

CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR



All ages. All abilities. All together.

Vol. 5 No. 2

A PUBLICATION OF CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS

FALL 2018

BUDDY SYSTEM



Cushing student Preston Linthwaite washes a car at Briteway Carwash in Norwell while Mark Caruso, a Best Buddies employment counselor, looks on. PHOTO: SEAN BROWNE



Chris Westfield loves doing yard work at the home he shares with Barbara Compton.

Perfect match: shared living success

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Shared living is a residential program that matches an individual with a disability with a provider who is willing to share his or her home, welcoming the individual as a contributing member of the family. One of the key facets of the program is that special care is taken to match individuals with providers best suited to meet their needs. The goal is for the arrangement to benefit both parties.

In the case of Christopher Westfield and

Peggy Compton, mission accomplished.

Westfield had been living in a group home run by Cardinal Cushing Centers for 11 years and was looking for a change. His parents, Barbara and Joe, were made aware of the shared living option by Ryan O’Kane, who directs Cushing’s Shared Living program.

“We were hesitant at first,” Peggy said. “What if it didn’t work out?”

Chris and Barbara had several months to get

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COOKING UP VOLUNTEERISM



**CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS
CONNECTOR**
A PUBLICATION OF CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS

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Helping others is a team effort



PETER O'MEARA

In looking at the stories and photos that fill the pages of this edition of the *Connector*, I can't help but be impressed with the partnerships and relationships that are highlighted and that we at Cushing are fortunate to have. From our affiliation with Best Buddies and the businesses that employ our students and residents to Barbara Compton, who has opened her home to

Christopher Westfield in what is a spectacular shared living success story, these partnerships are meaningful and valuable.

Then there is the Boston Foundation, which has given us a generous \$100,000 grant to provide support for the Vocational Inclusion Pathways (VIP) program, which helps individuals with intellectual disabilities obtain and retain long-term, meaningful employment.

You will read profiles of a board member and one of our volunteers. We benefit from the commitment and dedication of many people who share their talents with us to the benefit of those we serve.

Then there is Colin Keady, one of our

neighbors, who chose Cushing for his Eagle Scout Service Project. Thanks to efforts of Colin and his fellow scouts, the trails behind our school building are again accessible to our students and staff. We are grateful for their faithfulness to the Boy Scout slogan to "do a good turn daily."

That slogan accurately describes our staff's dedication to our students and residents. All our efforts are geared to doing right by those whom we serve and their families.

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

Campaign season in full swing



JODY NASH

I am excited to share an update on our Changing Lives – Building a Community campaign. We are closer than ever to reaching our goal of creating a new MarketPlace, and our vision to transform our Hanover location into a neighborhood where people of all abilities live, work and play together is becoming a reality.

Residents began moving into the Bethany Apartments in the renovated Kennedy Building in May. The building includes 33 units of affordable housing for people without disabilities, as well as four units for residents

with disabilities. We welcome our new neighbors!

The MarketPlace will be the second component of the transformation, and we continue to make progress raising funds toward this goal. Our inaugural Paddle for a Purpose tournament, held in March, was a great success, raising more than \$18,000. We are looking forward to next year's event on March 2.

Fred and Jean Raymond, Cushing parents, held a cultivation event at their home to discuss our campaign goals with family and friends; their daughter Katie, who attends Cushing, was also in attendance. We received many generous contributions from this event, and were able to continue to broaden our circle of supporters.

In terms of MarketPlace building updates, we are getting closer to construction. We have solicited proposals from five contractors through

an RFQ process. We expect to award a contract this fall, and hope to break ground in the spring of 2019. It is so exciting to see this vision become a reality.

I would like to thank those who attended this year's Springtime Gala. I am grateful to have been honored at the event, and your support helped make it the most successful Springtime in recent years.

We are so appreciative of your continued support as we move closer to making our dream of the MarketPlace a reality. Please consider donating to Cushing today. You can give online at cushingcenters.org/support/give/fundraising/. Thank you.

