



The CO-OPerative Advantage

Spring 2020

A MESSAGE FROM CO-OP PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear Friends, Individuals Supported, Staff, and Colleagues:

To say the least, these last couple of months have felt like an eternity filled with infinite uncertainty. There are questions that we have no answers for and the future contains many unknowns. One thing we do know, however, is that CO-OP will prevail! We are moving forward – navigating through uncharted territory and creating roadmaps to places we've never been. Now more than ever our sense of shared purpose and reliance on each other will be called upon to move through this extraordinary time together. And now more

than ever, I reiterate one simple message to all of you: Thank you. Thank you for your caring, your patience, your perseverance, and your generosity.

To CO-OP staff: I will again and publicly thank you for your commitment and the incredible work you do, particularly those of you on the frontline providing essential services to the individuals we support. Your dedication to them has been inspiring throughout these extraordinary times. CO-OP employees at all levels have risen to the occasion demonstrating flexibility, resilience and creativity. You are an amazing workforce. Thank you for coming together beyond expectations.

To the people we support: Thank you for being patient and for entrusting us to make decisions that have impacted your daily lives. We know that your lives are very different right now, and that your enjoyment of many activities – including spending time with people you care about – has been put on hold. We understand that this has been difficult for you and your families. But please know that your safety and well-being is and will always be what drives us.

Also, to all our families, guardians, Board members, associates and friends: Thank you for your messages of support, unexpected gifts, and offers of assistance. These are things for which we will be forever grateful. It reminds us that our community is kind, strong and resourceful.

In addition to the heartfelt message of thank you, I want to share a second message with you: We WILL get through this. Although the days ahead may be challenging, and we all may need to adapt to a world that looks and feels differently for a period of time, we will move forward together, each of us doing our part, and come through even stronger.

With pride and immeasurable appreciation,

Joyce Faria

President & CEO

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WE ARE SO GRATEFUL to all those that raised their hands in support of CO-OP during this worldwide coronavirus crisis. We are especially grateful to those that helped provide our front line staff with personal protection equipment (PPE). Our staff, friends and family reached out—to each other and to organizations who shifted production from consumer products to PPE—and they came through for us.

We also thank those who contributed in other ways, from financial contributions, to Dunkin' gift cards, and other gifts to brighten our day.

Today, our supply rooms — along with are hearts — are full.



OUR SERVICES

Since 1972, Cooperative Production, Inc. (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.

OUR CLINICAL DIRECTOR EXPLAINS...



The COVID-2019 pandemic has resulted in a number of changes that have affected the way the individuals at CO-OP are supported. Each initiative in place has been thoughtfully considered to ensure individuals and staff remain safe and healthy.

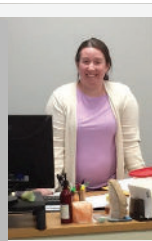
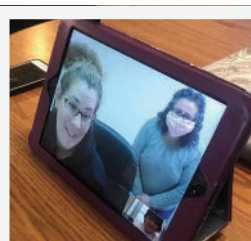
CO-OP has sent day staff members to the residences during their regular day hours. In some cases, day staff are working with individuals on day program activities and goals. In order to alleviate some anxiety, and ensure a level of consistency, all efforts were made to pair a staff with individuals they support at the day program so a familiar face could be seen daily. Although recreational activities have been replaced with walks around the yard, and dining out has been replaced with outdoor picnics, all individuals are finding ways to explore new activities or expand their current interests.

Additionally, some day staff are busy conducting a variety of Telehealth services including group sessions, individualized sessions and wellness checks for individuals served in all of our day programs. These sessions are offered over the phone or through video streaming services. Staff are working on skill building, conducting social groups, doing familiar activities, and helping to create new highly structured routines to keep the individuals engaged throughout their day. While we all look forward to having face to face contact again, we are making every effort to ensure each person is offered the opportunity to feel connected to CO-OP.

