



*A leader in supporting
people with developmental
disabilities*

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

www.charlesrivercenter.org

Dear Friends,

Thirty six/ninety. I remember the number very well. It is the number of people Charles River served in both our Residential and Day Programs in 1981, when I first arrived here. Today that number would read 140/300. Adding all those we now support through our Family Support services would bring the number served to over 900.

In 1981, nearly 10,000 people resided in state institutions. Today that number is less than 400. It has been an amazing transformation in service philosophy moving from isolated and forgotten institutions to serving individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities in their communities in integrated models of service. **The Charles River Center has been a vital part of that transformation as the leading provider of services in our communities.** Not only did we

help get people out of those institutions, we were the answer to the many families who cared for their children with developmental disabilities at home, providing an ever expanding array of services to meet a variety of needs.

I consider myself very fortunate to have had the privilege of working for

and participating as a leader in this wonderful organization, started by parents who wanted something different than the large, decaying institutions that, at the time, were their only option. Working as a team, dedicated families and staff who chose this as a career were both the catalysts for change and active builders of a new way of serving people with intellectual developmental disabilities. It was a pioneering adventure that saw the development of a system of care that made institutions obsolete.

It is with mixed emotions that I announce that after 45 years in this field I will be retiring in September 2016. As evidenced by the many accomplishments we highlight in this report, there is a tremendous feeling of energy, innovation and accomplishment taking place here. I will miss the

opportunity to observe and admire the enthusiasm of our staff and the achievement of those we serve. There will be a continuing need for energetic and engaged leadership to address ongoing challenges that we face now and in the future. This team will need to ensure that we continue to refine our services, meet the unmet needs of families, and address the growing issue of workforce development as well as the uncertain shape of state and federal funding and the regulatory environment going forward. As much as I will miss Charles River and the joy it has brought me, it is time to turn the reins over to those with the energy and enthusiasm to address the challenges ahead. Charles River has a strong team of senior leaders whose passion for our mission is unquestioned, and we have instilled a strong set of values and a remarkable culture that is the foundation of what we do well every day. I feel strongly that we are positioned well to continue the legacy of services that has been created here.

The Charles River Center will soon celebrate its 60th anniversary; yet, remarkably it has only had three leaders; soon there will be a fourth. I have confidence that our Board will continue to ensure that our organization will have strong and stable leadership at the helm, unafraid to advocate for the values we hold dear. It is with this knowledge that I am comfortable moving on to make way for the next generation of leadership.

Thank you to all who have made my career here an emotionally rich and rewarding experience. Please continue to be strong supporters of the Charles River Center, the people we support and their families. It is a precious organization that needs and deserves the support of all its stakeholders and the community it serves.

Sincerely,



John Grugan
President



2015 FACTS & FIGURES

15,345 hours worked in the community by members of Opportunities to Work



140 individuals living in Charles River supported homes



12 individuals receiving Adult Family Care support—a program that provides financial assistance so individuals may stay in their own homes



75 employees who participated in the Fitbit challenge

515 Wings for Autism attendees at Logan in April—the highest ever!



10 Rodman Riders fundraising for CRC at the 25th Rodman Ride for Kids

Who we are:

303 full-time staff

249 part-time staff

300 volunteers

154 kids in after-school programs and camps throughout the year

30 towns served across all divisions



30 years Louise Condon Realty has thrown a Valentine's Dance for individuals

Who we help:

311 ages 0-21

270 ages 22-34

271 ages 35-65

45 age over 65



1 Respite Home-overnight, weekend stays so caregivers can recharge



1,000 pounds of organic fruits and vegetables donated to food pantries by our Horticulture Program

2015 HIGHLIGHTS



▲ ENTERTAINING VISITORS

We hosted many visitors in our effort to introduce individuals to new experiences. The Harvard Women's Basketball team showed us their moves (and we showed some of ours!) in an energy-packed visit. Gem, who is training with the Prison Puppies program to become a therapy dog, received many treats on the patio. Barn Babies, Creature Teacher, and the New England Aquarium also visited to teach and entertain.

