



Samuel Kirschner, developer of the Breaze breathing technique, ties a thread around each person's wrist, asking them to make three wishes when done.

## It's a Breaze to Relax

### Breathing Exercises Help PSCH Residents to Better Cope with Everyday Stressors

**“ The breathing exercises help me to relax and cope with daily issues. ”**

*Keith R., Omni Resident*

**T**here are many proven ways to relax and relieve stress – deep body massage, drinking a cup of chamomile tea or even vigorous exercise. But something we all do, every minute of every day, is an amazing stress reliever – breathing.

Deep breathing is not only relaxing, but it is proven to affect the way we think, act and even cope with the stressors of living. This is what six PSCH Omni residents discovered at their home during a specialized seven week training course. The purpose of the *Breaze* is to focus attention on how to breathe fully and get more oxygen to the brain and body. These exercises help “breathers” to take more control of their life; recharge their energy; reduce anxiety and stress; help reduce pain and trauma and feel more peaceful and connected to their inner well-being.

The group was lead by Samuel Kirschner, founder of the *Breaze* technique. With some 30 years of experience working with hundreds of people worldwide, Kirschner has taught this alternative approach from his own experience of dealing with PTSD, anxiety and depression. Mr. Kirschner was recommended to us by Howell Schrage, M.D., Secretary, PSCH Board of Directors.

### A Proven Technique for Relaxation

*Breaze* is a proven technique for relaxation, helping people with life threatening illness (AIDS & cancer) trauma, loss, crisis and PTSD. Each session began with participants identifying themselves and briefly sharing their feelings the day of the session. Next, the five steps of the *Breaze* were demonstrated by shaking like a humming bird; flowing like a river and letting go; standing – like a tree and making space; walking like an elephant with grace and dancing to celebrate life. After practicing the five steps, participants relaxed on a yoga mat. Each session was ended by sharing experiences and insights.

The last session was a celebration of relaxation, with all participants receiving a certificate of achievement and sharing their experiences and their success in using breathing to reduce life's stresses. The celebration acknowledged their efforts, accomplishments and growth.

PSCH's innovative housing programs and support services, located throughout New York City and Long Island, offer supportive environments to some 1,000 people with mental illness and formerly homeless individuals. PSCH is a leader in creating an array of recovery-based housing, from service-enriched community residences and apartments, to independent living arrangements with ongoing supports. Our goal is to provide environments that support individuals to further their recovery and live independently within the community. ■



(L-R) Howell Schrage, M.D. congratulating Omni residents on successfully completing the Breaze breathing exercise relaxation course. (Center-Right) Crystal John, Director MH Residential Services and (far Right) Samuel Kirschner, Breaze group facilitator. *Photos by Anne Marie Kanable*