



Staying Connected

Annual Report | FY-2021



Our mission is to provide life-enriching services that promote optimal independence for people with disabilities.



Day Habilitation

Helps overcome obstacles in the way of an individual's goals.



Employment Services

Provides placement supports, interview assistance and job coaching.



Flower Angels

Brightens the day of Cape Cod nursing home residents through deliveries of repurposed flower arrangements.



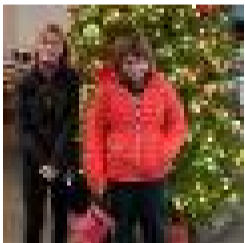
Life Skills

Promotes an independent way of living with skills for self-sufficiency.



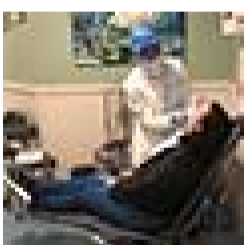
Pre-Employment Transition Services

Offers individualized services to match student's abilities and goals.



Social Recreation (Explorers)

Helps build social skills and friendships through daytime, evening, and weekend events.



Supported Living Services

Provides one-to-one services through therapies and activities.



Community Connections is an affiliate of The Arc, a national organization that advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Community Connections, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and committed to inclusion and nondiscrimination. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or veteran status.



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Dear Friends,

In my youth, I spent the summers boating on the waters of Cape Cod. As I sat behind the helm of my grandfather's 16-foot wooden boat, my grandfather would be by my side, smoking on his pipe, while instructing me on the do's and don'ts of safe boating.

One of the most important lessons he taught me was how to handle the unexpected, when you suddenly find yourself surrounded by fog and your visibility is cut to almost zero. He would drill into me about the importance of a plan. Starting with being aware of exactly where you are at all times, having the right resources at hand and putting them to use – compass, whistle, horn, nautical chart. And finally, moving forward slowly with a destination close to shore in mind.

At Community Connections, we started our new fiscal year in July 2020. By then, we were 4 months into the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, our Day Habilitation and Transportation programs were still closed. What we had once known had been taken away. A previous clear path forward was obscured by uncertainty. It felt like we were trapped in the middle of a massive fog bank.

What we did have though was what my grandfather had emphasized all those years ago. We had a plan. And we had put together the necessary resources to execute that plan. Remote services which we had introduced immediately after the shutdown in the Spring continued to grow in quantity and quality. We worked hard to develop safety protocols, so that when we were allowed to reopen, we would be ready.

And in August 2020, we did reopen. We continued to avail ourselves of stimulus funding designed to assist agencies like ours. For clients who could not return to programs, we continued providing remote services; doing everything we could to help the people we serve to stay connected. We piloted our Community-Based Day Supports program which lets our clients choose community activities that are right for them – from keeping fit to volunteering.

In March 2021, we launched Explorers, our new social recreation program, starting with weekly hikes over an 8-week period. Our goal was to create a program that appealed to the interests and goals of the people we serve in a manner that emphasizes community inclusion.

In last year's Annual Report, I spoke about how Community Connections is an organization that can be trusted to find solutions. Our staff have done an incredible job adapting, while sustaining and improving our programs and services.

We may not be completely out of this fog bank, but we have our plan and we are continuing to execute on our plan. We are slowly but surely finding our way to shore.

Thank you for staying connected to Community Connections. We look forward to your continued support!

With gratitude,

Dave Botting



Sophia LeJacq-Smith

In 2020, Sophia became a client with our Employment Services program in Fall River, Massachusetts.

“I enjoyed interacting with the kids. It’s a long bus ride for little kids and they didn’t have anything to do.”



You Never Know Where the Road Might Lead

Jobs are like a pair of shoes. The shoes can look good, but if the shoes don't fit, you're going to be uncomfortable the whole time. In 2020, Sophia LeJacq-Smith became a client with our Fall River Employment Services program. Sophia was looking for a job, but was discouraged because she had worked many jobs in retail that just weren't right for her.

At Community Connections, Sophia was paired with an Employment Specialist. "If I need anything, I'll call her," says Sophia. "This place is amazing and everyone is so nice."

Instead of a retail job, Sophia was placed as an elementary school bus monitor with Amaral Bus Company in Westport, Massachusetts. "When I was first told about the bus monitor job," says Sophia. "I thought it was cool."

As a school bus monitor, Sophia would be responsible for taking attendance and ensuring that the children remained in their seats on the bus. When Sophia first started working as a bus monitor, she was most concerned about being on time, doing her job right, and knowing where she was going.

"I enjoyed interacting with the kids," says Sophia. "It's a long bus ride (one hour) for little kids and they didn't have anything to do. We'd play Tic-Tac-Toe or listen to music. Sometimes, I'd pick up stickers, coloring books, pencils and pens for them from Dollar Tree."

The bus driver, Gil, had decades of experience and encouraged Sophia to advance from bus monitor to bus driver. "Gil used to help me a lot with my car, a 2014 Chevy Sonic," says Sophia. "When we would get back to the bus yard, he'd open the hood of my car and say, 'OK, you need this and this and I'm going to do this for you.' He was like my Bus Dad."

Gil even wanted Sophia to get a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). With a CDL, Sophia would be able to drive a bus of any size. "In my mind, I wanted to do it (get her CDL) because I would have more hours and it paid a little bit more," says Sophia. "Gil was an awesome guy. I wish he came back this year, but he didn't." (For health reasons, Gil was unable to return to work.)

Sophia set a goal to get her 7D License which would allow her to drive a school transport vehicle or van. At 6:11am, Sophia arrives at the bus yard to pick up the keys to the school van. She conducts a maintenance check outside and inside the vehicle, for example, ensuring the tires are inflated properly and the lights, blinkers, horn, and flashers are working.

By 6:20am, Sophia is on the road for an hour to drop off and pick up the kids from elementary school. When Sophia returns to the bus yard, she conducts another maintenance check and fills up the van's gas tank before logging the van's mileage and how much gas was used.

As a driver, Sophia says, "I like being able to meet new people; I've seen so many new faces this year." Like any job, some days are stressful, especially traffic. Sophia relaxes at home by watching anime (movies inspired by Japanese animation) or The Great British Baking Show with her boyfriend.

