

Horizons

A Publication for Seven Hills Foundation
Affiliates, Friends & Supporters

 **Seven Hills**
Foundation



**HELPING FAMILIES BUILD
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

WINTER 2019

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dr. David A. Jordan
President

Dear Friends,

In our ongoing effort to respond to the critical needs of our communities, Seven Hills Foundation will expand our services on January 1, when Family Services of Central Massachusetts (FSCM) will join our organization and become our 13th affiliate. Founded 130 years ago, this agency comes with an extraordinary history of excellence and a unique commitment to caring for our most vulnerable children,

adults, and seniors. Their areas of service complement the diversity of our programs at Seven Hills, and align with many of our strategic areas of focus and growth opportunities. On page 19 of this issue, you can learn more about FSCM and our affiliation. Please help me welcome this important agency into our family of Seven Hills.

In 1995, Seven Hills Foundation set out strategically to act as an umbrella organization for agencies that fit our mission and vision. As we have grown, we have delivered on our intent to ensure that our affiliates have the business and allied services needed for sustained fiscal health. By building out this successful model to date, Seven Hills has grown to support 12 separate affiliates, all of whom have expanded their reach of care while continuing their quality of excellence in clinical, educational, and community support.

Our Seven Hills business model ensures that our affiliates are well-positioned to succeed and lead in each respective sector, as our world of health and human services continues to move toward managed care and data-driven oversight in this era of health care reform. We continue to work with organizations that contact us to learn about our model and see if an alignment makes sense for both organizations and most important, for the people we support. The saying, “No Margin, No Mission” drives our model, as we continue our commitment to making our work—that of serving our most vulnerable—our mission. Our business leadership and direction is ensuring that we have the best evidence-based practices and measurable demonstrated outcomes, delivered by the most committed and passionate professionals.

We extend a warm welcome to our future colleagues of Family Services of Central Massachusetts. Our work together will expand a network of services and strengthen our ability to ensure a healthy, vibrant community.

Sincerely,

David A. Jordan

Dr. David A. Jordan
President

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Share your time and talents! Contact Amy Kupranowicz, senior human resources generalist, at [508.983.1373](tel:508.983.1373) or akupranowicz@sevenhills.org.

HORIZONS WINTER 2019

Horizons is a newsletter published by the Advancement Office of Seven Hills Foundation. Please direct all content requests, comments, and questions to:

Jennifer Wentworth
Director of Communications
jwentworth@sevenhills.org

Kathleen Myshrall
Vice President of Advancement
kmyshrall@sevenhills.org

Peter Demko
Multimedia Communications Associate
pdemko@sevenhills.org

William Stock
Vice President for Government and Community Relations
bstock@sevenhills.org

Contributors:

Jennifer Bergstrom
Lauren Frazee
Jennifer Hubert
Christina Sheehan
Elizabeth Vittum

Seven Hills Foundation
81 Hope Avenue
Worcester, MA 01603

508.755.2340 (T)
508.849.3882 (F)
508.890.5584 (TTY)
sevenhills.org

David A. Jordan, DHA
President
Seven Hills Foundation

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BRINGING CARE, HOPE, AND A PATH TO RECOVERY

For Giovanna Borges, community health educator for Seven Hills, fighting the stigma of addiction has been a family calling. Her mother was a community health educator at the former Home of Hope in New Bedford, a small program of Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH), an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation. Home of Hope opened in 1998, with a staff of three to support women with HIV/AIDS. Giovanna grew to know and admire the people her mother supported. Some got well, many did not. But all were valued and treated with respect.

The dramatic increase in the need for community public health services over the last 20 years, has led to the expansion of that small program into the prominent presence of the SHBH Community Wellness Centers in southeastern Massachusetts. The Centers deploy help on the streets in the form of a team of community public health educators. Now 36 strong, staff members are out combing the streets, alleys, parks, and even train tracks of the city, bringing the resources where they are needed—to those struggling with addiction and a host of contributing issues that are blocking the road to recovery.

The Center’s comprehensive programs include HIV, Hepatitis C, and Sexually Transmitted Disease screening, testing and treatment referrals; Safe Syringe programs; Counseling; Narcan training; Substance Abuse and Post Overdose education and prevention; and a Food Pantry. Walk-ins are welcomed and supported, yet most of the work is conducted out in the community. Staff team up in pairs or alongside police or agency partners to connect people to the resources they need and assure them that help is always available.

Director of Community Health Services Connie Rocha-Mimoso and her staff at SHBH work closely with local community partners, including local law enforcement, faith-based groups, local correctional systems, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to implement health promotion and disease prevention initiatives. These relationships are crucial to delivering effective services and are making a significant difference in the Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, Plymouth, and Wareham communities.

Fall River has one of the highest overdose rates in the Commonwealth—an average of seven per day—with New Bedford close behind at an average of five per day. The SHBH Post Overdose program is using a Harm Reduction approach to turn those numbers into a positive trajectory.

“Our harm-reduction model for overdose is really effective. After a 911 call, I visit the home along with a police officer and our approach is simple and genuine. We are there together to ask, “How can we help you not OD again. What do you need?” said Rebecca Mello, community health educator in New Bedford and Fall River. Being in “Help” mode vs “Arrest” mode is having a great impact here and the word is spreading about our success.

Help provide food and basic supplies for our Community Health Workers to distribute to clients in need. Contact Maria Alves @ [508.996.0546](tel:508.996.0546) or sevenhills.org/donate.





Dayanne Pena, left, with Family Support Specialist Leticia Lopez

HELPING FAMILIES BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH) **Family Support & Stabilization Program**, funded by The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF), has helped families work through challenges and stay together. Trained family support specialists provide **parent aide** as well as **supervised visitation services** to families in **Visitation Centers** located in New Bedford, Plymouth, Fall River; in the community; in the parents' home; or at any location approved by the state.

Program Manager Diane Cook and her caring staff ensure the Visitation Centers are welcoming, child-safe, and nurturing for parents, family members, and children to meet and spend quality time together. Divorce, separation, domestic violence, child abuse, and substance use all contribute to the need for children to have a safe place to visit with family members in their lives. The Centers are geared toward children of all ages. A full kitchen equipped with cooking supplies is a huge hit among families who are able to cook and enjoy a rare meal together.

The program's family support services include teaching basic life skills such as house cleaning, food shopping, meal preparation, and budgeting assistance. They may also include parenting and child development education, benefits and housing advocacy, assisting with school and medical appointments, and referrals to mental health and substance abuse treatment or other community resources.

One of the program's greatest assets is the ability to provide multilingual services including English, Portuguese, and Spanish. Seven Hills is one of three gold members of the Supervised

Visitation Network, completing the Supervised Visitation Network's 24-hour formal certification training program.

Three years ago, life for Dayanne Pena had become overwhelming and difficult. She was struggling with significant mental health and substance use issues while also juggling the pressures of caring for two young children with severe autism and learning disabilities. DCF stepped in and referred Dayanne to the SHBH Family Support & Stabilization Program. There, she found the support and encouragement that she needed to recover and help her children thrive.

Leticia Lopez, Dayanne's Spanish-speaking family support specialist, met with Dayanne twice a week for three years. They started with the basics, then moved on to organizational skills and techniques to manage stress. The duo then worked to obtain an educational advocate to help ensure the children had the supports they needed in school.

Dayanne was trained as a nurse in Puerto Rico and hopes to get credentialed to work as a nurse in the U.S. For now, her main priority is her children and being "the best parent she can be." Happily, Dayanne's hard work and determination, along with the continued support of Leticia and the program, have turned desperate measures into steps to success.

To learn more, about the SHBH Family Support & Stabilization Program, contact Diane Cook @ [508.617.2001](tel:508.617.2001) or dcook@sevenhills.org.

 **Seven Hills**
Behavioral Health
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ASPIRE! TO HIRE THROUGH WORKFORCE READINESS & EMPLOYMENT

The U.S. is currently experiencing one of its best employment years as the unemployment rate continues to lower month after month. In September, it was reported that the unemployment rate dropped to a 50-year low, which is great news for people who are looking for a new opportunity. With more jobs becoming available and competition for those jobs decreasing, it's hard to imagine that job seekers would have an issue breaking into a new position; however, there are still pockets of our population who are finding it challenging to make their mark.

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, there are 53 million people of working age who have a disability in the U.S. Yet, in the same month that the U.S. unemployment number was hitting record-breaking lows, the U.S. Department of Labor was conveying that only 20% of people living with disabilities comprised that workforce compared to 68% of people living without a disability. Even though there are jobs to fill, these numbers prove that there are still societal stigmas and barriers that people with disabilities face when trying to fill those jobs.

The Seven Hills Workforce Readiness and Employment programs at Seven Hills Foundation in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are working hard to break down those barriers for people with disabilities. As one of the first disability organizations to close its sheltered workshops, Seven Hills is continually investing its time and resources into developing a wide range of programs designed to assist participants in achieving their highest possible degree of integrated competitive employment.

"Unemployment rates for people with disabilities is around 80%, and a lot of that is not because of abilities or desire. It is because of the social hurdles that people have because of those disabilities," said ASPIRE! Assistant Vice President Tim Johnson.

