When Carol Alden joined the Charles River Center as the vice president of the Day Habilitation Program in 2010, she had a special interest in growing the internship program. In her experience, interns had been a positive addition to the mix of staff—asking questions and bringing a fresh perspective from their current educational background. She began making connections with various schools in the Boston area. After a few years, the number of interns had increased to a steady four or five each year. Then the growth of CRC’s network of schools began to yield more opportunities. Day Habilitation is now well on its way to hosting more than nine interns by the end of 2018.

One of the reasons for the success of the program is Carol’s willingness to take interns from all levels of education. Interns range from high school students fulfilling their community service requirements to undergraduate and graduate students majoring in

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Sunday, September 23**
  5K Run, 1 Mile Walk
  Charles River Center, Needham, MA

- **Saturday, September 29**
  Ellie Bloom Special Olympics
  DeFazio Park, Needham, MA

- **Friday, November 2**
  Annual Dinner
  Lombardo’s, Randolph, MA

- **November 2018**
  Wings for Autism
  Logan Airport, Boston, MA
Since our last issue of *The Lamp*, we have had some wonderful events and announcements.

The Charles River Center’s annual Building a Dream Gala was held on Friday, April 27. Almost 400 people attended the event and raised more than $225,000. This year’s gala honored Phil Robey with the Maria McTernan Leadership Award. I was delighted to present the award to Phil for his 24 years of dedicated service to the Charles River Center.

During the gala, there was a surprise announcement on the establishment of the Phil Robey Community Fund. The fund will enable individuals from the Charles River Center to participate in enriching community experiences that may not otherwise be affordable for them.

The family of one of our long-time residents, Barbara Lauricella, recently established the John and Maria Lauricella Fund. This gift is to be used to provide staff training in appreciation for the care that Barbara received from Charles River Center staff for many years. The mission of the fund is to create opportunity for staff to develop skills and participate in specialized training to support the clients’ needs throughout their lifetime. The Charles River Center is committed to providing individualized continuum of care throughout the lifespan of our individuals.

Community partnerships continue to support our programs and services. Two events were held in June, the 31st Annual Needham Exchange Club Charity Golf Tournament to Benefit the Charles River Center, and the Needham Women’s Club, another wonderful local service organization, held their popular annual Needham Garden Tour, donating this year’s proceeds to the Charles River Center.

Grants provided by our funding partners Power Options, the Greater Boston Real Estate Board and Wellesley Bank Charitable Foundation will allow us to enhance services, targeting technology and staff training.

These important sources of financial support are critical to our ability to plan and care for our individuals, and we greatly appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in these funding efforts.

Early in the new year, we will be starting the process of developing a new strategic plan for the agency as the current plan ends in June 2019. This process will include a rigorous analysis of both internal and external factors influencing both our industry and the Charles River Center. With all of the changes happening at both the state and federal levels it is a perfect time to assess where we are today, identify the threats and opportunities, and to chart a course through the next few years strengthening Charles River’s position as an industry leader in providing quality supports and services.

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**THE GRUGAN CENTER RENOVATION**

*From left to right, the front of the Grugan Center at 989 Central Avenue in early June, prior to the beginning of the renovation, and the front and two side entrances as construction progresses.*
JOE AND DOUG: BROTHERS REUNITED

By Alison Rivers

In 2006, Joe Homsi and his brother, Doug, were in a terrible car accident. Doug was hospitalized for many months, which meant that he and Joe, who has developmental disabilities, could no longer live together.

The two brothers, who are both in their 70s, had lived together in their family home in Needham for their entire lives. With Doug in the hospital, Joe was unable to live in the home alone, so he stayed with different family members while his brother recovered. “The hope was to reunite the two brothers in their family home. What they wanted the most was to be together again,” says Kayla Condon, the Program Director of Individual Support.

Joe had been a member of the Charles River Center’s Employment program since 1990, but had never needed assistance in his home before. Staff at the Charles River Center realized the two brothers needed some help, so members of the Charles River Center’s Individual Support team stepped in.

After a long, ten years of recovery, Doug and Joe were able to move back into the home together, but Doug continues to have very limited mobility and is in a wheelchair most of the time. So twice a week, Joe’s case manager from the Charles River Center’s Individual Support team visits Joe and his brother in their home. She helps with Joe’s medical care and appointments, home care and finances as well as coordinating care with Doug’s caregivers since he, too, needs assistance. Kayla stops by once a week to check in. Joe has also stepped up and taken on more responsibility. He keeps track of his medical appointments, gets the mail, does his own laundry and has lost 20 pounds in an effort to improve his health.

