

CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR



All ages. All abilities. All together.

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FALL 2020

Bearing with it

Pages 4-5



Students have returned to Cushing, rejoining residents who stayed on, including Shannon O'Connell, who shows off her painting to teacher Sonja Jensen.

Graduation the culmination of an 'awesome' experience

By MEAGHAN CASEY

When Conor Daly walked across the stage at Cushing's graduation ceremony in August, it was with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Conor, 21, enrolled as a residential student at Cushing in the fall of 2016. While in his teens as a student at the

Cotting School in Lexington, he attended community recreation programs at Cushing during the summer.

"We used to say 'wouldn't it be awesome if Conor could be a resident here,'" said his mother, Kate Daly. She and her husband, Joe, are Quincy residents.

Eventually the family applied and Conor, who has cerebral palsy, was accepted. He moved in, thrived in vocational learning and

Conor Daly accepts his diploma from Cushing President & CEO Michelle Markowitz.

recreational activities and benefited from regular services from Cushing's physical therapy team, led by Kym Doherty, Stephanie MacKay and Megan Walsh.

"We're very blessed," said Daly. "It hasn't been easy for the PT department, but they've gone above and beyond."

"Conor's made tremendous growth since he matriculated to Cardinal Cushing," said Doherty. "We've all worked with him and enjoyed watching him excel here — not just us, but his residential staff, teachers and other therapists."

"I was with Conor since his first day and he has taught me more than I could ever teach him," said Chloe Truskowski, his 1:1 teaching assistant. "He is patient. He let me learn about him and very rarely became frustrated. He is resilient. His inner strength and positive mindset are powerful forces. He can and will work through anything. His desire to learn and grow will forever be his greatest strength."

When Conor first arrived at Cushing, he needed assistance and extra time to walk inside and outside the school buildings and around the grounds.

"He frequently caught his toes on rugs and bumped into



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

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Pandemic response requires team effort



**MICHELLE
MARKOWITZ**

Welcome back. That feels so wonderful to say, even as we started this fall with the “new normal” for all of our day programs and schools. As you will read in this edition, COVID-19 has certainly presented us with a range of challenges. We know that some of you went a long time without seeing loved ones, and those visitation restrictions created a great deal of stress and heartache. For others, the responsibility of your child’s care and virtual learning fell into your hands for a much longer time period than we could have initially anticipated. We truly appreciate your commitment and patience as we have had to

navigate these unusual circumstances.

I will never be able to express enough gratitude to our incredibly dedicated staff at Cushing. Our art director, Randy Wiskow, made a sign for our community that said “Heroes Work Here,” and that perfectly describes this team. Our Cushing heroes were here every single day to support and care for our community during this crisis. Given the needs of those we support, it was important that we continued to provide a consistent and predictable schedule, with health and safety at the forefront of all of our decisions.

I have heard from many families that staff members went above and beyond to keep their loved ones safe and engaged, not only with daily programming initiatives, but by going that extra mile—whether it was a drive-by birthday parade for someone home with family or an extra evening Zoom session for a person who needed it.

We are grateful for all of the support as we

have worked to bring our staff and participants back to school and their adult programs successfully. As with many traditions that have been impacted by the pandemic, our organization’s largest annual fundraising event, Springtime, was canceled and our newest event, the 5K, has taken on a virtual format. Our supporters have been so incredibly generous in giving to Cushing during these extraordinary times, particularly through the Cushing Opportunity Fund. The funds raised have helped to offset the incredible expenses we have had during this pandemic. Every donation, no matter the size, is still needed and will make a lasting impact as we continue to keep our doors open and operations moving forward.

Thank you, and stay safe.

Michelle Markowitz is president & CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers.