In efforts to remain proactive, CO-OPs administration is working to develop systems to adapt to our “new normal” and plan for a safe implementation of day services. Regardless of our position or current responsibilities, CO-OP stands united as a team. Everyone is in constant communication to ensure all programming meets the needs and expectations of the individuals supported to maintain a strong sense of community for all.

Lauren Giordano

Director, Clinical



2020 Board of Directors

Chair Raymond Pelote,
Wynn & Wynn, P.C.

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Community Health Centers

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Michael Browner,
Consultant

Joyce Faria, CO-OP,
President & CEO

Paul Hodge, Probation
Officer (retired)

Russell Latham, Gosnold
School Superintendent
(retired)

Roger Monty, Dept. of
Developmental Services
(retired)

Jeff Morse, CFO (retired)

Margaret Szewczyk,
Human Resources Director

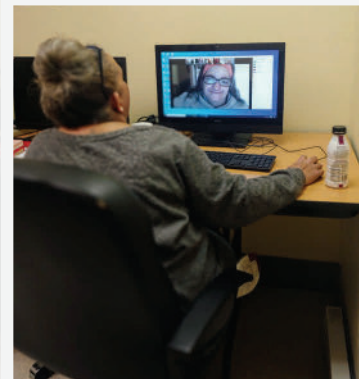
A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS...

When it became clear that CO-OP day services would temporarily shut down and those support residentially by CO-OP would stay at home, CO-OP management and staff researched, discussed, and made plans for staying connected with individuals and families during the service disruption caused by COVID-19.

The goal is to prevent individuals from becoming isolated during this time, to combat depression and anxiety, and to prevent the regression of progress towards individual goals. According to Director of Day

"[He] felt as though this was only happening to him... 'Everyone is gone, Mom.' No amount of reassurance helped. Zoom followed at COOP and that ended...a remote learning tool illustrated that he could be together with his peers and beloved staff, just in a different way..."

Services, Lucy DeOliveira, "The tools to stay connected with individuals and families are as varied as the individuals themselves." These include telephone, Facetime, and Zoom. For some, the preferred way to



communicate is by telephone or text messaging. These regular check-ins are from multiple members of CO-OP's program, clinical, and nursing teams. Contacts are happening in many different ways, at all times of the day.

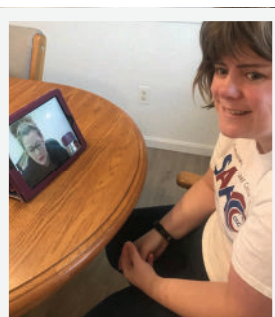
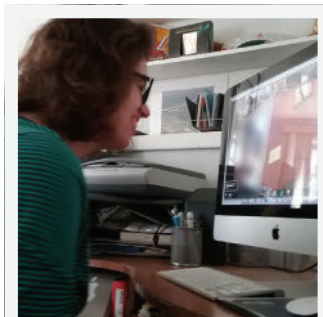
Balancing priorities has become a way of life. In some families, parents are working at home so scheduling a Zoom call may depend on when the family laptop or iPad is available. At the CBDS program in N. Dighton, there are likely several calls happening simultaneously. At the Taunton Day program, manager Chris DePaula tells us that, "Individuals meet on Zoom together and they are so happy to see their peers. This, by far, has been the most successful way to communicate." It's a new world.

"These meetings have definitely helped reduce her anxiety ... given her some sense of a "normal" routine ... We are thankful for CO-OP's effort in trying to maintain consumer and staff connections ... an extremely valuable practice during this crazy time."

Creativity among the staff is seen across the Agency. At Norton Day, there was a "drive-by" where the staff let individuals see just how much they were missed.

Dighton Day manager Celeste Phillips is proud of her staff who choose a theme such as bingo, Earth Day, flowers, or colors, and conduct an on-line learning presentation. The sessions might include sending activity materials which all can then work on together.

"I REALLY like them...I get to see my friends at CO-OP!!"