// Workforce development programs are a way to get around those hurdles and into community employment. //

— ASPIRE! Assistant Vice President Tim Johnson

The Workforce Readiness and Employment programs are based out of several locations including Worcester, MA; Devens, MA; Milford, MA; and Woonsocket, RI. ASPIRE! programs were developed as a new model of day and employment supports and have helped to restructure the way traditional services have been offered to individuals with disabilities. With an emphasis

on Innovative Lifelong Learning, community-based sites serve as a "hub" for soft-skills and job-readiness-skills development. Through a wide variety of offerings in art, woodworking, ceramics, music, a radio station, horticulture, technology, health and wellness, and vocational programming, participants attain critical social and workforce readiness skills both on-site and in the community. A continuum of community-based employment settings that range from volunteer opportunities, group and individual supported employment, and competitive independent employment provide options that are improving employment outcomes for the individuals we support.



"I think what sets us apart from other Workforce Development programs is that we have a diversity of program sites, like our on-site Seven Hills cafés, where people can learn how to use a cash register and interact with customers within the protection of our walls and the support of our staff," Johnson said. "As they progress a little further, we can have them work at our off-site cafés at Worcester City Hall or at Stearns Tavern and eventually leverage their talents to work at a community partner, like Starbucks per se."

In 2019, ASPIRE! was awarded a renewed and expanded contract from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to provide Pre-Employment Transitional Services (Pre-ETS) to high school and post-secondary education students with disabilities, aged 14 to 21. Pre-ETS helps students transition successfully from school to post-secondary education or employment, and with improved long-term competitive employment outcomes and self-sufficiency on an annual basis. ASPIRE! has successfully provided

these services for the past twenty years with expanded services this year to high schools in Framingham.



Tim Johnson, Mallery Dicks, Sandra Hurtubise, Karen Chiurri, and Brendan Carlson

“The Pre-ETS program is so important for students with disabilities as they are often overlooked when it comes to planning their next steps after high school,” said ASPIRE! Program Manager Karen Chiurri.

// The Pre-ETS staff at ASPIRE! is currently working with over ten schools in the Worcester/Framingham areas to provide Job Readiness services. //

— ASPIRE! Program Manager Karen Chiurri

Seven Hills ASPIRE! also offers Group Supported and Individual Supported employment services for adults with disabilities. Working with a variety of available Group Supported worksites through longstanding and new partner employer relationships, ASPIRE! is able to evaluate individual preferences from interest inventories and assessments to offer opportunity. Trials of Group Supported worksites are available to individuals prior to commitment and regular scheduling. These trials assess interests, abilities, and identify deficits with soft and hard skills that need to be addressed to support the achievement of successful outcomes. ASPIRE!’s Individual Supported Employment services provides on-site training with a 1:1 job coach when an individual has secured competitive community-based employment. ASPIRE! job coaches are dedicated to thoroughly learning each job, its worksite, and personnel when training and providing ongoing supports to individuals in competitive individual employment.

The Workforce Readiness and Employment program at Seven Hills Rhode Island was especially useful for Wesley, who has been working at Stop & Shop in their Pea Pod division for almost two years. Packers for Pea Pod have to be detail-oriented and quick on their feet. Not only has Wesley met the position’s highest productivity requirement, he is excelling in his position and has been asked to work more shifts. Wesley’s weekly check-ins with his job coach has benefited his work performance and earned him praise from his supervisor.



Stories like Wesley’s are why we believe the future is full of possibilities for people with disabilities seeking competitive employment. Corporations and Foundations such as Bank of America, National Grid, TD Bank, and The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts have all supported Seven Hills in exploring the ever-changing landscape of workforce development for people with disabilities. Because of their support, Seven Hills has been able to develop programs that provide meaningful opportunities out in the community—like that of the new Café Seven Hills in Stearns Tavern featured on page 8.

// Workforce development programs are so important for people with disabilities because like anyone who goes to work, it gives the person a sense of purpose and community. //

— Seven Hills Rhode Island ASPIRE! Workforce Readiness and Employment Area Director
Melissa Charpentier

To learn more about the Seven Hills Workforce Readiness and Employment programs, contact Tim Johnson at 508.796.1512 or tjohnson@sevenhills.org.





Stearns Tavern at Coes Park Ribbon

ATTENDEES RISE AND SHINE FOR STEARNS TAVERN GRAND OPENING

The chilly breeze off Coes Pond at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 15, did not sway the celebratory spirit at the Grand Opening of the Stearns Tavern in Worcester. Over 200 attendees from the community and parties involved gathered to hear the noted speakers who all had a compelling message that collectively contributed to the very unique story that is the evolution of Coes Reservoir into the state-of-the-art, universally accessible training, employment, and recreational destination in this burgeoning city.

The Health and Human Services sector has made tremendous strides in achieving the collaborative goal to integrate people with disabilities into the community. It is now the norm for agencies to have shifted the focus from disability to the abilities of us all. Inclusion and universal access are at the forefront of building design, expansion, and city planning.

Such was the case that brought a neighborhood task force, city management, and preservation to the rescue of Worcester's

centuries-old Stearns Tavern. At the end of the day on June 19, 2014, Stearns Tavern narrowly escaped the first pass of the wrecking ball, but was not cast from its shadow just yet. It received a stay of demolition for one year—the clock was ticking, the moving parts started clicking, and the players started thinking.

Certain qualities stand the test of time, and Stearns Tavern's testament to the duration of Federal vernacular architecture of the early 19th century appealed to the mission of Preservation Worcester, which launched a campaign to keep this stalwart structure standing.

Since it was built in 1812, tavern keepers, a furniture retailer, carpet sellers, and bank tellers had occupied the building. Its proven history of reinvention caught the attention of Worcester City management and a partnership was formed between the City of Worcester and Preservation Worcester.

The team needed to make their next move, literally, as part of the demolition waiver involved moving the Tavern from its current location on Park Avenue. They needed a plan. For that,



Dr. Jay Hayston, Dr. David A. Jordan, Annie Chandler, Bill Stock, Tim Johnson, and Phil Niddrie

they needed to look no further than Coes Pond, where plans for a universally accessible, multi-generational playground were already in the works. Relocating Stearns Tavern to the site of the playground was a perfect fit.

With all the moving parts settling into place, Seven Hills Foundation became a third and critical partner in the ambitious project as the future tenant with the intent to develop a full workforce-training site in this inclusive community setting. Seven Hills would operate a Seven Hills Café to employ trained participants, maintain the park and building, and learn about hospitality through the management of public meeting spaces that are available in the renovated Stearns Tavern building. Other critical partners included the Coes Pond Neighborhood Association that worked for many years to lobby for resources to revitalize a once vibrant Coes Pond Reservoir, which had become almost abandoned with the loss of a former factory. Departments from the City of Worcester brought expertise and in-kind partners to the table, each with the skill, generosity and desire to see this project to completion. City officials and State legislators worked tirelessly to gather partners and identify funding sources. Individuals with disabilities from the city were invited, heard, and valued as guides in the planning process.

The Stearns Tavern Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony marked just the beginning of this important project dedicated to continued development of this inclusive community space. The ceremony was a community celebration with Mayor Joseph Petty acting as host with special guest speakers Senator Harriette Chandler, State Representative David LeBoeuf, District City Councilor Matthew Wally, City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr., Executive Director of Preservation Worcester Deborah Packard, President of Seven Hills Foundation Dr. David A. Jordan, Brian Brousseau of Roofers and Waterproofers Union #33, and Senior Vice President of CDR Maguire Matthew Amorello.

The funding partners of the Workforce Readiness and Employment program at Seven Hills ASPIRE!, including Bank of America Charitable Foundation, National Grid Foundation, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts and TD Charitable Foundation, made it possible for the Café Seven Hills to open in the Tavern. The Café is open daily and is fully staffed by Seven Hills ASPIRE! participants, who are trained to thrive as employees in the community workforce.

A large-scale community garden and hydroponic tower garden units, funded by The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, are being installed to introduce the concept of sustainable farming as a potential career track for adults with disabilities, and will provide enhanced opportunities for participants to learn, work, and socialize with members of the community.

The revitalization at Coes Park and the impact it will have on the community has been, literally, groundbreaking, and a model to be exemplified throughout the state. The commitment of the City of Worcester to make the site all-inclusive and accessible demonstrates the power that public and private partnerships can have in leading change for the greater good of the community, ensuring that everyone feels part of the city they call home.



Stellar customer service is provided by Jenna Dame at the Café Seven Hills at Stearns Tavern



Leslie Courtney, H.K. Derryberry, Jim Bradford

CELEBRATING THE CONNECTIONS MADE THROUGH SHARED LIVING AND ADULT FAMILY CARE

For 26 years, families, provider agencies, and state agencies convene to network, educate, and promote the benefits of community living options through the national Annual Shared Living and AFC Conference. The intent is to exchange practical information and innovative ideas that promote community living as a model of choice where adults with disabilities and seniors reside in a dignified, normative setting. The Models of Shared Living and Adult Family Care were promoted for their success underway nationally, and specifically here in the Commonwealth.

