



ANNUAL REPORT

2021



WCI'S mission is to empower and support Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism and acquired brain injury to achieve rich and meaningful lives at home, at work and in their communities.

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Message From The Chief Executive Officer



HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHALLENGED WCI

This year has been another one of change and challenges, again nothing that we have ever dealt with before. The Coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19, which began in mid-March, 2020, turned everyone's world, the world of our staff and those that we support, upside down. The same is true for FY'21 and currently.

WCI began the pandemic closing its Employment & Day programs on March 17, 2020. Many of the people that we supported in our Day programs lived in our Residential homes. Therefore, they were forced to live at home 24 hours/day, 7 days a week to be safe.

Our goal was to keep people safe and healthy to the best of our ability. We then opened our Employment & Day programs in FY'21 in mid-August, 2020, no new cases evolved during the summer months. We developed policies and procedures regarding COVID-19 in the Day programs similar to our residential homes. Staff and Individuals were required to wear masks, use PPE, 6 - foot distance as much as possible, clean and disinfect high touch items, before and after use of any space, and; most importantly, wash our hands frequently, not to touch our face and to use Purell as much as possible.

We used a Screening Checklist with a QR Code at our Main Office, all of our homes and the Employment & Day Programs, when they opened, to identify someone with a fever and other symptoms, anyone who may have traveled outside the country or state in order to ensure that we were all safe and healthy to be around other people. If someone had symptoms and was sick, they needed to stay home and not go to work for a quarantine period or could go to work if they received a negative COVID test. We used isolation rooms, if one of the Individuals tested positive at home or at the Day Program until they could return home. As we opened our doors, we made sure the supply and use of additional PPE, KN95 masks, gowns, gloves, disinfecting supplies, etc. were available, not only in the homes, but also our Employment & Day Programs. We had a locked closet at our Main Office with PPE so we had a supply on hand for everyone.

Day Program Opening



to 60% and now have reached about 75% occupancy.

Prior to opening the Day Programs in August, 2020, we developed new activities while everyone was remaining at home. Our Day program Supervisors and Art Coordinator created various crafts and art activities, classes and other options for all of the Individuals in the homes. Technology allowed people to have remote connections with their Day Programs, family and friends. These activities continued when everyone was back to their Day Programs as well and Day Program staff worked remotely with those still remaining at home.

When the Day Programs opened, everyone was so excited to see each other. Activities resumed, but new activities were necessary, ASL classes, Yoga and Clinical Check Ins were among a few of them. Not all of the volunteer activities and Group Employment jobs were available. New employment opportunities were slow to open, but eventually did during the spring of FY' 21. Home Depot is a strong partner as well as Meals on Wheels, Cradles to Crayons and Revolve, a retail store in Belmont. We began with about a 30% occupancy rate when we opened, then went



Message From The Chief Executive Officer cont.

Cases of COVID 19 – 2021

In the summers of 2020 & 2021, cases were basically non-existent. September and especially October and November of 2020, WCI saw a rise in the number of cases and homes affected by the virus and the same occurred in 2021. There were times that we had to close the Day Program due to positive cases in 2020 for a 2-week period and again in 2021, for 2 days.

In 2021, WCI had 35 COVID cases, 9 Individuals and 26 staff in 16 homes and both Day Programs (Rumford Ave and Common St) versus 39 cases of 16 Individuals and 23 Staff in 2020. However, unfortunately, in 2021, we had 1 death from the virus which was less than the 4 deaths (3 Individuals and 1 staff) in 2020. Although we made it successfully through both summers without positive cases, COVID-19 came back in the fall and winter of both 2020 and 2021.

This was extremely sad during both years for all staff and the individuals who knew those who passed away during the pandemic. They were such a special part of the WCI family.

Dedicated DSPs & DSP Recognition Week in September 2021

We had extremely dedicated, hard-working, committed direct support staff who did unprecedented tasks and worked unimaginable hours during close to two years of the pandemic. Initially, the state came through with incentive bonuses in FY'20 and in FY'21 provided a rate increase in Residential homes which allowed us to raise staff salaries. WCI also kept the Incentive Bonus going in homes that had Individuals with positive cases in FY'21 as well.

Once again, we celebrated DSP Recognition Week at WCI in September, 2021, but in a different way, due to the pandemic. Every year, our CEO requests the Governor, Charlie Baker, and our two Senators in Congress, Markey and Warren, to proclaim the 2nd week of September, DSP Recognition Week, which they did once again this year. We were not able to hold barbeques and large gatherings at our homes and Employment and Day Programs this year, but instead, the Executive Leadership Team decided to distribute \$300 American Express gift cards and a large LL Bean Gift Bag with a WCI Logo on it, including goodies in them during a Drive By Tent DSP Recognition Event in the Hobbs Brook parking lot of our Main Office. We wrote thoughtful notes to all of our staff letting them know we appreciated all of their hard work and commitment to the Individuals that they support, especially during the pandemic.



WORKFORCE CRISIS

In 2021, WCI along with other human service providers became overwhelmed with a shortage of Direct Support Staff, Nurses and Clinical staff. From 2020 through 2021, we lost staff due to a shrinkage in the workforce. It was difficult to compete with other large stores and other large businesses. We began competing with Amazon, Costco, Dunkin Donuts, restaurants, and other major stores. We are working on a plan to attract and retain our Direct Support Workforce and provide other benefits for our staff. WCI does have a strong Referral Bonus for staff who assist in recruiting other staff. WCI currently has an average vacancy rate of 24%; however, Deaf Supports is the highest at 40%. Prior to the pandemic, we had a 23.2% Vacancy Rate. In 2020, it was 22.9%. As a result, we can not bring back some of the individuals that we were supporting and take on new referrals in our Employment & Day programs. At the start of FY'22, we had a 58% vacancy rate in our 24 Hour ABI residential home, and were forced to hire outside agency relief. There are two Bills in the State Legislature sponsored by the Provider's Council that support increased wages and student loan repayment. We thank our Legislators for their support on these Bills.



