CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR

All ages. All abilities. All together.

Vol. 7 No. I

A PUBLICATION OF CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS

SPRING 2020

SWEET SUPPORT

Knights of Columbus answer call for Cushing

By Meaghan Casey

What do Tootsie Rolls have to do with Cardinal Cushing Centers' culinary center and its soon-toopen MarketPlace? Quite a lot, actually.

Cushing has been the biggest benefactor of the Massachusetts State Council of the Knights of Columbus and its annual Tootsie Roll Drive. The fundraiser, more formally known as the Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities, is a popular and successful one. Knights are positioned outside of grocery stores holding cans and each donor is offered a piece of candy, most commonly a Tootsie Roll.

State Deputy Paul Flanagan estimates the Massachusetts State Council raises between \$200,000 and \$300,000 annually through the drive, and 100 percent of the funds go toward providing more resources for people with intellectual and

> physical disabilities to live happy lives.

The Knights' support of Cushing dates back to the late 1970s when the organization donated \$300,000 for Cushing to open its culinary arts center. Annually, the State Council supports Cushing's golf tournament and Springtime fundraiser — even volunteering some of its officers as models. The organization has also given substantial donations to renovate the chapel in the Kennedy

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– PAUL FLANAGAN

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children

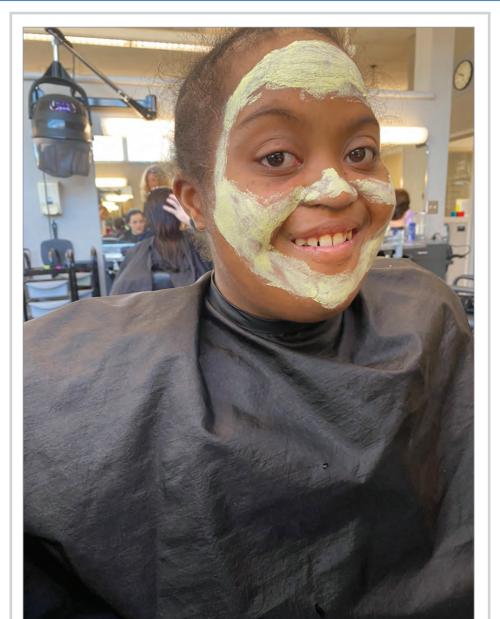
Cushing

imagined."

Building and kitchens in students' homes. And more recently, the Knights gave \$150,000 toward the MarketPlace.

"Over the years, we've probably given upwards of \$1.5 million to Cushing," said Flanagan. "By

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RELAX & REJUVENATE

Cushing students, including Faith Chandler, were treated to a spa day at the South Shore Vocational Technical School. More photos Page 7.





Michelle Markowitz, Cardinal Cushing's interim

president and CEO, with Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, Director of Corporate Ministries for the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.

Cushing beat is in good hands

Markowitz settles into role of president, CEO

By Paul Halloran

Had her career path taken a different turn, Michelle Markowitz might be wearing a badge and keeping one of the local communities safe. But, since everything happens for as reason, she continues to keep watch over the Cushing community, now in the role of interim president and chief executive officer.

"About 15 years ago, I was going to become a police officer. I come from a family with deep roots in law enforcement," said Markowitz, whose father is a clerk magistrate, brother a state trooper and several uncles local police officers. "I went through the Municipal Police training course."

By that point, she had been working at Cardinal Cushing Centers in Hanover for about seven years, though her affiliation started when she volunteered at St. Coletta Day School in Braintree as a student at Archbishop Williams High School next door. She worked at Cushing throughout her college years at Bridgewater State University and came on board full-time in 1998.

Markowitz has held a variety of roles, working in the classroom, the residential program, as vice president of admissions, and chief operating officer, prior to being named interim president and CEO in January.

For Markowitz, it has been a seamless transition to the top position in the organization, at least until

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CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR

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We will get through this with your help



MICHELLE MARKOWITZ As you will read in this edition of the Cardinal Cushing Connector, my experience with this wonderful organization dates back to my high school days, when I volunteered at the St. Coletta site in Braintree. Since then I have held several positions, and I am humbled and honored

to serve as interim president and CEO.

While the prospect of taking over was somewhat daunting, as chief operating officer I had been involved in all aspects of the operation, so I was confident as I took on the

added responsibility.

Who knew a pandemic was coming.

