

# CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS CONNECTOR



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## SHOWCASING their abilities

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Cushing's Nick Hanson works as an usher at the new Showcase Cinema de Lux in Hanover.  
**PHOTO BY SEAN BROWNE**

## Hitting a high note with new music therapy program

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Students at Cardinal Cushing Centers' St. Coletta Day School in Braintree are responding to music and movement in meaningful ways.

Music therapy has been offered at the day school since December, through Sing Explore Create, a Rockland-based center for music therapy, education and wellness. The organization provides services at its center, as well as in schools, residential facilities, day habilitation programs, hospitals and community sites throughout the area. At St. Coletta, music therapist Katelyn Sable visits weekly to host sessions with three different groups of students, ages 8-22.

"Whenever I start with a new group, I want to help them create meaningful connections and experiences with music," said Sable. "Naturally, you see their engagement and attention levels grow because they feel that connection. Each week I go [to Braintree], I'm starting to see that growth with them."

Sable uses the clinical use of music to address non-musical goals across all areas of development. Common goals are to improve speech/communication, social/emotional support, gross/fine motor skills and self-expression.

"It's really successful with special-ed and nonverbal students because they work on strengthening speech and communication

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Emily Andersen gets some assistance as she strums her ukulele

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CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS  
CONNECTOR

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# Connecting with the community



**MICHELLE  
MARKOWITZ**

We are proud of the work that we do every day at Cushing to make life better — now and in the future — for the students and adults we serve. And we enjoy sharing with you the success stories that validate that work. I think this edition of the *Connector* is especially impactful in that regard. Cushing students wearing waders

and harvesting a cranberry bog? You bet. A graduate who is working in an office setting as a receptionist? Absolutely. Adult program participants who have parlayed the valuable work experience they received here into jobs in the community at the YMCA, Whole Foods and Showcase Cinema? Check. You can read about those individuals in this edition, as well as an exciting new music program at our St. Coletta Day School in Braintree, a board member who helped us build for our future with the MarketPlace, and options available to those who may be inclined to support our mission through planned giving.

Any organization is only as strong as its people and we are blessed to have a combination of students, adults, staff, community partners, and families who all come together to make Cushing the special place that it is. At this year's Springtime gala on May 25, we will honor two of those families, the Roessner King and the Florence families. I hope you can join us.

Thank you for your interest in all we do at Cardinal Cushing Centers and best wishes for a warm and fulfilling spring season.

*Michelle Markowitz is president & CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers.*



## Springtime

*A family affair*

Honoring the Roessner King  
and Florence families

[SpringtimeGala.org](http://SpringtimeGala.org)

**SAVE THE DATE:**

May 25, 2023

5 p.m. at Seaport Hotel Boston



Cardinal Cushing Centers





# New music therapy program hits a high note

## MUSIC from page 1

skills,” said Doug Frazier, director of the St. Coletta Day School. “It’s also encouraging peer relationships and taking turns. And it stimulates their creativity and imagination, develops their leisure skills and improves their fine motor skills.”

Sable’s sessions typically focus on movement with music, as well as instrument playing. Each class wraps up with a relaxation or sensory exercise.

Sable, who works with a number of different organizations, said she enjoys her time at St. Coletta.

“The personalities of all of them are phenomenal,” she said. “It’s the best group I’ve worked with. They just have fun at the sessions, and even though it’s fun, they’re still hitting those goals. Really, I’m so happy to be part of this community and to provide services on some level.”

Frazier says this is the first time the school has offered music therapy, but he hopes to see it continue long-term.

“I’m sold on it,” said Frazier. “Music can be fun and relaxing and it touches us in different ways. I think the students are getting that. They love it, and it really has been therapeutic for them.”



1. Ebony Lewis assists Colin Smith during music therapy class at St. Coletta Day School.

2. Music therapist Katelyn Sable of Sing Explore Create enjoys working with the St. Coletta students.

3. Caleb Charles works with music therapist Katelyn Sable.

4. Jenn Merzon helps Elise Taylor during class.

5. Chris Dewhurst strums a beat with Linda Santacroce.





# Partnership berry good for Cushing

**BY MEAGHAN CASEY**

Not everyone can say they have waded in a cranberry bog, but it's a way of life for former Cardinal Cushing Centers student Ian Norrie, who is introducing a new generation of students to the one-of-a-kind experience.

