

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

Day Habilitation

Creates new and better ways to help people become more engaged and reach their maximum potential.

Employment Services

Operates on a simple belief that everyone who wants to be employed is employable. We are able to match candidates successfully with positions at local companies.

Life Skills

Offers self-sufficiency by instilling feelings of empowerment and an "I can do it myself" attitude.

Elder Care

Provides a full program of individually-focused activities designed to promote health, physical well-being, and self-esteem, allowing seniors to continue to explore their interests.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Offers individualized services to high school students and a robust job-readiness curriculum to match each student's unique abilities, interests and goals.

Individual Supports

Provides one-to-one specialized supports, services and activities that incorporate a range of individually-tailored therapies and activities recommended by our specialists.

Transportation

Offers daily rides to and from our day programs, appointments and group outings.

Opportunities for People with Disabilities

Since 1985, Community Connections has been dedicated to promoting optimal independence for people with disabilities. We have a team of over 350 caring, compassionate employees (many have worked here for decades). Through their dedication, Community Connections has grown to 8 locations across Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod. Today, we provide services for over 800 individuals with disabilities.

Our mission is to provide life-enriching services that promote optimal independence for people with disabilities. Our extraordinary team supports each person in reaching their potential through goal-driven services and community partnerships.

Our vision is to be the leader in providing comprehensive and innovative services that promote community inclusion and improve the lives of people with disabilities.

By the Numbers for FY19

OVERALL SATISFACTION RATINGS



DAY HABILITATION ATTENDANCE AVERAGE 87%

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUCCESS 97%

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING IN-HOME SUPPORT 9

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING 1:1 SUPPORT 105

INDIVIDUALS SERVED DAY HABILITATION/LIFE SKILLS 605

INDIVIDUALS SERVED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES 262

TRANSPORTATION TOTAL RIDERS DAILY 522

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES NEW PLACEMENTS 47
EMPLOYMENT RATE 91%
EMPLOYMENT LONGEVITY:





Our Employment Services Program is certified at the highest level by the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Office of Quality Enhancement.



Community Connections Inc.

Opportunities for People with Disabilities

Dear Friends,

It is that time of year. Change is all around us. From the falling temperatures, to leaves changing colors and overtaking our lawns, to clocks that seemed to have magically gained an extra hour.

If you think about it, change is such a part of our everyday lives, yet somehow, we find ourselves often resisting and pushing back against it. Sometimes even when it is in our best interest. Perhaps this is because with change comes new challenges.

This past year we experienced several changes here at Community Connections. We moved two of our programs into new locations, one planned – Plymouth – and another happened sooner than expected – Somerset program moved to Fall River. We introduced two new fundraisers, the Brew Ha Ha! comedy night to support our Plymouth program and The Gasp bike ride. And we had the good fortune of adding two new members to our Board of Directors (Joyce Lorman and Dr. Heather Bish-Martin). Another change for us involved ramping up our advocacy efforts by hosting several state legislator visits at our programs and making visits to the State House in Boston to impress upon legislators the importance of our work.

We were also forced to deal with changes to minimum wage laws in Massachusetts and the impact on all pay levels of the organization. While we applaud the overall efforts to raise pay rates, unless reimbursement rates are also increased, we are challenged to find ways to reallocate scarce resources in order to comply with these unfunded mandates.

Despite the changes and challenges, as in years past, the agency remained focused on our mission and delivered another year of exceptional services and supports for those we serve. The secret behind our continued success starts with, I believe, staying firmly grounded around 5 key principles.

The analogy I like to use is that of a boat on a mooring. The boat may be pushed around by winds and waves, but in the end, the mooring keeps the boat from drifting.

Here are the 5 key principles that serve as our mooring and keep us from drifting during times of change and challenges.

