

CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR



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Arts (a)live at Cushing



Cushing student Giovannie Scott concentrates on his painting as art teacher Randy Wiskow looks on. **Story, pages 4-5**

PHOTO: SEAN BROWNE

In the right place at the right time

Student performs life-saving maneuver on choking victim

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

What a difference a day makes.

For James Mulligan, a student in Cushing's ACE program, an instance of being in the right place at the exact right time proved to have life-changing consequences.

Mulligan was dining at Quan's Kitchen in Hanover when he noticed someone choking. Fortunately, he had participated in first aid training at Cushing just a day earlier.

"James described noticing a gentleman having trouble breathing

and holding his hand up to his throat," said ACE director and clinical case manager Katy Hamilton. "He was proud to report feeling very calm and assertive while walking over to the couple to ask if he could help — which is exactly how he was trained. He performed the choke-saving steps and the gentleman coughed up a piece of steak."

Hamilton had recently requested first aid and CPR training for the students in the ACE program, which focuses on



James Mulligan is certified in first aid and CPR. PHOTO: SEAN BROWNE

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**CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS
CONNECTOR**

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There's a spring in our step



PETER O'MEARA

Spring has finally sprung, and there is plenty to feel rejuvenated about at Cushing. In this edition of the *Cardinal Cushing Centers Connector*, we are proud to highlight the new building on Route 53 that will house state-of-the-art classrooms and our retail stores. The location of the building will provide our students and adults who work in the stores the opportunity to interact more frequently with members of the community who patronize them. We believe this building will be a real game-changer for our vocational program and the classes that

support it. As with any project of that scope, the construction of the new building requires a significant investment, and one that we could not make without the generous support of many individuals, companies and organizations. The first phase of the project is estimated to cost \$8.8 million, of which we have raised almost 70 percent to this point. We greatly appreciate the support of those who have given or pledged, and encourage you to consider supporting this important initiative.

Also in this edition, we recognize those who will be honored at our annual Springtime gala – Joanne Jaxtiner and the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. They are most deserving of the recognition. Please consider attending and supporting this event. The Boston Marathon is an annual rite

of spring and we were fortunate to have a dedicated team of runners earmark their fundraising to Cushing. John Hancock again graciously provided us with four official entries to use as a fundraising tool. We appreciate the hard work and training these four women put in to prepare to run Boston and are grateful to all who supported their fundraising efforts. Having now had several months to settle into my current position, I am even more impressed with the great work that goes on at Cushing every day. We are blessed to have a talented and committed staff, dedicated to improving the lives of everyone we service.

Peter O'Meara is president and CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers.

Cushing is lucky to bank on their support



South Shore Bank again hosted a St. Patrick's Day dinner and auction and donated the proceeds to Cushing to be used for the annual Disney Trip of a Lifetime. Pictured are South Shore Bank employees, from left, Jim Dunphy, Kim Walters, Joe Dahlstrom, Joyce Duhaine, Marielle Hardiman, Cindy Bovaird, Mary Lou Vacca.

Wanted: people to share their homes and their hearts

Are you a caring, flexible person looking for meaningful work that provides you with more than just a paycheck? Do you have an extra bedroom and are you willing to welcome someone into your home? If so, Cardinal Cushing Centers is looking for someone like you to be a caregiver in our Adult Family Care or Shared Living programs.

As a caregiver, you will provide some physical assistance, transportation to community activities and medical appointments, prepare meals, and help the individual you care for be as independent as possible while still giving him or her the stability of a family atmosphere.

A qualified caregiver must maintain a positive attitude and environment, and be able to communicate with team members in a positive and professional manner. A flexible schedule is a must.

