

CHS Community News

Summer, 2009 Volume 1, Issue 2

Editor:

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A Message from the Executive Director



The Cooperative for Human Services has weathered very difficult economic challenges over the past year.

However, thanks to the hard work of staff, family members and the Board of Directors, CHS remains focused on our mission to provide quality care and services to the 350 individuals served.

The CHS Team is very excited about the future and we need and welcome your help! The challenges next year will be greater than ever with fewer State and local resources available. The progress of the individuals served, however, will continue. New projects and exciting activities are moving forward. These initiatives will enhance lives and build skills.

CHS will continue to implement new cost saving measures and use technology to further reduce our already low overhead and administrative costs. The individuals we serve will greatly benefit from the implementation of new energy efficiencies in our homes to promote healthy environments and cost savings.

We hope you find the stories in this issue both interesting and affirming. We want to hear your ideas, stories and input too. Please feel free to call me directly at 781-273-2123 x 211 to talk about our future plans at the Cooperative for Human Services.

Sincerely,
Kevin J. Leahy
Executive Director

CHS Celebrates the Successes of Individuals



Michael's life is a testament to the power of community living and inclusion!. He knows first hand about living in an institution.

Born with cerebral palsy and development delays, Michael spent 43 years of his adult life living at the Fernald State School in Waltham, MA. In 2006, Michael moved into a CHS home which he shared with one other gentleman.

When he first moved in, staff asked Michael what he would like to eat for dinner. Michael replied, "You mean I get to choose what I want to eat?"

The staff at Fernald packed Michael's helmet, warning CHS staff not to remove it from Michael's head because of his head banging. (See Page 5.)



Susan was referred to CHS's Individual Supports Program 10 years ago. With CHS supports, Susan lived independently in an apartment in Melrose with a roommate. She worked in a community job and participated in many social and recreational activities in the area.

In January of 2008, Susan's world came crashing down around her — she was seriously injured when a car hit her as she was walking in the community. She suffered a broken leg, ankle and ribs, as well as internal injuries. Doctors feared that Susan would not survive.

Susan underwent several surgeries, including intestinal surgery. (Continued on page 5.)

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CHS Receives 3 Grant Awards

This year, CHS was awarded 3 grants totaling \$11,000 dollars for capacity building initiatives.

- ◆ A \$3,500 Catalyst Grant from the **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation**. This grant paid for a consultant to research and develop foundation grant proposals for capital projects designed to expand housing capacity at CHS.
- ◆ A \$2,500 grant from **The Agnes M. Lindsay Trust** was granted to help fund capital start up costs for renovating a CHS home in the Arlington area, making it wheelchair accessible and barrier free.
- ◆ A \$5,000 grant from **The Clipper Ship Foundation** to fund engineering and architectural plans as a first step towards renovation of a CHS home which would expand its capacity to serve five individuals.

Support Reaches New Level Annual Appeal 2008-2009

The Cooperative for Human Services completed its Annual Appeal campaign for 2008-2009 with over 65 donations totaling \$11,345, the highest level achieved over the past 3 years. A special thank you to everyone who donated this year. Each donation is an important affirmation of the mission of CHS, as well as an investment in the promise, hope and future of 350 very special lives. Your contribution is sincerely appreciated!

Benefactors: (\$500 — \$1,000)

Fred Misilo, Fletcher, Tilton & Whipple, PC
Stephen Darr
Carol E. Tully
Donna & Edward Sullivan
Norman & Margie Wilson
Michele & Victor Ramirez
Rick Catino
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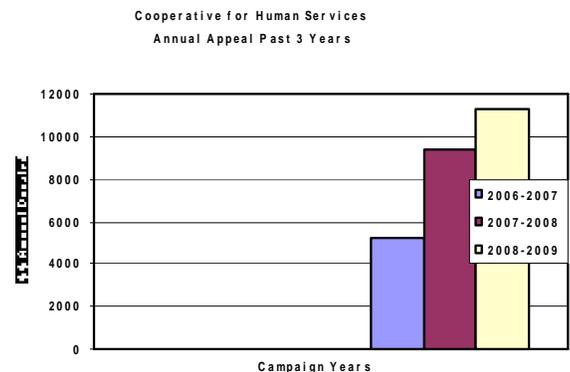
Anonymous
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Audrey & Richard Magown
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Patrons: (\$200 — \$499)

Anonymous
Anita & James Farrell
Mr. & Mrs. Richard J. Forsley
Ann W. & David N. Perkins
Charla & Phillip Coleman
Grove Street Management, LLC
Helen Cushman
Kirkland & Shaw Plumbing & Heating
Leahy & Son Landscaping & Design
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Friends: (\$5 — \$199)

