

Developments

Winter Edition • Feb. 2025

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5th ANNUAL HARMONY WALK

Paving the Way for Inclusion

Inclusion is vital for a thriving, diverse, and equitable community. For people with disabilities, it means having equal opportunities to live, work, and enjoy life. The Harmony Walk raises awareness about the positive impact of individuals with disabilities and embodies the spirit of inclusion.

An inclusive community integrates people with disabilities into all aspects of life, from accessible housing and public transportation to supportive neighbors. Inclusive workplaces and employment opportunities allow individuals to earn wages and contribute to the community. Volunteering and accessible community spaces enhance social connections and well-being.

The Harmony Walk demonstrates our commitment to inclusion, helping create a community where everyone, regardless of ability, can thrive. Let's continue to champion inclusion, making our community a place where everyone feels valued and respected. Join us March 30th at Santander Arena. Registration information is on our website and on the back page of newsletter. 🌟

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Jody Wagner
Chief Executive Officer

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Nikki Roman-Cruz
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Erin Miller
Human Resources Administrator

Kristy Vigo
Community Services Administrator

Stacey Mikatavage
Corporate Administrator/Assistant to CEO

Jessica Penchard
Development & Public Relations Director

FIVE APPOINTED TO BOARD



(Pictured left to right are Gavin Milligan, Marie Schmehl, Ann Marie Haus, Joshua Oswald, and Amy Vaughan.)

Ann Marie K. Haus is the Vice President of Business Development & Community Outreach at Customers Bank. She has held significant roles such as Director of Development at Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center and Executive Director at Ephrata Area Education Foundation. Ann Marie holds a Master of Business Administration from PennWest Clarion and a Bachelor of Science from Susquehanna University. She is a graduate of the Leadership Berks and Penn State Health Emerging Leaders programs. She serves on various boards and committees including VOICEUP Berks, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Olivet Boys & Girls Club, Girl Scouts Take the Lead, and Helping Harvest. Ann Marie's expertise in marketing, communications, networking, and fundraising has earned her the ABWA Woman of the Year 2023 award. In addition to serving her community, Ann Marie enjoys golfing, cooking, baking, and traveling with her family. She is happily married to her husband Tony; together they have three boys: Tyler, Dylan, and Wyatt.

Gavin Milligan is the Business Development Manager & Successor at Advanced Comfort Specialists, Inc., and a marketing and strategic planning consultant assisting private, government, and nonprofit

organizations through transition and modernization. An alum of the BCTC Business Management & Entrepreneurship Program, Gavin has assisted numerous organizations with successful turnarounds. He serves on over 15 boards and committees, including Olivet Boys & Girls Club, Safe Berks, and Reading Regional Airport Authority. Gavin is passionate about economic development, youth advocacy, and strengthening community organizations. He is also a volunteer firefighter and enjoys football. Gavin is inspired by ProBerco's dedication to inclusion and innovation in serving adults with disabilities.

Marie C. Schmehl is a licensed professional engineer and is a Risk Management Engineer at Jensen Hughes, with previous experience at Enercon Services and RPA Engineering. She holds an MBA in Community Service and Economic Leadership from Alvernia University and a BS in Chemical Engineering from Widener University. Marie specializes in probabilistic risk analysis for nuclear power plants and is a member of the ProBerco Finance Committee. She enjoys swimming, reading, watching baseball, and is an avid fan of both the Phillies and the Reading Fightin Phils. Marie is committed to supporting ProBerco's mission

and values the organization's impact on the community.

Joshua Oswald is the Business Development Manager at Discovery Federal Credit Union. With over 15 years of experience in commercial lending and business banking in the Berks County community, Joshua holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Wilkes University. He serves as a board member for Wyomissing Area Softball and Baseball, where he is also the Treasurer. Joshua enjoys fishing, boating, watching the Phillies, umpiring baseball, and spending time with his family. He is humbled to be part of an organization that enriches the lives of adults with disabilities.

Amy K. Vaughan is the Vice President, Business Development Officer/Manager at Tompkins Community Bank, where she has worked for 18 years. She holds a B.S. in Science with a Business Minor from Penn State University and has held various leadership roles. Amy serves on the Genesis Theatre Board, Co-County Wellness Board, Wilshire Pool Association Board, and Reading Science Center Board. She is also actively involved in community organizations: Spring Township Centennial Rotary Club, Wilson Wrestling Booster Club, Baseballtown Charities, and Opportunity House. She has received several honors, including the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry Rising Star Award. Amy is dedicated to fostering an inclusive

environment for people with disabilities. When she is not spending time with her husband Trevor and two children Cael and Samantha, she is cheering on the Phillies.