Message From The Chief Executive Officer cont.

Regarding Nurses and Clinical Staff, WCI also has a shortage during the pandemic. We are currently down two Nurses and two Clinical Team members. It has been difficult to recruit and retain new Nurses and Clinical Team staff. We are working on this area and hope to be able to recruit into these positions as well.

Family Visitation

In the Summer of 2020, outdoor visitation began as long as we instituted a Screening process, implemented 6 - foot distancing and had everyone wear masks. This worked out well for many family members. Eventually, family members could take their loved ones home for a day or the weekend with conditions. Once the cases rose again in late September, October and then especially November, testing became extremely important. Before the individual left for a Thanksgiving visit, they had to be tested and have a negative test result in order to visit their family on the holiday. Then, the family needed to test the person, receiving a negative result, before they returned to their home. We strongly encouraged small family gatherings to prevent potential infection. Of course, the individuals could not have visitors or leave their home if the home was identified as COVID-19 positive. This was extremely difficult for family members and individuals, but it had to be enforced, unless a family member took the individual home for a 2 week quarantine and returned with a negative test.

In 2021, Visitation was relaxed somewhat. Family members could visit or take a family member home unless there were positive cases. If people were vaccinated, they didn't need to wear masks, except in common areas. Masks are not necessary outdoors unless the person is not vaccinated. All families were extremely understanding of these guidelines and standards that had to be established.

Testing and Vaccinations



In August and September, 2020, we began testing our staff given State guidelines on an every two-week basis. Then, it changed to ½ of our staff being tested every two weeks on a rotating basis as long as we were in a low transmission area (by County) under 5% in 100,000. All of this placed an undue burden on our Administrative, Nursing, Supervisors and Direct Support Staff. Testing changed in the fall of 2021 to having all of our staff in Group homes whether vaccinated or not tested every 7 days. Currently, WCI will continue to test our staff according to EOHHS state guidelines. This could change, but we are sticking to the state guidelines until the Federal guidelines officially change.

Vaccinations became available in late January, 2021 and WCI held several Vaccine Clinics, primarily Moderna and one Pfizer Clinic with our Pharmacy, PelMeds. We want to thank PelMeds for their partnership in this process. Currently, 100% of our Individuals and about 70% of our staff are vaccinated. WCI held a Booster and Flu Shot Clinical on November 19, 2021.

We want to thank all of our staff for enduring tremendous hardship and continuing to be committed to the Individuals that we support, as they could not continue on without you being there for them. We, as an organization, could not go on without you as well. So thank you for all that you have done

during this unprecedented time.



Message From The Chief Executive Officer cont.

PPP LOAN

WCI received a PPP Loan on May 6, 2020, initially available for an 8 - week time period, but was extended to October, 2020. WCI used these funds to assist us to keep staff on our payroll without laying anyone off. It paid for Salaries, Bonuses, Overtime, Benefits and other expenses. It allowed us to keep operating, providing us with cash flow to pay all of our bills without having to use our Line of Credit, which costs money. Given that our Day programs closed and Individuals were home 24 hours, 7 days a week, WCI could not stay afloat without this PPP Loan. Funding received by the state did not come to us quickly enough to cover all of the new FY'20 & 21 expenses. As of July, 2021, WCI received forgiveness for the PPP loan.

MEDICAID RELIEF FUND

WCI applied and received funds from the Federal CARES Act in August of FY'21. These funds assisted us in keeping our Day Program open and other programs that did not have enough funds. It allowed us to continue operating. WCI was attempting to cover all of the staffing and fixed costs required to run not only the Day program, but also other homes. In the Day Program, WCI typically has over 100 participants in its four programs, Social Skills/CBDS; Deaf Employment/Day Supports, Community Employment and Life Skills Day Habilitation Program. We went from 30% to about 60% by the end of FY'21. WCI had just over a \$100,000 deficit at the end of the fiscal year given we were able to supplement our budget with these added Federal programs.

CARF INTERNATIONAL

In May 2021, WCI underwent it's CARF Survey, which occurs every three years. It was slightly delayed as it was due in November 2020 during the height of the pandemic. CARF decided to conduct its survey remotely, which was done through Teams calls. It was extremely successful with only a handful of recommendations, primarily related to analyzing data, documenting drills at our new Main Office and documenting a Policy for Positive Behavioral Supports which has consistently been in effect.



OPENED A NEW ABI HOME IN MAYNARD

In mid-August, 2020, WCI opened a new beautiful, fully accessible home in Maynard in the Northeast Region of DDS for five (5) men with acquired brain injury. The home was developed with CIL who holds a capital lease with us, which we will own at the end of the lease term.

The home has two ramps to grade, five (5) fully accessible bedrooms (3 of which require bed evacuations), two (2) accessible bathrooms, a large great room, kitchen dining room, laundry and Nursing/Medication room on the 1st floor. It also has a staff office, training room, bathroom and an additional laundry on the 2nd floor. The 5 men with significant medical and psychiatric needs moved into their new home, with a staggered start, four (4) moved in during the 2nd week of August and one (1) moved in by the end of September. It was initially a challenge, but the men and staff settled in nicely. One of the men was asked how he felt about his new home and the staff that supported him. He said, "It's my dream home." The home went through its Pre-Survey in November with DDS Quality Enhancement and did very well.



Message From The Chief Executive Officer cont.

The men began getting used to their home. One man wanted to learn to play chess so the staff began teaching him and learning to play chess with him. When community activities opened up, some enjoyed going to car shows, having lunches outside, going on vacation to the Cape and many other activities.

NEW WCI MAIN OFFICE

In the fall of 2020, WCI was notified that its lease for its Main Office at 135 Beaver Street would not be renewed after 25 years. Hobbs Brook found us a site in their complex of office buildings, but changed plans and identified a new site at 610 Lincoln St, Suite 120, North Building, Waltham. Hobbs Brook provided us with a temporary, “swing space” at 265 Winter Street through mid-January 1, 2021, while they finished renovating the new space. Everyone was excited about finally moving into our final destination. Our space is lovely and everyone is excited and enjoying it, even though we are still partially remote and partially in person in the Main Office due to the pandemic.

BOARD NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE WORK, CHANGE IN BOARD OFFICERS

During FY’2021, WCI recruited a new Chair for the Board’s Nominations Committee, Courtney Buckley. She led the committee to begin working on materials to recruit new Board members, develop written Board Officer roles and job descriptions and to solicit a change in Board Officers. For 2022, WCI will be voting on four new Officers, Chair, Michael Sullivan; Vice Chair, Sara Goddard; Treasurer, Michael Carotanuto; and Clerk, Shannon Shea. Anyone interested in becoming a Board Member or joining a committee is welcome. We are seeking various types of talent, such as in Public Relations, Fundraising, an Attorney, Real Estate Broker, IT, Human Resources, Finance, etc.

WCI'S ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION

In 2021, WCI made an administrative decision to restructure its administration and promote Joe Donati from VP of Operations to Chief Operating Officer (COO), since he would be overseeing & supervising the Nursing & Clinical Departments, which had been overseen by the President & CEO, Nancy Silver Hargreaves. Joe had already taken on IT and Property Management several years ago. In July, he became responsible for the Nursing Team and recently began overseeing the Clinical Team. Please congratulate Joe on his new position!

In October 2021 we also promoted Sherri Shafman to Clinical Director following Paul Arrighi’s resignation at the end of August 2021. Please also congratulate Sherri on her new position as Clinical Director. See announcement on Page 12.

Nancy Silver Hargreaves, President & CEO



“Our Staff 2021”



As a human services agency, WCI is only as good as its employees and we have more than 300. Our workforce is uniquely diverse, coming from an assortment of home countries that include the United States, Nigeria, Uganda, Haiti, the United Kingdom, Cameroon, Liberia, Tanzania, the Ivory Coast, Moldova, Bangladesh and many more. In addition to English and American Sign Language (ASL), many of our employees are fluent in French, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Swahili.

WCI employees proudly make a difference in the lives of the people we support. We actively promote self-determination and self-advocacy. We support people through the many stages of their lives. We celebrate when there are successes, respond to crises, compassionately support people when ill, and memorialize those who have passed away. The Individuals we support are an integral part of our lives just as we are in their lives. For more information, contact Pam Laventure at plaventure@wci.org.

Professional Development



WCI also supports employees in their pursuit of professional development and encourages all employees to be life-long learners. WCI provides continuing education grants and tuition vouchers for many employees as they further their education. Other employees attend classes to develop and enhance their ASL skills. WCI has sponsored several employees in the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Direct Support Certificate program as well as the Provider Council's Human Services Management Certificate program. WCI continues to support its employees with a generous benefits package, on-the-job training (including the trademarked HOTSS/DOTSS system) and opportunities for internal promotion.

For more information, contact Pam Laventure, VP of Human Resources at plaventure@wci.org.

Committed To Our Individuals

We celebrate our diversity as a group of nearly 200 people with a wide range of individual skills, strengths and challenges. At WCI we are respected and valued for our uniqueness, ideas, dreams, and goals. WCI staff support us to live and work within the communities of our choice, Waltham, Belmont, Watertown, Newton and Maynard with independence and dignity.

WCI staff help us to achieve success by providing us with quality services, and seeking to improve accessibility, accountability, and coordination of these services among professionals, care-givers and across agencies. Staff support us to live as independently as possible on a daily basis. They listen to us, talk to us and read our behavior. They are our eyes and ears for some of us. They are our family, teacher and coaches. These supports range from day to day assistance with reading, cooking, and budgeting to hands-on daily personal care needs. We participate regularly in selecting our goals and evaluating our progress. Specialized services are here for our growth so we might become more skillful in communication, relationships and self-discipline.

Maintaining relationships with those people in our lives who are important to us is just another way WCI staff help us navigate through social systems: groups, organizations, community and society. They help us to cultivate new friendships and get involved in community activities. Many of us go on vacations together, attend adult education classes, sports activities, and participate in cultural events, spiritual services and a variety of other community events. Our lives reflect our preferences, values, desires, lifestyle and goals.

WE ARE WCI!

