



Spring /Summer 2016

# The CO-OPerative Advantage



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the spring/summer 2016 edition of The Cooperative Advantage. It seems not so long ago, that our newsletter and CO-OP's Annual Report were the main places to find agency news. Today, this newsletter is just one of many ways we keep you informed. Just like the service options we offer consumers, we now provide friends and supporters with a number of different ways to keep in touch with our work.

CO-OP's digital presence, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, provides updates in real time about our events and activities as well as on-going developments and stories related to the field of disabilities. Plus, our updated website has been designed to give visitors a much more comprehensive picture of the agency and its many services.

We know many of you prefer to receive news via email and have already received copies of CO-OP's new electronic newsletter. If you have not yet seen our e-news or received your copy of CO-OP's 2015 Annual Report, please send your email address and other contact information to our Director of Marketing & Communications, Jeanne Connolly, at [jconnolly@co-op.cc](mailto:jconnolly@co-op.cc).

This year, we are particularly excited about CO-OP's growing Acquired Brain Injury Services component. We plan to open a second residence this September and are looking to expand our current offering of day services. I'm also happy to announce that long-time staff member Katelyn Eagan will be helping us in this endeavor.

On behalf of everyone at CO-OP, enjoy the summer and thank you for your continued support.

**Bill Corbett**  
President & CEO

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## OUR SERVICES

Since 1972, CO-OP has served as an important resource for local citizens with disabilities and their families with a variety of residential, employment and day program services. Today we support close to 300 people throughout southeastern Massachusetts with developmental and other challenges, as well as individuals with brain injuries. Our services receive the highest levels of licensure and accreditation from the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). For more information about CO-OP's programs and services, please visit our website at [www.co-op.cc](http://www.co-op.cc).



## OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM

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## FROM OUR BOARD

CO-OP is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, each who contributes their time, talent and experience in support of the agency's commitment to local citizens with disabilities.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

CO-OP's Board of Directors has engaged the services of McLaughlin & Associates to facilitate its current strategic planning process. Generally reviewed and updated every three years, key issues now include potential service changes associated with the emergence of Accountable Care Organizations and a new property plan to address the agency's expanding list of residences and day program facilities. Of course, the common thread for all of CO-OP's



planning activities – past and present – is determining how we can best support our current and future consumers. According CO-OP's Governance Committee Chair, Dr. Darlene Boroviak, "Working on the next strategic plan for CO-OP gives us a chance to recommit to our vision of service to the community and to discover new and exciting ways to move the agency forward as we fulfill our mission."

*"Working on the next strategic plan for CO-OP gives us a chance to recommit to our vision of service to the community and to discover new and exciting ways to move the agency forward as we fulfill our mission."*  
*-Dr. Darlene Boroviak*

## ANNUAL MEETING



Celeste Phillips  
2015 Employee of the Year

CO-OP will again hold its Annual Meeting in October. In addition to the election of Board members, the event traditionally honors the agency's Community Award winners, CO-OP's Employee of the Year, and service time of our employees.

## PROPERTY PURCHASES

⇒ In May, we purchased a local home in Dighton with expanded accessibility opportunities to better address the needs of current residents with increasing mobility issues.

⇒ In June, CO-OP entered into a construction contract to build the agency's second ABI residence in Marion, with an anticipated start date in September.

### 2016 Board of Directors

Chair Eva Gaffney, Bridgewater State University

Vice Chair George Mendros, Bristol County Savings Bank

Treasurer Don Backlund, FBinsure

Clerk Mark Karsner, Karsner and Meehan

Darlene Boroviak, Wheaton College

Michael Browner, Consultant

William Corbett, CO-OP

Paul Hodge, Probation Officer (retired)

Russell Latham, Gosnold School Superintendent (retired)

Raymond Pelote, Wynn & Wynn, P.C.

