

# VOICE

News and information for friends and supporters of Vinfen



Sean and Yvonne in his new room.

## Finding a Place to Call Home

Home has a special meaning for everyone. For Sean McFarlan this included being part of a family with a dog.

After 10 years in a group home, Sean worked with Vinfen Director of Community Living Meg Gaydos to find a Shared Living arrangement that met his needs. "Sean is a quiet, soft-spoken man who knows exactly what he wants," said Meg.

At Vinfen, Shared Living means an individual, couple, or family share their home and life with a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. Shared Living aims to provide greater independence in the community while making sure individual needs for support, belonging, and safety are met.

David and Yvonne Goulbourne and their dog, Allie, were the perfect match. Yvonne and Sean went shopping together to make his room his own space. When Sean saw the room, he was overwhelmed. "He thought it was too good for him, but I told him that was not true, and it was his room," Yvonne said.

The Goulbournes include Sean in their daily lives. He joins them for dinners, football games, and family trips. He recently attended David and Yvonne's 40th anniversary party and their son's wedding where he danced the night away and posed for family photos. At home, he plays with Allie, watches action movies, enjoys Yvonne's cooking, and spends time with the Goulbournes' sons.

Yvonne recently assured Sean, "You are part of our family now." To Sean, that is exactly what home means.

To learn more about Shared Living, please visit [www.vinfen.org/shared-living](http://www.vinfen.org/shared-living).



## President's Message

Bruce L. Bird, President & Chief Executive Officer

Most of us are aware of two major trends that have influenced the way long-term supports and services are provided to people with disabilities. The first was the trend away from using institutions such as state-operated hospitals, schools, or nursing homes and to community-based residences. It is why Vinfen was founded, with our first group home on the corner of Vining and Fenwood Road, designed to support people who had lived for years in the Massachusetts Mental Health Hospital to begin a transition back to the community.

Over the past decade, the second major trend has been to develop a more robust array of services to support people living more independently, in their own apartments or with their families.

The article, "Finding a Place to Call Home," brings to life the service of Shared Living. It is one example of services which are planned for expansion by Vinfen and the entire Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services. Others include our Community Based Flexible Supports program for individuals served by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, which has moved many people from group homes into apartment or family settings in the community.

Vinfen's founding mission was to help people live happy, healthy, productive, and valued lives as members of their communities—as independently as possible. Almost 40 years later, these evolving services offer innovative ways to accomplish this mission. It is what all of us really want as we age, or if we experience health challenges, and it is clearly the way forward for our system of care.

# vinfen leading the way

## Integrating Care for Better Health

Thanks to a three-year grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Massachusetts, Vinfen is evaluating another innovative technology-supported program to improve integrated care for people with serious mental illness. The program has expanded a smartphone app first developed with Wellframe, a local technology company, which showed positive results with transition age youth. The project will evaluate the Wellframe app with expanded content for adults in Vinfen's Department of Mental Health (DMH) funded Community Based Flexible Supports (CBFS) program in Plymouth, MA. In addition to improving features, increasing content, and expanding support provided through the app, the project adds integrated care services delivered by health outreach workers embedded in the CBFS team.

"Our health outreach workers teach people with both physical and behavioral health needs how to create a healthier lifestyle. The services are designed to help people improve their overall health including sleep, nutrition, and exercise while also tackling specific conditions like heart disease, diabetes, or asthma," said Director of Project Management Elizabeth Cella.

The evaluation will examine the impact of this new program for 100 individuals, compared to a similar group of people served in traditional services. Vinfen expects that the Integrated Care and Wellness project will show sufficient value to attract sustained support by funders such as DMH and MassHealth.



*Participant Al Baroni using the Integrated Care and Wellness App.*

## Presenting and Performing at Conferences



Vinfen was honored to participate at the United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association's 2016 Recovery Workforce Summit, held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel, from May 22 to 25. Vinfen's Point After Club performed their recovery theme song "May the Circle Be Unbroken" and Member Keith spoke about the support he has received from Program Director Tom Coppinger. Clinical Program Director Maureen Kamau (left), Training Specialist Lisa Macchi (center), and Director of Project Management Elizabeth Cella (right) discussed the challenges of integrating health technologies into services delivery to improve health outcomes and enhance engagement.



