



New England Village
Connecting People, Purpose & Passion

Scoops

The Newsletter of New England Village, Inc. Spring 2024

PLAY BALL!

Residents and Staff Get to Experience the Trip of a Lifetime

By Ann Luongo

In March, our good friend Paul Sullivan, V.P. of Sullivan Tire & Auto Service, generously arranged for three individuals and four staff to take a trip to Ft. Myers to see the Boston Red Sox take on the New York Yankees in a pre-season game at JetBlue Park on St. Patrick's Day. But, who would go?

The very first things considered when identifying who might be a good match for this particular trip were who liked baseball, who wanted to go, and who could manage the travel and activities. Once we knew who the individuals served would be, we needed to match them with support staff who were MAP (Medication Administration Program) certified and with whom they had a good relationship.

After much discussion and consideration, it was decided that NEV residents Mary



Josh and Mary sit with Wally



Pictured from left to right: Kristin Carlander, Glenn Carey, Russell Muise, Josh Hawes, Monica West (front), Mary Bastian, and Paul Sullivan.

Bastian, Josh Hawes, and Glenn Carey, along with Program Manager Monica West, Assistant Residential Director Kristin Carlander, Assistant Manager of In-Home Services Russell Muise, and Chief Development & Communications Officer Dolores Rezendes would all go on this adventure together.

Our individuals and staff were picked up at the Sheingold building in a roomy and comfortable "party bus," and shuttled to Logan Airport in style. Two of the three individuals had flown before but, for one, it was a new experience.

It was Mary's first time on a plane, and it was an excellent experience she'll never forget. "It was good," she said. "Not scary at all. The airport was busy and I liked the movie." She added that she definitely preferred taking off to landing.

Monica added that Mary's sister had helped prepare her for the flight by watching videos together of planes taking off and landing, and talked about what

it's like to fly. "Her sister even took her to Castle Island (near the airport) one day so they could watch the planes take off and land but, on that day, they didn't see any!"

(cont. on page 10)

INSIDE

From the Office of the CEO	p.2
The Living Center	p.3
Community Based Day Services	p.4
Day Habilitation	p.4-6
Enrichment & Community Services	p.7-8
Residential Services	p.9
In Memoriam	p.12-13
Organizational News ...	p.14-17
Staff Updates	p.18-19

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CEO



As we welcome the energetic spirit of spring, it's a beautiful time at New England Village (NEV). Nature's blossoming mirrors the emergence of new opportunities for all those we support and our organization.

This spring marks a significant milestone for us as it's the first time in four years that we are not under specific new guidance related to COVID-19. On March 1st, the CDC released updated recommendations, ushering in a unified approach to addressing respiratory virus risks. While we remain committed to health and safety measures, the absence

of COVID-specific operational adjustments is a breath of fresh air.

It is so exciting to see this season bring a flurry of activities, reflecting the renewed energy within our community. Some of these activities are highlighted in this Scoops issue, such as the memorable trip supported by Paul Sullivan, Vice President of Sullivan Tire, to Fort Myers, Florida, where individuals had an unforgettable experience.

In our Fall 2023 Scoops edition, we shared our relocation of the day habilitation program from the Sollar Wellness Center to the Efron Center for Enrichment in Kingston and our hopes that with more depth in staffing under one roof, we would be able to increase our day habilitation members' attendance to pre-COVID levels. We've made progress, with over 70% of our members now back to pre-COVID attendance levels. Our efforts to increase this number continue as we strive to recruit more qualified staff to further support increased attendance. You can read more about some of our efforts

specific to recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce in this newsletter.

Additionally, advocacy remains a crucial focus this spring as the state budget progresses toward approval for the next fiscal year. This year, we have been strongly advocating for the following:

- Maintain the Governor's proposed funding for Chapter 257 services (Line-Item 1599-6903). The Chapter 257 line-item funds critical rate adjustments mandated by Chapter 257, including adjustments for adult long-term residential services at a level sufficient to attract and retain qualified personnel. We strongly believe in prioritizing funds to adopt fair and competitive salary benchmarks in human service employment.
- Maintain all line items in the Governor's budget for service provision to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including protecting MassHealth funding for Day habilitation (Line-Item 4000-0601).

New England Village, Inc.

664 School St., Pembroke,
MA 02359
781-293-5461
info@newenglandvillage.org
www.newenglandvillage.org
fax: 781-294-8385

Board of Directors:

Cindy Crimmins
Diane Dufault, *Secretary/Clerk*
Charline Gay
Steven Kaitz
Carolyn Langer
Susan McCowan
Sabrina Nicholson, *Chair*
Joe Olivere

William Ray
Kaitlyn Sapp
Scott Semel
Brian Shannahan
Barry Sheingold
Charles Volpetti
Femi Wasserman
Heather Wilson, *Treasurer*

Scoops is published twice a year.

Written by Ann Luongo, edited by Dolores Rezendes.

Community Based Day Services

Staying Active at The Living Center

By Lan Baker

As an older adult, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can prevent or delay many of the health problems that seem to come with age. It also helps your muscles grow stronger so you can keep your day-to-day activities without becoming dependent on others.

Fitness, after all, is synonymous with health. This is the reason why TLC participants continue to stay active. Folks at TLC understand that better fitness also promotes more functionality and mobility throughout one's lifespan.

Many members at TLC said that being active can help their day-to-day functioning, from better mood to sharper focus to better sleep. And they love to exercise!

That said, it's also important to know that there are many different ways to be fit. In the following photos, folks are using lit-up batons during chair exercise, a parachute for games, dancing exercises, and hiking on trails.

With that all being said, TLC has a couple of big birthday milestones coming up this year. In May, Reynolds will be 90, and Seth will be 70 in July.



Our recent collaboration with other providers (Road to Responsibility, BAMSI, and the Arc of Plymouth and Upper Cape Cod) to host the South of Boston Caring Force Rally underscores our commitment to advocating for fair treatment and resources for our sector. The Caring Force is a grassroots advocacy initiative of the Provider's Council. Their mission is to empower those who care about the human services sector to advance an agenda that creates an environment in Massachusetts that protects our most vulnerable neighbors and creates a stronger economy with pay, recognition, and respect. At this event, over 200 Caring Force members rallied to speak about the workforce challenges and human service budget needs. NEV will continue to collaborate and partner whenever possible to advance our advocacy.

Lastly, as we embrace this season with outdoor fun, we are very excited about the focus of our Spring Appeal. "Play It Forward: Recreation Fundraiser," aims to enhance outdoor spaces for reflection and rejuvenation. Your support enables us to create more opportunities for those we serve to enjoy the beauty of nature and the outdoors. We deeply appreciate the ongoing support and generosity of our community. Together, let's spring forward into a season filled with growth, advocacy, and meaningful connections.

PROGRAM HAPPENINGS

Community Based Day Services

CCEC Volunteers for Meals on Wheels

By Akari Hayashi



In January, a group from the Career & Community Exploration Center (CCEC) began volunteering with the Meals on Wheels program through the Plymouth Center for Active Living (CAL). Brian, John, Mary, Ron, and Samantha have delivered almost 200 meals to 32 different neighbors within the Plymouth area so far.

This program has given us wonderful opportunities to visit the recipients on a weekly basis, get to know them, and develop relationships. Seeing the recipients getting to know us, anticipating our visit, and talking with the group has been great. One of the

CCEC participants also had the opportunity to be able to help the person who used to support him in school by delivering the meal to her, which

provided him a chance to re-establish that relationship.

We also made cards on different holidays or seasonal occasions and delivered them along with their meals. Additionally, we are very fortunate to be able to work with Mary Beth, who coordinates the support services at Plymouth CAL. She always greets us with such a warm welcome and takes time to talk with every one of us to make us feel supported as we get up and running. Also, we got to play bingo as a part of the Meals on Wheels volunteer group and, to our surprise, we won the first prize of a gift card to a Plymouth-area Mexican restaurant! Everyone from the group shared the prize, selecting the tacos they liked.

We look forward to continuing to support the community through this project and fostering relationships with the people we meet.

Day Habilitation

New Collaborative Project at the Efron Center for Enrichment

By Melanie Rose-Zagwyn

NEV artists have been working hard creating Rainbow Seaweed Mobiles inspired by the work of American glass sculptor, Dale Chihuly. These large, multicolored, hanging sculptures will gently shift and turn in the air, revealing endlessly changing patterns of color, shape, and

light, reminiscent of great masses of seaweed floating in the sea.

The sculptures were constructed by all ECE program members working collaboratively to assemble hundreds of paper teardrop shapes and gluing them together to form long strands, which were then hung from hula hoops. They will be displayed in the front entranceway of the Efron Center for Enrichment.



Day Habilitation

Sapphire's Valentine's Day Treat

The Sapphire room thought outside of the box to whip up some Valentine's Day treats for their members. The members voted on the options: French toast, apple cider donuts, or spinach quiche, and were able to choose which dish they would like to make for themselves. All recipes were single-serve "mug" recipes, able to be cooked in the microwave. Best of all, Sapphire sent invitations to others to join their festivities. What a treat for all!

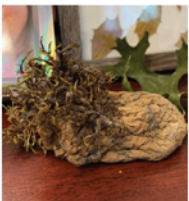


Emerald's Green Grass!

The Emerald room jumped into spring and planted grass seeds in cups decorated by the members. Each is unique, and the grass "hair" is growing like crazy! Spring has sprung in the Emerald homeroom!



HAVE YOU SEEN ME?