It's true that Sophia never imagined she would be driving a school bus, but you never know where the road might lead. "I love it," Sophia says, "I love the kids and I love driving."

Employee of the Year

“I love my job and the people we serve”.

Lore Jackson, Employment Coordinator



Last Spring, Lore Jackson began working with a young woman who had been bounced from provider to provider, not able to identify employment goals or follow through with any career plans. The last provider's only comment: "Good luck."

Lore spent time with this client, talking several times a week, allowing the client to open up and express her wishes.

Lore also regularly communicated with the client's mother that her daughter was on a path to employment.

Lore engaged the client in several job trials until the client identified one employer as "it". Lore assisted with the application process and practiced interviewing skills until the client felt confident. Lore also visited the client's apartment and helped her decide which outfit to wear for the interview and make the best professional presentation.

After a job offer to the client, Lore spent time with the store manager, ensuring that the client was understood and placed in a position to showcase her natural abilities.

Since taking this new job, the client has experienced bouts of anxiety on the job. Lore is responsive and respectful in helping the client restore her composure and not run away and hide.

Lore has assembled a real team – client, family, employer, co-workers – who keep the client centered, communicating openly, and moving toward success.

Lore's caring and empathetic personality underscores a natural ability to connect easily with her clients. She automatically places a client's interests and ambitions at the forefront of her employment support planning.

At the Employee of the Year award presentation, Lore said, "I love my job and the people we serve". Lore has shown commitment and compassion, setting the example for what it means to be person-centered at Community Connections. Congratulations, Lore!



SERVICE AWARDS FY21

Celebrating 375 years of service
milestones reached in Fiscal Year 2021!

