Dear Friends,

As we end our 60th anniversary year at the Charles River Center, we reflect on how far we have come as a society in accepting people with disabilities. Tremendous strides have been made in the past six decades, and we are thankful that you have helped the Charles River Center contribute to this journey. With your help, as well as the support of the Board of Directors, staff, community, families, and donors, we have moved people out of institutions and have helped to create loving homes and fulfilling lives for individuals with developmental disabilities in their own communities.

We have much more work to do to create an unconditional acceptance and understanding of the gifts and talents people with disabilities have to offer. We will know that we are getting closer to this goal when working alongside a person with a disability is commonplace; when having a community residence in your town or neighborhood is not considered novel.

We are currently in year two of our four-year strategic plan, and our focus remains true to our mission – to foster community inclusion. You will see in the following pages that we are continually working on innovative, new ways to encourage this.

We have made wonderful community connections through volunteering and our popular Horticulture Program, and the Wings for Autism program has introduced the work of the Charles River Center to thousands of families. These are the highlights, but know that every day we are working with individuals based on their interests to get them more involved in their communities. Individuals are taking classes at community colleges, visiting local attractions, working at neighborhood businesses, exercising in local gyms, and developing skills in community living. With the support of families, advocates, staff, and donors, we empower the people we serve to explore new and creative opportunities that challenge and inspire them.

As we work together to create fulfilling and meaningful lives for those we serve, we are not only broadening the experiences of those we support, but also providing opportunities for the community to develop acceptance and appreciation for their contributions in varied settings.

We will continue this mission with your continued support. Thank you for sharing our vision and joining us on this important journey.

Sincerely,

Anne-Marie Bajwa
President and CEO

Philip V. Robey
Chairman of the Board of Directors

OUR MISSION:
To empower and support people with developmental disabilities by offering high-quality, individualized opportunities that foster independence and community inclusion.

SAVE THE DATES

Building a Dream Gala
FRIDAY, MAY 5TH, 2017
Each year, over 350 people attend this special event, which raises critical funds to help us continue to provide the highest-quality services and programs for those we support. The elegant evening includes cocktails and a silent auction, seated dinner, an inspiring program with community and individual honorees, and a live auction. Thanks to the support of many generous sponsors and donors, this is Charles River’s major fundraising event of the year.

The Needham Exchange Club 30th Annual Golf Tournament
MONDAY, MAY 22ND, 2017
We have been honored to be the recipient of this golf tournament’s proceeds for many years. Over 100 golfers from the Club and community enjoy a delicious lunch, 18 holes of golf, dinner, and live and silent auctions. The tournament will be held at the beautiful Marlborough Country Club. Thanks to sponsors, participants and dedicated Club volunteers, proceeds have allowed Charles River to purchase a new van, and have provided scholarships for recreation programs for children.

5K Run/1-Mile Walk
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2017
This upbeat event brings together over 600 people from the community and the Charles River Center. For serious runners, new runners, or those who just want to walk, this USA Track and Field-certified course loops through the scenic roads of Needham and Wellesley, and ends with a festive afterparty including pizza, drinks, ice cream and socializing.

Ellie Bloom Special Olympics
SEPTEMBER 2017
Held at DeFazio Park in Needham, over 150 athletes of all ages and abilities from Charles River and neighboring communities participate in such events as running and wheelchair dashes, tennis ball throws, ring tosses, and relay races. Sponsors have included the Needham Golf Club Charities, Roche Bros., and the Needham Women’s Club. Everyone goes home with a medal and a big smile.
Building New Homes
With a growing population of individuals with developmental disabilities turning 22 years old, there is a large demand and need for housing.

The Charles River Center opened its first home in 1972 and now supports 28 homes and apartments in the towns of Natick, Needham, Wayland, Newton, Wellesley, Millis, Westwood and Sharon.

A home on South Main Street in Sharon opened last May. Four young adults who have recently graduated from the Boston Higashi School in Randolph have moved in. The residents have a bustling recreation schedule and enjoy spending time in the huge backyard.

In Needham, five young men moved into a home near the high school. These guys, who enjoy being on the go, will take full advantage of its central location. We have been particularly touched by the very warm welcome from the neighbors.

