



care... above and beyond

# The Community Cares Newsletter

Family

SPRING 2016

## Barn Animals Visit The Community Family

The Community Family was visited for a day in February by Barn Babies, a traveling baby animal petting zoo. Animals making the trip to all three of our centers included a multitude of bunnies and kittens, several puppies and chickens, and a piglet, lamb and baby goat. The small, furry crea-

tures were remarkably well-received by participants across all our centers.

Barn Babies is a 12-year old company based in Lakeville, MA that travels to children's parties but also provides a form of pet therapy for the elder population. Barn Babies employee Marco Moura

was overseer of all the animals, introducing them to the clients and then assisting everyone in the opportunity to hold them.

It was a fun, lively hour at each center for the highly engaged and entertained clients, and was newsworthy enough to be featured in the Everett, Medford and Lowell newspapers. At the same time, it did indeed

prove to be therapeutic. When the nursing team at TCF's Medford center did blood pressure checks on many of the clients later that afternoon, all of them had lower, safer rates than they typically do!

Left: Joseph Lavasseur, Lowell center; Top: Elvira Correia, Everett center; Right: Laura Tropnas, Medford center



## Sharing Good News

### We're Licensed!

Since our last newsletter, The Community Family was becoming fully compliant with new adult day health regulations issued by the state of Massachusetts. Prior to 2015, there were no formal policies for adult day health care at the state level. We were in favor of the implementation of such policies, but the regulations included new requirements for staffing patterns, training, consultants and numerous other provisions. With a grace period to become fully compliant, we worked determinedly over the course of the year and have been issued licenses for each of our centers!

### Annual Appeal Success!

The Community Family's two primary appeals of 2015 were the best to date in the organization's history. The Summer Appeal narrowly surpassed the former record from 2012 by raising **\$5,050**. On the other hand, the year-end Annual Appeal shattered the previous year's record by raising **\$17,721** from more than 170 donors!

We are grateful for the outstanding generosity of our family members, friends and benefactors. This support will help us continue to offer the very best programming possible as well as address some of the operational challenges we face in the upcoming year. Thank you so much to those who were able to make a gift! We look forward to building on those totals in 2016.



**EVERETT CENTER  
& ADMINISTRATION**  
106 WYLLIS AVE.  
617.381.6248



**MEDFORD CENTER**  
121 WASHINGTON ST.  
781.395.5542



**LOWELL CENTER**  
236 BROADWAY ST.  
978.458.4844

## Our Mission

*The Community Family is dedicated to providing high quality adult day health services that keep adults in their homes as long as possible. Our services are based on a deep respect for the dignity, self-esteem, and vitality of all those we serve. We are committed to improving the quality of life for both our participants and their families.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Legislation for Adult Day Health Rates

The Community Family (TCF) has been active in advocating at the state level for an increase in the reimbursement rate for adult day health services in response to the state's proposal of a zero increase. The state has proposed no increase in rates despite the fact that current rates are based on 2009 cost data. TCF has joined other adult day health (ADH) providers, legislators, clients and families to impress upon decision-makers the value and cost-effectiveness of adult day health.

TCF staff members testified at a public hearing held by the state on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Numerous advocates provided testimony on the importance of ADH programs and the need for a higher reimbursement rate. State Senator Barbara L'Italien spoke eloquently about her strong support for adult day health programs and how, after her mother was diagnosed with dementia, she relied on a local adult day health center to provide care for her. Senator L'Italien vowed to get all 40 state senators to sign on to her letter recommending that rates be increased to meet the cost of providing ADH services.

The current reimbursement rate of \$58.83 per day for basic ADH care has not been increased since 2012 and was set using cost data from 2009. When this rate was established four years ago, it was \$5.00/day less than the true cost of providing care and today, the funding gap is estimated to

have grown to \$11.00/day. The proposed rate increase is to \$70 per day – in essence, breaking even. Ten of our sister ADH centers in MA have closed over the last year. There are now fewer than ten Alzheimer's-specialty programs in the state - two of them TCF's. Programs cannot be expected to operate at a loss for long periods of time. As a non-profit organization, TCF raises private funds to help narrow the funding gap, but it's not possible to rely on fundraising to compensate for an inadequate state reimbursement rate.

The survival of ADH programs is being threatened even though they provide considerable cost savings to the state. According to a 2015 study by Genworth, a long-term care insurer, the median annual cost to the state for adult day health in MA is only \$16,900 per person, less than a quarter of the \$72,270 cost for nursing home care. Because more than half of TCF's participants have Alzheimer's disease, without our services, many would be forced to enter a nursing home to receive the care and supervision they need.

Given our strong foundation and fiscal management, TCF is not in any imminent danger and our high levels of care and service will continue into the future. However, our concerns are considerable and we will continue working diligently to ensure that adult day health services are viable and continue to thrive.

## Client Longevity

The Community Family strives to make every participant at its centers feel like a family member. For many, they have been with TCF so long they have indeed become just like family. This is particularly true at the Everett traditional adult day health center where the diagnosis of participants is often less complex than at the Lowell or Medford centers.

As a result, Everett has eight individuals who have been using the center on a regular basis for a decade or more. This group is led by Helus Kopaczynski, Carol Morgan and Edith Grice, all of whom have been coming to TCF for more than 15 years. Each of them have such unique personalities, dis-



**Long-time TCF clients. From left to right: Wally Langlois of the Lowell Center, Carol Morgan of the Everett center and Virginia Arsenault of the Medford center.**

positions and characteristics but they are all wonderful ladies who have added to the life and vitality of the center. We have been blessed to have all of them here for so long!

