While residents of Adelphoi’s Loyalhanna House in Latrobe are practicing social distancing, it hasn’t dampened their spirits or their productivity.

Over the past few weeks, youth have been spending their free time using Adelphoi’s 3D printers to make mask buckles for front-line employees who are assisting in the Coronavirus epidemic. Mask buckles are adjustable plastic pieces that fit onto surgical and face masks, providing much needed relief from constant pull and pain of the elastic on the mask wearer’s ears and cartilage.

Adelphoi students learned the skills to develop the mask buckles as part of the Career Exploration Maker Space and Mobile Lab on Adelphoi’s main campus in Latrobe. The Career Exploration Maker Space & Mobile Lab consists of stations designed to provide introductory instruction in high-demand vocational areas. Besides 3D printing, the program includes stations in Residential Wiring, Pipe Cutting/Fitting, Refrigeration, Mechanisms, Virtual Welding, AC/DC Circuitry, Programmable Logic Controllers, Auto-Brake Trainer, Laser Engraving, Programmable Logic Controls, and HVAC.

Youth are placed at Adelphoi’s residential programs, including Loyalhanna House, through Juvenile Probation and Children and Youth referrals. Adelphoi provides both therapeutic services and educational programming to students in a structured home environment. Students participate in the Career Lab at the end of their school day at Adelphoi’s Charter School.

“Making the mask buckles here is teaching me and the other kids how to help others in the community and using the 3D printers and materials for something we haven’t used them for before,” said Gage, an Adelphoi resident and Career Readiness student.

Students are donating the mask buckles to local hospitals and adult care facilities including Brookdale Latrobe, Barnes Place, Loyalhanna Care Center and both Excela Latrobe and Westmoreland Hospitals.

Adelphoi’s Career Exploration Maker Space and Mobile Lab helps to prepare students for the world of work and allows them to achieve their highest potential by offering career exploration in various trades and instruction in employability skills. Through the development of academic, vocational, and soft skills, Adelphoi students prepare to re-enter their communities with increased self-esteem and a better knowledge of their own abilities and aptitudes.

Supervisor of Career Readiness Programs Kerry Ozmelek said, “Having the students utilize the 3D printers to make the mask buckles shows them how what they have learned in our Career Readiness classes can be applied to real-world problems. I have noticed that the students have been developing their problem-solving skills while using the printers – tweaking the design, making multi-colored buckles and trouble-shooting the printers. I am hopeful that in the future the technology will foster creativity by giving the students the opportunity to become creators, designers and inventors.”
AT ADELPHOI, OUR HEROES LOOK LIKE THIS…

Everyday heroes are all around us. Doctors, nurses, truck drivers, grocery store workers, the list goes on. In the midst of this crisis, heroes emerge as the dedicated individuals who show up and do the hard work of keeping us healthy and safe.

At Adelphoi, those heroes look like Senior Counselor Mabel Jellison. Mabel is one of our youth counselors who comes to work every day to provide specialized care for some of the 300 kids in residential placement who cannot be home with their families right now. Mabel volunteered to make masks for staff members at Vincent Home and dedicated time at home to sew masks to better help protect our youth.

Heroes also look like Multisystemic Therapy Project Director Staci Sottile. Like many others, Staci is a mom who is balancing having her children home from school while still working. Staci and her staff of MST Therapists continue to provide intensive treatment and therapy to Adelphoi families, in this time of crisis, through phone calls and video conferencing.

Adelphoi teachers also serve as heroes to our youth. Even though they aren’t physically in the classroom with their students, they are working hard to prepare for each student the work that they need and to assist virtually in instruction. Our teachers are helping students navigate through this unprecedented time while still providing the support and guidance that they need to learn.

Our Adelphoi staff not only show up, they transform lives. We are so grateful for our amazing employees, and for all of the courageous everyday heroes in our communities, who are seeing us through these tough times and making the world a better place for all of us.

NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES, SOME MAKE MASKS

Adelphoi is grateful for the many volunteers who have spent hours making masks for our staff. Thank you to Mary Jellison, Judy Franke, Christy Lisbon, Alice Brasili, Mabel Jellison, Lisa Dyser, Nancy Kukovich, Michelle Keys, Sophia Hoch, Shannon Lotz, and Anita Tenerowicz for donating masks. The masks will be used by Adelphoi staff as well as donated to Adelphoi Foster Families.

ADELPHOI YOUTH SEND ENCOURAGING CARDS TO LOCAL NURSING HOMES

Residents from Middle Creek Female Secure took time to create encouraging cards that were sent to people living in local nursing homes. The girls understand how the residents must be feeling as the girls’ visits from family have been temporarily suspended out of concern for their safety. At a time when everyday life has been disrupted by the coronavirus, the girls thought that the cards would spread cheer to those who may also be feeling lonely due not being able to receive visitors. This positive activity allowed the girls to shift their focus to others rather than the changes that have affected them during this time.
Colin’s contagious smile and big heart will brighten anyone’s day. If you happen to find yourself driving through the McDonald’s in Latrobe, his kind words will greet you at the window. When he isn’t working, this 18-year old is often watching YouTube videos, or teaching his young nephew how to ride his bike. To see him now, you would assume he’s a happy, fulfilled high school senior. But it wasn’t always this way.

In 6th grade, Colin started to get into trouble at school and was diagnosed with ADHD and Impulse Control Disorder. By the time he reached 8th grade, the school was calling his mom Leslie pretty regularly. As his behavior spiraled and the calls increased, she began to fear that he was going to get “lost” in the public school system. Before the end of the first quarter of his 9th-grade year, Colin’s principal called her to have a meeting. During that meeting, his principal suggested that Colin attend Adelphoi Ketterer Charter School in Latrobe. While she agreed that she needed to do something to help Colin, she was hesitant to send him to a school that she knew little about.

“Life before the Charter School was very stressful and full of anxiety,” said Leslie. “Problems just kept arising and Colin was getting further and further away from where I knew he could be.”

Leslie reluctantly agreed to meet with teachers at the Charter School. During that meeting, Leslie says that they greeted her with “a smile and acceptance” from everyone that lasted long beyond the first meeting. Colin felt comfortable and accepted the first time he set foot in the school, not only from his teachers, but from all of the school personnel, including the counselors, receptionists, principals, CEO and the school resource officer.

Colin found that the staff took interest in his life beyond just school, and worked hard to forge a personal bond with him. One of Colin’s teachers, Eric Pavlik, was what Colin considered his “go to” for everything. “He has talked to me and helped calm me down so many times,” said Colin. “He talked through problems with me.”

Many others, such as Brooke Pierce, Principal at Adelphoi Ketterer Charter School, rallied behind him to help him succeed. “She has been there for me anytime I needed,” Colin noted. “I know that I am welcome to go to her and talk if I need to. She’s helped me even when I messed up.”

Colin says he feels at home at the Charter School. He credits his teachers for encouraging him and allowing him to realize his potential. He knows that he can go to each of them with any problems that he may have and they will help.

Leslie says that everyone at the Charter School “has Colin’s back” and they give him the encouragement and support that he needs to be successful. “Even when Colin makes a bad decision, the staff don’t make him feel like a bad kid, they just help him understand why it was a bad decision and help him to move forward.”

According to Leslie, the personal care and attention that Colin has received is outstanding. “We have never felt like just a number at Adelphoi Ketterer Charter. Anytime that I have concerns or questions, the staff have responded and provided the human contact and care that I have come to know, expect and love from them.”

“When I drop Colin off every morning, Resource Officer Ray always reminds him to tell me that he loves me,” says Leslie. “He asks Colin how he is, and if Colin misses a day of school, the next morning Ray says, ‘I was worried about you, you doing ok?’ There have been many mornings after Colin walks into the school that Ray will take the time to talk to me. He tells me what a good kid Colin is and that he will check in with him and see how he’s doing.”