Last month, we opened another home for young adults with autism in Sharon. This home, which will house five young adults, backs up to a bird sanctuary, so the residents will wake up to the sounds of nature!

Jonathan Pekor, Physical Therapist at the Charles River Center, explains our Out of Chair Initiative:

Many people we serve are unable to readjust their positioning while they sit in their wheelchairs. Some also struggle to communicate their needs, and may end up sitting in an uncomfortable or even painful position for hours without being able to ask staff to help change their position. Sitting in one position without moving for many hours can lead to skin breakdown, and medical complications may follow.

In an effort to avoid potential medical complications, as well as improve the quality of each person’s experience here at the Charles River Center, we decided that it would be prudent to ensure that everyone who uses a wheelchair for mobility spend time either sitting, standing, or lying — with the goal of at least an hour a day. As a result, we have seen an increased focus on skin protection, stretching, and standing.

For the past year and a half, staff in each room have worked diligently to make this happen. Individuals in wheelchairs are helped out of their chairs to spend time sitting, standing, or lying — with the goal of at least an hour a day. As a result, we have seen an increased focus on skin protection, stretching, and standing.

We look forward to seeing further improvements as we continue this initiative.

Encouraging Comfort and Health
Nearly 35% of the individuals in our Day Habilitation Program use wheelchairs. Our Out of Chair Initiative improves the experience for all who depend on wheelchairs for mobility.

Freia David: Where Is She Now?
This summer, news of Freia David’s retirement from the McDonald’s in Needham after 32 years quickly spread around the globe. Well wishes and gifts for Freia poured in from places such as the Philippines, Australia and Germany. How wonderful that Freia’s longevity and work experience helped to spread the word about the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities!

Today, Freia continues to live in her Charles River Center group home in Needham while she attends the Day Habilitation program during the week. Her favorite activities are Zumba class and art therapy. Freia visits her mother and father on the weekends, and they continue to have lunch at McDonald’s every Saturday. (It is, as promised, on the house.)
What is Adult Family Care?

Adult Family Care is a MassHealth funded service that provides a stipend to a family member to care for their loved one at home. A Charles River Center case manager and nurse partner with the family to provide ongoing support. Adult Family Caregivers can be biological family members as long as the caregiver is not the guardian or spouse. (Sometimes one parent chooses to give up guardianship in order to participate in the program.) Families receive an annual stipend depending on the level of care needed.

What is Shared Living?

Shared Living matches individuals with disabilities to members of the community. The caregiver assists the individual with personal care needs, medical needs, transportation, community integration, and day-to-day needs. Providers receive ongoing support from a Charles River Center case manager and nurse, as well as a tax-free stipend. This arrangement can be rewarding and beneficial for everyone involved.

If you are interested in learning more, be sure to contact us!

Helping families stay together... and creating new ones

We are pleased that the Adult Family Care program now serves 19 families and continues to grow. The Charles River Center was recently approved to become a Shared Living Provider as well.

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One family’s story...

Kathleen and Bill Paquette have participated in the Adult Family Care program for almost two years. Their son, Billy, lives at home with them.

“This program has been incredible. It allows us to purchase things for my son that he needs that we could otherwise not afford. It’s wonderful to have the check-in people come every month because we know we can count on them, tell them how things are going, and they can direct us one way or another if we need some assistance. We absolutely love the program, and we’re so happy that we qualified to be in it.”

— Kathleen Paquette

“I, as the legal guardian, am responsible for all of the legal matters and making decisions as far as medication, doctors, etc. My wife is the caregiver. It’s great that we have Billy living at home. We can take care of him, address all of his needs, and basically give him the 24-hour care that he needs without financial stress.”

— Bill Paquette

Nearly 10,000 families have participated in a Wings for Autism program near them. This test run through the airport boarding process was developed in 2011 by the Charles River Center in conjunction with the Massachusetts Port Authority. It all started with one family’s struggle to get their son with autism aboard the plane on a family vacation to Disney World. (That vacation didn’t work out, but with more practice at Wings for Autism events, their son is now a seasoned traveler!)

As word of the program quickly spread, airports across the nation wanted to participate, so in 2014 the Charles River Center partnered with The Arc of the United States to help expand it. Since bringing the program nationwide in 2014, The Arc of the U.S. has hosted 61 events at 30 airports across the country!

