BUILDING A DREAM GALA HONORS DENISE GARLICK

On Friday, April 26, Charles River Center held their 2019 Building A Dream Gala at the Boston Marriott Newton. Honorees of the evening included State Representative Denise Garlick, who was presented with the 2019 Maria McTernan Leadership Award, and Scott Airey, an individual who attends the Day Habilitation Program and lives in a Charles River Center residence. Scott was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The evening’s program was emceed by Tom Leyden, Sports Director at Boston 25 News, and the auctioneer was Mike “Sarge” Riley, Sports Anchor on WBZ 98.5 The Sports Hub. Highlights included the silent and live auctions, the award presentations and a video presenting the Fund-a-Need auction to raise funds for the Phil Robey Community Fund, a fund providing financial support to individuals for life enrichment activities.

Charles River Center is grateful for the support of everyone involved in making the 2019 Building A Dream Gala such a wonderful evening and successful fundraiser – our attendees, donors, sponsors, gala committee members and volunteers.

DEFINITIVE HEALTHCARE

Blueprint for a successful partnership

Definitive Cares is an initiative begun by Definitive Healthcare management about four years ago. The goal was to facilitate different volunteer events throughout the year with partner organizations and every employee is encouraged to participate in one event per quarter. Employees not only get time off to attend the volunteer event, they also earn additional paid time off for participating. The program is a popular one – it has had 100% employee participation every year since it began.

Today, employees run the program and the partnerships have grown to approximately 25 companies. With 365 employees volunteering once a quarter, many opportunities are needed. To expand the number of choices, employees have been encouraged to suggest organizations. An employee pitches the

(continued on page 6)
FOR ME, THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

REMIND ME OF DAYS SPENT LOUNGING ON THE BEACH, COOKOUTS, TIME SPENT READING AND SAILING OFF THE COAST OF THE SOUTH SHORE. THIS SUMMER, WHILE MANY OF US HERE AT CHARLES RIVER CENTER TOOK TIME TO ENJOY THE SUMMER MONTHS, WE WERE ALSO BUSY WORKING ON A NUMBER OF PRIORITIES IN THE AREAS OF PLANNING, PERSONNEL, OUTREACH INTO THE COMMUNITY AND ENHANCED SUPPORT SERVICES.

AS YOU ARE AWARE, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A THREE- TO FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OUR ORGANIZATION. WE CONTINUED OUR WORK WITH A FACILITATOR AND CONVENED STAFF, MANAGEMENT AND BOARD OF DIRECTOR TEAMS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT. WE LOOKED AT OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES, AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND EXTERNAL INDUSTRY CHANGES THAT WILL CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE US. ADDITIONALLY, WE USED THE FEEDBACK FROM THE LAST SURVEYS OF THE STAFF, FAMILIES AND FUNDERS REGARDING OUR SERVICES AND POTENTIAL SERVICE GAPS.

IN SEPTEMBER, I AM CONVENING A FAMILY FOCUS GROUP TO TAKE A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE FOUR MAJOR IMPERATIVES THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM OUR STRATEGIC ANALYSIS PROCESS. I EXPECT TO HAVE A FINAL PLAN IN OCTOBER.

ON ANOTHER FRONT, WE HIRED A HIGHLY QUALIFIED SENIOR DIRECTOR TO OVERSEE OUR DAY AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. HIS NAME IS JOHN BYRNE, AND HE IS A MEDFIELD RESIDENT. JOHN BRINGS A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE TO OUR EMPLOYMENT AND DAY SERVICES AT A CRUCIAL TIME. HE WILL GUIDE THE DIVISION THROUGH THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF WORK EXPERIENCES FOR OUR INDIVIDUALS BY ENHANCING OUR SKILLS TRAINING, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, PRE- VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS.

IN THE FEW SHORT MONTHS THAT HE HAS BEEN WITH CHARLES RIVER, JOHN AND HIS LEADERSHIP TEAM HAVE LAUNCHED OUR NEWEST EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE FUNDED THROUGH MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATIONS COMMISSION. IT IS CALLED PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS). THIS PROGRAM WILL EXPAND OUR FOOTPRINT INTO THE METROWEST REGION AND BEYOND! THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL AND INFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO HELP STUDENTS AGES 14 TO 22 BECOME BETTER PREPARED FOR THEIR FUTURE GOALS OF EMPLOYMENT OR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION. IN SEPTEMBER, THE CHARLES RIVER CENTER WILL BEGIN WORKING WITH EIGHT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND UP TO 200 STUDENTS OVER THE FIRST YEAR. WE WILL BE OFFERING WORKSHOPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES OF DOVER, MEDFIELD, NEEDHAM, NEWTON, WELLESLEY, WESTON AND WESTWOOD, FOCUSING ON PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT AND BECOMING A PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF THE WORKFORCE.