Jody Nash is chair of the Changing Lives – Building a Community campaign.



Cardinal Cushing Centers
Opportunity Fund

You can help us open more doors by giving to **The Opportunity Fund** today.

Donate online at
www.CushingCenters.org or
use the enclosed reply envelope.

Paddle for a Purpose
All proceeds benefit Cardinal Cushing Centers

Save the Date!
Saturday, March 2, 2019

Details to Follow

Cardinal Cushing Centers

Springtime
Save the Date!

Thursday, May 30, 2019
Seaport Hotel, Boston

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:



ELAINE COSSEBOOM

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

When Hingham resident Elaine Cosseboom was introduced to Cushing three years ago, she knew it was a place where she wanted to invest her time.

Cosseboom volunteers weekly, helping Cushing’s culinary students prepare and serve lunch. She also teaches an adaptive tennis class each spring.

“Volunteering at Cardinal Cushing Centers has been an extremely rewarding experience,” she said. “I truly believe that every person has unique and special gifts. Sharing these gifts with others is what keeps us all connected.”

A friend of Cushing’s Capital Campaign Chair Jody Nash, Cosseboom was quick to see why Nash’s daughter Sophie thrived in an environment like Cushing.

“It’s such a special place,” said Cosseboom. “Everyone is so invested.”

She has been particularly impressed by the vocational services, and has enjoyed interacting with the culinary students, as well as the Cushing community at large. Recognizing the importance of having job training and paid employment opportunities so easily accessible to Cushing students, she anticipates the construction and opening of the new MarketPlace



Volunteer Elaine Cosseboom helps Cushing student Shousei Honji serve green beans during lunch. PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE

will bring positive changes to the vocational program.

“With the building right on Rt. 53, students will be able to better interact with the Hanover community while learning valuable skills,” she said.

Cosseboom and her husband, Bud Schultz, own and manage the Cohasset Tennis Club, which offers travel and intra-club teams, after-school programs, clinics, private lessons and more. She has brought her passion for the sport to Cushing, where she typically teaches anywhere from four to 12 students per class from April through June.

“When I first started volunteering, Cushing was looking to offer a tennis class as part of the after-school recreational program, so it worked out perfectly,” said Cosseboom.

“Working with Cushing students has been so inspiring. Some of them have never held a tennis racquet before, and they have

to work so much harder to complete physical activities. It’s extremely rewarding witnessing the joy, pride and sense of accomplishment they experience when they learn a new skill or have successfully performed the task at hand. If they leave with smiles on their faces, it’s been a good class.”

Her students have also had the opportunity to participate in Special Olympics Massachusetts events, including the Summer Games.

“I have been fortunate enough to attend as a coach and have witnessed some amazing personal victories,” said Cosseboom. “The environment at Special Olympics is wonderful in so many ways. From the volunteers who organize and run the event to the athletes who train and compete, and the families and community who come to cheer on and support the athletes. It’s definitely one of the highlights of the summer.”



Board member Ralph Rivkind enjoys spending time with Cushing students.

BOARD PROFILE: RALPH RIVKIND

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Norwell resident Ralph Rivkind certainly believes in taking the saying “love thy neighbor” to heart.

Rivkind, who lives less than a mile from Cardinal Cushing Centers, has served on Cushing’s Board of Directors and provided corporate counsel to Cushing since 2013. His board term runs through June 30, but he will continue to provide legal services.

He was first introduced to the position through Joe Richardi, a Cushing parent and former board member. Additionally, his friend and client, Paul Sullivan, who has been a longtime supporter of Cushing, was quick to encourage Rivkind to get involved.

“The first day and every day since, I have fallen in love with Cushing and with Sr. Joanne [Schatzlein]. I just think she’s

wonderful. And the staff is phenomenal. I see a lot of people at Cushing who are there because they want to make it better.”