On October 26, the ballroom at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center in Marlborough, MA, was at capacity to continue this important idea exchange. Leslie Courtney, vice president of Seven Hills Family Services, chaired this year’s conference and brought some of the most inspirational speakers to the podium.

Keynote Speakers H.K. Derryberry and Jim Bradford made a tremendous impact on the audience, speaking from the heart about their unlikely friendship, built on trust and common admiration. They shared their journey of life together as friends and now national speakers after meeting in a diner when H.K. was just 9 years old. H.K. is blind and lives with cerebral palsy after a car accident in 1990 resulted in his premature birth

and other health conditions. He also has hyperthymesia, also known as superior autobiographical memory, and can recall every event that has happened to him. He is the subject of the book, *The Awakening of H.K. Derryberry*, which profiles this unique bond he has with Jim Bradford, a businessman from Brentwood, Tennessee. “I met him when I stopped for a coffee at Mrs. Winters’ Fried Chicken and he was sitting in a booth alone listening to a radio,” Bradford said. “I learned that he sat in that same booth every weekend—8 hours a day—while his grandmother worked, and could not afford a babysitter.”

Although H.K. had lost his mother and his father by age five, he had the most engaging, upbeat personality and a memory so unique—fewer than 100 people in the world have been diagnosed with hyperthymesia. Bradford also noted, “Fewer than 100 people in the world also have his incredible sense of humor!”

H.K. spoke about what this friendship has meant to him. “It’s allowed me to do things that typical young men without disabilities do; I ski mountains, ride horses, fly airplanes, drive Jim’s boat...it’s endless!” Both Jim and H.K. are fulfilling the goal for H.K. to become a motivational speaker to inspire people with disabilities.

“ At the Conference, we rocked the room with our story of how one person’s friendship and gift of time can change one life, even two! We ended with ‘The only disability any of us have in life is a negative attitude,’ and the room went crazy! ”

— H.K. Derryberry

After this emotional keynote, the Community Living Recognition Awards were announced. One of the many successful Adult Family Care pairings through Seven Hills was recognized—David and his caregiver, Isabel Mbe-Nkem.

AFC Nurse Kimberly Harmon and Area Director Whitney Mojica from Seven Hills Family Services nominated David and Isabel. To the delight of David and his family, the award was presented in front of over 300 attendees at the conference.

David, aged 48, has Down syndrome and was struggling in a group-home setting approximately one hour away from his mother, sister, and extended family. He had been an active adult who thrived on community opportunities that included employment and navigation of public transportation. His family began to notice, however, that David seemed to be failing, most notably in regard to his memory and cognitive function. He was falling asleep frequently during the day and required much physical assistance with his activities of daily living such as bathing, and grooming. He was becoming more and more “dependent” upon the staff at the group home. He was not eating well, so his nutrition was less than optimal. The family was also concerned that David was not wearing his CPAP machine at night, a critical component to managing his secondary diagnosis of Severe Obstructive Sleep Apnea. This was all out of character for the once vibrant adult.

In 2018, following this period of concern over her son’s care and distance of his living arrangement, David’s mother decided to refer her son to Seven Hills Family Services. David’s family and

the team at Seven Hills explored options for care, and identified Adult Family Care as the right fit because it offered consistency and individualized attention. Working with David, they began interviewing available providers.

After several visits, the team identified Isabel as the provider of choice. She and her husband David welcomed David into their home and he quickly became comfortable with his new surroundings. He also enrolled in the Seven Hills ASPIRE! innovative programming that keeps him active, healthy, and pursuing his areas of interest while making new friends.

With Isabel as his primary caregiver, David has made incredible strides toward becoming more independent—a goal both his mother and sister were fearful would never again be a reality. Isabel fosters David’s independence in a gentle manner, which encourages him to actively participate in his own care. He is now managing his own laundry, choosing his clothes every morning, and is more independent with his activities of daily living. David wears his

CPAP machine every night and that has made a difference in his energy level and focus, giving his family peace of mind. David has even developed an appetite for African cuisine as he continues to experience the richness of the culture that is prevalent in Isabel and David’s home—the residence that he now refers to as “My Home.”

This is confirmed at the end of every day when he arrives home from the Seven Hills ASPIRE! Program and little Daniella Mbe-Nkem is at the door ready to greet him with a hug.



Isabel Mbe-Nkem, David, Polly and Cathy

For more information on the Adult Family Care program, contact 508.796.1868. or afc@sevenhills.org

 **Seven Hills**
Family Services
An Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation



Chris, CJ, Leanne, Jonathan

EARLY INTERVENTION IS VITAL STEP IN REACHING MILESTONES

The Seven Hills Early Intervention (EI) Program in Rhode Island provides supports to families with children, birth to three years of age, who are at risk of, or who are currently experiencing, developmental delays. These delays can affect speech, physical abilities, and social skills. During this crucial stage of a child's growth and development, the Seven Hills EI professionals work with families as a team to help them help their children where they learn best: at home and in community settings.

"Early Intervention (EI) is a unique program in the way that there is an emphasis on educating and supporting families, so they have the tools to maintain and further a child's development," said Laurie Farrell, director of Early Intervention at Seven Hills Rhode Island. EI services are provided in the child's natural environment such as the home, school, community setting, or even at the playground. Children can be referred from a variety of sources including a parent, pediatrician, birthing hospital, childcare provider, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families—any professional or loved one who has a concern for the child's development and would like the child to be evaluated.

Once a child is referred, the family is partnered with a service coordinator (SC) who works with a team to assess the child's development based on medical history, observation of the child performing a daily routine, and learning about the child's likes, dislikes, successes, and difficulties.

The family's multidisciplinary EI team may include educators, therapists, social workers, and nutritionists. Parent Consultants, parents whose children have been through the EI program, are available to share resources, offer support, and facilitate networking.

The SC typically meets with the families in their homes once a week, reviewing the previous week's goals to determine the progress. The SCs will engage with the child, family, and others who may be present during the session. Visits are flexible and may assume different scenarios. For example, a visit may take place while sitting on the floor putting together a puzzle. Other visits may take place in the community at the zoo, in the public library at story time, or at the child's place of care.

Beyond the point of educating, service coordinators excel at coaching. Families benefit most when the SCs work with them and their child in a familiar, routine setting, where they can practice the skills they need to overcome the daily challenges they face. "The role of the SC is to coach the family and support them rather than just teach them. We are all a team working together to support not only the child, but also the family," said service coordinator, Marie Silveira. With two young sons referred for EI services, Leanne and her family benefited greatly from the SC coaching model. "From the beginning, Leanne displayed her intuition to take over as the SC stepped back. This is what we want to happen and she did this instinctively," Marie said.

During the initial visit, the SC and the family will determine the goals for their unique Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and how the goals will be achieved. There may be short- and long-term goals for the child as well as the family. In Leanne's case, this was Marie's first IFSP where the initial goals were geared more toward the family, for these would directly help the child. Goals specifically for the child were determined at a later time.

Leanne's middle son, CJ, was 6 months old when he began exhibiting gross motor delays in addition to screaming to communicate. CJ's pediatrician recommended further testing and CJ was diagnosed with disruptive behavior disorder and visual coordination disorder, which affects his fine-motor skills. He started Physical Therapy services and showed signs of improvement with pulling up and walking.

Leanne's youngest son, Jonathan, was referred by his pediatrician for an EI evaluation because he was not yet crawling or pulling himself up to stand, he was exhibiting other gross motor delays, and he was also screaming as his form of communication. The evaluation determined that Jonathan would benefit from EI services as well as Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapies.

In as little as three months, Jonathan displayed a tremendous sign of improvement. He started pulling himself up and taking steps, which were huge milestones. One of the IFSP goals addressed Jonathan's screaming. In order to strengthen the mode of communication in the home, Jonathan and his mom were taught sign language. At just 18 months, Jonathan is replacing screaming with sign language and continues to use it more each day.

During one of Jonathan's first visits, Marie recognized that CJ would benefit from a few more supports. Leanne concurred, saying "CJ was a handful. He had a lot of behaviors and was starting to hurt [Jonathan] his younger brother. Marie was able to supply me with strategies on how to handle his behavior and better support all of my children." Marie provided strategies on how to support CJ while Leanne's attention was given to Jonathan. Marie was also instrumental in referring Leanne to services outside of EI. A referral to the Brown Center secured the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for assistance in preschool.

// Early Intervention has given me the strategies to not only support my children, but to also support my family. //

— Leanne

SHRI EI Service Coordinator Julie Pallante received a referral for a child who was turning 3 in eight months. Pallante immediately started the evaluation process as time was of the essence for this child and his family. The child's behavioral self-regulation challenges required an evaluation with a developmental pediatrician, which would delay the plan of services. Upon completion of the evaluations, "staff immediately jumped into action and provided strategies for mom to help her son regulate his body," Pallante said. "Throughout the process, mom was very invested in her son's journey and the progress he could make."