THIS SUMMER, WE RAN A SUCCESSFUL PILOT PROGRAM AT WESTON HIGH SCHOOL WITH FIVE STUDENTS, AND NOW WE ARE EXCITED TO BEGIN RUNNING THIS PROGRAM WITH THE REST OF OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS. IN ADDITION TO MEETING AND WORKING WITH THESE STUDENTS, THE PRE-ETS CONTRACT ALLOWS US TO DEVELOP NEW RESOURCES THAT WILL HELP EXPAND THE VOCATIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO WE CURRENTLY SERVE.

THIS IS A VERY EXCITING TIME FOR OUR EMPLOYMENT AND DAY SERVICES!

IN JULY, WE ROLLED OUT OUR NEWLY-FORMED CLINICAL DEPARTMENT. THIS STAND-ALONE DEPARTMENT ALLOWS CHARLES RIVER CENTER TO ENHANCE OUR CLINICAL SUPPORTS TO OUR INDIVIDUALS, EXPAND SUPPORT TO OUR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING CHALLENGING ISSUES AND TO PROVIDE CLINICAL SERVICES TO YOUNGER CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOLS. CURRENTLY, TWO BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS, ONE BEHAVIORIST AND A REGISTERED BEHAVIOR TECHNICIAN COMprise THIS DEPARTMENT. THREE OF THESE FOUR PROFESSIONALS RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS FROM CHARLES RIVER CENTER TO ASSIST IN THE ACQUISITION OF THEIR BEHAVIORAL CREDENTIALS.

AS THE SUMMER TRANSITIONS INTO FALL, OUR WORK CONTINUES IN MANY AREAS. WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE ARE LIVING THE MISSION OF THE CHARLES RIVER CENTER AND LOOK FORWARD TO INFORMING YOU OF OTHER PLANS, IMPROVEMENTS AND INITIATIVES AS THEY ARE INTRODUCED.

ANN PARIS BAJER

ADAPTIVE KAYAKING

THROUGH AN ADAPTIVE KAYAKING PROGRAM OFFERED BY ALL OUT ADVENTURES AND THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION, SIX INDIVIDUALS FROM THE NATICK FUTURES GROUP HAVE SPENT TIME KAYAKING ON LAKE COCHITUATE THIS SUMMER. THE PROGRAM OFFERS INSTRUCTION, A SAFETY LESSON BEFORE AND GUIDES TO TOUR THE LAKE.

ANGELA, DANIEL, JON, JP, RANDY, LIZ AND XHESIKA ALL LOVED THE EXPERIENCE! SOME PADDLED ALONE AND SOME WERE PAIRED WITH STAFF IN TANDEM KAYAKS. VOLUNTEERS ALSO ATTENDED TO SUPPORT STAFF.
DAY HABILITATION’S SPRING AND SUMMER INTERNS

Michelle Martinez is a graduate student in Speech-Language Pathology at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. She is just one of six student interns who have chosen to work at Charles River this spring and summer. While learning and gaining experience from Charles River Center’s therapeutic day habilitation program and the professionals on our staff, they each add value to the areas where they work, bringing a variety of fresh ideas from their recent educational experiences.

During her summer internship, Michelle worked closely with Charles River Speech and Language Therapist, Gayle Greenstein, M.Ed., CCC-SLP. Her special interest is in alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). She says she has enjoyed working at Charles River Center because it provided exposure to so many aspects of her field.

Two nursing students from Simmons University School of Nursing, Beverly Wang and Maria Matrango, completed their clinical rotations working under the guidance of Charles River Center RN, Yvonne Estabrooks Toppan. Chantal Perrera finished her internship in preparation for entering the St. Louis University School of Medicine this fall by working with our physical therapist, occupational therapist and speech language pathologists, and Theresa Zeoli, a student in the Bridgewater State University Graduate Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders, worked with Gayle Greenstein this past spring.

