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# Carolyn Brown



EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO THRIVE | EST. 1968

## **WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE PEACE, INC. PART OF YOUR LIFE?**

**BROWN:** I came to work at PEACE, Inc. because I wanted to be part of a mission-driven organization. I'm a transplant to Syracuse and was struck by the many strengths of this area, as well as the tremendous challenges. I see the potential for PEACE, Inc. to be a force of change for the better in this community and I wanted to be a part of that effort. I value the opportunities I have had at PEACE, Inc. to develop new skills and work on so many different types of projects with so many different people across the agency - no two days have been the same and I love that about my job.

## **HOW DOES YOUR DEPARTMENT HELP KEEP THE PEACE AT PEACE, INC.?**

**BROWN:** The community engagement department can be difficult to explain because we do so many different things. Our official department goal is to maximize awareness, utilization, and support of PEACE, Inc. programs and develop community partnerships to reduce the effects of poverty in Onondaga County. Basically, we work as a team to develop collaborations and foster communication with community partners and among PEACE, Inc. programs - and we're responsible for things like special events, public awareness, strategic planning, community needs assessments, and internal and external communications like the community newsletter, the staff newsletter, and snapshots.

## **PRETEND TODAY IS YOUR FIRST DAY AT PEACE, INC. – AND YOU GET TO KEEP ALL OF THE INSIGHT YOU HAVE FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PEACE, INC. TO DATE – WHAT WOULD YOUR FIRST DAY BE LIKE?**

**BROWN:** If today was my first day - but I already knew what I've learned over 10 years at PEACE, Inc. - I would spend the day meeting with the people we serve and hearing their inspirational stories. I think listening to people is the best way to understand the impact of PEACE, Inc. on the community. And, it's empowering for a staff member to hear firsthand the changes we are making in people's lives.

## **WHAT CAN THOSE YOU SERVE DO TO HELP YOU HELP THEM?**

**BROWN:** This question is challenging for me because I don't work directly with clients. It may sound obvious but before we can help someone we need them to reach out to us. Once people take the initial step of seeking help, then PEACE, Inc. staff can work with them to identify strengths, connect with resources, and begin to move forward to reach their goals.

## **WHO IS THE PULSE OF PEACE, INC.?**

**BROWN:** The people we work with who live in poverty, who work hard, who persevere, who overcome challenges, who struggle everyday to make a better life for themselves and their families.

## **ARE YOU THE SAME YOU, YOU WERE WHEN YOU STARTED WORKING AT PEACE, INC.?**

**BROWN:** Absolutely not. When I came to PEACE, Inc. I was motivated to help people, but I thought there were people who needed assistance getting through life and other people who provided that assistance. Now, I realize everyone is a helper and a person in need - often at the same time. I can share one of many examples - we have a committed volunteer, Shirley, who lovingly cared for her daughter, as she struggled with a terminal illness, and her teenage grandchildren - a heavy burden and responsibility. Because her daughter was so ill, many home health care workers came to their home and when they did Shirley would give them advice about careers, relationships, and life in general and refer them to community resources. Even in the hardest moments, when she needed help herself, Shirley was still trying to raise up others. There have been many moments at PEACE, Inc. when my colleagues, volunteers, and donors supported me personally and professionally - I am grateful for our culture of giving and collaboration.