

# CO-OP LIFE



CO-OP  
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# THE FIRST ISSUE IS IN YOUR HANDS!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of "CO-OP Life"! We have revamped the format of our newsletter to give everyone a new perspective on the great people and the great work of Cooperative Production.



Michael Cancilliere  
LMHC, MBA  
President & CEO

It feels like a great time to reflect, as I am just completing my first six months as President and CEO of CO-OP. I remember making lists of all the things I wanted to get done in my first few months on the job, including visiting each program site and home; however, the pandemic certainly made that difficult for everyone.

COVID protocols prevented some in-person meetings, and the increase in positive cases meant that site visits often had to wait to reduce the risk. However, connecting with the staff and the individuals we serve is critical to building strong working relationships, driving collaboration, and creating a productive and healthy workplace. The great spring weather and fluctuations in COVID cases allowed me to see facilities, greet staff, and get a list of upgrades we might need to tackle.

Building relationships and connecting with the community are critical to achieving our goals, especially in these uncertain times. Over the past few months, we have been working diligently to expand our network of partner nonprofits, for-profits, government organizations, and other stakeholders because we know that we are stronger together, allowing us all to do so much more.

One new partnership is Best Buddies, which builds friendships between people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, offering social mentoring while improving the quality of life and level of community inclusion. As Best Buddies establishes a new Citizens Chapter in Dighton, we are working with them to spread the word through social media. You can help by sharing their information with anyone you think might be interested in serving as a mentor. You can find more information on our Facebook page.

We have so many exciting opportunities in our future, and I look forward to announcing them within these pages as we move forward together. Until next time!

Michael

# LET'S MEET JOHN G.!



Thanks so much, John, for providing warmth, care, and friendship to these kitties as they wait in the shelter for their forever home! 🐾



John is a very caring man who loves animals. Each week he visits the local animal shelter, where he spends time with the cats in the shelter's care, providing comfort and companionship, and helping to ensure the animals remain accustomed to human interaction to help them stay adoptable. Cats living in a shelter that humans frequently hold are more likely to find a home.

Here is a photo of John comforting a kitty who lost an eye and was still healing. John hopes to start volunteering for the shelter, a farm, or any other organization that will provide him the opportunity to work with and provide care for animals.

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# GOING FOR THE GOLD!

The **2022 Special Olympics USA Games** were held June 4 through June 11 in Orlando, Florida this year. This was the largest USA Games in history, bringing 5,500 athletes and their coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean. What a breathtaking event!

We are so proud to celebrate alongside **Heather Wyrostek**, and her father, Frank Wyrostek, who traveled to Orlando to compete. Heather and Frank play Bocce as the "Bristol County Baysiders" and

after doing well in other competitions, they won the right to compete. They traveled with their coach and some of the other Special Olympics Rhode Island athletes aboard a small plane, and you can see the excitement on every face in the photos!

Congratulations to Heather for earning the **MVP award** for playing great bocce on Monday, and for earning a **GOLD medal** in the Bocce singles competition on Tuesday! 🏆



## CO-OP STAFF SPOTLIGHT



**GETTING TO KNOW**  
Edwina "Eddie" Hoeg  
Direct Care Staff  
Day Services

### How did your career path lead to CO-OP?

I volunteered in a hospital in Stoughton and assisted individuals in the emergency room from this population and I absolutely loved it! This inspired me to go for my CNA/PCA license and pursue a career working more closely with individuals with developmental disabilities.

I began my journey here at CO-OP in 2007 at the DDH day program and most recently in the past two years, I have been working with a gentleman here at the program who requires a 1:1 staffing support. I assist him to achieve being as autonomous as possible throughout his daily routines. I have built a wonderful relationship with him and all the individuals within the DDH program and can't imagine doing anything else. When the pandemic hit, I dedicated myself to the individuals in the residential setting and assisted them in any way that was required and would do it again if needed. My priority as a direct

care staff has always been providing the individuals with safety, care, and respect.

