



Community Interactions, Inc.
740 South Chester Rd.
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610.328.9008
www.ciinc.org

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MEDIA, PA 19063
PERMIT NO. 113

New CI Board Members, cont.

term fiscal stability.

Highly regarded for his strengths in financial planning, grant management, real estate development, and governance, Michael has also served as a Board Treasurer and Finance Committee member for regional nonprofits. His commitment to responsible stewardship and sustainable impact will be a valuable asset to Community Interactions and the communities it serves.



Community Interactions is pleased to welcome **John Wheeler** of Treasure Island, Florida, to its Board of Directors. John brings more than 30 years of experience in information technology sales, serving major multinational corporations and earning a reputation as an innovative, results-driven leader. Known for his strong business acumen, strategic perspective, and ability to build lasting relationships, he adds valuable insight to the organization's mission.

Originally from Claymont, Delaware, John attended college in Florida on a baseball scholarship and later competed in the Delaware semi-professional league. He has been married for 28 years and is the proud father of three adult children.

John's commitment to the disability community is deeply personal, as the legal guardian of his sister, Marjorie. He looks forward to contributing his expertise and passion for service in his first board role.

Support our Mission to Make a Difference

We invite you to support CI by donating, volunteering, or sharing our mission with others to help us continue making a positive and meaningful impact in the lives of the many individuals we support.

To find out about ways you can support Community Interactions, visit www.ciinc.org. Or to make a direct donation, please access the

QR Code below. Thank you!

Help Create Meaningful
Community Experiences



CI Board of Directors

- John Saulino — Chairman
- Gerald Saulino — Vice Chairman Emeritus
- Michael T. McDonnell III, Esq. — Secretary
- Jerry Fisher Jr. — Treasurer
- Patricia Bayard
- Andrew Bradell
- Tim D'Ignazio
- Lawrence Green
- Michael Quintiliano
- Christopher R. Saulino, Ph.D.
- Jerald P. Saulino
- John Wheeler

CI Officers

- Christopher R. Saulino, Ph.D. — Chief Executive Officer
- James Strauss — Senior Vice President / Chief Financial Officer
- Diane Hannah Wilson — Vice President of Human Resources

CI Newsletter Editor

- Emma Doyle, Director of Admissions and Marketing

CI Builds a Professional Career Ladder



CI DSP Massa Dorley proudly displays her DSP I Certificate. Massa was the first at CI to receive the national NADSP E-Badge Academy credential.

In human services, meaningful change rarely begins with policy — it begins with people. At Community Interactions (CI), that change is visible across homes and programs as staff transform daily support into recognized professional practice through the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) Certification Program.

In January 2025, CI launched the initiative for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Front-Line Supervisors in partnership with NADSP, and the results exceeded expectations.

“We successfully certified 100% of our Front-Line Supervisors and we are on target to achieve 86% certification of the 100 DSPs enrolled in the program,” said Senior Vice President of Human Resources Diane Hannah-Wilson. “I am so very proud of our Front-Line Supervisors and DSPs who accepted this challenge and navigated along with us throughout this process.”

What NADSP Certification Means

The NADSP credential is a national, career-ladder certification recognizing competence in direct support. Participants progress through three levels — DSP-I, DSP-II, and DSP-III — by completing accredited education, demonstrating skills, and submitting real workplace reflections through the NADSP E-Badge Academy aligned with the association's Code of Ethics.

By earning electronic badges tied to core competencies and required education hours, professionals maintain flexibility and control over their certification path. Unlike traditional training, certification requires proof of applied practice, not just attendance. Participants complete coursework, earn competency badges, and write testimonials connecting their daily work to ethical principles.

To support staff through the process, CI created a training lab, provided 24/7 online access, and established team leaders and cohort mentors. As Hannah-Wilson noted, “The HR Team, including Sam Swain-Boyle, Barbara Vecchiolli, Jill Hill, Renee Sutton, Melanie Woods, Alex Cornaglia and Allegra Moses, developed a common curriculum... allowing our

(story continues inside)

Our Mission:

Community Interactions, Inc. (CI) builds communities of compassion and inclusion for neurodiverse people through innovative services.



Message from the CEO

Christopher Saulino, Ph.D.
President/CEO

Listening, Serving, and Strengthening Our Work Together

At Community Interactions, one of the most important things we can do is listen. The feedback we receive from the people we support and from their families gives us valuable insight into their experiences and helps us better understand what we are doing well and where we need to improve. More than that, it reminds us that our work is about people, relationships, and trust. When families and participants share their perspectives, they help us grow stronger and serve better.

That is why customer service is such an important part of our culture at CI. In our field, customer service means being responsive, respectful, dependable, and compassionate in every interaction. It means listening carefully, communicating clearly, and making sure the people we support, and their families know they are heard, valued, and taken seriously. Every conversation, every follow-up, and every effort to solve a problem reflects the standard we set for ourselves as an organization.