Richard Pomroy, Pomroy Associates

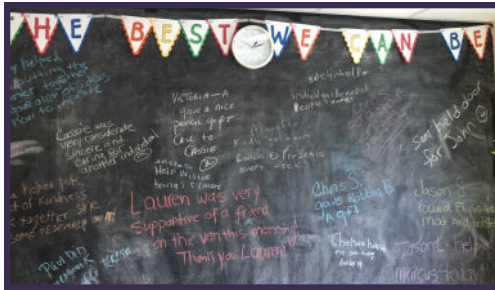
Jacqueline Scungio, Providence Community eHealth Centers

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT— *It's all good!*

There is a positive buzz at CO-OP these days and it is not just happenstance.

A Positive Behavior Support initiative (PBS) has taken on a life of its own, and that's how it should be according to Lauren Giordano, the agency's Clinical Director. Working closely with CO-OP's Speech and Language Pathologist, Gene Pizzolato, Giordano says, "Historically, people have lived by the perspective that good behavior should be expected. Our goal is to shift this philosophy into something more positive. Why not focus on the good behaviors not as expected but as worthy of praise? By drawing attention to the random acts of

kindness, we highlight personal victories as well as teach others how to communicate in a more functional way. This way, everybody benefits!"



When the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) introduced PBS as a service philosophy, it was intended to be a roadmap for creating environments that support healthy, happy lives. It also focused on ways to reduce or eliminate circumstances that do not

contribute to a person's well being. At CO-OP, where listening to each other and working together is an important part our success, it was an easy transition.

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*“Behavior is communicative and...we must determine what the person is saying and create environments that assist the person in being successful.”*  
Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services

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### MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES DEFINES PBS:

Positive Behavioral Supports is a systematic, person centered approach to understanding the reasons for behavior and applying evidence based practices for prevention, proactive intervention, teaching and responding to behavior, **with the goal of achieving meaningful social outcomes, increasing learning and enhancing the quality of life** across the lifespan.

For more information, go to <http://ddsllearning.com/dds-pbs-initiative/>

## CLINICAL & COMMUNICATION — *Together!*

Just over one year ago, CO-OP's Ingell Street Day Program found a creative way to build upon the PBS initiative started several years earlier. When PBS was started at CO-OP, a PBS Leadership Team was formed who researched the current level of staff knowledge and implementation of PBS, established goals and “key indicators,” developed a plan to make positive changes and, finally, continue to assess progress.

The project at Ingell Street was a fusion of Clinical and Communication services, based on the philosophy that most (if not all) challenging behaviors serve a communicative function. It focused on taking elements of PBS and integrating them with agency communication and speech services. By doing so, it allowed each individual to communicate needs and feelings using an image-based system. These images may appear on a wall, a personal computer, or an iPad. Are you happy? Are you sad? Are you uncomfortable? Is the room too noisy? By finding the right way to communicate with each other, we make life better.

With guidance from DDS and support from our Leadership Team, Lauren Giordano (Clinical Director) and Gene Pizzolato (Speech Pathologist) collaborated to develop strategies and tools. With Lauren's experience and leadership, CO-OP staff were trained to find new ways to promote positive behavior, by helping individuals to use communication skills and other techniques to help to change – or replace – behaviors that are disruptive or negative. Moving forward, we are excited about expanding this project across other agency programs.

CO-OP's goal is always to find the best method, a method that empowers each individual to find their own version of a happy, healthy life. For the individuals at Ingell Street, the partnership of Clinical and Communication is surely a successful method!



