



CHS Community News

Serving adults with disabilities and their families since 1981

Fall, 2015

Volume 2, Issue 3

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CHS Executive Director's Message



Dear Friends and Families,

Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. is an organization known for providing quality services and continually striving to meet the needs, desires and dreams of the people we serve. We are proud of this reputation. Throughout the years, our organization has continued to evolve, progress and excel thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, self-advocates and community members and their commitment to providing responsive, respectful and flexible programs and services.

At the heart of our work on behalf of individuals with disabilities is our ongoing effort to provide person-centered services that are respectful and positive. Over the years, the MA Department of Developmental Disabilities, Quality Enhancement Survey and Certification Team has consistently commended CHS for building upon our successes and continuously meeting our mission by moving forward - growing and finding new and creative ways to achieve personal satisfaction through understanding and knowledge of each person's own life story.

In keeping with our tradition of always moving forward, CHS recently embarked on what we call the Evolution of Excellence. This campaign is designed to re-affirm and re-dedicate our staff to the service commitment they made when they first chose to work at CHS. We are asking our staff to think about what it's like to experience receiving services from our organization. Additionally our process asks staff to experience their work as part of their personal and professional journey - a journey that truly reflects 'A Passion For What's Possible'. We encourage everyone to recall and build on their past successful contributions while reaffirming the important role that each person plays in the daily lives of those we serve.

Just as we strive to listen, understand and provide for the needs of our staff, our staff in turn, are encouraged to reflect upon the motivation and needs of each person served, learning each person's life story. Our Evolution of Excellence campaign continues to inspire all of us: renewing and re-energizing our desire to make a difference; helping us to create new avenues of engagement with the people we serve; and supporting new initiatives that continue CHS' excellence in every way, every day.

As the Evolution of Excellence campaign progresses, new CHS strategic initiatives and program development are moving forward. CHS is expanding our workforce, enhancing our training curriculum and establishing new provider partnerships, technology and advocacy services in anticipation of another year of major accomplishments and milestones. Some highlights include:

As part of the development of new service options for individuals and families, CHS is working with the Department of Developmental Services to expand our Shared Living Program. We have been selected as the lead shared living provider for three DDS area offices (Central Middlesex, Metro North, and Northshore). CHS is looking for individuals and families who would like to partner with us to provide shared living services for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities in our service areas.

(Continued on page 2)



~ Proud Citizens ~ Getting Involved ~ Giving Back ~

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CHS, Executive Director's Message (continued from page 1)

(Continued from page 1)

- ◆ CHS has recently purchased a residence in Tewksbury that will be extensively renovated over the next few months to accommodate a new twenty-four hour residential program for four adults with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI). This program will be one of the first in Massachusetts funded under the MA Home and Community Based Services ABI Residential Supports Waiver. DDS has selected Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. for this new service because of our extensive experience and expertise providing medical, behavioral and clinical services. We are most pleased to expand our services to this population of individuals, most of whom previously resided in institutional care settings
- ◆ CHS is also opening a new residential program for five young men diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. These individuals have very unique needs; they are able intellectually, but have significant social and emotional disabilities that require non-traditional behavioral and clinical supports. This program is one of the first programs funded by DDS under the Omnibus Autism Bill.
- ◆ CHS continues to expand our Family and Adult Sibling Support services, as well. We not only provide in-home family support services, but we are also host to MA Families Organizing for Change's parent education series called Advocacy Bootcamp. A group of parents of school age children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, have learned about educational and community services; advocating on behalf of their child; and supporting each other.

Thanks to all of you - our dedicated families, volunteers and staff - CHS continues to meet its mission, providing quality services that enhance the inclusion of individuals served into community life. In this newsletter you will also read about many of our summer and fall activities, as well as plans for our annual holiday volunteer events.

At Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. we welcome and truly appreciate your participation and assistance. Whether you volunteer, send a donation to our Annual Appeal and/or share your personal success stories with us, you continue to help CHS to provide our quality services to 300 individuals with disabilities served throughout the year.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Leahy
Executive Director

THE Cooperative FOR
Human Services
A PASSION FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Be A Local Hero ~ Join Our Shared Living Program

Have an impact and make a difference in the life of a person who needs you.