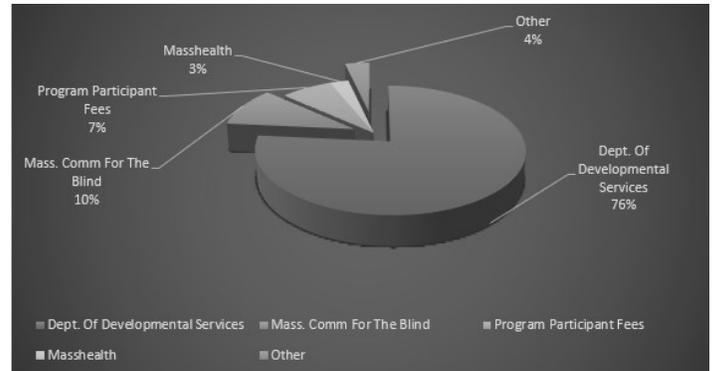


Financial Summary

Year Ending June 30th, 2021

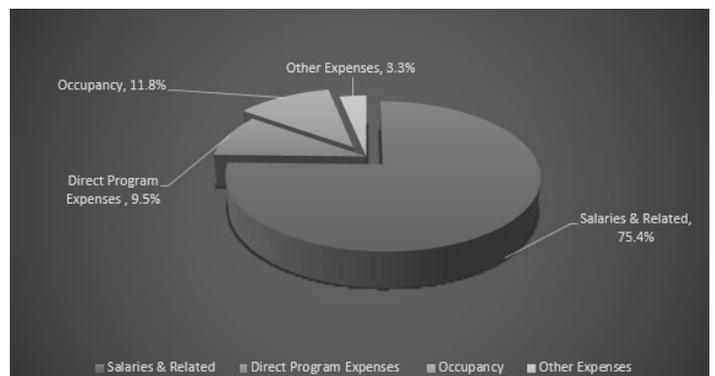
WCI ended FY'2021 with a deficit of \$107,918.42. Revenue grew by 9.1% from FY'2020 to FY'2021. This was primarily due to the revenue associated with the launch of the ABI home, Medicaid Relief Grant Income and the DDS and MCB increased rates revenue which were to cover the increased and new expenses due to the Covid-19 pandemic. FY'2022 revenue is expected to increase by 12.9% which will be due to the PPP loan acknowledgement as revenue and ARPA funds.

Revenue FY'2021—\$21,843,026 – Audited



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts continues to be the major funder of WCI's programs, which include; the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) \$16,708,109, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) \$2,219,987, Program Participant Fees \$1,518,739, Mass Health \$564,157 and all Other Income \$772,033.

Expenses FY'2021—\$21,950,944.42 - Audited



FY'21 Executive Leadership Team



Mike Richard

Interim CFO Consultant



Pam Laventure

Vice President of Human Resources



Nancy Silver Hargreaves

President & CEO



Joseph Donati

Chief Operations Officer



Anne Ndunda

Finance Director/Comptroller

Board of Directors

FY'2021



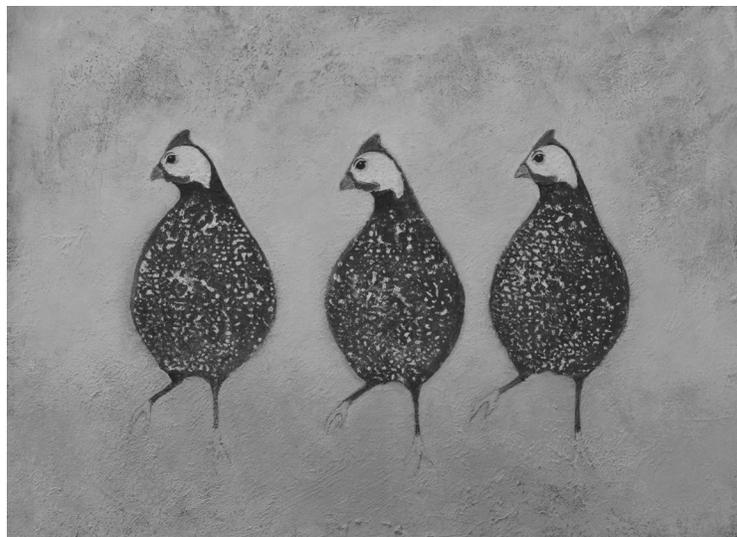
WCI's Board of Directors is an active group of eleven (11) Board Members. They meet about five (5) times a year and also now have five running Committees and Sub-Committees. Some committees are Ad-Hoc and meet for a period of time and may start up again, such as Strategic Direction, Human Resources, Mission in Action Grants, Governance and others. Currently, the Board has an Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, Property and Real Estate and Nominations Committee. We are seeking new members in the area of Finance, Real Estate, Technology, and Public Relations/Development. If you know of someone who would like to serve, please contact Nancy Silver Hargreaves, President & CEO at nshargreaves@wci.org, Courtney Buckley, Nominations Chair, or Ed Skou, Board Chair, at Edward.Skou@peoples.com. On behalf of the Executive Team, we wish to thank all of our Board Members for all of the hard work, effort and dedication that they give to WCI throughout the year.

Board Of Directors Roster

Edward Skou, Chairperson		Thomas Montanari, Vice Chair
Michael Sullivan, Treasurer	Sara Goddard, Clerk	Courtney Buckley
Michael Carotenuto	Kevin Fahey	Kenneth Marcou
Shannon Shea	Robert McMullen	Devorah Smith

Board Of Trustees Roster

Karen Osborn Shanley	Maureen Keegan	Sue Ann Poitras
Ruth Harutunian	Rhonda LeSanto	



In Memoriam



Richard LeBrun
5/10/1938 - 9/28/2021

Richard passed away quietly in September of 2021. He had been a part of WCI for many years, having lived at a number of different locations. His final home was at Clark Lane 2 where he was very much loved by his housemates and staff. Richard was known for his feistiness and friendliness. He loved to talk with staff about their cars, animals and where they lived. He was a very smart dresser and loved the color red. Richard was a huge part of Clark Lane 2 and he is dearly missed.

John joined WCI's new ABI home in Maynard in August 2020. John was a young man who had tragically had a couple of motor vehicle accidents which left him with a significant brain injury. John was excited to have had the opportunity to move from a long-term care facility into the community. The transition happened during the throes of COVID-19 which caused many complications in getting to know John prior to the move, but once he did make the move he was easy to get to know and love. John loved loud, heavy metal and rock and roll music. He had a great sense of humor and enjoyed a good laugh. John passed away suddenly in January 2021 due to complications with his breathing. He is missed by his housemates and staff.