Rivkind, a partner at Rubin and Rudman LLP, represents closely-held businesses, nonprofit organizations, and families and individuals in the areas of taxation, business law, banking, commercial transactions, real estate, and estate planning and estate administration. He serves on several boards, both public and charitable.

“What I’m doing – I’m paying it forward,” he said. “My life has been good and all of my nonprofit board involvement is a way to give back.”



BUDDY SYSTEM

Cushing-Best Buddies partnership has fostered job opportunities for nearly a decade

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

It's a rite of passage for any young person to secure his or her first job, and Cushing and Best Buddies Massachusetts are committed to seeing that through for the individuals they serve.

Since 2009, Cushing's vocational staff has worked in partnership with Best Buddies

Massachusetts' employment division. Together, a variety of community-based job opportunities have been created to match Cushing students' interests and skills. Opportunities include paid employment, internships and volunteer

BLAKE MACKENZIE | Denly Gardens

positions. Job development skills, job placement and job coaching services are provided to all students entering community placements.

"It's been a very successful model," said Craig Welton, State Director of Best Buddies Massachusetts. "It represents one of our organization's three key mission pillars — integrated employment. It secures

jobs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, allowing them to earn an income, pay taxes and continuously and independently support themselves."

"Both organizations see the value," he continued. "What better way for these individuals to hit benchmarks than to have already been employed by age 22? Having a resume and an employment record is very powerful."

Mark Caruso, an employment consultant with Best Buddies Massachusetts, has worked with Cushing students in this role for the past three years. Because nearly all of his placements are from Cushing, he works out of Cushing office space in Hanover and travels to the numerous work sites with participants. Prior to joining the Best Buddies staff, he was employed at Cushing in various roles, working in residential life, then as support staff and eventually as a teaching assistant.

"I've been lucky enough to be here for 14 years, watching some of these kids grow up and get their first pay checks," said Caruso. "That first job means so much to them and it's an amazing feeling to help them go through the process."

Caruso works specifically with Cushing vocational

students, ages 16-22. With each individual, he'll perform an evaluation for job interests, help him/her build a resume to apply to jobs and prepare him/her for an interview. Students may also participate in job shadowing experiences, which provide them with realistic views of jobs, while helping Caruso to identify their preferred work environments, career interests and abilities. Once a job is secured, Caruso provides transportation and guidance.

"I'm hands-on learning the job with them," he said. "It helps because I've worked in restaurants and in landscaping in the past, so I use that in job coaching. I'll stay with them for the first couple of months and then fade out, but I'll maintain constant communication with their managers and do regular check-ins."

Current placements include Audi Norwell, Briteway Car Wash in Norwell, Classic Shine Auto Fitness Center in Norwell, Dairy Queen Grill & Chill in Hanover, Davio's in Braintree, Denly Gardens in East Weymouth, Fit Factory in Braintree and Kingston, Graham Built Corp. in Pembroke, Healthtrax in Hanover, McGee Pre-owned Superstore in Pembroke, Moe's Southwest Grill in Hanover, Panera Bread in Hanover, Talking Information Center (TIC) in Marshfield, George



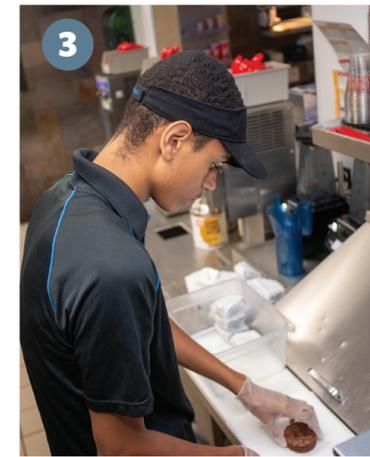
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- 1. Cushing student Blake Mackenzie folds pizza boxes at Denly Gardens in East Weymouth.
- 2. Will Nutt washes dishes in the kitchen at Panera Bread in Hanover.
- 3. Cushing student Savion Yetman preps brownies at Dairy Queen in Hanover.
- 4. Preston Linthwaite washes a car at Briteway Carwash in Norwell.
- 5. Mark Caruso of Best Buddies, right, speaks with Cushing student Ja'Kahrie Brucker in the kitchen of Panera Bread.

PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE



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5

WILL NUTT | Panera Bread

Washington Toma TV and Appliance in Brockton and Weymouth and Wahlburgers in Hingham. INFINITY of Hanover and Weymouth Town Hall have also agreed to hire Cushing students in the near future.

"Locally, businesses have been very open to us," said Caruso. "Panera has been amazing, hiring three students this fall. Denly Gardens and Wahlburgers have been amazing as well hiring two participants last fall, and both employers have been so compassionate in his process. Not every business is as open to hiring people with disabilities, but some can't wait to be part of the process."

"I think the Best Buddies name, in combination with Cardinal Cushing Centers' name, opens more doors for people with employment," said Doug Frazier, Cushing's Director of Vocational Services, who works closely with Caruso. "The partnership's been a total success in my mind."

Caruso agrees it's a win-win. "It fulfills our goals as an organization and we're helping kids find not only jobs, but social inclusion," he said.

Overall, Best Buddies Massachusetts has more than 115 employed participants throughout the state. The



JA'KAHRIE BRUCKER | Panera Bread

partnership with Cushing, which started as a pilot program nearly a decade ago, is unique. Cushing is the only school in the nonprofit/private sector that Best Buddies has partnered with.

"Our model is direct placement, and that might not be the first step for a lot of other places," said Welton. "But at Cushing, Doug and the vocational staff have already worked with these students, so they're

coming to us ready to go."

Through Cushing's Vocational Services, students as young as 14 are provided with a quality instructional program that incorporates best practice assessment, curriculum, instruction and employability skill development. In the classroom and in retail shops within the Cushing community, such as the bakery, greenhouse or thrift store, students are learning vocational skills that better prepare them to live and work in their community as independently as possible. When Caruso begins working with them, they already have a solid foundation of career interests and job acquisition skills.

"You really need a strong vocational program and foundation in a model like this, so it's worked so well because of the supports they have in place," said Welton.

Both organizations see the *value*. What better way for these individuals to hit benchmarks than to have already been employed by age 22?

Having a resume and an employment record is very POWERFUL.

CRAIG WELTON
State Director of
Best Buddies Massachusetts



SAVION YETMAN | Dairy Queen

Perfect match: shared living success

SHARED LIVING: From Page 1

to know each other, but he was sold the first time they met.

“I knew once we sat down and started talking,” he said. “I saw all that we had in common.”

Chris and Barbara share a love of the Red Sox and all things outdoors, including grilling, yard work and sitting by the fire pit.

“We found out everything Chris wanted in a new home,” O’Kane said. “He outlined the best-case scenario. I met with a lot of potential providers. When I met Barbara she seemed like a great match. She is a caring person and she and Chris have similar personalities.”

Throw in the fact that Chris, who has ambulatory challenges, would have a first-floor bedroom in Barbara’s Pembroke home, and he would be living near his job at Stop & Shop in Whitman and his parents’ home in Hanson, and you have a winning combination.

Chris and Barbara met for the first time in mid-October of last year and he moved in last April. Barbara has fulfilled the shared living objective of accepting the individual as part of your family – and then some. She brought him to Cape Cod this summer for a week with her family. Peggy and Joe came to visit as well,

and if they had any lingering doubts about the success of their son’s living arrangement, they were eliminated that day.

“We were greeted like we were part of the family,” Peggy said. “Christopher fit right in. We met Barbara’s daughter and her grandchildren. They accepted Christopher without any hesitation.”

Barbara previously worked for an agency that runs group homes and as a hospital administrator. “I wanted to get back to working directly with people,” she said. “I was looking for something where I could enhance somebody’s life. I thought I would work at a program, but then I found out I could have someone live with me.”

