

WINTER  
2015

# CUSHING Community News



## A Message from Vice President of Development: *Jansi Chandler*

Dear all,

At this point in December, we imagine that most people on our e-mail list have fully embraced the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. We would like to pause and take a moment to send our warm thanks and appreciation to everyone who has generously contributed to **The Opportunity Fund** this year. Additionally, we are very pleased to report that our #GivingTuesday drive was the most successful one we have had to date!

Funds raised from our annual appeal directly enhance our current programs. Without the Opportunity Fund, for example, we would not have been able to invest in SMART Tables and iPads which are currently being used as integral tools in classroom teaching, employment training instruction, and speech and occupational therapy sessions.

And that's just one example.

As you read some of the success stories that follow, you will see that **The Opportunity Fund** is a very important piece of our annual operating budget.

There's still time to **make a contribution** before 2015 comes to a close. I hope you will consider making a gift this year to help people with disabilities reach new heights!

Wishing you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season,



## Success Stories: Tobias Connolly and Casey Gibbons

Tobias Connolly, a student at Cardinal Cushing Centers, was never very interested in reading. At the age of 17 he was so unsure of himself that he would refuse to read in class. Confidence was a big issue.

Teachers Brian and Bill saw promise in Tobias and tried a new reading curriculum made possible by donations to the Opportunity Fund. As Tobias' reading vocabulary grew, so did his confidence.

His mother Meghan tells us "When Tobias was in the 5th grade we were told that he had "plateaued" and that he would never move beyond his then current reading level. Bill and Brian have shot that theory out of the water and more! By taking this new approach, they have unlocked a door for him."



Tobias now loves to participate in class. Reading is a big part of his day as he reads complete books on his own, both at school and at home.



When Casey Gibbons was a student at the Cardinal Cushing School, she had her ups and downs. Behavior was a challenge, and Casey's days did not always go smoothly. When Casey turned 22 and graduated from the Cushing School, she enrolled in Life Opportunities Unlimited (LOU), Cardinal Cushing Centers' day program for adults. Knowing Casey's history, the staff told her parents that her enrollment was on a trial basis. What happened next was incredible.

Casey has become one of the most welcoming members of the LOU program, showing leadership and caring for the other clients. She views the LOU program as her work. Her parents and the LOU staff have reinforced that adults who go to work must behave as adults...and that is what she does. Casey loves to collect eggs at the Stewart Farm in Duxbury and care for the animals at the

Salty Dog Day Care in Marshfield. Her success is inspiring to all.

## Success Stories: Molly Butler and Chris Sanchez



When Molly Butler enrolled at the Braintree St. Coletta Day School over two years ago, social outings with her family were challenging. "I used to drop my sons off at their baseball practices because I couldn't stay and watch if I had Molly with me" said Lisa Butler, Molly's mother. "Things are much better now that Molly has experienced so many community outings through the programs at St. Coletta's. We can do so much more together as a family."

Molly now attends her brothers' baseball games and practices and is their biggest cheerleader. She is able to enjoy meals out at restaurants and is her mother's "best shopper" when it comes to the grocery store.

Recently, Molly participated in surf lessons provided by Northeast Surfing at Nantasket Beach in Hull, MA. A natural in the water, Molly thrived on the surf board. "We picked St. Coletta's and we have no regrets," says

Lisa. "All the extras they provide have been so helpful for Molly."

Chris Sanchez, a young man who has always been a hard worker, craved independence. Excited about having a job and earning a paycheck, his only obstacle was gaining enough work experience to help him reach his goal.

Thanks to the support of our donors, Cardinal Cushing Centers offers on the job training in a variety of retail shops at the Hanover location. After successfully working independently in Cushing's Bass Café, Chris was prepared to apply for a paid position at Montillio's Bakery in Braintree. Chris folds pizza boxes, helps prepare the lunch counter and is in his element, taking initiative and delivering on the promise of a job well done.





## Success Story: William Powers

"The best part of my day is working." This was the answer William Powers, age 17, gave during his Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting just a little over a year ago. His mother Thelma, resistant to taking him away from the classroom in exchange for time at a worksite, was shocked. She realized the future she had envisioned for William held so much more possibility and opportunity than she had ever imagined.... and she was thrilled.

When he was seven years old, William enrolled at the St. Coletta Day School at Cardinal Cushing Centers. Anxiety, learning disabilities and extreme behavior issues were among his obstacles to education.

Through the one-on-one attention and quality teaching programs at Cushing, William began to thrive. At the age of 16, and as part of the school's transition to adulthood, William began working in Cushing's vocational training program located in Hanover. The Greenhouse and the Bass Café, both retail shops open to the public, were his favorites. It was there that he learned a variety of skills, gained a solid work ethic and most importantly built up his confidence and social skills.

He now has two paying jobs which came about as a result of this job training. The Potting Bench in Braintree hired William, appreciating that he already had experience working in a greenhouse. Montilio's Bakery and Pizzeria in Braintree pays William to help with a variety of tasks. William is an important part of both businesses and is proud to earn his own paycheck.

William opened his own account at the Bank of Canton and makes monthly deposits. His family, teachers, employers and most importantly William himself are proud of his success...just one of Cushing's many students who have accomplished their goals.