- 1. We believe that everyone matters. Clients and staff alike.
- 2. We are committed to seeing that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience full inclusion within their communities.
- 3. We support efforts that ensure people with disabilities have the same opportunities to hold a job and earn a competitive wage as others without disabilities.
- 4. We place a very high value on our workforce and believe that they deserve the right to earn a fair and livable wage and are given ample opportunity to grow.
- 5. We are committed to the idea that working collaboratively with partner agencies at both the public and private levels we can accomplish more than acting alone.

Changes and the subsequent challenges impacting our services are not likely to diminish anytime soon. In fact, they are most likely to intensify in the years ahead. Yet, by holding true to these 5 key principles, we believe that the successes we have achieved over the past 33 years will continue many years into the future.

With gratitude for your ongoing support.





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JESSICA MULLIN

employee of the year



L to R: Kit George, Program Manager, Plymouth with Employee of the Year, Jessica Mullin

As Developmental Specialist II for the Plymouth Day Program, Jessica is an extremely dedicated and hardworking employee. She is always professional and never wastes a moment.

With her great focus, she makes the most of her day, whether assisting clients, helping a co-worker, or completing her documentation. Always busy and on-the-go, Jessica is an ideal employee, whose great attitude never flags, despite the large volume of work to be done.

Jessica has outstanding attendance and is always at work on time. The therapists working with Jessica know that no matter how many goals they need her to implement, she will get the job done.

Jessica has a two-year degree in Early Childhood Education. Starting her career at Community Connections as a temporary Aide in September 2014, Jessica became a regular employee 2 months later. In 2015, Jessica was promoted to the role of Developmental Specialist. In addition to her role as Developmental Specialist II, Jessica provided part-time Employment Aide supports for more than a year.

Congratulations, Jessica, on all your hard work!



JOHN A. SALKOWSKI AND PATRICK & MIRKA MCAVENNIE

kindhearts ambassadors

In his professional life, John Salkowski performed as a bassist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra for 41 years and he is more than willing to share his love of music by hiring the music performers for the Plymouth program's Christmas party and the Summer Fun Day.

Since his son, John, joined our Plymouth program in 2011, John Salkowski has been giving to Community Connections. John has been a constant supporter of the Plymouth program year after year.

For the Silent Auction at our Canvas and Cuisine event, John generously donated front row tickets to

L to R: Mirka McAvennie, John A. Salkowski, Kit George, John William Salkowski, Dave Botting, Patrick McAvennie

John William Salkowski Training Kitchen

For Use By All

the Cirque de la Symphonie show at the Boston Pops. John even shared an extra ticket with a Plymouth program staff member to hear the Boston Symphony play at Tanglewood.

John Salkowski continues to look to the future in providing the best care he can for his son, telling us that Community Connections has been included in his estate plan. We couldn't be more grateful for John's continued support.

The Plymouth program's move to a new location spurred John's sponsorship of the training kitchen – named in honor of his son, John William Salkowski – at the new building. Funding the kitchen seemed like a perfect fit, since younger John loves to cook with his caregivers, Patrick and Mirka McAvennie. John is part of Patrick and



Mirka's family and they are dedicated to John's happiness and well-being.

Patrick and Mirka are a cheerful presence at Community Connections events, always going above and beyond. In fact, at our annual Canvas and Cuisine event, Patrick can be counted on to wear his kilt and deliver an impassioned speech to encourage donations to Community Connections.

Patrick and Mirka's attitude is always about how they can help John be heard and included just like any able-bodied person. Patrick and Mirka are an inspiration, a kind and caring couple who are well-respected and loved by the staff at Community Connections.

Congratulations, John, Patrick and Mirka!

honorees

employerpartners



It can be hard to gain employment, especially for people with disabilities. Community Connections supports clients who are reliable, hardworking, eager and friendly workers. With open hearts and open minds, companies like Market Basket can be relied upon to bring our clients onboard, partnering with Community Connections for the past 7 years.

Community Connections clients are proud Market Basket employees working as baggers or parking lot attendants at stores in Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham. The work environment at Market Basket for these 7 clients is uplifting, supportive, encouraging, positive, inclusive and understanding. The management at these stores is present and available.