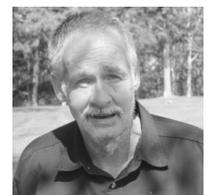
John Morine
8/27/1988 - 1/25/2021



Robert Friedlich
7/13/1959 - 1/22/2021

Robert (Rob, Robbie) Friedlich was with WCI for many, many years. He lived with his cohorts Tom and Mike for over a decade, first at Charles Street and then at Phillips Circle. He played basketball and volley ball and even tried cycling with Belmont SPORTS. He greatly enjoyed playing the team sports and he made many friends. Rob was devoted to his brother Andy and his family and visited with them whenever he could. Rob was a faithful companion to Shannon for many years. He worked many different jobs while attending the WCI Community Employment - Common Street Program. Rob was an avid collector of MBTA memorabilia. He knew many of the conductors and railmen at the MBTA and liked to visit with them frequently. He kept us all up to date on what was going on with any MBTA project. Perhaps, what we will remember best and miss most is that Rob loved the practical joke. He loved seeing the look on someone's face when he got them with the untied shoelace or undone zipper. It's hard to walk out of a bathroom and not look to see if there is toilet paper stuck to your shoe. His smile and laugh was contagious. He left us way too soon. We truly miss him.

Robert (Bob) Stearns is well known in the WCI community and the community of Waltham in general. Bob had friends everywhere. He lived the last couple of years of his life at Hardy Pond Road. Bob was an avid Boston sports fan. There was no part of Boston sports that he didn't like - he loved going to the games, watching games on TV and just talking about the games. He knew the histories and he knew the current players and shared his knowledge with anyone who was interested. Bob was also very invested in politics on all levels. He was very knowledgeable and kept up to date. He could certainly hold his own in any discussion. Bob loved his family and greatly enjoyed visits with them. Bob was a great self-advocate and knew what he wanted and what his rights were. He was very vocal when he felt people were not treated as he felt they should be. He spoke for others as well as himself. Bob was particular about choosing his friends, but once he did he was faithful. He enjoyed outings with preferred people and would talk about the little things that made those times together special. He made it special for his friends as well. Bob struggled at the end and his life was not what he would have chosen. He passed from us peacefully in the company of friends and family.



Bob Stearns
11/14/1946 - 6/8/2021

2021 Awards



Legislator Of The Year: State Senator Jamie Eldridge



State Senator Jamie Eldridge has served the Middlesex and Worcester district since January 2009. Sen. Eldridge currently serves as Senate Chair for the Joint Committee on Financial Services, which is responsible for health insurance legislation. For the current legislative session, Senator Eldridge is a lead sponsor of An Act Providing Equal Access to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals and An Act Improving Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. He is co-sponsoring over a dozen bills to specifically benefit people with developmental disabilities and their families. Senator Eldridge was a prime supporter of the Mental Health Parity bill and the Children's Mental Health bill, to ensure that Massachusetts residents have equal access to mental health services. Eldridge was also lead sponsor on An Act Relative to Bullying, which included provisions for children with special needs and passed unanimously in the Senate.

Senator Eldridge has served in the senate (Middlesex and Worcester district) since January 2009. He is Senate Chair for the Joint Committee on Financial Services. Senator Eldridge's advocacy on a variety of special education, mental health, and health care bills was especially noted in his recognition. Eldridge was also lead sponsor on An Act Relative to Bullying, which included provisions for children with special needs. The bill passed unanimously in the Senate. Thank you Senator Eldridge for all of your work in the Senate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Employer Of the Year: Revolve Consignment Boutiques, Belmont

It is our pleasure to recognize Revolve Consignment Boutiques in Belmont as WCI's 2021 Employer of the Year. Revolve is a luxury clothing consignment store with a commitment to sustainable and conscious consumerism and to connecting to their community. In December of 2020, Revolve hired a young woman receiving Employment Supports from WCI, whose dream was to work in fashion and retail industry, to work processing their consignments. Over the past year, Revolve has created a positive and supportive environment that has allowed this Individual to truly thrive in her work place. She has become a critical part of the team with many responsibilities including: processing consignments, cleaning the store and helping create Facebook Live marketing videos. For creating such a positive work environment for an Individual supported by WCI's Community Employment Program, we recognize Revolve Consignment Boutiques as WCI's 2021 Employer of the Year!

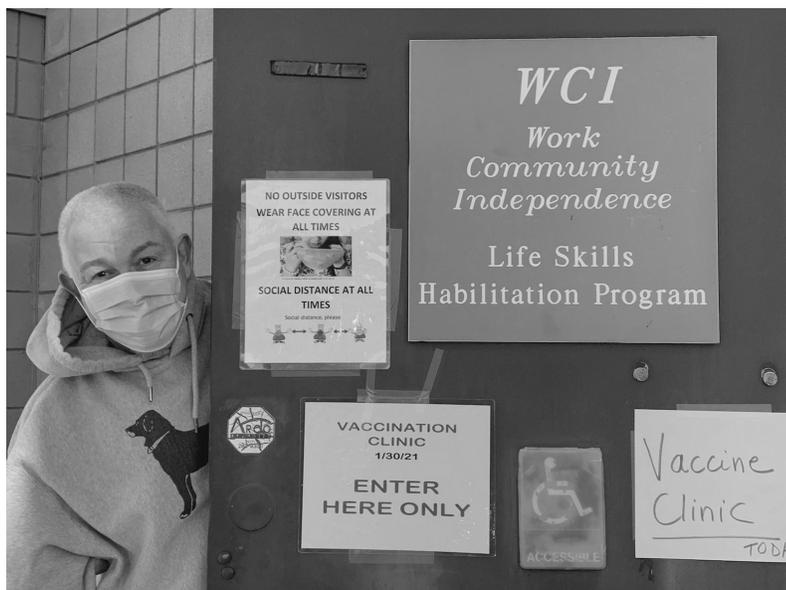
Volunteer Organization of the Year: Waltham Senior Services - Meals on Wheels

The partnership with the Waltham Senior Services Organization has been mutually beneficial. The Meals on Wheels program offers volunteer opportunities to deliver meals to the elderly in the Waltham Community, thus giving purpose and human connections to the Individuals who attend WCI's Employment and Day Supports Division. This partnership has been going strong for over 6 years and in the past year, where many employment and volunteer sites closed, it was even more meaningful. Individuals love to give back to their community and this year participants in each of the four programs delivered meals every week. Seeing the seniors and knowing that they are providing them with warm meals and a smile makes each visit special. While the transitions were slow, and followed all COVID-19 Guidelines, the opportunity to get out and give back made the connection very valuable during this past year. Thank you Waltham Senior Services!

