



## AMIB's 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Group Homes Now Staffed and Home to Several New Individuals

**A**MIB's newest homes in Brick and Howell are fully staffed and new individuals began moving in to the 15th home in late spring/early summer, while the 16th home started to welcome new individuals as recently as late August. If you have been following our FaceBook page or any of our social media, you have seen the progression of the completion of our homes as well as when some of the first men from the Howell home had moved in. The men living in Howell have already taken trips to the boardwalk, helped participate in activities like grocery shopping and watering the lawn while enjoying time being together and getting to know one another. In fact, two of the men – Richard



**Jenny and Jonathan test out their new furniture – the beginning of a great friendship.**



**Richard and Joseph during a trip to Asbury Park Boardwalk.**

and Joseph – had previously lived together until they became separated for a few months when their caregiver became ill. It was then that AMIB was contacted to help them plan for their futures. AMIB was not only able to reunite the men - but insured that they will have a place to live out their adult lives together and continue their “brotherly” friendship!

We are excited to get to know more about some of our even newer members of the AMIB family in the weeks and months ahead. For instance, Jenny and Jonathan moved into the Gregory Group Home in Brick a few weeks back. We look forward to sharing their joys and accomplishments with you in the coming months. Follow us on social media: [facebook.com/AMIBNJ](https://facebook.com/AMIBNJ) or Instagram [@amib\\_nj/](https://www.instagram.com/amib_nj/) to stay up-to-date with the travels, progress and activities of individuals living at AMIB!

## From the President



Dear Friend:

As we begin to look ahead to 2022, we must continue to recognize the great work of our administration and skilled care staff during these

challenging times. As the year continues to unfold, safety protocols to fight COVID-19 are still followed across all AMIB properties, while individuals have been able to enjoy visits from family or outdoor visits to locations as much as possible. AMIB staff continues to prevail – always with the individuals served at the center of every decision and for that – we are grateful.

With our two newest homes now staffed and the process for welcoming new blind/visually impaired individuals with multiple disabilities well underway, we would like to focus your attention to our newly developed opportunities for supporting the work of AMIB. On page six of this newsletter you will find details about new Naming Opportunities for your perusal. With multiple levels and areas to choose from, we're sure you'll be inspired to become a part of the AMIB legacy in this way!

Additionally, we will host a clay art-making experience called "Project Blessing Bowls" on November 20th and November 30th at Over the Moon Art Studios in Asbury Park. This event will bring the kids together to create clay bowls known as blessing bowls for individuals living in specific AMIB group homes. Kids will get to enjoy learning about people who live in their community while creating clay art to gift at the end. Please reach out to the office for more detail on the event. We hope you will take part in one of our new ways to support AMIB and look forward to everyone coming together safely again very soon.

In Health,  
Kenneth Carson

## From the Executive Director



Greetings and I hope this finds you well. While we all have faced our share of challenges for what seems far too long now with COVID, I am pleased to be a part of the happy stories within this

newsletter. Our 15th and 16th group homes are open and operational thanks to Steve Gottlieb of Quantum Construction, who worked tirelessly the past 18 months to complete the renovations. These homes have provided families of individuals served by AMIB the much-needed support and caring for their loved one in an accessible, congenial home environment. A big thanks to the administrative staff that have supported our vision from when we first purchased these homes to when the first individual moved in. Additional big thanks to our direct care workforce that has kept all AMIB individuals safe, healthy and COVID-free this year.

Given the need for a safe, barrier-free environment for our special population, we now look to embark on our 17th/18th group home project. Availability and pricing for purchasing new homes in the current market is quite competitive in Monmouth and Ocean Counties NJ. It is for these reasons \$100,000 is needed to go toward the down payment for the 17th group home and we hope that you will help with just that by finding the enclosed envelope and returning it with your donation – a gift of hope for more individuals who are blind/visually impaired and living with multiple disabilities. Thank you in advance for having the love in your heart to help more individuals to have a home with AMIB. We still stand by 'always making it better' for those who we serve.