Market Basket understands that each employee may need a different approach and puts effort into supporting our clients who are given the time and care necessary to learn new skills. Market Basket is mindful of expectations, while ensuring our clients are challenged appropriately to pursue their full potential at work. Market Basket treats our clients as professionals within a close-knit, family atmosphere that makes all who work there feel welcomed, appreciated and respected.

On behalf of our clients who are fortunate to call themselves a part of the Market Basket family, we salute Market Basket as a beacon of hope and opportunity for the wonderful population that we serve.



TJX®, operating through its two business retail groups, T.J. Maxx® and Marshalls®, has long been a welcoming and accommodating employer on Cape Cod. The two stores currently employ 10 Community Connections clients who work within all Cape locations in various part-time positions as accessories merchandisers, cashiers, fitting room associates, backroom lay-up and clothes processors, maintenance/store cleaners and shoe processors.

Managers at all Cape T.J. Maxx and Marshalls locations are accepting of our clients seeking situational assessments. The managers welcome the support and advocacy of our Employment Specialists who help clients navigate the job application, interview, hiring and orientation processes. Accommodations are offered as needed and scheduling revolves around client preferences and transportation requirements. Job coaching (which is provided by Community Connections) is encouraged by store managers and adds an extra dimension of support that enables clients to learn and grow in their jobs, and eventually achieve new levels of independence.

The current roster of 10 clients who work at T.J. Maxx and Marshalls have been employed by TJX for a combined total of nearly 70 years. These work anniversary dates do not go unnoticed, as employees participate in district-wide celebratory luncheons and awards ceremonies, honored by these companies for their years of employment, dedication and outstanding performance.

LINDA CORREA

innovation award

After a situation that arose at home, a client's mother became concerned that her son, Justin, would not be able to identify an emergency situation and call 911.



Linda Correa was innovative in developing a plan for Justin. First, we purchased an imitation phone and Linda created a role-play scenario.

Linda randomly stages a situation for Justin to evaluate. For example, someone pretends to drop to the floor or falls and complains that they skinned their knees. Linda will ask Justin: What would you do in this situation? Call 911 or offer basic help? If the situation requires a 911 call, Linda uses the imitation phone to call another staff member who acts as a 911 operator, so that Justin can practice the interaction. Justin provides details such as his name and location, telling the "operator" that the situation is urgent and please send help.

These drills are not scheduled, so Justin doesn't know when to expect he may need to make a "call". Working with Justin 3-4 times a week, Linda has helped Justin make progress in identifying the difference between a situation that does not require a call to 911 and an emergency that would require a 911 call.

Thank you, Linda, for your innovation!

STATE REPRESENTATIVE CAROLE A. FIOLA

legislator of

State Representative Carole Fiola is a strong supporter of Community Connections. Whether it's accepting a client invitation to our Annual Pasta Dinner in Fall River, joining



us for the ribbon-cutting at our new North Main location, or paying a special visit to our Davol Street program, Rep. Fiola is a reliable advocate for Community Connections.

As the first-ever recipient of this award, Rep. Fiola is being recognized for her legislative advocacy on behalf of people with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Rep. Fiola has co-sponsored several bills with an impact for Community Connections clients, including:

- aiding parents with dependent children
- protecting persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities from abuse
- creating higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other developmental disabilities
- employing persons with disabilities on state contracts Rep. Fiola has taken the time to understand the needs of our clients. She is a champion with the heart and the determination to take a stand.

We are pleased to honor Rep. Fiola's work in aiding, protecting and creating opportunities for people with disabilities. We could not be more appreciative of her leadership and support.

CHRIS PAUL

selfdetermination award

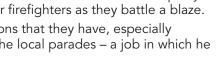
Chris Paul graduated from Somerset High School at the age of 18, determined to be independent in the community. He earned his driver's license when he was 16 and has not stopped since.

