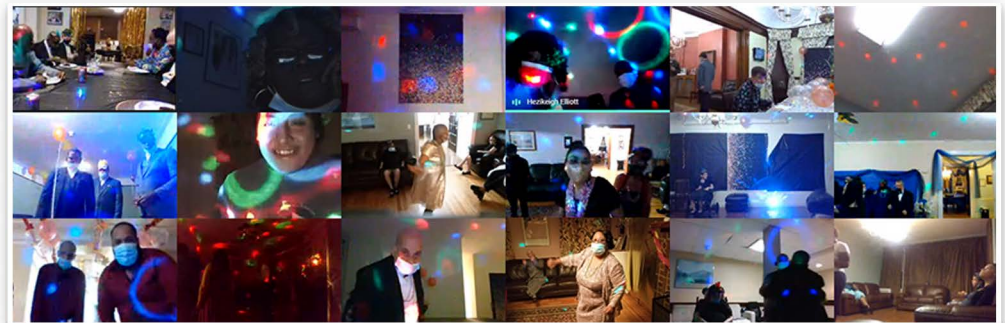


# AABR ADVANCE

Empowering People With Special Needs



## THE HARVEST BALL GOES VIRTUAL



In the middle of a world wide Pandemic, it was important for AABR to not simply pause, but continue to find ways to move forward and innovate. With that in mind, it was discussed how to manage the ever anticipated annual event, the Harvest Ball. The idea of canceling was briefly considered but immediately rejected; the event was too important and needed to lift both the individuals' and staff's spirits during these challenging times. The Harvest Ball would go on but be held virtually.

First, however, it was decided that a staff cooking contest would be held to determine what dishes would be served at the event for the first time ever. The event winners would then work with former restaurant owner and AABR Residence Manager Albert Teekasingh to prepare hundreds of dishes to be served simultaneously at each AABR residence during the virtual Harvest Ball.

Executive Director Libby Traynor, Assistant Executive Director Kathryn Flood, and a panel of staff members were tasked with sampling all of the dishes and choosing the winners, a tough job, but someone had to do it! They chose: Chiquetta Fisher-Southern Comfort Greens & Cornbread, Earma Mullings-Rasta Pasta, Anna Hemraj-Guyanese Style Curry Chicken, and Dalinda Espinoza-Papa Rellena Peruana.

Then, on the day of the Harvest Ball, Directors, Maintenance, and Agency Drivers came from every borough, Westchester, and Long Island to package the food and transport it to every facility to be enjoyed during the evening.



The Harvest Ball itself connected each residence via Google Hangouts, allowing them to share in the festivities together. All of the houses were decorated and supplied with party favors and props to simulate photo booths. And, like they do every year, the individuals danced the night away in their gowns and tuxedos, with music supplied by a real DJ, lights and all, streaming live from St. Pascals.

For more images visit: [aabr.org/harvestball](https://aabr.org/harvestball)



# EVV Technology

AABR's Community Habilitation Program has taken the first step into the future using technology to bring transparency, efficiency and accuracy to documenting our services through a newly implemented Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) system. The 21st Century Cures Act mandates that providers of Home and Community Based services implement EVV systems to electronically verify the time and place of service using GPS technology. EVV ensures that services are being conducted in the community as intended, assuring taxpayers that services meet all compliance mandates.

There are additional benefits that come with this new service. "We will not only be able to deploy staff efficiently, but we will also have service plans at the fingertips of the staff working with people in the community," said Director of Network/Revenue, Ancilla Cuffy. "The EVV fosters accountability, tracks hours of service received and offers AABR the ability to assign Community Habilitation Specialists geographically, thereby maximizing staff hours efficiently. EVV will positively impact Agency Revenue, as well," she added. Families who require additional hours may receive authorization via supervisors accessing the system. Not only does EVV verify the service received, but it also allows for the staff person to enter service documentation, receive payment for hours worked, and gives staff a full picture of those they serve without the need for loose paper, binders, and outdated information.

Additionally, supervisors can access and update Individual information, review services received, and plan for full allocation of hours needed by families.

## KEEPING AABR CLEAN & SAFE

### clean SCIENCE

2020 brought to our collective consciousness the dangers of airborne viruses such as COVID-19 and the importance of additional safeguards. After evaluating multiple solutions designed to create safer, healthier environments for both employees and individuals, AABR chose a system called "Clean Science." Their Advanced Oxidation Technology supplements our HEPA filter. They do this through 2 technologies called PHI-CELL, which utilizes a broad-spectrum, high intensity UV light and REME HALO, which uses an electro magnetic energy cell to create ionized hydro-peroxides. These technologies destroy toxins upon contact, and air will not need to pass through the unit for it to work effectively.