Cushing's MarketPlace to open soon

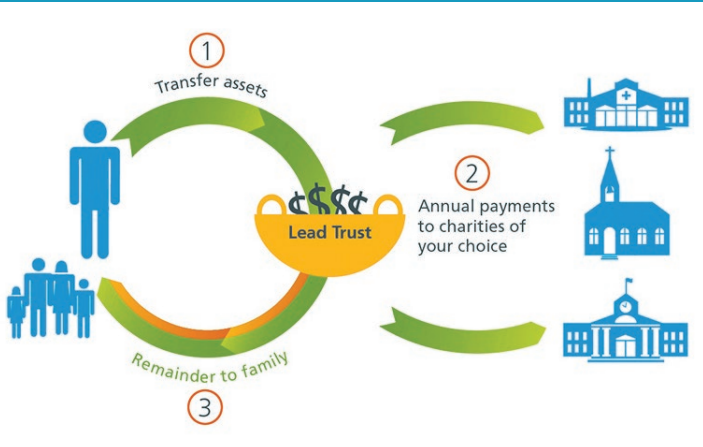
We are just a few weeks away from the opening of the new MarketPlace. The building, visible and accessible directly from Route 53, houses Cushing’s redesigned retail shops, as well as new classroom space. Some familiar shops such as the Bass Cafe, the thrift store and the Cushing Trader will open with new names: The Cushing Café; Take 2 and Unique Boutique. Due to COVID-19, the launch will be very different than initially envisioned, but exciting nonetheless. It is still being determined how and when to welcome visitors, but Cushing’s vocational students and adult participants in the job training programs will still have ample opportunity to better prepare for success in the workplace.

Give to the causes you believe in, and your family

If you hold a nonprofit near and dear, but also want to provide financial support for your family in the future, a charitable lead annuity trust may be the answer.

Over the course of your lifetime, or a set number of years, a charitable lead annuity trust pays a set amount to one or more nonprofits of your choice. Once the term is up, the remainder of the assets transfer to your beneficiaries—at no additional transfer tax cost, regardless of the amount being transferred. Interest rates are at an all-time low, making charitable lead annuity trusts an increasingly popular option for reducing gift and estate tax liabilities.

If you would consider a gift to Cardinal Cushing Centers and would like more information about charitable lead trusts, please contact Laurie Maranian at lmarianian@cushingcenters.org.



BOARD PROFILE: Jeanine Mount

‘You don’t say no to Sister Joanne’

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Jeanine Mount hadn’t even left Madison, Wis. for Boston when she was recruited to join the board of Cardinal Cushing Centers.

Mount, who moved to Brookline in 2013, had been serving on the board of one of the ministries of Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi—the Milwaukee-based congregation with which Cushing is affiliated. She was exiting the board after five years, but Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, director of corporate ministries for the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, wouldn’t let her go that easily.

“When I told them why – because I was moving – Sister Joanne said, ‘I’ve got a job for you.’ You don’t say no to Sister Joanne,” Mount said.

Three months later, Mount walked into her first Cushing board meeting, and was blown away.

“I was so impressed by the caliber and commitment of the people in that group,” she said. “I was kind of taken aback. It shouldn’t have been such an eye opener, but it really was. The other members were so engaged and made time for their involvement, despite their busy professional lives. I remember introducing myself to the first person I saw and it was George Drummey, senior vice president for property development at TJX, and he was on Cushing’s Real Property committee. You couldn’t have had a better fit for that committee.”

She was equally impressed by Cushing’s mission, programs and dedicated staff.

“To hear about the range and complexity of services provided by Cushing, and then to see and feel the depth of the relationships there, it was different from any place I had ever been involved with,” she said.

Mount is a graduate of Purdue University, earning her



To hear about the range and complexity of services provided by Cushing, and then to see and feel the depth of the relationships there, it was different from any place I had ever been involved with.”

bachelor’s in pharmacy and her master’s and Ph.D. in sociology. She has led research projects funded by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Before moving east, she was an associate dean and associate professor at the Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy, where she spent 28 years.

Her move was based on an opportunity at Northeastern’s Bouve College of Health Sciences as an associate dean and professor. She now serves as associate provost for Academic and Professional Affairs at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Services. She is also co-chair of the pastoral council of the Paulist Center. She and her husband, David, have been married for 41 years.

Mount is currently in her second extension on the Cushing board, having served as co-chair for three years. She served her first two years as co-chair with Kevin Kiley and her third year with Jerry Vitti, who has remained on as co-chair with John Cochrane.

“When Jerry came in, I was able to fill him in on what we’d been doing as chairs and he could slide into that and make suggestions,” said Mount. “It’s wonderful continuity to the board having two chairs.”

Having served during Cushing’s capital campaign and the planning for the new MarketPlace Building, Mount is thrilled to see some of the expansion in Hanover come to fruition.

“We had no idea four years ago that the decision to open a building with good airflow and more space in a warm and safe environment would be so critical,” she said. “It took an enormous amount of hard work, but here we are. It’s absolutely providential given the situation we’re in now.”