Wishing you the best of health,  
Aaron Soto

### Giftback.com: Another Way to Give Back

Are you looking for a birthday, get-well, thank you, house warming, or new baby gift to send to a friend, family member, employer or employee? Then consider going to **Giftback.com**. The site offers a wealth of items— from fresh flowers to fruit baskets to engraved items and electronics.

And better yet, after you have chosen your gift, you can select the **Association for the Multiple Impaired Blind** as the charity of your choice, and Giftback will donate 10 percent of the purchase price to us.

Association for the Multiple Impaired Blind is qualified by the IRS to receive contributions which are deductible for federal income tax purposes. This charitable organization is registered with the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey. Information may be obtained by calling 973-504-6215. Registration does not imply endorsement.



# The Legacy Society

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following who have become members of The Legacy Society through a bequest or planned gift:

- Janet Andruss\*
- David R. Bixel\*
- Elaine O. Behr\*
- Kenneth J. Carson, Jr.
- Mary J. Carson\*
- Phil Cochran\*
- Albert R. Costa\*
- Joseph "Pat" Donohue\*
- Patricia A. Donohue\*
- Viola Ellison\*
- Peter & Mildred Galanti\*
- Richard F. Harries & Carol J. Harries
- Austin\* & Clara\* Helle
- Lillian Johnsen
- Betty Wold Johnson\*
- The Keith Wold Johnson Charitable Trust
- Robert Wood Johnson 1962 Charitable Trust
- Kellogg Endowment Fund
- Anthony J. Kokoll, Jr.
- Harold W. Korradi\*
- Mary Katherine Lightner\*
- George H. Love\*
- Lorraine McA. Love\*
- Muriel Martucci
- David Mathey\*
- Daniel J. McCarthy\*
- Patricia McKinley
- William McKinley, III
- Margaret J. McLean
- Vera Monaghan\*
- Ann Pambello\*
- Wilma A. Power\*
- Edna Thorsen\*
- Polly Wilson\*
- \* deceased

## Father of Monmouth County Resident Living With AMIB Includes AMIB in His Will

Late last spring AMIB learned Mr. Anthony J. Kokoll Jr. named AMIB as a beneficiary in his will. We are extremely honored and recently reached out to talk with Mr. Kokoll learning more about his personal experience with the organization. We discussed more in-depth about why AMIB is so important to him.

Growing up in his home in New Jersey, Mr. Kokoll was one of four children. He was a member of the military and served in the Marines from (1963-1967) as well as a Vietnam Vet. His son, Anthony III, currently lives in one of AMIB's Monmouth County group homes, where he's resided for nearly ten years now. Prior to 2013, Anthony had lived in a developmental center in South Jersey for nearly 30 years. According to Mr. Kokoll, his son has "flourished" since moving from the developmental center to AMIB's Monmouth County home.

"Upon moving in, AMIB staff ensured that my son had professional assistance to employ strategies to help him with adjusting to his new home," said Anthony. "The staff stood by him each step of the way, they did not give up on him and it was great to see him feel comfortable so quickly." He expressed that an added benefit has been his son living within the community where he currently lives, as it makes visits to spend time with him much easier and more frequent.

During the first two years Anthony resided with AMIB, Mr. Kokoll visited his son each week. After a car accident in 2015 however, he was not physically able to do so. "AMIB was really accommodating because they brought Anthony to me for visits on a weekly basis during that time until I

