

CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR



All ages. All abilities. All together.

VOL. 1, NO. 2

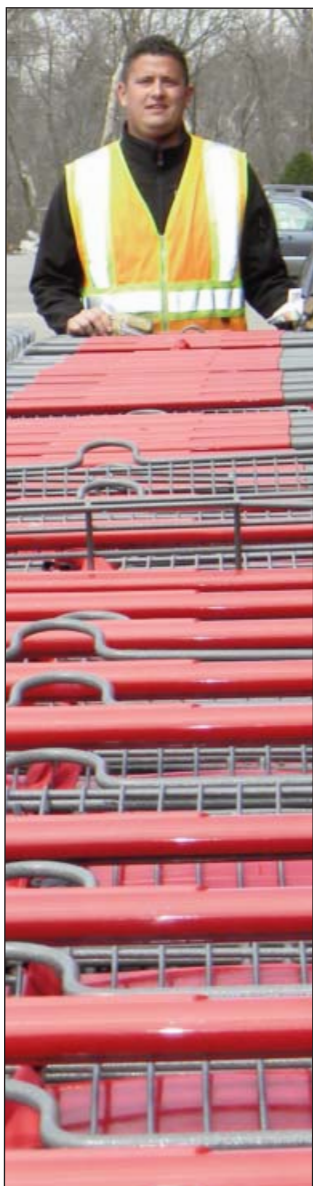
A PUBLICATION OF CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS

SPRING 2013

Rios gets job done at BJ's

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Some might consider it a strenuous job — continuously traversing the parking lot at BJ's Wholesale Club in Weymouth to gather stray carriages — but Anthony Rios prefers to focus on the animate rather than the inanimate.



Anthony Rios is an award-winning employee at BJ's Wholesale Club in Weymouth.

"I like being outside and interacting with people," said Rios, who has been working at BJ's for four years. "Getting to know the members and helping them out makes my day better."

With that type of attitude it's easy to understand why Rios, who works 20 hours per week, is an award-winning employee, having earned Star of the Month and Members First Recognition honors.

Rios, 25, is a Cardinal Cushing Centers success story, having come to the school as a residential student when he was 17. He worked closely with Doug Frazier, Director of Vocational Services, experiencing Cushing's many employment opportunities on the Hanover campus. More importantly, he learned to be a dependable employee and a good co-worker, traits that followed him to BJ's.

"Anthony is out there year-round, when it's raining and snowing," said Rick Joyce, the store general manager. "It can be a tiresome job,

See **RIOS** Page 7



DISNEY | PAGE 6

WORK OF ART

Randy Wiskow, shown above working with student Tiana Shiller-Lau, came to Cushing to teach 26 years ago and has never left.

ART | PAGE 8

We are committed to advancing our mission



JO ANN SIMONS

Special education in the state of Massachusetts has changed significantly in the 66 years Cardinal Cushing Centers has been in operation. Our student body is reflective of that changing landscape, with almost 70 percent of our students on the autism spectrum. And while we maintain the vision espoused by Cardinal Cushing when he enlisted the Sisters of St. Francis Assisi to open this school for “exceptional” children –

as he referred to them – our focus has broadened considerably. We are keenly aware that our students are exhibiting an increasing need for lifelong supports, and we are committed to providing the resources and services they require. In addition to educating students age 3-22 — the ages mandated by state special-education law (Chapter 766) – we operate 11 group homes for adults, including three on our Hanover campus, with a fourth scheduled to open this year.

Our vision is to be able to serve people of all ages, which is why we continue to expand our adult supports program. We are gratified that people who come to Cushing want to stay at Cushing after they age out of the

special education system.

We have added a wonderful program to support families who have older teens and adults living with them. Our Adult Family Program recognizes the additional care-giving demands placed on families and, in turn, we are able to provide families with financial support.

One shining example of the opportunities we provide for adults is the South Shore Industries work/employment training program at our Braintree campus which you will read about in this edition of *The Connector*.

We know that every individual has the potential to achieve more, and we are committed to helping children and adults

reach their potential.

To continue expanding the services and supports we provide requires additional resources. We have embarked on a planned giving program in order to ensure the fiscal health of our organization. Our hope is that people will consider making a final gift to Cushing. We know that there have been thousands of individuals and families touched by Cushing Centers and the vision of Cardinal Cushing himself. We need their help in advancing our mission.

Jo Ann Simons is president and CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers.