Special Needs Planning Q & A

**Q: What is a Special Needs Pooled Trust (SNPT)?**

A: The SNPT is a legal vehicle enabling money to be set aside for a person with a disabling condition. It is intended to help preserve funds for the individual, while protecting access to public benefits. A SNPT must be maintained by a 501c3 nonprofit organization and provide separate accounts for individual beneficiaries, which are “pooled” only for investment purposes.

Q: What are the advantages of a SNPT?

A: Pooling of accounts reduces start-up fees and ongoing administrative costs and can be established as either “first-party” or “third-party” trusts—the former established with the beneficiary’s own assets, the latter using assets provided by other people. A person can be a beneficiary of both kinds of trusts simultaneously.

Q: What is a First Party Trust?

A: Also referred to as a “self-settled” or “Medicaid pay-back” trust, funds deposited come from the beneficiary, and could be a settlement of an injury case, or an inheritance. A lien is placed on the trust at the time of the beneficiary’s death, and Medicaid is entitled to be paid back for anything paid during the beneficiary’s lifetime.

Q: What are the advantages of a First Party Trust?

A: Public benefits are protected, and funds deposited are not counted as assets. Medicaid and SSI benefits are not disrupted. The job of the trustee is to ensure that distributions do not negatively impact benefits.

Q: What is a Third Party Trust?

A: A third-party special needs trust is created and funded by someone other than the beneficiary (e.g. a grandparent). At the end of the beneficiary’s life, the “donor” names where the remaining funds will go.

Q: What are the positive aspects of a Third-Party Trust?

A: There is no Medicaid “pay-back,” and the beneficiary is protected from being taken advantage of by potentially unscrupulous parties. Both first- and third-party trusts are for the sole benefit of the beneficiary, and funds are protected from creditors.

Joan McGrath is the executive director for Planned Lifetime Assistance Network (PLAN) of MA and RI. Joan worked in both public and private accounting, and was director of finance at PLAN for 11 years. She earned her bachelor’s degree in accounting from Boston University School of Management. Founded in 1971 by parents of children with special needs, PLAN of MA & RI is a 501c3 that provides trust management and coordination of services for almost 800 beneficiaries. For more information, visit planofma-ri.org, or call 888-890-7526.

By MEAGHAN CASEY

As the world reacted to COVID-19 and ever-evolving precautionary measures, Cardinal Cushing Centers had to respond on not one but multiple levels: protecting its students, staff, residents and adult day program participants.

“The hardest thing for me, as a leader, was figuring out how to manage this crisis as people were coming to work terrified,” said President & CEO Michelle Markowitz. “It required complete honesty, transparency and empathy. The teamwork has been incredible, and I think it showed how resilient, adaptive and flexible we all are. Our community has an incredible capacity for empathy and caring in times of need, and maintaining physical distance will never change that.”

“I applaud the staff—especially the support staff, administrators and nurses,” said Amy Purkis, Vice President for Student Programs and Services. “We had to change direction so many times, but our main goal was to keep everyone safe, healthy and happy.”

Early on in March, Cushing canceled field trips, as well as attendance to large group events – visiting museums and sports complexes, for example. Iron Kettle luncheons and facility rentals were canceled, program tours were postponed, and vocational work sites were closed. PPE equipment was brought in, and staff members made every effort to keep the Cushing community safe.

“When everything first happened, we had staff members driving all over on a Saturday night looking for thermometers,” said Purkis. “We had one person sewing masks all day long. Everyone pitched in. The leadership, from Michelle down, was right in it with the rest of us.”

“It’s been so important to me to be visible and supportive,” said Markowitz. “One day we had a quarantined home on site with no one to do the laundry, so I suited up in full PPE to assist. And I have to say, I was afraid. But it’s more important than ever to walk the walk and to support our front line staff.”

By March 18, per government mandate, Cushing closed all day programs – South Shore Industries, Life Opportunities Unlimited, St. Coletta Day School and Cardinal Cushing School’s day program in Hanover. Outside visits were suspended and families that took their loved one home were required to keep them home through the statewide shut-down period. By April, remote learning was implemented.

“Jude [Morgan, Director of Education, Hanover] and her team did a phenomenal job providing interactive activities for parents to do with their children at home and making the live content from teachers available,” said Purkis, adding that grant funding and the Cushing Fund helped equip students with Chromebooks and other technology.