The Lowell and Medford centers have also had numerous long-time participants over the years, including current "club members" Wally Langlois in Lowell for more than 9 years and Violet Arsenault and Rocco Albanese in Medford for more than 8 years.

One never knows what each day brings at TCF but is comforting to see the familiar faces of our long-term participants. We hope to keep them coming into our homes for years to come!



## TCF Board President Joe Keohane

Behind the scenes at The Community Family is a Board of Directors that monitors the performance of the centers and guides the direction of the organization. The efforts of the Board have been a critical component of the organization's success and growth over the years and currently spearheading this effort as President of the Board is Joe Keohane. Joe is Executive Vice President & Senior Loan Officer at Everett Co-operative Bank and has been on TCF's Board since 2001, including the past 9 years as President. He was instrumental in helping TCF build its beautiful, modern Everett and Lowell centers. Perhaps just as importantly, under Joe's leadership, the Board has helped TCF remain fiscally sound during unsteady economic times that have certainly impacted the



**TCF Board of Directors President  
Joe Keohane**

organization.

With his humble demeanor and easygoing manner, Joe has been a steady influence for years, providing stability to an adult day health industry that continues to change as part of the constantly evolving healthcare landscape. And he has done so graciously, thoughtfully and willingly. We are grateful for his years of service to The Community Family.

Joe has demonstrated similar loyalty to his employer, having worked at Everett Co-operative Bank for 16 years. Joe lives in Tyngsborough with his wife Beth. They have four children and two grandchildren.

## The Value of Memory Loss Programs

When family members find out that a loved one has an issue with memory loss, it can be life-altering for everyone involved. It is a time of great uncertainty. Numerous questions need answered, not the least of which is determining the most appropriate form of care. Quite understandably, a spouse or child most often takes on the role of caregiver, wanting to keep their loved one at home for as long as possible. The tremendous stress involved with such care is well-recognized and the need for respite understood.



**Above: Lowell center participants with volunteers from The Power of Flowers. Below: Delia Cardona observing her floral arrangement.**

flowers with them and assisted a group of ladies in putting together beautiful floral arrangements. In meeting its mission, The Power of Flowers enriched the lives of TCF participants by harnessing the proven power of flowers to lift spirits and promote healing.

Not only did participants get to partake in an enjoyable, stimulating activity but they got to take the flowers home with them and brighten their home surroundings as well. The Power of Flowers will be making a return visit to the

This is where The Community Family comes in. Our memory loss programs in Medford and Lowell are great resources in the community and not just as a means of relief for caregivers. We engage participants, rather than simply watch them and act as a babysitter. Our dedicated staffs provide specialized care with activities and sensory experiences that improve well-being and reduce depression.

On occasion, outside groups are brought in to lead a program and one such activity recently took place at our Lowell center with a visit from the non-profit organization The Power of Flowers. Volunteers from The Power of Flowers brought recycled but gently-used



Lowell center in June.

The value of dementia-specific adult day health programs, in particular the expert care provided at our Medford and Lowell centers, cannot be understated. TCF employees work diligently each day to meet the high standards and expectations of our clients and caregivers, as well as our own, and we look forward to continuing this quality care into the future.

The Medford and Lowell centers care for individuals with dementia from early to very-late stages. Should you learn of a person near these two communities that is even in the early stages of diagnosis, please have their family reach out to us. We just may be able to provide them peace of mind without a severe interruption of their current lifestyle.

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*care . . . above and beyond*  
**Premier Adult Day Health Programs**  
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## Communications Updates

- If you have not seen our updated website, we encourage you to check it out. It is a more fresh, contemporary look that we feel better represents TCF and we have received very positive feedback on the site. Our video and past newsletters are among the features.
- While on the internet, come visit our Facebook page – and Like us, of course. We have become more consistent about posting photos of activities at our centers and look to use it to post more updates on relevant topics like those covered in this newsletter.
- We recently sent out a survey to consumers and caregivers, in which we asked for feedback on the various areas of care and service that we offer. We look forward to sharing the results. The surveys are very important to us, helping guide our future courses of action.
- We began an automated system of notifying clients and caregivers of weather-related cancellations or delays at our centers. It seems to have worked out well for the few snowy days we had this winter. Please keep us updated of any phone number changes.

## ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVER

### SUPPORT GROUPS

**The public is welcome to attend.**

### MEDFORD CENTER

**2nd Monday of each month**

**7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Call 781.395.5542**

### LOWELL CENTER

**3rd Thursday of each month**

**1:30 - 3:00 PM**

**Call 978.458.4844**

## Jingle Bell Festival Rocks—Again

The Community Family's Medford Center is once again the grateful recipient of proceeds from the Jingle Bell Festival, held at Medford City Hall last December. The Medford Center has been the primary beneficiary of the festival since its founding 16 years ago, with proceeds now totaling more than \$250,000! The festival is run by a group of 30 Medford residents and friends, led by TCF Board member Judy Lonergan.

Revenues are generated through the sale of raffle tickets for decorated Christmas trees that are donated by area businesses, organizations and families, and through a house tour of Christmas-decorated homes in Medford. Thanks to all the volunteers for their time and energy planning this wonderful event!