SILVER STARS

Cushing employees with at least 25 years' service

Carole Meyer	43	Steven Hughes	31
Linda Smith	40	Anne Matheson	31
Sylvia Boyd	39	Kathleen Doyle	31
Debra McGeoghegan	38	Karen Pinard	30
Melissa Bonney	37	Richard Banks	30
Patricia Larson	35	Sean Finerty	29
Suzanne Martin	35	Douglas Frazier	28
Donald Briggs	35	Nancy Gentile	28
Anthony Gauquier	35	Francine Starck	28
Carl Wengler	35	Linda Santacroce	28
Cynthia Erbe	34	Gerard Fanning	28
Jocelyne Leary	34	Juanita Benson	26
Mary Daley	34	Liane Ahearn	26
Nicholas Santacroce	34	Nora Carlton	26
William Sack	34	Melissa Laidlaw	26
Carol Molongoski	34	Karen Harkins	26
Susanne Murphy	33	Randy Wiskow	26
Regina Slowe	33	Brian Nevins	26
Thomas McElman	33	Ronald Shepherd	26
Roberta Pulaski	32	Patia Wheeler	26
Pamela Shea	32	Barbara Fiumedoro	25
Lezlie Hodges	31		

Answering the call for four decades

Meyer, Smith are Cushing's longest-serving employees

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

The success of a workplace can often be judged by the happiness and long-term dedication of its employees. With more than 40 staff members who have at least 25 years of experience, Cardinal Cushing Centers must certainly be doing something right.

“There have been new faces throughout the years, but always the same dedication of people working here that I respect and admire so much,” said part-time switchboard operator and former teacher Carole Meyer, who is celebrating her 43rd year at Cushing. “I thought about retiring in December, but I just couldn’t walk away. I’ll miss this too much, seeing the dedication and everything this school has meant to me and the community of Hanover.”

Meyer had been teaching in Milwaukee when she accepted a position to teach arts and crafts at Cushing’s six-week summer session in 1970. She became hooked and stayed on to teach art full-time at Cushing until 1976, when she was hired as a high school art teacher, retiring in 2001. Though she left the classroom at Cushing after six years, she continued to work for 15 more years as a child care provider on weekends, living on campus and running activities with the young residents. She also taught evening classes at Bridgewater State University. When she no longer did weekend child care, she began working as a weekend switchboard operator at Cushing. She continues to work one day a week on the switchboard.

Receptionist Linda Smith, in her 40th year as a Cushing employee, has felt a similar sense of devotion to her job and to the organization.

“I have my Cushing family, and it’s so worthwhile being here every day and seeing the progress the students make,” said Smith.

She has also made Cushing her home – literally – moving on campus in 1981 when the organization opened its 150 affordable housing units in Hanover. Smith, who had been diagnosed at a young age with cerebral palsy, was 28-years-old at the time of the move.

“I will always, always be grateful for that,” Smith said. “It was one of the greatest things in my life because it made me be independent.”

Thirty-two years later, Smith is still living on campus, along with her husband of 22 years, Walter.



Carole Meyer



Linda Smith

CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR

A PUBLICATION OF CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS

A PUBLICATION OF:
Cardinal Cushing Centers
 405 Washington St.
 Hanover, MA 02339
 Tel. 781-826-6371
 www.cushingcenters.org

Jo Ann Simons
 President and CEO
 jsimons@cushingcenters.org

Jansi Chandler
 Vice President of Development
 jchandler@cushingcenters.org

PRODUCED BY:
PKH COMMUNICATIONS
 LYNN, MA
 617-872-0384
 pkhcomm@gmail.com

Michelle Markowitz
 Vice President of Admissions
 mmarkowitz@cushingcenters.org

Laurie Maranian
 Development Manager
 lmaranian@cushingcenters.org

A will to give

Harris family bequeaths gift to Cushing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

For Phil and Rita Harris, the decision to amend their will, naming Cardinal Cushing Centers a beneficiary, was a natural one.

Their son Traves, 32, enrolled at Cushing as a student at age 16 and has since transitioned to the adult residential program.

“Cardinal Cushing Centers is his home, where he’ll grow old,” said Rita. “Obviously our interest starts with Traves and isn’t entirely altruistic, but it grows from there. We want the organization to thrive for future generations.”

“We would do everything possible to build the financial security of this center,” said Phil. “We’re so thankful and so passionate about the program and the wonderful job that everyone does here, I get choked up just thinking about it.”