In addition to academic content, students and adult day program participants had access to virtual exercise classes,



entertainment and religious services. Residents were still able to use the facilities, such as the pool, track and walking trails, in small cohorts. Socially distant birthday celebrations and movie nights on the field were held, Zoom family visits became the norm and staff members found new ways to engage residents in fishing, gardening, archery, arts and crafts and other outdoor activities.

“We would not have made it through without the dedication and creativity of the staff,” said Donna Hibbert, Director of Residential and Clinical Services for the adult program. “They didn’t complain and they were so supportive of the folks we support. They were the heroes through all of this.”

“We tried hard to create some normalcy,” said Purkis. “A pandemic is something I’ve never seen in my lifetime, and certainly nothing our residents ever experienced, and not seeing

their families was really hard. But I’ve been so impressed by how they’ve handled it.”

Despite all of its safety measures, Cushing had its first positive COVID-19 case reported in late April. A total of four individuals that Cushing supports — out of the 100 who remained in residence — tested positive and were able to recover at Cushing. Additionally, 16 of Cushing’s 650 employees tested positive. By late May, all quarantining and isolation by staff and students was complete and, fortunately, there has not been a new case since.

“The numbers were so low that we could take comfort that the masks, cleaning, temperature checks and everything we were doing to react quickly was working,” said Markowitz. “We had great support from the Town of Hanover. The Hanover Fire Department came out and disinfected our health center and treatment rooms, and the town’s nurse was an incredible resource to our staff. The Hanover Fire Department first responders and physicians from South Shore Health were also here to help with testing. It was just phenomenal.”

Since early June, scheduled outdoor family visits at Cushing have been allowed, to the delight of those who had been separated for months. In August, the adult day program entered Phase 1 of reopening. It is in Phase 3 now, still with limited capacity, but offering full learning opportunities five times a week. Cushing’s community-based day programs successfully opened for in-person learning in September, and both the Hanover and Braintree school programs welcomed back their students in small cohorts. Both locations have supplemented their facilities with outdoor tented classrooms and picnic tables. Staff members have committed to engage in ongoing testing through at least December.

“When we leave work, we all have to remember the responsibility we carry,” said Markowitz. “The health of our community is dependent on the thought, care and good judgment of each and every one of us. It’s important not to get complacent, but I think there’s been an overall sense of excitement this fall. It’s been so wonderful to see the smiling eyes of our students coming back. I think the whole organization has been reenergized.”

1. Cushing student Ned Davenport, who took part in remote learning at home, shows off his artwork with his father, Patrick.
2. Student Zachary Jonas adds artwork to the board reading “Heroes work here.”
3. Adult residents Suzanne Michaud, left, and Amy Slater enjoy some time by the water.
4. Staff members Mario Cruz, Laurie Sousa and David Edouard suit up in protective gear.

5. Staff member Jamar White and Lukas Nedeau take a loop around the track for some exercise.
6. Caroline Gillig enjoys familiar routines at Cushing.
7. Meghan Cooney gets a hug from Emily McElman.
8. Samira Taha adjusts to wearing masks while remaining at Cushing.
9. Faith Chandler helps to keep up the greenhouse.



“Our community has an incredible capacity for empathy and caring in times of need, and maintaining physical distance will never change that.”
— PRESIDENT AND CEO MICHELLE MARKOWITZ





Conor Daly enjoyed kayaking last summer.

Culmination of an ‘awesome’ experience

CONOR from Page 1

people, doorways, furniture and corners,” said Doherty. “We worked with Conor to teach him how to negotiate these obstacles — open and close doors, and carry items while using his posterior walker. He made great strides.”

The mission of Cushing’s physical therapy department is to address students’ strength, balance, coordination and motor planning, and provide students with the skills they need to lead active, healthy and happy lives after graduation. The goal for Conor was to help him to do as much as he could independently, providing support only when needed. Working through some bumps in the road, such as a heel ulcer last fall and the addition of a body brace, Conor persisted and found success at many of the vocational sites at Cushing.

“He’s a hard worker and motivated to do a good job,” said Doherty. “In culinary, we assessed his work station and collaborated with staff to improve his independence during standing and seated tasks. In the Trader, we gave him an adapted chair to help him sit with stability and well-aligned posture while he worked. We also helped teach him how to negotiate the narrow spaces in the store and safely use the small set of stairs with staff assistance.”