“'The day habilitation program here at CRC is special and unique because it has a therapeutic component not offered by most other day programs.'”

From Lesley University, Nicole Camuso was here for a full school-year internship that ended in mid-May. To complete the second year of a three-year graduate program, Nicole interned for 15 hours a week while taking graduate classes towards a Master of Art degree in Expressive Therapies with a concentration in Dance/Movement Therapy. She worked with individuals and small groups assisting our two music teachers with their groups, leading portions of the groups, working one-on-one with several individuals and with small groups made up of three people. “Every individual has needs we can work on. Movement therapy, incorporating music and dance, can help improve balance and coordination, but also benefits social interaction, memory, cognitive function, concentration, focus and direct eye contact. It directs energy in a positive way and can improve mood and mind-set.”

FLOWER CSA UPDATE

This past spring, the Horticulture Program launched Charles River Center’s first flower CSA, offering bouquets to 20 subscribers for 20 weeks running from June to October.

The flowers arranged in the bouquets all start from seed at the Charles River Center’s greenhouse and are then planted at the Needham Community Farm by participants in the Employment and Day Services’ Horticulture Program. Each week flowers are harvested and arranged by Horticulture Program participants and are delivered to the Hearth Pizzeria in Needham Center for flower CSA subscriber pick up.

Flower varieties grown this season include yarrow, dahlias, zinnias, statice, gomphrena, strawflower, eucalyptus, Iceland poppies, sunflowers, ammi, cress, nigella, rudbeckia and native wildflowers and perennials that the Horticulture Program has planted over the past few seasons at the farm.

The Charles River Center Flower CSA has provided a paid employment opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities. Thanks to our partnership with the Needham Community Farm, the flower CSA has made an impact not only for the individuals but for the community at large.
HITTING THE LINKS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

It was a beautiful day for the 32nd Annual Needham Exchange Club Charity Golf Tournament to benefit the Horticulture Program at the Charles River Center. On June 4 at the Marlborough Country Club in Marlborough, Mass., more than 80 golfers enjoyed lunch, golf, a silent auction during cocktails, then dinner, prize presentation and a live auction.

Special thanks to the Needham Exchange Club, the event sponsor, Salem Five Charitable Foundation, Golf Committee Co-Chairs, Phil and Paul Robey, and the many donors who helped make the event such a success.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Thank you to the Wellesley Hills Jr. Women’s Club for providing $1,500.00 in funding for a Jump Start Program to benefit Family Support. The program intends to provide children aged 3 to 12 and their families a “jump start” to successfully attend typical outings.

For example, the Smith family has always attended church services, but their youngest daughter, who has autism, cannot tolerate the large number of people at the service, the lights that are too bright for her and the noise level. All she can do is scream and kick, disrupting the service.

Jump Start will provide funding for the parents to hire a trained and trusted person to slowly introduce their daughter to church. Five sessions are typical however, each situation is unique. After an intake process and first meeting, the professional might begin by visiting the church with the child when no one is there, perhaps introducing headphones. The next week they may visit just as people are arriving. It will all depend on the child's needs. The goal is that after approximately six weeks of rehearsal, the child will learn to generalize and will then be able to attend services successfully, becoming more integrated into their community.

DDS SURVEY RESULTS

Representatives from the Department of Developmental Services’ (DDS) Office of Quality Enhancement visited Charles River Center for one week in mid-May. They conducted the 2019 review for licensing and certification indictors in both Employment and Day Services and Residential Services programs.

As a result of studying the Charles River Center self-assessment for both licensing and certification indictors, and performing their own targeted review encompassing all critical indicators, DDS has determined that Charles River Center will receive Two-Year licenses for each of the two programs.
MEET JOHN BYRNE

John Byrne has joined the Charles River Center as Senior Director of Employment and Day Services. He will manage the division providing employment and day programs and services to adults at the Needham and Natick locations.

Prior to joining Charles River Center, John was employed by CLASS, Inc., Lawrence, Massachusetts where he worked for nearly 10 years, advancing in his career there to become the Director of Program Supports and Quality.

In order to introduce himself and give an overview of the programs and services available to the families of individuals who attend Employment and Day programs, John and staff organized two open houses, one at the Grugan Center in Needham the evening of July 16, and one in Natick on July 23.