CHARLES RIVER RECEIVES HIGH HONORS

In May, the Department of Developmental Services surveyed our Residential and Employment divisions and re-certified them with the highest level of recognition. The report stated that staff "was found to be caring and extremely knowledgeable about the personalities, needs, and interests of each individual served." In January, Day Habilitation once again passed a CARF (Commission on Accrediting Rehabilitation Facilities) survey with no suggestions for improvement, with the report stating the organization "goes the extra mile by accepting difficult cases and by matching individuals with staff members who work effectively by understanding, appreciating, and respecting the individual in a positive person- and family-centered service milieu."



▲ HORTICULTURE'S BOUNTY

Our first official summer for this program was a huge success. We farmed in three locations - raised beds at the Needham Community Farm, a plot through Newton Parks and Recreation, and in containers at CRC. Over 70 individuals grew, tended, and harvested more than 60 crops. Individuals learned transferrable job and life skills, benefited from the therapeutic effects, and enjoyed time in the great outdoors.

EXPANDED CLINICAL THERAPIES IN DAY HAB

As we strive to provide the best care for those in Day Hab (generally those with the most complex medical issues), we expanded our therapy programming. This included an out-of-chair initiative, with the goal of having individuals in wheelchairs spend at least an hour a day out of their chair, as well as a monthly seating clinic to assess

wheelchairs. Our speech-language pathologist reviewed and updated the modified diets for individuals with swallowing problems (dysphagia) and much-loved music therapy was increased to one and a half days per week.



▲ REMEMBERING A TREASURED FRIEND AND EMPLOYEE

At our 20th Annual Building a Dream Gala in May, we presented the Needham Exchange Club with the first Maria McTernan Community Leadership Award. Maria was our Director of Development for fourteen years and her genuine warmth, kindness, and passion for our mission made a lasting impression on all she encountered. We were honored to present this premier award to the Exchange Club for their many years of volunteerism at CRC.



▲ STOKES ON FIRE

Due to increased demand, our partner, Stokes Natural Firestarters, moved into a larger production facility in Natick. The company was founded by high school student Adam Liszewski, and uses natural products to make reliable firestarters for cookouts, fireplaces and firepits. Teams of five CRC individuals travel to Natick five days a week to produce and package all of the Stokes product – producing more than 15,000 firestarters a week! (Find them at Roche Bros., Whole Foods, Volante Farms and others.)

POSITIVE RESULTS

Our integration of Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) continues to grow organization-wide. Positive Behavior Supports is a set of research-based strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person's environment. This is a person-centered approach that empowers the individual while maximizing

his or her independence. This year we identified a leadership team across all levels, and a PBS specialist from the Department of Disability Services visited to provide additional training.

NATICK PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO GROW

Four years ago we opened a facility in Natick in order to better serve families farther west of Boston. Today, we offer a vibrant selection of classes and outings for children and adults after school and on weekends. Classes include Girls Group, Artistic Afternoons, Teen Sibling Group, Bowling, Fitness Fun, and Music Therapy. As word of our great programs spreads, enrollment continues to rise.

APPROACHING 60

In 1956, a group of 15 parents came together to start a preschool for their children with developmental disabilities. Today, the Charles River Center serves more than 900 families from the MetroWest area. We will be celebrating our 60th anniversary in 2016 – 60 years that have marked an enormous change in the way people with developmental disabilities are cared for and treated. Stay tuned for some special celebrations to mark this milestone.



▲ A VALUED PARTNERSHIP

Since 1969, members of the Wellesley Service League have been volunteering at the Charles River Center. At least twice a week, members of the League visit Day Habilitation to assist in our Music and Art Therapy programs. These dedicated volunteers add humor, energy, and valuable helping hands so that all individuals can actively participate. We are sincerely thankful for their continued commitment to our organization.



▲ ADULT EXTENDED DAY THRIVES

Many adults we serve live at home with a parent or relative, so what happens when that caregiver needs to put in a full day at work?

We now offer afternoon care from 3 to 5:30 through Family Support in Needham. Staffed by a great crew and many volunteers, it's a very popular program with individuals enjoying fun activities including yoga, Zumba, and cooking.