“I walked in one day when he was working at the Trader and he was so focused on beading jewelry,” said Daly. “I was beyond words. Fine motor skills had been so hard for him, so I was ecstatic to see him doing that so diligently.”

Daly said his gross motor skills have improved as well, highlighted by his ability to safely use his walker to transfer to and from a variety of chairs and vehicles. Cushing also provided Conor with unique opportunities such as modeling in the annual Springtime fashion show, kayaking and riding an adaptive bike.

“I’ll never forget his proud smile the first time he pedaled the bike by himself,” said Doherty.

And that, she said, is what makes her job so special.



Jack Siegel received wonderful care from Kerri Edson throughout the pandemic.

Parents place trust in Cushing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

It was heartbreaking for many families to stay apart during the early months of the pandemic — and emotions ran even higher for those of whom the virus hit close to home.

When Scituate resident Lisa Siegel found out her son, Jack, a residential student at Cushing, tested positive for COVID-19, she felt helpless.

“We talked it through with Cushing staff and, as a team, we decided Jack would be best served by remaining there,” she said. “As a parent you struggle with the thought, ‘this is my child and I should be caring for him,’ but staff assured us: ‘We’ve got this!’”

“The staff did a fantastic job,” she continued. “They consistently showed up to take care of the kids, and having those familiar faces was so important. It would have been difficult for Jack if his routines had been significantly disrupted.”

Jack contracted the virus in early May, along with three other individuals served by Cushing. The students were relocated to one of two quarantined sites according to safety measures, with staff in full PPE.

“He was a little more tired, but otherwise good,” said Siegel.

She and her husband, Jonathan, and their two older

daughters were finally able to visit Jack in July —after four long months.

“It was so emotional seeing him,” she said. “We were so excited to be reunited. There were many tears, of course.”

She credits the staff’s commitment to communication — virtual and otherwise — that helped them get through the spring.

“Communication was fabulous, and everyone was so kind and caring,” said Siegel. “Plus, they really went above and beyond getting the kids outside, exercising, or in the pool, which was great. It was so much extra work for them to coordinate with the other cohorts and limit who was using the spaces when, but they did an incredible job. We were so fortunate Jack was able to stay at Cushing. He adapted well.”

Jack, 19, has autism and has been a residential student at Cushing for five years. Siegel said they hired an educational consultant to present options to them when they were still living in Pennsylvania, and Cushing was determined to be the best fit. They have since relocated to Massachusetts. In 2017, Siegel was part of Cushing’s Marathon fundraising team.

“I feel emotional and energized just talking about this organization. Our son has had an amazing team helping him to succeed both in the classroom and the residence,” she said.

RACES GO VIRTUAL

CUSHING SUPPORTERS KEEP RUNNING TO CHANGE LIVES

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

While runners won't be gathering together for this year's Run to Change Lives 5K event, they will still be logging miles in support of Cardinal Cushing Centers.

The event, in its second year, will be a virtual one. Participants can register for a traditional 5K, or opt for a one-mile walk or roll, and complete it from Nov. 18-21.



They will be asked to upload their results and encouraged to post photos and videos on social media. There will be awards for the top fundraising teams and the top finishers in each age bracket, as well as prizes for creativity, such as best costume. Registration is still open. Visit www.cushingcenters.org.

support/give/fundraising/run-to-change-lives/ for more information.

Boston Marathoners running for Cushing also had the opportunity to go the virtual route this year. After the cancellation of the in-person race due to the coronavirus

pandemic, runners could opt to complete any 26.2-mile course across the globe in the inaugural virtual Boston Marathon.

Frank Walsh, a Bridgewater State University student who had been training for his first Boston Marathon, completed the run on Sept. 8, finishing in 4 hours and 46 minutes. He chose a route that took him through the Cape Cod Canal.

"I wanted to follow through with the run since I'd already raised the money, and it's probably one of the only opportunities to do a virtual Boston Marathon," said Walsh, who is studying exercise science. His brother, Alec, was a day student at Cushing and graduated this summer.