Today, Colin talks positively about his future with his school counselor and plans to use the Adelphoi Promise scholarship program to pursue education after high school.

“Colin is a smart a young man, he was a lost soul with some emotional baggage that needed the support of people that understood and cared and that is exactly what he got at this school,” said Leslie. “Adelphoi Ketterer Charter School gave us hope again, restored my faith in public education, in teachers and humanity. I wouldn’t want my son anywhere else.”

To learn more about the Adelphoi Promise, or how you can make a donation, please contact communityrelations@adelphoi.org.
When former Adelphoi Board Chair Ralph Liberatore heard about the addition of the new activities program at Adelphoi, he knew it was a perfect way to honor his late wife, Donna. Known for her compassion, Donna had a history of helping others, especially children. Donna passed away last year after a long, courageous battle with liver disease. In addition to her husband, she is survived by three children, Craig Liberatore, Sharie Rodriguez, and Stacie Hartman.

Donna was the foundation of her family. There wasn’t anything that she wouldn’t do for them including taking care of Stacie after a serious car accident left her with a traumatic brain injury and hospitalized for eight months.

“Donna was there every single day, helping Stacie get out of bed, keeping her active, making sure she was able to get where she needed to be. She completely dedicated herself to Stacie’s care. Donna helped Stacie gain a quality of life. Without her, Stacie would not be alive today,” said Ralph.

In her memory, the Donna Liberatore Memorial Activities Fund was created to support the new activities program at Adelphoi.

According to Karyn Pratt, Director of Marketing, “This special fund will support various activities, including basketball and volleyball tournaments, concerts, karaoke, and movie nights. We hope to offer community service activities and educational opportunities as well as access to the arts for our youth in residential care. Donna was passionate about the arts and loved to paint and attend art classes as a member of the Greensburg/Latrobe Art Center. She also ran her own interior design business.”

Adelphoi recognizes the importance of providing therapeutic recreational opportunities and interactive learning experiences to youth in placement. Recreation and leisure activities strengthen and reinforce family bonds, increase self-confidence, and positively impact physical and mental health. Many of the activities already underway take place inside Adelphoi’s new Youth and Family Center, which features a stage and multi-purpose auditorium for events and student-driven artistic performances, as well as dedicated rooms to provide art and music therapy as part of a growing curriculum for at-risk youth.

Through the generosity of more than 70 individual donors to date, the Donna Liberatore Memorial Activities Fund has already purchased recreation and leisure equipment, as well as art supplies that will enhance the scope of the program. The Fund has also supported various on-campus and off-campus activities.

### Easter Celebration and Activities

Adelphoi staff has been working hard to make the best of the current situation by providing youth with activities that are both fun and therapeutic. Over the Easter holiday, many of the group homes helped to make Easter dinner as well as color eggs. The youth continue to take part in therapy groups as well as completing school work during the stay at home order.

- The girls at Marker Home colored eggs as a part of their Easter celebration.
- The boys at Vincent Home spent a sunny afternoon cleaning up the Adelphoi campus.
- Saxman youth cleared out brush from behind the unit and have been working hard to make the yard look nice for spring.
- They boys at Sweeney Home took advantage of the sunshine and spent a Saturday planting flowers and pulling weeds.
- Each group home is working hard to complete their school work. Every Friday the teachers bring new materials and pick up the previous week’s work. If the students have questions throughout the week, the teachers skype or call to help them. Everyone is working together to make this new way of learning a success!
By the time staff from Adelphoi’s Multisystemic Therapy (MST) Program began working with Julie and her 16 year-old son Peter, Peter was physically and verbally aggressive as well as destructive to their home.

Within the household, the boundaries between Peter and his mother were blurred. Peter was very much in charge as his mother would give in to his demands and would not hold him accountable for negative behaviors, fearing that Peter would become angry. In an effort to regain control, Julie would often preach at her son, which would lead to Peter calling his mother names and arguing. This became an ongoing cycle for the family.

