

CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR



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FALL 2022

Sustaining success



Sustainability coordinator Eleanor Arpino and student Adam Burbine empty a bin of pumpkins outside of Cushing's greenhouse.

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Getting resourceful: Pages 4-5

Shopping at Cushing is a gift

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

The holiday season is fast approaching, but, thanks to a new program, Cardinal Cushing Centers may be able to help ease the shopping process.

Through Cushing Carriers, businesses and individuals can choose from a selection of unique, handmade products from the MarketPlace, and Cushing students will prepare and package the gifts. The program grew out of a discussion about how to generate more sales through the Unique Boutique, which offers whimsical, one-of-a-kind gifts that are crafted by Cushing students and adults, as well as by other individuals and organizations that serve people with intellectual disabilities. Items include handmade jewelry and pottery, silk-screened clothing, framed artwork and photography, handcrafted home and

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At Cushing Carriers, John Kahian prepares boxes for shipping while Grace Heald helps Josh Bowman add soap dishes and soap to boxes.

PHOTO: SEAN BROWNE

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CONNECTOR**

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It takes a village (to raise a child).

That now-common refrain comes from an African proverb referencing the fact that an entire community of people must come together to positively impact children so that they can grow in a safe, healthy, nurturing environment.

The phrase has been condensed and taken on a more general connotation: In order to have meaningful achievement, there must be a commensurate amount of effort from a group of engaged stakeholders.

I am happy and proud to report that is what

we have at Cardinal Cushing Centers and this edition of *The Connector* shines a spotlight on it.

You will meet volunteers who play a vital role in not only our MarketPlace but also all of our fundraising events, such as the Run to Change Lives.

You will learn of the partnership we have with area businesses, who need to look no further than Cushing for their corporate gift needs.

You will read about the work we are doing, in partnership with PLAN of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, to expose families to resources they can access in order to maximize the long-term quality of life of their loved one.

You will catch a glimpse of the successful

return of our Springtime gala, which raised more than \$600,000, as we look forward to next year's event.

You will learn of the work we are doing to support sustainability and meet the person who is leading those efforts.

The Connector is intended to provide a snapshot of all the great work being done at Cushing. We are keenly aware that, even with a talented, dedicated, compassionate staff, we can't do it alone. We are so grateful for all those who take the journey with us as we continue to change lives.

A village, indeed.

Michelle Markowitz is president & CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers.

Auditorium rehab gets top billing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

A curtain call is, hopefully, in the future for Cushing's auditorium, which will breathe new life into the performing arts program.

The renovation project, estimated at \$785,000, aims to change the way the auditorium is currently set up. The first phase will include leveling the floor and bringing in moveable tables and chairs for seating, creating a multi-purpose room.

With the updated space, Cushing could welcome professional and community groups to provide new, engaging experiences for students. This would also benefit members of the community by providing a space to enjoy and view live performances, while being

more integrated into the Cushing community. The auditorium is also a gathering space for staff meetings and trainings, and it would be beneficial to the entire Cushing workforce, as well as other local area organizations and businesses, such as the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, to have a more suitable space.

The second phase of the project would tackle the elements that are part of the space. The lighting system and stage curtains need updating for both appearance and safety reasons. The current sound system does not suit the needs of the population at Cushing, especially those who have communication disorders or social anxiety. In the third phase, Cushing hopes to be able to install a



Cushing's auditorium will become a multi-purpose room following renovations.



Cushing student Jack McGann participates in a music class in the current space.

VOLUNTEER PROFILES

High school students team up for Cushing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

When Celia Vitti made the decision to get more involved with Cardinal Cushing Centers, she was doing so in support of her older sister, Francesca.

Francesca — better known as Frankie — is 20 and has been enrolled as a day student at Cushing for nearly 10 years.

"It's a great opportunity for her," said Vitti. "She's really happy there and she's grown a lot."

The sisters are close, and Vitti, a junior at Milton High School, often makes the trip to Hanover to pick up Francesca. Their parents, Jerry and Erin, are also very committed to the

Cushing community. Jerry, founder and CEO of Healthcare Financial, Inc., serves on Cushing's board of directors. He co-chaired the board during the height of the capital campaign and MarketPlace building project.