Transform lives ~ open your home to a person with disabilities. Share your talents, skills, and home with a person with special needs! Through our shared living arrangements and with your caring support, you can help a person with disabilities learn, grow and discover greater independence. Your support opens up a world of opportunities and creates a new beginning filled with rewarding experiences for you both.

Yes YOU Can! CHS matches you with a person who needs your support. We customize living arrangements that are flexible and successful for working professionals, single adults, couples, families, empty nesters or stay-at-home parents. Yes, you can open your home and your heart. Welcome a new member to your household and family.

The Basics: Provide a caring, safe home environment, show compassion and understanding, use good judgment and decision making, high school diploma, valid driver's license and use of a vehicle. Contact CHS to learn more.

Generous Compensation: Each financial arrangement is based upon the level of care the person needs. Financial subsidies include monthly support for rent, food, recreation, and direct payment for caregiving in your home.

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Phone: 781-538-4626 x 231 ~ Fax: 781-538-6950 ~ Visit: www.cooperativeforhs.org

CHS ANNUAL APPEAL MEETS CAMPAIGN GOAL

Board of Directors

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Thanks to the generous support of our families, volunteers and supporters, Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. is pleased to announce that we achieved our Annual Appeal goal last year collecting a total of \$16,625 (an 18% increase over the previous year). As is our tradition, donations are used to enhance and enrich social, leisure and other community activities for the 300 men and women with disabilities served each year. We are very grateful for every gift and extend sincere appreciation to all of our donors.

Thank you for helping us make 'A Passion for What's Possible' a reality for everyone we serve!

Sponsors: (\$1000-\$5000)

- Dennis Conlin, Colins Pharmacy
- Ann and David Perkins
- Ann Powers
- Norman and Marjorie Wilson
- Steven and Norman Wilson

Benefactors: (\$500-\$999)

- Rick Catino
- Helen Cushman
- Jermaine Kidd
- Kirkland and Shaw Plumbing
- Ramirez Landscaping
- Edwin and Donna Sullivan
- Carol E. Tully
- Wolf and Co. Charitable Foundation

Patrons: (\$200-\$499)

- Karen and Lou Barrett
- Robert and Anne Bersani
- Stephen Darr and Linda Fermery
- Rachel and Norman Dionne
- Paul Eddy
- Edgeworth Appliance Co.
- Roland Gregoire

Friends: (\$5-\$199)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mary J. Bardwell | Richard and Irene Knight |
| Beacon Health Care Products | Catherine and Leo Krant |
| Elaine Blass | Dr. Mary Pat Leahy-Vela |
| Gail and Philip Brykman | Donna Lubarsky |
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| Elizabeth Cloutman | Mass. Bay Self-Insurance |
| Kathleen and Fred Conover | Angela McGrath |
| Karen Costa | MG Print and Promotions |
| Antoinette Dallaire | Michael Morris |
| Simone D'Eon | George Murphy, Jr. |
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| Carl Kazanjian | Marie and Roger Tulin |
| Keane Fire and Safety Equip. Co. | Marianne Vezerian |
| Kendall Relocation Corp. | |
| Francis Kilty | |

ATTENTION STATE and FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

CHS is an approved non-profit organization for both Federal and State employees who contribute to their respective Combined Charities Programs. If you, your friends or other family members are employed by a State or Federal agency, your contribution can be directed to Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. by indicating our provider number on your pledge card.

Our MA Combined Employee Campaign Number is 700417.

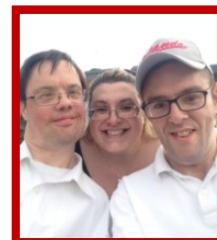
Our Combined Federal Campaign of Eastern MA number is 42522.

CHS ACTIVITIES FOR ALL SEASONS



Lowell Spinners Games

This summer, CHS purchased season tickets for the people we serve to enjoy a good old fashioned American pastime ~ Baseball! Each week there were several opportunities for folks to enjoy a game, and those seats filled up fast! Everyone had a wonderful time out in the fresh air enjoying some refreshments and cheering on the beloved local sports team, Lowell Spinners.



Summer BBQ ~ Fun For All!



The most recent summer BBQ season was a major success! Everyone had a fabulous time at the cookouts. A lot of laughs were shared, and everyone went home with satisfied taste buds and gifts in hand.

