Dear Friends, Colleagues and Supporters of TRI,

*Welcome to the debut issue of **TRI**athlon! There's a lot going on here at Taconic Resources for Independence (TRI) and this newsletter will not only keep you up to date on our current programing, but also provide you with information on TRI's community events and workshops, feature articles of interest related to living with a disability, and links to resources to empower you to live as independently as possible. **TRI**athlon will be published quarterly to start, but we hope to be able to bring it you on a monthly basis; we will keep you posted!*

Before we step into 2021 with anticipation and excitement for our plans for the upcoming year, I would like to reflect a bit on this past year and what we were able to accomplish, despite the unforeseen challenges thrust upon us by the COVID pandemic. TRI's dedicated staff of advocates stepped up to this challenge by continuing to provide services, peer support and resources to our community. Here are a few highlights:

- *We celebrated the 30th anniversary of the ADA with a virtual event: ADA 30 – Yesterday's Dream / Today's Reality / Tomorrow's Vision. We had a great turnout out of attendees – almost 90 registered for the event!*
- *We developed a Consumer Needs project, which provided food and essential items to over 45 Dutchess County residents with disabilities and their families.*
- *Our Special Education program has been instrumental in raising crucial awareness of the disproportionate impacts students with disabilities face with virtual classroom instruction.*
- *We worked with Vassar College students to develop a voter empowerment project, which provided our consumers with weekly information on accessible polling sites, candidate profiles, articles of interest, and useful links to resources for voters with disabilities.*
- *We distributed clear face masks to our community partners to help them better communicate with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing population.*
- *Our Housing Advocate met our consumers in public parks and other outdoor venues to provide them with housing resources and application materials.*

As Dutchess County's leading disability rights organization, TRI serves as a prominent voice to represent the needs of our local disability community. Are you experiencing access barriers in your community? Are there issues of interest that you would like to read about in TRIathlon? We want to hear from you, so please drop us a line at: tri@taconicresources.org or call 845.452.3913.

From all of us at TRI, wishing you and yours a healthful, productive and joyful new year!

Lisa Tarricone

Executive Director