



OPPORTUNITIES for INCLUSION

A New Name and a Bright Future

Formerly GWArc

OPPORTUNITIES for INCLUSION NEWS

May 2020

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From Gabriel Vonleh, Chief Executive Officer

Hello!

During this difficult and uncertain time of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, we are thinking of our program participants, their families and guardians, staff members, volunteers, community members, friends and supporters. We hope you are all staying healthy and safe.

In accordance with state guidelines, our on-site programs closed on March 17. **We are currently running remote online sessions on Zoom for all participants. Sessions are held Monday-Friday 10 AM-2:30 PM.** Our Adult Family Care (AFC) program has continued to operate by telehealth visits throughout this time.

See page 3 for more details about our remote online sessions, which are fun and educational, and have become very popular. To maximize access to these sessions, we have delivered a number of iPads used in our day programs to our participants at their family or group residences. This has enabled many more participants to join our remote sessions and helps us to keep individuals active and engaged. We are also calling all participants regularly to check on their health and how they are doing.

We have also begun online **Parent, Family and Guardian Advisory meetings**, which are scheduled every two weeks to share updates and hear your thoughts and ideas. All are welcome and encouraged to join these sessions. Meeting details have been emailed and mailed to all parents, families and guardians. For more information, please visit our website or call our main number at 781-899-1344.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Michael & Vincenza Vinciullo Charitable Foundation, we have been able to provide grocery store gift cards to many participants and their families who are struggling to have enough food on hand. The gift cards have been a great help to many and we will continue to provide gift cards as long as possible. Individuals and families are encouraged to contact us for assistance as needed.

We are beginning to consider strategies for reopening when the time is right, based on state guidance. We will have more details to share in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, please be in touch with any questions or comments. Take care and stay healthy!



Gabriel Vonleh
Chief Executive Officer

With humility and respect,

Gabriel Vonleh, MHA
Chief Executive Officer



Opportunities for
Inclusion is an affiliate of
The Arc of the U.S. and
The Arc of MA.

Staff & Other Updates



Welcome to:

John Freiberg, who joined us as **CBDS Day Support Assistant** in February. John holds a B.A. in psychology and addictions from Southern New Hampshire University, as well as certification in social and behavioral research. He has a variety of experience performing laboratory and interpersonal work in a clinical environment. John is currently putting his technology and other skills to use as co-host of our remote online programming.

Thank You to:

Our wonderful nurses! **National Nurses Week** was May 6 - May 12. We are proud to recognize them for all they do: Day Habilitation - Christine Dorn Dressler, RN; AFC Program - Barbara Dunker, RN, Joann Corbelle, RN, and Kathy Augustini, RN.

We also recognize and thank the health care workers, first responders, front line workers and essential staff in our community and beyond for their dedication and commitment to keeping us healthy and safe.

COVID-19 Safety Tips and Care

by Christine Dorn Dressler, RN, Coordinator of Health Services

These days we 're navigating a social horizon unlike anything we've experienced before. We have to do things differently to keep ourselves and those around us safe. It may seem difficult to know what actions are appropriate. Here are some tips for your safety (and sanity!).

- **Stay at home as much as you can.** The more you stay at home the less likely you will come in contact with the virus and, if you have it, the less likely you will expose others. While you are at home, try to stick to a routine and stay busy to fill your days with meaningful and satisfying activities. If you are still going to work, practice good hygiene and try to implement these tips as often as needed. Those in high risk categories (with underlying illness or the elderly) should stay at home as much as possible.
- **Stay 6 feet apart** (at least) from other people as much as possible. Avoid close contact with sick people and strangers. Limit your exposure by staying home. Remember this is *physical* distancing from people. You can (and should!) telephone, use apps and find other ways to stay connected to friends and loved ones.
- **Work on healthy habits.** Sure, rest and sleep are good ways to stay healthy, but why not take this time to work on a new exercise routine or tweak your diet with more healthy foods? Exercise will boost your mood and reduce anxiety. Adding more healthful food to your diet will add to your immune system and give you tasty treats to enjoy while feeling good about your choices. Meditation, yoga and outdoor walks are great ways to boost your mood.
- **Protect yourself and others. Wear a mask** when outdoors or when it's difficult to stay at least 6 feet away from others. When removing the mask only touch the ear loops or ties and not the front of the mask itself. Make sure you clean the mask according to the manufacturer's instructions often. If you have to cough or sneeze please do so into a tissue and then throw the tissue away and wash your hands.
- **Wash your hands.** Frequent, thorough handwashing is the best way to protect yourself. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you wash the back of the hands, wrists and scrape the nails across the palms to get underneath the fingernails. If washing your hands is not possible, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content, making sure you cover your hands completely. Wash your hands as soon as you can.
- **I might have COVID-19 symptoms, what should I do?** First, isolate yourself from others as much as possible. Call your doctor or another medical professional for guidance. Do not go to your doctor or urgent care unless they instruct you to do so. If you experience more severe symptoms (high fever, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips, face or nails, difficulty breathing, wheezing or shortness of breath) this may be an emergency and you should call 911 and tell them you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Don't forget about your overall health and safety.** Please call for help if you need it, no matter what kind of help you need.



Christine Dorn Dressler, RN, demonstrates wearing a mask.

Remote Online Programming on Zoom!



