It was a night to remember, as we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Charles River Center and honored John Grugan, who will retire in September. Held at the Westin in Waltham on Friday, April 29th, it was an inspiring and enjoyable evening with a social hour, an abundant silent auction, a delicious dinner and a touching program.

During the program, the crowd watched a moving video of the agency’s 60 years and how it has grown to serve the needs of families as times have changed. (You can watch the video on our website.)

John Grugan’s remarks brought tears and smiles as he thanked people who have supported him during his career – including staff, colleagues, his wife, Kathy, and his 91-year-old mother, who was in the audience. He also remarked on the changes he has seen in his career – from the days of institutions to today’s emphasis on inclusion. See excerpts from John’s speech on page 3.

Also honored was Phil Hackett, an individual who participates in Employment & Day Services and lives in a Charles River home in Needham. With the support of staff, Phil has become an active and contributing member of his community. Phil’s mother was a founding member of the Charles River Center in 1956 and was a strong supporter, acting as Chairman of the Board in 1967. One of Phil’s sisters flew in from Los Angeles and another from England to celebrate their brother.

At the end of the night, we were very pleased by the generous outpouring of support for the fund-a-need auction, which raised over $32,000 for the popular, new Horticulture Program. The funds will enable us to purchase a shed, a mobile farm stand, and supplies and equipment so that more people can participate and more produce can be donated to local foodbanks. (Horticulture Program participants also assembled the lovely arrangements that decorated the tables.)

Connecting and Learning at Emmanuel College

Members of our Futures program just finished a very rewarding pilot program with students from Emmanuel College in Boston. The program was inspired by Cathy McKay, the parent of a CRC participant, who also works in the Business Office at Emmanuel. She thought a partnership would be beneficial for both the Charles River individuals and the Emmanuel students, in that individuals from Charles River would get an opportunity to get a feel for college life, while the Emmanuel students would broaden their horizons by meeting people with developmental disabilities and get experience creating programming for this population.

Save the Date

- **Thursday, June 23rd**
  Wings for Autism Travels to Disney
  Logan Airport, Boston

- **Mid-September**
  Ellie Bloom Special Olympics
  DeFazio Field, Needham

- **Saturday, September 24th**
  Rodman Ride for Kids
  Foxboro

- **Sunday, September 25th**
  5K Run, 1 Mile Walk
  Charles River Center, Needham
RECRUITING ALL RIDERS!

Join the Charles River Riders at this year’s Rodman Ride for Kids on Saturday, September 24th! Ride 25, 50 or even 100 miles over a beautiful course through Foxboro and surrounding towns. Don’t want to get on a bike? Consider becoming a virtual rider. The Rodman Ride is the #1 single-day athletic fundraiser in the nation supporting at-risk kids and Charles River is one of only 50 partner charities.

Reasons to participate:
✓ Great exercise
✓ Help us reach our fundraising goal of $60,000 – which will go directly to camps, after-school and recreational programs for children at Charles River
✓ Festive atmosphere and fun after-party
✓ An opportunity to explain to others what the Charles River Center means to you!

Are you interested or would like to learn more? Contact Hilary Ryan, VP of Development, at 781-972-1030 or hryan@charlesrivercenter.org.

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WB Mason

A special thanks to Emily Riemer, Co-Anchor at our Needham neighbor WCVB-TV, who was warm and welcoming, and to John Terrio of Auction Knights, who always adds much humor to the evening.

We are continually humbled and impressed by the generosity of our friends and families, and are sincerely thankful to everyone who helped make this such a successful event.
To start, eight students from Emmanuel (two Education students and six students from the first year Education class) visited Charles River in January for a tour and orientation. They also met the Charles River individuals and learned more about their ISP goals.

The Futures group then travelled to Emmanuel College and met with students and professors every other Friday for six sessions total, with workshops designed by the students. Activities included 20 questions, comic strip creation, and mock interviews – fun exercises that helped CRC individuals with skills such as oral and written communication, expressing creativity, listening, taking turns, and team building. The course ended in May with a pizza party – with all CRC participants receiving certificates and t-shirts.

When asked about the experience, one Emmanuel student remarked, “The experience with Charles River influenced my philosophy of education. I realized that it is hard work, but so rewarding. Working with the Charles River Center has motivated me to pursue a certificate in special education.” Another said, “The experience made me realize that no matter what your circumstances are, or who you are, you deserve an education.” We are hopeful that the relationship will continue so that new students and individuals alike can benefit from this educational and gratifying experience.

On a personal note, there are two women in the audience I’d like to recognize tonight. My kid sister Amy was born much later than the rest of us. My Mom was 45 and my father was 50. Amy was born with Apert syndrome, a developmental disability that would require multiple, intensive surgeries and present life-long challenges for her and my parents.

My father passed away when Amy was 23, and my mother assumed full responsibility for raising Amy for the past 23 years. Today, my mother, at age 91, continues to sacrifice to make sure Amy leads a secure and happy life. My mother told me that she’s proud of me and thrilled I’m getting this recognition tonight, but Mom, you cannot be any more proud of me than I am of you.

“My parents were honest, kind and hard-working people of modest means. They were always content with what they had. Together they set a great example for all of their five children. And the sacrifices that they made for all of us were remarkable.

In many respects, my parents aren’t much different than many of the parents I have gotten to know during my career. I have witnessed your sacrifices and your commitment to your children and your hard work giving them all the opportunities that you have given them. I admire you all.

Thank you for being good partners with us. I hope that Charles River has held up its end of the bargain because you and your children deserve the best that we can be.

Our organization’s mission is to help illuminate possibilities, but it’s the children, the men and women we serve that grasp every opportunity afforded them, driven by their spirit to achieve and their enthusiasm for life. Thank you all for your deep reservoir of love, for your humor, for your dignity and your courage. You are the inspiration that motivates all of us to do the very best to make your lives more beautiful than they already are. Your love is the real engine that makes the Charles River Center a wonderful place.

“To my colleagues, to parents: work hard and courageously to preserve the progress. Our gains are fragile!”

EMMANUEL COLLEGE

continued from page 1

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IN THE SPRING

In the springtime, when the flowers bloom,
And the birds chirp in the trees,
I think of the sunshine shining bright,
And the blowing of a nice warm breeze.
I like to see the flowers bloom,
And the surfers in the ocean,
Or the kids running around
on the beach’s shore,
Which can cause quite a commotion.
But lying in a field of daffodils
And gazing up at the sky
Tends to be my favorite thing to do,
Although sometimes … I wonder,
Why?

Lori N.
A participant in Employment & Day Services

ADULT FAMILY CARE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

The Adult Family Care program at the Charles River Center is entering its third year, and we are pleased that 17 families are taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity to get financial compensation as they care for a loved one at home.

This program (also called Adult Foster Care), which is a statewide program funded through MassHealth, is designed for adults with disabilities or frail, elderly adults, who cannot live alone safely. Eligible recipients must be at least 16 years of age and receive MassHealth insurance, either Standard or CommonHealth. Caregivers can be relatives, friends or non-related people with the exception of a spouse or a parent who acts as guardian. Some families have changed guardianship in order to participate in this program.

Caregivers are paid a tax-free, daily stipend for the services they provide, such as assistance with activities of daily living, personal care, meal preparation and transportation to appointments. The “placement” is monitored regularly by an RN and a care manager who provide support and education to the caregiver and the participant.

There are two levels of care, which is determined by an assessment done by the RN and the care manager. If you are interested in this program for your family and would like more information, please contact Yvette Jones at 781-972-1017 or yjones@charlesrivercenter.org.