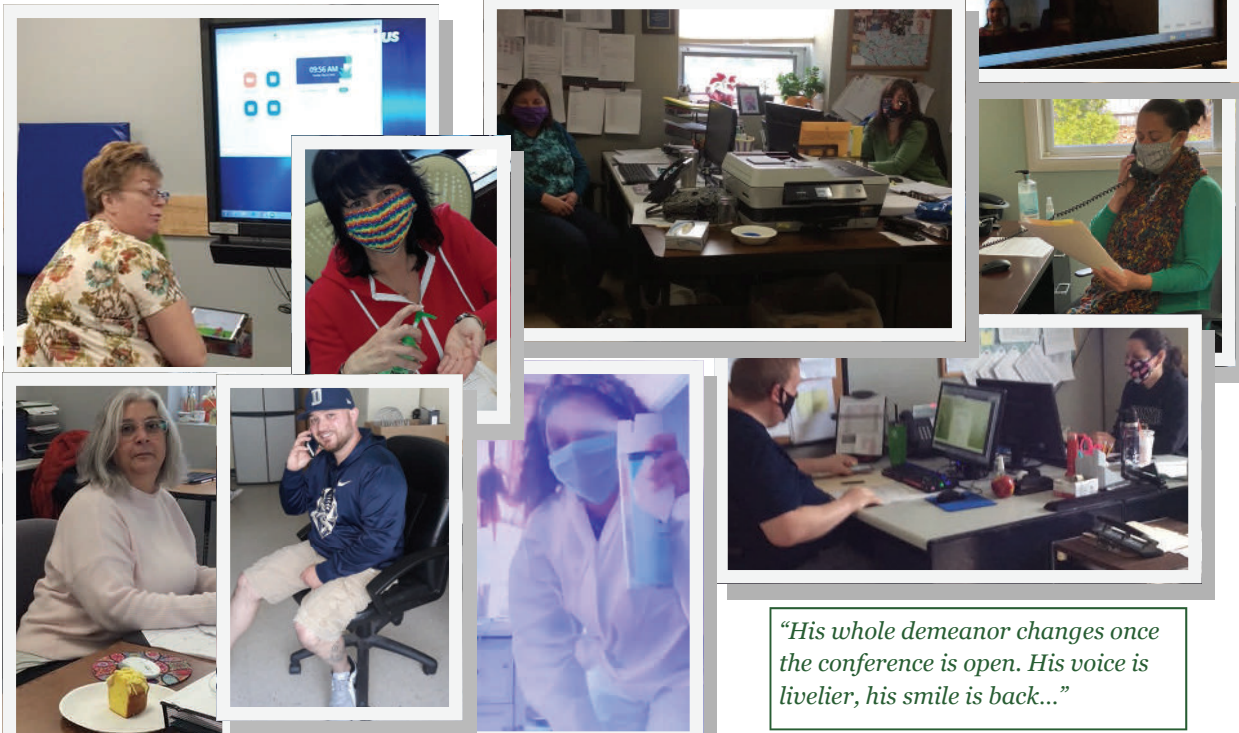
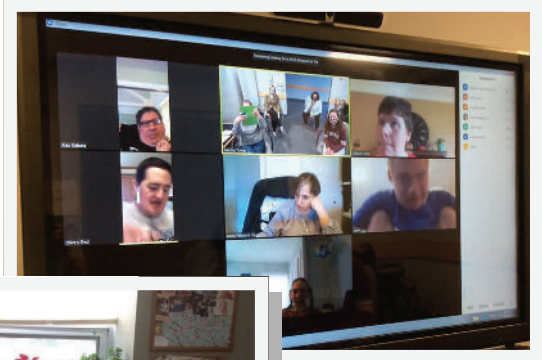
"When she's done, she comes upstairs, always with a big smile and a happy thumbs up!! And it certainly seems like she's getting comfortable with this totally new way of communicating and that's great to witness."