Good Morning! It's 10 AM on a weekday and individuals are eagerly connecting to our remote program on Zoom with their iPads, computers and phones. They're joining from their homes where they live with their families and from group residences where they live with housemates and residence staff. These popular weekday sessions are hosted by Leslie LeBlanc, Director of ECB, and John Freiberg, CBDS Day Support Assistant, with assistance from Christine Dorn Dressler, RN.

What goes on? A typical schedule includes:

- Morning meeting - check in with each participant, giving everyone an opportunity to say hello to friends, share what they've been doing and let us know if they need anything
- Short meditation/relaxation exercise
- Session on life skills, such as safety in the community, looking for a job
- Lunch break
- A variety of activities, including games (hangman, charades, name that tune), exercise, Zumba with Danny, music and singalong, and read-aloud stories
- Shortly before the session ends at 2:30 PM, participants share what they liked best about the day, and have an opportunity to request songs and activities for future days
- See the detailed schedule of activities on the back page

What activities do participants like best? Some recent responses:
 "Music!" "I love everything!" "Playing hangman and name that tune"
 "Life skills about interviewing for a job" "Exercise" "Music with James"

In the near future, we hope to add online remote sessions at additional times. We are also exploring adding Recreation events, such as dance parties, and online Watch City Self Advocates meetings.

You can find the weekly schedule of activities for our sessions on our website at OppsforInclusion.org. Do you have ideas for activities? Let us know!



James Jones, jazz musician and staff member in our Day Habilitation program, joins our remote online sessions twice a week.

Adult Family Care (AFC) Telehealth Visits

Our Adult Family Care (AFC) team has continued to operate throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Our AFC team of three RNs and a care manager is conducting remote visits to caregivers and participants by telephone and video chats.

We currently support nearly 50 caregivers and participants and continue to meet remotely with all our families at least once monthly. We are also working with potential new families who are interested in joining our program.

AFC is a program for individuals on MassHealth that are elders or individuals with a disability who require daily help or cueing and supervision with at least one activity of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, toileting, eating or ambulating. The caregiver receives a generous, tax-free monthly stipend for caring for this individual. Caregivers and participants receive ongoing support from a registered nurse and care manager on our AFC team.



We are proud of our recent survey results which reflect a satisfaction rate of over 99.5%! View the details and comments at OppsforInclusion.org/AFC-survey. Many people are already caring for a family member with a disability or an aging parent and may not be aware of this beneficial program. If you or anyone you know might benefit from this program or have any questions, please contact Barbara Dunker, RN, AFC Program Director, at 781-899-1344 x4710 or bdunker@oppsforinclusion.org.



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Electronic Newsletter

To receive our newsletter and other updates by email, please send an email message to jraymond@OppsforInclusion.org, call 781-899-1344 x4147, or visit OppsforInclusion.org



Scan with your smartphone to visit our website!



Opportunities for Inclusion is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

"Spring for Opportunities for Inclusion!"
Postponed

WCAC-TV The Waltham Channel's Spring 2020 Live TV Auction to benefit Opportunities for Inclusion, originally scheduled for April 14, 2020, was **postponed to a later date** (to be determined).

In the April 2019 photo at right, auction co-hosts Yolanda Cellucci and David Josef pose with guest host Waltham Mayor Jeannette McCarthy. We appreciate the support of WCAC-TV, our auction co-hosts and the community for this fundraising event!



We hope to celebrate our **50th Annual Harvest Breakfast** our signature community fundraiser in the Fall of 2020!
 Stay tuned for updates!

Remote Online Programming Schedule of Activities

Monday 5/25	Tuesday 5/26	Wednesday 5/27	Thursday 5/28	Friday 5/29
Holiday - Memorial Day 	10:00 AM <i>Good Morning!</i> Meet & greet, sharing			
	10:45 AM Meditation	10:45 AM Meditation	10:45 AM Meditation	10:45 AM Meditation
	11:00 AM Life Skills	11:00 AM Life Skills	11:00 AM Life Skills	11:00 AM Friday Funtivity
	11:30 LUNCH	11:30 LUNCH	11:30 LUNCH	11:30 LUNCH
	12:30 PM Game	12:30 PM Game	12:30 PM Game	12:30 PM Game
	12:45 PM Group Activity	12:45 PM Movement	12:45 PM Group Activity	12:45 PM Movement
	1:00 PM Movement	1:15 PM Music with James Jones	1:00 PM Movement	1:15 PM Music with James Jones
	1:30 PM Story Time	Music with James Jones	1:30 PM Story Time	Music with James Jones
	2:00 PM Music	2:00 PM More Music	2:00 PM Music	2:00 PM More Music
	2:20 Wrap up	2:20 Wrap up	2:20 Wrap up	2:20 Wrap up
	2:30 Close of Day			

YOU Can Make a Difference!

As we work to run our programs remotely and make plans to reopen our onsite programs when it's safe, please help us continue to provide high quality care and services to individuals we serve.

Please make your tax-deductible donation online at OppsforInclusion.org. Click on:



You can make your gift...

- in memory of someone special
- in honor of someone special
- to celebrate a special occasion (Birthday, Anniversary, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Graduation) and we will send an acknowledgement of your gift (without the amount) to the person(s) or family you designate.

Or mail a check to:
Opportunities for Inclusion
 56 Chestnut St.
 Waltham, MA 02453
Thank You!