We have all had to deal with unimaginable challenges during the COVID-19 health crisis. I could not be prouder of the job our staff has done under very difficult circumstances. We adjusted to the closure of our day programs for students and adults, while maintaining our residential program. We continue to provide as much support as necessary for every person and family we serve.

Never has it been clearer that working collaboratively is critical, especially in a time of crisis. The Cushing staff has embraced the challenges presented by this unprecedented situation, always acting in the best interest of those we serve, despite dealing with their own personal trials and tribulations.

Cushing will survive, and thrive, but we

could really use some help at this time. We have established a new fundraising initiative — the Cushing Fund. Between having to cancel Springtime and the uncertainty surrounding funding for services while some programs are shut down, it is vitally important that we raise funds to ensure that we not only continue to operate now, but also fully recover when we make it through this crisis. We appreciate your support always, but especially now.

I am very pleased that we are publishing this edition of the *Cardinal Cushing Connector* at this time. It is important to highlight the great people and programs that make Cushing the special organization it is.

Not even a pandemic can change that.

Michelle Markowitz is interim president and CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers.

Please support the Cushing Fund

While we are all navigating uncertain times, one thing we want to be certain of at Cardinal Cushing Centers is the health, safety, and well-being of our community. As such, we made the decision to cancel our Springtime gala this year. We plan to honor Dolly Di Pesa and The Raymond Family in 2021.

As closures extend with the government's recommendations, funds we typically receive for our services may be delayed. Uncertainty around whether we will receive funds for the days we have had to close or adjust our programs looms. We are working diligently to remain open for our residents. But we can't do it alone. We need your support.

To that end, we have created The Cushing Fund to keep Cushing operational now and to help us fully recover from these challenging times. Instead of the table you might have purchased or the auction item you might have bid on at Springtime, we hope you will consider supporting The Cushing Fund. You can donate online at cushingcenters.org/the-cushing-fund or by sending a gift in the enclosed envelope. Your donation will truly make an impact as we figure out how to maintain a safe and supportive environment for our community.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act allows

taxpayers an above-the-line deduction of up to \$300 for qualified charitable donations. This means that taxpayers can claim a charitable contribution deduction even though they don't itemize their deductions. The rule will apply to charitable contributions made in 2020 and can be claimed on tax forms next year. The CARES Act also removes the existing 60 percent adjusted gross income (AGI) deduction limitation for those who do itemize, thereby allowing a deduction of up to 100 percent of AGI for qualified contributions made in 2020. Thank you for your consideration.

cushingcenters.org/the-cushing-fund/

Knights of Columbus answer call for Cushing

KNIGHTS from Page I

far, Cushing has received the biggest amount we've given to any organization. They have such a great vision over there and their needs have been greater with expansion and renovation projects over the years. We've been fortunate to have been in the position to help fulfill some of that."

Outside of Cushing, the Knights have given to organizations such as the Seven Hills Foundation, Friendship Home and more.

Flanagan, who joined the Knights of Columbus 16 years ago, follows his father and grandfather in the role of state deputy — the highest position within the

organization.

"I'm the first third-generation with that title in the whole order," said Flanagan. "That's pretty special."

What has also been special has been getting to know the staff, students and residents at Cushing over the years.

"We usually go over for dinner a couple times a year and we participate in some of the events," said Flanagan. "I love seeing the kids grow up and the community coming together in support. I get emotional sometimes seeing these wonderful children having such great lives. It's what Cardinal Cushing imagined."



From left, Francis Galvin, Knights of Columbus District Deputy; Paul O'Sullivan, past State Deputy; Jansi Chandler, Cushing Vice President of Development; Bass Café employee Selena Waitt; Robert Schwarz, State Advocate; and Russell Steinbach, Executive Secretary.

volunteer profile: Jim Fagan

Walking the walk for Cushing

By Meaghan Casey

f there's a face of
Springtime, it has been
that of Jim Fagan.
Fagan, a lifelong
South Shore resident,
has volunteered to
serve as the auctioneer
of Cushing's annual
fundraising gala for
more than a decade. For the past
three years, he has also modeled.
Though this year's event is tabled
until 2021, Fagan is looking forward
to his eventual return to the catwalk.

"I've always enjoyed being with the students," he said.

Fagan was first introduced to Cushing by his parents, Betty and Jim, who were active volunteers and avid fundraisers for the organization in the 1960s. The Fagans lived in Pembroke, just about five miles from the school. His brothers, Tom and Rick, were both summer counselors at Cushing. Fagan volunteered for a few car washes and gym days, and he has a vivid memory of attending a Requiem Mass for Richard Cardinal Cushing a month after his passing.