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Crystal Holland
Roland Gregoire
Joan & Haig Hedison
George A Coleman
Simone D'eon
Leona Grell
Mary & Conrad Bardwell
Anita & James Farrell
Melrose Glass Co.
Faulkner Brothers, Inc.
Lexington Auto Service
Johnson's Transmission
Resources for Human Services
Robert L. Coleman
George Manfra
Gertrude & Edward Reil



CHS Homes "GO GREEN" Cutting Energy Costs

Last fall, CHS individuals and staff joined the "Go Green" movement developing energy saving and conservation projects in their group residences and supported living apartments. Individuals in each home decided how they would contribute to the "Go Green" movement by reducing energy consumption, promoting healthy living and protecting our national resources. Roger Plourde, Director of Residential Services for CHS reported that residents were very enthusiastic about their projects which included:

- Shutting off lights when leaving a room or going outside;
- Lowering the heat at bedtime and when away from home;
- Operating washing machines, dryers and dishwashers during non-peak hours and waiting for full loads before use;
- Winterizing homes (weather stripping windows & doors and installing insulation);
- Re-cycling paper, plastic and glass;



At CHS, our strategic planning process provides the framework to focus our shared vision and fulfill our mission with "A PASSION FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE".

Service Quality: concentrates on the design and delivery of direct supports, strategies, clinical approaches, health-care services, adaptive technologies, environmental considerations, and continuity of care with a goal to anticipate and respond flexibly to the unique needs of the persons served with insight, inspiration, and innovation.

Workforce Development: recognizes that competence and performance is influenced by morale, opportunities for advancement, equitable compensation & benefits, training and performance reviews with the goal to establish CHS as a premier employer.

Communications/Marketing: reflect CHS's planned and multidimensional information sharing dialogue reflecting our activities, needs and successes; the interests and actions of our stakeholders; and the impact of internal and external environments to create public trust and recognition through community relationships.

Information Management & Technology: links knowledge, data collection, analysis, decision-making, action, and outcome through the practical application of technology with a goal to connect employees, programs, and operations via readily accessible information.

Finance: manages the systems and processes related to capital, assets, cost, price, volume, alignment, and revenue flow to assist CHS's financial growth and stability through service expansion, revenue enhancement, and capital acquisition.



CHS Administrative Cost Saving Initiatives



Just like every other household in the country, the Cooperative for Human Services has had to stretch its limited resources to make ends meet. By initiating several cost savings and efficiency measures, CHS reduced our administrative and energy costs, saving the organization thousands of dollars in gasoline, heating fuel and electricity costs. Glen Charney, Chief Financial Officer at CHS, reported that CHS:

- ⇒ Joined a Mass. Energy discount program for non-profits that has already saved CHS over \$5,500 in oil heating costs in the first 9 months of FY 2009.
- ⇒ Initiated use of a new gasoline credit card rebate program that allows CHS to purchase gas at the least expensive, local gas stations (rather than travelling to designated stations) AND receive a 1 cent per gallon rebate too. CHS has already saved over \$6,000 in gas expenses compared to this period last year.
- ⇒ CHS individuals and staff developed their own "GO GREEN" energy savings projects in their own homes. Individuals set goals and took on monitoring assignments too. The projects have been enormously successful. In fact, during the first 9 months of the "GO GREEN" projects, individuals and staff have saved over \$9,000 in electric costs compared to the previous year.
- ⇒ CHS has cut expenses for office supplies by nearly 20% this year by instituting a new centralized ordering system.
- ⇒ Through the expanded use of technology, CHS has increased its administrative and fiscal back room efficiencies, enabling our office staff to do more at lower costs.

Thanks to everyone for their hard work! CHS is proud of its environmental and cost savings initiatives.

Guardians are special people who are committed to preserving the legal and human rights of individuals who are unable to make informed decisions about independent living, legal, medical and financial matters.

Guardians must be honest, patient and mature individuals who care sincerely about the well-being of the people they represent.

For information about guardianship opportunities call 781-273-2123.

Cooperative for Human Services Corporate Guardianship Program

The Corporate Guardianship Program provides advocacy services on behalf of more than 130 individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities living throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through this program, CHS provides legal guardianship for people who require additional levels of assistance, advocacy and protections to assure that their desires, wishes and needs are respected, addressed and met.

CHS guardianship services are based upon seeking the least restrictive level of guardianship to ensure that the person served retains as much personal control as possible. The Guardianship Program provides both permanent and temporary guardianship services, ranging from partial guardianship (i.e. medical, financial, Roger's Monitoring, etc.) to full permanent guardianship.

