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"You are going to love your life"



Ally began life in Russia, and while she's only 21 years old, the twists and turns of her life thus far suggest the drama one finds in a Russian novel. Born into an alcoholic and abusive home, she and her sister were removed and placed in an orphanage. Ally didn't think life there was too bad, but her sister, five years older, found it intolerable, and ran away. Ally never saw her again.

At seven, Ally was adopted by an American family, and came to live in the Catskills region of New York. In

SAVE THE DATE

Imagine More Fundraiser

Saturday, June 13

11 am to 4 pm

Raymour & Flanigan Furniture

Stores:

Clifton Park, Latham and
Niskayuna

Vanderheyden 2015

Oktoberfest

Thursday, October 29

6 pm to 8pm

Brown's Brewing Company:

Troy

Charity of the Month

July

Burger 21

622 New Loudon Rd. Latham

Do You Have...

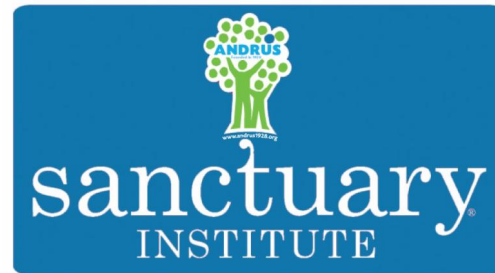
Our Community Service Department is looking for Lego's; model cars; board games and community gaming systems (Wii, Play Station 3

this family, she had an older sister who was also adopted from Russia. But something didn't click and Ally never felt loved or at home with this new family. Things went from bad to worse, and when she was 16, Ally spent a month in jail. After a brief stint of living with her sister, the county offered to place her at Vanderheyden. She jumped at the chance, and says that suddenly she felt as if so many people were invested in her happiness and future. She felt at home in her cottage on campus, and developed a warm relationship with the house manager, Stephanie Ferrone. "She became a mentor to me," says Ally. "She never judged me, no matter what I did. She said, it's my life to live and I'm going to love it."

While at Vanderheyden, a family in Putnam County took an interest in Ally, and she spent many weekends and vacations with them. They offered to adopt her, but Ally decided that being adopted once was enough. Despite that, Ally considers them her real family and remains close with them. They are all going on a cruise to the Bahamas next month.

Ally graduated from Vanderheyden's high school with honors, and now lives on her own in Albany. She works in a Wildwood Programs group home, helping take care of five autistic men. "I don't want to be cocky, but I

or an X Box 1). If anyone has any they would like to donate to Vanderheyden - we would be very grateful. Please email Lauren lfinlan@vanderheyden.org or call (518) 283-6500 ext.750 if you wish to donate. Or you can buy directly from our **WishList**.



**The seven commitments to
which our Sanctuary
Community commits:**

Non-violence
Emotional intelligence
Social learning
Open communication
Growth and change
Shared Governance
Social responsibility

Not surprisingly, their eventual connection happened via Facebook. That led to the offer to bring Ally and a guest to Russia, to meet her sister. Their communication now is limited to smiles and waves on Skype, because Ally doesn't speak Russian, and her sister doesn't speak English. But Ally is in the process of getting a passport and planning to learn Russian. There

think I'm one of their favorites," says Ally. "I like the guys and can relate, because I have lived in a group home. We have a lot of fun."

Ally wants to begin college part-time and travel while she is young. An all-expenses-paid trip to Russia may be in her near future, courtesy of a reality TV show there that wants to reunite Ally and her Russian sister. Ally learned last year that her biological sister had been searching for her for ten years, even hiring a private investigator.

is a Russian church down the street from where she lives, and she's going to walk in one day soon and ask if there is anyone who can help her learn the language.

Asked how she has maintained her sunny, can-do outlook given all that she has lived through, Ally responds, "People have been through a lot worse than me, and they are still standing. I'm still here, it's life, you've got to live day-by-day, and you can not be scared."



Residents On Board With Service to Others!

Everyone at Vanderheyden, including residents, has jumped on the "helping others" bandwagon. Each cottage is taking on a different project. Plans include:

- Partnering with the North Greenbush Community Center to do yard work and clean ups at parks and beaches
- Nail painting parties and game playing with nursing home residents.
- Volunteering at Healthy Kid day at the Saratoga Y
- Volunteering with STRIDE, an adaptive sports program

Springing Forward with a new Sanctuary Garden

Snow may still be on the ground, but a large team of staff and residents are planning a major garden initiative as part of their Sanctuary "giveback." Several raised-bed gardens growing vegetable, herb

and flowers are in the works.
Various teams are in place for
the Planning and Site
Development:

- * Tools Committee
- * Compost
Committee
- * Involve Kids Committee
- * Marketing
Committee
- * Planting Committee



If you would like to donate to help check out our [WishList](#)

Vanderheyden Receives Donation From Stewart's Holiday Match



Vanderheyden is delighted to be one of 1,600 local children's charities chosen to receive a grant from the [Stewart's Holiday Match](#). The \$4,500 grant Vanderheyden received will go to towards assisting our health, wellness and recreation programs for the children and youth we serve.

Stewart's Holiday Match funds are to be used directly for children 18 years and under in the geographic areas where their shops are located and the money was raised. The success of Stewart's Holiday Match is thanks to Stewart's customers for their generous contributions, and the dedicated shop partners who worked diligently to collect the funds. The Stewart's Holiday Match program has now allocated more than \$20 million since the program's inception in 1986. Vanderheyden is very thankful for Stewart's Holiday Match and their customers' willingness to help children and families in our community!

Carving the Powder at Jiminy Peak

Thanks to a grant set up for healthy living six kids were able to learn snowboarding or skiing. Pat, Will, DD and Millie picked snowboarding while Alexis and Johanna tried skiing. [STRIDE](#) Adaptive Sports at [Jiminy Peak](#) provided

lessons. STRIDE is run by a great group of volunteers who provide lessons 5 days a week. At the end of the season the kids got to participate in a race with 79 other people who had lessons this winter and all of them won medals!



Shop for a Cause

Do you shop at Amazon? Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Vanderheyden, whenever you shop on [AmazonSmile](#). AmazonSmile is the same Amazon. Same products, same prices, same service.



You shop. Amazon gives.

Want to Learn more about us?

Call today for a tour and speak
to Cathy Yudzevich
518-874-4901



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