Earlier this year, the Lifetime television show “Designing Spaces of Hope” partnered with The Tile Shop to give Maureen Handy, a longtime AB client, the kitchen of her dreams -- a place to express and nourish herself through one of her passions, cooking.

Maureen had been asking me for a new kitchen for years,” said David Slater, Director of Property Administration at Ability Beyond, who worked closely with the Lifetime team to complete the project. “Now she has places to put her family keepsakes and everything that she really enjoys.”

Maureen joined the AB family after suffering a traumatic brain injury from a car accident when she was 19 years old. With our support, she has strived to rebuild her life and achieve independence. Her humble kitchen was transformed into the environment she needed for continued healing and growth.
Lori Pasqualini Named as CFO of the Year

Lori Pasqualini, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer at Ability Beyond was one of seven people selected for Westfair Online's CFO of the Year awards. Lori was honored at a dinner on Tuesday October 18th at Stepping Stones Museum in Norwalk, Conn. Lori has been the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer at Ability Beyond for 21 years.

"Lori is a treasured member of the Ability Beyond team and we are so proud of all of her accomplishments!" said Jane Davis, President & CEO. "We can never completely express our respect and gratitude for all you do for Ability Beyond and the people that we serve."

Lori oversees all fiscal responsibilities ranging from strategic financial planning, to capital planning, maintaining banking and lending relationships, and managing government funding that support Ability Beyond. In addition, Lori is responsible for setting the strategic direction for our Workforce and Human Resource needs. Prior to joining the organization in 1995, Lori worked in the Health Care Practice of Deloitte and Touche as an auditor in Boston, and Bridgeport Hospital as the Director of Reimbursement. A graduate of Southern Connecticut State University, she holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics.

Block Grant News

Ability Beyond is proud to have again received a City of Danbury Block Grant in the program’s 42nd year, to renovate homes at two of our locations and directly improve the lives of 12 people with physical and developmental disabilities, acquired brain injuries and mental illness.

Past projects have included accessibility improvements—like adding exits to homes, building ramps and re-flooring—as well as utility upgrades that increase efficiency, and generator installations that advance safety at all times. Altogether we’ve transformed elements of dozens of homes through the City of Danbury Block Grant, with funding in the hundreds of thousands.

This year, AB will contract with local companies to upgrade ones home’s old, inefficient boilers and hot water heaters; and install an emergency standby generator at another home.

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude to the staff at Mountainville’s residential program, for their continued dedication and commitment to the people they support—including my brother, Jason. My brother was given the opportunity to receive a kidney transplant a few months back. Though we were ecstatic, there were many preparations in order to get my brother ready for such a major surgery. Mountainville staff did not hesitate to help carry out all of the doctor’s orders by helping Jason lose weight and manage other health issues. With their help, Jason was able to receive the transplant successfully and recover in a place that truly feels like home.

I am eternally grateful to the staff members who helped Jason and my family every step of the way. Your passion for your work does not go unnoticed. Staff truly went above and beyond to make sure Jason received the highest level of care. Thank you for giving Jason the best gift he could ever receive; a new lease on life.

Gratefully yours,
Andi Andrade
Sister of Jason Gates
Ability Beyond hosted another immensely successful Golf Tournament on Monday, Sept. 19 at Centennial Golf Club in Carmel, NY. With the leadership of Saurin Shah and the Golf Committee - and in spite of the rainy weather - we were able to raise over $67,000 to support our organization!

This success of this event was in very large part due to the efforts of Saurin and the Golf Committee and the subsequent saving of staff time in planning and organizing. We are so grateful to Saurin, the committee and everyone whose given their overwhelming amount of support. We are going to use this event as a shining example of what can be accomplished by strong board involvement and dedication.

In spite of the rainy weather - we were able to raise over $67,000 to support our organization.
An ambitious, up-and-coming entrepreneur faces a panel of scrutinous investors, to deliver a business pitch that could change his or her future. It’s Shark Tank -- but not the one you’ve seen on ABC.

Ability Beyond has launched its own Shark Tank-style program for young adults with autism spectrum disorders, through our Explorations in Entrepreneurship summer program - a two-month, hands-on experience that prepares our interns for the workforce. Along the way, we also teach our interns how to bring their business ideas to life -- and they share their business plans during a capstone presentation attended by community leaders.

“I wish I had something like this when I was younger,” said Richard Cyr, a stand-up comedian with cerebral palsy who served as one of this year’s “sharks.” Over the past two years, we’ve sent 23 young adults through the program, including Vanessa Vioude, an intern at Plainville Transition Services, who dreams of becoming a fashion designer. Realizing that her dream needed to be broken down into smaller, achievable steps, her dedicated staff mapped out a strategy with Vanessa.

