HOW FAR WE’VE COME.

In the 1950s, there weren’t many options for people with developmental disabilities. The only publicly supported residential facilities were underfunded and isolated state institutions. Few people with disabilities were given the opportunity of a public education, and families who kept their children out of the institutions had little or no support.

So Tom and Anne Sell, the parents of a daughter with Down syndrome, convened a meeting in their home in Needham to talk with other parents about creating something better. In 1956, they started a preschool, held at Carter Memorial Methodist Church in Needham, for twelve children at the cost of $1 a month.

Wouldn’t they be amazed. Today, the Charles River Center staffs 24 group homes, helps individuals find jobs in their communities, cares for the most medically complex, and provides a host of diverse programs and activities for all ages. With great support from families and the communities we serve, we now offer services and programs to over 950 children and adults from the Boston MetroWest area.

Much progress has been made in the developmental disability world in the past sixty years, with the emphasis now on integration and inclusion. The Charles River Center’s history is just one small piece of the story but it is remarkable to think of all the lives that have been touched and enhanced by this transformation in services. We look forward to seeing what the next sixty years will bring.

A LEGACY OF SUCCESS, A FUTURE OF PROMISE

60 YEARS

A LEGACY OF SUCCESS, A FUTURE OF PROMISE

1956-2016

OUR MISSION:

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