TRAINING TO HELP THOSE WITH ALZHEIMER'S

As adults with developmental disabilities are living longer lives due to improved health care, they are unfortunately succumbing to dementia and Alzheimer's, and in fact, are more likely to get the diseases. To respond to this need, 17 staff members underwent Alzheimer's training in order to be sensitive to the necessary special care. Staff learned: the basics of dementia and Alzheimer's, communication as behavior, best practices for personal care, the importance of the physical environment, and purposeful engagement.

WHAT THE CHARLES RIVER CENTER MEANS TO ME ...

"I love being a part of the Charles River Center because everyone accepts me for who I am and doesn't just see me as a person with a disability."

— Nicole Gowe



OLIVIA BOGAN
*Recreation Aide
in Family Support*

When I began working at the Charles River Center two years ago, I had no idea how much the kids from ASPIRE would impact my life. They make me smile, teach me patience and creativity, and remind me

that every person has a unique perspective of the world. Additionally, I feel extremely grateful that I have the opportunity to connect with the kids extensively and learn about their unique qualities, including their interests and goals.

As is unfortunately inevitable in the lives of those with disabilities, I am sure that most of the kids in the program have faced some sort of discrimination or judgement because of their handicaps. Thus, I value the opportunity I have to express my genuine interest in their attributes and validate that their challenges do not define their characters, but rather allow them to navigate certain parts of life with a different set of resources.



GARY MERONE
*Residential Counselor,
with Charles River
for 16 years*

Gary, top, with Charles River residents

I enjoy working at the Charles River Center. I have been fortunate to have been able to work for this great agency for over 15 years. I feel very appreciated and trusted in my job as a residential counselor, and as a result, I am able to take

certain initiatives to ensure that I accomplish my tasks and responsibilities. The environment at Charles River Center is very friendly, respectful, and supportive.

It is a wonderful experience to be able to help the individuals learn new skills, maintain the skills they have, and to assist them to have a great quality of life. I enjoy doing activities with the guys, such as bowling, grocery shopping for the house, and attending CRC dance parties.

I like my co-workers and enjoy working with them as well as the individuals. My supervisors are always willing to devote their time to help me improve in any area of my job. It's a pleasure to work for an agency that truly cares about its employees and the individuals.



ALEX DEDON

Resident and Day Habilitation participant

For Alex Dedon and his family, the Charles River Center means everything. A few key words sum it up for us: reassurance and confidence, community and inclusion, opportunity and activity, and, most importantly, love and compassion.

Alex was involved in Saturday and vacation programs at Charles River for many years and joined the community last year as an adult resident in the Stott House and a participant in Day Habilitation. Major life changes are never easy, but the chaos of Alex's transition to his new home was managed gently and professionally by a highly experienced and caring Charles River staff.

Pick ups and drop offs at Stott for weekend visits are now happy events, with high-fives and high-energy banter - Alex erupts with a big smile when he arrives home to hear "Hey, Dedon!" The impact of Charles River on Alex's life is apparent in very simple things - such as when he spontaneously bursts into a new song that he must have learned at Stott or Day Hab. We scramble to Google the lyrics and sing along.

Perhaps the most tangible evidence of Alex's comfort and happiness in his new home arrived in the form of a video recorded at his birthday celebration at Stott House. His big-eyed wonder during the exuberant singing by staff and friends gives us confidence and reassurance that Alex is doing well in life as a much-loved member of the Charles River Center community.



NICOLE GOWE

Board Member, Resident and Opportunities to Work participant

Hello, my name is Nicole Gowe. I am a 33 year-old young adult with spina bifida. I have been a part of the Charles River Center since December of 2003. I live with two other young ladies who also have developmental disabilities.

We have full-time staff that helps us with meal preparation, planning outdoor activities--such as going to the movies, choir, swimming, and performing arts. I love my staff and especially my two roommates Patti and Jen. They are like sisters to me. Whenever I'm feeling down or just need someone there to talk to, they are always there with a listening ear.

I am involved in a work employment program called Opportunities to Work. I love working with Marina who runs the program. The program is geared towards helping me find jobs in the community. When I first started working, I loved going up to the Merritt Center to help Maria do the mailings for the different functions we had. She was one of my favorite people to work with and I deeply miss seeing her smiling face every day.

I am also a member of the Board of Directors of the Charles River Center and got the opportunity to speak at the State House about affordable housing for people with disabilities.