Vitti has participated in Cushing's Run to Change Lives since its inception in 2019. Her family organized Team Francesca, which was the top fundraising team last year. They raised \$4,200 for Cushing. Vitti also recruited her friend and classmate, Kyla Miller, to volunteer at last year's event. Miller, who works part-time at Playa Bowls in Milton, was able to help secure the restaurant as one of

the event sponsors.

"It's all pretty new to me, but I've enjoyed getting to know people with different backgrounds. It's been really fun," said Miller, whose father, Quincy, is president of Eastern Bank, which has supported Cushing through event sponsorships and capital campaign gifts.

In addition to the run, Vitti also modeled with Francesca at the Springtime gala in May and she and Miller volunteered at Cushing's St. Patrick's Day fundraiser.

"I've loved meeting everyone, and I love the events," said Vitti. "It's such a great community."



Members of Team Francesca helped to raise \$4,200 for Cushing at last year's Run to Change Lives.



Celia, Frankie, Jerry and Erin Vitti enjoyed Springtime, especially with the sisters' walk down the runway.

MarketPlace volunteers give the gift of time

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

One of the greatest gifts a person can give is their time. Teens Maya Hostetler and Ashley Bushing not only gave their time, but their enthusiasm and compassion while volunteering at Cushing's MarketPlace.

Hostetler, who graduated from Dexter Southfield School last spring, completed 100 hours of service at the Cushing Café as part of her senior independent learning experience.

"The cafe relies on the teamwork of multiple people," Hostetler said. "They have built a culture of inclusivity that makes everyone feel like they have attributed something to the workplace. Day after day, I would walk into the café greeted by smiles and appreciation for my time. Teachers and customers alike were eager to introduce themselves to me and incorporate our talks into their daily routines."

"I enjoyed talking to everyone and seeing familiar faces every day," she continued. "I felt like I was becoming a part of the Cushing community. The biggest thing I took from my experience is that people with special needs can do anything when given the proper time and resources."

Hostetler, whose mother is a special education teacher in Boston, says some of her best memories have been in her mother's classroom.

"I knew that volunteering at Cardinal Cushing would continue to provide skills I've inherited through working with my mom, and also from my participation in the Best Buddies program at Pembroke Community Middle School," she said.

Hostetler is now in her first year at the University of Notre Dame, pursuing a major in biology and a minor in compassionate care in medicine. She hopes to eventually work in pediatrics.

Bushing, a Hingham resident, volunteered in the MarketPlace three days each week over the summer. Her hobbies include jewelry making and photography, so the Unique Boutique was a perfect fit. She is in her junior year at Miss Porter's School, a private college preparatory school in Farmington, Conn., but hopes to return to the MarketPlace to volunteer during her winter break.

"She wanted to put in some community time, and she was already familiar with Cushing," said her mother, Soon-Ae. "She loved the boutique and thrift shop. She's very into fashion, so she was thrilled organizing the jewelry and clothing. It was a great first experience, and will help her when it comes time to find a summer job. Now she has a better idea about responsibility, discipline and accountability."



Ashley Bushing



Maya Hostetler

A game PLAN for families

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

All youth face certain challenges as they move into adulthood, but for those with disabilities, the changes can seem even more daunting.

On Oct. 5, Cardinal Cushing Centers joined with Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Inc. (PLAN of MA & RI), Special Olympics Massachusetts and Best Buddies of Massachusetts and Rhode Island to host a resource fair to help families navigate that process.

"It is really important for us to be able to share, with our families, the importance of special needs trust and estate planning," said Cushing President & CEO Michelle Markowitz. "We know that conversations around financial planning can be incredibly overwhelming, which is why we have partnered with PLAN of MA & RI. PLAN is a trusted resource that has helped many families map out their financial security without impacting their loved ones' eligibility for public benefits. We were thrilled to have their knowledgeable team at our resource fair."

The informational event, held at the Cushing Café, provided families with the opportunity to learn about programs available to them, which would support adults, as well as young adults approaching transition age. When individuals turn 22, they age out of educational services, but can still qualify for adult services designed to help them increase their independence and become active members of their communities.

