

# CHS Community News

Editor:

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## New Chairperson Elected to Lead CHS Board

Fred Misilo Turns Gavel Over to Long Time Board Member, Helen Cushman



On May 1, 2012, the CHS Board of Directors elected Helen Cushman, as the new CHS Chairperson. Helen has served on the Board both as a Director (14 years) and as Clerk (6 years). She was a family member of the "Friends of Forest Street" which became part of CHS in the 1980's. Helen has been part of CHS for nearly 25 years.

Originally from Concord, MA, Helen now lives in Danvers with her husband. They have 2 grown sons. Helen works at St. Mary's Elementary School in Beverly as a Special Education Teacher and Marketing Coordinator. She is a graduate of Boston College where she earned a bachelor's degree in Special Education.

In a recent interview, Helen stated that CHS truly lives up to its mission statement, always demonstrating "A Passion for What's Possible." She added that CHS **"exceeds expectations, personally supports people with disabilities, and sets the standard for the field...at CHS its all about the needs of the client...that comes first."** As Chairperson she looks forward to focusing on Board development and expansion of Family Support Services. We welcome Helen and look forward to many years of positive growth and development for CHS under her dedicated direction.

CHS extends best wishes to Frederick M. Misilo, Jr., Esq. who has served as Chair for over 15 years. Under Fred's guidance, CHS has grown into a \$11.3 Million agency providing acclaimed residential, individual support and guardianship programs to nearly 300 adults across Massachusetts. The entire CHS community thanks Fred for his outstanding service and wishes him well as he devotes more time to his expanded role at Fletcher, Tilton and Whipple, PC., and as he extends his advocacy and policy efforts to the national level.

## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of CHS,

CHS is proud to announce that it recently received a two year License and Certification from the MA Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Office of Quality Enhancement. This award reflects the highest level of certification awarded; the report also included many notable commendations for exceptionally outstanding achievements. CHS met 99% of all licensing indicators and 100% of all certification indicators.

All providers who serve individuals funded by DDS are required to meet State Licensing and Certification regulations that ensure health, safety, human rights and quality service standards are met. From February 27 to March 1, 2012, a team of four professionals from the MA Department of Developmental Services led by Steve Goldberg conducted a thorough review of CHS's Residential, Individual Support and Guardianship programs. The process began with a presentation made by the CHS Executive Management Team. The survey team then proceeded with reviewing records and reports;

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## See Also.....



19 Individuals Move to New Homes. Page 4



The Ladies of Fellsview start a new volunteer project - baking dog biscuits for local animal shelters. Page 5

## Board of Directors

### Chairperson:

**Helen Cushman**

Special Educator  
Family Member

### Treasurer:

**Stephen B. Darr**

Mesirov Financial Consulting, LLC  
Senior Managing Director

### Director:

**Lori Maida**

Shore Educational Collaborative, Inc.  
Director of Human Resources

### Director:

**Carol E. Tully, CPA, JD**

Wolf and Company, P.C.  
Director of Tax Services

### Director:

**Kathia G. Manzi**

Wheaton College

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THE CHS E-MAIL LIST

Want to get your news-  
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CHS news, updates and  
information via e-mail?

You're invited to join our  
e-mail list. It's easy! Just  
complete the enclosed  
post card and mail it  
back to us.

OR

Send us an email or call  
us - whatever you prefer.  
Call or email Barbara  
Mague at:  
bmague@cooperativefor  
hs.org  
781-273-2123 x 200



## Message from the Executive Director

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visiting residences and sites; and interviewing individuals served, staff and managers. On the last day, the DDS Survey Team presented an oral feedback report to our Senior Management Team. The final report was released by DDS in March, 2012.

In addition to the high scores on each licensing and certification standard reviewed, the report noted many outstanding achievements on behalf of individuals served. The team was especially impressed with the opening of our new Individual Support Program offices and drop in center in Malden. The Survey Team also commended CHS for its focus on addressing the changing needs of individuals in our 24 hour residential programs as they age, including completion of major renovations at several of our residences to construct barrier free home environments.

### Other Commendations

Another area of note cited in the report was CHS's outstanding software technology specifically designed to track all data and organizational systems. The survey report noted that this technology "**provides a linkage between knowledge, data collection, analysis, action, and outcome areas providing a positive direct impact on supporting the individuals served, the staff, and managers.**"

CHS also received very high marks for continuing to create positive community connections that allow individuals to be involved in "**many very meaningful projects**" ranging from "**charitable causes to building stronger social networks.**" The report further commended CHS staff "**for the ways in which they value the individuals they serve,**" noting that staff were consistently enthusiastic, professional and caring in their interactions with individuals served and that staff often refer to the agency's philosophy of "**A Passion for What's Possible.**"

### CHS Strengths and Positive Practices

The Survey Team observed many other strengths and positive practices at CHS, including:

- ⇒ **Human resource capabilities, particularly strong employee retention, a policy of promotion from within the organization and outstanding staff training services;**
- ⇒ **Practices related to the collection and utilization of feedback from all stakeholders to improve services; and**
- ⇒ **Creative events designed to build strong bonds among individuals, family members and staff.**

Our heartfelt thanks are extended to everyone involved in the Survey and Certification process - your efforts on behalf of CHS are sincerely appreciated.

As we go forward into our new fiscal year, please join me in welcoming Helen Cushman as chairperson of the Board of Directors. Her wisdom and passion for what's possible will have a great impact in her new leadership role.

I want to thank Fred Misilo for sharing his time, talent and knowledge with our organization. He has guided the organization through times of great challenge. He will be missed. However, I am excited about his continued advocacy especially on the national level.

As always, I welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas. Please call me at 781-273-2123 x 211 or send me a message at [kleahy@cooperativeforhs.org](mailto:kleahy@cooperativeforhs.org).