### What motivates you in your work?

The individuals motivate me, and I enjoy every aspect of their lives.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Gardening (very therapeutic!), and traveling (have been to Portugal, Las Vegas, Mexico, and the Bahamas), golfing, baking, and cooking. I also enjoy spending time with my family and friends.

### What is one thing about you that would surprise us?

That I have been working at a pizza house named Denneno's in Stoughton for 45 years making Pizza's. My specialty pizza is bacon, linguica, peperoni, olives and pineapple cooked well-done. *Pizza Anyone?*

# IN GOOD HANDS

**Sandy Rubin**, with us since 1993, and **Evan McGarry**, who joined us in 2021, both work as nurses in our Norton Day program.

For Sandy, the desire to become a nurse started because her older sisters were nurses, and then the tradition continued with her daughter. "When I graduated High School, there were not a lot of options for me. When my daughter was going to nursing school, I took a part-time nursing job so she would not have to work while she attended school!"



population I enjoy and being from Norton, I also feel pride in contributing to my local community. The schedule allows me to continue coaching our youth hockey and lacrosse programs and filling my role as a father."

At our Dighton Day program, **Maggie LaPierre** has been with us since 1997 and nursing has also been a family affair. "What made me decide to become a nurse? My grandmother. She was a registered nurse, and when I was a CNA, I had the chance to work alongside her. It was a wonderful experience."



Like Sandy before her, Maggie was also a nurse at the Dever School. "I was interested in working at the Day Program, and when I came in for the interview, I met several individuals I knew, and it was so nice to see how happy they were. We have a connection. I've known some of them since 1978!"

Having worked for the closed Paul A. Dever School in the past, Sandy was happy to see some old friends when she took a part-time job at CO-OP. "I loved seeing some of the folks I knew from the Dever School, including some I have known since 1973!"



Evan took a different path, having worked in residential care for the Department of Youth Services before joining us. He also has a nursing background in his family, and in fact, at one point,

he, his mother, father, and three sisters all worked as nurses for the VA Hospital.

He said, "CO-OP was an opportunity I could not pass up. I gain experience in a different role with a




Starting at CO-OP in 2006 as a direct care staff, **Cindy Boland** moved into a supervisor role and then coordinator. She left for a time, subsequently completing nursing school. Upon graduating, she was

recruited back to Dighton Day in 2021. "I feel fulfilled in this role and am happy to be surrounded by some

of the individuals and coworkers that I have known for so many years."

Cindy counts Maggie as one of her motivating factors at work. "It's the whole team I work with, the individuals we support, and my coworker Maggie. Everyone comes in and gives it 100%, and it encourages me to do the same. The individuals are

a huge motivator because not only do they teach me every day, but they make me laugh and vice versa."

Four different nurses with four perspectives – some here for years, and some brand new in their roles – but all ensuring that the people CO-OP supports are healthy, happy, and connected to their communities. 

# SEEN OUT & ABOUT





CO-OP | Cooperative Production, Inc.  
455 Somerset Avenue  
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Program Sites:

455 Somerset Avenue  
North Dighton, MA

82 Ingell Street  
Taunton, MA

97 Ingell Street  
Taunton, MA

399 Old Colony Road  
Norton, MA

2 Tupper Road  
Sandwich, MA



## Hiring!

Join us at our next Employment Open House and speak to a recruiter "on the spot!" New hires can earn up to a \$2,000 sign-on bonus!

### Open House Dates:

10 am to 3 pm

The first Wednesday of every month:

- Wednesday, July 6
- Wednesday, August 3
- Wednesday, September 7

### Where:

97 Ingell Street, Taunton, MA 02780

### Can't make it to the open house?

Call our HR Department today!  
(508) 824-1717

**WE ARE HIRING!**

LPNs  
(up to \$29)  
Direct Care  
(up to \$17)  
Day Program Instructor  
(up to \$16.50)

ENGAGING PEOPLE  
**CO-OP**  
ENHANCING LIVES

co-op.cc/hiring  
508.824.1717