When the SHRI EI team started services, the child's vocabulary only consisted of a few words. Communicating these words often ended in frustration and tears. The staff initiated a strategy for the child's mom to use pictures to help her son communicate. She used her phone to take photos of objects and people in his environment that would make sense to him. He is learning to communicate in helpful ways that are building his vocabulary. Julie credits the mom's tremendous dedication to her son's progress. She was determined for his success.



Early Intervention is a vital service for young children during their early years of development. Laurie pointed out that "research continues to prove that the sooner you provide supports the better the outcome the child will have in the long run. Additionally, education to families, childcare providers and educators is key." Early Intervention is a free service through Medicaid and public funding. The family does not have to have their own medical insurance in order to qualify for or receive services. In most cases, services do not follow the child past the age of 3. However, if a child displays the need for services beyond the age of 3, EI will start working with the child and family at the age of 2 to ensure a seamless transition to a carryover of services.

To learn more about SHRI Early Intervention, contact Laurie Farrell, director, at [401.921.1470](tel:401.921.1470).

 **Seven Hills**
Rhode Island
An Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation



VSA MA Managing Director Nicole Agois, CATA Executive Director Margaret Keller, and Director of the Worcester Art Museum Matthias Waschek

OUTSIDE THE BOX EXHIBITS A.R.T. AND FREE EXPRESSIONS

The Open Door Gallery's Outside the Box exhibit at the Worcester Art Museum is proving that artistic talent cannot be hindered despite limitations. Outside the Box explores the imagination and resourcefulness of people with significant disabilities through two specialized art techniques, Artistic Realization Technologies (A.R.T.) and Free Expressions. Through the use of a laser, a tracker, and creative communication methods, artists from Seven Hills Pediatric Center (SHPC) and the Community Access to the Arts (CATA) created the beautiful abstract paintings that are currently on display.

Designed by Ted Lefens, A.R.T. gives artists who don't have the use of their hands, voice, or both, the resources to "paint," by moving their head or wrist, which is strapped with a target laser. The artist indicates colors, textures, brushes, and the direction they want to paint on the canvas. The tracker asks yes or no questions to elicit responses that range from slight verbalizations to expressive grins.

"I know I am on the right track when he lets out a big smile," said David Munyaka, a tracker for SHPC artist, Isaiah. "He even puts those smiles into the designs of his work."

Artists and staff from SHPC and CATA celebrated their amazing work with guests, family members, and partners at the exhibit's opening on October 9. "All of us have a unique perspective on life that we like to share," said CATA Executive Director Margaret Keller. "It is so important for our artists with disabilities to have an outlet where they can share their perspective."

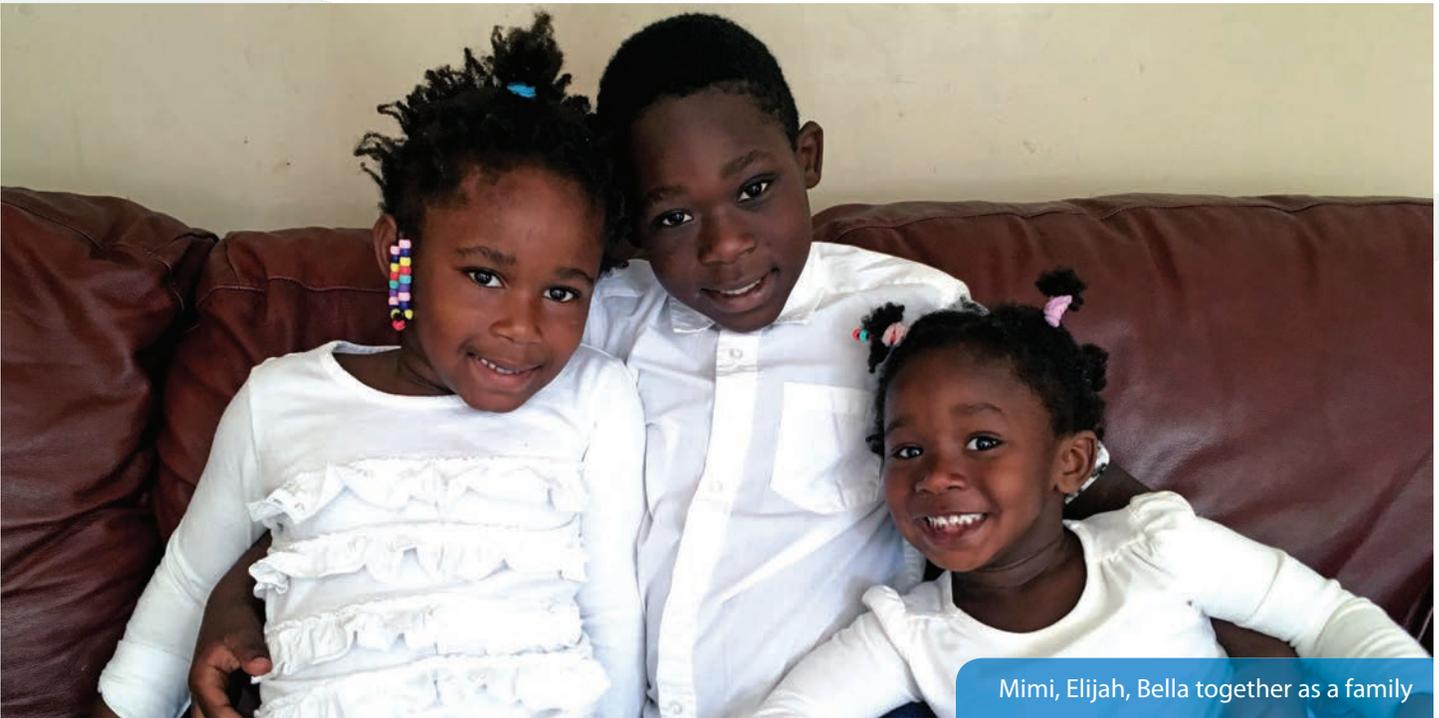
CATA's mission is to nurture and celebrate the creativity of people with disabilities through the arts. They work with over 800 artists throughout western Massachusetts and parts of New York. CATA has had a longstanding partnership with VSA Massachusetts, which helped to bring 25 of their artists who use the A.R.T. technique to display their work in Outside the Box.

"This was a great way to collaborate with CATA as this exhibition shows the lengths that both organizations will go to support our participants," said Nicole Agois, managing director of VSA Massachusetts. "Without A.R.T., we would not be able to find out how creative people with disabilities can be or how creative we can be for people with disabilities."



Tracker David and Artist Isaiah posing in front of Isaiah's painting

Outside the Box will be on display until January 9, 2020.



Mimi, Elijah, Bella together as a family

CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH LOVE AND STABILITY

“I was single with no children and decided that while I didn’t need to be someone’s wife, I did need to be someone’s mother,” said Debra. Nearly half of the roughly 12,000 children in the Massachusetts state foster care system cannot go home to their birth families. Many of the children in the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) have a goal of adoption, but have yet to be matched with a loving family. Children’s Friend, the oldest adoption agency in central Massachusetts, has been helping children and families since their first finalized adoption in the early 1850s.

Today, Children’s Friend helps match children in care with loving and devoted parents in the stable and secure homes they so desperately need. Children’s Friend adoption services are free, all-inclusive, and provide the individualized attention and quicker process only a small private agency can offer.

Adoption is a multistep process that starts with a social worker intake, completion of an application and background check, and progresses to MAPP (Massachusetts Approach to Partnership in Parenting) training. After MAPP, prospective families undergo a Home Study that identifies each family’s strengths and the type of child that would be the best fit. Once the Home Study is approved, a family becomes licensed and ready to welcome a child or sibling group into their home.

Through Children’s Friend, Debra fulfilled her dream of becoming a mother by adopting three children. “Choosing Children’s Friend to help me become a mom is the greatest decision of my life...today, nine years later, I have three happy, healthy adopted children—and though it’s busy and even chaotic in moments (many moments)—I feel like the luckiest person on earth!” Debra is grateful to her social worker, Caroline, who advocated for and supported her every step of the way. “I would encourage anyone who wants to become a parent to pursue adoption through the state. It certainly isn’t an easy process, but in my case it was well worth all the time, effort and emotion that I invested. Thank you to Children’s Friend for the impactful role you have played in my life. I am so very grateful.”

CONSIDER STARTING OR GROWING YOUR FAMILY THROUGH CHILDREN’S FRIEND

If you are interested in opening your home to one of the 1,100+ children in Massachusetts who are waiting for a permanent adoptive family, please schedule an appointment with the Children’s Friend adoption staff at [508.753.5425](tel:508.753.5425).

 **Children’s Friend**
An Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation

JOHN AMICO'S LEGACY CREATES UNIFIED SPORTS IN NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS.



// John was an amazing man. My cousin, John, thought he was in charge of me growing up. Through him, I learned that everyone is the same with just some differences in learning. Yet, we all should have the same expectations of BEING A GOOD PERSON," said John's cousin, Gina Bernard, senior family support specialist at Seven Hills' North Central Family Support Center (NCFSC).

John Amico recently passed away due to complications of Alzheimer's and Down syndrome. However, his spirit for sports, especially baseball, will be his legacy. All who knew John remembers his upbeat outlook on life and giving a wink or a high-five.