We also know that quality service depends on a skilled and professional workforce. That is why CI continues to invest in the professionalization of our Direct Support Professionals and front-line managers through our work with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). This effort is about recognizing that direct support is not just a job—it is a profession. Through NADSP, we are helping strengthen the knowledge, skills, ethics, and professionalism of the staff who are at the center of our mission every day.

By listening to feedback, focusing on customer service, and investing in our workforce, we continue to raise the standard of excellence across CI. That is how we build trust, strengthen our services, and better support the people and families who rely on us.

PEOPLE

Introducing CI's New Board Members



Patricia J. Bayard brings a thoughtful, values-driven approach to her service as a new member of Community Interactions' Board of Directors. A resident of Wilmington, Delaware, she is recognized for her integrity, professionalism, and commitment to respectful collaboration. Her career in Corporate America strengthened her expertise in organization, accountability, and results-oriented leadership, earning her a reputation for reliability and principled decision-making.

Patricia's dedication to advocacy is shaped by personal experience as a longtime caregiver to her mother, who lived with Multiple Sclerosis, and to her granddaughter JoAy, a Community Interactions resident with Cerebral Palsy. She is a strong advocate for dignity, inclusion, and independence through community-based services.

Actively involved in Wilmington High School Alumni Inc. and her church's Cancer Ministry, Patricia remains deeply committed to education, health advocacy, and community engagement. She is honored to contribute her experience and perspective to the board.



Lawrence Green of Haddon Heights, New Jersey, brings more than 40 years of distinguished experience in the nonprofit and higher education sectors to his role as a new CI board member.

A strategic and creative leader, Lawrence is highly skilled in fundraising, grant development and management, communications, public speaking, and special event planning. His strengths also include administration, strategic planning, and organizational assessment.

Currently, Lawrence serves as a fractional External Affairs Officer for the Botstiber Institute for Wildlife Fertility Control, part of the Botstiber Foundation in Media, Pennsylvania. He is also a longtime member of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations' Consultant Collaborative, where he has supported numerous nonprofit organizations. He is a Standards for Excellence PANO Licensed Consultant.

Lawrence's personal experience includes caring for loved ones with mobility challenges. He is an active community volunteer and brings proven board leadership, including service as President of Animal Grantmakers, to advance CI's mission.



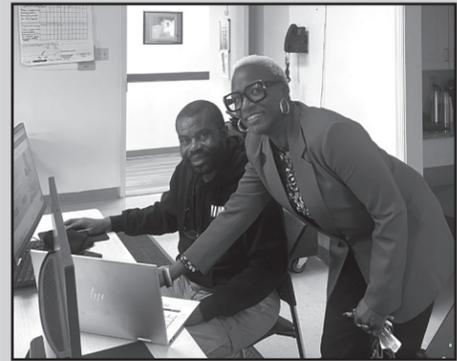
With a strong foundation in financial leadership and organizational strategy, **Michael Quintiliano** joins Community Interactions' Board of Directors as a trusted advisor and experienced executive. He brings more than 10 years of expertise in finance, operations, and growth management, with a demonstrated ability to strengthen mission-driven organizations.

Michael currently serves as Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operations

Officer at The Lincoln Center for Family and Youth, where he directs financial, operational, and development functions for a multimillion-dollar, multi-state organization. Under his leadership, annual revenue expanded from \$3 million to more than \$25 million, reinforcing long-

(New CI Board members continues on back cover)

FOCUS ON



DSP Athanasius Johnson consults with HR Generalist Melanie Woods.

(Continued from front page)

DSPs and Front-Line Supervisors to reflect their expertise to achieve each of the individual certifications."

From Intuition to Professional Framework

For DSP Athanasius Johnson, certification reshaped how he approaches his work. What once relied largely on instinct is now guided by a structured decision-making framework grounded in ethics and person-centered support. Reflecting on the broader impact, he said, "This isn't just another class; it's a vital step toward elevating our profession."

Renewing Experience and Deepening Care

Even seasoned professionals found new perspective. After more than 40 years in healthcare, Evangela Newkirk said, "It broadened my knowledge base and allowed me to take a deeper look into the various levels of care, aligned with the NADSP Code of Ethics." She added that "The certification process helps me... better apply what I learned to day-to-day situations."

DSP Massa Dorley, the first to receive DSP I certification, expressed a similar sense of renewal, explaining, "I am refreshed with more knowledge, learning to advocate for and advocate with the people I support and respect their needs, wants, values and desires."