Qualified caregivers receive:
• a tax-free stipend

- room and board to cover food and household expenses
- comprehensive training, free of charge
- emergency support and assistance
- monthly visits from a case manager or RN
- respite support

In order to qualify as a caregiver you must:

- be 21 years or older and own or rent a home
- own or rent a home with an extra bedroom
- have a valid Mass. driver's license, with access to an insured vehicle
- be able to effectively communicate with all team members

To apply, please complete the application at www.afc.cushingcenter.org or contact Pat Conley at 781-829-4608 or pconley@cushingcenters.org or Megan Gajewski at 781-829-4618 or mgajewski@cushingcenters.org.

Special woman, special Sisters to be honored

BY PAUL HALLORAN

When Joanne Jaxtimer was first introduced to Cardinal Cushing Centers, she was especially interested since she has a son with intellectual impairment.

Jaxtimer quickly became enamored with Cushing's work and, now retired, she has expanded her role to include assisting with the organization's development efforts. In recognition of her ongoing efforts to advance the Cushing mission, Jaxtimer will be presented the Richard Cardinal Cushing Award at the Springtime gala, to be held June 8 at the Seaport Hotel in Boston.

Also to be honored at Springtime are the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, who will receive the Franciscan Leadership Award in recognition of their founding Cushing in 1947 at the request of Cardinal Cushing and the strong relationship that endures.

"I'm honored and humbled," Jaxtimer said. "I love the people at Cushing. Everyone I've had the occasion to work with is so committed to the population that is served."

Jaxtimer's son, Michael, spent approximately four years working in the food service program at Cushing as both a student and then graduate of Milton Public Schools. He also took a 12-week evening course in cooking last year. Now 22, Michael works three days a week as a prep cook at Davio's in Boston and volunteers two days at Cushing.

"The experience he got at Cushing prepared him for adulthood. His time in the post-graduate program further defined his skill set and his interest in food service," said Jaxtimer, who retired from BNY Mellon last year after 22 years with the company.

Jaxtimer said she is impressed with the continuum of care provided by Cushing, from academics, to job training to housing.

"They give people the opportunity to develop skills they need to survive in adulthood," she said. "What's not to love about everything Cushing offers."

Now that she is retired and has time to "refocus and start a new chapter," Jaxtimer is working with Cushing Vice President of Development Jansi Chandler on Cushing's capital campaign, helping to identify prospective donors.

"I've served on many boards and helped raise funds," she said. "I'm enjoying this opportunity to work with the team at Cushing."

When Richard Cardinal Cushing wanted to create educational opportunities for what he termed "exceptional" children, he called upon the Wisconsin-based Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, who were noted for their work with children with intellectual disabilities. Five Sisters relocated to Hanover to open St. Coletta's by the Sea, the precursor to Cardinal Cushing Centers and first school of its kind in the Northeast, providing education and residence for 35 children.

While the stewardship of Cardinal Cushing Centers has been undertaken over the years by a capable board of directors, leadership team and staff, the Sisters enjoy a strong and productive relationship with the organization, maintaining a presence on the board of directors. Cushing is one of nine corporate ministries sponsored by the Sisters, with each striving to live out their mission in the specific work of its ministry. The Sisters remain proud of the way in which Cushing upholds the Franciscan values and welcomes all people with dignity and respect.

For information on sponsorship opportunities or tickets to Springtime, please contact Ricky DeSisto at 781-829-1289 or rdesisto@cushingcenters.org, or visit www.springtimegala.com



Joanne Jaxtimer with her son, Michael.

Arts (a)live at Cushing



From left, Princess Fiona, played by Julia McLane, is guarded by dragons, played by Shea Frost and Jai'lyn Jackson, during a performance of "Shrek The Musical."



Jonathan Perrault played Pinocchio.



Shrek, played by Ryan Akins, right, and Donkey, played by Justin Alston, run down the aisle to rescue Princess Fiona. PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE



Cardinal Cushing student Shea Frost plays the maracas during a music class at Cardinal Cushing Centers.



Cushing student Andrea Lawson, left, and teacher assistant Corey Kelly prepare clay to make handmade beads.