When John was born 65 years ago, doctors told his parents, Emilia and Anthony Sr., to place him in an institution as they advised all families of children with Down syndrome to do at the time. To others, this may have seemed to be the best option for their child's care. However, John's parents knew it was not an option for them. Their refusal to institutionalize John led them on a journey to inclusion. Early on, their journey proved to be successful and John was one of the first two children with Down syndrome to attend Leominster Public Schools. John's parents continued to actively pursue inclusive opportunities for him throughout his life.



Emilia and Anthony Sr. were pioneers in establishing the ARC of Massachusetts, an agency located in the north central region that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy. John participated in the ARC's supported employment program, where he earned a paycheck every week. "Not only was he part of these pioneering efforts to teach life skills, he was also a participant in the very first version of the Special Olympics," said Anthony Amico, John's brother.

John loved sports and participated on the swim team, and played bocce and baseball, which was his favorite. Up until a few years ago, the ARC of Massachusetts offered inclusive opportunities for people with disabilities including unified sports, in which John participated for many years and earned many medals. Funding for these programs was not reinstated, however, leaving many people including John with few or no extracurricular activities.

The North Central Family Support Center has received donations in John's memory, which will provide funding for a few of the unified sports that so many have missed and hoped would someday again be available. Through the donations, the NCFSC plans to offer a swim social, a bocce group, and two baseball teams. The sports will be unified (consisting of individuals and community players) and available to all, regardless of agency association or location of residence.

The swimming social will be offered to beginner and advanced swimmers of all ages, starting in January 2020. The Italian American Club of Leominster will host bocce once a week for people, aged 45+ starting in June. John's favorite, baseball, will start in May in Fitchburg. During John's sports career, he earned the nickname, Boomer. In John's honor, the sports teams will be named the Seven Hills Boomers. Donations have also funded uniform jerseys for both baseball teams. John's community involvement brought him much happiness. His spirit will continue through these unified sport teams and bring many medals to the participants as they did to him.

PLAY ON OUR TEAM!

Opportunities to participate, volunteer, or become a partner on a team will be included along with details and sign-up information in the winter 2019 issue of *PRIDE*. To learn more, please contact Kathy Black, Community Connections / Family Support specialist at kblack@sevenhills.org or phone 978.602.8697.

Sharing is Caring Give the Gift of **ARTS FOR ALL**



Donate online at sevenhills.org today!

Just imagine the possibilities, then take the leap from thinking to creating! Releasing imagination through the therapeutic value of the arts can have impactful results.

Everyone has talents and interests to bring to the table, the easel, the stage, the instrument. **Access to the Arts for All** through Therapeutic Arts provides outlets to nurture and hone our innate abilities. Throughout Seven Hills, we are tapping into a collective force that is being driven by self-expression at the creative core of the children and adults with disabilities, brain injury, and significant life challenges we support.

"Art can make anyone forget about their problems and just be happy. If I'm having a bad day, as soon as I get to the art museum, I put it on paper. That makes me smile." —Ramona, ASPIRE! artist

Therapeutic Arts bring comfort and joy. Give the gift of **Access to the Arts for All** and bring the joy of self-expression for artists of **All** abilities.

 **Seven Hills**
Foundation & Affiliates



93 cents of every dollar directly improves lives.

Just imagine the comfort and joy your gift will bring!



END OF SUMMER BBQ STOKES CORE VALUES FOR SEVEN HILLS NEUROCARE

Seven Hills Foundation's core values were on display in Paxton on Saturday, September 14, as the team from Seven Hills NeuroCare (SHNC) on Suomi Drive hosted an end-of-summer BBQ. The afternoon gathering recognized the Seven Hills affiliate's dedication to the Core Value of "Service to Others" by providing guests with a full BBQ feast, a DJ, raffles, games, and an interactive drum circle, in which everyone was invited to participate. Seven Hills staff, friends, and family all took part in the rhythmic and inclusive activity performed by Tara Murphy of Cape Cod African Dance and Drum. Fits of heavy rain couldn't dampen the spirits of attendees and what culminated in an uplifting celebration of the Seven Hills community, culture, and individuals we support. Special recognition is extended to Kerry McGowan, area director for SHNC and her staff for exemplifying another Seven Hills Core Value, Teamwork, in the planning and success of this amazing event.



NEW AFFILIATE SET TO EXPAND SEVEN HILLS' SERVICES

As of January 1, 2020, Family Services of Central Massachusetts (FSCM), headquartered in Worcester, will officially become the 13th Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation. FSCM provides services and supports for hundreds of children, families, and individuals throughout central Massachusetts.

This affiliation will enable both organizations to build stronger programs for children, adults, and seniors, using the strengths and resources of both Seven Hills Foundation and FSCM. The organizations will be able to share and benefit from each other's depth of experience and community support expertise.

For 130 years, Family Services of Central Massachusetts has been serving the greater Worcester community as a valuable resource that provides high-quality support, guidance, and counseling. FSCM offers a diversity of programs and services that include individual, and child and family counseling; employee assistance; home care; community mediation, senior volunteer, and companion opportunities; and professional development for the early child care industry.



Dr. David A. Jordan and Jim Regan, FSCM



“Family Services of Central Massachusetts will continue to provide exceptional services to the central Massachusetts community, as it has for the past 130 years. Their services for children through seniors help those most vulnerable in our community, and together we will expand programming so that more individuals and families are strengthened and valued.”

— Dr. David A. Jordan, President of Seven Hills Foundation

Headquartered in Worcester, Seven Hills Foundation currently offers program sites at 160 locations throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island, employing nearly 4,000 professionals. In central Massachusetts, Seven Hills continues to expand its wide range of services that respond to the needs of the community. In 2017, Children's Friend became an affiliate, adding adoption, grief support, child and family counseling, and early childhood education to Seven Hills' supports.

“After an extensive and thorough process, it was clear that Seven Hills Foundation offered the best path forward for FSCM to continue to fulfill its mission. This affiliation will ensure that Family Services of Central Massachusetts will have the financial stability and programmatic capacity to continue providing

our current services to people in central Massachusetts for years to come. This affiliation will also provide the leverage to expand into other areas of need in the community as they arise, preserving FSCM's legacy of responsive service provision,” said Jim Regan, who will continue leading the organization as vice president of the new affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation.

“We are pleased to be associating with an organization as respected and focused on quality outcomes for children and adults with life challenges as is the Seven Hills Foundation. This is a win-win for our organization, clients, and staff,” said Dr. Carol Donnelly, newly elected board chair, who will be leading the FSCM Board and staff through the affiliation process.

GRANTING GOOD WORK!

Seven Hills Foundation is fortunate to leverage grant and contract support from numerous sources to strengthen and expand our work across our 12 affiliates located in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Funds raised support programs or projects not typically funded through existing funding streams and provide us with unique opportunities to develop and implement innovative and creative initiatives that enhance the lives of people faced with significant life challenges. The following highlight recently funded projects:



ACTIVATING HEALTH THROUGH SKILL BUILDING, EDUCATION, & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Sustainable Farming: Activating Health through Skill Building, Education, & Community Partnerships is an innovative approach to alleviating health disparities for people with disabilities that result from underemployment and poor access to healthy foods and nutrition education. The generous funding of \$109,903 from The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts' Activation Fund will enable Seven Hills ASPIRE! to expand its workforce training in food service by introducing sustainable farming as a potential career track. At the same time, participants will learn how to grow fresh vegetables and incorporate healthy nutrition into their lives. Seven Hills has established strategic new partnerships with the Regional Environmental Council (REC); Town to Table, a local Hydroponics consulting company; and the City of Worcester, in order to install accessible raised garden beds and vertical hydroponic tower gardens in six community-based day and employment support sites in central Massachusetts. A large-scale Community Garden will be installed at the Café Seven Hills job training site at Coes Park in Worcester. Additional funding from Bank of America Charitable Foundation, National Grid Foundation, and TD Charitable Foundation has been instrumental in strengthening workforce readiness at Coes Park in the areas of hospitality, café management, facilities maintenance, and landscaping.



NEIGHBORHOOD CHAMPIONS — ADVANCING ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Seven Hills ASPIRE! is the proud recipient of Bank of America Charitable Foundation's first-ever Neighborhood Champions grant awarded to a central Massachusetts organization. The Neighborhood Champions program focuses on nonprofit leadership development and advancing economic mobility in the central Massachusetts market. The \$50,000 grant, payable over two years, will support the ASPIRE! Workforce Readiness and Employment Program for adults and transition-aged youth with disabilities, and expansion efforts that include a new Café Seven Hills and community garden at Coes Park in Worcester. The new job-training site will offer opportunities for skills development in the areas of customer interaction, cafe and small-shop operations, healthy food service, responsible agriculture/permaculture, landscaping, and facilities maintenance. The grant will also provide opportunities for ASPIRE Vice President Dr. Jay Hayston to participate in a virtual leadership development program where he will engage with and learn from other nonprofit leaders/awardees from around the country.