Traves had attended the Boston Public Schools as a child, but began to feel more isolated as he entered high school. That was when the family began to look elsewhere, and discovered Cushing.

“When he got accepted to Cushing, it was one of the happiest days of my life,” said Phil. “Traves thrived here – playing basketball, attending the prom. He had the opportunity to participate in it all.”

Traves now lives with three other roommates and works at a fitness club in Weymouth three days a week. Phil, the founder and former CEO of QuadTech, and Rita, a former Hill Holliday executive, are now retired and living in Miami, returning to Cape Cod each summer. They have remained actively involved at Cushing, with Rita serving on the Board of Directors and Phil serving on the

Board of Overseers. Their older son, Hadley, lives in New York City.

“Gifts such as the Harris’ will enable us to grow our endowment and provide a stable funding source so there will always be resources available to carry out our mission of supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities,” said Jenna Gomes, director of planned giving. “The legacy of those who have generously given to us will live on in a safety net of funds that will ensure that Cardinal Cushing Centers is able to safely open our buildings and doors and provide the best in people and technology for many years to come.”

Gomes was hired in April to oversee Cushing’s newly launched, comprehensive planned giving program. Examples of planned gifts include: making a will bequest, either by percentage or specific amount; gifting a home; naming Cardinal Cushing Centers as the beneficiary in a life insurance policy, retirement plan or IRA; gifting to a charitable trust and naming Cardinal Cushing Centers a beneficiary; making a gift of highly appreciated stock or personal property such as artwork, antiques or vacation property.

A gift may be unrestricted for Cardinal Cushing Centers to use it where it is needed most, or a donor can choose to earmark funds for a particular need. Both types of gifts will help Cushing build its endowment to address a growing list of capital concerns, offset maintenance costs, bridge the gap for individual tuition, invest in new technology, retain the best employees and continue to offer value-added initiatives not currently reimbursed through state sources.



Phil and Rita Harris with their sons, Hadley, left, and Traves, a Cushing student.

A planned giving opportunity to consider

In January, President Obama signed an extension of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 which, among other things, extended the IRA Charitable Rollover through December 2013. This provision allows individuals who are 70½ and older to make tax-free distributions from their IRA to charity up to \$100,000. This transfer counts towards the required minimum distribution without being treated as income for federal tax purposes.

If you are interested in supporting Cardinal Cushing Centers through this time-sensitive opportunity, please contact Jenna Gomes at 781-829-1223 or jgomes@cushingcenters.org.

Many factors account for Di Pesa’s support

BY PAUL HALLORAN

As a teacher at Cardinal Cushing Centers during the famous Blizzard of 1978, Dolly Di Pesa was literally prevented from leaving the school for a week. Thirty-five years later, she still can’t get away, nor would she want to.

“I’ve had a great experience at Cushing,” said Di Pesa, who has worn many hats in her long association with Cushing, including volunteer, aide, teacher, board member and benefactor. She looks back with particular fondness on the three years she spent as a teacher in the late 1970s.

“I loved the experience of teaching at Cushing,” said Di Pesa. “We were all working very hard, and it was all about the kids.”

Di Pesa was first exposed to Cushing when her brother, David, was a residential student. She would volunteer in the summers, and she remembers being there in early November of 1970 when Richard Cardinal Cushing was buried at the

Portiuncula Chapel. Her parents, Bill and Mary Jane, chaired the first Springtime; Di Pesa still serves on the Springtime committee.

“We have all enjoyed our time at Cushing,” said Di Pesa, who left teaching in 1978 to pursue an accounting degree. Today, she is a third-generation owner of her family’s firm, Di Pesa & Company CPAs. Through the firm, she has attracted even more support for Cushing, as her partner, John Oteri, spearheaded the fundraising drive to institute the culinary arts program at the school.

A special education major at Boston College, Di Pesa got a job as an aide and eventually as a teacher at Cushing. One of her students was Chris Burke, who went on to fame and fortune as the star of

the sitcom “Life Goes on.” Di Pesa is mentioned in Burke’s autobiography “A Special Kind of Hero.”



Dolly DiPesa

“Chris was Mr. Social,” Di Pesa recalled. “He knew everyone. He liked to take off to explore things, so we had to keep a close eye on him. He was accepted at Cushing for who he is and he really liked it.”

Burke, who has Down Syndrome, got his start in acting at Cushing, appearing in the school’s production of “The Emperor’s New Clothes.”

