WELCOME NEW PRESIDENT, ANNE-MARIE BAJWA

Philip V. Robey, Chairman of the Board at the Charles River Center, has announced that Anne-Marie Bajwa has been selected as the Charles River Center’s next President and Chief Executive Officer. Bajwa, who has served as the agency’s Chief Operating Officer since 2008, assumes her role effective October 1, 2016.

Bajwa succeeds John Grugan, who is retiring after 35 years with the Charles River Center, the past 16 as President. “Anne-Marie’s experience with the Charles River Center will allow her to move forward quickly, and her deep knowledge of the strengths and needs of the organization will be key as the developmental disability field prepares to make major changes over the next several years,” said Robey. “Retiring President John Grugan had a major impact on the growth of the agency and the presence of the Charles River Center in the community, and we are confident that Anne-Marie will carry on the legacy of compassion, commitment, leadership and innovation.”

“I am honored to hold the position of President of this wonderful agency. At the Charles River Center, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to explore their interests and develop their skills and talents so they may become integral to their communities to the greatest extent possible. I look forward to working with the dedicated staff and Board of Directors as we continue to provide quality programs and services while remaining true to this mission,” said Bajwa.

Bajwa has worked in the non-profit sector for over 35 years, developing and implementing programs and services for adults with developmental disabilities, autism and physical challenges. She has played a pivotal role in the growth of the Charles River Center, as she oversaw the Day Habilitation, Residential, Family Support, and Employment divisions.

Bajwa holds a bachelor’s degree in special education from Boston College and a master’s degree in public administration from Bridgewater State University. For seven years, she served as Chairperson of the Massachusetts Day Habilitation Coalition. She has been an active member of the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers for a decade, working on the Autism Blueprint and Employment First committees. Bajwa has three grown children and resides in Bridgewater with her husband.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS AT CHARLES RIVER

By John Richmond, Behaviorist at the Charles River Center

The Charles River Center is about half way through a five-year rollout of the Massachusetts DDS (Department of Developmental Services) Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) Initiative. The plan was initiated by DDS two years ago, and we are well ahead of the rollout schedule!

PBS is an agency-wide systems change that encourages a holistic approach to understanding individuals and their environments, and is a move away from reactive behavior management. PBS provides individuals with choice and control, teaches them skills that will help them avoid the burden of challenging behavior, focuses on the role of the environment, and incorporates data-based decisions that will improve outcomes over time.

An example: Jane is doing well overall. While most areas of her life are successful, a team member articulates a series of seemingly unrelated situations in which Jane is experiencing difficulty. The PBS initiative focuses on analyzing, continued on page 3
SHOW OUR RIDERS YOUR SUPPORT

Our team has been gearing up in preparation for The Rodman Ride on Saturday, September 24th. Ellen Kilicarslan (VP, Family Support), Jennifer Fagan (VP, Residential), Kelly Atkins (Program Director, Family Support), Shane Jones (Program Director, Stott), Debbi and Michael Coran (parents of Amy Coran, Residential Director), and Emily MacGregor (Charles River supporter) are joined by virtual rider, Cathy Freedberg (Charles River supporter).

The Rodman Ride, held in Foxboro, is the nation’s #1 single-day athletic fundraiser supporting at-risk kids, and Charles River is one of only 50 partner charities. Each year over 1,500 riders and 700 volunteers participate, with each rider asked to raise $1,500. All expenses are underwritten by the Rodman Ride for Kids, which means 100% of every donation goes directly to the charities, plus the money is matched at 5% by the Ride.

Our team is raising money for Wings for Autism, camps, after-school and recreation programs for children at the Charles River Center. Please visit the Rodman Ride website to donate to the team and show them your support!

Donations welcome through November 30th.