“At the Grugan Center, the staff in each program room enlisted the help of individuals to prepare a presentation for each room. They included artwork, descriptions of groups/programs and examples of room activities. An employment slideshow was prepared, and light refreshments were served. About two dozen families attended, and many of them took a tour and were able to have individual conversations with staff as well as the entire Grugan management team.

At the Natick location, the evening began for the approximately two dozen family members with a meet and greet John and staff. Refreshments were served and a presentation highlighting volunteer and community involvement of our individuals ran throughout the night.

Job Developer Pat Collins presented a slideshow to the families about the job process and his work with potential employers, followed by a question and answer period. John then spoke about his plan for both day programs (Grugan and Natick), which included some structural changes along with a focus on enhancing meaningful curriculum.

Tours of the building were given as well as curriculum demonstrations at various stations including those on money skills, social skills and communication group.

Both Meet and Greet evenings were deemed successful and enjoyable by those in attendance.

PHIL ROBEY COMMUNITY FUND UPDATE

After one year since the establishment of the Phil Robey Community Fund, the committee is thrilled to report that numerous individuals throughout all program divisions have been awarded grants. The mission of the fund is to provide financial support to adult participants served by the Charles River Center so they can afford to participate in enriching community activities.

Here are some highlights from this past year:

- Trip to Haiti to visit family
- Membership to YMCA plus personal training sessions
- Trip to New Orleans to attend a family reunion
- Concert tickets (Mariah Carey, Disturbed, North Shore Music Theater)
- Camp Grotonwood, Camp Allen, Camp Arrowhead
- Adaptive swimming program
- Attend soccer tournament
- Rock climbing

The fund committee looks forward to continuing to provide opportunities to access the community to learn new skills, stay active, enjoy new experiences and broaden horizons.

If you would like more information about the fund, please visit www.charlesrivercenter.org
non-profit to the Definitive Cares Committee describing some sample activities and events that employees could volunteer for. If the committee approves the partnership, the employee that presented the idea becomes the non-profit’s ambassador. They act as the liaison between the two companies, communicating details about events and posting sign-up sheets.

Definitive Healthcare employee Katie Campbell is an ambassador for two nonprofits, Charles River Center and the Mass Audubon Society. Her relationship with Charles River goes back years, as her aunt Joan attends the Day Habilitation program and Katie recently helped move her aunt into one of our residences. Katie has volunteered several times with the groups coming to Charles River since their first visit this past January. To date, Definitive Cares has gone to Zumba classes, Bingo, Wings for Autism at Logan Airport, attended the Building A Dream Gala as a Gold Sponsor and volunteered during school vacation week.

There is a lot of interest in CRC, Katie says. “I’ve definitely heard a lot of really positive feedback from people who have gone before who are telling other people about it. Charles River is a popular choice.”

Definitive Healthcare provides data and intelligence on hospitals, physicians and other healthcare providers. To learn more, visit www.definitivehc.com

“Everything has been smooth from our end and CRC has been awesome in making sure they have all of the information we need and are prepared for us when we come.”

**NEWS FROM AROUND CRC**

**CRC Staff Honored at the State House**

Congratulations to the Individual Support Program team of Kayla Condon, Sarah O’Brien and Charlie Kelliher for receiving their award from DDS and the DDS Statewide Advisory Council at the Massachusetts State House this past March.

**Renovation Update**

The Grugan Center, which houses Charles River Center’s Employment and Day Services, is really coming along! The finishing touches are being added and a ribbon-cutting ceremony is being planned for October.

**Mitov Dances for Charity**

Kalin Mitov, a case manager in the Employment and Day program, competed in Dancing with the Needham Stars, a local dance contest on April 6. Over 600 people attended. The charity event was hosted by the Needham Women’s Club and the Needham Exchange Club.

(Dance photo Tom Halliday Photography)

**Jenny Gives Back to the Community**

Jenny participates in the Charles River Center’s Employment and Day program and is very active in the community. One of the ways she gives back is by volunteering every Saturday morning at the Needham Community Thrift Shop on Hillside Avenue. She is one of the volunteers who prepare clothing donations for sale in the shop.