MISSING:
Emotional
Support
Potato

Last seen:
9am 3/19/24
In a Ziploc bag on
Jonathan's Desk

If you have any info or tips
please tell Lindsey or Molly
ASAP! Your help and support
are appreciated in this trying
time.



The Case of the Missing Potato

By Lindsey Stone

NEV resident and Efron Center member Molly was both thrilled and disgusted to receive an "emotional support potato" that she named Matt as a birthday gift. Wanting to share the love, Molly put the potato in a Ziploc bag for safekeeping and left it on (Office Manager) Jonathan Weinman's desk as a prank while he was on vacation. Unfortunately, two days later, the potato was nowhere to be found, and Molly was distraught. Missing posters went up throughout the building, but nobody had any clues or info that led to the location of the potato (likely: the trash). Staff Donna Clifford saved the day by bringing in a new, much prettier potato named Bonnie. Molly was thrilled with her new potato; all is well again at the Efron Center.

"This is a wicked funny story," Molly said. "I was upset when Matt the Potato went missing; I bawled my eyes out. I was so happy to find Mrs. Potato Head (Bonnie) when Donna brought her in. I love this building so much, even though my potato went missing."



PROGRAM HAPPENINGS

Day Habilitation

Wellness Practices at ECE

By Donna Clifford, DayHab Specialist

Through the cold winter months, Efron Center for Enrichment (ECE) members discussed and practiced several wellness opportunities to lift their spirits, boost their energy, improve their self-image, and promote general mental well-being.

Members created Daily Positive Affirmations of written and spoken statements to reinforce positive thoughts and to build up and improve confidence, even when things are difficult. Group discussions included stories and examples of positive affirmations, which they repeated out loud. They then created note cards expressing their own unique affirmation. Some highlighted thoughts from our members included phrases like “I am strong,” “I am beautiful,” “I am kind,” and “I am happy.” Over time, repeating these phrases has been shown to reshape how we think and feel about ourselves. Eventually, positive thought patterns will appear more easily. The good thoughts not only improve our mental well-being but also our actions and relationships. Members will continue our Positive Affirmation practice through the spring, including keeping a daily personal journal.

Other wellness opportunities through the winter months included New Year’s Resolutions, Having Good Friends, Heart Health, Winter Skin Care (making and experimenting with a homemade aloe facial), the Health Benefits of Chicken Soup, The Mental and Physical Benefits of Reading (including a weekly Book Club Group), and Laughter Is The Best Medicine—sharing some of our favorite jokes and funny stories.

Wishing you peace and wellness. Happy spring!



Paraprofessional Paulie Devlin and Peg



Joe



Bob and Dan

Shopping, Creating, and Making Friends

Nothing beats a little retail therapy. Paulie and Peg were out on the town in January, scoping out the upcoming Spring fashions and accessories at Walmart in Plymouth.

Joe shows off the pumpkin science experiment Emerald room is working on. The pumpkin was placed in a sealed jar, and over the next few months, Emerald and the rest of ECE will watch as the pumpkin decomposes and hopefully, in the late spring, there will be a pumpkin seedling that can be replanted outside in the garden at ECE.

Make new friends, but keep the old, some are silver and the others are gold. Bob and Dan are newfound friends at The Efron Center post-Day Habilitation merge. Their faces say it all. This merge has brought new opportunities, fun, and friendships!

Enrichment & Community Services

Aqua Zumba®

By Ginger Comeau

Back in February of 2015, the Sollar Wellness Center offered its very first Aqua Zumba® class to our residents and members of the community (people with and without disabilities). Nine years later, this class is still going strong! Taught by Aqua Zumba® instructor Debbie Rafferty, who has been teaching Zumba® on the South Shore since 2011, these classes are wildly popular and have a very loyal following.



Aquatic exercise offers many a safe form of exercise that puts less stress on the joints and has a lower risk for injury, all while promoting increased flexibility, strength conditioning, and an excellent cardio workout. Add some great music, fun choreography, and a motivating instructor, and you've got a dance party in the pool!

NEV resident Marisa has been attending the Tuesday night class for the past six years and enjoys coming to the pool weekly to spend time with this group. When asked what her favorite thing about Aqua Zumba® is, Marisa says, "I know all the moves, so if anyone needs help, I can help you."



Marisa with Debbie Rafferty

Instructor Debbie Rafferty says that Marisa is her most improved attendee, as she has seen her make huge strides in her level of participation over the years. Way to go, Marisa!



New Year, New Drums

By Ginger Comeau

The new year started off with some really "good vibrations," thanks to a generous donation from the Family Association. Music instructor Sean Carr had been looking to update NEV's supply of instruments, many of which were 15+ years old and showing their age. With a focus on purchasing high-quality adaptive equipment that is more musically engaging (including some that are sensory-limiting), the overall response is that individuals across all programs are thrilled with the instruments' look, feel, and sound. We are officially back in the groove!