CO-OP's Dighton Positive Perfecters (back row) Sam Wood, Christine Lennon, Justin Irving, Denise Vallee, Lauren Manocchia, (front row) Elyssa Noonan, Heather Wyrostek, Amanda McMeekin

## POSITIVE PERFECTERS

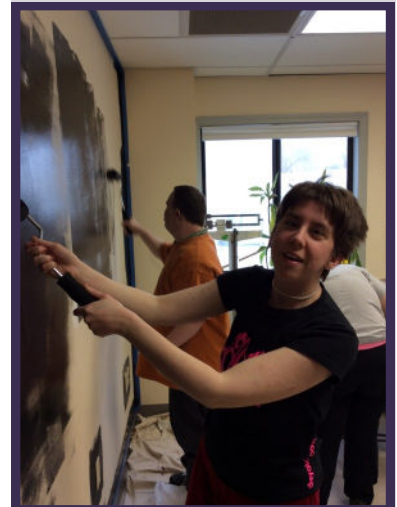
What started as a casual conversation with Dighton Day Program Manager Natalie Oliveira and members of her team, has morphed into one of the most active and positive groups in the agency: The Positive Perfecters.

When PBS was introduced to CO-OP's Dighton Day Program, Natalie's staff began to think about individuals in the program who were exceptionally positive role models. These were people who arrived each morning with a positive attitude, who worked diligently toward their own personal goals, and who interacted with others in a helpful, collegial way. The list was eventually narrowed down to eight people who were recognized as obvious leaders among their peers (pictured above). "There were a lot of people on the original list," acknowledges Natalie, "but these folks really stood out."

The Positive Perfecters, Sam Wood, Christine Lennon, Justin Irving, Denise Vallee, Lauren Manocchia, Elyssa Noonan, Heather Wyrostek, Amanda McMeekin lead by example and identify ways to make all our days more positive.

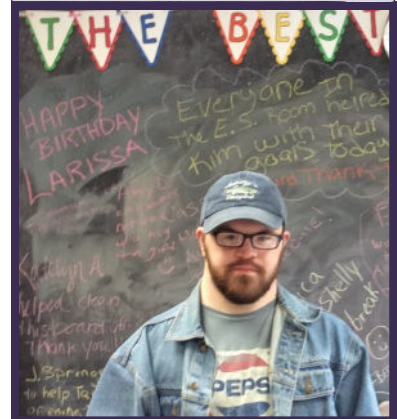
## KINDNESS MATTERS

The Positive Perfecters first initiative was "Kindness Matters" where small or not-so-small acts of kindness are recognized and celebrated. To publicly acknowledge the positivity among all of us, the group created their very own chalkboard walls. They encourage people to write down their own or others' acts of kindness in personal journals, which are later posted on the popular chalkboard walls.



### POSITIVE PERFECTER: CHRISTINE LENNON

Christine Lennon was a little nervous when she first joined the Positive Perfecters but, now that she has settled in, she is happy to help others stay positive. She is especially pleased when she sees those changes in others. As Christine says, "Save your drama for your mama."



### POSITIVE PERFECTER: SAM WOOD

Sam Wood's life philosophy is something we can all learn from. He understands that we all have our bad days, but that just makes him try all the harder to have a positive influence on the people who really need it. As Sam explains, "I treat everyone with respect and kindness...the way I've been treated at CO-OP."

Meet  
The Wildfire Girls

Amy Daniels, Hailey Dupont,  
Christine Lennon, Ashley  
McMeekin, and Chelsea Silmon

as they plan a **November 10**  
performance

*Save the Date!*



**PAYING IT FORWARD**

Recently, a group of folks from CO-OP crossed the street at Somerset Ave. for their morning cup of Joe at Dunkin' Donuts. While this group of six decided what they wanted, ordered, were collecting their food and drinks and preparing to pay, the cashier informed them that their order had already been paid for by another customer. It turns out that a local policeman was performing his own act of kindness by treating all to a free breakfast.

The group was so pleased that together they decided that they would pay it forward and do this same thing once a month. We wonder who will be next to benefit from a random act of kindness.

The officer's identity is a mystery to us—but if you know who it is, give him a huge thank you from all of us. He started some wonderful acts of kindness!



*MUSIC 4 CO-OP:  
SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2016  
Fireside Grille, Middleboro*

**MUSIC FOR CO-OP**

CO-OP 4 MUSIC has been working throughout 2016 to write music, perform the tunes, and produce a holiday CD for all to enjoy.