Benefactor of the Year: Robert Jingoian, The Masons -Waltham Triad Lodge

The Waltham Masons Triad Lodge donated to WCI \$6000 to provide technology and equipment to facilitate communication between our Individuals, staff, family, friends and their Day Programs. WCI wants to thank Robert Jingoian of the Masons for making this donation possible during the pandemic when interactions were so important and difficult to make happen. To start, WCI purchased 30 large screen Smart Televisions to enhance the visual screen that allowed people to view people and activities in a much better way than on a small iPhone or computer screen. We have some of the money left over and will continue to enhance our technology to facilitate communication in additional ways.

Welcome Chief Operations Officer Joseph Donati!



It is my pleasure to announce that as of December 1st, 2021, Joseph Donati is now the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Work, Community, Independence, Inc. in Waltham. Joe has worked for WCI for over 20 years. He has been the VP of Operations since 2012 and is now the COO. He oversees all of Operations which includes five (5) Divisions (24 Hour Supports including ABI; Individual Supports; Deaf Residential Supports; Social Supports & Shared Living; and Employment and Day Supports). He also oversees Property Management; the IT Department and Social Media; and the Nursing Department. As of December 1st, Joe will also oversee the Clinical Department.

Prior to becoming the VPO, Joe worked in our Clinical Department and was the Division Head of Deaf Supports for many years. He holds a Master's degree from Suffolk University and a Bachelor's degree from Salem State University. He also attended classes at Northeastern University to gain knowledge and expertise in American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Culture, while working at WCI and immersing himself in the language while Division Head of Deaf Supports.

Please welcome and congratulate Joe in his new role at WCI!

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Congratulations Clinical Director Sherri Shafman!

I'm excited to announce that Sherri Shafman has been promoted as the Clinical Director effective 10/03/2021. Sherri joined WCI in March of this year as a Behavior Analyst. She earned her Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology from the University of Hartford and her Bachelors of Arts in Sociology and Psychology from Smith College. She passed her BCBA exam on October 26th. Sherri has had various experiences working with both children and adults with disabilities. Sherri's previous experiences include working as Behavioral Consultant for the May Institute for over 7 years, Clinical Director for the Department of Youth Services at the Connelly Transitional Unit for over 6 years plus much more. She has experience teaching social skills and has been trained in Cognitive-Behavior Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, and Trauma Informed Care. As part of the team, Sherri enjoys participating in activities at the group homes and the day programs. While attending virtual meetings, her pug, Louie, can often be heard in the background snoring.

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming Sherri Shafman to her new role!



24 Hour Residential Supports



WCI's 24 Hour Supports consists of seven (7) homes in Waltham and Belmont and supports 25 Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism and Acquired Brain Injury. There are varying levels of support needed from staff at each home to enable the Individuals to complete their Activities of Daily Living. Each home assists those who live there to be as active and involved in all aspects of their life as possible. This can include personal care, household responsibilities, medical care and medication administration, leisure activities and community involvement.

This past year and a half with COVID-19, it has presented many new challenges as well as opportunities. Many of the Individuals gradually returned to their Day Programs during the summer and fall of 2020. Also, we discovered that being able to remain at home was more beneficial for some. The more relaxed pace and less need to be up and ready early in the morning proved to be an advantage for some. Many of the Individuals acquired new skills in technology, communicating with family, friends and their Day programs through zoom and FaceTime. Quite a few Individuals were then able to transfer some of their new skills into a whole new array of technology options, such as playing games, watching videos and listening to music.

COVID-19 and staffing shortages continued to be out front in our concerns this past year. Staff and the Individuals continued to follow the CDC guidelines to help stop the spread of the disease. Another major accomplishment was our partnership with PelMeds to have all our Individuals and many of our staff vaccinated in the spring and included their 3rd Booster and Flu shot this fall.

As our Individuals began to reenter the community they once again participated in Belmont Sports events, went to Red Sox baseball games and returned to their favorite restaurants. The Individuals began to spend time with their families and friends and return to their pre-COVID activities.

ABI Supports

August 2021 was our first full year of supporting Individuals at Summer Street in Maynard in our first Acquired Brain Injury home. We began the year with the sad loss of John Morine in January due to breathing complications. We remained at four men until Antonio Rodergues joined them in August, 2021. The house is vibrant and always has some activity happening. Virginia Green, Director of Supports, has been tackling the dual role of Director and Support Coordinator for almost the entire year as we search for a qualified candidate to take over the daily operations of the house. On a daily basis there are numerous therapies and VNA visits at the house, as well as visits to PCPs and specialists in the community. Hiring staff is the highest priority as we use Agency Relief Staff.

The men had active, meaningful lives, jobs and families prior to their brain injury and want to be able to continue to pursue their hobbies and dreams albeit in a new supported way. One of the men was a musician and wants to be able to still play his guitar and attend live music. This gentleman wanted to obtain his Driver's License and the staff were supportive and assisted with all the necessary steps to apply. Unfortunately, the RMV assessed that his eye sight was not adequate for driving. Another gentleman had an amazingly rich life of living and being educated in a number of countries. He is continuing his passions for archery, cycling, target shooting and various other adaptive opportunities. His family is committed to ensuring that he has the ability to attend a large number of community and cultural events. He was able to vacation on Cape Cod this fall with the support of WCI staff. He sat for hours enthralled with the seashore. He is able to visit monthly with his mother who is in a nursing home in Quincy and will soon be 100 years old.