35 Years of Service

Joe Krajewski, Chief Operating Officer

25 Years of Service

Therese Arruda, Developmental
Specialist, FRHE

Kathleen Ferreira, Service Director

Kristine Fletcher, Program Manager,
FRHS

Lisa Mello, Individual Support
Specialist, FRES

20 Years of Service

Kristen Codega, Program Manager,
GNBS

Simone Laferriere-Rego,
Developmental Specialist I, FRHS

Lynn Nogueira, Transportation
Manager, GNBT

15 Years of Service

Melinda Flanagan, Program Manager,
Individual Home Supports

James Monteiro, Driver/Monitor, FRTS

Linda Moore, Developmental
Specialist, YCCH

Beverly Mota, Case Manager, FRHS

Noemi Nieves-Dias, Developmental
Specialist - Lead, FHLS

John Paiva, Developmental Specialist
I, FRHS

10 Years of Service

Kathryn George, Habilitation Manager I,
PHS

Laurie Pereira, Employment Program
Coordinator, FRES

Corina Shea, Case Manager, PHS

5 Years of Service

Marisa Botelho, Aide, FRHS

David Botting, President, Central
Administration

Michael Fitzgerald, Employment
Specialist, FRES

Tina Geary, Case Manager, PHS

Elizabeth Glover, Developmental
Specialist - Lead, PHS

Winifred Hutchinson, Nurse RN, FRHE

Jeffrey Lindberg, Supported Living
Specialist, Individual Home Supports

Manuel Medeiros, Driver/Monitor, FRTS

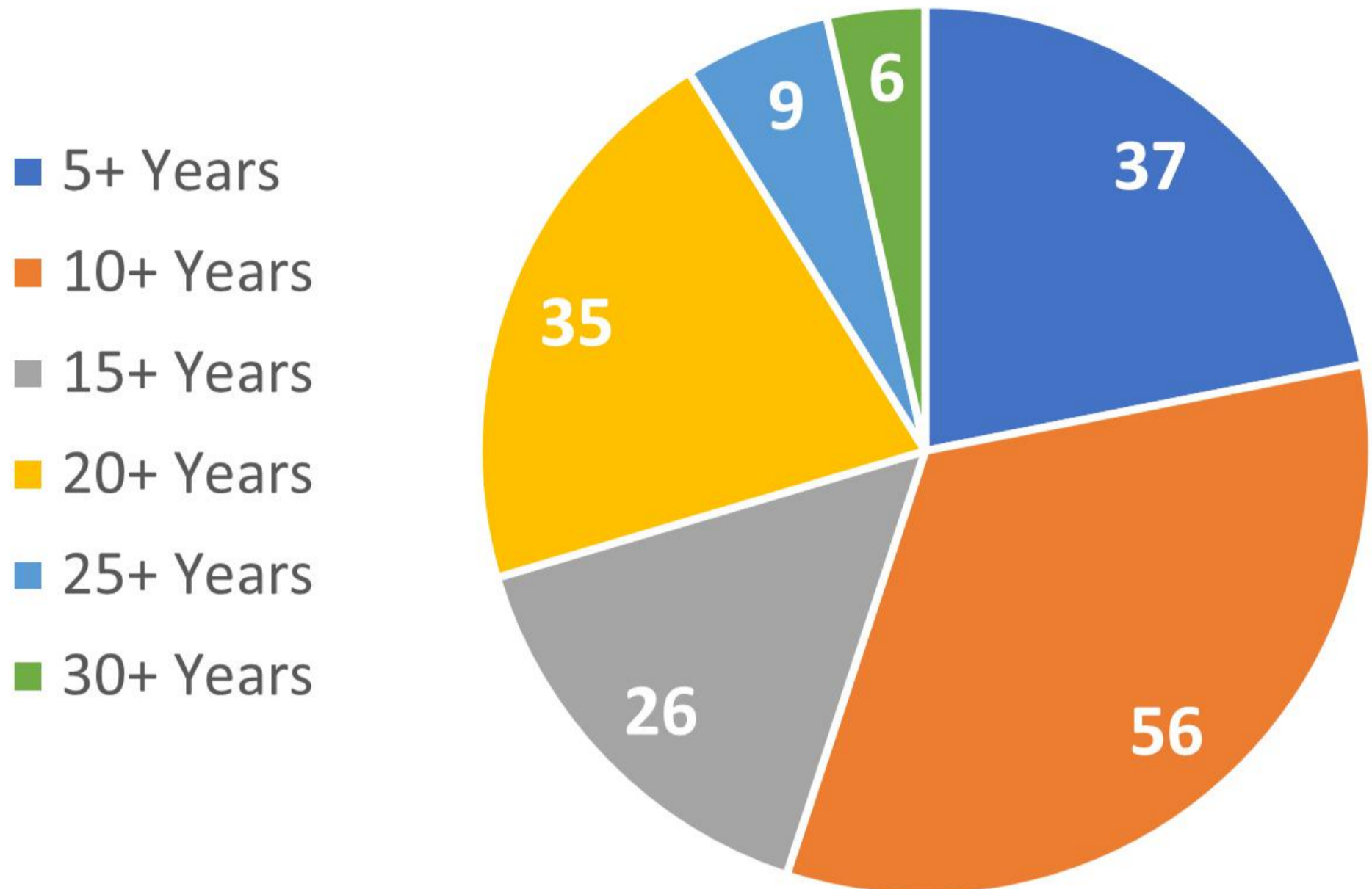
Raymond Melancon, Driver/Monitor,
GNBT

Victor Nawoichik, Driver/Monitor, GNBT

Robert Travers, Driver/Monitor, FRTS

Tara Wotton, Nurse RN, FHLS

Employee Tenure at Community Connections



At Community Connections, our mission is to provide life-enriching services that promote optimal independence for people with disabilities.

This mission requires the right people to deliver these services.

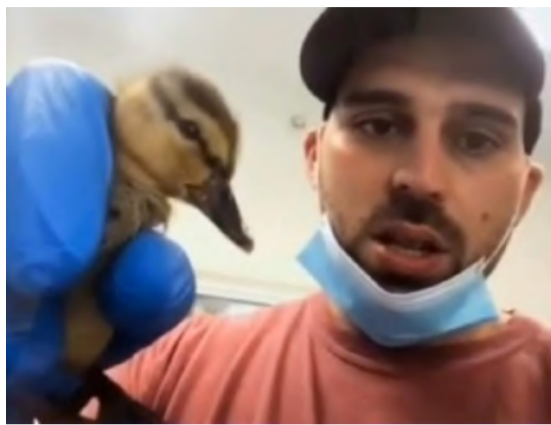
Employees who are committed and professional with a heartfelt sense of involvement are the rule, not the exception.

Because Community Connections employees work with our clients for many years, employees become “part of the client’s family”. Even when not working, our employees are still concerned about our clients’ needs and involved with our clients’ lives.

The compassion and dedication of our employees is compelling. As a result, family members can trust that their loved ones are in good hands.

Community Partners Lend a Hand

Cape Wildlife Center



Based in Barnstable, Massachusetts, Cape Wildlife Center cares for sick and injured wild animals, and educates the public on environmental conservation.

Zak Mertz, Executive Director at Cape Wildlife Center, hosts virtual classes for Community Connections clients. Animal patients have included flying squirrels, bunnies, ducklings, turtles, swans, a red-tailed hawk, and of course, Loki, the one-eyed Eastern Screech Owl.

As part of our Explorers program, Zak was our guide through Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge as we learned about songbirds and waterfowl.



Whether it's an injured swan or an orphaned bunny, Cape Wildlife Center teaches our clients and staff about the natural world on Cape Cod. Thank you, Zak and Cape Wildlife Center staff!

Christen Gray Culinary

No matter what we're making, when cooking with Christen Gray, there's always laughter and learning.



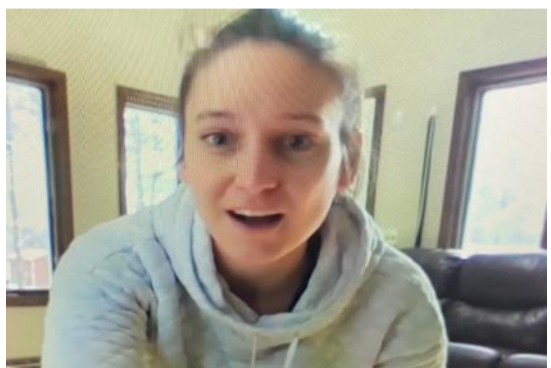
Christen, a former Community Connections employee, volunteered to teach virtual cooking classes from her home in Florida.

With her experience as a chef, Christen says, "If you follow the steps, you can do anything in the kitchen." Clients followed along with Christen during the virtual class or watched and learned, so they could try recipes on their own later.

Christen's recipes also included gluten-free and vegan options. A Festive Quick Bread class encouraged participants to get creative. The Quick Bread flavor combinations included cranberry orange, walnut spice, and chocolate zucchini.

The virtual cooking classes are a chance to learn life skills, have some fun, and maintain friendships. Thank you, Christen!

Special Olympics Massachusetts

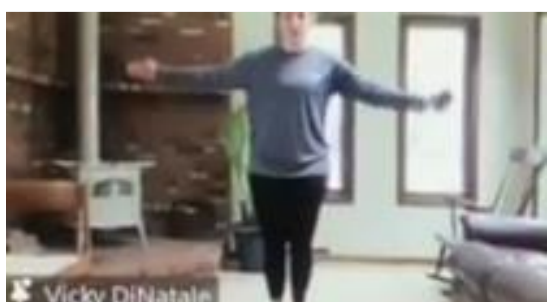


During the 6-Week Fitness Challenge with Special Olympics Massachusetts – whether participants were walking, biking, or running – the most important thing was to keep moving!

Each week, Coach Vicky from Special Olympics Massachusetts would lead a virtual workout with standing and seated exercises for clients to participate from home or at one of our programs. In addition to a weekly virtual workout, 100 Community Connections clients exercised at least two to three times a week to earn medals. Community Connections staff tracked the workout progress of clients who completed seated and standing exercises.



Matthew Skypeck, a gold medalist in our Wareham program, was recognized for participating in 47 of the 48 fitness opportunities. In all, there were 44 gold medalists, 16 silver medalists, 29 bronze medalists, and 11 participation ribbon recipients.



Participants didn't rest on their laurels, taking on the 8-week challenge which continued the weekly virtual workout with Special Olympics Massachusetts. The challenge went beyond physical activity to include discussions about nutrition and hydration, helping the people we serve to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Social Recreation Enhances Social Skills



It can be challenging for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to understand the nuances of friendships and communicating with others.