Before the accident, if you asked someone about Joe, they might have said he could be a bit grumpy, but his newfound responsibility and appreciation for life has caused Joe to have a new lease on life. “He is happier and more willing to try new things,” says Kayla.

Today, Joe and Doug are glad to be together again. They enjoy meals together (indulging in an occasional Honey Dew donut, their favorite), visit and tease one another in a brotherly way. Joe also calls Kayla every morning to talk about his plans for the day and tell her how much he loves and appreciates her. “It’s really amazing how far he’s come,” says Kayla.

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY  The John and Maria Lauricella Fund

It was an important and complex decision to place Barbara in a residential program, but once John and Maria Lauricella made the decision they never questioned it. They came to appreciate how Charles River gave Barbara options for a fuller and more rewarding life. Barbara’s sister, Anita Lauricella recalls, “When my parents died, my brother and I felt very fortunate that Barbara was happy at Charles River with friends and staff that she loved. As Barbara’s health began to decline, Charles River continued to provide wonderful care until the end. Throughout Barbara’s final years we saw first-hand how difficult this work was for staff and how the staff made all the difference in her life.”

As a result of the family’s experience with the Charles River Center, they created the John and Maria Lauricella Fund to support workforce development for staff that will enhance skills and provide specialized training to address the needs of the aging population and individuals with complex needs.

Charles River is committed to providing an individualized continuum of care to the community. Because of families like the Lauricellas, who recognize that providing staff with the tools they need enables us to support our clients, Charles River can continue to serve our community.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Thank you to the Wellesley Bank Charitable Foundation for providing funding for Charles River staff members to participate in an employee training on autism. This training, through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), allowed twenty staff members from multiple divisions at the Charles River Center (Day Habilitation, Residential Services, Employment Services, and Family Support) to participate in 14 continuing education hours online and included the Autism Certification Competency Exam. As part of a continuing effort to provide quality care for those that we serve, we recognize that providing staff competency-based training in areas like autism benefits both the clients and staff at Charles River.

Charles River also received a generous gift from the Rental Housing Association (RHA), a division of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, in honor of John Lafferty, a parent and long-time supporter. Our Day Habilitation program utilized the gift to purchase program supplies and a 3D printer to create innovative therapeutic equipment.
The Charles River Center has been awarded $10,000 to support its programs by PowerOptions, New England’s only nonprofit energy buying consortium, as a part of its 20th anniversary celebration.

In a statewide campaign, the PowerOptions member donation “20 for 20” initiative is investing nearly $400,000 directly in the missions of its non-profit and government members. Giving 20 cash gifts of $10,000 each and 20 electric vehicle charging stations puts funds directly into members’ organizations to help them keep pace with technology advancements and better prepare for their energy futures.

Leaders from the Charles River Center, PowerOptions and Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy III gathered with local elected leaders and supporters at Charles River Center to announce the first series of the “20 for 20” awards.

“For 20 years, PowerOptions has supported the nonprofit and public institutions of Massachusetts, providing energy savings, guidance and leadership,” said Congressman Kennedy. “This gift to the Charles River Center is just one of many that will allow these critical organizations to expand and enhance the services that make all of our lives better.”

“As a nonprofit ourselves, PowerOptions has always invested in our programs and services for members,” explained PowerOptions CEO Cynthia Arcate. “This is another way of investing directly into our members’ missions and energy futures.”

“Power Options has been helping organizations save money on energy for 20 years and now they are giving back in a big way. The Charles River Center in Needham empowers and supports people with developmental disabilities. They are deserving of the generous donation by Power Options,” said Senator Richard Ross (R-Wrentham).

Serving individuals with autism and developmental disabilities, the Charles River Center will be using its $10,000 gift toward building IT infrastructure that will enable their clients to have greater access to assistive technology.

“Power Options has been helping organizations save money on energy for 20 years and now they are giving back in a big way. The Charles River Center in Needham empowers and supports people with developmental disabilities. They are deserving of the generous donation by Power Options,” said Senator Richard Ross (R-Wrentham).