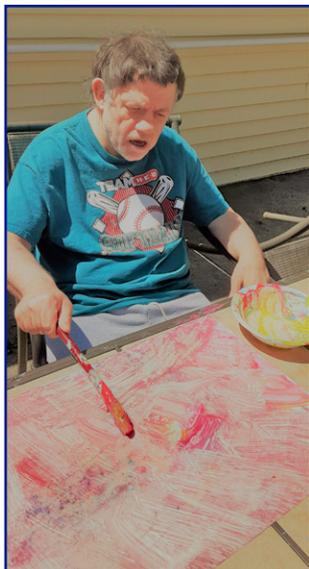


**Anthony and his dad earlier last Spring.**

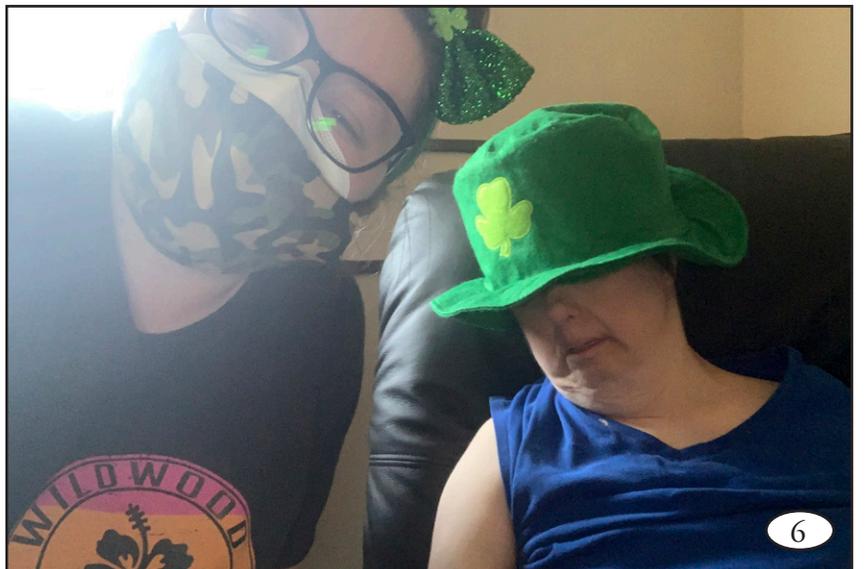
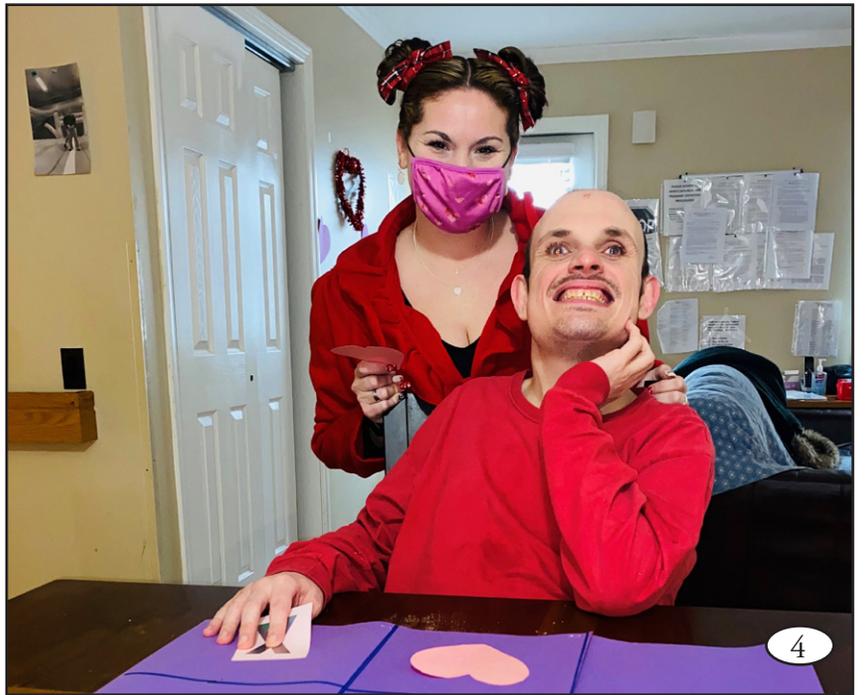
rehabbed and healed," he said. By 2018, Mr. Kokoll was able to drive again. He has since bought a pick-up truck - which Anthony has loved cruising around in with him when he visits!