Social recreation provides structured activities to enhance social skills and help participants build friendships in real-life situations.



Community Connections launched Explorers, a social recreation program created for adults with high-functioning IDD and/or ASD.

The program began with hiking and enjoying the beauty of Cape Cod, Community partners, including Center for Coastal Studies, Cape Wildlife Center, Mass Audubon, and the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, served as guest experts.



Community Connections staff helped participants improve social skills by guiding communication, identifying social cues, and offering suggestions on appropriate interactions.

Starting in late March, the Explorers went on a journey of discovery each Saturday – from watching for whales during a guided “Whale Walk” in Provincetown to navigating the open fields and salt marshes on the Fort Hill Trail in Eastham.

In May 2021, the Explorers completed the 8-week series of fresh air and friendships with a visit to the Grays Beach Boardwalk in Yarmouth Port. Well-done, Explorers!

Visit the Explorers page on our website.

Human Rights for People with Disabilities

As human beings, we have innate rights. These rights may seem so intuitive that we take them for granted. But for some, human rights may need to be learned.

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities may not have had the opportunity to learn about their rights and their ability to advocate for themselves.

At Community Connections, the Human Rights Committee ensures that client needs are addressed appropriately.

The committee includes clients, employees, and community members who volunteer to advocate for the clients served through Community Connections locations across Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod.



Meghan McDonald and Liz Glover are two members of the Human Rights Committee at Community Connections.

This 25-person committee meets quarterly to discuss individual behavior plans and any human rights issues that might arise across programs or any concerns that clients might have about human rights. All committee members must sign a confidentiality statement in order to discuss any behavioral or medical incidents.

Community Connections produces a Human Rights Handbook for clients that outlines a person's rights as well as the corresponding responsibilities which are equally important. For example, people with disabilities have a right to find a job that they enjoy and do well, but they also have the responsibility to complete the job requirements and follow workplace rules.

Many people with disabilities have not been told they have rights and responsibilities. Parents, guardians, and caregivers may have the best interests of clients in mind, but it might not be what the clients want or need.

Liz Glover is a Developmental Specialist Team Lead with Community Connections. As a Human Rights Officer, Liz says, "I'm not here to judge; I'm here to help. My job is human rights. I'm going to do what I can to help the clients."

Liz joined the Human Rights Committee in 2017. "I wanted to learn more about human rights from the client's point of view," says Liz. "Some people may think that rights for people with disabilities aren't the same as rights for others. I wanted to better explain these rights to clients and help them advocate for themselves."

If clients don't feel comfortable talking to a Human Rights Officer, they can speak with a peer. Meghan McDonald, a Community Connections client, describes herself as a "people person" who loves meeting new people and hearing what they are all about, "I strongly believe in advocacy and there are so many people that feel like they don't have a voice. As a person with a disability, I want to advocate for others who may not be able to do things like this."

Meghan McDonald thinks that volunteering on the Human Rights Committee is a great way to build confidence, improve self-advocacy, and help friends who may be in a similar situation. Meghan's advice to someone who is new to the Human Rights Committee? "Make sure you're listening, not just hearing. And don't be afraid to speak up, when it's your turn."

Liz Glover agrees, "As part of the Human Rights Committee, I love how our clients give their input on ways to help other clients. I feel like we all help to make a difference."

Supporter Profile | Taylor Krajewski

Going the Distance



If you're lucky, there are people in your life who will go the distance with you.

Community Connections has been participating in the Falmouth Road Race since 2016. And every year, Taylor Krajewski has been running with our team.

The Falmouth Road Race is an internationally recognized 7-mile race with an iconic seaside course. The irony is that Taylor likes to run distances much longer than 7 miles.

She has run many half-marathons and marathons, including Boston and New York, and 24-hour relay races, a type of ultramarathon.

Most years, Taylor has run the Falmouth Road Race in-person. But in 2020 and 2021, Taylor ran a virtual race because character is what you do when no one is watching.



Henry when he was a puppy.

Of course, running for the team also means fundraising and she has always been one of our top fundraisers. Taylor can get creative in her fundraising, once offering "a signed photo of the world's smallest puppy, Henry the Daug!" as an incentive to donors.

In high school, Taylor ran track at Bishop Stang in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. In college, Taylor was Captain of the Cross Country and Track & Field teams. During the summer, she worked part-time for Community Connections, serving as a job coach in the Fall River Employment Services program.

Taylor's father, Joe Krajewski, serves as Chief Operating Officer at Community Connections. Joe has been a long-time volunteer for Special Olympics. Joe remembers Taylor sleeping in a baby carriage at Special Olympics events, so Taylor grew up around people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

When Taylor was just 11 years old, she volunteered as a Special Olympics Unified Partner, helping to train and compete with a Special Olympics athlete. For Taylor, it was the first 5K race she had ever run, but it wouldn't be her last.

In her junior year at Salem State, Taylor won the 5K race (3.1 miles) in the league championship. It was the last race of the day. After her junior year, Salem State dropped the track program, so Taylor's claim to fame at Salem State is that she won the last-ever track meet.



Today, Taylor works as a Senior Patient Engagement Specialist at Syneos Health. In 2022, Taylor will not be running the Falmouth Road Race because she will be preparing for her wedding.

Joe says, "Like any father, you're happy to see your child grow up, find someone they love, and want to spend their life with."

Thank you, Taylor, for all that you have done for Community Connections! We are wishing you a lifetime of love and happiness!

I'm Worth Something | Melissa Beckwith Q&A

How long have you been working at Dunkin'? I've been working at Dunkin' for about 8 years. Originally, I was in Orleans (Massachusetts). Then, I transferred to Dennis (Massachusetts) in 2021.

How many hours do you work? I work Tuesdays and Fridays from 9am to noon; 3-hour shifts. I am trying to get more hours or even another day.

What work do you do at Dunkin'? I prep the food that they need. If they need eggs, they'll have me do a whole case of eggs or they'll have me do a whole case of hash. Stuff that they would need for the weekend because now they're staying open until 7pm. Such a giant leap from 4pm, so they're starting to get busy. Other prep things would be stocking the fridge with drinks or putting the coffee pods on the shelves. If I could get my third shift, I would like to do a "non-prep" day. Last year, I started making coffee and I earned extra tip money.