The Charles River Center continues to host events twice a year at Logan, as well as other New England airports, so we should hit the 10,000 families helped mark in the months ahead! Thanks to some ingenuity and our many partners and volunteers, these families now have the confidence and experience to visit relatives and go on long-desired vacations. Bon voyage!

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— Bill Paquette
The Horticulture Program’s Bounty

Now in its second year, the Horticulture Program continues to grow in popularity and produce.

10 Fun Facts about the Horticulture Program

1. Over 100 individuals participated in 2016.
2. Flowers and produce are grown at the Needham Community Farm (thank you Massachusetts Master Gardener Association for the extra raised beds!), in a greenhouse at the Charles River Center, in raised beds at Charles River residences, and at the Nahanton Community Gardens.
3. This year, we formed a partnership with Drumlin Farm, where we planted flowers at the farm and arranged bouquets for the farm stand. We’re also caring for their chickens.
4. The mobile farm stand was a wonderful addition to the program this summer. Once a week, produce grown by the Needham Community Farm and the Charles River Center was brought to residents of the Needham Housing Authority communities. This was a great way to interact with community members and provide fresh, free food for those in need.
5. We love caring for eight, Nigerian dwarf goats twice a week at Habitat Education Center in Belmont.
6. We donated several hundred pounds of produce to the Brookline Food Pantry, the Needham Food Pantry, and Charles River Center residences.
7. During the winter months, individuals are making teas, tinctures, lip balms, soaps and natural dyes using plants and herbs that they grew during the summer.
8. In February, we’ll collect sap and boil it down into maple syrup at Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary in Sharon. This was one of the most popular activities of last year!
9. This spring, be sure to check out the tulips and daffodils along the Rose Kennedy Greenway. For the second year in a row, individuals helped plant the bulbs.
10. The program’s first fundraiser — a farm to fork dinner — was a huge success. Held in the field at the Needham Community Farm, a delicious dinner using produce from the farm was prepared by Rachel Klein and Stacy Cogswell of RFK Kitchen.

Making a Difference in the Community

Volunteering can help instill a sense of accomplishment and dignity while aiding skill development.

Our volunteers develop fine motor skills when stocking a food pantry, communication skills when delivering groceries to a homebound senior, or office skills when filing at a hospital.

Thank you to these partner organizations, where individuals are currently volunteering:
- Belmont Audubon Society
- Boston College
- Boston Food Pantry
- Buddy Dog Humane Society, Sudbury
- Cedar Gardens Subsidized Housing, Natick
- Common Street Spiritual Center
- Drumlin Farm, Lincoln
- Ethos, Jamaica Plain
- Faulkner Hospital
- Greyhound Friends, Hopkinton
- Habitat for Humanity Restore, West Roxbury
- Hyde Park Food Pantry
- Lincoln Sudbury High School
- Meals on Wheels - BayPath Elder Services Inc.
- Meals on Wheels - Council on Aging, Natick
- Meals on Wheels - Waltham
- Needham Community Farm
- Needham Driving School
- Newton Community Farm
- Newton Park and Recreation
- Newton Wellesley Hospital
- Norfolk Audubon Society
- Pearl Street Cupboard, Framingham
- Senior Shopping - Needham Council on Aging
- Stearns Farm, Framingham
- The Needham Channel

GIVING BACK

Tiffany: Volunteer Extraordinaire

Tiffany is an incredibly caring and thoughtful person who gets a great sense of accomplishment from her volunteering.

Her favorite volunteer work is at the animal shelter, Buddy Dog in Sudbury, where she visits once a week. There, she particularly likes to walk the dogs and cuddle with the kittens. She also enjoys volunteering at Meals on Wheels in Waltham, and she grocery shops for homebound Needham senior citizens on Wednesdays.

Tiffany says she is very good at senior shopping because she can read the labels and remembers where certain items can be found.
THANK YOU to all of the individuals, corporations, and foundations who made a gift to various Charles River Center funds. We would also like to thank all who made in-kind donations of equipment, services, and gifts; to all who made gifts in memory or in honor of a special person; and to all who volunteered their time to make our programs outstanding. All of these gifts are deeply appreciated.