BY MEAGHAN CASEY

From music to visual art, dance and theater, the arts play an integral role in the education of Cushing students. In February, students put on a fantastic performance of "Shrek The Musical," bringing the beloved characters from the film to life on stage. Also in February, the Cushing Dance Group and the K.R.J. Band (made up of Cushing participants Kaitlin, Ryan and Joe) delighted audience members at the Rock and Shine Concert. They were joined by performers from True Soul and the Dance Workshop of Hanover. Throughout the year, students are exploring their creative sides through painting, jewelry-making and photography — some of which is available for sale at the Cushing Trader, or on display at the Bass Village Café.

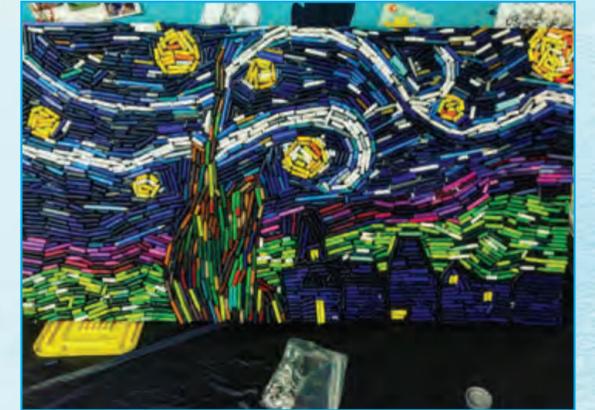
"In the art studio, we've created an environment that allows our students to achieve their highest level of success through nurturing, along with challenging and innovative projects," said Randy Wiskow, Cushing's art director. "We encourage personal fulfillment with new experiences and shared happiness. The art studio is full of life and laughter. It's a valuable part of our student's development and success in life."

For adults in Cushing's Life Opportunities Unlimited (LOU) program, artistic and therapeutic music expression are encouraged

through daily group activities. At the Braintree site, there are two rooms designated for art — one called Open Canvas Gallery and the other called Creative Expressions. Participants have worked on projects such as murals made out of bottle caps, a framed quilt (using glue instead of a sewing machine) and dog toys made with braided fleece, which will be donated to a nearby shelter. This spring, they will be painting and decorating small flower pots, which they can either take home or sell at the Braintree location's craft fair on May 4.

LOU participants have also worked on bigger, long-term projects such as a master copy of Vincent van Gogh's "Starry Night" using crayons, as well as their own version of "The Great Wave of Kanagawa," which was painted on a large piece of wood.

"Having an art program is very important," said Catherine DeQuinzio, LOU North art instructor. "The arts are something that are often overlooked. At LOU North, in particular, coming into the art rooms is different than the other rooms. It's a little more free-spirited. I try to make sure all individuals get to choose their own colors or materials, and it seems that everyone enjoys the fact that they get different options. Everyone's art projects look different and it's really great to see. We also do small projects such as cutting, tracing and coloring because it's important to keep our fingers moving and practice fine motor tasks."



LOU program participants created their own version of Vincent Van Gogh's "Starry Night."



Enjoying the Rock and Shine Concert are, from left, staff member Colleen Townsend and students Jai'lyn Jackson and Kareem Ashu.



Joe Barness dances along to the music at the Rock and Shine Concert.



Art teacher Randy Wiskow, right, works with student Lauren Lopes.



LOU program participants Jim Cahill, left, and Na Zou helped create a piece of artwork out of bottle caps.

A lasting bond

Longtime volunteer finds fulfillment at Cushing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

When Southborough resident David Ambach visits the Cardinal Cushing Centers, he equates it to spending time with family.

“My job keeps me so busy — I went to 18 countries last year — that this is like a reset for me,” said Ambach, who has a degree in fashion merchandising and works as a retail buyer. “I don’t have children of my own right now, so they’re like a family for me.”