What do you like about working at Dunkin'? I like the environment. It's a change of pace. I love the people I work with. My co-workers: I like their energy, their attitude. I like the way they approach me about things; they're not mean about it. They'll say: Could you help with this? I have friendly co-workers who understand that I am someone who gets support even though I don't look like I need support. But they understand that I got my job through Community Connections. I love my job.

What have you learned from working? When you come in and your co-workers have a good attitude, right? I have come to realize that when a co-worker might be upset, it doesn't have anything to do with me. It's just something they're dealing with. For a while, I took it personally. But it's not personal. So, I've learned that.

How does it make you feel to work there? It makes me feel like I'm worth something. Not that I'm not worth anything. But I love earning money, whether it's just a paycheck or tips. I have a cat, so I can make sure he gets what he needs. That's why I'm working. I have an animal, not just myself to support.

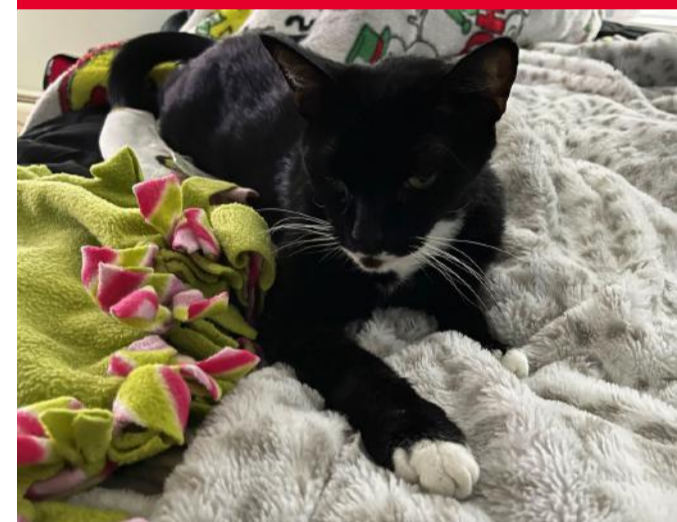
What kind of cat do you have? He's a tuxedo cat. His name is Angus. He's 9 years old. He's like my son. There have been a few times where I've been at work, and I felt anxious. I look at pictures of Angus just to comfort me. If I give up on myself, I'm giving up on him because I'm working and putting in effort for him. So, having an animal to support is giving me the confidence and the ability to take care of someone other than myself.

What do you like to do when you're not working? Angus is a big priority. But I watch TV, or I play on my Nintendo Switch. On TV, I watch Big Bang Theory or Fuller House. I'm into Grey's Anatomy right now.

If you think back to when you first started at Dunkin' what were you most worried about? I was most worried about not being able to expand my progress. Since I've moved over to the Dennis store, I started off with prep for my first year. Then, I took a giant leap into working on coffee and at the drive-thru. That really makes me feel good because I want to be as helpful as I can while I'm there. I always feel bad when I leave work at noon. I always feel that I'm leaving them stranded, even though I know I'm not. But I'm invested in my job. And while I'm still young, I want to be working as much as I can.

When you first started at Dunkin', what were you most excited about? I was excited to meet new people. I used to be very shy when meeting people. I still am a little bit. It takes me a while to figure people out; to see if they're good or bad. And usually, the vibe of them or their energy can tell it all. Because I had some not-so-nice people in my life, and I want to be around good, positive people.

"Having an animal to support is giving me the confidence and the ability to take care of someone other than myself. If I give up on myself, I'm giving up on him because I'm working and putting in effort for him."



Angus is Melissa's tuxedo cat.

Melissa's guardian prefers that Melissa's photo not be used with her story.

Melissa Beckwith is a client with our Day Habilitation and Employment Services programs, based in South Yarmouth. Melissa has worked at Dunkin' for 8 years. The work environment is a change of pace for Melissa who likes the energy and attitude of her co-workers.

Employer-Partner Awards | Stop & Shop and West End Day Nursery



Stop & Shop: Laurie Lombard, Front-End Manager

Laurie Lombard, Front-End Manager at Stop & Shop, has worked with Community Connections clients for 15 years at Stop & Shop locations across Cape Cod.

Today, there are 4 Community Connections clients working at the Stop & Shop in Hyannis with Laurie.

In collaboration with Cape Cod Employment Services, Laurie helps ensure that our clients are working to their full potential. For example, a client was employed as a bagger and others assumed that he would not progress to a cashier position.

But Laurie said, "Everyone deserves a fair chance, regardless of their disability, so I'm going to try." Now, this client works the cash register, and Laurie says, "His cash drawer is always counted out perfectly. He's never off by a penny."

Laurie advocates for our clients and wants them to be successful, even when it can be difficult – from ensuring a client remembers his schedule to boosting a client's confidence, so she feels capable at work and that her job has meaning.

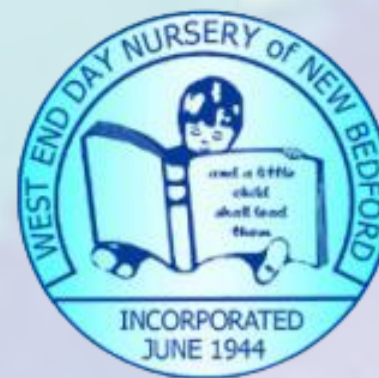
As Front-End Manager, Laurie is responsible for 70 employees, and takes that responsibility seriously. Sometimes, a taxi is not available, so one of our clients might be left stranded at work.

While the Community Connections Employment Specialist asks to be contacted when that happens, Laurie gives the client a ride home instead, saying "I'm the boss; I can do what I want."

On behalf of our clients and their families, we commend Laurie's wholeheartedness and compassion towards individuals with disabilities.

Laurie was raised to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Yet, Laurie displays a tough exterior and says, "Don't tell anyone I'm this nice."

Thank you, Laurie Lombard and Stop & Shop for your continued dedication to our client's success, personal growth, and confidence.



West End Day Nursery: Lee Frias, Associate Director

West End Day Nursery hired Community Connections client, Paige Bouchard, as a part-time teacher's assistant in June 2018.