I love being a part of the Charles River Center because everyone accepts me for who I am and doesn't just see me as a person with a disability. I feel truly loved and appreciated by everyone who I've come in contact with at the Charles River Center, and I am truly grateful for being a part of such a big family.

SIGNATURE EVENTS



BUILDING A DREAM GALA

(to be held Friday, April 29, 2016)

Each year, over 350 people attend this special event which raises critical funds to help us continue to provide the highest quality services and programs for those we support. The elegant evening includes cocktails and a silent auction, seated dinner, an inspiring program with community and individual honorees, and a live auction. Thanks to the support of many generous sponsors and donors, this is Charles River's major fundraising event of the year.



ELLIE BLOOM OLYMPICS

Held at DeFazio Park in Needham, over 150 athletes of all ages and abilities from Charles River and neighboring communities participate in such events as running and wheelchair dashes, tennis ball throws, ring tosses, and relay races. Participants enjoy t-shirts sponsored by the Needham Golf Club Charities, and a delicious lunch provided by Roche Bros. and served by the Needham Women's Club. Everyone goes home with a gold medal and a big smile.



THE NEEDHAM EXCHANGE CLUB GOLF TOURNAMENT

We have been honored to be the recipient of this golf tournament's proceeds for many years. Over 100 golfers from the Club and community enjoy a delicious lunch, 18 holes of golf, dinner, and live and silent auctions. Tournaments are held at the beautiful Blue Hills Country Club. Thanks to sponsors, participants and dedicated Club volunteers, proceeds have allowed Charles River to purchase vans for transporting individuals, as well as critical adaptive equipment.



5K RUN/1 MILE WALK

This upbeat event brings together over 600 people from the community and the Charles River Center. Open to all abilities, this USA Track and Field-certified course loops through the scenic roads of Needham and Wellesley, and ends with a festive after party including pizza, drinks, ice cream and socializing.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Thank you to all of the individuals, corporations, and foundations who made a gift to various Charles River Center funds. We would also like to thank all who made in-kind donations of equipment, services, and gifts; to all who made gifts in memory or in honor of a special person; and to all who volunteered their time to make our programs outstanding. All of these gifts are deeply appreciated.

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Every effort has been made to be complete and accurate in publishing donors' names. This listing reflects gifts and support for fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015). We apologize for any omissions or errors and hope that you will contact Hilary Ryan, Development, at 781-972-1030 with any corrections.



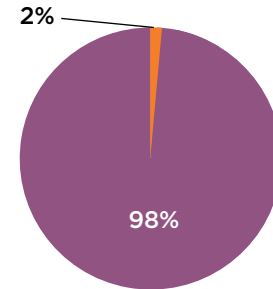
FINANCIALS

The Charles River Center Statement of Operating Activities for the Year Ending June 30, 2015

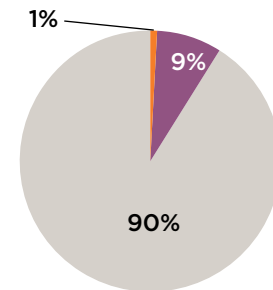
	FY2015 (000's)
REVENUES	
Total Revenues	\$22,972
EXPENSES	
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$16,229
Occupancy Costs	\$1,551
Program and Office Support	\$784
Stipends, Contracted Serv. & Professional Fees	\$831
Transportation	\$299
Depreciation Expense	\$783
Interest Expense	\$75
Food	\$383
Staff Travel and Training	\$43
Program Supplies	\$296
Fundraising Costs	\$113
Management and General	\$384
Sub-total	\$21,771
Expenses Associated with Investments	\$10
Total Expenses	\$21,781
NET OPERATING INCOME/(LOSS)	
Operations and Fundraising	\$1,112
Investment Results	\$79
Total	\$1,191

		Percentage of Total Expenses
Program Expenses	\$19,545	89.77%
Administrative Expenses	\$2,024	9.30%
Fundraising Expenses	\$202	.93%
Total	\$21,771	100%

We are proud that 90 cents of every dollar you've given goes directly to programs and services.



2015 REVENUES
■ Program Service Fees
■ Grants and Contributions



2015 EXPENSES
■ Program Expenses
■ Administrative Expenses
■ Fundraising Expenses

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