As a sibling, Di Pesa saw firsthand the positive impact Cushing had on David, who came to the school as a residential student when he was 11.

“David lived at the school during the week, but he came home on the weekends

because he wanted to be with the rest of us,” said Di Pesa, one of eight children.

David went to Milton High School and works full-time at Milton Academy.

Di Pesa said she has maintained her support of Cushing for so long not only out of a sense of loyalty and believing in the mission, but also because she understands the school must have the resources to meet the evolving needs of the population it serves.

“There will always be a need for more programming, especially for those over age 21,” she said. “It’s a challenge to help people assimilate to going back to their own home or a group home. It requires a lot of training to make that happen.”

Di Pesa has played an important role in helping Cardinal Cushing Centers make it happen for thousands of children and adults. Once it stopped snowing 35 years ago, there was nothing preventing her from leaving, but she is still riding out the storm and making sure Springtime arrives every year.

STUDY, WORK, PLAY

Braintree campus offers opportunities for people of all ages and abilities

By PAUL HALLORAN

From a day school for students under age 22 to two programs servicing more than 140 adults, Cardinal Cushing Centers' Braintree campus is abuzz with activity on a daily basis.

St. Coletta Day School opened in Braintree in 1957 — 10 years after Cushing Centers was founded as St. Coletta's by the Sea in Hanover. There are currently 26 students ages 10-21 in the program, under the direction of Ron Shepherd, a 32-year Cushing employee.

"No two kids are alike," Shepherd said, noting that the school services students with a combination of physical and developmental disabilities. "It's challenging work but very worthwhile. It's a great environment to be in."

Students come from as far away as Wilmington and Billerica to receive individualized instruction and range of therapies, including occupational and language. They are in school 216 days a year for seven hours a day. There is an emphasis placed on socialization and community access.

"We try to provide as many opportunities as possible for inclusion," Shepherd said.

It is hard work — on the part of the students and staff — but rewarding.

"You get to see that changes do happen," Shepherd said. "Kids do learn and progress. You have the opportunity to be a positive part of their growth and development."

When students age out of the school program, some move on to jobs or other opportunities in their home communities, while others transition to one of the two adult programs

housed at the Braintree campus.

Life Opportunities Unlimited is a therapeutic day program for adults designed to provide a meaningful, productive experience, with an emphasis on a healthy lifestyle, community engagement, and choice. The team that runs the program includes a registered nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and a behavioral therapist. The program is run at the Braintree and Hanover campuses.

Participants in the program are placed in small groups (5-8) based on age, individual interests and needs. Emphasis is placed on wellness, relationships, independence and community. Life Opportunities Unlimited has partnerships with several organizations in order to provide opportunities for participants to engage in volunteer activities in the

community.

South Shore Industries provides adults with the training and skills necessary to obtain meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities. Employment plans are developed according to each individual's skills and needs. Participants work at a variety of businesses, including: Marshall's, Dave & Buster's, Meals on Wheels, BJ's Wholesale Club, Roche Brothers, TJ Maxx and the Braintree mayor's office (see story on page 6).

Some people work as interns or as part of a community-based work crew. There are also formal employment training programs set up with the Ninety Nine restaurants in Weymouth and Hingham and Alliance HealthCare of Braintree, according to Karen Cooper, who directs the South Shore Industries program along with Linda Dixon.

"People gain employment skills that allow them to work in the community," Cooper said. "We want them to have the opportunity to find meaning from their work like the rest of us."

Dave Babcock helps facilitate the employment training program, in which team building plays a key role.

"Team building brings people together and gives them a feeling that they are in it together," he said. "They are able to enhance their soft skills and self-esteem, so they have the confidence to be successful in the workplace."

In addition to employment and internships, there are a variety of activities available, from the Next Chapters Book Club to fitness classes to sign language.

"It's their program," Cooper said. "They decide what is important to them."



Kerri O'Neil plays the piano on her iPad.



Mary Saaco is a participant in the Life Opportunities Unlimited (LOU) program in Braintree.



Julia Moschella and Christopher Sanchez



Tim Rochon, Graham Snow and Nick Sida work at Dave & Buster's.



Matt Folsom is in the culinary department at Cardinal Cushing Centers.



Jill Alongi and Kevin Riordan work at Stop & Shop in Weymouth.



Tahir Williams works on a puzzle.



Jessica Doherty takes a well-deserved break.



Kristina Gaxho draws a flower.

O'Connell PROVEs herself in Braintree

By RICH FAHEY

Not everyone goes to work with a permanent smile on their face, but Julie Ann O'Connell is the exception.

O'Connell, 24, has worked at Braintree Town Hall for the past two years as part of Cardinal Cushing Centers' South Shore Industries' employment placement program.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon, she usually begins her day in the office of Braintree Mayor Joseph Sullivan and then branches out to one of six other offices, as needed.

Everywhere she goes, she goes with a big smile and a determination to get the job done.

O'Connell first came to Town Hall as part of the Project PROVE program for special education students at Braintree High: Providing Respect Opportunity Vision and Excellence.

It became apparent she was a perfect fit for both the office and her duties.

"The Town of Braintree was contacted by SSI regarding job placement specifically for Julie," said Braintree Human Resources Director Karen Shanley. "Since Julie had worked at Town Hall with Project PROVE, we knew that it would be a good fit both for Julie and the town."

O'Connell does filing, sorting, stamping and other clerical duties, and depending on the day or the time, you can find her in the assessor's office, the tax collector's office or



Julie Ann O'Connell presents Braintree Mayor Joseph Sullivan with a drawing of Town Hall. Also pictured are Cardinal Cushing Centers CEO Jo Ann Simons, far left, and Diane Dumont, employment specialist at Cushing's South Shore Industries program.

human resources. "She's incredibly good at alphabetizing and organizing," said Shanley.

"I'm good at following directions and getting the work done on time," said O'Connell, whose mother, Elaine, let out

a little secret, revealing that Julie Ann has been working towards a trip towards Universal Studios in Florida, where "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" will be the first stop.

South Shore Industries is an integral part of the Cushing's Adult Services Program, helping adults with disabilities gain the training, skills, and opportunities to find meaningful jobs in the community.

SSI is committed to the exploration, development, and implementation of employment plans tailored to each individual's preferences, skills and needs. The program is designed for adults over age 22, with and without employment experience (see story on Page 4).

"The SSI program is a perfect example of a program that benefits both parties," said Shanley. "The employee makes a real contribution and Julie Ann brings level of joy to her work."

During a recent meeting at Town Hall, Mayor Sullivan had this to say: "She's the mayor. We're all working for her."

At a Cushing employer recognition luncheon, O'Connell presented the mayor a drawing of Town Hall she had done from memory; the drawing has been framed and now hangs in Town Hall.

"Julie is a delight for us all," said Sullivan.

"Her enthusiasm for the work lifts all of us, and her commitment to do the job well is a model for all town employees."

For Cushing students, the 'trip of a lifetime'

By RICH FAHEY

For an event so full of joy and love, there are many tears.

For the 25 students in this year's graduating class at Cardinal Cushing Centers, the almost week-long trip to Disney World in Orlando, Fla. in May was a dream come true.

For some students, it was first time they flew on an airplane or stayed overnight away from their families.

For parents, knowing that their children were enjoying the trip while being safe and well-chaperoned brought smiles through tears of joy.

Lisa Allen's son, Josh, took the Disney World trip two years ago as a Cushing student, and this year it was her son Eric's turn. Allen, a Sharon resident, said she was happy that her son's chaperone would be along for the trip, but still was concerned with Eric's anxiety issues.

"Eric had never slept away from home for more than one day," said Lisa Allen. "At the end of the first day, he was so happy and tired he didn't even call me, and his chaperone said he had decided to leave his cell phone at the hotel. Hearing he was having such a great time brought a smile to my face."

Wherever you find something this good, you'll usually find "angels" hovering somewhere in the background. In this case, those "angels" are the employees of South Shore Bank, led by President and CEO John C. Boucher.

For the past seven years, the bank has been raising the \$100,000 needed to send Cushing students and support staff to



South Shore Bank President and CEO John C. Boucher, second from right, and Cardinal Cushing Centers CEO Jo Ann Simons with students who went on the Disney trip this year, from left, Eric Allen, Nick Hanson and Michael Thompson.

Orlando, paying not only expenses but providing spending money as well.

Boucher said the bank gets involved with many nonprofit charitable organizations, usually involving people who can use outside help to better their lives.

The bank's involvement began with Boucher's wife, Mary, volunteering as a teacher's aide at Cushing. Abington Savings Bank had been the original sponsor, but the bank was sold, and suddenly, the bank was no longer the sponsor. Tears were shed as students realized that what had been a cherished tradition might be coming to an end.