Over the past 22 years, Chris has held a few different jobs, Home Depot, Titleist, Burger King, and his most recent job at The Salvation Army, where he has been for the last 11 years. Chris is responsible for ensuring that the store is clean and orderly for the customers. He greets customers and engages in conversations with the regular patrons, making them feel welcome in the store.

Chris enjoys helping people and is very involved in his community. He attended the Citizens Police Academy and assisted officers on ride-a-longs and keeping watch for suspicious activity in his neighborhood.

Most recently, he has become a member of the Fall River EMA, an organization of citizens who work closely with the Red Cross by assisting the firefighters while they are working. Chris arrives at a fire scene and helps by providing water, Gatorade, coffee, towels, blankets and a safe resting spot for firefighters as they battle a blaze.

He has become part of the firefighters' family and attends many of the functions that they have, especially summer cookouts. Chris is also responsible for driving the Fire Chief's car in the local parades – a job in which he takes great pride.



makingprogress

"TURNING 22" AFFECTS MORE THAN JESSICA

"Turning 22" is a turning point for adults transitioning from special education. The focus is on process and timeline and programs and services. When touring a program, parents can look apprehensive. We understand that it's not easy. Because "Turning 22" is a transition for the individual and the people in their lives.

In 2016, when Jessica turned 22, she left school and came to Community Connections in Fairhaven. Jessica lives with her Mom and Grandma. At first, it seemed that Jessica was having difficulty transitioning from high school to the Fairhaven program. She would cry. She would say she felt sick. She would tell her Mom that she didn't want to come to program.

We had a team meeting with Mom. She wanted to pull Jessica out of the program. We asked Mom to try something different the next time she dropped off Jessica at the program. She should come back 10 minutes later, quietly. And just stand in the hallway and listen to Jessica.

And Mom did what we asked. Actually, she did this a few times to be certain. Mom saw a change in Jessica and said, "She's having fun." Mom's visits started to decrease slowly.

At first, Jessica wouldn't join community outings because she was concerned about access to a bathroom. We continued to encourage Jessica to try different activities. We've found that she's now living in the moment and looking forward to community activities which surprised her Mom. Previously, when Jessica left the program for the day, she just wanted to go home. Since attending the program regularly, Jessica has come out of her

shell. She realizes there's a lot of fun out there. Most importantly, there are now times when Mom picks up Jessica early from the program and they go out for ice cream. It's more than Jessica going for ice cream with her Mom. It's Mom. knowing that Jessica is okay and Mom can get things done while Jessica is with us. When Jessica has difficulties, we may notice something that we can mention to Mom. Our nurse can help determine if an issue is medical and answer questions for Mom. And Mom maintains open communication with us. When you're in high school, you're usually with the same students that you've known for a long time. When someone like Jessica comes to Community Connections, she's an adult now and she's treated like an adult. When we see that she can do something, we will encourage her to do that something for herself, instead of doing it for her. Jessica has learned to do things for herself because we continued to let her know "This is what you do. This is what you do." Jessica is discovering she can do a lot more for herself. She is learning to come into an office and talk about things in a safe place. If it's personal, we can direct her to a counselor. And sometimes, Jessica just wants to come into the Day Habilitation Manager's office to look out the window and chat. She's come a long way.

makingprogress

JUST LIKE ANYONE, JESSIE NEEDS HIS OWN SPACE

Usually every six months, Jessie has difficulty controlling his impulses. For the Community Connections Plymouth staff, the difference has been the ability to tune into his triggers and to help Jessie utilize his coping skills. Working closely with Jessie's Mom and his team, the staff is very proud of Jessie and all the success he has had.

The staff is trained to use deescalation techniques and reduce challenging behaviors. We also have a really good connection with Jessie's Mom and with his team. His Mom knows she can always text or call if she needs anything. This combined effort helps to redirect Jessie on a different path. There have been changes for Community Connections Plymouth, too.

In April 2019, we opened the doors to a new building at 23 Resnik Road. At the previous location, it felt like we were on top of each other. It was hard to find a place for Jessie to cool down. And sometimes, Jessie just needs his own space. Here, Jessie can walk around the hallway or sit in a quiet spot, when he needs to get away. For Jessie, this is "his place". He loves it here. He hates it when we have days off.