**Impact:Ability Teaches Safety**

IMPACT:Ability is a non-profit organization that empowers people and organizations to prevent abuse. Impact trainers conducted one-hour classes twice a week at Charles River Center throughout July into early August. Lessons taught and demonstrated how to recognize unsafe situations and how to respond with effective self-protective behaviors. Six individuals from the Natick, and six from the Needham Employment and Day program attended.
Special Olympics

Four athletes from Charles River Center, Laura, Jenny, Nick and Nancy, participated in the Massachusetts Special Olympics Summer Games. First, on June 7, they attended the Opening Ceremonies at Boston University’s Nickerson Field that included a parade of teams from all over Massachusetts, and then, on June 8, the Track and Field events at Harvard University.

The athletes had earned their places at the Games at the Milton Qualifiers held at Milton High School, Milton, Mass. They were supported by Sarah Ouellette, Family Support Program Coordinator, coach Ann Saint-Juste, a volunteer, as well as families and friends.

- Laura competed in the Tennis Ball Throw and the 50M Walk and received 2 gold medals
- Jenny competed in the 100M Walk, 100M Dash and the Softball Throw and received a gold medal and 2 ribbons
- Nick competed in the 50M Dash, 50M Walk, and the Tennis Ball Throw and received 2 golds and a ribbon
- Nancy competed in the 10M Walk and the 25M Walk and received 2 gold medals

“My goal for next year is to make a team big enough that the Special Olympics of Massachusetts chooses the athletes of Charles River Center to walk in the parade during the ceremony.”

Sarah Ouellette

Funding for the team came in part from what the Charles River Center team made during the winter season by participating in Special Olympics’ Polar Plunge.

The next Special Olympic sport this fall will be Flag Football, then winter Bowling and then next spring, Track and Field.

Wings for Autism

Charles River Center held its 18th Wings for Autism at Boston Logan International Airport on Saturday, April 6. More than 620 children with autism and their family members went through the airport boarding process during the fun half-day event designed specifically for families with children with autism to help ease the stress of flying.

Thank you to our volunteers and all who made the event possible: American Airlines, Cambridge Savings Bank, Definitive Healthcare, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue, Massachusetts Port Authority, Needham Bank and the Transportation Security Administration.

Wings for Autism®, originally created in 2011 by Charles River Center staff, is now modeled at 57 airports nationwide. Charles River Center coordinates Wings events in New England and The Arc of the United States coordinates events nationally.

In Memoriam

Members of the Charles River Community

Gerry Barnard  Joan M. Kennedy
Alan S. Bloom  Helen Langsberg
Sally Brown  Mary Mcerman
Jacqueline Clark  Sydney Miti
Antionetta Covino  Gloria Olin
Amelia Cusack  Judith Pierre
Freia David  Cynthia Roix
Gerald Dente  Michelle Ann Ruscitti
Bonnie Forster  Barbara Stearns
John Derek Homeyer  Norbert Strissel

Tributes January 1 to August 1, 2019
5K RUN/1 MILE WALK

The 9th annual Charles River Center 5K Run/1 Mile Walk is a fun family event that takes place on Sunday, September 22 at 11:00 a.m. The USA Track and Field-certified course begins and ends at the Charles River Center, Needham, and loops through the scenic back roads of Wellesley and Needham. Participants (nearly 600 in years past) enjoy food, drinks and festivities after the run.

We are very fortunate to have Reflexis Systems as our Event Sponsor for the second year in a row.

Runners and walkers of all abilities are welcome. Free t-shirts are given to the first 300 entrants and, new this year, free t-shirts to registrants under 12 years of age thanks to our t-shirt sponsor, Bright Horizons at Newton.

Registration is open until the day of the 5K Run/1Mile Walk on September 22. For information, course map and registration, visit www.CharlesRiverCenterRoadRace.com

Proceeds from the event will benefit the more than 950 children and adults with developmental disabilities supported by the Charles River Center.

**Planning on registering for the 5K Run/1 Mile Walk? Why not create a team? Team captains earn one free registration for every 5 team members who register. Prizes will be awarded for Top Fundraising Team, Largest Team and Team with the Most Team Spirit!**

**You can create a team when you register. For complete details, download our Team Captain Packet at www.charlesrivercenterrodrace.com**

**COMING THIS FALL**

Charles River Center is going to be offering a new way to support the programs and services that we provide those with developmental disabilities. Look for more information this fall!

**FOLLOW US!**

The Charles River Center is active on social media, posting photos, current events, information of interest and special updates. Be in the know! Check us out on:

- facebook.com/TherCharlesRiverCenter
- instagram.com/charlesrivercenter
- twitter.com/charlesrivercen

Spring/Summer 2019

THE LAMP