ADVANCING STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY FOR CHILD CARE ISSUES (CAFS)

Children's Aid & Family Service (CAFS) received a sub-contract from Child Care Aware® of America, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, to advance state-level advocacy around local child care issues in Massachusetts. Funded through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, CAFS was the lead Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agency with active participation from all seven CCR&Rs across the Commonwealth in hosting a legislative breakfast at the Massachusetts State House on November 14. The breakfast featured CCR&Rs there to inform legislators about their district's specific data, particularly with regard to waitlists for child

care subsidies, the number of children who access child care vouchers, and the number of providers who accept subsidy payments. CCR&Rs will also host future legislative open houses at their respective locations to build upon information disseminated at the legislative breakfast. The goal of this initiative is to strengthen advocacy and funding that supports low-income children and families in need of quality early childhood education and care.



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH FAMILY FUN (CAFS)

Children's Aid and Family Service (CAFS) received a grant from the United Way of North Central Massachusetts in support of the Strengthening Families Program. The \$13,500 award will allow CAFS to continue to provide at-risk families in north central Massachusetts with access to family fun events while educating parents about healthy child development and the protective factors that help children and families thrive. Now in its ninth year, CAFS' Strengthening Families Program has become a well-known and important community resource in the region. For more information, contact Deanna Wilbur at [978.602.8657](tel:978.602.8657) or strengthfam@gmail.com.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY – ACCESSIBILITY CAPACITY CAMP

Nicole Agois, managing director of VSA Massachusetts (VSA MA), was recently invited to participate in the Social Innovation Forum's Capacity Camp sponsored by the Liberty Mutual Foundation. This yearlong program focuses on the professional development of non-profit leaders in the area of inclusion and accessibility for people with all abilities. VSA MA will receive a stipend of \$5,000 to support Ms. Agois' participation in the program. This capacity-building support is in addition to a generous grant from Liberty Mutual Foundation in the amount of \$60,000 to support VSA MA's COOL Schools Program in FY20.

UNRESTRICTED GRANTS TO SUPPORT ARTS-BASED PROGRAMS

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) has awarded VSA Massachusetts, Inc. with a Cultural Investment Portfolio grant in the amount of \$11,300, providing unrestricted general operating support in FY20. MCC is a state agency that promotes excellence, inclusion, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and sciences; fosters a rich cultural life for all Massachusetts residents; and contributes to the vitality of our communities and economy. The Council pursues this mission through a wide range of grants, initiatives, and advocacy for artists, communities, organizations, and schools.



BRISTOL COUNTY HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS

The Bristol County Sheriff's Office has awarded Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH) with two new contracts totaling \$90,000 to provide Substance Abuse and Educational Services, and Co-Occurrence and Aftercare Services to inmates at the Bristol County Correctional Facilities. Seven Hills community health workers travel to these facilities on a daily basis to provide inmates with services such as HIV and Narcan educational programs, substance abuse programs, relapse prevention, anger management programs, basic life skills, group work, individual case management, and community information and resources. Seven Hills Behavioral Health is very pleased to continue this important work and honored to have the support of the Bristol County Sheriff's Office once again.

BASIC NEEDS ENHANCE INDEPENDENCE IN RHODE ISLAND (SHRI)

Customer's Bank has awarded Seven Hills Rhode Island a \$3,000 grant to purchase assistive technology for participants with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With this grant, SHRI will be able to provide items that will assist individuals in doing normal, everyday movements that a person without a disability could easily take for granted, such as switching on a lamp or holding onto an object. Assistive Technology purchased through this grant will also provide individuals with equipment that will help them communicate with staff and their peers while participating in their daily activities at SHRI.

SPOTLIGHT

SEVEN HILLS ASPIRE! (ASPIRE!)

Between August 7-9, 2019, each of the ASPIRE! locations was visited by surveyors on behalf of the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF is a three-year accreditation required in Massachusetts for day habilitation programs, and an excellent best-practice accreditation for other day program models to pursue. Seven Hills is a leader in the field regularly applying CARF standards to each of its day services in addition to the day habilitation programs where it is required. Seven Hills is pleased to announce that ASPIRE! passed its visit with flying colors and has achieved another full three-year accreditation.

The Community-Based Day and Employment Services (CBDES)

program is enjoying an increase in active referrals to our programs located in Milford, Worcester, and Devens. The employment services team working on Mass Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) contracts grew this summer in response to expanded contracts: ASPIRE! is now providing **pre-employment transition** services to high school students in the Framingham area, as well as **competitive integrated employment** supports in the Fitchburg area. These are two new MRC regions for which ASPIRE! had not previously provided services.



ASPIRE! welcomed many new aides and interns this past summer. These included four interns from the Department of Developmental Services' Urban Youth Collaborative Program; four summer aides; Young Neighbors in Action, a faith-based service-learning group; and two Youthworks interns from the city.

Major summer events included barbecues or carnivals at each location, as well as the Open Door Gallery's Botanica Fantastica exhibit at the Worcester Art Museum, where dozens of pieces by ASPIRE! artists were featured. A new, regular volunteer site was launched at the St. Mary's School, and a new, daily group employment site was launched at Medline Industries.

SEVEN HILLS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (SHBH)

The **Psychiatric Day Treatment Program** provides clinical psychotherapy and rehabilitation services for adults with chronic mental health conditions and co-occurring disorders. This recovery-oriented program offers intensive group therapies and focused activities in a supportive environment to enable clients to acquire realistic and adaptive behaviors, as well as the attitudes and skills needed for independent functioning in the community. Some clients participate in volunteer work designed to build competency, self-esteem, and community development. SHBH currently supports roughly 25 clients each day. Clients enjoyed a summer filled with outings and enjoyed a Labor Day "cook-in" to celebrate the beginning of fall.

Throughout recent months, the **Southeast Tobacco-Free Community Partnership** has worked in Barnstable, Chatham, Middleboro, and Marion to assist the Boards of Health in successfully passing flavored tobacco restriction regulations. The Community Partnership

helped to educate the Boards of Health before the public hearings through various presentations on vaping and flavored tobacco and tobacco industry tactics, testified in support of the proposed regulations at each town's public hearing, and successfully mobilized community members to support the proposed regulations.

The Community Partnership continues to raise awareness for regulation of vaping and flavored tobacco to various groups and agencies. Recently, the Community Partnership presented at Northeastern University's Summer Academy for School Nurses in Hyannis, at the Department of Youth Services in Taunton, at a continuing education event for pharmacists in Eastham, and at the Justice Resource Institute in Attleboro.

The Tobacco-Free Community Partnership attended a Massachusetts Health Council educational event, Vaping: Addiction & the Adolescent Brain. The Community Partnership gained insight to various vaping topics at this event, including adolescent nicotine addiction and prevention, the public health scope of youth vaping, and more. Speakers included Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, and Dr. Nicholas Chadi. Various panelists also discussed vaping diversion, cessation, and access, which helped provide valuable information to include in the Community Partnership's work in the community.

Medical case managers working in the **Community Health Promotion Services** program continue to engage with HIV+ clients to conduct assessments, re-assessments, and to address their medical and social needs on a monthly basis. The majority of clients need food, medical transportation, and housing.

HIV Prevention & Screening activities continue to take place in high-risk areas from Wareham to Attleboro and include venues such as correctional facilities, inpatient detox units, streets, halfway houses, methadone clinics, rest areas, clubs, and social service agencies. Recruitment and outreach in high-risk areas continue to be the core of the program. Community Outreach staff utilize SHBH Outreach vans to canvas areas to meet potential clients where they are and work to engage them with prevention and screening services.

Overdose Prevention/Narcan Enrollments have been very active in the southeast communities. The program continues to enroll families, friends, loved ones, and users in the Narcan program through the target areas of Wareham, New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton, Attleboro, Dartmouth and Norton.

Post-Overdose Ride Along Services pair Harm Reduction Specialists with local police in Fall River and New Bedford to support individuals who have overdosed and their family members to get information that informs appropriate and effective services. Referrals to community organizations are made and follow-up care is offered. These interactions focus on providing necessary care, removing stigma associated with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), and breaking down barriers between community members and police.

The **Syringe Service Programs** in Taunton, Fall River, Dartmouth, Wareham, and Fairhaven provide safe needle exchange for people who inject drugs. SHBH also provides Department of Public Health-approved kiosks in three locations in Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton.

The **Food Pantry** continues to be a valuable community resource for many clients who are homeless or struggling



to put food on their table. SHBH actively pursues grants and individual donations in order to stock the pantry and meet the growing demand for food in the community.

The **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP)** staff has met with principals at the Normandin Middle School and New Bedford High School to plan this year's activities. The GEAR UP program follows a cohort of students beginning in seventh grade through high school with a goal to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. The GEAR UP program hosted a kick-off picnic at New Bedford High School on August 19, and had over 500 students and parents attend.

SEVEN HILLS COMMUNITY SERVICES (SHCS)

In more than 50 communities throughout Massachusetts, individuals with disabilities live in a variety of residential arrangements supported through Seven Hills Community Services. SHCS operates more than 120 **Group Residential Homes** and provides **Individual Supports** to others who are living in their own apartments. SHCS works collaboratively to ensure safety, quality, autonomy, and respect in each living arrangement. Through community-based supports, Seven Hills strives to increase each person's control and independence. A person-centered approach provides the highest quality of life for each individual.