Norrie, who operates Carver-Middleboro Cranberry Co. with his father, John, has been building a partnership with Cushing for the past year. Cushing students and adult participants have been invited out to the bogs, and some even assisted with the harvesting in the fall.

"He went above and beyond to welcome us," said Cushing Chief Operating Officer Hank Perrin. "He purchased waders for all the students. He also provided them T-shirts and handmade cranberry boxes, as well as coffee and donuts and lunch. He took them for rides on the equipment and gave a presentation about bogging. The entire day was really impressive. The students raved about what a great experience it was. Some of them have done farming, but not bogging. They really enjoyed it."

Norrie hopes he can provide some guidance and inspiration for the students, having once been in their shoes.

"It's been a true honor to work with them," he said. "I want nothing but the best for them, and I want them to know that even if you might be challenged in one area, you can still succeed in something else."

"He wants to raise the bar for the students," said Perrin. "As he knows, they might have trouble learning, but they have abilities, and he wants to help them reach their full potential. He remembers that the people here care a great deal. He wanted to give back to a place that was special to him."

Norrie attended Cushing as a day student for a few years, 30 years ago. He enrolled after a surgery to remove scar tissue from his frontal lobe left him with some learning disabilities.

"My right side was perfectly fine, but my left side was affected and my IQ was lower," said Norrie. "It would take time to reestablish everything."

He eventually left school at age 15 and went to work with his father, who also runs Plympton Sand & Gravel Corp.

"Working in that field, I was able to be hands-on and try new things, making something out of nothing," said Norrie, who is mechanically inclined and very skilled with his hands. He has built equipment to assist in the operations of the company. "My father gave me the tools to do that."

The father-son team operates 75 acres of cranberry-producing bogs in Plympton and Middleborough. Norrie is planning to start an organic bog—free from pesticides from day one—that Cushing students would help manage.

"I want them to construct the bog with me and put in the irrigation system, and then help farm it," Norrie said. "We have 50 acres of land to work with, and eventually I'd like to grow fruits and vegetables and maybe set up a farmstand that the students could run."

Norrie is working on permitting for the new bog, but is hoping to hit the ground running in three to six months.

"I'm excited for the students to get the opportunity to learn this business," said Norrie. "I hope it will build their self-esteem,

like it did mine. I know what helped me the most was mentors and guidance. Sometimes you need someone to let you learn, let you fall and get back up and learn from your mistakes."

He also hopes it might set students up for new employment opportunities.

"The field of farming produce is a dying breed and people can't find help," said Norrie. "There are farmers out there looking to hire, and most of them have a heart of gold. If some of these students want to get into this field, they'll be going in with experience."

In addition to bringing students into his business, Norrie has also ventured back to the classrooms of Cushing. Since March, he has been volunteering on a weekly basis in the industrial arts department. He also volunteered over the holidays to sell Christmas trees.

"The time I spend there just flies because I'm enjoying it," said Norrie. "I'm just glad to see the students."



1. Cushing Sustainability Coordinator Eleanor Arpino and student Ryan Akins get a lesson in cranberry bogging. 2. Cushing staff members Kristen Scalata and Randy Wiskow enjoy the day at the bog, run by a former Cushing student. 3. Cushing students have been getting hands-on lessons in bogging. 4. Cushing student Joey Barao and alumnus Ian Norrie, who operates the bog, test out the machinery. 5. The Norries operate 75 acres of cranberry-producing bogs. 6. Cushing student Shea Frost and former Director of Education Jude Morgan use rakes to corral the cranberries. 7. Cushing student Nickolas Frazier uses a blower to push the cranberries into the center of the bog.



BOARD PROFILE

# Happy to help build a stronger Cushing

By MEAGHAN CASEY

With more than 25 years’ experience in the construction industry, Jacob Simmons was a perfect fit to join Cushing’s board of directors just as the organization was embarking on its MarketPlace project.

Simmons is the owner and chairman of Delphi Construction, which provides a full range of pre-construction, construction and post-construction services to take a project from concept to completion on time and on budget. He took ownership of the business in 2001, growing it to become a visible leader in multiple construction markets. Simmons is responsible for overall strategy, business and market development.

At Cushing, Simmons was able to help guide the construction of the \$10 million, 20,000-square-foot MarketPlace building, which opened in December 2020, housing state-of-the-art classroom and office space, in addition to the retail shops. He has nothing but praise for the end product.

“It’s a great building that will be there for a long time,” Simmons said.

Simmons is in his eighth year serving on the board. He previously served on the Executive Committee and as chair of the Real Property Committee. He was brought on by his attorney, Ralph Rivkind, who also serves on Cushing’s board.

“I was just starting to slow down in my day-to-day,”

Simmons said. “I did a walk-through and fell in love with the organization.”

Since then, Simmons has only become more enamored. “It’s been some of the most rewarding work I’ve done in my lifetime,” he said. “I hope I’ve given back as much as I got.”

Simmons, whose father was a general contractor, says he grew up on job sites. He went to school for architecture, but was drawn to the field of construction management. He joined Delphi in 1995, when the company was a relatively small firm focusing on the healthcare market.

Simmons and his wife, Sue, raised their three children in Marshfield, but now split their time between homes in Cape Cod and Florida.



“I did a walk-through and fell in love with the organization.”

— Jacob Simmons

## Cushing is strategic about planned giving options

By MEAGHAN CASEY

They say it takes a village, and at Cushing, that village is helping to plan for the future.

For the last 10 years, a group of community professionals have given their time and talent, serving on Cushing’s Planned Giving Advisory Committee.

Committee members provide guidance on marketing and strategy and act as a resource for technical questions.

“We have expertise in this area, so we might suggest opportunities that Cushing should highlight, or answer questions for donors,” said Tim Barry, who chairs the committee. “Some of it is technical, just helping out with language. We’re always on call to proofread or go over things.”

Barry serves as principal at CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) Quincy, which provides wealth advisory, outsourcing, audit, tax, and consulting services.

“From our perspective, we may

be busy in our professional lives, but this is one of those opportunities to do something for an organization that provides extraordinary services,” said Barry. “To help out in some small way, it makes you feel good.”

Barry was invited to serve on the committee by Jeff Smith, senior vice president of the Investment Management Group at Rockland Trust.

“Rockland Trust has been a good partner to Cushing over the years, and vice versa,” said Smith, who also serves on Cushing’s Development Committee and spearheads the St. Coletta Golf Classic with his team at Rockland Trust. “I’m involved in a lot of organizations, but none feel as good as this.”

Smith says the organization approached him about long-range financial planning.

“I started to form a group of financial planners, accountants and estate planning attorneys from the South Shore,” said Smith. “Cushing has such a great

reputation, people lined up.

“Once you introduce people to Cushing, they’re hooked,” he added. “That was the idea with the committee—trying to create awareness around the organization and how people can support it in their estate planning.”

Planned gifts are gifts that are made now but will be received at a future point in time, usually through a will bequest, estate plan, retirement fund or life insurance.

“A lot of it comes down to the person, to the extent that they have that philanthropic desire, but there are tax benefits, too. The sooner people start to think about it, the sooner they can determine what fits their circumstances,” said Barry.

“When you talk about planned giving, it takes time, but it’s been fun to watch it come to fruition,” said Smith.



Jeff Smith



Tim Barry

*If you would like to learn more about how you can help Cushing through a planned gift, contact Laurie Maranian, Director of Development, at 781-829-1247 or [lmarianian@cushingcenters.org](mailto:lmarianian@cushingcenters.org).*

## ALUMNI PROFILE

# Stephanie Steele success story is a shore thing



BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Eighteen years ago, Peabody native Stephanie Steele found herself trading the North Shore for the South Shore when she became a residential student at Cardinal Cushing Centers.

Now, she finds herself back on the North Shore, living independently and working five days a week as a receptionist at Northeast Arc, an organization helping people with disabilities.

Steele, who has autism, entered Cushing at age 18 and graduated four years later. She participated

in the vocational program, working at the former Cushing Trader and bakery. She also explored health careers and volunteered at a nursing home. She was involved with recreational activities and Special Olympics, enjoying cheerleading, track and field and basketball. She says the best part of her time at Cushing was the people she met.

"I made a lot of friends there," said Steele, who still enjoys attending alumni reunions each fall.

After graduating from Cushing, Steele participated in day programs and moved into one of Northeast Arc's group homes. She secured a

job at Market Basket and later completed a work-readiness program at Salem State University called Project Search, where she learned the skills to work as a receptionist.

She was hired as a receptionist in Northeast Arc's office in Danvers in 2016, and she has been living independently in Salem since 2019. She works 22 hours per week.