"Mary said to me 'you have to take it over,' but I knew it was a big undertaking raising that much money," said Boucher.

He assembled a team of a dozen employees to help plan a fundraiser, which has become the bank's annual St. Patrick's Day

gala that attracts about 300 people. Employees are heavily involved in the effort each year.

"It's become our signature charitable event of the year," said Boucher.

Boucher said of the 300 people at the gala each year, about 200 are return attendees. "I think people feel like they get a bang for their buck. They're spending the money and feeling good about it," he said.

The bank's fundraising also provides annual funds for class rings for graduating students.

Lisa Allen said that Cushing staff involve the parents of students throughout the planning that goes into the trip.

Many of the students require 1-on-1 support, so that has to be arranged. There are flights and hotels to plan, and many meetings to go over the details.

After the students return home, the bank sponsors a pizza party at the school, which is another emotional time.

"They bring pictures and unbelievable photo albums, and many are still wearing their Mickey Mouse ears," said Boucher. "It brings tears to your eyes."

Each of the students also receives a video montage of the trip, a souvenir that will last a lifetime.

"I serve on the boards of a number of charities but I always get the most satisfaction when I see the excitement on the faces of the kids taking this trip," said Boucher. "Most of them have never gone on a trip like this before or may never go in the future. Literally, it's the trip of a lifetime."

Parent has seen daughter thrive in 15 years at Cushing

By PAUL HALLORAN

As her daughter, Andrea, prepares to graduate from Cardinal Cushing Centers, Aimee Mailhiot can't help but look back and wonder where, exactly, the last 15 years have gone.

"When I was looking at schools for Andrea, the minute I walked into St. Coletta (on Cushing's Braintree campus), I knew it was where she belonged," said Mailhiot. "It is such a welcoming place."

Andrea, who was six at the time, spent 10 years at Braintree before moving into the residential program in Hanover five years ago.

"It was a tough decision to go residential," Mailhiot said. "It was hard to let go."

She is sure it was the right decision. And the results bear that out.

"Andrea has gained so many strengths," Mailhiot said, "from vocational training to learning to be more independent. As a mother, it's your instinct to help her do everything. The staff at Cushing have taught Andrea that she can do more things on her own. It gives her a lot more self-confidence when she is able to make her own decisions. I am very proud of all the strides she has made."

Andrea, who has cerebral palsy and autism, is a very outgoing young woman who is able to communicate well despite being non-verbal. "Cushing has done an amazing job helping her communicate. The speech department is phenomenal. (Director of Therapy Services) Patti Nelson does an excellent job," Mailhiot said.

Andrea works at the Cushing Trader, which makes her feel very productive. She clears

tables at the Bass Cafe and works in Timeless Treasures, the recycling center and the bakery. She also interns off-campus and works with animals at a local farm, something she truly enjoys, according to her mother.

"She likes to be busy. She loves Cushing; she thrives there," her mother said.

Mailhiot plays a very active role in the school, serving as president of the Parents Advisory Council (PAC) and working on various fundraising initiatives. She said she would like to see more parents get involved, though she understands how difficult it can be balancing a job, a child with special needs and other children. In her case, she also has a 20-year-old son, Nathan, who is in college studying special education with a concentration in severe special needs. He volunteered at the Braintree campus last summer and will be working there this summer.

Mailhiot brings Andrea home to Quincy every weekend, returning her in time for classes Monday morning. "I can't tell you how happy I am to have the people at Cushing taking care of her," Mailhiot said. "She has formed great friendships. As a parent, you want to see your child be part of something. Andrea has been in pep squad, bike club and Girl Scouts."

Mailhiot said she is hoping Andrea will stay at Cushing in the Adults Services program. That would place her among an ever-growing number of people who simply don't want to leave Cushing.

"Cushing has a reputation for being one of the best schools," Mailhiot said. "It definitely has lived up to that reputation for us."



BJ's Wholesale Club President & CEO Laura Sen, far left, who serves on the Cushing Board of Overseers with Bob's Discount Furniture CEO Ted English, joined English and his daughter, Kathleen, at Springtime, Cushing's annual fundraising gala.

Support of Cushing a priority for BJ's and CEO

By PAUL HALLORAN

Like so many before her, once Laura Sen was exposed to Cardinal Cushing Centers she was hooked.