Enrichment & Community Services

Prop and Scenery Workshop

By Melanie Rose-Zagwyn

It takes a village to create a stage production! Artists gathered to work behind the scenes to create decorative props and colorful set designs for the NEV production of Aladdin this spring. In addition to NEV residents, many of NEV's day program community participants and NEV employees also helped to construct and paint props and scenery. With excitement and wonder, we are all anticipating how these props will appear when the big Aladdin curtain opens in May!



Residential Services

Laboure College Nursing Students Visit NEV

By Lauren Miller, RN, Director of Medical Services

Beginning in January of 2024, a group of six last-semester nursing students from Laboure College had been assigned for a clinical rotation lasting six weeks here at New England Village.

My goal for this clinical rotation was, first, to provide the students and the individuals with a positive experience. From an educational perspective, the goal was to help them apply a holistic approach to healthcare, taking into consideration their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing, to experience meeting the individuals where they are, and learning how to use their assessment skills and communication skills in a variety of ways.

An additional goal of working with the students here at New England Village was for them to experience firsthand interaction with individuals with IDD, and to meet the staff who support them, with the hope that when the students enter into their own practices, they have a better understanding of the individuals New England Village serves, how to care for them, and how valuable the staff are.

The following feedback is from the students about their experience here at NEV:



“Being placed here at New England Village was a great choice. I love it here. I want to come back.”

“I have truly enjoyed my time here at NEV. I did not know what to expect, despite making my own assumptions. Every week I am more impressed with the facility and the care that the individuals receive. This is a great learning opportunity.”

“I have gained a lot of experience on how to use my nursing skills from communication, critical thinking, and the aging adult. I have had the best experience and appreciate the school having this type of clinical experience for students.”

“New England Village has been such a joy. To be able to meet the residents and learn about their interests. I am grateful for this time and have learned so much from each person.”



Apartment 7

The ladies of Apt. 7 who stayed at home for Easter helped create beautiful floral arrangements to add a little sunshine to their indoor areas.



Chuck & Marisa



Marisa and Chuck had their first date on Valentine's Day, and went to Subway for lunch. They are looking forward to going out again!

Smith A



The folks at Smith A, along with their staff, enjoyed a great meal recently at the Charlie Horse Restaurant in Kingston.

FEATURE STORY CONT.



The group had a smooth and safe flight and they were fortunate to be greeted by perfect weather in Florida, arriving to sunshine and great temps. They were met at the airport by Paul Sullivan and Mike Fitzgibbons (also from Sullivan Tire). They picked up their rental passenger van, and headed to the Doubletree by Hilton Ft. Myers hotel. As an added bonus, the hotel had warm cookies waiting for them!

Paul and Mike had each day planned out for the group, providing a variety of suggestions for places to eat, places to play, and places to just relax (like the hotel swimming pool). Each time the group came down into the lobby, Paul or Mike or both were waiting to greet them.

Josh, the youngest of the group, was excited to talk about his visit to the Harley-Davidson store, where he bought a new orange T-shirt. "White gets dirty and black gets too hot," he said. His favorite parts of the trip, hands down, were visiting Dave & Buster's to play games and going to Coldstone Creamery for ice cream.

That Sunday was a great day for a ball game – sunny and warm – and before going onto the field, Paul accompanied everyone to the stadium gift shop and told them to buy anything they wanted.

His generosity was unending.

"I only had to use my money one time," said Josh. "There were golf carts that brought us to and from our van and the ballpark. There was a tip box on the cart and I gave him two dollars for driving us there and back. Other than that, my money stayed in my wallet because Mr. Mike and Mr. Sullivan took care of everything else."

Before the game, the group passed out magnetic Red Sox schedules (to ticketholders). Josh added, "We gave out a lot of them. When we went inside to get out of the sun for a little bit, Mr. Sullivan got us comfortable and then went out to help Mr. Mike with more (calendars)."

Mary had wanted to meet "the green guy" (Wally, the Red Sox mascot), but the group felt there wouldn't be enough time before they had to get onto the field. Paul heard this and rushed off, returning with Wally himself so the group could meet him and take pictures. The entire group got the opportunity to yell, "Play ball!" from the field to start the game.

"This trip checked off a lot of boxes for Glenn," said Russ. Glenn, who had last flown many years ago, still liked the plane ride the best and enjoyed all the places they visited. He also picked

up a few things for himself, including a T-shirt, a coffee mug, AND a new pair of sneakers.

This trip was a fantastic experience for the staff as well as the individuals – one that they'll remember for a long time.

"(This opportunity) was completely unexpected and something I have never experienced," said Kristin. "In my 20-plus years in the DDS field, I have never had someone say, 'Hey, you're going to go to Ft. Myers and, by the way, you're going to go see a Red Sox/Yankees game and, by the way, it's all paid for.' It was awesome."