"I had every intention of standing in the back and tiptoeing out at the end, but the monsignor caught me and invited me to the breakfast," said Fagan. "I ended up sitting with [Humberto] Cardinal Medeiros. My [Sacred Heart Elementary] school principal came in and couldn't believe it."

For more than two decades,
Fagan worked for Shields Health
Care Group as a territory manager in
its diagnostic imaging department.
He retired five years ago, though
he still consults. Fagan also emcees
and raises funds for at least 20
charities, including the Boys &
Girls Club of Brockton, Make-AWish Foundation, Quincy Rotary
Club, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute,
the Wounded Warrior Project,
Friendship Home, New England



Fashion Focus Owner Maria Wood, Brendan McMahon and Jim Fagan at the 2019 Cardinal Cushing Centers Springtime Gala.





PHOTOS: JARED CHARNEY

Jim Fagan, who has been auctioneer for the past decade for the fundraising gala, takes the stage with Sister Helene Mertes, left, and looks to the audience for bids.

Home for Veterans, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and more.

"Of all the events I do, Springtime remains the most special because of Cushing's connection with my parents," he said.

Last year's Springtime event, held May 30 at the Seaport Hotel, raised a record \$675,000 for the organization. Fagan says he is continually amazed and impressed by the generosity of Cushing's supporters.

"When someone can give a \$50,000 check, what a feeling that must be," he said.

In 2014, Fagan was the recipient of the Richard Cardinal Cushing Award at Springtime. The award is given annually to an individual, business or organization that demonstrates humility, compassion and dedication to enhancing the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

"That was one of my highlights," he said. "My mother was able to attend and she was so proud."

Fagan is also a two-time recipient of the Edward R. Murrow award for sports broadcasting of high school football for WATD-FM radio – along with the WATD broadcast team. He has been married for the last 42 years to his wife, Janice. The couple has four children and five grandchildren, and Fagan hopes they will help to carry on his legacy.

"My commitment to Cushing has been passed down and I hope to pass it down to my children and grandchildren," he said.

He also hopes to be bringing back his six favorite words in the spring of 2021: "Let's open the bidding at just..."

While this year's Springtime event is canceled, Cardinal Cushing Centers has established the Cushing Fund to raise money for operating expenses during these challenging times. To donate to the Cushing Fund, visit cushingcenters.org/thecushing-fund/

"My commitment to Cushing has been passed down and I hope to pass it down to my children and grandchildren." - JIM FAGAN

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+The magic + of the Arts

CUSHING CAST BRINGS ALADDIN TO LIFE

While Broadway might be shut down for the foreseeable future, the curtain didn't close on Cardinal Cushing Centers' production of *Aladdin*. More than 50 students in the Drama Club performed the show in mid-February, delighting audience members with their colorful costumes, vocals and adaptation of the classic fairy tale.

The Drama Club, which typically puts on one musical a year (last year it was *The Little Mermaid*), is just one of many opportunities for students to excel in the arts at Cushing. The school has a strong visual arts program, led by Randy Wiskow, as well as dance and music. New this year, Cushing offered weekly hip hop classes taught by instructors from the South Shore Conservatory. The two organizations are exploring ways to further partner next year, perhaps with a visual arts or variety show.



















- Michael John as Rajah, Princess Jasmine's protective pet tiger.
 From left, William Egan as Aladdin, Shane Kelly as the Genie and Andrew Bizzozero as the Magic Carpet.
- 3. Jonathan Perreault with Cushing volunteer Barbara DiNatale.4. Shea Frost as Abu and William Egan as Aladdin.
- 5. Karl Griffin as the Sultan.
- 6. Megan Locke as Princess Jasmine
- 8. Aiden "AJ" Johnson as a palace guard with adapted physical education instructor Katie Boutwell.
- 9. Zach Jonas also as Aladdin.



Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

—Nablo Nicasso



Frankie's dad thankful for Cushing

By Meaghan Casey

For six years, Milton resident Jerry Vitti has taken a seat on the Cushing Board of Directors, all the while watching his daughter Francesca thrive in her transition to adulthood.

Francesca — better known as Frankie — is 18 and has been enrolled as a day student at Cushing for seven years. Born with

a rare chromosome disorder, she contends with developmental disabilities and attention-

deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Vitti said the main focus when she arrived at Cushing was on her behavioral health.

"We're incredibly blessed to be in a state with the best healthcare in the world, and to have a place like Cardinal Cushing Centers," said Vitti. "The combination of therapists, teachers, doctors and the Cushing community is an

integral part of her flowering. She's forged her own path, and never lost her huge personality. She's received a lot of love, devotion and compassion."

"The Cushing staff not only helped her, but our entire family," he continued, "so we'll always be grateful for that."

Vitti and his wife, Erin, who he calls "the hero" of the family, have two other children — Anthony, 19, and Celia, 14.

The founder and CEO of Healthcare Financial, Inc. (HFI), Vitti has helped to connect low-income, elderly and disabled populations with public benefit programs for more than three decades. Outside of his professional commitment, he has also made it his civic duty and is ceaseless in his advocacy on a national level. He is the coach and founder of Challenger Little League and has served on the Milton PAC Advisory Committee and the MA Health Council Board, which is the oldest public health organization in the Commonwealth. On the Cushing board, he serves as co-chair, alongside Jeanine Mount. He joined the board about a year after Frankie started at Cushing.



Cushing board member Jerry Vitti and his wife, Erin, appreciate the opportunities provided to their daughter, Frankie.

"I was unsure about becoming an officer and then Sister Joanne [Schatzlein] walked by and tapped me on the shoulder and said 'you'll do great," he said. "There was no saying no to that. It's been an honor to be part of the organization, and humbling to be the co-chair with such caring, dedicated and intelligent people."

In the midst of a capital campaign, building projects and COVID-19, there hasn't been a dull moment during his tenure.

"It's an exciting time with the MarketPlace," said Vitti.
"In addition to providing hands-on training and community

living, it's a physical manifestation of inclusion, right on 53. It's an expression of our folks being part of the town and the community."

"I've been advocating for the disabled through my company for years, but really I'm a parent first," he said. "My interest is for Cushing to provide the best education and extraordinary care, met with compassion and love. All of that already defines the organization. The leaders are an extraordinary group of people. No matter how much credit you give them, they deserve more."

Markowitz settles into role of president and CEO

MARKOWITZ from Page I

the Coronavirus struck.

"We're dealing with so many unknowns," she said, as Cushing's day school, employment and day habilitation programs were in the midst of an extended shutdown necessitated by the public health crisis, leading to understandable anxiety among families and staff.

"This has had an incredible impact," Markowitz said, "but we're getting through. Our team and our staff are amazing."

Like virtually every other event scheduled to be held this spring, Cushing's Springtime gala – and biggest fundraiser -- was canceled. Dolly Di Pesa and the Raymond Family will be honored in 2021 when, presumably, our lives will be back to normal. The cancellation, along with uncertainty surrounding funding during the closure, led to the creation of the Cushing Fund, with all donations going toward operating expenses.

"We really need the support to sustain the organization during this pandemic," said Markowitz. "We hope that in this environment, people are inclined to help get us through. We really can't afford any breakdown in our funding and reimbursements."

There is also the issue of providing security for the 650 employees who do remarkable work on behalf of the 140 students and 250 adults that Cushing serves.

"Our staff have bills to play and food to put on the table," Markowitz said. "We need to make sure we have the revenue to continue to support them during the closures. People want to know what's next."

While there is plenty of anxiety to go around during the ongoing crisis, Markowitz believes that, considering her background and experience, her taking over has been well received by the Cushing staff.

"I think people are feeling a sense of stability and trust, having worked with me," she said. "I hope they know I have the right intentions and feel like we are moving forward to do great things. I feel an incredible sense of team."

It helps when the new coach came up through the ranks as a player.

"I know what it's like to have to get six (residential) kids out of the house in the morning, to be stuck in the house during a

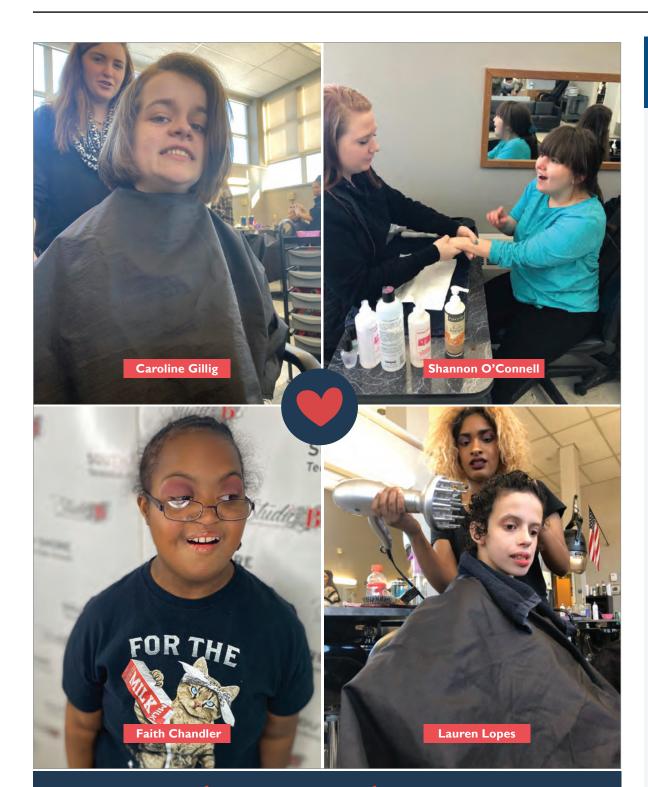
snowstorm and try to find things to do," Markowitz said. "As a leader, it's incredibly important to have that perspective. I want to be engaged with staff at all levels, to walk side by side with them."

She has been doing that for more than two decades and, when she was seriously considering leaving to become a police officer, the opportunity to move into the admissions department at Cushing presented itself. That was her sign to stay. Shortly thereafter, Jo Ann Simons came to Cushing as CEO and became a role model for Markowitz.

"Having Jo Ann as a mentor shaped my future here," said Markowitz, who lives in her native Hull with her husband, Jeremy, and sons, Reefe (7) and Sawyer (4). "It's always been my goal to continue my growth and maybe someday become CEO."

The opportunity came after the resignation of John Von Ahn, and Markowitz didn't really have time to wonder if she were ready.

"This definitely feels like my time," she said. "The most important thing is creating a sense of trust and reassuring people that Cardinal Cushing is here, we're doing incredible things, our programs are strong. Our services will continue to be top-notch."



A day at the spa

Prior to the school closures necessitated by the COVID-19 crisis, Cushing students were treated to a spa day at South Shore Vocational Technical School's Studio B. The girls enjoyed getting their nails and hair done, as well as facials and makeup. It was a learning opportunity for both Cushing and South Shore Vocational students, who were all approximately the same age.

Marathoners take rescheduling in stride

MARATHON from Page 8

son is a Cushing student.

"It's a definitely a worthwhile charity to run for," he said. Michelle Nolan, a school counselor at a therapeutic school in Bellingham, will be running for Cushing alongside her friend Mary Keady. Both also work parttime for lululemon. While Keady has run Boston several times, this will be Nolan's first marathon.

"I work with kids with social-emotional learning disabilities, so I cannot think of a better charity to run and raise money for," she said.

Nolan is looking forward to having more time to prepare.

"I'm excited to train in better weather," she said. "I love being outside in the sun, and I'll do some more scenic runs this summer. I can't wait to finally cross that finish line and to bring in money for Cushing."

DONOR PROFILE: Mary McGoldrick

Generous with her time, talent and treasure

By Meaghan Casey

For Cohasset resident Mary McGoldrick, time spent at Cardinal Cushing Centers has been a labor of love.

McGoldrick serves as clerk of Cushing's board of directors, as well as on the Governance, Capital Campaign, Program and Development committees. She got involved with Cushing about four years ago through her friend Jody Nash, a board member and chair of the Capital Campaign Committee.

"I had just finished up on the [Cohasset] School Committee and was looking for something to get involved with," said McGoldrick. "Before I knew it, I was gardening at the Sister's Inn and on the Capital Campaign Committee."

She has been continuously impressed by Cushing's goals for the new MarketPlace building.

"Right now, there's a loyal constituency, but too many people don't know what's here," said McGoldrick. "It's really exciting for the kids and for the surrounding community, and it opens up a lot of vocational opportunities."

In addition to her committee work, McGoldrick started volunteering weekly working with students in art director Randy Wiskow's classroom. She has also taken an active role helping out with the Cushing Greenery.

"I'm just so impressed and in love with the kids," she said. "And I've been blown away by the dedication and commitment of the staff. It's really an extraordinary place."

For that reason, McGoldrick has not only given her time to Cushing, she has also made a financial commitment. While she has contributed to the capital campaign in the past, she recently pledged a gift of \$10,000, inherited from her mother's Roth IRA.

"She would have loved that," said McGoldrick. "It's a great way to honor her and the school."

McGoldrick has a background in marketing and public relations. She served as vice chair of the Cohasset School Committee from 2013-16, and served as a liaison to the Special Education Parent Action Council. She also served as president of the Cohasset Education Foundation, helping to raise more than \$1.3 million in six

years to support Cohasset
Public Schools, and she
co-chaired the Town Hall
Renovation Advisory
Committee in Cohasset.
She and her husband,
George, own Black Rock
Country Club in Hingham.
They hired their first
student employee from
Cushing last year, offering
him training in the kitchen
and on the grounds.

The McGoldricks have three children, one of whom — Maggie — ran the Boston Marathon for Cushing in 2017.



Mary McGoldrick, far right, joins fellow committee members Jody Nash and Jordan Berns at this year's Paddle for a Purpose fundraiser.

Jill Elie and Hannah Delorey



BF viO ERST

Michelle Nolan and Shea Frost

2020 BOSTON MARATHON: SEPTEMBER 14

DELAYED, BUT NOT DETERRED

MARATHONERS TAKE POSTPONEMENT IN STRIDE

"I CAN'T WAIT TO

THAT FINISH LINE

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-MICHELLE NOLAN

CUSHING."

By Meaghan Casey

When Plymouth resident Frank Walsh committed to run his first Boston Marathon for Cardinal Cushing Centers this year, he never expected he would have to wait an extra five months to cross it off his bucket list.

Walsh joins a unique group of registered runners who were mentally and physically prepared for the 124th running of the Marathon on April 20, only to have it rescheduled to Sept. 14 due to the global health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 virus.

"I was ready for it now, but I'll just continue running here and there and pick it up again in June," said Walsh, who completed his first marathon — the Hyannis Marathon —

on Feb. 23. A Bridgewater State University student, Walsh was a standout sprinter in high school. He has always been a fast runner and has been among the top finishers in a number of 5K events. He just started to pursue distance running, finishing three half-marathons last year, and his dream has been to secure a bib for Boston.

"Since I started track back in high school, I always wanted to run Boston," said Walsh.

Walsh's brother, Alec, who turns 22 in July, has been a student at Cushing for about a year.

"He loves it," said Walsh. "This is a perfect opportunity to say I ran the Marathon and to help out my brother's school at the same time. I just think that's really cool."

Five others will be running for Cushing, including Canton resident Kayla Florence.

Florence ran her first marathon for Cushing in 2017 and decided to give it another go this year. Her family's connection to Cushing runs deep, starting with her greatuncle, Lenny Florence, who was affectionately known as "Mr. Springtime" for all of his support of the organization and its primary fundraising event. Her father, Eli, serves on Cushing's Capital Campaign and Building committees.

"Cardinal Cushing Centers has been part of my family

for so long, I could never think about running for another charity," said Florence. "I don't even love running, so there needs to be something bigger to motivate me. That's Cushing. I know the money's actually going where they say it is. They're helping so many lives all the time."

Florence, who is earning her MBA at Babson College, says the September race will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Obviously it's a little bit of a bummer that we were so close, but it's for the greater good and safety of everyone," she said. "It'll be cool and really special in a way. I'm excited."

Rockland resident Jill Elie is training for her second Boston Marathon and will be running to benefit Cushing.

> "I'm a little wary about starting all over in July and running in the heat, but we'll just have to have a different mindset in terms of hydrating," she said.

> Elie's husband, Matt, has a cousin, Liam, who was a residential student at Cushing a few years ago.

"We're very lucky we have four healthy kids, but we've seen what a great organization it is," said Elie. "Liam benefited greatly from their programs and supports."

This will be the 11th marathon for Joe Ohm, who

lives in La Grange, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. The date change hasn't fazed him, though it forced him to defer his entry to this year's Chicago Marathon.

"I'm actually looking forward to it more in the fall," said Ohm. "I've trained in the summers for Chicago, so this will be no different. I'm just glad they rescheduled versus cancelling it outright."

Ohm started his marathon journey in 2012, sometimes running two a year. He has run Boston once and Chicago five times. He connected with Cushing through his friend Jonathan Siegel, whose

See MARATHON Page 7



Frank Walsh and Alec



Mary Keady



Kayla Florence



TO SUPPORT THIS YEAR'S RUNNERS, VISIT

cushingcenters.org/support/give/fundraising/boston-marathon-team/