The staff members who work so hard each day to better the lives of the people we serve truly put great effort forth in making the cookouts a wonderful memory. Special thanks to Mariah Havens who went above and beyond creating wonderful, fun-filled carnival themed cookouts that individuals, their friends and family members enjoyed!



Apple and Pumpkin Picking Fun!

On Columbus Day a group of individuals from CHS celebrated fall in New England by going to Shelburne Farms for some apple and pumpkin picking fun. Everyone enjoyed the lovely weather, live music and apple cider donuts at the bake stand. It was a lovely afternoon for everyone involved.



CHS ACTIVITIES FOR ALL SEASONS

2015 Human Rights Events



During the last two weeks of October, CHS hosted several Human Rights events inviting the individuals we serve to discuss all aspects of their services and relationships with staff.

The individuals shared what they truly enjoy, as well as areas where they would like to have more support. Human Rights were reviewed and how to advocate on your own behalf was discussed. Each person was asked to share “their story” and other interesting, unique aspects about themselves to help enhance the quality of their services as part of the Evolution of Excellence campaign.

CHS Citizens ~ Getting Involved ~ Giving Back

Individuals served by CHS are busy gearing up for the holiday activities they look forward to the most all year long. Giving back to the community by getting involved and serving as volunteers!

Our 2015 Giving Back program primarily focuses on creating care packages for our communities’ military veterans and helping homeless families being served by the Lynn Shelter Association.

A team of individuals from several of our residential programs joined together and “adopted” a family from the Lynn Shelter Association.

The individuals have been busy trying to discover what the children of the family are wishing for as gifts. This information will be used to develop a creative plan to make each child and each family’s wish come true!

The gifts will be delivered by the individuals and

they each will be able to see first hand, the positive impact they have had on the lives of these children and this family in Lynn.

At the same time, another group of CHS individuals is busy making cards and care packages for elderly veterans at the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Bedford. These cards and gifts will also be hand delivered. The individuals involved in this project are looking forward to having the opportunity to personally thank our veterans for their service.



2015 CHS HOLIDAY PARTIES

Our annual holiday parties have begun!

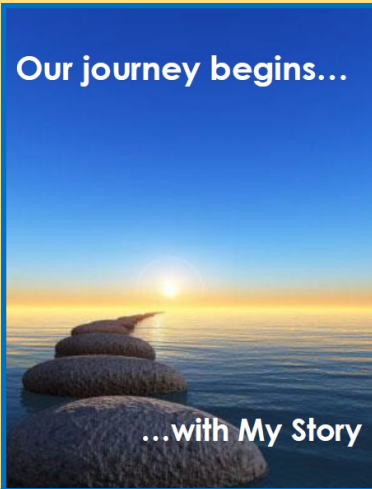
Individuals and staff from each program have made plans suited to meet their own specific needs and preferences. Certainly each party will include plenty of great food and fun complete with gifts and music. A joyous time is sure to be had by all.

Happy Holidays to everyone from CHS!



CHS ~ EVOLUTION OF EXCELLENCE

Our journey begins...



...with My Story

Designed by CHS Employees and Managers to create a visual representation of the journey shared between the people we serve and the people who support them!

Be part of our story and share yours.

CHS invites the people we serve, family members, guardians and our staff to share their story.

Stories will be selected and featured in upcoming newsletters.

In March the CHS **Evolution of Excellence** campaign was launched. This agency-wide process is designed to continually inspire us to renew and re-energize our commitment to the people we serve.

Employees have been challenged to think about CHS's Evolution of Excellence as part of their personal and professional journey focusing on each one's individual responsibility to enhance the lives of the people we serve.

This journey to achieve excellence begins and ends with understanding how the people we serve experience our services, each and every day.

Through a series of meetings and trainings, we asked our employees to imagine what it is like to receive services from a staff person like them asking are they happy; filled with hope and a sense of purpose or is there more that we can and should do?

As a result, we created a series of training sessions that focus on our personal role in creating happiness. The central theme is learning the life story (My Story) of the people we serve.

Implementing a series of exercises and roles playing, employees shared their own Life Stories; broadening their understanding of each other and as a result, opening their hearts and minds to understand the Life Stories of the people we serve!