"Clean Science air and surface purification units leverage advanced oxidation technology to eradicate 99.9% of bacteria and viruses such as MRSA, Swine Flu and COVID-19," said Luis Reynoso, Director of Maintenance. "In addition, Ultra Violet Light (UVC) based advanced oxidization units are installed in the HVAC ductwork to neutralize airborne pollutants such as bacteria, virus, odor, and mold."

For additional unparalleled protection, individual units have been installed in bedrooms, common areas, and classrooms. As of this month, installation has been completed in all AABR residences, day program sites, NYCLI, and the Main Office.

## INTRODUCING ANCILLA CUFFY

Ancilla Cuffy, AABR's Network Director of Operations and Revenue, has been here for barely two months, and yet already, we feel her impact. She has implemented the Agency's EVV (Electronic Visit Verification) system, is working on bringing Station MD to the Individuals we serve, and has her sights on greater levels of technology.



Ms. Cuffy comes to us with a wealth of experience working at Staten Island Mental Health Society for 15 years before merging with Richmond University Medical Center. She states that her first role as a Medical Assistant shaped her career, observing patient care, insurance billing, and technology. She noticed medical professionals speaking with caregivers as if the individual with the disability was not present. "With EVV and Station MD, the individual is part of their own care. My focus is the services we provide and staying on top of the workflow. Revenue becomes the outcome naturally."

When asked what is next, Ms. Cuffy reports that she shares the vision of Executive Director, Libby Traynor in bringing an Electronic Health Record (EHR) to AABR. The system will be accessible 24/7 access with items of potential concern flagged with appropriate team member notification. Having worked with Libby for 15 years, she stated that our Executive Director is "organized and a go-getter. When she sets her eyes on something, she gets the job done." How does Ms. Cuffy feel about that? With a broad smile, she responded, "We need to make it happen!"

## StationMD OUR NEW TELEHEALTH SOLUTION



As Telehealth services became more widely used during the COVID crisis, allowing people to receive health services from their own homes, AABR searched for the service that could best benefit our individuals. We are excited to announce the implementation of StationMD Telehealth at our Residential Facilities. Not only is their service convenient and effective, offering us the ability to triage a medical concern without exposure to potential infections at a typical health facility. What separates StationMD is that it specifically serves people with developmental disabilities, and all of their doctors are trained to address our population's specific health needs.

StationMD provides immediate physician assessment and treatment within the comfort of the Individuals own home, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. An easy-to-use tablet, high definition camera, and Bluetooth stethoscope allow for immediate access to Physicians who specialize in the treatment of those with developmental disabilities. Additionally, through StationMD, medical treatment plans can be accessed simultaneously with other professionals, clinicians, and family members. With StationMD unnecessary Emergency Room and Urgent Care visits can be avoided, as will the lengthy wait times that come from those in-person services. Individuals are also protected from the potential of related exposure to infection, the "trauma of transfer," and fears related to both hospitals and crowds. In addition, disruptions to meals, sleep, and medication will no longer be an issue. In the event an ER visit is warranted, the Station MD Physician will contact the ER ahead of arrival to provide both history and current medical concerns to expedite the treatment required.



## BLESSING BAG DRIVE

AABR Employees are always looking to give, even beyond our own walls. Despite an ongoing Pandemic, this holiday season was no different. Charlene Williams, Instructor at St. Pascals, and Angee Thomas, Assistant Manager at the Shebitz Residence, created what they called the Blessing Bags Drive for the Homeless, with a special focus on women.

Over 100 lbs of donations poured in from AABR Directors and staff. Thomas reported that close to 200

Blessing Bags were personally distributed to The Franklin Women's Shelter in the Bronx as well as to people on trains, at bus stops, and on sidewalks. One hundred of those knapsack-size multicolored string bags were donated by AABR employees and assembled by the Individuals at AABR's Klamar Residence.



## RUTH FLORES RETIREMENT

AABR thanks Ruth Flores for her 31 years as an Accountant in the Fiscal Department. Ruth was admired by her colleagues for her kind dedication and her careful reviewing of Medicaid accuracy, billing submissions, and solving payment issues that needed to be addressed. Ruth is, "A pleasure to work with, highly conscientious, and maintained an extraordinary work ethic." CFO Mary Bosnack stated. "Ruth would do anything for anyone. She is that type of person. She taught me so much," Bosnack added.

Ruth Flores made a difference at AABR, for colleagues and the Individuals she supported, alike. Her presence will be missed most of all.

**"Ruth would do anything for anyone. She is that type of person."**

- Mary Bosnack, AABR CFO

## HOW TO DONATE



Visit [aabr.org](http://aabr.org) and click the donate button on the upper right side of your screen.



Call 718.321.3800 and ask to speak to the Development Department.



Mail a check made out to AABR Foundation to Development Department  
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