



Helping Hands for Independent Living Scholarship Information

Scholarships will support individuals in the following programs:

The POINT Community

The individuals in the POINT (Pursuing Our INdependence Together) community follow an innovative model where they reside in their own apartments within walking distance of a Community Center. They receive support from master's level clinicians, access to a 24/7 emergency phone line, and are part of a community of peers who face similar challenges and triumphs in living independently. Unfortunately, unlike Group Homes or Community Residential programs funded by OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities), the POINT community does not receive public funding, limiting access to those with financial resources.

POINT offers individuals who might have otherwise remained isolated at home without social support or community engagement, or in a residential program designed for those requiring continuous assistance, a real opportunity to achieve maximum independence. Participants in this community have demonstrated significant personal growth since its inception in 2008. They strive daily to develop new skills and build upon their current strengths, reducing their reliance on support and becoming more self-sufficient through enriching educational and social activities designed to foster growth and independence. At the same time, they build a supportive peer community that allows for social interaction and meaningful, lifelong friendships. Most POINT participants are employed, volunteering, or pursuing further education.

Scholarship: \$2,500-\$5,000 per year (*Commitment for up to 4 Years with Annual Renewal*)

Shelanu

Shelanu is a program for individuals who are on the Autism Spectrum or living with intellectual and/or developmental differences and are transitioning into adulthood. Many services that individuals were once entitled to within their school district are no longer accessible once they reach age 21; they have essentially “aged out.” Shelanu offers experiences where individuals can come together in a safe space, learning hands-on skills and developing lasting friendships by participating in educational, vocational, and recreational activities. The hope is that through this supportive and educational program, and with guidance from trained counselors, they build a



network of peers they can rely on for support, impactful connections, and camaraderie through the years.

Scholarship: \$250 Annual Membership Fee

Theater for Action

Theater for Action is a comprehensive arts and performance experience for young adults that allows everyone to be a star! Individuals come together to learn about creating a performance through interactive and skill-building theater games, improvisation exercises, physical movement, singing, and acting. Participants are encouraged to step out of their comfort zone, be creative, and take risks in a safe and supportive environment. The season starts in the fall with sessions designed for new participants to build trust and discover their acting voices. Soon after, actors commit to the annual show and audition for a part, with everyone receiving a role. Actors rehearse for several months, and the culmination of their efforts takes place in the Spring with an annual performance. The show is a huge hit year after year, with a packed audience and very proud actors!

This program is included in the POINT fee. Individuals from the community, if eligible, can join for a nominal fee of \$300.

Scholarship: \$300 Annual Membership Fee

North East Westchester Special Recreation

North East Westchester Special Recreation, Inc. strives to provide community-based therapeutic recreation programs that enhance the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning of children, teens and adults with developmental disabilities. North East is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization operating under the auspices of the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. Nominal activity fees are charged to help cover the gap between state funding and the cost of participating in community recreation activities.

For this reason, we are providing scholarships to eligible individuals who cannot otherwise afford these meaningful and essential programs.

Activities include: Bowling, Team Sports, Fitness Frenzy, Girl's Night Out, Nite Club, Friday Night Fun, Curling, Saturday Clubhouse, Fantastic Friends, Escapades & Adult Trips, and Summer day camp for children ages 4 through 21 years.



Scholarship Amount: Based on Cost of Requested Activity

Achilles Westchester

This is a free, healthy activity held at the Kensico Dam in Valhalla. The group meets from May through mid-October, and athletes walk, jog, and run. It is social, fun, and a great way to get your steps in! Volunteer guides are available to walk, jog, and run with the athletes.

Achilles International, based in NYC, was established by Dick Traum in 1983 to encourage people with disabilities to participate in mainstream athletics. With support from Traum, the Westchester Chapter was founded in May 2015. Since then, over 50 athletes have joined, and in addition to the weekly sessions, the group has participated in 5ks throughout Westchester.

The Dam is near the Valhalla Train Station and on the Beeline Bus route. However, if transportation costs preclude an individual from joining, they are encouraged to apply for transportation funding through a scholarship.

Scholarship for Transportation: Cost TBD

Our hope is that these scholarships, for eligible applicants, will open more doors for individuals to partake in and benefit from services in Westchester County that promote independence, connection, friendships, and community.

— Valerie Rosen & Bob Mensch, Co-Chairs, of Helping Hands for Independent Living

For more information about these programs, please click on the links provided below:

POINT WJCS: www.wjcs.com/services/disabilities-autism/point/

Shelanu WJCS: www.wjcs.com/services/disabilities-autism/shelanu/



NorthEast Recreation: <https://northeastspecialrec.org/>

Theater for Action JCCA Compass: www.jccany.org/our-programs/jewish-programs/compass/

Achilles International: www.achillesinternational.org/