As much as the arrangement has benefited Chris, Barbara feels like the real winner.

“Chris has changed my life in so many good ways,” she said. “He gets excited about everyday things. It gives you such a different outlook on life.”

“I can’t say enough about it,” Chris chimed in. “I love every minute. When she goes anywhere I’m right behind.”

Chris’ mother does have one minor complaint, however.

“My only beef with Barbara is that she does too much for him,” Peggy said, laughing.



Chris Westfield and his shared living provider, Barbara Compton, sit by the fire pit they built together.



Cushing was honored to host Nineequa Blanding from the Boston Foundation on a visit to Cushing’s Hanover community. Cushing’s Vocational Inclusion Pathways (VIP) program, which provides employment training and jobs to Cushing students, is a proud 2018 grant recipient of the Foundation. Joining Blanding, second from left, on her visit were, from left, board member Joannie Jaxtimer, Jansi Chandler, Cushing Vice President of Development, and Doug Frazier, Director of Vocational Services.

Boston Foundation is VIP for Cushing

\$100,000 grant benefits vocational program

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

The Boston Foundation has made a name for itself by bringing people and resources together, and it’s doing so in a big way for Cardinal Cushing Centers.

The Foundation has granted Cushing \$100,000 to provide support for its Vocational Inclusions Pathways (VIP) program. The funds come from the Boston Foundation’s Permanent Fund for Boston, the area’s only endowed fund focusing on the pressing needs of Greater Boston. Cushing was one of 44 nonprofits awarded grants in June of this year.

“We have an opportunity to make strategic investments, and we were so impressed with Cushing’s work — particularly the VIP program,” said Nineequa Blanding, Director of Health and Wellness for the Boston Foundation. “Our mission is to use our platform and our resources to advance efforts in building and sustaining a vital, prosperous

city and region, where justice and opportunity are extended to everyone. Programs like the VIP one are integral to providing the kinds of supports that will improve the trajectory of the lives of young people with disabilities in Greater Boston.”

Cushing’s VIP model is unique in that it promotes student involvement in all aspects of career planning decision-making. By identifying skills that students ages 14-22 will need and instructing them in those skills, the program helps them to secure paid employment or work experiences. Students are placed in jobs in Cushing’s retail shops, as well as in integrated settings in the community — some of which is coordinated by Mark Caruso, an employment consultant with Best Buddies Massachusetts. Ultimately, the goal is for them to find a long-term fit that will enable them to feel a sense of

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security and independence.

“One goal for the Foundation is to invest in youth with disabilities in the transitional period before they turn 22,” said Blanding. “There’s a considerable gap in services for those transitioning out of school, and the VIP program is a robust effort to support young adults so that they can thrive as they enter adulthood. The program is already impactful, no question, but my hope is that our funding will help the program to expand and meet its targets, especially when it comes to the number of students they engage.”

Currently, the VIP programs serves more than 100 students, with 70 percent experiencing community-based jobs. The Foundation hopes to see an increase in the number of participants enrolled in the program, with at least 80 percent securing paid employment by the time they turn 22. The grant funding will help Cushing to collaborate with community partners to create and support internships as well as competitive employment opportunities. It will also allow for job coaching training for Cushing staff twice a year, as well as training for employment partners on how to best provide natural supports to people with disabilities.

“Our first step is to establish a good relationship with our employers and encourage them to join us with some informational training events,” said Doug Frazier, Cushing’s Director of Vocational Services. “Success is a two-way street, but we as an agency must support both the student employee and the employer.”

“It’s really important to have the employers involved in this effort,” said Blanding. “The more buy-in we have among a diverse set of employers, the more choices the students will have.”

Blanding acknowledges the success Cushing has had with the VIP model and applauds Cushing’s partnership with Best Buddies Massachusetts in generating more vocational opportunities for students.

“Cushing’s willingness as an institution to be so collaborative underscores its commitment to providing students with the best resources and supports,” she said.