Be part of our story and share yours! Begin today with a smile and bring happiness into your life!

Make today a great day!

Join our Evolution of Excellence.

Contact:

Gale Alles,
Operations Manager, Residential Services

galles@cooperativeforhs.org

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CHS Opens Two New Residential Programs for Adults

New Program for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Excitement is in the air! This November, Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. opened a new, twenty-four hour residential program for five young men diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). These gentlemen will reside on a seventy-five acre farm that CHS has leased in North Reading, Massachusetts.

The property's main building, a large, two-story antique colonial, will provide a comfortable home for these men. The home features five bedrooms, three baths, a huge combined kitchen and dining room, a grand fire-placed living room and a separate, spacious activities room.

Adjacent to the home is a large, three hundred year old barn that is in excellent condition. The barn has several horse stalls, as well as a large loft. It once was the home of a therapeutic riding school for people with special needs.

Additionally, the property provides opportunities for numerous outdoor activities and entrepreneurial endeavors. The expansive property includes open fields, horseback riding and hiking trails and a horse corral.

The five young men being served in this new program have very unique needs. Although of average intelligence, these individuals have complex, significant social and emotional needs that are characteristic of ASD. CHS will provide for their specialized needs by providing twenty-four hour supports within a non-traditional behavioral and clinical environment.

Funded by Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services under the Omnibus Autism Bill, this program will offer a variety of day and residential services.

There are many possible initiatives to explore dependent on the interests of the individuals served. These include organic farming, a horse riding stable, therapeutic horticulture, environmental studies and hiking. Other possibilities being discussed include cooking (seed to table) activities, such as making baked goods, canning fruits and vegetables and perhaps running a seasonal farm stand.

There is hope of attracting trade and craft artisans willing to teach others about skilled work and working with your hands.

We look forward to keeping you informed about our newest residential initiative as we get "back to basics" on our new farm!



New Program for Adults with Acquired Brain Injuries

Early in 2016, with funding from the MA Department of Developmental Services, CHS will open a new twenty-four hour supervised, community based residential program for four individuals with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI). A home in Tewksbury has been purchased and renovations for this program have begun. Renovations will include adding bedrooms, updating the kitchen and bath facilities and constructing handicap accessible ramps. Residential services for these adults will include personal care, recreation and leisure activities, activities of daily living and community education services.

Incorporated into these residential services are intensive, specialized services, including clinical supports, Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services; comprehensive health, safety and nursing care services; and counseling. This home will be equipped with assistive and adaptive devices and staffed by highly qualified and experienced professionals. Clinical services are available from our highly skilled clinicians including our Licensed Mental Health Counselor, ABA certified therapist and Registered Nurse, as well as part time clinical services from community health and mental health providers.



Shared Living: A New Take on an Old Idea

Why Shared Living?

Systems are Changing. Economic and demographic forces are pressuring state service systems to look toward alternative, more sustainable ways to support people in need. The confluence of workforce shortages, the recent recession, growing waiting lists and the increasing costs of shift-staff residential programs are leading states to seek equally effective, less costly support alternatives. In order to meet growing demand and assure sustainable, effective and cost-effective programs, states are turning to shared living.

What is Shared Living? Shared living is an arrangement in which a care provider in the community and an individual with a disability **choose** to live together and share life's experiences. The approach is based on a mutual relationship where both parties agree to share their lives. The approach is designed to enable people with support needs to experience a real community life; one that is not controlled by the formal service delivery system.

What Shared Living is Not. Shared living does not refer to a place, nor a "facility," or a group home. It is neither traditional foster care, nor a bed in a boarding home or a small "setting" serving three or four individuals. Shared living is not a "residential program" or a supported program with multiple staff working in shifts, and is not a "model" of service or a program to fix people. Shared living is not for everyone, it must be freely chosen and structured to afford the person receiving support the life and life-situation that matches and meets his or her needs. It is one option among many.

Commitment and Leadership. For the concept of life sharing to be a viable alternative that endures over time, the state Developmental Disabilities (DD) agency must first make an affirmative commitment to promoting and supporting shared living. It is important that shared living not be viewed as a "rebranding" of old models of family or foster care, but rather as an innovative approach designed to support people to be independent and self-determined in person centered ways.