The original compositions are ready, the talent has been chosen to record this new sound, and the production team is hard at work. When November comes, we'll be ready to party.

**Save the date, November 10, 2016 and join us at the Fireside Grille in Middleboro!**



Celebrating the Introduction of  
CO-OP for Music  
Holiday CD

Thursday  
November 10, 2016  
Time TBD  
Fireside Grille  
30 Bedford Street  
Middleboro, MA 02346

*Tickets will go on sale in early Fall.*

## THE HODGE FAMILY TRUST

We sincerely thank The Hodge Family Trust who recently made a generous donation to CO-OP allowing us to upgrade our day program technology. We recently purchased two interactive Smart Boards that use touch detection in the same way as our phones and other touch screen devices. The Smart Boards recently arrived at Ingell Street and Somerset Avenue day programs. We've chosen to have them mounted on stands with wheels so all can take advantage of this technologically advanced learning tool. It will allow consumers and staff alike to collaborate on educational projects, job searches, meetings with community groups, and—to the delight of many—a whole new set of interactive games!

*Donations play an important role in supporting CO-OP's many programs and services. For information on ways to help, go to [www.co-op.cc](http://www.co-op.cc).*

## FAREWELL AND SPECIAL THANKS TO...

- ⇒ **Phil Vecchio** from Mechanics Cooperative Bank was a member of CO-OP's Board of Directors since 2011 and is now stepping down. Thank you, Phil, for years of dedicated service!
- ⇒ **Jane Mello** from Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical High School is retiring. Over the years, Jane has sent us many wonderful interns who have made a lasting impact. Thank you, Jane!

## BSU SELF-ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP SERIES

Congratulations to Justin Irving, Christine Lennon, Lauren Manocchia, and Denise Vallee, for their acceptance in the Self-Advocacy Leadership Series. With encouragement from staff member Tamara Figueroa, all four submitted applications and were accepted into the program sponsored by the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council. They will proudly represent



CO-OP at classes at Bridgewater State University beginning in late June. In an interactive and supportive environment, they will develop and improve decision-making and leadership skills.

## U MASS DARTMOUTH

Earlier this year, CO-OP entered into an agreement with The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Center for Marketing Research, to conduct a Needs Assessment Study. Seven 4th year students conducted a survey to determine how administrators, governmental agencies and schools select or refer people to residential and day services. Thanks go to Center Director Dr. Nora Ganim Barnes and students Ciara Barrigas, Jessica Griswold, Jane Lamarre-DeJesus, Heather Macedo, Russell Mangsen, Corey Morris and Erin Robinson for helping us plan for the future!



The Ingell Street Smart Board was used for the first time at a Mass Advocates Standing Strong training session. Thank you to The Hodge Family Trust for this wonderful gift!

*Have you seen our 2015 Annual Report and our e-newsletter? If not, we may not have your current contact information*

*Contact Jeanne Connolly at [jconnolly@co-op.cc](mailto:jconnolly@co-op.cc) to get all CO-OP news!*



## Our Mission

The purpose of CO-OP is to support people with developmental and other disabilities, including brain injuries, to become valued members of their communities, with opportunities for meaningful participation in areas of personal pursuit.

## DAY HABILITATION PROGRAMS

### North Dighton

455 Somerset Ave. 508-824-1717

### Norton

399 Old Colony Rd. 508-223-4080

### Taunton

97 Ingell St. 508-880-0352

60 Main St. 508-880-0015

## COMMUNITY BASED DAY SERVICES

### North Dighton

455 Somerset Ave. 508-824-1717

### Taunton

97 Ingell St. 508-880-0352

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

### North Dighton

455 Somerset Ave. 508-824-1717

## BRAIN INJURY SUPPORTS

### Taunton

97 Ingell St. 508-880-0352

## CO-OP

455 Somerset Avenue  
No. Dighton, MA 02764-0506

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE