



Spring 2021

The CO-OPerative Advantage

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO



At long last, we have entered a new year. In 2020, we all experienced inconceivable changes in our lives because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes impacted our lives in ways that we will not soon forget. But now it's time to look forward to a new and more promising year.

In reflecting on 2020, I am proud of how so many of the individuals we support made their way through this past year. I am deeply moved by how our CO-OP teams stepped up, supported individuals and each other, and tirelessly performed with commitment, integrity, and compassion.

As we begin to move forward through 2021, let's do so with hope and optimism that brighter days are indeed coming. Let's be heartened as COVID numbers start to decline; and let's be further encouraged as we join others across the state with a robust vaccination program. The light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter with each day.

In this newsletter, we are telling stories of those who exemplify our resilience; have grown or enhanced their lives in creative ways; or set an example for how we all might make the world around us a bit better. Finally, and as always, thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to CO-OP.

Sincerely,
Joyce Faria
President & CEO

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

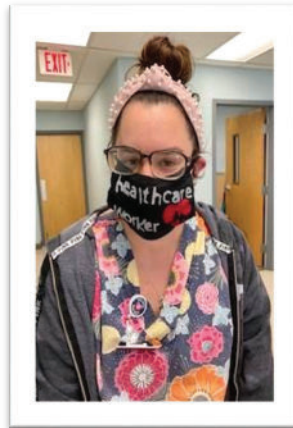
CO-OP's Essential Worker	2
Our Services Our Beliefs.....	2
Stay Safe on Social Media.....	3
Liv's Litter Patrol	3
Spotlight Ashley Gonsalves	4
Management Team.....	4
Two Friends	5
Better Days Ahead	5
We Are Hiring.....	6
Dinner is Served!	7
Board of Directors	7

CELEBRATING A COMMUNITY OF HEROES

AMY DANIELS, ESSENTIAL WORKER

Double-masking. Double gloves. More responsibility and lots and lots of stair climbing.

CO-OP’s Community Based Day Services (CBDS) member Amy Daniels is a designated Essential Worker and just one of the heroes who are helping us cope with COVID-19. Amy is an 11-year employee at Swan Brook Assisted Living. While she has seen some changes over the last year, we know one thing will never change and that is Amy’s positive attitude. Another thing that will never change is Amy’s commitment to excel at work.



with your lunch.” Amy has also taken on new responsibilities in the facility’s kitchen as she gained new skills with a chef’s knife.

According to CBDS Program Manager, Natalie Oliveira, “Over the years, Amy has brought so much joy to the elderly. Amy’s inherent kindness makes people happy, including at our program, where she shares with us stories of kindness to others.”

While many businesses shut down and people stayed home, Amy’s work schedule did not change and her reputation of reliability did not falter. Holidays, snow days, a global pandemic—no matter—Amy shows up!

As Swan Brook adjusted to keep people safe, Amy’s duties as a kitchen assistant expanded. With the dining room now closed, Amy delivers food to residents’ rooms which involves a lot of stair climbing. While Amy is getting some exercise, we have no doubt Swan Brook residents’ days are brighter when they hear, “Hi. It’s Amy

Acquiring new skills is not limited to Amy’s work duties. She is also trying new things at home, including screen printing with a Cricut for her scrapbooking hobby. You can see examples of her work in the mask she is wearing and the container she decorated to help her stay hydrated throughout the day.



Thank you, Amy Daniels, for your work as an Essential Worker and setting a good example with your bright smile, tenacious work ethic, and kindness to others.

OUR SERVICES

OUR BELIEFS

We believe that people of all abilities should have meaningful opportunities and the support needed to experience rich and productive lives. We also believe that we should appreciate the similarities we all share and value, and respect and celebrate our unique differences.

<p>Our Services Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Clinical & Support • Healthcare • Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-Based Day Services - Day Habilitation Programs • Employment • Brain Injury <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential Services - CO-OP Milestones Day Centers in Taunton and Sandwich - Individualized Support • Blended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blending an array of services for an individual plan is sometimes the right option 	<p>How You Can Help:</p> <p>\$50 could cover a one-year subscription to unlimited online yoga classes.</p> <p>\$100 could help CO-OP’s music program provide hand-held instruments to individuals for remote and/or socially distant activities during the pandemic.</p> <p>\$250 could cover several online subscriptions to cooking classes with companion kitchen essentials.</p> <p>\$500 could purchase four tablets with communications software.</p> <p>\$1,000 could purchase fitness equipment.</p>
--	--



Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Social distance. We know this will keep us safe in 2021 but as we spend more and more time online, staying safe in a digital world is important, too.

CO-OP's Community Based Day Services (CBDS) has offered numerous training sessions in recent years but now the Massachusetts Department of Development Services funded training sessions provided by Triangle, Inc. and its IMPACT Ability team has gone virtual. Although, the format is different than past sessions, the goal of safety in the digital world remains the same.

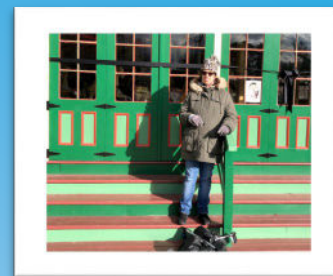
The training included role playing and frank discussions with experts in social media safety. We had a chance to see our friends via zoom, discussed our online experiences, and learned how to stay safe.



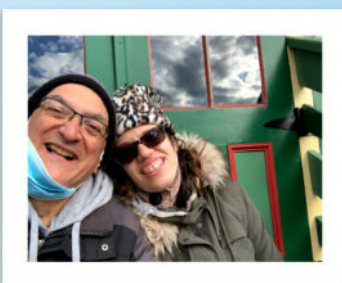
LIV'S LITTER PATROL

We all want Olivia (Liv) Palange as our neighbor!

While her dad, Paul, is frequently seen walking and Liv has been known to join him, recently it has been more than a casual walk—it is a mission!

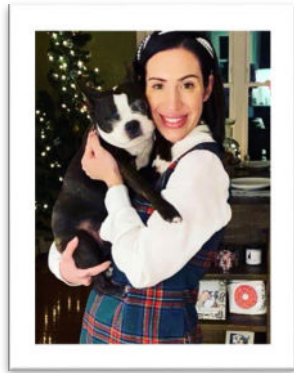


Liv and Paul noticed that there was quite a lot of trash on the sides of the roads as they walk so they decided to do something about it. With the help of garbage bags and garbage picker tools, they now clean up their neighborhood as they walk. Dubbed by Liv as the "Litter Patrol," this father-daughter team walk with a greater purpose.



Thanks for setting a good citizenship example, Liv and Paul. Perhaps we should all give this a try and make our world a better place.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: ASHLEY GONSALVES, A MODEL OF FLEXIBILITY



Ashley Gonsalves has been with CO-OP for close to five years and, until the coronavirus intruded, she spent her days in the Dighton Community Based Day Services (CBDS). When these programs were temporarily suspended

because of COVID-19, CO-OP's residential program needed staff 24/7 as we all hunkered down at home. Like so many others at CO-OP, Ashley was quick to volunteer for a post where she was most needed. Once she jumped into the unknown, she showed us just how flexible she can be and how valuable she is to CO-OP.

Over the course of this new experience, Ashley set an overarching goal – to make quarantining interesting, fun, and diverse for everyone. Her day began at 7:00 a.m. and, as she adjusted to the rhythm and routine of each home, she was determined to put people at ease. She recognized that while she was adjusting, so were those around her. She also recognized that getting people outside to try new activities or games would make the days fun and interesting.

While being assigned to a residential program was a new experience for Ashley, she took this new

assignment on with enthusiasm and positivity. Given some of the restrictions around COVID, creativity was essential. Ashley's scavenger hunts while never leaving the car were a hit – can you find stop signs, blue signs or yellow cars? The water ball games were also a big hit even if changing into dry clothes at times took longer than the games themselves!

On a more serious note, Ashley believes she experienced personal growth. She was most surprised to discover a nurturing side of herself she had not seen before – bubbling up as she assisted individuals with a wide range of personalities and individual needs. Although she tells us she's never considered herself domestic (and credits her husband for keeping her own household running smoothly), Ashley set about learning new skills. Like any good Millennial, Ashley said, "Google helped." We are happy to report that Ashley is now a pro at cooking sausage and operating the washing machine!