"I'm grateful for AMIB because Anthony has an amazing Program Manager and their team at the home is always seeking out the next success for my son, no matter how small," said Anthony. Although he is retired, during his career Mr. Kokoll had worked for the Cerebral Palsy Association of Monmouth & Ocean Counties, Hominy Hill and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Manasquan, NJ. He felt compelled to name AMIB in his will because of the great care that they have provided for his son over the years and because he wants to be able to support the work they will continue to do for more individuals with needs similar to Anthony's. We couldn't be more thankful for his generosity.

**Anthony enjoys painting regularly and is proud of his creations each week.**



# ENJOYING LIFE AT AMIB





1. Greg enjoyed his group home's pool all summer. Fun fact: AMIB has pools at two of our 16 group homes.
2. Marlon, one the newest of the men to AMIB, enjoys the beautiful new patio of his group home.
3. Matthew having fun with his new tube at the Christmas in July celebration.
4. Manager Jennifer LaBranche (seen here with Jason) created a life-sized tic-tac-toe game for the guys in her group home.
5. Virginia and Tim waiting for their food to arrive at a recent Applebee's outing.

6. Care worker Kathleen caught some rays through the window with Barbara at one of our Brick group homes.
7. Gary celebrated his birthday with group home friends and Program Coordinator Christian Solis.
8. Rita painting for fun!
9. Darla thoroughly enjoying her painting session too.
10. "Life's better at the beach," said the individuals living at our Pine Beach group home.
11. BBQ buddies - the newest Monmouth County group home patio getting good use by Richard, Joseph and Marlon.



# AMIB Introduces Group Home Naming Opportunities

AMIB is excited to announce our newly created opportunities for individuals, families and businesses to become a part of our legacy. We have worked hard to purchase and renovate six homes during the last eight years in order to turn them into handicap accessible, barrier-free group homes. It is our honor to be able to invite donors to add a name to our superb legacy of caring. A meaningful message or naming in honor of a loved one or someone esteemed is the perfect way to show them you care. Your gift will live on not only in the named area of choice – but in the new homes your gift will go toward purchasing – so that AMIB can continue providing homes for more individuals in-need. The following are a sampling of our featured opportunities and areas for naming:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Founders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multipurpose Room/Living Room</li> <li>• Kitchen &amp; Dining Room/ Gathering Place</li> <li>• Deck/Outdoor Barbeque Area</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Guardians</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patio</li> <li>• Pool</li> <li>• Caregiver Station</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Builders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gazebo</li> <li>• Parking Area</li> <li>• Bedroom</li> <li>• Nurse Station</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pillars</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bench</li> <li>• Paved Path</li> <li>• Welcome Wall</li> </ul>

To learn more about these or additional Naming Opportunities, please go to: [www.amib.net](http://www.amib.net) and click “Support AMIB” or contact Nicole Lewis, Development Associate via: [nlewis@amib.net](mailto:nlewis@amib.net)

## RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Lavelle Fund for the Blind supported AMIB’s work by helping to fund the purchase of 4 new handicap vehicles so that staff can safely transport individuals to the places they’re interested in going and to visit their necessary medical appointments as well.
- Knight of Columbus #8415 – has supported AMIB annually and usually has a check presentation which AMIB attends each year. Although they were not able to host the check presentation this year, we appreciate their continued support.
- Bradford Blauvelt Memorial Trust helped to fund ramps and decking needed in our 15th group home.
- Manasquan Bank helped to insure AMIB can provide uninterrupted continuum of care in the event of a power outage in our newest Monmouth County home.