Blanding is also hopeful that Cushing’s new MarketPlace — breaking ground in the spring — will further foster an environment that helps VIP students define and determine their own meaning of success in the workplace by providing a range of options.

“The expansion will allow Cushing to engage additional students and increase the program’s impact,” she said. “It’s incredible seeing these students who are already working in the bakery and other sites. The skills they’re developing are the kinds of skills that will help them advocate for themselves. I can’t wait to see how deeply integrated they will be in the community as a result of the new building.”

Though the grant was offered as a one-time discretionary grant, the Boston Foundation will remain actively involved, with Blanding making site visits and assisting Cushing with implementation.



Christopher Lyons washes dishes in the kitchen at Cushing.

“There’s a considerable gap in services for those transitioning out of school, and the VIP program is a robust effort so that they can **THRIVE** as they enter adulthood.”

NINEEQUA BLANDING

Director of Health and Wellness for the Boston Foundation



Nina Smith prepares peppers for a meal as part of Cushing’s vocational training. PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE



Tom McElman, right, Cushing's Director of Recreation, and student Brendan M. walk on one of the newly cleared trails.

SCOUT'S HONOR

Eagle project makes for happy trails

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

When it came time for Hanover resident Colin Keady to come up with an idea for his Eagle Scout Service Project, he turned to Cardinal Cushing Centers.

Keady, a junior at Xaverian Brothers High School and a member of Troop 38 in Hanover, was familiar with Cushing's mission and services.

"I knew Cushing was there and what they did," he said. "I had been there caroling when I was in Cub Scouts, so I've had experiences there before."

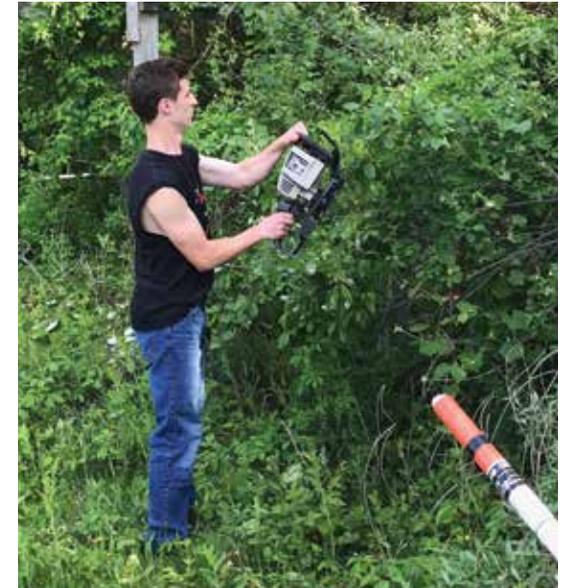
An Eagle Project is an opportunity for a Boy Scout to demonstrate leadership of others while performing a project for the benefit of his community. By completing it, he can earn the highest rank and honor within Boy Scouts of America.

Keady originally approached Tom McElman, Cushing's Director

of Recreation & Community Programs, with a proposal to install an outdoor movie theater, but McElman advised him that there was a greater need to clear the trails behind the school. Keady was in charge of planning the project, and he recruited eight other members of Troop 38 to help with the work. Together, the boys spent about 12 hours clearing the trails. They are in the process of building a boardwalk to improve accessibility for Cushing students and residents, as well as community members.

"That area was unusable before, so hopefully the students can enjoy some more activity out there," said Keady. "There are rope courses and workout spaces that more people will have access to."

"With the revitalization of this trail, our students and staff can safely use our one-kilometer trail for exercise, relaxing on the benches to enjoy the surroundings, and to learn about the many different ecosystem that we have in our backyard," said McElman. "In addition, the Hanover Open Space Committee and the community will have access to this trail."



Troop 38 member Ethan Ritchie trims hedges.



Colin Keady chose Cushing for his Eagle Project.



Scout Hunter Puleo lends a hand by raking leaves.