“Helping to make the Needham community and the center a nice place to live, learn, work and play for everyone.”

For more information about PowerOptions, visit www.poweroptions.org

GARLICK RECEIVES LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

For four decades, The Arc of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council have joined with families, human service agencies, and legislators in March to observe Disability Awareness Month, to honor outstanding legislators and hear from powerful advocates who present the issues facing families from across the Commonwealth.

At the 2018 Legislative Reception, held on March 7, Representative Denise Garlick received a Legislator of the Year award for her role in advancing the rights of people with disabilities. Charles River was very excited that someone from our area was honored in this way. She was presented with her award by Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo. “Chair Garlick treats every person she encounters with dignity and empathy,” said Speaker DeLeo. “She is an incredible ally to those with disabilities and an incredible person.”

State Representative Garlick serves the 13th Norfolk District, which includes Needham, Dover and Medfield. Elected in 2010, she currently serves as the House Chair of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery. Previously, she served as the Chair of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Education.

Representative Garlick has been a long-time advocate and leader for Family Support and a powerful ally since the inception of the Supporting Families Campaign. She has co-sponsored many bills, including Nicky’s Law and Operation House Call, and has carried important budget amendments for funding the Department of Developmental Services’ line items. Representative Garlick’s leadership extends to educating new legislators about disability priorities. Her personal experience and nursing background give her unique insight to the demands that families and individuals with developmental disabilities face in their daily lives.
NORTH MAIN STREET GARDEN FLOURISHING

Name any summer vegetable and the odds are very good that you will find it growing in the backyard garden of the North Main Street residence in Sharon, MA. What was a small salad garden last year has evolved into a huge 12’ x 12’ raised bed full of vegetables, flowers and a few select fruits.

Eva Were, the program director, and Tim Dunn, parent of a resident and an expert gardener, planned to expand the garden this season not only for the healthy food it would provide, but also for the positive experience of gardening. Eva and Tim were not surprised when the residents were interested in participating as most of them had enjoyed working with Mike Bolio at the Charles River Center’s Horticulture Program. All of the parents were on board as well. Eva says they all contributed in one way or another and continue to be supportive.

The year started early in the season. Most of the plants were started from seed this year and went in the ground by the end of June. Residents watered every morning and evening and by mid-July harvesting began. By the end of July, the garden began to overflow with produce. Eva and Tim hope that residents can use the extra bounty in creative ways like baking zucchini bread. Tim says, “I would love for them to get into canning and enjoy the produce into the winter months.”

For now, everyone is enjoying the garden’s success. On July 29, residents, family and staff gathered for a cookout on a beautiful summer day. As for next year, Eva says, “The garden will definitely continue.” Tim agrees. “It will be 25 percent larger and include more variety—even watermelons, strawberries and pumpkins—I think we can do a lot more.”

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WELLBEING

Charles River Center’s new Health and Wellness Project

Charles River Center remains committed to planning, training, assisting and motivating individuals through holistic and natural means to live longer, happier and healthier lives. We recognize trends and commonalities which often require emergent or reactive care. Charles River Center wants to “rewind the clock” and prioritize these healthier and holistic approaches and practices earlier in life.

As a result, Residential Services has launched the Health and Wellness Project. The primary goal of this project is to organize existing resources and incorporate new and creative supports and systems which will frame our six guiding Pillars of Health and Wellness. Once the project is developed and piloted, it will be fully implemented in all homes to benefit individuals, employees and the entire Charles River community.

Pillars of Health and Wellness
1. Healthy Eating
2. Exercise and Physical Activity
3. Healthy Relationships
4. Personal Care and Safety
5. Emotional Wellbeing
6. Chronic Condition Prevention

We continue to participate in EO 509 nutrition training provided by Framingham State University. EO 509 is part of Mass in Motion, the statewide initiative to prevent obesity in Massachusetts by increasing opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places we live, learn, work and play. Training topics include nutrition standards, preparation of healthy meals and nutrition resources that provide the framework for a healthy lifestyle.

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health professions. Recently, a new collaboration has been arranged for a grant-funded research project with an MIT PhD candidate and an MIT professor. Student interns have come from Needham High School, St. Sebastian’s School in Needham, Wellesley High School, Lasell College, Leslie University graduate programs, Massasoit Community College, the MGH Institute of Health graduate school and Nazareth College.