**Do you or someone you know want to host an event to help raise funds in support of individuals who are blind/visually impaired and living with multiple disabilities?  
Ask us how!**

## Current Funding Opportunities

In order to enable more individuals in-need are assured a place to call home, AMIB will continue its growth plan and look to purchase additional group homes in New Jersey. This newsletter reflects an extraordinary time in which AMIB, along with local and global communities, continue to be impacted by the pandemic. Overcoming set-backs and obstacles, two new group homes were purchased, renovated, opened and staffed in the midst of it all. As we look to purchase two new homes in the coming year in order to renovate, making them both handicap-accessible and barrier free, we urge you to consider helping us to meet our revenue goals during this unprecedented time. Costs associated with purchasing and renovations continue to rise – and so our need for your support has never been stronger. Please find the enclosed envelope and know that your donation can help more individuals have a place to call home – the source of love, trust, understanding and hope.

# In Memory of

*The following staff member and individuals will be deeply missed by AMIB staff and friends of AMIB:*



**Darlene Venezia**  
**Program Manager**

Darlene worked with AMIB for nearly 14 years and was well-respected by staff and residents alike. “My manager Darlene was a pleasure to talk with. Whenever there was a problem she was always there for me. All the staff here are like mothers to me but Darlene was especially good to me,” said Jody, who lives in the home Darlene managed.

Darlene was a bright light to everyone whose path she crossed and so many staff had positive memories that she was a part of with AMIB. “Darlene took the time with each staff and truly mentored them throughout their careers. Staff members she worked with felt connected to her in a positive way and it showed by the way that they worked together when caring for each individual and their specific needs,” said Program Coordinator, Maria Leschinski.

AMIB is truly grateful for Darlene and her many years of service with us.



**Larry**  
**Tinton Falls Resident**

Larry lived in our Tinton Falls home for three years. He was unable to ambulate when he first moved-in with AMIB and needed lift assistance to get in and out of bed. After just a few months with staff here working with him, all of that changed. Larry not only got around without assistance but no longer needed the lift. He truly progressed when he moved from the former nursing home to living with AMIB. Laughing and joking was Larry’s favorite past time and he will always be remembered by everyone at AMIB for his positive spirit. Larry was 75 years old when he passed away in July.



**Eugene**  
**Brick Resident**

Eugene went home to the Lord in mid-August. He moved to AMIB’s Revere Group home in Brick from the North Princeton Developmental Center. He lived in the Revere home for nearly 23 years and participated in any activities which he was able. He was endearingly nicknamed the ‘Gentle Giant’ for his 6’7” stature, sturdy frame and peaceful soft-spoken demeanor. “After a few years, every time I saw him I would say, ‘What’s up Euge’ (pronounced huge) and he would lightly chuckle, repeat it and extend a handshake for he knew it was me. I like that we had that little laugh together when we ran into each other,” said Executive Director, Aaron Soto. “With those who have passed, I feel lucky to have known them. I’m also proud that AMIB was a part of their lives and that they were a part of AMIB’s.”

**This newsletter is in memory of each of the above individuals who we considered to be very much a part of our AMIB family.**

**AMIB, Inc. Lions Head Office Park**

35 Beaverson Blvd. Bldg.#13

Brick, NJ 08723

*Please remember AMIB in your will*

732-262-0082

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**Our Mission** is to promote community integration and participation of people who are blind or visually impaired and have multiple disabilities by providing opportunities for community living, training and support.



## Project Blessing Bowls

On Saturday, November 20th, youth ages 8-15 will come together at “Over the Moon” art studio in Asbury Park to create clay bowls known as “blessing bowls” for individuals living in specific AMIB homes. As a part of a two-day experience, youth will learn about blind/visually impaired individuals living with multiple disabilities in their community while working side by side with them to create small clay bowls. The bowls will then be gifted to some of the individuals living in AMIB group homes. The pilot project is being considered to potentially become a part of an annual art experience for AMIB residents. To learn more or to have a child you know attend, contact Nicole Lewis at: [Nlewis@amib.net](mailto:Nlewis@amib.net)

\*Youth must be able to attend both days in order to participate – November 20th & 30th.