Vinfen sponsored and attended the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health's Northeast Area Transition Age Youth (TAY) Conference on June 24. Vinfen President and CEO Bruce Bird welcomed guests and spoke to the importance of listening to the needs of young adults when creating programs that support them. Vinfen Youth Leadership Coordinator Jennifer Stultz and Transition to Independence Program (TIP) Facilitator Matt Griffin spoke on a panel that examined the resources available to young adults.





Lisa Berger  
Director of Recovery Services

## Promoting Recovery

There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed through recovery. These successes often go unnoticed by the broader population. This is why Vinfen joins the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the promotion of National Recovery Month.

The observance, held during the month of September, provides increased opportunities for people to speak about the gains made by those in recovery and share their success stories with their community, friends,

and colleagues. In doing so, everyone helps to increase awareness and furthers greater understanding of psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders. The month also provides a vehicle to celebrate people in recovery and their accomplishments.

For the past six years, Vinfen has recognized National Recovery Month by taking nominations for our Peer Leadership Award. The award recognizes the outstanding achievements of a person served or staff member with lived experience who has made significant contributions to the peer movement or to Vinfen. Criteria for selection include:

- Increased understanding or promoted constructive change on issues regarding persons with lived experience
- Influenced the success of persons with lived experience
- Helped to bridge the gap between peers and non-peers
- Promoted greater understanding of the values of hope and resiliency as related to peers

While September is designated National Recovery Month, Vinfen honors and celebrates recovery year round. Throughout its history, Vinfen has been a leader in emphasizing recovery and promoting a culture that encourages it.

Specifically, our Recovery Learning Centers offer a wide range of programming options for people who identify as having a psychiatric condition and wish to come together as a community. Vinfen posts recovery stories on our website and continues to seek more involvement from people about what recovery looks like to them. We are also in the initial stages of building a recovery writers' forum, where people can write articles and blogs on topics of their interest. In addition, our staff, whose specialty involves having lived experience, facilitates Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups for the people we serve. WRAP is a self-designed process that supports people with monitoring uncomfortable feelings and reducing them through planned responses. These are just some of the many ways that Vinfen supports the people we serve on their own paths toward recovery.

## Board of Directors

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## Mission Statement

*Vinfen transforms lives by building the capacity of individuals, families, organizations, and communities to learn, thrive, and achieve their goals. Our services promote the recovery, resiliency, habilitation, and self-determination of the people we serve. As a human services leader, we strive to be the provider, employer, and partner of choice.*

# vinfen leading the way

## Creating and Celebrating Traditions

"I'm always excited to see the smiles on their faces on Thanksgiving," said Vinfen Site Manager Carole Colas. When she noticed some of her residents did not have family to visit during the holiday, she decided to host a Thanksgiving dinner at their home. Together, staff and residents cook a homemade meal and set the table. The feast includes some of residents' favorite foods like lasagna and baked ham as well as a traditional turkey and mashed potatoes. The dinner has become a beloved yearly tradition. "The residents keep asking, 'Are you cooking a ham this year?'" said Carole.

Carole also invites people served from nearby Vinfen residences who have all become friends through the years. Even residents who do visit their families come back to attend the Vinfen dinner. "We plan it so everyone can be here and be together," noted Carole. Throughout the year, the residence celebrates other holidays, birthdays, and milestones. "I see them all the time. They're part of my family," said Carole.



*Residential Counselor Shirley Gakpetor at a birthday celebration for two people served.*



*Last year's Thanksgiving meal.*

## Welcoming Second Chances



*Andrea Shapiro*

We have all experienced the transformative power of a well-fitting, good-looking outfit. This holds just as true for people who are homeless or have a small income.

"When you're going through the kinds of transitions that the folks we serve go through, having a nice outfit can be such a confidence boost that it's a big deal," said Second Chances Founder and CEO Andrea Shapiro.

For over seven years, Second Chances has provided wardrobe staples, interview outfits, and even prom dresses for dozens of the people Vinfen serves in the Cambridge and Somerville area. Founded in 2005, this unique clothing donation program works with service providers, like Vinfen, to meet the specific needs of individuals.