Based in New Bedford, Massachusetts West End Day Nursery provides child care, including family service, child development, education, health, recreation and nutritional programs.

Paige, who has Down syndrome, is certified in CPR and Early Education & Care. She works Monday-Friday from noon-4pm, assisting two other teachers with children in the toddler room. When possible, Paige also helps with children in the infant-toddler room.

Paige's duties include sanitizing the toys, blankets, and cots; getting snacks ready; keeping the children calm by reading stories and playing with puzzles and blocks; changing diapers; putting paperwork in backpacks; collecting any trash and vacuuming the rugs in the room.

After a performance review, Paige is receiving a raise and a bonus. "It was a surprise for Paige; she didn't expect that," says Christina Hermenegildo, Community Connections Employment Specialist.

Paige maintains her certification in Early Education & Care by working with Christina to review the training materials.

Christina says, "One day, I went into the infant room and Paige and another teacher were taking care of children who are two to three months old. As soon as I walked in, four of the six children started crying, and Paige was as calm as a clam."

Lee Frias, the Associate Director at West End Day Nursery, encourages Paige. For example, at first, Paige thought she wouldn't be capable of changing diapers, but now accomplishes the task with ease.

Lee has worked closely with Christina to ensure that Paige remains successful and includes Paige in all meetings that take place at the child care center.

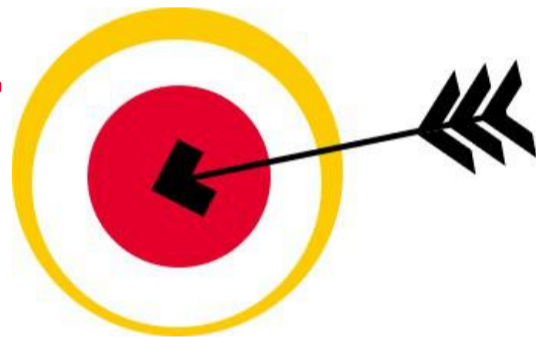
Thank you, West End Day Nursery and Lee Frias, for providing a welcoming work environment for people with disabilities.

Employment Services By the Numbers for FY21

We believe that people with disabilities who want to be employed are employable in jobs at competitive wages.

**New Placements
in FY21**

26

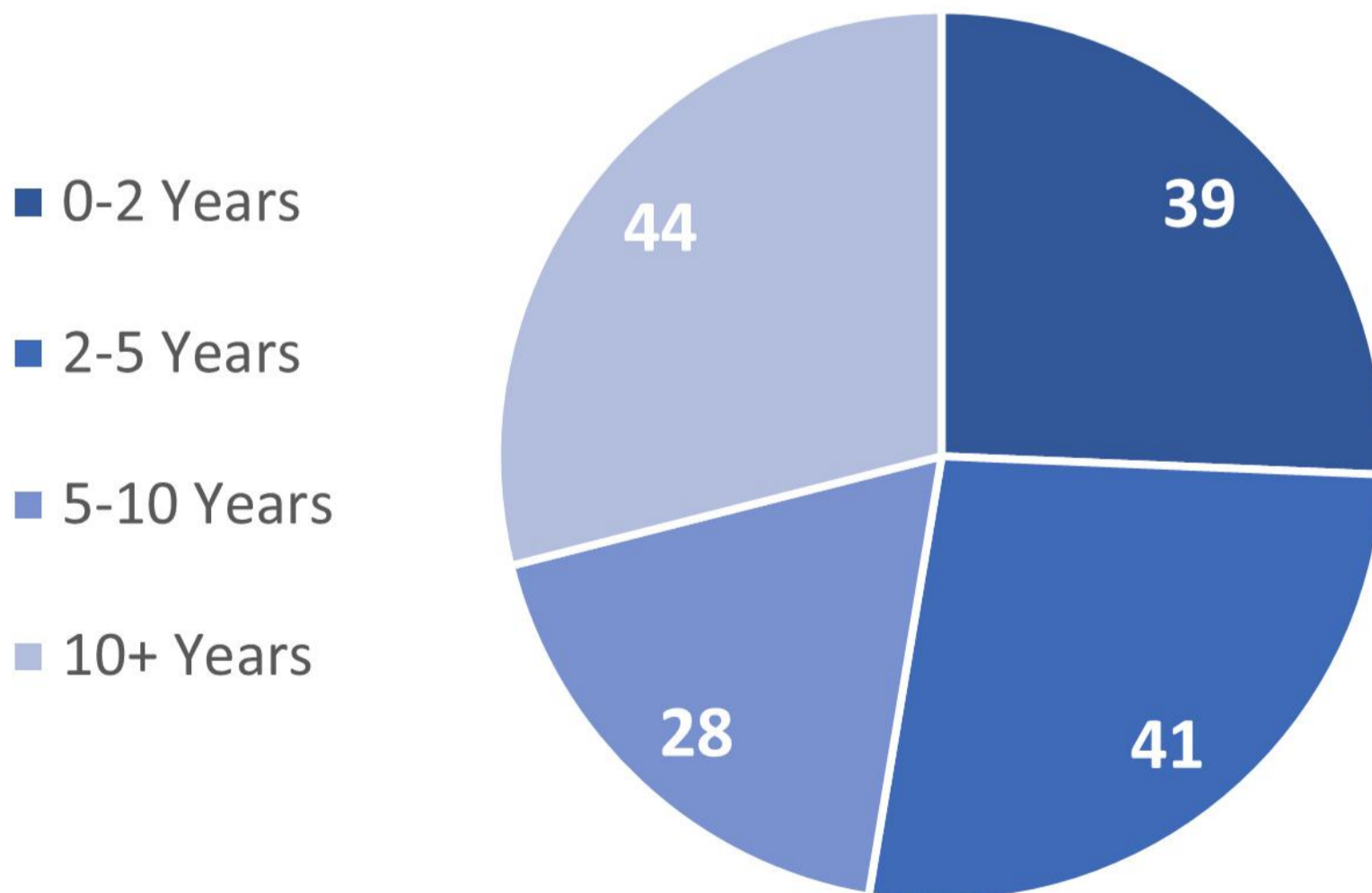


**Number of Clients
Served**

341



Employment Longevity of Clients



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

Innovation Award | Community-Based Day Supports (CBDS)



Stephanie Cantin, Christina Hermenegildo, Kevin Jones, Maria Miranda and Laurie Pereira at Fall River-Hartwell.