Now that CBDS is up and running, even if it looks a bit different, Ashley is back with her day program. As she looks back over the past year, she feels the experience has helped her grow. One thing that hasn't changed is her outlook on life as she tells us, "I take every day as a learning experience."

CO-OP MANAGEMENT TEAM

Joyce Faria

President & CEO
jfaria@co-op.cc

Gail Gordon

Sr. VP & COO
ggordon@co-op.cc

Lucy Andrade

VP, Human Resources
lfandrade@co-op.cc

Courtney Arnold

Director, Health Services
carnold@co-op.cc

Jeanne Connolly-Horrigan

Director, Marketing & Development
jconnolly@co-op.cc

Lucy de Oliveira

Director, Day Programs
ldeoliveira@co-op.cc

Katelyn Eagan

Director, Specialized Services
keagan@co-op.cc

Lauren Giordano

Director, Clinical Services
lgiordano@co-op.cc

Erin Morley

Director, Residential Services
emorley@co-op.cc

A STORY OF TWO FRIENDS

Ashley McMeekin and Christine Lennon have been friends since their school days. Now, we find both in No. Dighton at CO-OP's Community Based Day Services (CBDS) where they shared their thoughts on the past year and their hopes for the future.

It's always a pleasure to talk with these two ladies and a recent zoom call was no different. They shared the ups and downs of 2020 but most of all, they left the impression of two young women, making the best of the challenges, and looking toward the future.

Christine told us she enjoyed having more time with her mom who, like millions of others, is now working from home. While Ashley admitted the days at home sometimes dragged, she brightens up when we ask about her dogs. For all of us who are pet lovers—we understand! Having this company was especially helpful to Ashley as she had to quarantine, not just once, not just twice, but three times! We are happy to share that Ashley always tested negative and remains healthy.

Both Ashley and Christine were happy to return to CO-OP. CBDS may look a bit different but the opportunity to be with friends and continue to work toward individual goals is something they look forward to.

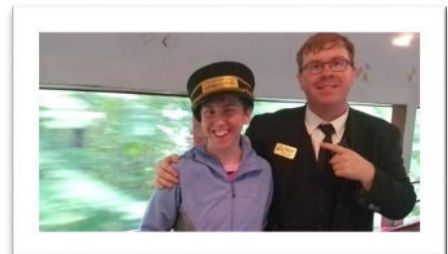
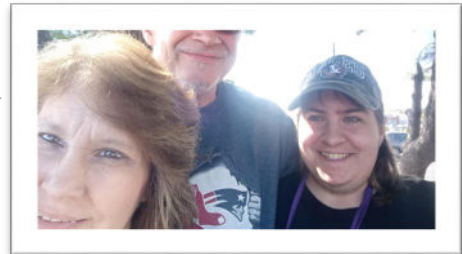
CBDS reopened, with reduced capacity and safe social distancing and the

ladies shared some of the other changes they see: wash your hands, social distance, wear your mask, along with the diligent hourly facilities cleaning conducted by CO-OP staff.

While at CO-OP, perhaps the most missed activity is the social gathering at lunchtime. Music and karaoke is also high on their lists of activities they hope will be possible soon. The drum circles are fun but there's nothing like belting out your favorite song at karaoke!

When asked what they miss the most and look forward to when we

return to more normal times, they both agreed that going on vacation and spending time with friends and extended family tops the list. The photos they share with us says it all!



LOOKING BACK & DREAMING OF BETTER DAYS AHEAD

In 2020, Theresa Elmsley traveled to North Carolina to watch the Special Olympics, with support from Director of Residential Services, Erin Morley. Not only did Theresa have an a fabulous time in the South, she also got to meet dedicated Special Olympics volunteers, Edward and Julia Mulvey, who just happen to be Erin's aunt and uncle. There must be something in the family genes and whatever that is, let's just say we'd all like to spend our next vacation with the Mulveys and the Morleys!



TOP NOTCH! WORLD CLASS! GOLD STAR!

Meet the CO-OP Recruitment Team

CO-OP's Recruitment Team of Candace Bolduc and Katherine (Katie) Dwyer having been doing yeoman's work over the past year and we want everyone to know it. We may also be able to lend the team a hand.