"We are thrilled to welcome Ann Marie, Josh, Gavin, Amy, and Marie to our Board of Directors," said Jody Wagner CEO of ProBerco. "Their diverse backgrounds and extensive experience will be invaluable as we continue to drive innovation and growth. We look forward to their contributions and leadership." 🌟

WELCOME

Erin Miller

ProBerco hired Erin Miller as our new Human Resources Administrator. Her career spans over a decade of working in the human services field specializing in human resources. She worked as a Recruiter and advanced to Human Resources Generalist, and then to Director for a large corporation in human services. Erin is looking forward to her professional role with ProBerco and relishes the opportunity to expand the Human Resources Department into a robust program for employees to gain the necessary skills to be successful in their roles and to help employees on their career journey. "I enjoy seeing people with no experience grow and move into their positions; finding their niche and excelling," Erin said. The addition of a Career Development Director is one of the reasons Erin found the position attractive. By investing in quality training and preparing staff more effectively for their positions, Erin believes the corporation will experience an improvement in employee retention and recruitment.



Upon graduating from Penn State University with a degree in Applied Psychology, Erin was employed as a case manager for the Reading School District, collaborating with high school students and helping them achieve their career goals. It is through this experience that Erin found her niche in human resources, which led her to CareerLink and to working in human resources in the human services industry.

Erin is happily married to Richard Miller and resides in Fleetwood with her husband and two furry dogs. In her free time, Erin assists her husband in running PA Terrain Search and Rescue, a local nonprofit specializing in disaster relief.

Erin is happily married to Richard Miller and resides in Fleetwood with her husband and two furry dogs. In her free time, Erin assists her husband in running PA Terrain Search and Rescue, a local nonprofit specializing in disaster relief.

We are confident that Erin's expertise and dedication will be invaluable as we continue to foster a supportive and dynamic workplace. Please join us in welcoming Erin to the ProBerco Team and wishing her great success in her new role. 🌟

Inclusive Spaces

KultureCity® Sensory Bags at Santander Arena and Performing Arts Center



ProBerco is proud to partner with the Santander Arena and Santander Performing Arts Center in their initiative to bring sensory bags into both venues. We are proud of their desire and commitment to achieved Sensory Inclusive™ certifications from KultureCity®, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting accessibility for individuals with sensory needs. This certification underscores the venue's commitments to inclusivity, ensuring that guests with sensory sensitivities—such as those with autism, PTSD, or dementia—can enjoy events in a supportive environment.

Jody Wagner said, "This initiative aligns perfectly with our mission to promote inclusion, ensuring that everyone can enjoy everyday activities in meaningful ways, such as the simple joys of attending hockey games, concerts, or any number of shows at the Santander Performing Arts Center. By sponsoring the sensory bags, ProBerco is taking a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for people with disabilities living in our community, which is something we can be very proud of."

Four years ago, ProBerco teamed up with the Reading Royals to host the Harmony Walk. We are delighted to see this partnership flourish as we continue working together to create inclusive spaces for our community. (Pictured are Jaden and his mother Shari. Jaden is wearing earphones to mute the noise of the large crowd.) 🌟

Memorials

Lawrence (Larry) G. Angstadt, 71, of Reading, passed away on Friday, December 6, 2024, at Reading Hospital-Tower Health, after a prolonged illness. Larry was a longtime member of the ProBerco family. He made numerous friends among his peers and direct care workers while attending the Community Participation Supports (CPS) day program and as a resident in one of the ProBerco Community Living homes. He was cherished for his quick wit, love of wrestling, and compassionate spirit. Larry's memory will live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

Melanie Ann (Mooney) Kinder, 54, of Reading, PA, passed away unexpectedly on December 9, 2024. She leaves behind three daughters, Keiana, Jovanna, and Jessica, and eight grandchildren. Melanie was employed by ProBerco for many years, where she worked in various roles, including overseeing the Foster Care, Life Sharing, Family Support Services program, and serving as a Community Living Director. Melanie's dedication to the individuals in her care and to her family will be deeply missed.

Ernesto Santiago, 67, passed away on January 7, 2025, at the Reading Hospital-Tower Health. Born in Puerto Rico, Ernesto and his family moved to the Reading area when he was a younger. He lived with his mother for many years before moving into a ProBerco Community Living home. Ernesto will be remembered for his infectious smile, laughter, and foxy dance moves. He will be greatly missed by his friends in the CPS day program and his roommates.