Polly Burns is based in the South Yarmouth office.

What is CBDS? CBDS offers community-based activities for participants to explore personal interests while learning confidence, independence, and life skills. Participants choose from weekly activities, such as feeding and caring for animals at Taylor-Bray Farm to volunteering that can lead to paid employment, such as sorting books and restocking shelves at the public library.

Who developed CBDS at Community Connections? The team included Laurie Pereira, Program Coordinator; Employment Specialists, Stephanie Cantin and Christina Hermenegildo; Maria Miranda, Fall River Employment Services Program Manager, and Kevin Jones, Director of Program Administration. Since the CBDS program was piloted through our two Cape Cod-based locations, Polly Burns, Cape Cod Employment Services Program Manager provided additional guidance.

How was CBDS developed? Laurie Pereira created the curriculum for what Kevin Jones termed "The Pathway to Employment." Laurie developed the presentations for the 10 weeks of training. Christina Hermenegildo and Stephanie Cantin scheduled the training and presented the materials to the participants.

What is included in the CBDS training program? The curriculum features two 5-week sessions. Christina and Stephanie conducted weekly group sessions and weekly one-on-one sessions with each participant to review and discuss concepts.

The first session focused on setting employment goals and using basic skills to enhance potential employment, such as how to communicate with people you don't know and how to think about a situation from another person's point-of-view.

The second session focused on interviewing, resume writing, and the work day, for example, participating in mock interviews, traveling to work safely, and building a natural support system with colleagues at work.

What's next for CBDS? In the pilot, 6 clients participated in CBDS. Community Connections created their own curriculum with the expectation that CBDS expands to other locations.

Through CBDS, participants can better prepare for paid employment and gain additional skills through volunteering in the community which helps individuals acquire work readiness skills, build a strong work ethic, and become valued team players.

CBDS volunteers devote their time and talents to organizations across Cape Cod, such as Flower Angels, Taylor-Bray Farm, The Cultural Center of Cape Cod, Hyannis & Falmouth Recreation Centers, Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Heritage Museums and Gardens, among others.

By engaging with community organizations, participants expand opportunities for achieving a rewarding and productive work life. In addition, for the people we serve, there is an ongoing need for remote services.

The CBDS curriculum will be adapted for use in our existing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program to help high school students match abilities, interests, and goals to job readiness.

As part of our person-centered approach, CBDS is another opportunity for the people we serve to understand self-determination and become self-advocates.

Self-Determination Award | Te-Ana Davis

Te-Ana Davis joined our Fairhaven Life Skills program in August 2016. "Te-Ana is a sweetheart," says Maria Pavao, Fairhaven Life Skills Manager. "I love Te-Ana. She's so independent."

Te-Ana has Williams syndrome, a developmental disability that affects many parts of the body, causing learning problems. After experiencing frequent backaches, Te-Ana self-advocated with her physician and made an informed decision to have surgery to alleviate this concern.

At 33 years old, Te-Ana was ready for her own apartment with minimal support. For more than 3 years, Te-Ana had been talking with her Department of Developmental Services Coordinator and support staff about living on her own.

"My sister and my brother already left my mother's house, and they have their own place," says Te-Ana. "So, I was just waiting for a long time to do that. And I'm happy that I did because it's quieter on my own."

At her apartment building, Te-Ana likes being around different people. "My neighbors who live right next to me. They're cool people and they're like family. Another neighbor is older and he's nice," Te-Ana says. "We all like each other and get along. If someone needs something, they'll knock on my door, or I'll knock on theirs."

Te-Ana also likes the view from the apartment's sliding glass door. "I can see people walking by and animals," says Te-Ana. "A couple of weeks after I moved in, it was the first time I saw a turkey. There were five of them all together. They were big turkeys."

Prior to the COVID shutdown, Te-Ana had worked in the cafeteria at UMass Dartmouth. However, not all staff have returned to work at the college.

A friend referred Te-Ana to a hair salon, where she now works a part-time job, ensuring towels go into the washer and dryer, cleaning everything, sweeping the floor, and throwing away any trash. The hair salon is another chance to meet people. Te-Ana says, "I like to meet new people and talk to them. Hey, my name is Te-Ana and give them a handshake."

With minimal support, Te-Ana plans her work schedule and transportation to and from work. She budgets her own funds, so she can visit family members and take vacations, everywhere from New Hampshire and Maryland to Florida and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

Te-Ana's two favorite places to visit are North Carolina where family members live and Atlanta, Georgia where Te-Ana attended a camp for adults with Williams syndrome. At the camp, Te-Ana enjoyed ziplining (a couple of times!), fishing, miniature golf, and working out at the gym.

"Te-Ana has really blossomed this year," says Maria. "She had been living at home with her mom. Te-Ana's mother encourages independence and for Te-Ana to do as much as she can on her own."

Everyone here at Community Connections is very proud of Te-Ana's growth in self-advocacy and self-determination. Congratulations, Te-Ana, on earning the Self-Determination Award!



Te-Ana Davis attends our Fairhaven Life Skills program and has earned the Self-Determination Award!

Kind Hearts Ambassador Award | RogersGray



On behalf of RogersGray, LA Silva and John Foley accept the Kind Hearts Ambassador Award from Dave Botting and Liz Rabideau of Community Connections.

For more than a decade, RogersGray has been consistent and unwavering in their support for Community Connections.

In recognition of that commitment, RogersGray has been honored with the Kind Hearts Ambassador Award for enhancing the lives of people with disabilities through significant and generous contributions of time, treasure, and talent.

Allison McEachern, Chief People Officer at RogersGray, has served on the Community Connections Board of Directors for 7 years, currently as Vice Chair.

After meeting Community Connections President & CEO, Dave Botting, at the Rotary Club of Yarmouth, Allison was drawn to the Community Connections mission of promoting optimal independence for people with disabilities.