...AND WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH WHEN IT COMES TO THANKING CO-OP STAFF

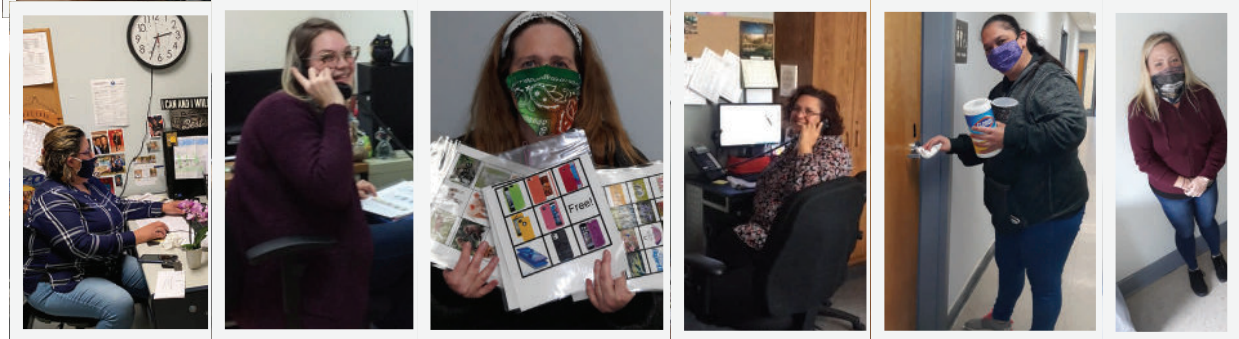
The world is different and our day-to-day lives have changed. Like every other organization, the ability to adjust was critical. In CO-OP's case, it was essential to act quickly, competently, and with compassion for all the lives disrupted by the coronavirus and COVID-19.

While CO-OP has always had an emergency plan, the success of this plan and of CO-OP sits squarely on the shoulders of the staff. According to Joyce Faria, President & CEO, "An emergency plan is always in place and updated on a regular basis. The unknown is disconcerting to all of us but these past weeks have shown us, without reservation, our staff is up to any challenge. They moved with speed, grace and competence. I could not be more proud."

"I asked her what she thought [and she] thinks that it's very cool...since the stay-at-home order...[she's] has lost contact with CO-OP friends, her work friends and her own social circle of friends...so she really looks forward to the scheduled meeting..."



"His whole demeanor changes once the conference is open. His voice is livelier, his smile is back..."



CO-OP GIVES BACK



With the temporary suspension of day programs, CO-OP support of a local Meals on Wheels service was in jeopardy until staff members Dori McClellan and Amanda Clark filled the breach. This was especially helpful as many of the Meals on Wheels volunteers are retired citizens who are no longer able to deliver food to those in need.

According to CBDS Program Manager Natalie Oliviera, “We have continued to maintain the food delivery for Bristol County Elder Services. Social distancing and isolation has taken a toll on the elderly. They are starving for attention and human contact, probably more now than ever. I am so glad we were able to continue with our effort to care for people. Our job as human service providers has no boundaries.”



OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM

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Are you on our email list?

*Contact Jeanne Connolly at
jconnolly@co-op.cc for CO-OP
news!*

SO, WHAT ELSE HAVE WE BEEN DOING?



YOU CAN HELP.

- \$50** could cover arts and crafts supplies
 - \$100** could purchase paint, canvas and framing supplies
 - \$250** could purchase two tablets with communication software
 - \$500** could cover supplies for a summer garden
 - \$1,000** could purchase fitness equipment
- TO DONATE: Visit www.co-op.cc/support**



Our Mission

The purpose of Cooperative Production, Inc. (CO-OP) is to support people with disabilities 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

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

Milestones—Taunton

82 Ingell St. 508-880-0352

Milestones—Cape Cod (*Coming soon!*)

Sandwich

2 Tupper Road—Snowgoose Landing

CO-OP

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