"I'd been living with my grandmother and unable to find a steady job," said Kaitlin, an individual served by Vinfen and Second Chances. "I don't have any money, so interview clothes were out of the question. One week after my social worker put in a request, a large bag arrived with my name on it. I never could have imagined owning such wonderful clothing. Now I feel good when I show up for interviews."

Second Chances' name refers to the individuals receiving clothing and to the clothing itself, which is routinely reused or recycled. "The recycling piece of our work is crucial to us, and people have been very excited about it," Andrea said. With a fantastic reputation of supporting those we serve and reducing waste, Vinfen is proud to partner with Second Chances.



*A Vinfen staff member with donated clothes.*



Visit [www.secondchances.org](http://www.secondchances.org) to learn more and to locate a donation bin near you.



# making a difference

## Promoting Education and Training

The 2016 Board of Directors Scholarship winner is Rehabilitation Coordinator Danisa Batista. The award, which is generously funded by Vinfen's board members, is given yearly to help employees further their education, career, and commitment to the people Vinfen serves. Danisa plans to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker to enhance the ways she can positively impact services. Team Leader Daniela Carrier nominated Danisa for the scholarship. "She is a hard-working, motivated, and determined person. Furthermore, her education is not only a professional pursuit but also a personal endeavor for her—a 'labor of love' so to speak. I can see her becoming a very dedicated social worker," Daniela said.



President and CEO Bruce Bird with Danisa Batista.

## You Make the Holidays Sparkle

### Holiday Giving

Join the Vinfen Family



*"The amount of personal, genuine care at Vinfen—you can't fake it. There's a level of care here that's special. You'd be hard pressed to find it elsewhere."*

—Tom W.,  
Person Served by Vinfen

For many families, the holidays are their favorite time of year, when friends and loved ones gather to share food, laughs, and gifts with those they hold dearest. But not all of the people we serve at Vinfen have the family or personal means to celebrate.

This holiday season, we invite you to become part of Tom's family; part of our Vinfen family.

Your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100, or more places a gift directly in the hands of the people served by Vinfen who inspire us daily by achieving extraordinary goals. You can ensure that all these remarkable individuals have gifts to open and enjoy this year.

Join the Vinfen Family today.

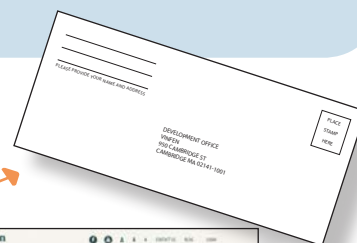
## You Can Contribute to Vinfen in Many Ways

- Direct, unrestricted donations
- Matching gifts
- Gifts in memory, in honor, or in celebration
- Gifts of bequests or planned giving
- Donate online: Visit [www.vinfen.org](http://www.vinfen.org) and click "donate now" to make a secure and convenient online donation to Vinfen.
- A donation envelope is also enclosed for your convenience.

For more information, please contact the Vinfen Director of Communications and Development Erin Tighe at 617-441-1736 or [tighee@vinfen.org](mailto:tighee@vinfen.org).

Web

Mail



# vinfen happenings

## Enjoying the Great Outdoors



*Haverhill Clubhouse Members Lynn, Marline, Marilyn, and Michelle with Clubhouse Counselor Taylor Dunleavy.*

Members from six of Vinfen's Clubhouses across Eastern Massachusetts got together for their annual camping trip during Labor Day weekend. Around 45 members and staff stayed at the YMCA Camp Lyndon in Sandwich, MA. Activities included boating, hiking, swimming, and archery. At night, campers enjoyed a campfire and eating s'mores.

## Graduating Youth Leaders



*The 13 GIFT graduates and their trainers.*

Vinfen's Point After Club hosted a graduation ceremony on June 28 for 13 young adults who completed the Gathering and Inspiring Future Talent (GIFT) training program. In collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, GIFT prepares young adults for a career in peer mentoring and helps them learn to share their stories in a way that inspires positive change.

## Having Fun in the Sun



*Vinfen Outreach Worker Miriam Alcantara, Assistant Area Directors for Greater Boston Developmental Disabilities Services Kaitlyn Spencer and Elizabeth Sandblom, and Vinfen Program Director Sethany Griffin.*

Vinfen and other Family Support Centers had a Family Fun Day at Pope John Paul II Park in Dorchester, MA on June 4. The event invited people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to have fun, relax, and network with one another. Attendees enjoyed playing board games, flying kites, and watching a dragon dance performance.