Rockland resident Jill Elie also completed the run for Cushing, which was her second Boston Marathon. Her husband, Matt, has a cousin, Liam, who was a residential student at Cushing a few years ago. She ran with her sister, Sharon Bolduc, who is a teacher in Canton, and Mary Grzybinski, a nurse at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Bolduc and Grzybinski were completing their 13th marathon together, running for other charities. The trio completed their miles on Sept. 7, starting and ending in Abington. They all finished in 4 hours and 15 minutes, even with a few stops along the way to soak in the cheers from family and friends.

"We were running all spring and summer—not big miles, but every day," Elie said. "I had a much better recovery than two years ago, and finished a half hour faster."

Despite the unusual circumstances, Cushing's Marathon team raised more than \$68,000 this year.



Mary Grzybinski, left, and Sharon Bolduc, center, joined Jill Elie in completing this year's virtual Boston Marathon.

RUNNING A RACE FAMILIAR TERRITORY FOR DRISCOLL

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Milton resident Julie Driscoll knows a thing or two about organizing 5Ks, having served as the event chairperson for an annual one benefiting Best Buddies Massachusetts.

Now, she's in her second year chairing Cushing's Run to Change Lives, but it will have one element that's new even to her: It will be virtual. Participants can complete their miles on their own time, in a location of their choice, any time between Nov. 18-21.

Driscoll chaired the Milton 5K Gobbler Run/Walk benefiting Best Buddies Massachusetts in years past, while she was also working as a grant writer for the organization. It was a family effort with her husband, Steve, volunteering as the "parking captain" and their two daughters helping out.

Best Buddies eventually handed the reins of the 5K event to Cushing, and Driscoll was recruited to help with the transition.

"Through Best Buddies, I got to know Cushing," she said. "I just think it's a great organization. The mission is so admirable, and the people there do such great work."



I just think it's a great organization. The mission is so admirable, and the people there do such great work."

Driscoll is also a friend of Joanne Jaxtimer, who serves on Cushing's board and whose son, Michael, participated in Cushing's culinary training program. Michael and Driscoll's daughters were former schoolmates and have remained friends, even connecting on Zoom these days.

Last year's Run to Change Lives, held on Nov. 23, kicked off at the same location as the Gobbler Run—Cunningham Elementary School in Milton. It featured entertainment by DJ Rick DeSanctis and food by Montillio's wood-fired pizza truck. The event raised more than \$30,000 and benefitted both Cushing and Best Buddies Massachusetts. This year's virtual event will just benefit Cushing.

"My favorite part last year was seeing them all go through the finish line and meet their families," said Driscoll. "I know we won't have that this year, but I'm hoping we can still give them some sort of special moment."

Driscoll, who earned her bachelor's from Northeastern University and her MBA from Bentley University — with both degrees in marketing — works as a grant writer for BCN Productions in North Easton. Earlier in her career, she wrote five children's books for Battat's Our Generation doll line, sold at Target.



Hats off to our 2020 graduates

Cushing’s 2020 graduates may have had an unconventional ending to their academic journey, but it was a celebration nonetheless.

In August, graduates and their families were led by the Hanover Police in a drive-through ceremony, compliant with health guidelines. As cars lined up around the track, each graduate walked up to the stage to the song of his/her choice and received a graduation certificate, a framed triumph message, a personalized yard sign and a voucher for next year’s Disney trip or a gift card (in lieu of this year’s canceled trip).

“While this wasn’t the graduation that we initially envisioned, quite honestly, I think we set a new standard for future graduation ceremonies at Cushing,” said Cushing President & CEO Michelle Markowitz. “There was laughter, tears and lots of celebrating. Students really were center-stage in such an individualized way. Despite our COVID restrictions and the rain, once again, Cushing took lemons and made lemonade.”

The graduates were: Shianne Allen, Faith Chandler, Meaghan Cooney, Conor Daly, Tyler Ferguson, Orion Landall, Jordyn LaPointe, Lester Licon, Brendan McMahon, Michelle Miranda, William Nutt, Shannon O’Connell, Sophie Savage, Justin Spaulding, Alec Walsh, Adrian Yas and Rose Zamarro-Beiter.

- 1. Cushing staff members gather to celebrate the Class of 2020.
- 2. Faith Chandler and Shannon O’Connell celebrate graduating.
- 3. Adrian Yas poses with his family.
- 4. Michelle Miranda awaits her time on stage.
- 5. “Wolfie” the mascot greets families.
- 6. Will Nutt enjoys the moment with his family.