Since the spring, PLAN of MA & RI has been the preferred planning partner of Cushing. The organization committed \$75,000 to support Cushing programs and services, and has been working to help educate individuals and families affiliated with Cushing on special needs trusts and the critical need for financial security.

"We, at PLAN, were so happy to be a part of this resource fair," said PLAN of MA & RI Executive Director Joan McGrath. "It is so nice to finally be able to do in-person events, and based on the strong level of interest, it appears others feel that way as well. Being able to collaborate with Cardinal Cushing, Best Buddies and Special Olympics — all of whom are supporting individuals with disabilities and their families in a variety of ways — is fantastic, and through this collaboration, we are able to deliver a wide range of support services for our shared constituents."

1. Glenn Janosky speaks with Gabriela Boudreau of Special Olympics. 2. Angela Gokey, Cushing's Interim Vice President for Adult Services, speaks with families. 3. Stephen Coulter of PLAN speaks with Patrick Shaughnessy, Director of Best Buddies for Massachusetts. 4. Cushing President and CEO Michelle Markowitz and PLAN Executive Director Joan McGrath are all smiles to come together for the event.

PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE



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John Kahian preps a box for gifts items.

PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE



One of the gift options includes handmade soap paired with a pottery soap dish.

Shopping at Cushing is a gift for area businesses

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garden accessories, notecards and more.

"Since proceeds benefit our programs here at Cushing, we looked at how we could broaden awareness, and corporate gifting was a good fit for us," said Wendy Benitez, business manager of the MarketPlace. "Whether people want to show their appreciation during the holiday season or say thank you to employees for their service, Cushing Carriers has them covered. We worry about the details, so they don't have to."

The program also provides an opportunity for students and adults to have vocational training in a fulfillment center environment. Located in the former Cushing Trader, the Cushing Carriers space has been stocked with boxes and shipping supplies, and students are tasked with assembling and packing the gifts.

"We're able to provide meaningful training and work, which aligns with the mission of our MarketPlace," said Benitez.

"We are thrilled to be able to provide wonderful, socially-conscious gifts for the modern shopper," said Cushing President & CEO Michelle Markowitz. "Cushing Carriers creates vocational training opportunities for those that prefer the behind-the-scenes work experience. The individuals take on a great sense of purpose as they package and mail these beautiful gifts. We hope our customers take as much joy in the unboxing as our students take in the creation and assembling."

Gifts range in price from \$15 to \$75, and are put together by theme. The "party ready" package, for example, includes a handmade pottery charcuterie board, jam, a stainless-steel spreader and a recipe card. The "relax" package includes

handmade soaps, a candle, bath salts, sugar scrub, a bath bomb and rescue salve. Another option is a handmade pottery plate—designed for cookies for Santa and carrots for Rudolph—paired with cookies from the Cushing Café.

Some businesses have already stepped up, committing to gift orders.

"Sullivan Tire and Auto Service, which has long supported Cushing, is happy to support the participants' wonderful and creative work by ordering 125 gifts through Cushing Carriers this year," said Paul Sullivan, Sullivan Tire Vice President of Marketing.

Most of the gift options require time for handcrafting, so quantities of 15 or more are best ordered by November 11. Personal shopping experiences can also be scheduled by appointment. For more information, email WBenitez@cushingcenters.org.

Gaining Independence a win for Cushing



Emma Locke of Whitman worked at the MarketPlace through Independence Associates.

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

When Cushing opened its MarketPlace, it was with the belief that every person, regardless of ability, should have the opportunity to have a productive, fulfilling day.

And that has extended beyond members of the Cushing community.

Last spring, Emma Locke of Whitman gained work experience at the MarketPlace. She was placed there through Independence Associates' transitional internship program. The program provides job and skills training and internship placement to youth with disabilities to help them prepare for future employment. She earned a stipend, through Independence Associates, for the hours she worked.

"I liked all of the organizing in the store and the people I worked with," said Locke, who worked in both the Unique Boutique and the thrift shop, Take 2.

She says learned how to work the cash register, as well as how to be responsible and manage her time.