After researching the fashion industry, Vanessa saw an opportunity to fill a gap - the tutu industry was beginning to grow.

**Ability Beyond is remarkable. They help people who have a tough time on their own become a productive part of society.**
With the help of her staff, Vanessa created a presentation for our summer service, our own version of “Shark Tank,” a popular television show where budding entrepreneurs present their ideas to established investors. The “sharks” were impressed with her presentation and granted her start up funds which were used to purchase the needed materials for her business. Our staff taught Vanessa how to create the tutus and in a matter of weeks, she sold some of her products.

Today, Vanessa is on the right track. She is looking to market her business, has created some business cards and with help, and will soon create a social media platform as well as an Etsy page. Other business pitches have included a cupcake company, fresh homesqueezed lemonade and more.

“I witnessed a group of very passionate young people, present ideas they had, to better themselves through employment, using those ideas,” said David Bishop, another one of our “sharks.” He is a retired government employee who has had positions as a technical illustrator, public affairs officer, museum curator and engineering technician. “They were very specific and showed a dedication to create products, start social programs, and engage others in the fields of art, building and salesmanship. “
SAVE THE DATE!

AN EVENING IN THE GARDEN

From Our Roots We Grow

ABILITY BEYOND GALA

April 29, 2017
High school graduation is a time of change and uncertainty for any young person, but for students with disabilities the path is even more challenging - leading to high rates of unemployment, poverty and social isolation among folks who simply need the right support to thrive as independent adults. When students fail to connect in a timely fashion with adult social services, it’s called “falling off the cliff.” Our goal: to help every young person with disabilities soar right over it.

So far this year, we’ve delivered that support to almost 40 families in Connecticut and New York thanks to generous investments from our community partners, The Thomas & Agnes Carvel Fund, The Aramark Foundation and our newest partner, Fairfield County Community Foundation. The bulk of our work has occurred at Brewster High School and Danbury High School, through our “Transitioning Together” educational workshop for families -- developed in collaboration with autism researchers at The University of Wisconsin’s Waisman Center.

A highlight of the year has been our collaboration with parent advocates in New Haven County to produce and deliver a Parent Education Workshop called “Navigating the Systems: Achieving Meaningful Employment and Personal Success for Emerging Adults with Disabilities.” Three dates were offered in Guilford and Madison, Conn., with another workshop planned for the Fall.

Designing Spaces of Hope (cont. from page 1)
Gives Maureen the Kitchen of Her Dreams

“Having this kitchen allows me to cook better! I can make meals and be able to reach for things and know where they are,” Maureen said.

In May, a production crew from all over the country headed to Maureen’s Danbury apartment for a three-day overhaul of her kitchen. Everything from the floors to the cabinets and lighting fixtures were torn out and replaced with high end products. The goal was simple--make Maureen’s kitchen a more functional, useable space that would allow her to do the activity she loves the most.

Jane Davis, the CEO of Ability Beyond was also thrilled with the results. “I am so overwhelmed with joy,” Jane said. “I thank Lifetime and The Tile Shop for providing Maureen with a kitchen that she can enjoy for years.”
Ability Beyond Board of Directors, Trustees & Committees, 2016-2017

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- Lori Pasqualini, Treasurer
- Fred L. Baker, Esq., Secretary & General Counsel

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- Mary Borba, Vice-Chairman
- Joseph Clouse
- Gerald Garavel
- James Kennedy
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- George Mulvaney
- Sanford C. Proner, DPM
- John Richards
- Candy Shaughnessy
- Carol Steiner
- Stephen Tracy, Ed.D.

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- Gerald Garavel, Chair*
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- Steve Finklestein
- David Kasiarz
- James Luciano, M.D.
- David Parkes
- Jane Hardesty Poole
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- Saurin Shah
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- Barbara Volz

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- Mary Borba, Chair*
- Jane Gates, Ph.D.
- Amy Meichner
- Ryan Pence
- Holly Saxton
- Stephen Tracy, Ed.D.*

**Human Resources Committee**
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- Jane Gates, Ph.D.
- Amy Meichner
- Ryan Pence
- Holly Saxton
- Stephen Tracy, Ed.D.*

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- Robert Reiss

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- Rodney Bell
- Peter Courtway
- Raymond Curatolo
- Keith Iaia
- Scott McNulty
- Buddy Pitt
- Saurin Shah
- Rambabu Vallabhajoyasulu

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**From the Grant Desk...**

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<th>GRANT FUNDER</th>
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* denotes position on the current board