



BFAIR BUZZ

Summer 2016



Jermaine Monson, a prideful participant in BFAIR's employment services program, cut the ribbon to kick-off business along with Mayor Richard Alcombright, Executive Director Rich Weisenflue, Director of Employment Services Kelly Brennan, and City of North Adams Administrative Officer Mike Canales.

Summer  Fun

BFAIR HAS BEEN SELECTED AS AN AGENCY WITH CHOICE SERVICES, BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

In a distinction by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), BFAIR is qualified to provide Agency with Choice Services for people living with disabilities. Sounds great, but what does that really mean? In a nutshell, the people that we support have the opportunity to select who they receive their services from, making this an empowering experience. How does DDS describe it?

“Agency With Choice is a way to support individuals/families to engage in self-determination. It is an approach to service delivery that supports people with disabilities to live the lives that they desire by allowing people to exercise authority over potential staff who support them. Agencies With Choice are provider agencies who agree to hire the individual staff workers you choose to provide services to you. This individual worker becomes an employee of the provider agency and the agency agrees to help you train and manage that staff person.”

PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENT



As BFAIR continues to follow a strategic growth plan, we are pleased to announce the promotion of Theresa Gelinas to Director of Program Operations for Day Services. A member of the BFAIR team since 2001, Theresa most recently served as the Director of Habilitative Services. In her new role, Theresa will be responsible for the supervision of the Day Habilitation Program, Homecare Services, Vocational Services, and other ancillary services.

Her experience within the organization marks a long-standing commitment to serving people living with disabilities. Ethel Altiery, Associate Executive Director, said of Theresa, “[her] skills and experience have grown steadily in conjunction with BFAIR’s expansion and diversity of service offerings.” Theresa’s roles at BFAIR have included directing the Day Habilitation Centers, managing the Acquired Brain Injury Waiver Program and Homecare services. Theresa has successfully completed CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) surveys for the Day Habilitation Program’s accreditation since 2003. She is also considered a trainer of the “Care for People with Alzheimer’s Disease” training from the Alzheimer’s Association. As Theresa prepares to take on her new role, Altiery continued, “I anticipate under Theresa’s supervision that our Day Services programs will flourish and demonstrate our commitment to offering people with disabilities and older adults quality services.”

Theresa earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Westfield State College in 1998. She resides in Clarksburg with her husband and three children.

The Snack Attack is taking a bite out of summer...



... by selling snacks to patrons at Windsor Lake in North Adams. In an official ribbon cutting ceremony on June 20th, North Adams Mayor Richard Alcombright provided remarks on the joint efforts of BFAIR and the City of North Adams to bring affordable snacks back to the lake, but with a greater purpose of pride and employment opportunities for people living with disabilities. Hankering for a snack the next time you're at the lake? Stop by The Snack Attack for outstanding service and affordable treats!

ALL STAFF PICNIC

BFAIR employees enjoyed a summer picnic at Windsor Lake in North Adams, complete with hot dogs, burgers, all the fixings, corn hole, magic by Omer Black, and fun raffles.



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Tara Quigley

Finds Inspiration in a New Home



Author Blair Benjamin is a longtime fan of BFAIR who lives in Williamstown with his wife and two daughters, and works at MASS MoCA.



One of Tara Quigley’s most striking paintings is of the exterior of a sun-lit house – and not a distant profile of the house, but instead a warm and expressive close-up of a pair of windows with flower-filled window-boxes, positioned off-center within a wall of swirling color.

Tara painted this image long before she ever set foot in the new BFAIR home on Cascade Street in Pittsfield, but it was a clear sign of how inspired she would feel by living in a home that surrounds her with little touches of cheerfulness and beauty.

For the last several years, Tara has been battling to regain her communication abilities and overall independence after suffering an aneurysm that caused Acquired Brain Injury, also known as ABI. She has been aided by numerous individuals and organizations, including the Mount Greylock Extended Care facility in Pittsfield, where she lived until mid-June before moving to BFAIR’s new Cascade Street home.

The same patience and determination that have helped Tara develop her skills as a painter have also been the hallmark of her fight to live fully despite ABI. Thanks to the hard work of physical and speech therapy, she has recovered significant mobility, and she can now speak some 50 words. And Tara can communicate many more words with the use of an iPad that she wields with confidence. While she clearly finds it frustrating when she can’t muster the words to say or write something that she wants to share, she never shuts down or retreats from the conversation, but keeps looking for other ways to convey the thought that needs to be said.

Tara is one of four adults with ABI to take up residence at BFAIR’s house on Cascade Street, allowing ABI patients to live in a more independent setting, assisted by a minimum of two staff members at all times. This is the second house for ABI patients that BFAIR has developed, and a third such house (also serving four ABI patients) will be coming on line in August.

Before moving in, Tara was able to pick the furniture she wanted for her new bedroom, and has received financial and logistical assistance from Elder Services of Berkshire County to get clothes, decorations and household supplies for this exciting transition. Tara now has a large sunny bedroom all to herself, plus a spacious closet and an adjoining room that will soon become her art studio when a new painting desk arrives.

Tara is particularly excited that she will now have more opportunities to go on outings, with BFAIR staff available to assist with travel arrangements and mobility. She looks forward to spending time at nearby Onota Lake, and shopping trips whenever she needs more art supplies or something new to decorate her room.

One of her first outings was a trip to Adams on June 25th to participate in BFAIR’s fundraiser, the “Walk for Independence,” on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail. That’s a perfect metaphor for Tara and others with ABI, for whom independence is not a destination but a journey, one marked by many slow determined steps, and some great leaps, such as her recent move to Cascade Street. Tara won’t be resting from this journey anytime soon, but she’ll be painting the beauty she finds along the way.

Welcome Home



CASCADE STREET

In June, four people (three men and one woman) living with acquire brain injuries made Cascade Street in Pittsfield their new home. Transitioning from long-term care facilities, the new residents of Cascade Street have settled quite nicely into their new surroundings. This home is the second home that BFAIR operates that is dedicated to serving those living with acquired brain injuries.



Walk for Independence

June 25 • Adams on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail
Berkshire Family & Individual Resources

Our first-ever Walk for Independence, held on June 25 on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, was a huge success! With nearly 100 participants of all ability levels, we netted just over \$16,000 in our first year and can't wait to do it again next year. After the Walk, we enjoyed a picnic at the Adams Visitors Center, corn hole, raffles, music by Blueberry Buckle, and a BBQ lunch. The greatest achievement was hearing some of our program participants words: "I can make it further, I want to go all the way to the finish line." And they did – what a great job by all!



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berkshire
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café

Making Memories Count at Our First Berkshire Memory Café



Magic was certainly happening at our first memory café on June 16th! The Berkshire Memory Café had their first meeting with a small group of people that live with memory issues or are caregivers. Magician Omer Black was on-hand to perform slight-of-hand tricks and tons of laughs.

*Interested in the next meeting of the
Berkshire Memory Café?*

*It is scheduled for
Tuesday, August 23rd
from 9 – 11am*

*St. Joseph's Parish Center,
414 North Street, Pittsfield.*

For more info, contact Mark at 413.664.9382 ext 34