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Mother-Daughter Team Brings Hope and Happiness to Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Brooklyn, NY -- Gigi Pettway, a lifelong Bedford-Stuyvesant resident, began her career as Head Cook, at The Home of the Aging in Brooklyn. After 9-11, seeking a position closer to home, she accepted a position as a Direct Support Professional, with The Center for Family Support (CFS). She is currently an Assistant Manager at the 163rd St. group home.

"I was looking to help others and I also wanted to bring wholesome, healthy food to adults under my care. That was sixteen years ago and I feel so fortunate that I have been able to give my residents a life that has meaning and one they can be happy about. CFS gives me the tools I need to do my job, and I make a difference in their day, every day," Gigi explained.

Gigi Pettway has received numerous awards from CFS, including Employee of the Month in November, 2016, where she was chosen from a workforce of over 1,000. Plaques for past awards decorate the walls in the CFS Bronx regional office.

"My mom has shown me that strong connections can be made from one human being to another, no matter the disability. I have witnessed my mom's dedication to her "guys", during normal times and during times of disaster such as the 2003 Blackout and Hurricanes Irene and Sandy. Her dedication was returned to her many

times in her life and as a young preteen, I watched as one of the residents from the 163rd St group home, in attendance at my grandfather's wake, walked up to her and give her a big hug to provide comfort. The connection was palatable and he put a smile on my mom's face and eased her pain," Gig's daughter, Monica Pettway remembered.

Gigi Pettway's day involves overseeing the 163rd residence, spending quality time with the residents, arranging recreational activities and addressing their personal wants and needs. In many ways, Gigi's professional position mirrors her role as a mom, and as a result, she is living her dream of helping others and providing an amazing role model for her children.

Monica Pettway graduated from Central Piedmont Community College and followed in her mom's footsteps by taking a position at the Arlington/Cypress Hill group home. She then moved into her current role as Employment Specialist, seeking job opportunities for many individuals. Her day-to-day is different from her mom's, but in many ways it is the same, as she is helping them live a fulfilling life. In this position, she identifies the challenges that someone would face and works to give them the tools they need to be professional in the workplace. It is her goal to take off the mask of intellectual disability and allow potential employers to see their abilities and talents and ultimately, to create a meaningful life for them.

The Center for Family Support is celebrating this very special mother-daughter team and their many years of dedication to the people CFS serves.

"My favorite part of the job is helping someone reach their goal. I like to believe that anyone can accomplish their goals if they are able to dedicate themselves to doing so. No matter how small a step may be, it always bring us closer to happiness, and this is what I love about my job... assisting others in finding what make them happiest. I have learned this comes in many different shapes and sizes and what makes one person happy does not necessarily make the next person happy," said Monica.

While they do not work side by side in the residential division of CFS, they do collaborate and share a passion for healthy food and thus, provide delectable and nourishing dishes for CFS Family Days and on holidays. Gigi is known for her

amazing potato and seafood salads and Monica likes to bake desserts. Her cupcakes have become fan favorites among residents and CFS employees alike.

Monica describes her mom as “an amazing role model for my siblings and me. While we had to share her with her work, she taught us the value of maintaining a positive attitude and that helping others is what we are put here to do. Whoever knows my Mom knows what a wonderful job her ‘guys’ do every day to put a smile on her face and that is what inspires me to continue in her footsteps.”

Says Monica, “Whoever knows my mother knows she cannot help but smile when she is working and when she is home with us, telling us about her day.”

About The Center for Family Support

The Center for Family Support, founded in 1954, is a registered 501-c-3 charity, committed to providing support and assistance to individuals with developmental and related disabilities, and to the family members who care for them.

We support over 1500 individuals in both the NYC Metropolitan area and New Jersey.

We support individuals to help them live the lives they want, respecting diversity, and individual choice.

We provide families with the support to help them stay together.

We strive to enable individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to become productive members of their community. For more information about The Center for Family Support services, visit their website at www.cfsny.org.