Staff at a home in Andover recently helped make a significant difference in the life of one of its new residents who previously lived in a state institution. Depressed and withdrawn for years prior to his move, staff encouraged this individual to participate in activities in and around his new home. Through these efforts, the individual rekindled his love of "tinkering" and found new joy and purpose in restoring old bicycles, lawn mowers, and other items that staff found for him. These accomplishments have helped the new resident develop a sense of self-worth and have provided him with a renewed sense of purpose. He came to SHCS with the "know-how," but his depression had masked his abilities. Examples such as this can be found throughout SHCS because of dedicated staff with an unparalleled commitment to helping those supported find their passion and thrive.



Maximo Lorenzo-Ramirez received the **Gerry Wright Direct Service Employee Award of Excellence** at the Providers Council 44th Annual Convention & Expo. The Gerry Wright award is given each year to a direct support professional who provides exceptional supports and care to individuals. Mr. Lorenzo-Ramirez has provided support and guidance to people residing in our southeast homes. He has an amazing ability to build rapport and trust with the people we support, which has assisted them to make considerable personal growth.

SEVEN HILLS FAMILY SERVICES (SHFS)

Seven Hills is the go-to source for families supporting a loved one with a disability. Our three **Family Support Centers (FSCs)** located in Fitchburg, Sturbridge, and Worcester, Massachusetts provides information and referral services to a vast array of resources and activities geared toward helping people with disabilities and their families lead full lives in their communities.

The FSCs are always busy coordinating many fun and educational events for individuals and families. This past quarter, offerings have included Yugio Club, Anime Club, Ipad Club, Summer with a Purpose (6-week camp), Art Classes, Outdoor Movie, Drum Circle, Woodworking, Creative Minds, Open Mic Night, Mini Golf, Bowling, Self Advocacy, GEO Caching, Adaptive Exercise Class, Paint Night, Ice Cream Night, Care for the Caregiver, Wills and Trusts, SSI Information, Housing Options, Support Group discussions, Healthier Minds, Self Direction Focus Group, Connecting the Dots to your IEP, and more. *PRIDE*, the quarterly newsletter of Seven Hills Family Services, promotes a vast array of "Community Connection" opportunities offered in central Massachusetts to children and adults with disabilities. *PRIDE* offerings can be found on the Seven Hills website under the "What's Happening" tab or by calling one of the FSC locations to be added to the *PRIDE* mailing list: Worcester, [508.796.1850](tel:508.796.1850); Fitchburg, [978.632.4322](tel:978.632.4322); Sturbridge, [774.241.2500](tel:774.241.2500).

Shared Living continues to grow at a fast pace and is now the preferred service model of state agencies instead of group residential placements. Shared Living Providers are compassionate caregivers who welcome adults with developmental disabilities into their homes and lives. Providers are professionally trained and well matched with the individuals

in their care to ensure stability, safety, health, and welfare, and provide personal care, homemaker services, meals, transportation, and socialization. The Provider receives professional supports and services to help them provide optimum care, and also receives a tax-free stipend. Both Providers and individuals supported frequently form lasting bonds and find this a rewarding experience. To learn more about becoming a Provider, call [508.796.1868](tel:508.796.1868).

SEVEN HILLS GLOBAL OUTREACH (SHGO)

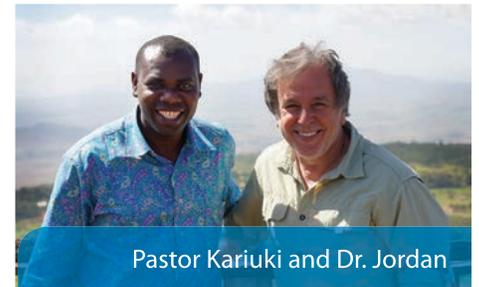
Seven Hills Global Outreach works to support humanitarian efforts around the world, driven by the diversity and energy of Seven Hills employees. Since 2009, SHGO has touched the lives of more than 17,000 people in need in eight developing nations. SHGO addresses the critical need for potable water, food, clothing, education, and healthcare through the support of Seven Hills Foundation staff and partnerships with organizations in developing countries to sustain local solutions to these challenges.



Grow Hope Foundation is a leading Liberian and East African charitable organization in Massachusetts that support the needs of children in developing communities. Grow Hope recently announced the establishment of the "**Dr. David A. Jordan Distinguished Service Award**" on behalf of our President and founder of Seven Hills Global Outreach. This annual award serves as a token of appreciation and respect for the humanitarian work that Dr. Jordan has led over the past 10 years in many countries within the developing

world. Through his leadership and direct efforts, nearly 20,000 of the world's poorest women and children are being cared for and uplifted.

At their October 19 ceremonies, the Grow Hope Foundation granted the first Dr. David A. Jordan Distinguished Service Award to **Dr. Wendy Haynes** for her efforts to bring the new Nelson Mandela-Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders initiative to Bridgewater State University.



Seven Hills staff members were recently invited to attend the Seven Hills Global Outreach **annual meeting** held this year on September 27. During the luncheon, staff learned about current and future work being done with SHGO's partner organizations.

A fundraising campaign is underway to build a desperately needed school and to purchase medical equipment for a hospital in Kibera, Kenya. Kibera is considered the largest urban slum in Africa, with a population of nearly 1.5 million people per 1.4 square miles. "The poverty and desperation in Kibera is beyond description when compared to our lives here in the U.S. Lack of drinkable water and limited health and educational opportunities for children and mothers is commonplace," said Dr. David A. Jordan at a recent SHGO event with prospective donors. At this critical time, SHGO is working with Pastor Samuel Kariuki and our Kenyan partners and donors to raise **\$25,000** to purchase and ship critical gynecological and related medical

equipment to a rural medical clinic outside of Nairobi, and to raise \$50,000 to build a new school for the children in Kibera. Any groups, churches, civic organizations, businesses, or individuals interested in supporting the work of Seven Hills Global Outreach in Kenya are encouraged to contact Danielle Painchaud, executive assistant to Dr. David A. Jordan, at [508.983.1301](tel:508.983.1301).

SEVEN HILLS NEUROCARE (SHNC)

Seven Hills NeuroCare continues to solidify its reputation as a leader in strengthening the Commonwealth's system of care for people with acquired brain injury (ABI). In addition to actively participating as members of the Brain Injury Committee assembled by the Association of Developmental Disability Providers (ADDP), Seven Hills NeuroCare collaborates closely with the Brain Injury Association of America's Massachusetts chapter (BIA-MA) to strengthen services and supports for people with brain injury. **Dr. Joseph Ricciardi**, director of clinical services at SHNC, recently served on the committee for the Commonwealth's most important conference dedicated to survivors of ABIs, and helped the BIA-MA offer continuing education for behavior analysts for the first time in the history of the conference. This is an important outcome for our system of care, as the needs of people with ABI have become increasingly complex, requiring a multidisciplinary cadre of providers. **Dr. Jonathan Worcester**, vice president of SHNC, recently provided verbal and written testimony in response to the request of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) for public comment on Rates of Payment for Services to Participants in the Home and Community-Based Services Waivers. Dr. Worcester also offered public comment to the Brain Injury Commission regarding recommendations to improve services and resources available to people with

ABIs. At each of these meetings, SHNC was the only provider agency to be represented, thereby reinforcing the affiliate's position as both a leader of fellow providers and advocate for the needs of people with ABI.

The **SHNC clinical team** continues to support people with challenging neurological presentations with stellar outcomes. As a direct result of consistent implementation of neurorehabilitation strategies across our 14 programs statewide, staff members have helped participants achieve a quality of life they could not have imagined. From helping them attend important family milestones and vacations to supporting them through multiple behavioral and medical crises, SHNC staff works hard each and every day to uphold Seven Hills' Core Values and apply them to real-life situations. Outcomes such as these are not outliers; they are increasingly becoming the norm. Perhaps this is why colleagues in the Department of Developmental Services have reported that SHNC is the only organization providing 24-hour residential services that have begun to fade to a less restrictive level of care.

SEVEN HILLS PEDIATRIC CENTER (SHPC)

Seven Hills Pediatric Center at Groton ended the summer with an "Around the World in Adult Services" celebration where residents and staff participated in a virtual tour of the world, presented by each Adult Service classroom. Residents learned about the food, music, and the traditions of a variety of countries. The residents enjoyed the music and the colorful settings in each classroom and the staff enjoyed tasting a variety of new dishes!

The fall is an exciting time of year for all 12 residents of **Seven Hills Pediatric Center at Hopedale** as they transitioned

back to school. The Center staff is very pleased that all of the children are attending Bi-County Collaborative in Franklin, MA, where they are thriving at levels not previously seen. In addition to exceptional educational services, Bi-County staff has an adept understanding of each child's medical needs, which enhances their comfort and ability to enjoy their time in school.

SEVEN HILLS RHODE ISLAND (SHRI)

SHRI's **Residential Program** currently supports 63 participants living in group-home settings throughout Rhode Island. The exceptional staff continues to be recognized for the care and support provided to all residents, ensuring they are able to remain comfortable and safe in their homes.