“At Community Connections, the employees are generous of spirit and have committed their lives to a portion of our population that is often underserved or overlooked and even sometimes feared,” says Allison. “Community Connections offers a typical life to people who otherwise would be left isolated for hours at a time and the commitment to this work is what inspires me.”

John Foley, Vice President, Employee Benefits, at Rogers Gray, was inspired by the mission of Community Connections after meeting our founder, Donna Sabecky, at an event. Donna founded Community Connections in 1985, when an accident had required her to use a wheelchair for 6 months, and she became aware of the lack of adequate services to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

“What RogersGray does as a corporate partner in the community goes beyond insurance, and we make sure the great things that our not-for-profit clients do in the community are supported,” says John. “That support resonates with RogersGray employees because from an employee’s perspective, you want to know that the organization that you’re working for cares not only about revenue and profit, but about supporting the community where we live.”

For RogersGray, being a good corporate citizen is not limited to Community Connections. This ongoing commitment to nonprofit organizations is encouraged and recognized at RogersGray as part of their company culture. RogersGray employees volunteer hundreds of hours for nonprofits, events, and business/industry associations. In addition, as a company, RogersGray donates to over 120 different nonprofits in Massachusetts.

“Philanthropy allows RogersGray to remain connected to those we serve from a client perspective and helps us to understand what the needs are in the community,” says Allison. “Philanthropy is woven into our core values, and I think our colleagues have a sense of pride in giving back to the community.”

By helping Community Connections and the people we serve, Kind Hearts Ambassadors like RogersGray are an example to others, inspiring even more people to get involved, make an impact, and stay connected with Community Connections.

Founded on Cape Cod in 1906, RogersGray offers property and casualty insurance and employee benefits programs for individuals, families, and businesses. With approximately 40,000 clients, RogersGray has 230 employees in 11 offices in coastal Massachusetts.

Flower Angels Return to the Workshop



Meaningful connections can mean the world to someone who feels isolated. Flower Angels is rooted in the understanding that nursing home residents often feel lonely.

Twice a week, flower arrangements are delivered to nursing homes across Cape Cod, so that no one feels forgotten. The mission continues!

Through hard work and perseverance, a small team of volunteers returned to the Flower Angels workshop from October-December 2020, and again in February 2021 (and haven't left since!).

By following strict protocols at the workshop and partnering with a smaller number of nursing homes, Flower Angels continues to connect with the elderly and disabled by repurposing donated flowers into floral arrangements for delivery.

Our Flower Angels volunteers have built a supportive community with a shared passion for our mission to create flower arrangements for nursing home residents who need to know that someone cares for them.

Visit the Flower Angels page on our website.

FALMOUTH ROAD RACE "AT HOME"

August 15-29, 2020

Thank you to our runners, Taylor Krajewski & Jessica Mullin!

The Falmouth Road Race "At Home" Edition meant the iconic course along the Atlantic Ocean, from Woods Hole to Nobska Lighthouse to Falmouth Heights Beach, must wait for another August.

Instead, Taylor Krajewski and Jessica Mullin ran the 7 miles in their own neighborhoods, anytime from August 15-29.

Because Taylor and Jessica stayed the course, we truly appreciated their commitment to helping sustain the programs for the people we serve.





Tom Pelletier gets creative with his fundraising sign.

VIRTUAL WALK October 18-31, 2020

Thank you, participants!

By the dog days of summer, we knew our October Walk would need to be all-virtual.

Participants walked 1, 2 or 3 miles (all at once or a little at a time) anywhere that was safe: at their program...in their backyard...in their neighborhood.

No matter where or how they walked, participants were able to bring awareness and support to our programs.

For our first-ever Virtual Walk, Tom Pelletier raised more than \$5,300 and earned first prize as our highest individual fundraiser. Way to go, Tom!

Thank you to our sponsors!



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July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

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Thank you for helping make our mission possible.

Because of donors like you, Community Connections helps people with disabilities stay connected with friends, family, and the community.

When you support our programs, you help us provide on-site and remote services, employment supports, social recreation, and supported living services.

From giving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities a chance to develop social skills to finding suitable employment and providing job coaching, we are connecting people with disabilities to their community for a lasting impact in their relationships and in their lives.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS INC.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	FY 2021	FY 2020
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,885,086	\$ 2,635,089
Accounts receivable, net	1,409,675	1,123,221
Employment retention tax credit receivable	2,065,555	
Prepaid expenses	121,956	135,387
Property and equipment, net	3,420,793	4,017,364
Other Assets	40,474	30,287
Total assets	\$ <u>10,943,539</u>	\$ <u>7,941,348</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current portion of notes payable	\$ 59,812	\$ 102,511
Current portion of mortgages payable	43,415	31,331
Current portion of capital lease obligations	173,952	256,735
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	321,229	171,280
Accrued salaries and wages	664,611	900,198
Other current liabilities	115,203	107,016
Refundable advance	2,000,000	1,568,795
Notes payable, net of current portion	518,869	586,134
Mortgages payable, net of current portion	965,058	1,011,487
Capital lease obligations, net of current portion	244,723	418,675
Total liabilities	\$ <u>5,106,872</u>	\$ <u>5,154,162</u>
Net assets	<u>5,836,667</u>	<u>2,787,186</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ <u>10,943,539</u>	\$ <u>7,941,348</u>
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES		
Revenues, Gains and Other Support		
Contract revenue	\$ 11,662,596	\$ 14,592,815
Client service fees	30,644	27,649
Contributions and fundraising	4,692,389	663,558
Gain on sale of property and equipment	5,400	5,000
Other income	25,132	26,962
Total revenues, gains and other supp	\$ <u>16,416,161</u>	\$ <u>15,315,984</u>
Expenses		
Program services	\$ 11,796,727	\$ 14,140,966
Management and general	1,561,095	1,537,003
Supporting services	118,795	149,874
Total expenses	\$ <u>13,476,617</u>	\$ <u>15,827,843</u>
Change in net assets	2,939,544	-511,859
Merger	109,937	27,567
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ <u>2,787,186</u>	\$ <u>3,271,478</u>
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ <u>5,836,667</u>	\$ <u>2,787,186</u>



**Community Connections has locations across
Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod.**

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