The Match. "The success of shared living rests on the thoughtful and careful process of introducing people to each other and assuring the relationships work." (Shared Living bulletin, Pennsylvania)

Support. An essential component of shared living is the nature of the support furnished to the shared living provider. Effective programs typically offer a variety of training resources, information and assistance that enables the provider to focus on the person they are supporting. This includes ensuring the availability of other professionals as well as access to consultation, respite and emergency services if needed.

Making a House a Home. The primary responsibility of a shared living provider is to make a real home where the care provider and the individual have a mutually satisfying and meaningful relationship ~ a home that really feels like a home to everyone. In true shared living, the individual being supported is not just moving into a room in someone else's house, he or she is agreeing to enter into a personal relationship that can be expected to endure over time.

Paying for Shared Living Services. Shared living is not a specific support "model," but rather an "approach" that can take many forms typically, the care provider(s) receive compensation. Most states finance shared living with Medicaid funds under the Section 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver program.

Robust Person-Centered Planning: Person-centered planning has been a part of DD service system expectations since the early 1980's. Making sure the voice of the individual is being heard clearly and acted upon is critical to the quality and outcomes of shared living.

CONCLUSION

Shared living offers an alternative approach to supporting individuals with I/DD. It is not a specific model of service, but an approach to creating individualized, customized living situations, based on relationships. Shared living presupposes that people choose to live together, mutually exploring and agreeing upon how they wish to share their lives. With careful attention to matching individuals and good supports to care providers, shared living can be a successful alternative to "traditional" residential services.

Excerpted from a report prepared for the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council by Robin E. Cooper
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services – Spring 2013)

CHS Hosts “Advocacy Bootcamp”



Six Saturday mornings this fall Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. served as host, providing refreshments, media equipment, conference space and staff support, to “Advocacy Bootcamp”, a new and exceptional educational series, sponsored by MA Families Organizing For Change. In this series a group of parents of children with special needs met with MFOFC leaders and guest speakers at the CHS headquarters in Lexington.

The main focus of “Advocacy Bootcamp” is to build a solid foundation of advocacy skills to empower children with special needs to lead rich, meaningful and exciting lives. Participants were selected from applications from primary caregivers of young children (birth to 10 years) with developmental disabilities, chronic illnesses and/or complex medical needs.

“Advocacy Bootcamp” is organized into six separate sessions and a subsequent six month mentorship that includes a monthly one hour phone session. The six sessions include:

- ◆ **Session 1:**
Getting to Know You ~
Participants meet each other and begin to develop trust within the group.
- ◆ **Session 2:**
Critical Thinking: Trust but Verify ~
Participants critically assess the support systems that empower them to take charge of their child’s treatment, education, and the remaining components of their lives.
- ◆ **Session 3:**
Building a Competent and Supportive Team for Your Child
Participants examine the components of building a competent and supportive care team for their child.
- ◆ **Session 4:**
Expanding and Redefining Expectations We Have For Ourselves and Our Communities
Participants apply the critical thinking skills discussed in previous sessions and the strengths identified in to expand and redefine their own expectations of themselves and their respective communities.
- ◆ **Session 5:**
Developing a Vision for Your Child and Family
Participants develop a vision for their child and family.
- ◆ **Session 6:**
Tapping Into Our Communities to Support Our Visions
Participants review community-based, region-based, and state-wide resources and conclude the series feeling empowered and capable of transforming their Vision into Reality.

For more information about MA Families Organizing For Change’s educational series visit www.mfofc.org.
Visit www.cooperativeforhs.org for more family support and advocacy resources.

Please Contribute



____ YES, I/we want to help the Cooperative for Human Services continue its mission to provide quality residential, independent living, guardianship and other support services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Please accept my/our tax deductible contribution of \$_____. (You can also contribute on-line at www.cooperativeforhs.org)

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State/Zip _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Gifts can also be made in memory, in honor, or in celebration of a special person or occasion.

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Celebration of: _____

Please make check payable to Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. and mail to:

Cooperative for Human Services, Inc., 420 Bedford Street, Suite 100, Lexington, MA 02420

Telephone: (781) 538-4626 On-line donations: www.cooperativeforhs.org THANK YOU!