



A Message from President and CEO: *Michelle Markowitz*

Dear all,

I hope the latest edition of the Cushing Community News finds you happy, safe, and well. We are now settling into summer and seeing the world returning to a sense of normalcy brings with it a sense of relief, joy, and hope.

Much has happened since we shared our last edition of our newsletter. We recently held our official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the MarketPlace Building. We were joined by Cushing staff, local electives, and many of the donors who helped make our vision a reality. We would love to have you stop by the Cushing Café, Unique Boutique, or Take 2 shops soon! Visit www.cushingmarketplace.org for hours of operation and additional details.

We also celebrated the many successes of Cushing's Class of 2021 with a wonderful outdoor graduation ceremony and an incredible Senior Social. Between arriving in a horse drawn carriage, dancing and enjoying Montilio's Baking Company pizza and Smiles by the Mile Ice Cream, memories were made that will last a lifetime. Local nonprofit Giving the Glam did a wonderful job outfitting our students for their special day, as well.

The Cushing Community started Summer 2021 by participating in our Cycle Challenge and helped raise over \$20,000 for our programs! Many thanks to all who participated, and congratulations to our winners, including our top-fundraiser Ali Palasek, who will receive a top-of-the-line bicycle from South Shore BMW/MINI, valued at over \$1,000.

As our fiscal year came to a close at the end of June, we would also like to share our sincere thanks to all who made a donation to the Opportunity Fund. Your gifts and generosity helped us exceed our goal by \$100,000! This is just a small sample of all of the incredible things happening at Cardinal Cushing Centers. We hope you enjoy this latest edition of the Cushing Community News.

Be well,

Michelle Markowitz
President & CEO



Congratulations Ali Palasek, for being our top fundraising Cycle Challenge Champion and winning this beautiful bike from South Shore BMW. Pictured here with General Manager, Avery Trumbo.

Self - Advocacy by Amy Slater, with help from a friend



Self-Advocacy by Amy Slater

Amy Slater, a participant in our Adult Services Programs, has recently discovered a passion for writing. We hope you enjoy this piece she wrote on self advocacy!

To me, Self-advocacy means sticking up for yourself. Being a kind person, the type of person you want to be around. It gives me a voice to express my feelings and opinions. After all, I do have them and I want to be heard. I want respect and to live a life with choice and my dignity.

I was reminded of my right and need to express myself when I participated in the Self-advocate program. It was in person and then most recently on-line. I attend with others like me, and had homework. I really enjoyed it and would like to do more things like this.

Because I have epilepsy sometimes, my nerves get the best of me and make me very shaky and sometimes it is people that trigger this in me, "and get my goat." Participating in self-advocacy and

practicing some of the lessons learned has helped me to set limits, ask for help and decide who to be around and call friends. I am thankful for that however, I do need to do more practicing. I feel lucky to have Cardinal Cushing because I live with two life-long friends and through them met my BFF who is always respectful, fun and a good friend.

Next, I would like to talk to students and others about my experience and the importance of speaking your mind and standing up for yourself. I would also like to see a way to recognize the good staff that encourage us to be self-advocates. Maybe giving them a certificate or an award, they deserve it too.

The Self-Advocacy Leadership Series is a training that provides education and training support to people with disabilities. This series seeks to help people improve their skills in the areas of decision-making and leadership. The series is a 9-week program with each class session lasting 2 hours. The Self-Advocacy Leadership Series is a program coordinated by Mass Developmental Disabilities Council and Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS). For more information go to:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/sals-brochure>



Amy presenting at an event.

Woodworking Craftsman, AJ



A finished project

AJ has become quite an accomplished craftsman specializing in woodworking. While working with Randy, Cushing's Art Director, for extra art as part of his behavioral plan, his projects have really blossomed. Randy is quick to mention "AJ has amazing skills and is extremely good with working with his hands - woodworking is perfect for him." He wanted to create something he could use at home so he decided to make a holder to stack firewood. The skills he used during construction included measuring, cutting wood, drilling holes, using a screw gun and the use of a hammer and nails. He needed to design and problem solve throughout the project when it wasn't working out the way he wanted. AJ excelled at this project and it really laid the groundwork for the amazing pull-along cart he made for his tractor pictured below. His friends and family are very impressed by such an accomplishment and he can be found proudly working in the yard and putting the pull-along cart to good use. We're so happy AJ has found such a useful niche and we look forward to seeing what's in store for his future projects.



AJ hard at work



AJ using his cart

Talented Artist Spotlight: Savion Yetman



Artist, Savion Yetman

Self-expression via visual and performing arts has always played an important role in the curriculum at Cardinal Cushing Centers. As we celebrate the accomplishments of our community, we wanted to spotlight one very talented 2021 Cushing graduate, Savion Yetman.

As you can see, Savion's technique and attention to detail are impeccable. He has the skills, motivation, and drive to work in animation. Savion has said many times, "I would love to work in animation. I would like to see how artists do this behind the scenes."

Savion has been working on his drawing on his own for many years. He has taken his talents into the digital realm, and recently started working on a website with a friend from his previous school.

We hope you enjoy this scene from his portfolio. And if you know anyone who might connect Savion to an internship or job, please let us know! We would love to help him utilize his gifts and talents in a new way.



Illustration by Savion