Julie was incredibly worried about her son and was most afraid of him being placed into foster care permanently due to his refusal to attend school. He had a history of truancy that resulted in multiple out of home placements, including a partial foster care program where he spent the week with a local foster family and would spend weekends and one evening during the week with his mother.

Realizing that she needed help, Julie reached out to Adelphoi’s MST Program. MST is an intensive family- and community-based treatment program that addresses all environments that impact high-risk youth, including families, schools and peer groups.

Together, Julie, Peter and their MST therapist identified contributing factors of Peter’s negative behavior with peers, school, community and family systems, and quickly realized how crucial it was for Peter and Julie to understand their roles in the family and how to effectively establish those boundaries. Through the course of therapy, Julie learned she needed to hold Peter accountable for his behaviors. Additionally, the family needed to improve their communication, and Julie needed to learn the de-escalation skills that she desperately longed for to handle Peter’s anger more effectively. Julie had to build her confidence when holding Peter accountable and to follow through with consequences for negative behavior and as well as incentives for positive behavior.

The MST therapist also worked with Peter to help him improve his problem-solving skills by building frustration tolerance through coping strategies that worked for him. Peter shared those skills with his mother and they worked together to identify how she could encourage him to utilize these skills if he became frustrated or angry. Communication and spending positive time together to rebuild their relationship was the focus of this family’s treatment. These interventions helped Julie to see the value of being an authoritative parent that encompassed both control and warmth.

The family’s overall goal was for Peter to spend more time at home during the school week and eventually return home. Over time, Peter was permitted to start coming home more during the week in order to test the family’s plans and shape them as needed. Soon, Peter was home at least three to four days of the week and their routine began to run smoothly.

With the help of their therapist, Julie enlisted Peter’s foster parents as a support for her to continue to use the skills that she had learned throughout treatment. Peter’s foster father was able to spend time with Peter as a mentor, and his foster mother provided strong emotional support for Julie. She would support Julie develop her plans as well as help her to problem-solve if they would reach a barrier. Julie also identified her siblings to encourage her and cheer her on in order to ensure the sustainability of the progress made throughout the family’s treatment.

With the help of MST, Julie and Peter learned how to decrease aggressive communication and find ways to really “hear” each other, which was critical to their relationship. They were able to share their concerns without being judgmental and could focus on the outcome of the conversation on problem-solving. Additionally, appropriate boundaries were re-introduced into the home. Peter found a renewed sense of being loved and taken care of, while knowing that because he was loved, he would be held accountable to certain standards of behavior. Ultimately, Julie and Peter became closer, making the atmosphere at home both loving and functional.

ADELPHOI’S SHOWCASE OF STARS EVENT CANCELLED

After much deliberation, we have made the difficult decision to cancel our 2020 Showcase of Stars event, which was scheduled for May 21, 2019.

With the dramatic escalation of the spread of COVID-19 in recent weeks, we believe this is the best choice at this time. Our priority is and always will be the physical and emotional health, safety, and well-being of our kids, staff, and community at-large. Canceling our largest event of the year is therefore the only responsible choice.

We hope you will join us in celebration next year on Thursday, May 20, 2021!
The Adelphoi Newsletter is published by Adelphoi and contains information, listings, events, programs, and notes pertaining to Adelphoi and its services: Adelphoi Village, Adelphoi Ketterer Charter School, Adelphoi Education, Inc., and Adelphoi Foundation

SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

STUDENT CREATIVITY CORNER

HELP
by John R., middle school student at AEC

We need help, help to make us better,
Help each other to make us better.
We need each other to clean the world of the sick and hurt
We need to hold on to hope and believe that there is going to be a miracle.
Life is precious.
So, stay in and don’t go out of your house so we can all get better.
Give it a chance, give the people a chance to get better.
Let’s give hope, love and life to all that is trying to save us from harm.
We need to stop for a moment and look around to see what is truly important to us.
Don’t take life for granted by not listening to what people are saying.
So, ignore what is said that isn’t true, STOP and smell the roses.
Stop hurting others.