

# Maranatha

Supporting Families. Guiding People. Improving Lives.

## Spring Fling, Maranatha Style

After a year of sheltering in place, individuals of Maranatha will have a chance to get social at the agency's Spring Fling. The event will take place on May 26th, from 5pm to 9pm at Exclusive Events in Astoria, Queens. Individuals residing in the downstate IRAs will dance the night away to a D.J., and a professional photographer will be on site.

Danielle Dawson, manager at 159th and 169th street, thought that after the end of 2020, everyone needed something to lift spirits, and a dance seemed like the perfect thing. "It gives [individuals] something to look forward to," she says, mentioning that many are already vaccinated. The event is a collaborative effort of all the downstate IRAs. "Each house is contributing [in some way]."

The dinner dance is the first of many activities house managers have planned for individuals.

Dawson shared that every Sunday in June there will be basketball, and they're planning a barbecue for July. The house of 159th Street is even planning a car-wash. Individuals will decide how the proceeds should be used.

While precautions will still continue, everyone is ready to reconnect in person. "It's time," Dawson says. "We can all get together and do something."



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# Staff Spotlight: Catherine Cruz



While poor retention remains common in the caregiving field, Maranatha is unique in the way that many of its employees have been with the agency for more than a decade. One such employee is Catherine Cruz. She’s the Medical Coordinator for 169th Street and has worked for Maranatha Human Services for almost 19 years.

Catherine currently resides in Hollis, Queens. And if you’ve never had the pleasure of meeting her (did you know that she’s a grandmother and great auntie?), you may recognize her name from the spotlight on Maranatha individual, Melvin Castle. She affectionately refers to the individuals she serves as “her guys,” is open, personable, and full of high energy.

That energy is super helpful when it comes to keeping up with the five individuals she works with. She thinks of them as “family,” noting that those working at IRAs often spend more time with the residents than they do anyone else.

Illustrative of where hard work can lead, she began as a housekeeper and cook for the agency. As time continued, she was ready for more of a challenge and moved up to her current role.

If you’re not familiar with what being a medical coordinator actually does, think of it as a manager meets assistant meets mentor. Catherine helps individuals make (and keep) their medical appointments and surgeries. She oversees their medication schedules and works with them to meet their personal goals. While the latter is different for every resident, the common denominator is that each are taking steps to becoming more independent. Catherine helps this take place by being an encouraging presence in their lives. Sometimes this means helping them speak up at doctor appointments. Other times it simply means being someone for them to talk to.

The job has many moving parts, but Catherine sees it as a pleasure- not a challenge. She says, “learning [her] individuals” and “the small things” that take place between her and them (think jokes, accomplishments), bring her the greatest joy in what she does. And of course, the trips they get to take are also fun. At the end of the day it’s really about doing her best, and that means helping the individuals do theirs.



## **MAY & JUNE BIRTHDAYS**

Luann Crawford	May 5th
Jean Gervais	May 5th
Zane Every	May 6th
Geneva Parker	May 7th
Serina Rivera	May 9th
Danielle Sickler	May 9th
Jaden Baird	May 10th
Kadian Lee-Ebanks	May 11th

Marina Manboadh-Ramphal	May 14th
Migdalia Otero	May 15th
Rosa Teran	May 27th
Kristie Appiah	May 28th
Karl O Hall	May 29th
Joan Davis	May 30th
Holly Accardi-Theohary	June 2nd
Lucille Williamson	June 7th

Michael Falco	June 7th
Devika Lutchman	June 17
Niasia Tippins	June 17
Maria Cardenas	June 26th