Sincerely,  
Kevin J. Leahy  
Executive Director

## TD Bank Sponsors Lunch at CHS

Many thanks are extended to TD Bank of Burlington for sponsoring a great Pizza Party for CHS staff on Thursday, April 26, 2012. All of our support staff, program managers and program directors were thrilled to have our bank recognize CHS for the great work we accomplish on behalf of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities each and every day.

The party was given as an acknowledgement and special recognition of CHS's outstanding bi-annual Quality Assurance Survey and Certification survey which resulted in a two Year Award. Thank you TD Bank!



Picture: Anne McCormack, Vice President TD Bank and Kevin Leahy, CHS Executive Director .

### **ATTENTION** **STATE & FEDERAL EMPLOYEES**

Did you know that 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, this contribution can be directed to the Cooperative for Human Services by indicating our provider number on the pledge card.

**Our MA Combined Employee Campaign Number is 700417 and our Combined Federal Campaign of Eastern MA number is 42522.**

Thank you for your consideration.

## Social Security Audit Applauds CHS

The Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. was audited by the Social Security Administration from March 21-22, 2012. This audit reviews all records kept on behalf of individuals served for whom CHS is the Representative Payee for their Social Security Insurance (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) payments.

As Representative Payee, CHS acts on behalf of the SSI/SSDI beneficiary; we are responsible for every transaction related to those benefits. The Social Security Administration encourages payees to go beyond just managing finances and to also be actively involved in the beneficiary's life. Duties of payees include determining each person's needs and making payments to meet those needs; overseeing bank accounts and savings for future needs; reporting any changes or events which could affect eligibility for payments; keeping financial and administrative records; and completing written

reports that account for the use of all funds.

The SSA audit team's report to CHS was highly complimentary and applauded CHS for its exceptional record keeping and use of on-line accounting for Rep Payee reports.

The report completed by Francine Kollias and Heidi Lamb from the SSA Boston office also stated: "During the two days of the review, we all concluded that you are doing a wonderful job. We were pleased to see that your accounts are titled correctly, clients' bills are paid timely and their needs all appear to be met. The record keeping is exceptional. We cannot thank you enough for taking such good care of our vulnerable population. We are very fortunate to have you as an organizational payee and we look forward to strengthening our already wonderful relationship.

You keep getting better!"

## NEW RESIDENCES OPEN IN MEDFORD AND SAUGUS



### 19 INDIVIDUALS MOVE TO NEW CHS HOMES

After more than eight months of planning and hard work, CHS recently completed a comprehensive plan that involved moving nineteen of the people we serve in our residential programs. Altogether eleven homes were involved and include the opening of our two new homes: Fairfield in Medford and Hemstead in Saugus.

The two new homes are featured in the pictures on this page. Each home has been totally renovated into barrier free residences that feature wheelchair ramps, accessible kitchens and bathrooms, new outside decks and landscaping. One of the residents who moved to Fairfield in Medford exclaimed "I like it...(this is) a beautiful house...I can't believe it...oh, my gosh is that mine?"

Approximately sixty-five staff were also affected by this huge undertaking. These staff people experienced schedule changes, assignments to new work locations and/or assignment of new individuals with whom to work. Without the dedication and flexibility of these workers and that of our maintenance staff, this undertaking would not have been possible.

Every individual involved upgraded their living situation and elected to move and decorate their new space in accordance their own choices.

Overall, the transition was smooth for everyone. Our individuals, and their family members, are very satisfied with their new homes. All nineteen moves are finished and were accomplished by CHS staff and managers without any outside help or movers!



## OTHER HAPPENINGS AT CHS

### Volunteer and Community Initiatives

CHS Program Development Coordinator, Janet Lachapelle has been busy developing new volunteer and community initiatives for individuals served by CHS.

If you or a family member would like to volunteer to help with community projects please contact Janet at (781)273-2123 x220 or email her at [jlachapelle@cooperativeforhs.org](mailto:jlachapelle@cooperativeforhs.org).

Individuals from our Individual Supports Program came to a Volunteer Night at the main office. Working with staff and managers they participated in three separate projects: making blankets, book-marks and cards. These items will be donated to local charities.

Men and women from our Individual Supports Program expanded the scope of their annual Easter Basket Project, making and donating baskets to many charitable organizations in their own local neighborhoods. Project Bread in Malden was one of the new charities receiving the baskets this year.



Members of CHS enjoy a warm, sunny afternoon, together at our Browning Road residence. The extensive renovations to this home were featured in the last newsletter (Summer/Fall 2011).

## Charles E. Harwood Trust Awards \$5,000 Grant for CHS "Spring Fling"

In April, 2012, CHS individuals who receive supports through our Individual Support Program began planning a grand "Spring Fling" thanks to a generous \$5,000 grant received from The Charles E. Harwood Trust.

CHS serves 70 adults with developmental disabilities in our Individual Support Program. These individuals receive part to full time supports from CHS, enabling them to live independently in their own apartments in many local communities. The program has offices and a Drop-In Center in Malden.

These individuals have very low incomes and very limited resources available for special activities. Thanks to generous benefactors like the Charles E. Harwood Trust, CHS will be able to provide a new social event that otherwise would not be possible.

With another difficult economic year before us, this grant is more important than ever. It will help CHS to continue to provide the quality community programs and services so essential to the continued well being of the individuals in our care.

# Please Contribute

## Cooperative for Human Services, Inc.

A PASSION FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE

\_\_\_ 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 \$\_\_\_\_\_ .

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., 17 New England Executive Park, 3rd Floor, Burlington, MA 01803

Telephone: (781) 273-2123 Fax: (781) 238-6163 THANK YOU!

Cooperative for Human Services, Inc.  
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Burlington, MA 01803