After initially expressing interest in giving back, Ambach was connected with Tom McElman, Cushing’s director of recreation and community programs, and began doing arts and crafts projects with Cushing residents on Saturdays. That was 15 years ago. Though he tries to make it in once a month, on average Ambach makes the hour-long drive from Southborough about eight times each year.

“It’s a little something extra for them—a ‘do something fun’ day,” said Ambach.

Projects have included constructing gingerbread houses, making bubble art, decorating planters and creating heart-shaped wall plaques.

“Very quickly, I saw just how happy the kids at Cardinal Cushing are,” Ambach said. “They’re aware that they fit in here, that they belong here and that they can be themselves here. It’s an environment where they play sports, go to prom, get jobs and do all the things kids are supposed to do at their age. It’s pretty incredible. I was excited about what was going on.”

Coincidentally, through his volunteerism, Ambach has been able to reconnect with a childhood friend and neighbor, who suffered trauma to the brain during a sledding accident and is now in Cushing’s adult services.

“His family moved away and I always wondered what happened to him,” said Ambach. “Twenty years later, there he was playing basketball at Cushing.”

Another special moment that stands out to Ambach occurred when he was having a rough day and one student saw right through the smile he had put on and offered him comfort.

“I’ll always remember how he gave me a pat on the back and told me that it’d be okay,” said Ambach. “He



Longtime Cushing volunteer David Ambach, center, with Cushing program participants Sarah Martin and Shane Mahoney.

was so perceptive of everything, even the emotions under the surface.”

“I learn a lot from all the kids,” he added. “I leave there

so energized and full of life. These kids have been given some incredible challenges in life, yet they’re so happy and have so much to give.”

Student performs life-saving maneuver

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academics, communication and employability. The program is geared towards students ages 18-22 with autism or mild- to low-average cognitive abilities. It provides them with comprehensive academic, vocational, social and life experiences.

“Learning new skills — specialized skills — helps students know that they can contribute in work, social and community situations in a meaningful way,” said Hamilton. “First aid skills help them learn how to care for themselves and loved ones, instead of always relying on other people. Plus, first aid and CPR are often certifications that employees need to acquire jobs in childcare, in schools

or in food services, which are all vocational areas of interest for ACE students.”

Mulligan is currently working at Wahlburgers and hopes to have a future in the restaurant industry.

“Certifications like this make him marketable and help him feel more confident,” said Hamilton. “Though I would never wish a choking incident on anyone, it was great that James could see how learning important skills — and taking them so seriously — can translate to the real world. His ability to describe his actions to the other ACE kids strengthened their understanding of the importance of first aid and how the skills they’re learning can make a huge difference in someone’s life.”

Darrin Brown, Cushing’s training specialist, was equally

thrilled to hear the story of Mulligan’s success.

“I met James on his first day of school and it’s been wonderful to see the child who walked in here develop into such a great young man,” said Brown. “I’d expect nothing less of him in that situation, but I was so proud to hear that he was able to step up to the plate. I was walking on clouds for weeks.”

Brown, who has also trained all Cushing staff members in first aid and CPR, was amazed by the timing of it all.

“I’ve trained thousands of people over the years and I could probably count on one hand how many times someone’s had to use that training in a choking incident,” he said. “It’s pretty incredible to see your training have such an immediate impact.”

Cushing training a recipe for success

By MEAGHAN CASEY

It's been 20 years since JJ McClellan was a student at Cardinal Cushing Centers, but the lessons he learned still resonate in all aspects of his life today.

JJ, who is autistic, grew up in Canton and started his education in the public schools before enrolling at Cushing as a day student at age 14.

"He maxed out of the school district once he got a little older," said his mother, Jane. "His social and emotional needs weren't being met. As soon as I crossed the threshold of the Cardinal Cushing Centers, I knew it was the right place for JJ. It was a warm, caring environment, the teachers were wonderful and the children were happy and welcoming."

"I had fun right away," said JJ, describing the transition.

"My husband and I were working full-time, so it was important to know that he was safe and in the best possible place," added Jane.