This list represents gifts received during our last fiscal year, from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

**BENEFICIARIES ($5,000+)**
360 Corporate Benefit Advisors
B. Good Family Foundation
Bushrod H. Campbell and
Adatt F. Hall Fund Charity
Countryside Estates
Dedham Institution for Savings
Peter Dedon and Tessa
Eastern Bank Charitable
Foundation
Clayton F. & Ruth L
Hawbridge Foundation
Louise Bullard
Manson Gaylor & Manning LLP
Philadelphia Insurance
Companies
Eileen Roche
Jay and Laurie Roche
Debra Kne Zitsh
Carol and James Tafel
The Exchange Club of Needham
Albert & Jessica Tseng
U.S. Trust and Bank of America
Private Wealth Management

**PATRONS ($1,000+)**
Advantage Nursing Care, LLC
Airmall Boston, Inc.
Alexander, Aronson, Finning & Co.
Anonymous
John and Tracy Atkinson
Richard and Anne Aulenbach
Bay & Merrimack Valley
Bee Zee Auto
Bee Zee Auto
Ethem M. Dole
Leora Zimbone
M & S Repair & Auto Body
Mary Lyne and Tim Hawkridge
Massachusetts General Hospital
Lawrence and Mark Denzer
Merrimack College
Michael Greaney
Richard and Kathleen Zimbone
Stephen Woyich
Young and Kathleen Zimbone
Zystrand
Zystrand
The inaugural Farm to Fork dinner was a terrific success.

John and Margaret Feldsteel
John and Joan Cusick
Anthony and Sue Dadda
Kathryn D’Addessio
Zack Danning
Karen Fitzgerald
Kenneth and Eileen Flail
James and Susan Freedman
John and Paula Geppert
Barbara and Lawrence
Ronald Cheung
Barbara Castillo
Damon Carter and Judith
Andrea and David Carter
Rebecca Carrier
Dianne Carde
Chad S. Callahan and
Edward and Barbara Brady
Paul and Carol Brown
Brett Boyle
Donald Bostic
Mel and Helen Colman
Commonwealth of MA

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Michael and Karen Cummiskey
Kathleen Coskheem
Linda and Barry Coffman
Morton and Marlene Coleman
Ron and Louanne Cohen
Barbara and Mary Coleman
Brian and Patty Colatis

John and Linda Dawber
Leslie Day
Edward and Carol de Lemos
Elizabeth Dedon
Jim Dedon
jon and Connie Dedon
Paul Dedley
Karen Degrempney
Joseph Delaney
Richard and Mary Delaney
Debra Delcera
Mark Rogers
Vincent and Margaret
Delfine
Richard and Mia DeMets
Gerald Dente
Marianne and David Dewing
Heidi Dietch
Jean and Marvin Dil
sandra DiMartino
Sandra Disanto
Michael Dieter
Ed Doeherty
Philip and Mary Ellen Dolesher
Andy Doig
Suzie Doyle
David and Janet Drake
Ron and Linda Drots
Denise Drugan
Edward Dubilo and
Grace Zimmerman
Elizabeth Duggen
Byron Dunker
Deanna Dunmyer
Stephanie Spring
Rachel Dunn
Richard and Karen Dewer
Theodore Edsall
Angela Edgeston
Margaret Esrenraad
Benjamin Ensistad
Benjamin Fabiano
Jennifer Fang
Jack and Judith Failing
Stacey Fallon
John Cullen
Christine Cummings
Elisa Cunningham
James and Nancy Currall

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Dianne Carde
Chad S. Callahan and
Edward and Barbara Brady
Paul and Carol Brown
Brett Boyle
Donald Bostic
Mel and Helen Colman
Commonwealth of MA
**Fun in the sun at summer camp.**

**FINANCIAL**

The Charles River Center Statement of Operating Activities for the year ended June 30, 2016

**REVENUES**

Program Service Fees ............ $23,943,053
Grants and Contributions ......... $189,937
Investment Results ............... 28,059

Total ................................ $24,644,873

**EXPENSES**

90% Program Expenses .......... $24,044,873

**NET OPERATING INCOME/LOSS**

Operations and Fundraising ........ $1,167,086
Investment Results ............... 189,937

Total ................................ $1,357,023

We are proud that 90% of every dollar you’ve given goes directly to programs and services.

For more information, please visit our website at www.charlesrivercenter.org.