## Bringing Vinfen CT Together



*Alicia Palazzo enjoys her lunch with Vinfen CT Assistant Program Director Latavia Walker.*

Around 250 individuals, their families, and staff attended Vinfen CT's 15th Annual Fun Fest on August 19 at Northwest Park in Windsor, CT. Local percussionist Mark Zarrillo from Drumming Spirit led a drum circle. A DJ from Blain Entertainment kept guests dancing all afternoon. Along with the traditional cookout items, each group brought a side dish, dessert, or drinks to make the lunch extra special.



## vinfen connecticut

### Honoring Families and Advocates

Vinfen Connecticut held their 4th Annual Celebration of Families at Elizabeth Park's Pond House in West Hartford, CT on May 31. WFSB sportscaster John Holt was the Master of Ceremonies. CT Department of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Commissioner Morna Murray and members of the Vinfen CT Family Advisory Council spoke and presented awards. Guests were treated to an inspirational keynote address by student, entrepreneur, world ambassador, advocate, and Special Olympics athlete Dakota Johns.

Self-advocate and artist Vicky Pacheco was presented with the Family & Community Advocacy Award. With the support of Vinfen CT, Vicky secured and has maintained employment for over two years. By sharing her story, Vicky hopes to inspire and encourage others.



Family & Community Advocacy Award winners Elisa Velardo and Vicky Pacheco, Dakota Johns, and DDS Director of Communications and Strategy Nicole Cadovius.

## vinfen arts

### Seeing Double

Gateway Arts held the opening reception for *Double Vision* on September 23. The exhibition, which runs till November 12, features the work of Gateway Arts' staff members paired with work of the studio artist of their choice; a selection that was based on similarity in style, medium, or subject matter. During the reception, a fashion event was held with wearable works, embellished by Gateway Arts artists, that were modeled by select attendees. The fashion show was produced in collaboration with TESstylist Lydia Santangelo and fashion expert Jane Feigenson.

For more information about Gateway Arts, visit [www.gatewayarts.org](http://www.gatewayarts.org).



Gateway Arts Artist Joe Howe and Service Specialist Leah Medin with their art.

### Connecting with the Community

Art Connection Studio was honored to have their artists' work featured by the Greater Hartford Arts Council in their exhibit, *Connections + Collaborations*. The opening reception was held on September 1 at the 100 Pearl Street Gallery in Hartford, CT where all works highlighted the power of community, connection, and creativity. Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy and First Lady and CEO of the Greater Hartford Arts Council Cathy Malloy, who has been a long-standing supporter of Art Connection Studio, attended the event. Dozens of artists, friends, family members, council members, and art lovers were in attendance for the reception.

For more information about Art Connection Studio, please visit [www.artconnectionstudio.org](http://www.artconnectionstudio.org).



Art Connection Studio Artists with First Lady and CEO of the Greater Hartford Arts Council Cathy Malloy and Governor Dannel Malloy (far right).



you transform lives

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## Working Together to Make Dreams Come True

Plymouth Bay Clubhouse Member Pamela Martin recently published a children's book, *Watermelon With Wesley*. Pamela wanted to be an author, but her dreams were on hold due to health concerns. When she mentioned her aspirations to become an author, the Clubhouse encouraged her to work hard and publish her book.



*"It's always been a dream to be able to do this. To have a computer to work on—this saved me. The resources here brought me over the last hurdle. I feel more a part of the community. I'm an example that you can do it. I have multiple disabilities and am a single parent. This gives me a chance to celebrate my accomplishments."*

—Pamela Martin, Clubhouse Member and Author

"Pamela is highly motivated, self-directed, and an inspiration to Plymouth Bay House members and staff," said Clubhouse Counselor Andrew Wilson. "Pamela did all of the work herself, designing, and laying out her book in a desktop publishing program, inserting her artwork, and preparing the book for publication." You can purchase Pamela's book on Amazon.

**vinfen**  
*transforming lives together*

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**voice**  
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