Strengthening Leadership

For leaders, certification affirmed long-standing practices within CI's culture. Associate Director of Residential Services Samuel G. Kiiru described the experience as "impactful," noting, "It reinforced my understanding of the values, ethics, and best practices that guide high quality direct support and strengthened my leadership skills." After



Samuel Kiiru, Assoc. Director of Residential Services.



Front-Line Supervisor Sepideh Motemavalian working on achieving her DSP I Certification.

20 years at CI, he added, "NADSP validated the strong foundation that CI has built and reaffirmed that our practices align with nationally recognized standards." He believes the program would benefit anyone entering the field and provides the professional direction he wishes he had early in his career.

Mentorship in Action

CI Central PA Team Facilitator Christina Shimer completed certification alongside her staff so she could guide them through each step. By experiencing it firsthand, she gained insight into both its rigor and its value. The program requires deep reflection and thoughtful writing about real workplace situations, often the most demanding aspect for hands-on professionals. As Shimer explained, "Instead

of clicking through slides, you actually connect it to real people." She believes that meaningful engagement strengthens professional judgment and improves how support is delivered.

Becoming Part of Something Bigger

According to Susan Arwood, NADSP's Director of Certification, CI staff have joined a small and distinguished national group. With more than 5 million Direct Support Professionals across the country and fewer than one percent holding certification, their accomplishment represents a significant milestone. Arwood commended their dedication, stating, "Your achievement demonstrates that you are a true professional, impacting the lives of others in a positive way each and every day."

A Professional Future

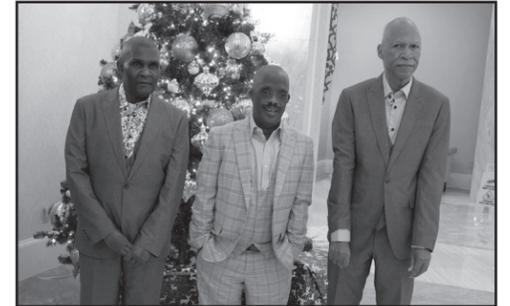
CI's adoption of NADSP certification represents more than coursework — it establishes a defined career pathway rooted in ethics, skill, and dignity. Capturing the achievement, Hannah-Wilson said, "Thank you for challenging yourselves beyond what at times participants thought was impossible... YOU DID IT!"

Across Community Interactions, the impact is already visible — in stronger teams, confident supervisors, and better lives for the people they support.



DSP Charity Saah received her DSP I Certificate on Dec. 30th, 2025.

HAPPENINGS



More than 300 residents, Day Program participants and team members made merry during CI's annual Holiday Ball held on December 11th at The Waterfall in Claymont, DE.



February's QE (Quality Enhancement) meeting turned into a Valentine's celebration of connectivity and great vibes.

SPOTLIGHT ON

New Home, Built with Heart, Opens in Central PA



Community Interactions Central PA recently celebrated the opening of a custom-built home in Lebanon County — an achievement that reflects both thoughtful design and deep commitment to the people CI supports.

Officially opened on November 3rd, the one-level, cottage-style residence was built from the ground up to meet the unique needs

of three women supported by Community Interactions. Christina Shimer, Team Facilitator, assisted with overseeing the project.

"I never in a million years thought that so much went into building a home," Shimer said. "But it was exciting to be part of every step—from choosing the floors and lighting to making sure everything worked for the individuals we support."

Working closely with Gerald Musser Builders, Shimer selected durable, wheelchair-



Mandy (left) and April are settling comfortably into their new CI home.

friendly flooring, customized cabinetry, and accessible features throughout the house. She also ensured that small details—such as lighting inside showers and closets—would promote independence and safety.

The very first resident, Mandy, was included in the design process. Shimer brought her samples and blueprints, and incorporated her favorite colors and love of horses into the décor. "This is her house," Shimer said. "I wanted her to feel proud and comfortable here."

The result was emotional. "She was overwhelmed with joy when she first walked in," Shimer recalled. "She always says 'home,' and that tells me she feels safe and happy."

Christopher Lynn, Director of Operations, emphasized that accessibility and functionality guided every decision. "Our primary focus was making sure the home worked for the individuals. From widened doorways and smooth thresholds to flooring that's easier for wheelchairs to navigate, we kept accessibility front and center."

Lynn also credited teamwork for the project's success, including Facilities Director Brian Rogers, realtor Ashley Centini of Iron Valley Real Estate, and Shimer's day-to-day leadership. "Christina was our boots on the ground," he said. "She was invaluable throughout the entire process."

After nearly two years of planning and five months of construction, the finished home now serves as a model for future projects. "This is the template we want to build on," Lynn noted.

For Shimer, the experience was both challenging and rewarding. "It was a lot of work," she said. "But I would do it 100 times again."

Together, the team has created more than a house—they've built a place where independence, dignity, and belonging can flourish.