The baseball game was Kristin's favorite part. "I am a 'significant' Red Sox fan," she said, laughing. "Watching the individuals see all of this and to see the smiles on their faces ... it was just so awesome to see them. And they greeted almost every person who came into the park when they were handing out the magnets, which was really fun."

"The game, for me, was the best," Russ said. "We were handing out the schedules at the park, and it was cool. More than one person said how much they look forward to getting that schedule each year. And Florida is like 'New England South.' Mr. Sullivan is like a rock star there! Everyone wanted to take his picture, or have their pictures taken with him."



Monica's favorite part of the trip was Mary. "It was definitely Mary," she said "I think she got to have some independence; she was confident. She wasn't dependent on me or anyone else. She swam in the pool, and she loves to swim. There were a lot of genuine smiles that we don't get to see all the time. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have shared this with Mary."

"You genuinely saw real smiles on everyone's faces," Kristin agreed. "We were seriously spoiled this whole trip. Nobody wanted for anything. When we were thirsty, Mr. Sullivan got a cooler and filled it with bottled waters and found out what types of soda everybody liked. He just wanted to make sure we had everything humanly possible. He is, by far, one of the nicest people I think I've ever met."

"The night before we came home," she added, "we just relaxed at the pool. Mr. Sullivan got pizzas and just hung out and talked and relaxed with the individuals. It was just a very nice ending to the trip."

"It was fantastic from the second we got on the bus outside (the Sheingold building) until we got dropped off," said Russ. "It was just unbelievable. Everybody gelled, everybody had a great time. It was just really awesome."

Dolores summed up the trip this way: "It really was the trip of a lifetime for our individuals. They received V.I.P. treatment from start to finish, which made them feel really special. It was also great to see some of our hard-working staff get some much-deserved recognition for all that they do. As an organization, we are so grateful to Paul and his staff at Sullivan Tire for their interest, personal involvement, and support of our mission. It was truly an amazing experience that will never be forgotten."

Another Amazing Holiday Party in the Books!

NEV friend Paul Sullivan and members of his staff from Sullivan Tire helped us celebrate the holidays in style with a beautiful party at Indian Pond Country Club in December. Because of Paul's generous donation, every individual we support was able to enjoy an amazing afternoon of food, friends, dancing, and merriment. In addition to the party, Paul also donated beautiful throw blankets embroidered with NEV's logo to every individual we serve AND every NEV staff member. We could not be more grateful for Paul's generosity and for the priceless memories he is helping us make when we all gather together at incredible events like this. We're very grateful to Paul and his outstanding staff for an unforgettable afternoon!





Kimberly Lowman

**(March 17, 1960 -
March 26, 2024)**

By Ginger Comeau

Kim Lowman's career at New England Village began 30 years ago as a direct support professional in the ladies' apartments. Advocating for others seemed to come naturally to Kim. Her contributions in the years to come would be transformational for the organization as a whole.

Kim fought fiercely for the individuals supported, instilling a true sense of their value while encouraging them to challenge themselves to try new things. A few years later, this "can do" attitude made her a perfect fit for her next position as an Enrichment Program Assistant. Kim ran various activities during the week, but there was always one area she was strongly drawn to - fitness. As a fitness enthusiast, Kim was well aware of the many health benefits that movement offered everyone, regardless of ability level. She committed herself to becoming a certified fitness instructor so that she could safely offer fitness classes for the individuals we supported.

One of the first things Kim recognized was that the word "fitness" itself was a deterrent to many. Faced with this knowledge, she created movement-based offerings that were not your typical classes because she was not your typical instructor. Kim filled her classes with humorous stories, fun music, and abundant laughter.

When conversations started about a new wellness center at NEV in the early 2000s, Kim's input was instrumental in helping to create a space that was not only inviting but also a place where people could exercise safely on equipment that was accessible and easy to use. In her new position as Adaptive Fitness Coordinator, Kim quickly became a subject matter expert and was a frequently sought-after presenter at local disability conferences.

New England Village's commitment to providing wellness offerings to all individuals served can't be discussed without including Kim's name in the conversation. Her hands are all over it. She designed the staff wellness program, supported day program wellness initiatives, and was the face of our vibrant evening offerings open to residents and local community members. In 2017, she accepted the position of Wellness Program Manager, a role in which she excelled. She knew how to break things down into realistic benchmarks to motivate people. But more importantly, her words of encouragement really sealed the deal for folks.

Kim's longevity at New England Village led to many longstanding relationships with the men and women served by NEV and her

co-workers. She was admired for her commitment and dedication to her job, as well as her honesty and genuine concern for people. Close friend and co-worker Melanie Rose-Zagwyn always thought of Kim as the Pied Piper of Wellness and admired her "always presume competence" philosophy. One of Kim's many life lessons was how to meet each moment with courage and conviction. She lived by that creed to the very end. New England Village will not be the same without her.



Johnny Koechlin

**(November 23, 1953 -
April 1, 2024)**

By Lan Baker

John Koechlin was born to Patricia Baker and Bernard Koechlin in Winchester, Massachusetts. He was the fourth of their six children.

When John's parents learned that he had Down syndrome a few months after his birth, they discovered that in the early 1950s, there existed little positive guidance for the families of children with the condition. Many professionals advised parents to commit their children to state-run institutions in that era, leaving them primarily forgotten. Eventually, his

parents enrolled John in a boarding school in Rhode Island. The family visited him frequently and often took him home for visits and on vacations to Cape Cod and Cape Ann.

Johnny moved to New England Village in January 1975 and lived here for 49 years, first in Apartment 5 and then in Fuller House. He attended NEV Industrial Services in Hanson for many years and transferred to the Efron Center for Enrichment in 2017.

John's presence was a source of joy and inspiration for many at NEV. He shared a special bond with his staff and friends, including Michael H., Brooks E., Joe M., Steve H., Kenny D., Kenny B., Seth B., Matthew B., Peter B., Daphne F., Barbara E., and Jeannie R. His love extended to his close-knit family, especially his siblings Carl, Emily, Patrick, Tim, and Nick. He had a special fondness for LaChance House resident Heidi W., whose company he cherished.

He loved many things: baseball, traveling, visiting with his family, white hats, white sunglasses (he would paint them white if they came in different colors), burgers, bananas, Coke, movies, going out to eat, classes at the Sollar Wellness Center, and so much more.

Johnny was part of the "Great Adventures Club" with Apartments 4 and 5 and the Red Cape guys. They traveled and visited many Halls of Fame: baseball, basketball, tennis, soccer, boxing, Corvette, Rock and Roll, etc. He also enjoyed vacations with NEV friends to Washington D.C., Cape Cod, the White Mountains, Laconia, NH, Newport, RI, Philadelphia, and many other places. Johnny loved any type of

construction site (sometimes getting himself into trouble).

Johnny did not speak much, but he could definitely communicate his wants and needs using single words and short phrases. When I worked in the men's apartments, every Friday was a guys-only UFC fight show on TV and, of course, junk food night. "Lannie" was never allowed to join. When I asked to be included, most of the guys replied, "No, Lannie!" including Johnny shouting at the top of his lungs.

John was a GEM with the biggest heart and smile! He has touched so many lives here at NEV. We will miss him tremendously.



Valerie Walker

**(May 20, 1938 –
March 6, 2024)**

By Lindsey Stone

Valerie Walker passed away peacefully in her home on March 6, 2024. Valerie was quite the spitfire - a quality she retained well into her golden years. She was the boss, knowing precisely what she wanted to do and what she didn't, and there was little that any of us could do to change her mind once it was made

up. Val was not afraid to let us know that she was going to "tell her brother on us" or "put us through the wash" if she was inconvenienced in any way.

She was also known as "Grandma Val," as she had a huge heart and was warm, caring and compassionate as well. She kept a keen eye on her friends and staff at Efron Center, and enjoyed meeting new people. She would notice if any of us looked down or sad, asking, "Awww, what's the matter?" and assured us, "I'll take care of you," or "I'll be nice to you." And take care of us she did. She would paint our nails, braid our hair, and make sure our clothes were tidy, adjusting collars and shirt hems if they went awry. She loved participating in art, especially if she was painting or drawing, loved the soft blankets and scented lotion in the Sensory Room, and loved music - even asking to play Sean's guitar from time to time. Years ago she liked to knit, and more recently she liked to do a flower arranging activity.

What she liked most was chatting with and doting on the people around her. She has been very much missed by all of us since she retired from the Efron Center in 2023 (at the age of 84 years old!) and even more so now. We hope that she has been reunited with her mother at long last, and that she's still keeping that keen eye on us.



ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

Development

Spirit Medium Night

Thank you to those of you who came out in February to support NEV at our sold-out Spirit Medium event. It was an inspiring evening with Spirit Artist Rita Berkowitz and Medium Lori Sheridan. We had a great time and raised over \$2,000!



Thanks for Your Good Deed!

New England Village was the recipient of Good Deeds' recent Give Back program, and we received a check in the amount of \$2,375 – a combination of the store's gift and the contributions from their shoppers who gave to the jar at the register. Many thanks to Good Deeds Thrift Store in Pembroke for their generous donation! We are so grateful for our amazing community support.

Pictured from left to right are NEV CEO Stephanie Costa, Good Deeds owner Larry DeRoche, and Pembroke Town News representative (and NEV Direct Support Professional) Kyle Harney.



Community and Foundation Support

Many thanks to the following foundations and companies that recently donated to NEV. We are so grateful for your partnership!