On Thursday mornings, Jessie works for RogersGray, helping to deliver the mail to employees. When Jessie comes into the program after his job, he's very happy, saying "hi" to all his friends and letting everybody know he's here. Jessie is active and participating in his plan at the Plymouth program, including group activities, such as art, pet therapy, music, karaoke and cooking. Recently, as part of the cooking group, Jessie baked cornbread. He's very proud that he made it himself.

You'll also find Jessie on community outings to visit the canal, the library, and the Buttonwood Zoo. When the weather gets warm, the Plymouth program enjoys swimming at local ponds where there's a lifeguard on duty, plus staff members on the beach and in the water. While some clients prefer to stay on the beach, Jessie likes splashing around with the group in the water.

Like anyone, Jessie will have good days and bad days. It's about how we engage with Jessie. And just like anyone, Jessie wants to be treated with dignity and respect – that's the foundation.





makingprogress

KATE KNOWS THAT YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Kate loves to read books. She attended Curry College, worked as a bank teller, drove her own car and had her own apartment.

At the age of 25, Kate developed a brain aneurysm. She could no longer work as a bank teller, drive her own car or live on her own. Kate moved back into her parents' house.

In 2017, Kate joined the Life Skills program at Community Connections in Mashpee. At that time, Kate used a wheelchair and her biggest challenge with the wheelchair was her club arm. Kate was born with a club arm, limiting the strength on the right side of her body.

As part of physical therapy at Community Connections, Kate worked on her stability with exercises such as sitting in a chair and standing up. Kate also worked on her endurance, slowly increasing the distance that she would walk. Through a dairy-free and gluten-free diet, Kate lost 60 pounds over two years. Today, Kate is able to walk with only a cane to support her. Kate has nicknamed her cane "Steve". Over the years, Kate has used 13 canes - all of them named "Steve" Why? Because she likes the name "Steve".

When Kate started at Community Connections in Mashpee, she was interested in giving back to other clients in the program. So Kate started a book club with a group of clients who enjoy reading or listening to others read. Kate offers various book choices to read and the group makes a selection. Every two weeks, the book club meets. When they finish one book, they start another. Kate serves as a mentor to other clients in the Life Skills program,



encouraging them to read, and when needed, helping them to pronounce a word.

Using book recommendations from the Oprah Winfrey Book Club, Kate downloads free books from Google Books or buys books from Barnes and Noble at the Hyannis Mall. Sometimes, book club members can borrow the book from different libraries. Even with only one copy of the book, Kate can read that one book to the group. Kate's book choices can range from JK Rowling and Nicholas Sparks to the Bell Tower Mysteries by Elizabeth May and the Princess Diaries series by Meg Cabot.

Kate's love of reading extends beyond the book club. Stephen is a client in Mashpee's Day Habilitation program. Stephen is blind and enjoys listening to a calm voice. Kate is that calm voice as she reads to Stephen every week and talks to him about the book. Now, Kate and Stephen are friends, sharing stories about their daily lives.

Through the Mashpee program, Kate is involved with the Cape Cod Collaborative Arts Network (CapeCodCAN!), expressing herself through musical theater. Kate loves to be around people and she is making progress with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to find employment.

For any client, at first, they may feel down and think "this is my life". Yet, no matter where a client is in their journey, they have goals and they make progress. Go, Kate!

newvans

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDES COMMUNITY ACCESS

Whether it's rides to and from our day programs, a group trip to the park, or volunteering in the community, the majority of our clients (522 riders) depend on our transportation every day.

Most vans in our fleet we've had since 2015. But wheelchairs are so large now that older vans can accommodate only three passengers in wheelchairs. New vans leased in March 2019 can accommodate three passengers in wheelchairs with room for three additional ambulatory passengers.



What's so great about these new vans? Let's compare.