Summer Street is the house where we thoroughly enjoy every holiday. We started by ringing in 2021 and then celebrated the Chinese New Year, St Patrick's Day, summer cookouts, Halloween treats and plans are in progress to end the year with holiday celebrations. Virginia always makes sure there is plenty of food, fun and music!



Individual Supports

Individual Supports consists of 9 Individuals living in their own apartments in Waltham and Watertown and one Individual receiving In-Home Supports while living with his mother in Waltham. Everyone receives less than 24 hour supports, having many skills necessary to live alone and travel independently in the community. The areas in which many of the Individuals receive support are cooking, shopping, medical appointments, medication management, money management, processing of mail and maintaining social relationships.



WCI's Individual Supports Division has been through many adjustments during 2021. Several of the Individuals returned to work at competitive jobs. Other Individuals were still wary of COVID-19 and chose to not be as active in their Day programs and community activities, which they used to avidly participate. All of the Individuals received COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters and there were no active cases of COVID-19 in the Division. There were many challenges with maintaining routine medical and psychiatric care as almost all healthcare visits were virtual. Staff would assist the Individuals with the visits and being able to access their healthcare portals was convenient. We saw significant growth with the Individuals accessing and becoming comfortable using I-pads and other devices to maintain communication with family, friends and participate in zoom meetings for their Day programs.

Unfortunately, the pandemic also helped staff identify two Individuals that were not thriving, being isolated with less staff and

had lost some of their skills which they needed to live safely in an independent situation. It became apparent that more support was necessary and both of those Individuals were able to move into 24 Hour Residential Supports. Both have maintained their friendships with those still in Individual Supports and love to chat over a cup of Dunkin Donuts.

The reduction in the number of Individuals in the Division led to the elimination of one of the Support Coordinator positions. It continues to be a struggle to find staff to fill all of the vacant positions which directly correlates to less time to support each Individual. It has forced us to be extremely flexible to ensure everyone's health and safety needs are met.

Some of the Individuals were able to begin traveling and taking day trips once COVID-19 restrictions loosened. Several went with Holly Ellis, Support Coordinator, on a wonderful day trip to Rockport. One Individual went on a sister trip with her three sisters whom live in different parts of the country.

Shared Living

Shared Living continues to be a successful option for supports at WCI. We currently provide Shared Living Supports for four (4) Individuals. We are ready to expand. There are three new Individuals currently exploring what this type of living situation could be like for them. It takes time, as WCI's philosophy is that the right match between the Individual and the Shared Living Provider is what determines the success of the living situation. It takes time and energy on everyone's part to make sure the whole person is well represented and considered. We want to be sure of what each person wants and needs, and that potential providers are aware of this as well. We currently have four (4) new providers who have met all qualifications to enter into a Shared Living arrangement. Hopefully, placements will start to happen after the holidays.

We continue to be active in the ADPP Shared Living statewide committee to further advance Shared Living and what it can provide. It is the hope that as people – including Individuals, families, guardians and DDS – become more familiar with Shared Living, it will become an option more widely explored.

Our Programs



Social Residential Supports

Greetings from the Social Supports Division here at WCI. We hope you are all well and taking good care of yourselves and one another. We are doing the same, as we have all become much better at all sorts of personal safety, like frequent handwashing, wearing masks when appropriate, and trying to keep our distance apart (although that one is really hard!).

We continue to live and work in 10 homes where 24 Hour Supports are provided and one (1) home where there is slightly less than 24 Hour Supports. We continue to work hard and play hard, although it has indeed been a bit different than in past years. Some of us have not had opportunities to return to our Community Based Day Programs. We remain at our home during the day with our dedicated staff.

While it is different, we have learned to enjoy various different activities than we may have done in the past. We enjoy taking walks during the day and exploring our neighborhoods. We have met different people during our travels as people's schedule continue to change. We have started working on some various hobbies, with making arts and crafts at the top of our lists. We also enjoy things like karaoke, making TikTok videos (being careful not to expose too much information about ourselves), having dance parties, doing Zumba, and learning to bake tasty treats.

Many of us have gotten pretty good with electronic devices and use our iPads on a daily basis to keep up with remote activities from the Employment & Day programs, visit with family and friends, and just explore what is going on in the world around us. We have also gotten pretty good at budgeting our money, and many of us have completely redone our bedrooms. It was fun shopping – sometimes on the computer with staff and sometimes at the stores when possible and safe. Either way, the results have been great. We were excited as the community opened up and there were more opportunities to go out and have fun. We really missed things like dining out, shopping and visiting our friends and family. It is good to be participating in all of this again, while we remember to do it safely.

And our staff have been amazing. They come back day after day, and do a great job – even when we have been sick or tired of staying in, or cranky. They have faced all of the same challenges we have with the pandemic, and yet manage to keep a positive attitude. We are thankful they choose to stay with WCI!

During the pandemic we were saddened to say goodbye to 3 of our Social Supports family. We miss Juanita, Rob and Bob daily. Our spirits were lifted as we have welcomed three others to join us in our journey forward and we look forward to future years with Jason, Shaq and Barbara.

We are greatly looking forward to this chapter of our lives being finished. We really miss the parties, gatherings and dances. We miss just all being together as one. While everyone has truly tried to make this time as positive as possible, there is just no substitute for a full-fledged Social Supports gathering.



Employment/Day Supports



Although the past year with the pandemic was nothing that we could have expected or planned, it brought out the best in our Team at the Employment and Day Division. It was a collaborative effort across all four programs to ensure that sites were ready to reopen, that staff and Individuals felt safe, and that we were able to provide creative programming to those who were able to participate. Individuals who began to attend our programs in person were able to engage in both virtual and hands on activities. The virtual activities offered by our staff included Employment Groups, Exercise Groups, Drumming classes, ASL groups, Clinical Chats, as well as News and Views, to name a few. For those Individuals who were able to return on site, programming also included a mix of volunteer and paid jobs, along with Art groups, exercise challenges, and holiday celebrations.