- Eastern Bank Foundation
- Quincy Credit Union
- Good Deeds Thrift Store
- The Schwartz Charitable Foundation

Eastern Bank
JOIN US FOR GOOD®





Thank you to our amazing friends at the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism for donating

155 Jersey Mike's subs

to the people we support and staff on March 23!

Thank you, also, to Lisa and Nicole for helping to pick the lunches and deliver them to programs, and to the awesome crew at the Jersey Mike's in Pembroke who put our order together. We're so grateful to have community partners like you!

Family Association

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars for the New England Village Family Association's 5th Annual Golf Tournament on Wednesday, Sept. 25, at the Cape Club of Sharon! This event is a fantastic way to meet friends, play some amazing golf at the beautiful Cape Club of Sharon, and raise money for New England Village! Sign up today; this event always sells out! Sign up here: <https://birdease.com/NewEnglandVillage>.



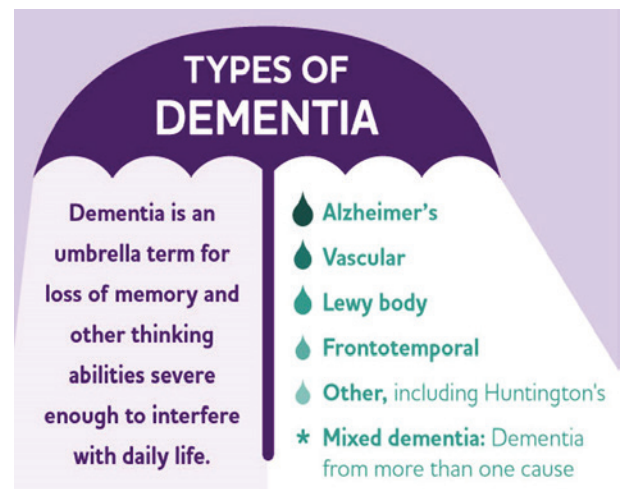
SIGN UP TODAY!
NEV Family Association's 5th Annual Golf Tournament
Wed. Sept. 25
Cape Club of Sharon
birdease.com/NewEnglandVillage



Alzheimer's/Dementia Programs

New England Village offered an Alzheimer's training course in early March. It was exciting to see so many people interested in learning more about Alzheimer's/Dementia to help support individuals who are experiencing this journey.

Special thanks to Eve Montague, who shared her expertise in such a wonderful way. Eve is a member of the Alzheimer's Partnership of the South Shore and a board-certified music therapist, roles that enhanced her presentation. If you're interested in a copy of the PowerPoint presentation from this course, contact Sue O'Shea at soshea@newenglandvillage.org.



A new Alzheimer's Think Tank was held in May, providing a great opportunity for all to participate in activities, share ideas, ask questions, and support each other as we support those with Alzheimer's/Dementia. The Think Tank and the Alzheimer's training events were open to everyone.

NEV Strives to Attract Top Talent

NEV's commitment to excellence in service delivery cannot be achieved without a committed and skilled workforce. As we navigate the ever-evolving workforce and service-delivery landscape, as well as the changing needs of those we support, a passionate workforce that is eager to navigate through challenges and push NEV's mission forward is essential. For this reason, a specific objective to invest in our workforce was identified in our current Strategic Plan. This objective covers the critical importance of prioritizing the 3Cs of employee engagement: Competence, Career, and Care. These pillars of employee engagement not only drive recruitment and retention strategies but also steer initiatives to empower our team to meet and exceed the changing needs of those we serve.

NEV has implemented innovative initiatives to increase recruitment of qualified candidates and foster a culture of engagement among our employees. One such initiative is our employee referral program, where active and in-good-standing employees can earn up to \$2,000 for referring qualified candidates to NEV. This not only incentivizes our team members but also taps into their networks, bringing in candidates who align with our mission and values.

Additionally, we have introduced referral cards that our staff can distribute to potential candidates, further amplifying our recruitment efforts. Our advertising for open positions spans multiple channels, including our website, social media platforms such as Facebook, and popular job search engines like Indeed, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and ZipRecruiter. We have partnered with Circa, a leading job board for reaching diverse candidate pools with the belief that diverse teams have the power to transform organizations.

Furthermore, NEV has advertised our postings with community organizations such as the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton and Haitian Community Partners and actively participates in job fairs, both in-person and virtual, to connect with



potential candidates. Leveraging platforms, like Handshake with its vast database of students and alumni from various colleges, including Massasoit, Quincy, Bridgewater, and Curry, has expanded our reach, often attracting staff who may be studying human service-related curriculum.

To streamline our recruitment process and enhance communication with candidates, we have integrated text message capability into our recruitment software. This enables us to effectively engage with candidates and expedite the hiring process, ensuring a seamless experience for both applicants and our hiring team.



Retaining our valuable employees is equally crucial, which is why NEV has doubled down on our training efforts. We have revamped our new hire orientation, offering comprehensive training modules focused on key areas such as Positive Behavior Supports, Sign Language, and Supporting Individuals with Dementia. By investing in continuous learning and professional development, we are striving for our employees to excel in their roles and provide exceptional support to all those we serve.

NEV's strategic focus on the 3Cs of employee engagement—Competence, Career, and Care—is not just a vision but a necessity that drives our organizational success. Through recruitment strategies, targeted partnerships, and a robust training framework, we are not only striving to attract top talent but also nurture a dedicated workforce that is equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Do you know someone who would like to do work that matters? Please have them visit our career page at <https://www.newenglandvillage.org/careers/>



New England Village's mission is to empower adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to realize their potential and pursue their dreams through innovative programs and community living.

~SAVE THE DATE~

NEV Family & Friends Day



Sept. 14
(rain date Sept. 15)



NEV's Signature Event!

NEV welcomes guests to our School St. location for food, entertainment, prizes, the State of the Village address, and more!

STAFF UPDATES

Lan Baker Receives Prestigious Light of Dawnn Award



TLC Program Manager Lan Baker was one of three individuals to receive a Light of Dawnn Award presented to unsung heroes in the Massachusetts nonprofit community. Now in its 10th year, this prestigious award pays tribute to the memory of Dawnn Ashley Jaffier, a youth worker who was tragically lost to gun violence. It aims to raise the public profiles of those doing important direct-service work, particularly those who do not have prominent or externally-facing roles. The event took place at the West End House Boys and Girls Club in Allston on February 27. Recipients received public recognition and a cash award.

Lan's nomination shared details about her uncanny ability to show up and pitch in wherever necessary at NEV and about her humility and desire to shine a light on others before taking any credit herself. It describes how she goes above and beyond to ensure the people she supports meet their goals and how she builds trust by observing, listening, and providing the most appropriate support exactly when needed. It recounted her experience as a young girl fleeing Vietnam with her family and experiencing incredible kindness while living in refugee camps. It also shared examples of how Lan herself has shown remarkable kindness to so many people at NEV for more than two decades.

We had a great time at the NEV Employee Get Together at the Rec Room at Starland Sportsplex & Fun Park in Hanover in January. Thank you to all who took part in making this a great event, and thanks to the NEV Employee Recognition and Engagement Committee for putting it together!





A Letter from Dolores Rezendes

Dear Friends,

I want to share some important news with you. After 20 years of service to New England Village, I will retire as NEV's Chief Development and Communications Officer effective May 31, 2024.

It has been an incredible honor and privilege to be a part of this vibrant community and to

contribute to its growth and well-being. Throughout my tenure, I have cherished the relationships built, the experiences shared, and the collective achievements we've celebrated together, especially our 50th-anniversary celebration in 2022 following two years of COVID-imposed separation.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for your support, collaboration, and trust over the years. Your dedication to our community's mission and values, involvement in various projects and initiatives, and unwavering commitment to making a positive difference have been truly inspiring.

As I transition into retirement, I am proud of all we have accomplished together. I am confident that the capable hands of those who will continue to lead and serve this organization will ensure that NEV's legacy continues to flourish.

Again, thank you for your support, friendship, and contributions to making our community a thriving and welcoming place for all.

With deepest gratitude,

Dolores Rezendes
Chief Development and Communications Officer

Email: drezendes@newenglandvillage.org (until May 31st!)



NEV Welcomes...

We extend a warm welcome to the following employees who have joined New England Village since the last edition of Scoops was published.

Direct Support Professionals

- Magdilene Gomes
- Mario Hernandez
- Delisson Jean
- Stanley Jeanty
- Prettina Johnson
- Ava Jones
- Casey Manley
- Brendan Rabs
- Gerardo Shields
- Laure Tagne
- Jelissa Teixeira
- Ann Lorie Theodate
- Shannon Tompkins
- George Treannie

Health Care Supervisor

- Krista Westhaver

LPN

- Kayla Ryan

Paraprofessionals

- Tricia Trombley
- Molly McGrath

Residential Program Manager

- Monica West



Play It Forward:

Recreation Fundraiser

Help us reach our goal of \$30,000!

When you support NEV's spring appeal, you're supporting **improvements to our outdoor recreation spaces**. Your donation will help us:

- build bocce ball courts
- enhance our walking paths
- create a pickleball court
- install new shade sails
- replace our basketball hoop



Thank you

How to Give: Send a check to the Development Office, 664 School Street, Pembroke, MA 02359 or donate online using this QR Code.

Your support makes a difference!



Stay up to date on Village happenings by subscribing to Village Connections our monthly electronic newsletter.

Just send your email address to jcadogan@newenglandvillage.org and we'll add you to our broadcast list.



New England Village

Connecting People, Purpose & Passion

664 School Street, Pembroke, MA
(781) 293-5461 x215
www.newenglandvillage.org