When a college or post-graduate level student comes to the Charles River Center as an intern, there are various expectations and requirements to be met. Charles River develops and modifies a schedule for the student, provides training, conducts weekly observation and supervised hours with the student and coordinates scheduled meetings with the school’s placement supervisor. Charles River also provides the school with midterm and final evaluations of the student.

A graduate student in Speech-Language Pathology at the MGH Institute of Health, Neha Paranjpe, spent her final semester in the Day Habilitation Program. Charles River Center is able to have speech pathology interns because they have Gayle Greenstein and Carol, both licensed SLPs, to provide oversight. Neha says that during her time here, “I did whatever Gayle does as a speech pathologist. For example, we went through each Day Habilitation group one-by-one, ran goals and reviewed them, provided feedback and strategies to staff to make sure that the goals written for each individual were really what was needed and effective. That is probably one of the biggest things that I have gotten out of being here. I have really seen what patient-centered care is like because each individual has so many specific needs and is so different, so unique.”

The flexibility of the program is also reflected in how it adapts to the interests of the student. Carol says, “Last year we had one undergraduate student from Lasell College who was majoring in Human Services. She came through the door saying, ‘I really think I might like to be an OT.’ We had never done it before, but I said, ‘Okay, we’ll customize your internship program.’ Afterwards, she wrote about her experience at the Charles River Center in her graduate school application and has been accepted at the MGH Institute of Health graduate program in occupational therapy. This fall another undergraduate intern is coming from Lasell who has expressed

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Grove Menus meal planning solutions is another program that has been implemented as a result of our Health and Wellness Initiative. A well-planned diet, focused on serving a variety of the right types of foods, can meet the unique nutritional needs of our clients. With dietitian-approved menus, our clients can eat and stay healthy. The menu program makes meal planning much easier as well.

Needham Women’s Club

On June 10, another local service organization, the Needham Women’s Club, held their popular annual Needham Garden Tour and donated this year’s proceeds to the Charles River Center. During the tour, Mike Bolio, Horticulture Program Coordinator at the Charles River Center, led a lively interactive demonstration on container gardening.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

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Grove Menus meal planning solutions is another program that has been implemented as a result of our Health and Wellness Initiative. A well-planned diet, focused on serving a variety of the right types of foods, can meet the unique nutritional needs of our clients. With dietitian-approved menus, our clients can eat and stay healthy. The menu program makes meal planning much easier as well.

Both host and student benefit from the intern relationship day-to-day, but there is another interesting benefit. While each student has to accomplish their school’s requirements while in the program, they are also asked to participate in a special project while they are here. The form it takes is up to them. Carol says, “We provide the topic and it can take any form, an investigation or a presentation for example. In expressive therapy they have someone who presented on sensory modalities. Neha Paranjpe investigated speech-language assessment tools for this population.”

On the whole, Carol says, “It has worked out really well for us as a program. We get a lot out of it and the interns get a lot out of it.”

*A graduate school founded by Massachusetts General Hospital

Zachary, a resident of North Main Street, climbing at Central Rock Gym in Randolph. Justin and Aly Wright, instructors.
ALL ABILITIES WELCOME

“The CRC 5k Run is quite simply one of the top 5k events in New England, and has been flying under the radar for years.”
Keith Lawrence

The 8th annual Charles River Center 5K Run/1 Mile Walk is a fun family event that takes place on Sunday, September 23 at 11:00 a.m. The USA Track and Field-certified course begins and ends at the Charles River Center, 59 East Militia Heights Drive, Needham, MA and loops through the scenic back roads of Wellesley and Needham.

Runners and walkers of all abilities are welcome. Free T-shirts are given to the first 300 entrants. Participants (nearly 600 in years past) enjoy food, drinks and festivities after the run. Proceeds from the event will benefit the more than 950 children and adults with developmental disabilities, including autism and Down Syndrome, supported by the Charles River Center.

Registration is open until the day of the 5K Run/1Mile Walk on September 23. For information, course map and registration, visit www.CharlesRiverCenterRoadRace.com

Save the Date!
The Ellie Bloom Special Olympics are Saturday, September 29 at DeFazio Park in Needham. The event is free. Pre-registration is required. For more information, visit www.charlesrivercenter.org

The Lamp
Summer 2018

A leader in supporting people with developmental disabilities