"She liked it a lot," said her mother, Andrea. "It was her first work experience, and she was there for three to four hours on Saturdays. Her boss was so nice. It was a lovely place."

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CHANGE
LIVES**



**November 19, 2022
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Scan the QR code or
register online at
CCCRunToChangeLives.org

BOARD PROFILE

Siegel provides parent's perspective

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

As a parent, Jonathan Siegel recognizes he brings a different perspective to Cushing's board of directors.

"You have to separate the personal and business aspects, but sometimes it's helpful to play a little bit of a devil's advocate," said Siegel. "It's a good balancing act to have a few members of the board who are parents and who can serve as a reminder of the mission while recognizing the business and financial challenges that the organization will always face."

Siegel and his wife, Lisa, have a 21-year-old son with autism, Jack, who has been a residential student at Cushing since 2014.

"Being in the residential program has been positive for him," said Siegel. "He's matured and his receptive language is better. He's also more patient. He's really grown up there, in a way, and he's developed close relationships with his caregivers."

A Scituate resident, Siegel manages the Taft-Hartley trust fund business for Loomis, Sayles & Co, LP, a Boston-based investment management firm.

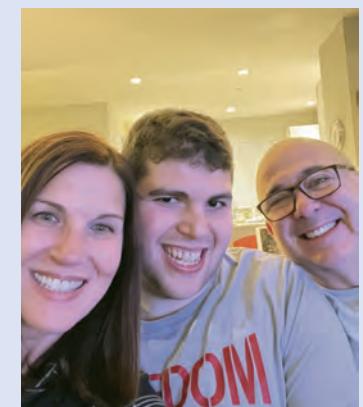
As part of his role on Cushing's board, Siegel serves on the strategic planning committee. He says he has enjoyed working with the leadership team, including Cushing President and CEO Michelle Markowitz.

"Michelle and her team are really good, and

really productive," he said. "It's been helpful for me to get to know her and the staff a little better."

Throughout Jack's time at Cushing, the Siegels have been supportive of the organization and its fundraising efforts. Lisa ran the Boston Marathon in 2017 as part of the Cushing team, and a friend of theirs, Joe Ohm, ran on Jack's behalf last year. They have also been active with the Springtime gala and other development endeavors.

In addition to Jack, the Siegels have two older daughters, Ally, who lives in Boston and works for Fidelity Investments, and Amanda, who lives in New York City and works for Time-Warner Discovery Networks.



Lisa and Jonathan Siegel visit their son, Jack, at Cushing.

Springtime returns with a bang

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Cushing's Springtime gala returned with a renewed level of excitement.

The event, held on May 26, raised more than \$600,000 and drew a crowd of 350 guests to the Seaport Hotel in Boston.

Charlie Drea of Conway Insurance Agency received the Richard Cardinal Cushing Award for demonstrating humility, compassion and dedication to enhancing the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Drea and Conway Insurance have supported Cushing's efforts to develop programs designed to help people with disabilities through sponsorships, volunteering and board participation.

Mary McGoldrick received the Franciscan Leadership Award for demonstrating generosity, leadership by positive example and mutuality towards all others. McGoldrick is a board and committee member, supporter and volunteer extraordinaire.

Paul Burton of WBZ-TV emceed the event. Sponsors included, among many others, Barbara Gorman, PLAN of MA & RI, Bob's Discount Furniture, Alera Group, Conway Insurance Agency, Quincy Mutual, Beth & Bill Sorenson, and TJX.