RICHARD LAWLESS JOINS BOARD

Please join us in welcoming Richard Lawless to the Board of Directors at the Charles River Center. Richard recently retired from his position as Executive Director at the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists. He comes to Charles Rivers with much experience working with non-profits – the United Way of Norwood, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay (Boston), and the March of Dimes Massachusetts. In the early 1990s, while he was Executive Director for the Family Counseling Region West (Newton), Richard managed several DDS contracts for services to residents of the Charles River Center, working with Paul Merritt and John Grugan. Richard was also President of the Needham Exchange Club in 1998, and developed the CAP (Child Abuse Prevention) Program, which still runs in the Needham Public Schools today.

Richard lives in Needham with his wife of 37 years, Paula, who recently retired. Their son, Richie, went through Needham public schools and works in communications. In his spare time, Richard likes to volunteer in the community, garden, walk and travel.

THANKS FOR THE GRANTS!

Thank you to the following foundations for their generous support this spring and summer! Grant support allows us to purchase equipment, provide scholarships, and bring in programs that aren’t in our fiscal year budget – thereby enhancing programs for the families we serve.

b.good Family Foundation – In a hotly contested online voting contest, we were the winners of $5,000, which will be used for a shed and coolbot system. This equipment will allow the Horticulture Program to keep produce fresh until delivery to local food banks.

Eastern Bank – Families will be able to receive scholarships for weekend stays in our Respite Home in Sharon, thanks to generous grant of $10,000.

The Hawkringe Foundation – Gave a gift of $5,000, so children in our after-school and summer programs can have 1:1 support.

MetroWest Healthcare Foundation – We received $17,850 to help purchase an electronic medical records system that will improve communication, client safety, and continuity of care.

Stott House celebrated its 40th year as a Charles River Center residence. Stott was the second Charles River home and the first barrier-free residence of its kind in the nation. Priscilla and Sam (pictured 2nd from left and 4th from right) have lived in Stott since the very beginning!
A MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

It is with humility that I accept the position of the fourth President and CEO of the Charles River Center. Great leaders have come before me, Earl Mountain, Paul Merritt, and John Grugan. For those who know John, I literally and figuratively have big shoes to fill. Realizing that it’s not possible, I will forge my own path while staying true to the Charles River mission and values.

As I thought about what to write to set the tone as the CEO, my thoughts drifted to the celebration of Freia David at McDonald’s in Needham on August 29th. Words cannot express my delight in seeing Freia being honored not only by the McDonald’s team, with whom she worked for 32 years, but more significantly, by the Needham community at large. People who knew Freia only through her work at the French fry station brought her gifts, cards, and said words of admiration.

One McDonald’s manager told this story... The restaurant was exceptionally busy one day, with three lines at the counter and the drive-thru spilling onto the street. He went back to the French fry station only to find there were no fries cooking. He asked Freia why. She responded, Because I was dancing! The celebration was a testimony to Freia’s joyful spirit, hard work, and perseverance, and all that she has achieved since the first day Charles River placed her in the job. This is what we at the Charles River Center have worked to achieve for those we’ve served for over 60 years. It clearly was a core value 32 years ago when Freia started working in the community, and it remains a core value today. We believe that people with disabilities deserve the opportunity to explore their interests and develop their skills and talents so they may become integral to their communities to the greatest extent possible.

We want our neighbors to see our participants as capable — whether it’s through employment, volunteerism, or community organizations. I assure you that we will continue to demonstrate this value in the next 60 years.

The current climate in the disability community is one of change. There are large-scale changes underway, driven primarily by federal government regulations that will alter the landscape of the industry. In my opinion, the magnitude of these changes is tantamount to the period of de-institutionalization in the 70s. That shift changed the delivery system entirely, and so will these, as it will change how we provide services and how we are reimbursed for them. I predict that the next few years will be challenging, as the state agencies and providers make necessary adjustments. We are working hard to understand the changes, plan for the future, and position the Charles River Center in a manner in which we will continue to be a leader in the industry.

While I am CEO of this wonderful organization, we will weather the changes, provide quality programs and services, remain fiscally sound, and above all else, we will remain true to our mission, philosophy and values. We will also take a page from Freia’s book and remember to dance despite the pressure around us!

~ Anne-Marie Bajwa

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

“PBS is a systematic, person centered approach to understanding the reasons for behavior and applying evidence based practices for prevention, proactive intervention, teaching and responding to behavior, with the goal of achieving meaningful social outcomes, increasing learning, and enhancing the quality of life across the lifespan.” – DDS

measuring, and comparing those situations for common factors in an objective way. After careful analysis, the team notes that Jane is thriving in situations where the lighting is soft to medium, but is struggling in environments with bright sunlight or artificial lighting.

Step 1 is done! We know the problem (and have data to support it).

Now the team must analyze the best approach for addressing this issue. In Jane’s case, after measuring several options, a set of light-adjustable eyeglasses is recommended. But the job is not over. The team must collect data to see if the new glasses help Jane as expected. This realization may also lead the team to examine other possible “sensory overload” situations that Jane may be experiencing.

Staff – new and experienced – have all undergone basic PBS training. Additional trainings led by the PBS Leadership Team, PBS Champions (peers who demonstrate an early expertise in the skill set) and supervisors occur throughout the year. Using PBS skills, we can be sure that we are best serving our participants, because the process addresses all clients and is proactive, data-based, and follows known best practices.
Thank you to the following local businesses for partnering with us and employing individuals served by the Charles River Center. In our Employment and Day Services division, we help individuals assess their work interests, and then help with job training, placement, and coaching. Businesses are rewarded with loyal and hardworking employees.

Dwight Building to Be Renamed

From a memo to the staff from Phil Robey, Chairman of the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Charles River Center Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that the Dwight Building will have a new name designation effective October 1st, 2016.

Since 1980, the building has played an integral part in providing services to the individuals the agency serves. For many years, it was the location of Charles River Industries, where staff and clients worked together to assemble products for organizations. Companies such as Colgate and former camera manufacturer Polaroid were two major customers. More recently, Stokes Firestarters were manufactured in the building.

In 1981, a young executive was hired to help the agency increase its assembly business and to improve its processes and efficiencies. At the time, he was working with the DMR (now DDS) and previously worked at the Wrentham State School.

As time went on, this man’s passion and commitment to supporting people with development disabilities, as well as his business acumen, were recognized by board members. When longtime agency president Paul Merritt announced his retirement in 1999, it was apparent the agency already had a strong candidate in place.

As Charles River began the new century, this gentleman was hired as the new president, and he immediately followed through on the plans to upgrade facilities. The McCormick, Johnson and Exchange Hall buildings were removed, and the Paul Merritt Center was built. There is no question that the building of the Merritt Center helped elevate Charles River in stature with both state agencies and prospective families.

Since the beginning of the new century, this gentleman has been instrumental in developing 14 new residences, has increased the number of people served to over 900, and has expanded the agency to 550 full and part-time staff members. Even with this agency growth, his passion and fondness for the people served has not waned. Staff is constantly amazed by the close relationship exhibited when he is with them. "He knows us all by name."

He will be quick to say that the success and growth of the agency are not solely of his doing, but it is the strength of senior staff and, ultimately, all employees, that have made the Charles River Center what it is today – a highly-regarded agency that has quality staff, facilities and outstanding leadership.

The Board is pleased and honored to recognize the contribution of 35 years of service with the renaming of the Dwight Building to:

The John J. Grugan Center

Students Graduate from Bridgewater State Program

In July, eleven Charles River Center students graduated from the Self-Advocacy Leadership Series presented by the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council. The 9-week program was held at Bridgewater State University and provided training in the areas of decision-making and becoming a leader.

Students learned about their feelings, proper communication, teamwork, and laws. They developed their own speeches, which they delivered at the graduation ceremony. Each student received a certificate of achievement, SALS tote bag, and their very own business cards.

When asked about the series, Chris G. stated, “It was great because I love advocacy. The classes were great.” Congratulations to all on this wonderful accomplishment!

Where We Work

Thank you to the following local businesses for partnering with us and employing individuals served by the Charles River Center. In our Employment and Day Services division, we help individuals assess their work interests, and then help with job training, placement, and coaching. Businesses are rewarded with loyal and hardworking employees.
Participants in ACES (Adult Community Experiences and Services) are on the go! This group of nine young adults (and the number is growing) is building skills and having fun while they are out in the community every day.

“ACES was initially developed in 2012 in collaboration with the Boston Higashi School to address a growing need for young adults with ASD to remain actively engaged in activities of daily life after graduating from high school and to grow into productive adult members of society,” says Carol Alden, Vice President of Day Habilitation.

A typical day starts with exercise in the physical therapy room, followed by morning meeting, volunteering out in the community, then lunch, an activity such as arts and crafts, music therapy, cooking or office tasks, then more exercise or a nature walk to finish the day.

Volunteer sites include the Dedham Food Pantry, Roche Bros. for Senior Shopping, and Meals on Wheels, as well as many others. The group also helps around the Charles River Center with document shredding, office supply delivery, and the popular Friday Lunch Run, where individuals practice a variety of skills – expressive language, organizational skills, money skills, turn taking and social skills – as they order and deliver meals for staff.

“The individuals who participate in ACES gain skills in a variety of areas including self-regulation of behavior, shifting and maintaining attention, turn taking, following directions, waiting, organizing and follow through to completion, social communication, basic problem solving, creativity, and cooperative behavior, in addition to specific life skills such as sorting, filing, use of tools/equipment, categorizing, shopping, and money skills,” says Alden. “ACES is a wonderful addition to Day Habilitation services. They bring energy and enthusiasm to Day Hab and all of their community based activities!”

Please be sure to support these businesses and let them know why!

Acapulco’s, Needham
Babson College
BJ’s, Framingham
Charles River Center
Creative Warehouse, Needham
CVS, Needham
Dana Hall School
Eastern Mountain Sports, Newton
Fisher College
Gardens of Gethsemen

Hampton Inn, Natick
Lowes, Dedham
Millwood Golf Club
Mt. Ida College
Needham Golf Club
Off Price Closeouts, West Roxbury
Olin College
Panera Bread, Needham
Pooch Hotel, Newton
Roche Brothers, Needham
State Labs

Stokes Firestarters
Sudbury Farms, Needham
TJ Maxx, Newton
VERC Enterprises, Framingham
VERC Enterprises, Weston
Walgreens, Needham
The Walker School
Wellesley College
Wellesley Country Club
YMCA, Needham
First Farm to Fork Dinner Showcases Horticulture Program’s Bounty

It was a festive atmosphere at the inaugural Farm to Fork dinner held at the Needham Community Farm on August 4th. Sixty guests (the event sold out in less than a week!) enjoyed a 5-course tasting menu prepared by Rachel Klein and Top Chef alum Stacy Cogswell, of Needham’s soon-to-open RFK Kitchen. The menu featured ingredients grown by the Horticulture Program such as herbs, tomatoes, onions, chives, and fresh greens.

Brian, a Horticulture Program participant, gave a speech describing planting techniques and explaining the job skills he’s gaining. Guests also enjoyed a Q&A with Rachel and Stacy after the meal, where they learned about RFK Kitchen and acquired some cooking tips.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Horticulture Program and the Needham Community Farm, where the Charles River Center has 18 production beds.

Thank you to the following organizations for donating time, space, supplies or ingredients!
Rachel Klein, Stacy Cogswell, Quang Tran, Crystal Hovland & Chelsea Mcauley of RFK Kitchen, Mass Audubon Drumlin Farm, Atent for Rent, Inc., Atlantic Importing, Jack’s Abby Craft Lagers, Captain Marden’s Seafoods, Cara Donna Provision, McDonald’s, St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Peters’ Farm, Volante Farms, Needham DPW, Leo Cara Donna, Tim Dunn, Deb Moore, and the many volunteers.