Bernadette Mary Shisslak, formerly of Reading, passed away on January 31, 2025, at the age of 82. Bernadette attended the ProBerco day program for many years, where she learned to make custom jewelry and play card games, especially Piggy, with her friends. Listening to music and singing were some of her favorite pastimes while visiting the program. Her family remembers how much Bernadette enjoyed meeting with her friends at ProBerco. She will be fondly remembered and dearly missed. 🌟

Executive Director's Message

"I am passionate about equal opportunities ..."

Jody Wagner, CEO

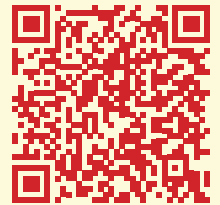


Having devoted my entire professional career to supporting, caring about, and empowering adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), I am passionate about equal opportunities and enriching support systems for each person living with a disability. That is why I am reaching out to you at this historic time where decisions regarding Medicaid funding for necessary services is in jeopardy. Medicaid is the primary payer of long-term services and supports to people with I/DD and Autism. In fact, 51% of ProBerco's annual budget is Medicaid funded.

A budget framework moving forward to the U.S. House of Representatives calls for up to \$2 trillion in budget cuts over 10 years and directs the House Energy & Commerce Committee—which has jurisdiction over Medicaid—to cut at least \$880 billion in spending. While details haven't been finalized, this would likely mean deep and devastating cuts to Medicaid funding. Even if proposals do not specifically target funding for I/DD and Autism services, the resulting pressure on state budgets creates an elevated risk of further reduction to

services for people with I/DD and Autism.

I am urging you to act now. Tell Congress to preserve Medicaid and ensure people with IDD and Autism have access to community-based services. Please join us in advocating for the amazing individuals we support in having an enriched life. Email your congressmen today to urge them to protect Medicaid funding for vulnerable citizens. ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources) makes it easy for you to contact your congressmen by using their resources on their website at <https://www.ancor.org/actions/house-vote-could-lead-to-deep-medicaid-cuts>; or by using the QR code provided. 🌟



Leadership Berks Class

ProBerco was proud to host future leaders at their January Leadership Berks Class.





Inspired by the new ProBerco logo, CPS day program attendees created a colorful wreath for display at Glick's Greenhouse. Melissa, Jose, and Mark, members of the Vocational Team, supported their peers by visiting the show.



During the holiday season, Beth Ann, Brittany, and Cindy enjoyed a visit from their furry friend, Bucky the Beaver.



Franny loves decorating her home for the holidays.



Santa started early this year, visiting residents in our Community Living homes. Pictured are Supervisor Carol Morgan, John, Santa, DSP Mike Berger, and Jose.



Community Living showed their team spirit by gathering for a Super Bowl Party. They enjoyed tailgate food and games before the main event.



Santa's visit brought smiles and holiday joy to Anthony and to his peers in the CPS day programs.



Jonathan, Hector, Angel with the Vocational Team decorated a Christmas tree at Gring's Mill for the Festival of Lights.



Bucky the Beaver energized the crowd by visiting the day programs. Pictured left of Bucky are Jordej, Jeff, Jan-Aire, and Mike. Pictured right are Eli, Jahdareya, Isaac, and John behind him.



A big thank you to the St. Vincent dePaul Society and the Holy Guardian Angels Parish for sponsoring gifts for Community Living residents, ensuring everyone had a special gift under the tree.



The Vocational Team catered lunch for the Leadership Berks Class, serving up hoagies and smiles. Great job Jeannette, Mark, and Avis.



Carmen was one of five artists whose artwork was selected for our holiday greeting cards. The artists are very proud of their work and are happy to share their holiday spirit.



John is hamming it up among the poinsettias at Glick's Greenhouse.



ProBerco

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Developments is a seasonal publication. Comments regarding the content of the newsletter, or to have your name added/removed from our mailing list, contact Jessica at jpenchard@proberco.org. Stay connected, sign up for our e-newsletter, and follow us on social media @[goproberco](https://twitter.com/goproberco).



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31st Annual Golf Tournament
Moselem Springs Golf Club

Learn more on our website!
www.proberco.org/golf

March 30, 2025 • Santander Arena
Step up for diversity and inclusion!

Walkathon 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Guests may attend the Reading Royals
Game that follows the walk at 3 p.m.
(Tickets sold seperately)

• **WALK**
• **SPONSOR**
• **DONATE**

Learn more on our event website!

www.proberco.org/harmonywalk

ProBerco enriches the lives of people with disabilities and their families by providing innovative community participation, community living, employment opportunities, and family support services.