OLDER VANS	NEW VANS		
Difficulty moving around the vans because of the lack of headroom.	Ambulatory passengers, aides and drivers can walk onto the new vans, getting in and out more easily and safely by using handrails located through the side door of the vans. Ambulatory passengers can walk into the van, turn, and sit in a single seat. That's much better.		
Once ambulatory passengers get into the van, they have to sit and slide over a bench seat.			
Passengers who use wheelchairs had to sit side-by-side, wheelchair to wheelchair.	Wheelchair users are facing forward, giving them more personal space and a view out the windows which are much larger.		
Plexiglass and a passenger seat behind the driver means that an ambulatory passenger can see the driver, but the driver can't see them.	When drivers look in the rearview mirror, they can see all the passengers better because there is not a passenger sitting directly behind the driver.		



In all, we have leased four new vans for Cape Cod and Fall River Transportation Services – two wheelchair-style and two ambulatory. The new vans are larger and heavier with dual-rear-wheels that hug the road and handle inclement weather much better.

These vans are expensive vehicles – a total cost of \$216,000 over 5 years – but we need every vehicle we have.

Independence is synonymous with freedom of movement and access to the community, and that makes transportation a key part of adopting a more self-sufficient adult life.

THANKYOU TO ALL OUR DONORS July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

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SEPTEMBER 16, 2018

walkathon

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AUGUST 19, 2018

falmouthroadrace

Thank you Team Community Connections!



Masa Bearse

Rajat Ghai

Beth Gomes

Samantha Hendrick

Taylor Krajewski

Pam Kuechler

Stacey Marino



APRIL 11, 2019

canvasandcuisine

Thank you to Wendy and Chris Wilson of the Gallery on Jarves and the Belfry Inn & Bistro for generously hosting this event.

Thank you to our sponsors!

Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank Charitable Foundation Trust

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APRIL 25, 2019

pastadinner



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MAY 11, 2019

brewhaha!



	FY 2019		FY 2018
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 595,642	\$	177,19 ⁻
Accounts receivable, net	1,903,812		1,836,689
Prepaid expenses	136,555		109,49
Property and equipment, net	4,751,670		4,324,47
Other Assets	32,937	<u> </u>	46,76
Total assets	\$ 7,420,616	\$	6,494,61
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS			
Current portion of notes payable	\$ 160,399	\$	168,583
Current portion of mortgages payable	40,474		38,83
Current portion of capital lease obligations	513,840		462,04
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	366,129		320,41
Accrued salaries and wages	664,402		642,71
Other current liabilities	92,583		63,94
Notes payable, net of current portion	636,590		129,58
Mortgages payable, net of current portion	1,030,051		1,070,51
Capital lease obligations, net of current portion	644,670		603,04
Total liabilities	\$ 4,149,138	\$	3, <mark>499,6</mark> 8
Net assets	3,271,478		2,994,93
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 7,420,616	\$	6,494,61
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES			
Revenues, Gains and Other Support			
Contract revenue	\$ 15,792,820	\$	15,161,750
Client service fees	42,790		64,31
Contributions and fundraising	246,424		195,57
Gain on sale of property and equipment	(3,729)		2,50
Other income	11,458		37,34
Total revenues, gains and other support	\$ 16,089,763	\$	15,461,484
Expenses			
Program services	\$ 14,015,051	\$	13,876,38
Management and general	1,633,577		1,650,68
Supporting services	164,594		147,03
Total expenses	\$ 15,813,222	\$	15,674,10
Change in net assets	276,541		(212,616
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ 2,994,937	\$	3,207,55
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 3,271,478	\$	2,994,93

STAY CONNECTED!

Community Connections has locations across Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod.

State Legislators Hear About Direct Care Workforce Challenges

State Senator Julian Cyr and State Representative Will Crocker took the time in April to visit Community Connections in South Yarmouth. These legislators learned about the amazing people we serve, the important work we do, and the challenges facing the direct care workforce in Massachusetts.



State Representative Will Crocker (at right).



State Senator Julian Cyr (third from left).