Though he already had a solid academic foundation, Jane said Cushing taught JJ how to apply his knowledge and skills to make his life better.

"I'd say it was the base for his success," said Jane. "He was able to overcome speech delays, he learned a lot and he developed a lot. Even to this day, he relies on the training he got at Cushing."

Through the vocational training at Cushing, JJ worked in the culinary arts department, preparing and serving meals to staff and students. He learned about portioning and serving meals, bussing trays and completing all dish room tasks according to sanitary guidelines. During that time, he also served customers from the community — even his grandmother, who would visit for lunch — at the Iron Kettle and the Bass Village Café.

"I learned how to make salads and lunches and use all of the equipment," said JJ. "It was important for when I got a real job."

"It was wonderful that he got to try out different areas," said Jane, who added that although JJ also worked in the Cushing Greenery, the culinary program interested him most.

He also expanded his recreational horizons, joining Cushing's bike club, playing golf, trying out cross country skiing, performing in the musicals and attending



JJ McClellan enjoying an island vacation, above, and as a Cushing student, below.

homecoming and prom.

"He had all of the experiences of a high school, tailored to his needs," said Jane. "Plus, he learned responsibility and teamwork through a lot of those activities."

JJ graduated from Cushing in 1997, at age 22, and gave a speech at the ceremony.

"It was one of the proudest moments of my life," said Jane.

Since that time, JJ has worked in a variety of environments, including at a nursing home, the former Old Country Buffet and the Massachusetts Hospital School (now called the Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children). He now works for Sodexo, servicing the Dunkin' Donuts corporate office in Canton.

"I am a dietary aide," said JJ. "I wash dishes, I do the trash. I fill the ice machine first thing every morning, and do lots of other things. I am a very busy worker. I'm tired when I get home from work every day."

Outside of work, JJ enjoys going to the gym, going bowling and watching sports.

"I like watching the Red Sox and the Patriots with my

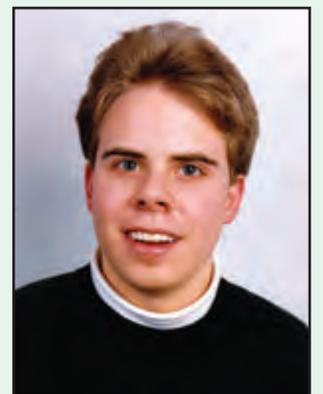
dad Sunday afternoons," he said. "My favorite sport is golf. I watch The Masters, the PGA, the U.S. Open and the British Open."

He also has an appreciation for classical music.

"I have over 100 CDs," said JJ. "Tchaikovsky is my favorite composer. I listen to my music when I go to bed and whenever I feel like it — especially when there's a thunderstorm."

JJ is living with his parents in Canton now, but will gradually be transitioning to his own condo in Norwood over the next three years.

"Cushing helped him to become the best person he could be," said Jane. "He takes part in family life more and is just more comfortable with himself. We couldn't be happier."



On the run: Marathoners raise funds for Cushing

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"I went to visit Cushing for the first time with my mom, and seeing the school and the students made the training and fundraising feel more tangible to me," said McGoldrick. "I was not only able to see where the fundraising efforts would be put towards, but also able to see the importance of creating awareness for such an amazing cause. Being able to tell my network of friends, family and coworkers about Cushing has resulted in an insurmountable amount of support and fundraising."

McGoldrick, who now lives in midtown Manhattan and works for Morgan Stanley, has run a few half marathons, but this was her second full marathon.

"I ran the Boston Marathon for the first time last year

for Tenacity," said McGoldrick. "It was such an incredible experience — both the training and fundraising and the actual race. I wasn't planning on running this year, but when I heard there was an opening on Cushing's team, I couldn't say no."

Duxbury resident Cheryl Gleason chose to run in honor of her nephew who has cerebral palsy. She heard about a bib up for grabs through a member of her running club, the South Shore Running Moms. Appreciating the services Cushing provides, she knew it was the right cause and the perfect opportunity to run her first marathon.

"Knowing that I'm helping the teachers and students at Cardinal Cushing get tools they need is a great feeling," said Gleason, who works in Marshfield Public Schools as a technology integration specialist.

"I have a number of friends and family who have worked at Cardinal Cushing over the years," she said. "They have all praised the organization. I'm lucky enough to have this pretty cool community garden on my street and John McCluskey, the overseer of the trust that supports the garden, has gotten Cardinal Cushing involved in it. I love seeing the students down at the farm. Sometimes I see them collecting eggs from the chickens or tending to their garden. It's a special place."

"I've had an incredible experience fundraising for Cardinal Cushing," she continued. "I've enjoyed bringing awareness to this wonderful asset our community has, as well as hearing the stories people have shared about their experiences with Cushing."

To learn more or to support the Cushing team, visit www.crowdrise.com/cardinalcushingcentersboston2017.

ON THE RUN

Marathoners race to raise funds for Cushing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

More than 32,000 runners pushed themselves to the limit on Monday, April 17, conquering 26 miles, 385 yards from Hopkinton to Boston. Among them were four individuals raising critical funds for Cardinal Cushing Centers. They made up the fourth fundraising team for Cushing in the Boston Marathon. In 2014 and 2015, Cushing was given three official numbers from event sponsor John Hancock, and last year a fourth number was added.

Heading into the race, Cushing's foursome had already raised well over \$60,000, and two were in the top 40 of Hancock's more than 1,000 nonprofit runners.

Lisa Siegel, whose son, Jack, has been a residential student at Cushing since September of 2015, couldn't pass up the opportunity to raise funds and awareness for the school. Jack, who was diagnosed with autism at age 3 is now 15 years old.

"Jack's team consists of amazing staff members who collaborate as a group to develop programming to help Jack succeed both in the classroom and in the residence," said Siegel, who lives in an eastern suburb of Pittsburgh, Pa. "I chose to run to raise funds to help support this amazing organization who work hard every day to help our kids be successful."

Siegel has run one other marathon before Boston, and was most looking forward to the high-fives from those watching in the sidelines.

"I ran the Marine Corp. Marathon in 2012 and was quite sure I would never do another, but

when the opportunity to run Boston and raise funds for Jack's school was presented, I changed my mind," she said.

Canton resident Kayla Florence, whose great uncle, Lenny Florence, was affectionally known as "Mr. Springtime" for all of his support of Cushing, is running her first marathon.

"Uncle Lenny was one of the smartest, hardest working and most philanthropic people," she said. "He knew that Cardinal Cushing Centers was providing a very important service to a group of people who were often forgot about in his lifetime. It's important to us that we continue our legacy with Cushing in honor of Uncle Lenny and in honor of the amazing things that go on at Cushing day in and day out."

Florence, whose father, Eli, also serves on the steering committee of Cushing's capital campaign, admitted she was not a long-distance runner — and had never run more than 10 miles at once — but wanted to bring more awareness to the students, the staff and the campaign.

"The new building is going to help Cardinal Cushing Centers fulfill its mission in giving possibility, opportunity and hope to the students and adults who continue to learn and to better themselves each day," said Florence, who works at Florence Electric/Kaydon Integrated Technologies and is a field hockey and ice hockey coach at Thayer Academy.

Cohasset native Maggie McGoldrick was connected to Cushing through her mother, Mary, and aunt, Kathy Mulhall, who both volunteer at Cushing.

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Top: Cheryl Gleason went into the run with the support of her husband, Chris, and children, Olivia and Conor.

Above: Maggie McGoldrick was all smiles after last year's Marathon with Tenacity Founder Bud Schultz.

Left: Lisa Siegel, whose son Jack is a residential student at Cushing, was happy to be a member of the team.

Far left: Kayla Florence had some preparation with the Tough Mudder event.