"I believe in the mission of educating children and young adults with special needs," said Sen, the president and chief executive officer of BJ's Wholesale Club, with which Cushing has enjoyed a long and fruitful partnership. "The school has always performed remarkably well in delivering high-quality services."

Sen was working in general merchandising in 1990 when she went to her first Springtime – Cushing's annual fundraising gala. Jim Halpin, then the president of BJ's, was being honored. Eventually, Sen met Lenny Florence, founder of Springtime and the first lay person ever to serve on the Cushing board of directors. She joined the board in the mid-1990s and served several years.

"There were many initiatives going on at that time," said Sen, who has remained a

committed supporter of the school.

"I have always believed that doing good deeds turns out well for you," she said. "As a result of my being involved with Cushing, I joined the board of Abington Savings Bank," where Jim McDonough, another longtime Cushing supporter and the original sponsor of the Disney World trip, was president and CEO. "I developed a new set of contacts."

Sen was with BJ's from 1989-2003, returned to the company in 2007 and was named president and CEO in 2009. BJ's remains one of Cushing's biggest benefactors, supporting events such as Springtime and providing employment opportunities for Cushing students and alumni (see story on Page 1).

"Cushing is dedicated to taking care of children and families that need help," she said. "You have to appreciate that."

And Cushing certainly appreciates all that Laura Sen and BJ's do for the school.

Rios gets job done at BJ's

RIOS: from page 1

but he has great dedication."

When he turned 22, Rios moved into an apartment at the Cushing Green, an affordable housing complex started by Cardinal Cushing Centers. Frazier helped him get his learner's permit and driver's license. He now proudly drives his own 2010 Nissan Altima.

When he's not working at BJ's, Rios likes to spend time with his girlfriend and go to

the mall. He also is a volunteer basketball coach in Cushing's recreation program. "I like to help out the kids," he said.

BJ's is a longtime partner of Cushing and one of the school's biggest benefactors, supporting Springtime and other events and providing employment opportunities for current and former students.

"BJ's relationship with Cushing goes back more than 20 years," said President and CEO Laura Sen. "We're absolutely happy to support the school."



Aimee Mailhiot said Cushing has been the perfect fit for her daughter, Andrea.

CARDINAL CUSHING CONNECTOR



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2
HANOVER, MA



Randy Wiskow with students, from left, Tiana Shiller-Lau, Justin Alston and Jona Ghelli.
PHOTOS: MEAGHAN CASEY



Wiskow masters the ART of teaching

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Some would look at Randy Wiskow's art students at Cardinal Cushing Centers and see children and teenagers with special needs; he simply sees them as having special talents.

"The kids are so creative and so talented," said Wiskow, who has been teaching at Cushing for 26 years. "They listen and they are eager to learn and create. I really enjoy being with them."

That becomes very apparent when you visit his classroom, which doubles as a de facto studio. Wiskow is constantly interacting with students, answering their questions and providing positive reinforcement every step of the way.

"We're not trying to make artists out of them," he said. "We want them to enjoy art as an element of life. If they can use it as a career, we will try to foster that."

That was the case with Nick Morse, a Cushing graduate who has become a professional artist (his work can be seen at nickmorseart.com). Morse, 24, travels New England exhibiting and selling his art. You might say he inherited the creative gene from his grandfather, who founded color TV for RCA, and his father, a former Boston Globe music critic.

A Wisconsin native, Wiskow planned to make art his career from the outset, majoring in art at the University of Wisconsin. He came to Westfield State for an exchange program and liked New England so much he moved here after graduation, along with several of his friends. His roommate's girlfriend was working at Cushing's Braintree campus and they were looking for a summer art instructor.

"I went there and never left," he said. When a full-time job teaching art opened in Hanover in the fall of 1987, he jumped at it: "I came here and I loved it."

Asked to what he attributes his longevity, along with many of his fellow teachers – 43 Cushing employees have been there at least 25 years – Wiskow pointed to the faces around the table and his colleagues.

"The students," he said. "They're wonderful; they're like sponges. They just want to learn. As soon as I spent that summer in Braintree, I knew I needed to stick with this population. I really enjoy being here."

"It's very comfortable here," he added. "It's like a family. We help each other out. I've never felt alone. It doesn't seem like it's been 26 years."

Wiskow lives in Mansfield with his wife, Tina, and daughters, Emily (17) and Abby (14). He likes to spend as much time as possible outside, working in his yard and riding his bike.