Recruiting is a conundrum for sure—in the spring of 2020, the unemployment rate in Massachusetts was at 17.7%, the highest unemployment level since The Great Depression.

Thankfully, the rate has come down, even if 6.7% is still exceptionally high and many people are suffering.

Why, then, are companies all over the country, including in Massachusetts, having trouble hiring?

The Wall Street Journal reported that the US workforce is 2.2% smaller than it was just one year ago. That means close to 4 million people have dropped out of the national workforce and are no longer looking for work. The reasons are many—some people have been temporarily laid off and are waiting for their old jobs to come back. Some have added responsibilities with schoolchildren at home or the care of a family member or elderly parent. Some are just not comfortable rejoining the workforce until they have been vaccinated.

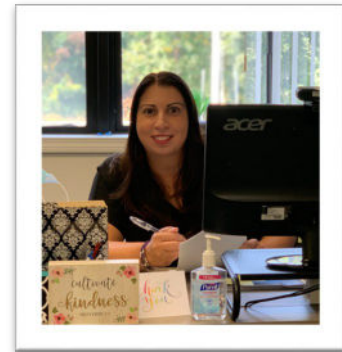
But for Candace and Katie, creativity and ingenuity bubbled up as they find new ways to reach people. You may have heard about CO-OP on local radio or seen us in community

newspapers. Plus, we've posted on numerous community Facebook pages, in addition to our own Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter pages. We are there! Plus, while that most-important recruiting tool of local job fairs is on hold for now, Candace and Katie found an option. They introduced monthly Virtual Job Fairs held on the first Wednesday of each month.

According to Lucy Andrade, Vice President of Human

Resources, "Our recruiting goal is to build a network where CO-OP is recognized as a potential source for employment opportunities as well as professional growth. We have strived to foster solid relationships with management and peers and work as a team in referring potential candidates. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have remained relentless in our pursuit of candidates and been resilient in responding to the ever-changing Human Resources landscape— especially regarding recruitment. Perseverance has been key for recruiting applicants during such difficult times."

This is where we can help. Talk to friends, post, share, holler from the rooftops: We are hiring!



To learn more about employment opportunities at CO-OP

visit www.co-op.cc/career-positions/



2021 Board of Directors

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

Vice Chair Jacqueline Scungio, Providence Community Health Centers

Treasurer Andy Donellon, Donellon, Orcutt, Patch & Stallard

Clerk James Riley, Cross Real Estate

Darlene Boroviak, Professor Emeritus, Wheaton College

Michael Browner, Consultant

Joyce Faria, CO-OP, President & CEO

Paul Hodge, Probation Officer (retired)

Russell Latham, Gosnold School Superintendent (retired)

Jeff Morse, CFO (retired)

Margaret Szewczyk, Five Star Companies

DINNER IS SERVED!



The secret is out. We have a chef on duty!

Joanne Carr joined CO-OP's residential program about six years ago after a decades-long career in the field. Most recently, Joanne has been a member of the ABI/ Specialized Services residential team.

Joanne's experience helped when new challenges arose in 2020.

With outdoor and social activities limited, Joanne recognized that

indoor activities became even more important. She met this challenge head-on, "I wanted to keep people happy in their own homes."

To do that, Joanne fell back on something she loves. She enjoys cooking and has proven to be not only a good cook but also a good teacher. As she tells us, "One of the guys found out that I am a good cook. Now he comes to me all the time and asks what's for dinner." Importantly, she found a way to enlist a number of chef's helpers who now look forward to learning how to prepare new dishes. Of course, dinner preparation takes teamwork!

Over the course of the past year, Joanne has seen a change in individuals as they join in an activity so many of us enjoy. No doubt cooking is a social and skills-building activity that promotes independence. It has also encouraged participation and social interaction among individuals, staff, and of course, the head chef, Joanne.

Bon Appetit!

Are you on our email list?

Contact Jeanne Connolly

at jconnolly@co-op.cc for CO-OP news!

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TAUNTON, MA
02780
PERMIT NO. 614

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.

CO-OP

455 Somerset Avenue, P.O. Box 506
No. Dighton, MA 02764-0506

Phone: 508-824-1717
Fax: 508-822-0919
E-mail: info@co-op.cc



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