"I like greeting people and showing them where to go," she said. "I also have to answer the phones and transfer calls and do some other projects like scanning."

## Showcasing their abilities in the workplace

### EMPLOYEES from page 8

at Cushing in September and Hanson made the first connection.

"He did a pre-interview with Howie, the general manager, right there in the café and he made an awesome impression," said Busch-Amrhein.

"I went up to him and said 'I'm a very hard worker and enthusiastic and always on time for work' and I filled out an application on the spot, and we caught up on our favorite movies," said Hanson.

It's been a good fit for Hanson, who lives in one of Cushing's residences and whose interests include movies, music, acting and art. He has dreams of becoming a professional artist someday, but for now, he's happy right where he is.

"I like working at Showcase so much," he said. "The management is really nice, and I never have to be afraid to ask for help. And I like meeting new people and making more money. I've always been a people person, so that's carried over."

"There are different types of technology—electronic door locks, thermometers, ticket scanner with touch screen—and a lot of codes, which he's memorized," said Busch-Amrhein. "He's been doing an awesome job. His co-workers are really helpful, but he's learned a lot."

Kim Hamilton, another veteran of the Unique Boutique, and also Take 2, was hired by Panera Bread at Hanover Crossing in May of 2021. She works three days per week and is responsible for cleaning tables and restocking supplies.

"I like working within the community," said Hamilton. "It gives me the chance to talk to people."

Hamilton has prior retail experience, but says the MarketPlace provided a great training ground. "It really helped me and prepared me, especially after COVID," she said.

"I noticed a big confidence boost in her after working in the MarketPlace," said Busch-Amrhein.

"She went for the Panera job herself and she even advocated for herself to add more hours."

Hamilton lives in Rockland with her sister, and in her spare time she volunteers at the Humane Society in Duxbury. She started at Cushing as a student and then transitioned to adult services.

Busch-Amrhein says the purpose of the SSI program is to provide opportunities for adults like Hamilton to find competitive and integrated employment in the community. The program is committed to the exploration and development of employment plans tailored to each individual's preferences, skills and needs.

Mark Milton, another SSI participant, was hired by Whole Foods in October as part of the "clean team," sweeping the store multiple times over per shift. A Pembroke resident, Milton works at the Hingham location, within the Derby Street Shops, and SSI provides the transportation for him to get to and from work.

"I love it," said Milton. "I keep the store clean and make it shiny. And it feels great to earn my own money."

Milton works at Whole Foods two days per week, and he also still trains in Cushing's woodworking shop two other days of the week.

Liz Wheeler, who has worked in the Cushing Café since it opened, was hired by the Emilson YMCA in Hanover in October. She works as a playroom attendant three days a week and works at the Café the other two days. She hopes to eventually become a teaching assistant or paraprofessional at a preschool and is looking into getting her early childhood credentials.

"Liz is one of the most organized people on the planet, and she handled a lot of the steps on her own," said Busch-Amrhein. "She's so independent. She's a great self-advocate and she does a great job working with staff."



1. Nick Hanson enjoys his job at Showcase Cinema de Lux. 2. Liz Wheeler works as a playroom attendant at the YMCA. 3. Mark Milton is responsible for cleaning the store at Whole Foods.

PHOTOS BY SEAN BROWNE





Cushing’s Liz Wheeler works at the Emilson YMCA in Hanover.

PHOTOS BY  
SEAN BROWNE

# Showcasing their abilities in the workplace

By MEAGHAN CASEY

When the idea for the MarketPlace was conceived, part of the intent was always to provide job opportunities and training for the adults Cushing supports. Now, many of those adults are seeing that their work experience at Cushing was a wonderful stepping stone to

employment in the community. About a dozen adults participating in Cushing’s South Shore Industries (SSI) program have transitioned from the MarketPlace to jobs at companies such as Whole Foods, Panera Bread, Market Basket, Previte’s Marketplace, Showcase Cinemas and the South Shore YMCA. Nick Hanson, who worked at the Unique Boutique

within the MarketPlace, recently secured a job as an usher at the new Showcase Cinema de Lux at Hanover Crossing. Hanson, who started in December, is one of two Cushing adults employed at the new cinema. Janina Busch-Amrhein, SSI employment specialist and community liaison, said Showcase participated in a job fair

See **EMPLOYEES** page 7

Mark Milton enjoys working at Whole Foods in Hingham.