Several staff working in one of our SHRI residences have been recognized for playing a significant role in **end of life care** for one of our participants as well as assisting her family through the process. The team went above and beyond in assisting the resident in checking off her "bucket list" as well as to ensure that she was happy and comfortable in her final days, surrounded by family and friends.

Support coordinator trainings have begun for interdepartmental team building and implementing person-centered planning and a person-centered approach. A half-day training was held August 15 with the adult service team, emphasizing collaboration.

SHRI is collaborating with the **Wounded Warrior Project** to provide community-based support services for individuals with brain injuries, neurological disorders, or neuromuscular conditions. Meetings are being scheduled to review the program and plan the next steps.

The **Rite@Home** Adult Family Care and Shared Living programs are experiencing success with an increase in participants since May 2019, due to the effective outreach campaigns, increased referrals from the multilingual communities in RI, and streamlining the intake process for new referral calls.

CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICE (CAFS)

This summer, **Child Care Resources (CCR)** was one of the very first CCRs in the country to undergo a Federal Audit for the use of Child Care funding. Kim Dion, assistant vice president, and all CCR staff did an excellent job preparing for the audit that went exceptionally well. As a result, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care is using CAFS as an example of an outstanding model for fiduciary responsibility.

The **CAFS Family Child Care (FCC)** Program continues to look for more in-home providers. FCC helps connect children with child care programs and provides guidance to in-home providers in the areas of curriculum development on early childhood education and learning.

The **Strengthening Families (SF)** Program, funded by The United Way of North Central Massachusetts, is underway and coordinates two family fun events each month at local venues throughout the community. The SF Coordinator also hosts two Parent Cafés throughout the year that provide parents with educational opportunities to learn about healthy child development. Information and referral to community resources are available at all SF activities and events held throughout the year.

In early September, 15 preschoolers who attended the **Child Enrichment Center** graduated with cap and gown from preschool. Families were thrilled to

participate in this joyous milestone and children received books and celebrated with their parents with cake and ice cream. The Center welcomed 12 new children this fall and is now operating at full capacity.

CHILDREN'S FRIEND (CF)

The **Ellsworth Child and Family Counseling Center** was recently relicensed by the Department of Public Health and continues to provide high-quality mental health counseling services to children living in central Massachusetts. Director of Clinical Services Dr. Johanna Sagarin and Vice President Karen Ludington continue to advocate for client needs and the current crisis in children's mental healthcare. In addition to attending a MassHealth "Listening Session" in June, Dr. Sagarin and Ms. Ludington, along with other local social service agency executives, met with Senator Ed Markey to discuss the current issues.

Children's Friend continues to provide children and families with its newest program, **In-Home Therapy**. Children must qualify for MassHealth to participate in this structured and strengths-based therapeutic service.

Adoption and Family Services finalized five adoptions over the summer, all causes for celebration. Children's Friend staff trained four of the families that celebrated their adoptions.

For over a year, there have not been enough judges in the Worcester Juvenile Court, so cases of children in foster care have been stalled. One new judge has begun presiding over cases, which we hope will have a positive impact on the scheduling of hearings on termination of parental rights and adoption finalizations.

The **Early Learning Center (ELC)** had a busy summer. In late August, six of its Pre-K students left for kindergarten, leaving a big hole in our census and our hearts. Some of these children had started at the ELC in the infant room, so they and their teachers have spent several happy years together. The vacant preschool and pre-K classrooms slots have since been filled with new students and the ELC infant and toddler classrooms are full.

The **Carriage House** continued to conduct intakes and orientations of new families throughout the summer. Carriage House Manager Emily Mullen organized a volunteer facilitator training on September 19-21 to kick off programming that occurs from October to June of each year. The Carriage House provides free peer support groups, led by trained staff and volunteers, to children and teens following the death of a parent, caregiver, or sibling. Adult support groups are also available to the caregivers of children and teens participating in peer support.

STETSON SCHOOL

In August, members of **Stetson School's Student Council** awarded \$9,000 in grants to local non-profits including the Barre Theater, Barre Historical Society, Barre Library Association, and Barre Youth Baseball/Softball League as part of its Community Impact Grant awards program. This new program has taught the students about philanthropy and giving back to the community. Students helped to develop a "request for



proposals” and invited local non-profit organizations to apply. The students collaboratively read and evaluated each proposal to determine how they wanted to distribute the money.

An incentive program was offered to the campus to earn a trip to **Canobie Lake Park**. Twelve boys earned a day of fun at the park, thanks to their hard work in treatment, displaying safe behaviors, maintaining a clean environment, and being role models to their peers.

The **Education Department** gave students the opportunity each week to transfer skills they have learned to use within the community. Classes explored nature through hiking trips, went to playgrounds and interacted with kids in the community, visited the local nursing home to play games with the seniors, and participated in pick-up basketball games! Through this very successful program, the students have grown from this practice of using the skills they will need to become better members of their communities.

Stetson School held its annual **Festival Day** on the last day of summer school. This year’s theme was “Survivor” and students joined with their staff to complete mental and physical team-building challenges. One of the highlights of the day was a spirited game of Duck, Duck, Goose that each class participated in after completing their team challenge. The day culminated with each class solving a riddle that led to an ice cream sundae reward!

VSA MASSACHUSETTS (VSA MA)

As VSA MA closed out the 2018-2019 school year, it was a pleasure to look back at all that was accomplished in the **COOL Schools** programs. Over 1,700 students in 102 classrooms in 10 different partner schools throughout Boston and Gardner

engaged in learning and creating through the arts. Highlights included the creation of original fashion designs by students at Community Academy of Science and Health, the creation of an inclusive band at Charlestown High School, and logos designed in response to social justice issues at the Henderson Inclusion K-12 school. The 2019-2020 year is off to a creative start with 11 partner schools, including two new partners: the Seven Hills Charter School in Worcester, and the Trotter Elementary School in Boston. VSA MA looks forward to another year of learning and growth!

VSA MA provided **Professional Development** to educators, staff in arts, and cultural organizations on inclusion and the arts. Trainings on inclusive practices were conducted with staff at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, and docents and staff in the education department of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. VSA MA will be providing a full-day session to the entire staff and docent team at the Museum of Russian Icons in November, focusing on welcoming visitors with disabilities.

The **Open Door Gallery in Boston** is currently featuring *Brains are cool (even when they hurt)*, by Bethany Noél Murray. This third exhibit in the *Prisms: Perspectives on Hidden Disability* series explores Bethany’s experience with chronic migraines, as she searches for the balance between pain and beauty. Also in the *Prisms* series, this summer we featured the work of Arielle Gray, in her exhibit, *Dreams and Things*, which explored her identity as a queer Afro-Caribbean woman with bipolar disorder.

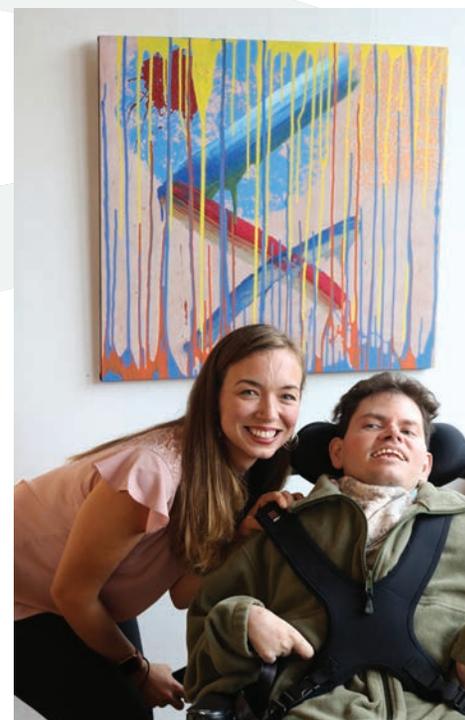
The **Open Door Gallery at the Worcester Art Museum** is hosting a remarkable collaborative exhibit, *Outside the Box*, which features artists from Seven Hills Pediatric Center and Community

Access to the Arts, all of whom use Artistic Realization Technologies and Free Expression to create works of art. Earlier this year, the gallery exhibited *Botanica Fantastica*, a collection of original artwork created by Seven Hills ASPIRE! artists that reflected a beautiful exploration of the natural world.

VSA Massachusetts is now Open Door Arts, and we are excited about the opportunity to reintroduce ourselves and our mission of inclusion in and through the arts to our communities. Our name change will coincide with an important milestone: our **40th birthday in 2020!** We look forward to celebrating these important events with our community.



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MAILING CHANGES?

If you are receiving duplicates, have a change of address, or wish to be removed, please contact Jennifer Wentworth at 508.983.1304 or jwentworth@sevenhills.org

sevenhills.org

 **Open Door Arts**
An Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation

**VSA Massachusetts
is now
Open Door Arts!**

We're excited to reintroduce ourselves and our mission of supporting inclusion through the arts with a new name that shares our commitment to collaboration and community.

To learn more, visit OpenDoorArtsMA.org