Backyard Beautification: Home Gardening!

Motivated by the success of last summer's "Right in my Own Backyard" landscaping projects (funded with a grant from TD Banknorth Foundation), individuals served by CHS set out this spring with plans to beautify the outside areas of their homes.



Using new loom and manual gardening tools, residents tilled the land and planted new vegetable and flower gardens.

Every one that participated in Earth Day festivities this year was inspired and brought a new energy to their own yards and home gardens.

MA State Budget FY 2010: Difficult Economic Times

The economic realities of the recession played major havoc with both current services and new initiatives for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as the MA FY 2010 budget process ended. Advocacy efforts including State House Rallies, letter and email campaigns to legislators and entreaties to the Governor did not prevail in the final budget plan, especially after actual State revenue figures for April and May of 2009 turned out to be drastically below the budgeted projections.

In spite of much rhetoric to the contrary and an increase from 5% to 6.25% for the MA sales tax, legislators still chose to approve deep cuts to services for people with developmental disabilities. According to The Arc of Mass., Day/Employment, Transportation, Turning 22, Autism, Family Support and other services provided by the Department of Developmental Services (formerly the Department of Mental Retardation) were cut by nearly \$50 Million.

Additionally there are significant cuts to other services supporting people with developmental disabilities, including key cuts to the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission's Extended Employment Program and the Department of Public Health's Early Intervention services. These cuts translate into service reductions to 4,500 families whose children are cared for at home.





Willie Horan, born in an institution, had many challenges, but began to thrive in his placement at CHS. He became a friend of the Mayor of Everett and a volunteer for the Boston Marathon. He is fondly remembered by friends and family.

Willie was born in a State institution where his mother had been placed. Born with developmental disabilities, he had a most difficult childhood, moving from one foster home to another, a life of many disappoint-

ments. As an adult, he wound up in Everett where he got in trouble with the law. In 2002, after serving time in jail and a failed community placement, Willie was accepted into the CHS Individual Supports program. He moved into a 24 hour supervised apartment in Melrose, where CHS staff with extensive behavioral management training, consistently implemented a behavioral management program. Willie began to thrive.

In 2003 Willie befriended a young man also served by

CHS who lived in the same apartment building, taking him under his wing and providing him companionship and mentorship. He also developed a close relationship with this man's family.

By 2008 Willie lived independently, with only 16 hours per week of staff support. Willie was now well known in his community. He worked as an assistant coach to Everett High School's football team; he passed the referee exam in 2005; and he volunteered for the Boston Marathon as a security guard.

Tragically, Willie past away last year. He would have been 48 years old this past New Year's Eve. Willie's "adopted" family planned his services and buried him in the family plot. Two mayors, several police officers and other notable dignitaries from the Everett, Malden and Melrose areas attended his funeral and the Boston Marathon Association board honored him. Indeed, the young orphan, Willie, born in an institution, made quite a family for himself!

Susan - continued from page 1



She was sent to live in a local nursing rehabilitation facility to recuperate.

Her intestinal problems only got worse in this facility and Susan was rushed back to the hospital for emergency care.

CHS advocated on Susan's behalf and got Susan placed at the New England Rehabilitation hospital where she received the intensive rehabilitation services that she needed. Following months

of hard therapeutic work, Susan was able to move into a group home where CHS provided the nursing and personal care supports necessary for her to make a full recovery.

Susan once again lives and works independently in the community. She considers the services provided by CHS's caring and supportive staff as the primary reason for her successful recovery.

Cooperative for Human Services, Inc. is proud to report the results of this year's Consumer Satisfaction Survey: *Ninety-five percent (95%) of the individuals served by CHS report that they are very satisfied with their services.*

Congratulations to our great staff for this outstanding achievement!!

Michael — continued from page 1



Staff soon put the helmet away because once Michael left Fernald his frustrations dramatically lessened. CHS bought Michael all new furniture, including a computer which he loved from the moment he was taught how to use the internet and email. When Rosemary, Michael's sister, first visited Michael's new home, she knew moving to a community home was the right thing.

Michael participates in many community activities and attends a day program too. He has developed his interest in music creating an extensive music media library. He has vacationed on Cape Cod, visited Portland, Maine and is

currently planning a camping trip for this summer.

One significant event for Michael came about when he researched the web and located a friend he remembered from his childhood over 50 years ago, when he was still living at home with his parents. His friend remembered him too and emailed back. They resumed their friendship and visit together often.

Recently, Michael decided that he wanted to move to another CHS residence where a room with fabulous windows and a great view had become available. He loves his new home!

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

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

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