

© Best Version Media

# NORWELL

*Neighbors*



*Thriving with Purpose:*

## AINSLEY'S JOURNEY

at Cardinal Cushing Centers

POWERED BY



JUNE 2025

Photo by Jackie Averill





BY KATELYN STEVENS | PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS BY JACKIE AVERILL

When you meet Ainsley DiTomaso, it's impossible not to be drawn in by her bright spirit and quiet determination. As a thriving resident at Cardinal Cushing Centers in Hanover, she's building the skills she needs to live more independently while stepping confidently into a future filled with promise, purpose, and joy.



That journey, however, hasn't always been easy. At the age of just 10-years old, Ainsley began having petit mal seizures and was diagnosed with epilepsy. Her seizures impacted typical brain development and she was subsequently diagnosed with an intellectual disability. And while she may appear like any other teenager, her developmental needs set her apart in ways that can make it difficult to connect with peers. "In the traditional school setting, it was hard for her to fit in," her parents Jill and Glenn explain. "But now, thanks to the community she's found at Cushing, she's built real friendships and a sense of belonging. She's really thriving there."

## Living and Learning at Cushing

Now a proud resident of Clarinda House, Ainsley lights up when she talks about her life at Cardinal Cushing. "I love my room—it's big!" she says with a grin. But her room is more than just a cozy space—it's a reflection of her growing independence. Since moving into residential life, Ainsley has embraced new responsibilities with enthusiasm. She does her own laundry, helps with cooking, and keeps her room tidy. "Living in my house has helped me grow," she explains. "I walk to school and to my jobs by myself."



Each small step has helped Ainsley build confidence and take ownership of her daily life. But gaining independence doesn't always mean doing things alone—it means learning how to do things with the right support. And Cardinal Cushing has offered just that, helping her develop the tools and confidence to step into adulthood, both on campus and out in the community.

"To truly understand Cushing, I encourage people to visit our campus, browse and eat at our MarketPlace shops and Cafe, and see Ainsley and her peers in action," says Cushing CEO and President Michelle Markowitz. "They are learning skills, gaining independence, and living their best lives – and we couldn't be more proud of them."



### Small Group Strength & Conditioning made for:

- Athletes looking to get stronger, faster, and more powerful
- Adults who want to look great and live an active life for decades to come

Visit us online to book your trial today!

[www.magnitudestrengthandpower.com](http://www.magnitudestrengthandpower.com)



@MAGNITUDESTRENGTHANDPOWER  
CONTACT@MAGNITUDESTRENGTHANDPOWER.COM  
(781) 590-3594



## Car Trouble? We Fix European Vehicles!






Scan Here to Schedule Your Appointment Today!  
@SouthShoreAutoworks



192 Summer St. Kingston  
SouthShoreAutoworks.com  
**781.650.7365**



## Practicing New Skills With Confidence

One of Ainsley's proudest accomplishments? Working at the Cushing Café, where she runs the cash register and restocks items. "I practice counting money," she says. She also has worked at the Peppermint Twist gift shop, carefully filling candy bags, and even in a cranberry bog, where hard work taught her about perseverance. "On the cranberry bog I learned to keep working even when it was really challenging," she reflects.

But Ainsley's talents don't stop at job skills. She's also a proud member of the Cushing Chorus, and serves as a junior coach for the Cushing cheerleading team. "I just like to help people," she says. "It makes me happy to help them."

Sports are also a huge part of Ainsley's life, and currently volleyball stands out as her favorite. "My speech and language teacher Michelle is my main volleyball coach," she says. "She inspires me to do my best and my other teacher Jared also helps out." That sense of encouragement and support, coupled with opportunities to shine, has helped Ainsley blossom—both on and off the court.

## Rooted in Love and Progress

An exciting milestone in Ainsley's journey came through modeling in a fashion show at Cushing's annual Springtime Gala. Under the tutelage of Maria Wood-Smith, founder of a confidence-boosting program for kids and teens in Pembroke called Fearless Focus, Ainsley strutted her stuff in front of about 400 people. "I felt like I was walking on a real runway," she says, beaming. "I was proud of myself for doing it. I felt awesome!"



That sense of pride and accomplishment reflects a much larger transformation, which consistently leaves her family in awe. "At first, it was hard for all of us," they admit. "She needed more support than we could give." But since becoming a residential student, Ainsley has found the right structure, care, and encouragement to thrive. "Cushing has helped her gain the skills and confidence that we see in her today."



Whether advocating to join vocational training or earning her campus independence—meaning she can walk to destinations on her own—Ainsley has embraced challenges with resilience. "We're proud of how she uses her voice now," her parents say. "When she's overwhelmed, she asks for help. That alone is a big step."

## Building Her Tomorrow

Looking ahead, Ainsley has clear dreams. "I want to live in an apartment with my boyfriend. I want to have a family one day," she says. And professionally? "I want to work in a school as a nurse."

At home, she loves downtime with her family and playing with her dog, Zoey, and rabbit, Ginger. But it's clear that at Cardinal Cushing, Ainsley has found more than a school—she's found a community where she belongs and a foundation for her future.

In every part of her life, Ainsley is setting an example not just for her peers, but for all of us: that with the right support and a little courage, independence isn't just possible—it's joyful. "There is no doubt that Ainsley will do whatever she sets her mind to," agrees Markowitz. "She's got an incredible future ahead of her."

### CHERYL MUTH

KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY  
484-678-6457  
171 Washington Street, Norwell  
cmuth@kw.com  
cherylmuth.kw.com





REALTOR®

**kw** SIGNATURE PROPERTIES  
KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY

• Certified SRES® (Seniors Real Estate Specialist)

• All buyers and sellers experience my customized, concierge service and expertise.

*"I'd be grateful to become your trusted real estate resource and will always take great care of your referrals."*

# BUYING OR SELLING A HOME THIS SUMMER?

It's very important to engage a real estate attorney before you sign an Offer to Purchase. Once the Offer is signed, it's difficult to renegotiate the terms to add or remove important contingencies that might have been missed. **Call us for a free consultation** and we can walk you through the process, even if your transaction is months away.



**GET STARTED TODAY!**

[fitzgeraldlawoffices.com](http://fitzgeraldlawoffices.com)

25 RECREATION PARK DRIVE, SUITE 206, HINGHAM



**Scott J. Fitzgerald, Esq.**

**781.924.5326**

[scott@fitzgeraldlawoffices.com](mailto:scott@fitzgeraldlawoffices.com)