Some of the highlights of celebrations included Halloween Pumpkin Decorating Contest, Tree Trimming Contest with recycled materials, Virtual Art Show, and Day Program Olympics. Once again, the Deaf Employment and Day program partnered with Northeastern University and hosted a virtual learning experience for their students, exposing them to atypical ASL users and styles. These activities provided new experiences, and challenged the staff's and Individuals' creative sides.

In addition to therapeutic and recreational activities, the programs continued to offer paid and volunteer work through partnerships with Boston College, Meals on Wheels, and Cradles to Crayons. Our Maintenance Department supported our Individuals in seasonal jobs such as yardwork and salt and sand delivery. All three programs were able to secure and support Individuals in new jobs during the pandemic. These new jobs included: Part Time Receptionist jobs at the new WCI office, two

Home Depot Enclaves that hired a total of 5 Individuals, and a new job for an Individual in the fashion industry at Revolve, Belmont.

Some great employment milestones were reached by the Individuals in the past year. Murphy B. and Jacob Z. celebrated two year anniversaries at their respective jobs at Home Depot. Frank B. has reached his five year anniversary at Market Basket, and Aditya K. has also worked for over five years as our WCI Receptionist. Congratulations to all of them!

All of these great accomplishments would not be realized without the dedication of our Direct Support Professionals, our Support Coordinators, our Nurse, and our Directors. They stepped up to each challenge that the past year brought with enthusiasm and dedication to their work. Thank you!



Our Programs

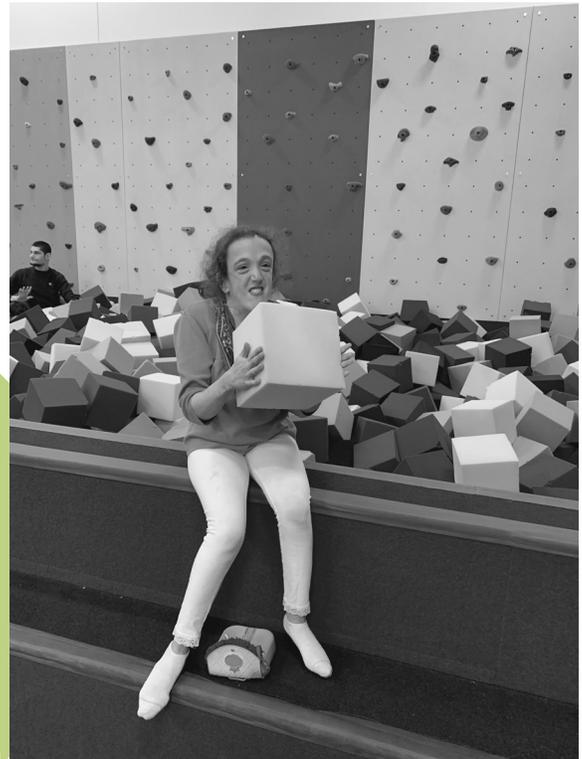


Deaf Residential and Individual Supports

WCI's Deaf Residential and Individual Supports is overseen by both Residential Division Heads, Paula Dunn Meadows and Sally Roach. There is currently one Director of Supports, Jessica Rich. Bernadette Cewulka resigned this past fall after having made significant contributions to Deaf Supports. We also continue to have difficulty filling our Support Coordinator position at Huntington Road. Staffing in general is a major struggle for Deaf Supports. Having the requirement of being fluid in American Sign Language (ASL) greatly reduces our prospects for staff. With that being said, WCI continues to provide high quality supports to our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals. WCI continues to offer opportunities for hearing staff to learn and improve their ASL skills. There is currently an ASL class being offered in Social Supports and we anticipate to continue to offer this opportunity. There also was a Deaf Culture training which occurred at the WCI Main Office to provide training for everyone with regard to work with Deaf staff and Individuals.

There are 49 Individuals living in Deaf Residential Supports, 41 that live in our twelve (12), 24 Hour homes in Waltham, Watertown and Belmont and 8 that live in their own condominiums and apartments with less than 24 Hour Supports in Waltham and Watertown. There is a broad range of supports provided to the Individuals. Some need tal care and some need weekly check-ins for mail reading and money management. Staff provide support to increase communication through ASL, cooking and shopping, ADL skill building, community participation and to increase their leisure skills.

2021 has seen a progression of the Individuals being able to return to work, Day programs and being a part of the community once again. All of the Individuals received two COVID-19 vaccines earlier in the year and a COVID-19 Booster and Flu Shot, once it was available in November, 2021. We continue to follow strict EOHSS & CDC guidelines to help minimize exposure to the virus. Staff wear masks when working at the homes. Weekly COVID testing is mandatory as well as taking of daily temperature and completing a Health Screening Questionnaire.



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Many of the Individuals have returned to their Employment & Day programs over the past six months. Some of the Individuals have not returned to their previous Day program which has had mixed results. While some of the Individuals are anxious to return to social connections and routines, others have benefited from the less structured routine of being in their home during the day. Actually, some of the homes, such as Hatherly Rd, have seemed to benefit from the connections which the Individuals and staff made even richer during the time they spent together at home. In addition, Individuals and staff have increased their technology skills, using iPads, iPhones and enlarged screen smart TVs.

The Individuals began to return to family visits and trips. Many of the holidays were able to be joyfully spent together after the restrictions from the previous year. Being active in the community was welcomed by all. Livingstone Lane took all four Individuals on a week long vacation in the White Mountains of New Hampshire at an accessible hotel, and needless to say, they all had a wonderful trip!

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July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021



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