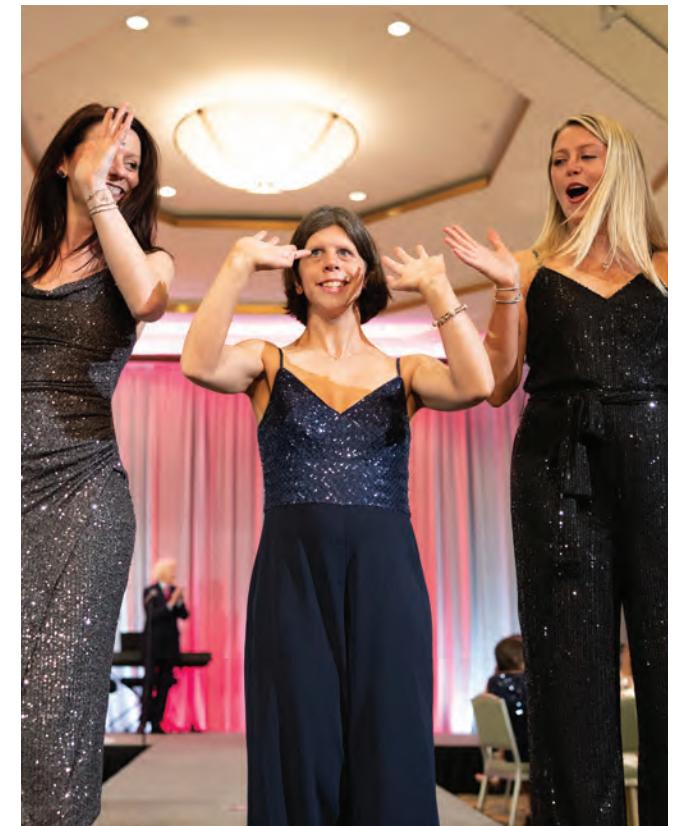
The event included a cocktail reception, auction, dinner, awards presentation and fashion show featuring students and adults with intellectual disabilities who walked the runway alongside celebrity models including Carolyn Jones, Market President & Publisher of the Boston Business Journal; Steve DiFillippo, Chef and CEO of Davio's Northern Italian Steakhouse; and Lizanne Kindler, CEO of Talbots.



Honoree Mary McGoldrick enjoys the evening with her daughters, Emmy and Maggie.



Honoree Charlie Drea, left, is congratulated by auctioneer Jim Fagan. PHOTOS: JARED CHARNEY



Cushing participant Julie Ellis walks the runway with her sisters, Marissa Schneider and Lauren Ellis.

SAVE THE DATE: May 25, 2023



Springtime
A family affair

Honoring the Roessner King
and Florence families

Sustainability growing at Cushing

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

With a background in food services, gardening, business and community-based organizations, Eleanor Arpino was practically made for her new role as Cardinal Cushing Centers' sustainability coordinator.

"I had been searching for some time for an area to focus my experience and enthusiasm into building something that gives back, and this was it," said Arpino.

The position was created for someone to develop and implement sustainability initiatives that relate to agriculture and food services at Cushing.

Arpino, a Dorchester resident, started her career with Boston Private Industry Council, primarily working with youth and economically challenged communities. She later shifted to the restaurant industry, serving as vice president of operations for the Davio's restaurant group before opening up her own restaurant in 2014. Ester, located in the Lower Mills section of Dorchester, was a labor of love for Arpino. The menu featured ingredients she grew right in the restaurant's rooftop garden.

"I'm very into gardening and organics," said Arpino, and she's excited to create new opportunities within Cushing's greenhouse and garden. "We're already using tomatoes and Swiss chard in the café and we just planted garlic, chives and other herbs. It's one step at a time, but I want to keep planting new things."

Arpino has been on the job since mid-August, helping to develop collaborative and innovative approaches to add value to Cushing's food products. She works closely with the culinary arts team and the Cushing Café manager, and also has a hand in creating new opportunities in the MarketPlace shops.

"One thing we've done is open the café earlier for staff to grab coffee or food, and our goal is to open on Saturdays for more community members to take advantage," said Arpino. "By next year, we'd also like to introduce more community involvement through a farmers' market."

Arpino is fully enjoying her new role, and the population she is surrounded by.

"The students in the greenhouse and the café have been absolutely fantastic," she said. "I'm loving how welcoming everyone has been. I really admire the organization, so I'm extremely happy. I got to the point in my life where I asked myself 'what do I really value?' and the answer was being around gardens, food and really nice people. So, I think I have it made."



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I. Eleanor Arpino spends a lot of her time at Cushing's greenhouse. 2. Arpino and Jamikka Pitts work together at the cash register at the the Cushing Café. 3. Mums and pumpkins decorate the outside of the MarketPlace.

PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE