

VOICE

News and information for friends and supporters of Vinfen

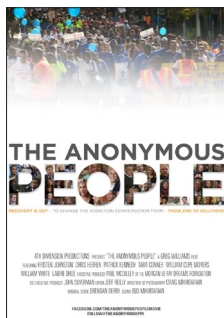


Star of "A Sister's Call" Rebecca Schaper (center) with President and CEO Bruce Bird, Senior Vice President of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Susan Abbott, Director of Nursing Mary McGinnis, and Director of Recovery Services Lisa Berger in 2015.

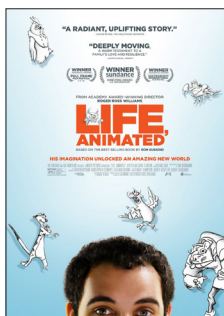
You're Invited to Celebrate 10 Years of Film

Vinfen is proud to invite you to attend our 10th annual Moving Images Film Festival, *Progress from Prejudice*, on Saturday, April 1 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School in Boston. For the past decade, Vinfen has used the power of film to raise awareness, educate our community, and fight prejudice and discrimination so often faced by people with psychiatric conditions, intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injuries, and behavioral health challenges. By offering a glimpse into the struggles and triumphs of these individuals, we have sought to strengthen the connection between people with disabilities and the community.

Now in the 10th year of our festival and 40th Anniversary of Vinfen, our fight to end discrimination against those we serve is more important than ever. The festival will showcase seven inspiring films and two



- **The Anonymous People**
- **This is Crazy: Criminalizing Mental Health**
- **Mental Health for All by Involving All**



- **Life, Animated**
- **Brooklyn Love Tales**
- **Perfect**
- **Love, No Matter What**

panel discussions examining prejudice and discrimination. The event is free and open to the public, but a \$10 donation, in honor of our 10th year, is suggested and appreciated. Your continued support makes an important statement in favor of equality for all.

This year's festival features two full-length films and five shorts. *The Anonymous People* seeks to change public perception and response to the addiction crisis by sharing the stories of those in recovery, and those who fight for the rights of these individuals to receive services and no longer remain nameless. *Life, Animated* is about Owen Suskind, a young man who was unable to speak as a child until he and his family discovered a unique way to communicate by immersing themselves in the world of Disney movies.

For more information and to register, visit www.vinfen.org/moving-images.



President's Message

Bruce L. Bird, President & Chief Executive Officer

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of Vinfen's founding. In 1977, Dr. Miles Shore and a group at Harvard Psychiatry and the Massachusetts Mental Hospital founded our organization. Our mission was to help individuals with serious psychiatric conditions, many of whom lived in the hospital for years, to live in the community. Today our mission has expanded to help people with psychiatric conditions, intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injuries, and behavioral health challenges live healthy, productive lives in their community.

We have many activities to commemorate our 40th. On September 8, we will host a conference with national experts, including Monica Oss of Open Minds, on innovative technologies that are re-shaping our services and helping people manage their health.

In an unusual alignment of events, we will also host two 10-year anniversaries. The first is our Moving Images Film Festival, which features a long list of engaging films and panelists. This year's theme, *Progress from Prejudice*, is a reflection of Vinfen's entire 40-year history and mission.

The second is the Celebration of Family Partnerships. The event, held in the fall, honors families who have provided extraordinary support for their loved ones. It never fails to present inspiring stories of dedicated families working with caring staff to help individuals achieve their goals.

Thanks to you, Vinfen has continued to improve our services and achieve the goals we have set over the past 40 years. The work of our company, our staff, and our partners, especially the families and individuals we serve, is not always easy. We hope you will all join us this year to celebrate Vinfen's accomplishments, and re-dedicate ourselves to the mission of service in which we all believe.

vinfen leading the way

Going Forward, Getting Fit

Vinfen has teamed up with Dr. Steve Bartels' group at Dartmouth College and the Massachusetts Mental Health Clinic for Fit Forward, a study examining how technology and various forms of support may help young adults get in shape, lose weight, and reduce their chance for heart disease. Obesity is common among people with psychiatric conditions, which puts them at higher risk for poor health outcomes and shortened life spans. Helping young adults make lifestyle changes may remedy this health disparity.

Participants will all be given Fitbits, lifestyle coaching, encouraging text messages, and goal-setting assistance. Half of the participants will also have group supports including workout sessions and a private Facebook group to share successes and challenges with trying to be fit. Researchers will do follow-ups to assess which group had better health outcomes.

"In addition to potentially helping participants be fit, the research team will learn how programs can better support healthy lifestyles," says Program Manager Stacy McHugh. "Our hope is that Fit Forward will help future programs be more successful in helping young adults live longer, healthier lives."



Fit Forward Research Assistant Reid Fultz and Project Manager Stacy McHugh test the Fitbit.



Jeff Keilson (middle) with Vinfen Champions.

Championing for Self-Advocacy

In an effort to better support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to achieve their goals and attain their highest level of independence, Vinfen recently launched a self-advocacy group called the Champions. Once a month, twenty staff members, with guidance from Advocates Senior Vice President Jeff Keilson, meet to discuss how to support individuals to be productive community members, active decision makers, overcome barriers, and brainstorm solutions.

"The meetings are quite informative and have helped me to become a stronger advocate for the individuals that I serve," said Program Director Marilyn Normil.

Thanks to a recently awarded Department of Developmental Services Innovation Grant to Promote Social and Community Inclusion, the group plans to expand their support.

Recognizing Dedicated Leadership

Residential Counselor Margaret Kelly is the recipient of the 6th annual Peer Leadership Award. The award recognizes the achievements of a staff person who has made significant contributions to the peer movement and to Vinfen. Margaret received the award on December 20 at the Newburyport residence where she has worked for over ten years.

Program Director Haley Kuver nominated Margaret. "She's an unbelievably valuable person. As a peer, she has helped bridge the gap between the people we serve and our staff. Through her own lived experience, Margaret provides them an outlet and understanding that they would possibly not have otherwise," said Haley.



Margaret Kelly (second from left) after receiving her award.



Lisa Berger
Director of Recovery Services

Ending Prejudice Together

I was having coffee with a highly intelligent, successful woman. When I told her about my job working in the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Division at Vinfen, she responded, "So, people with those illnesses can be rehabilitated? I had no idea." Somewhat dumbfounded, I explained to her that people with psychiatric conditions do recover. Her knowledge of psychiatric conditions came from the sensational tone and stereotypical portrayal of them in the media. People with mental health conditions often choose not to disclose their status for fear of negative, social

repercussions and the pervasive prejudice and discrimination people face when they are open about their illnesses.

This is slowly changing, through an approach that includes both royalty and star power. In the United Kingdom, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry are promoting their Heads Together initiative, which seeks to reduce prejudice and discrimination for people with psychiatric conditions. The Duke of Cambridge has said, "For too long it has been a case of 'Keep Quiet and Carry On'. As a result, too many people have suffered in silence...and the effects of this can be devastating."

Actress Glenn Close founded Bring Change 2 Mind (BC2M), a nonprofit organization built to start the conversation about mental health. BC2M develops influential public service announcements and has piloted evidence-based programs at the university and high school levels. Both Close's sister and nephew live with psychiatric conditions.

Be Vocal is a partnership between singer, songwriter, and mental health advocate Demi Lovato, who is living with bipolar disorder, and leading advocacy organizations that have come together to help individuals and communities advocate for themselves and others.

Every year, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) presents its Voice Awards, which honor peer and family leaders and television and film professionals who educate the public about behavioral health.

You might notice that I don't use the word stigma. This is because stigma refers to a mark of disgrace inherent in a person from a different background and may be used as a justification for discrimination. The terms prejudice or discrimination put the focus on the person who holds and expresses the bias and/or who acts in a discriminatory or prejudicial way. By changing the language used, we redirect attention to the person acting in a disrespectful manner. This is why Vinfen's 2017 Moving Images Film Festival focuses on the theme of progress from prejudice.

By putting our *heads together* and learning to *be vocal* and use our *voice*, we can *bring change to mind* to lessen prejudice and discrimination for those living with a psychiatric condition.



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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 happenings

Celebrating Family Partnerships



The Fields family were honored.



Bruce Bird with Representative Liz Malia.



Speaker Michael Plansky with members of the Northeastern Men's Basketball Team.



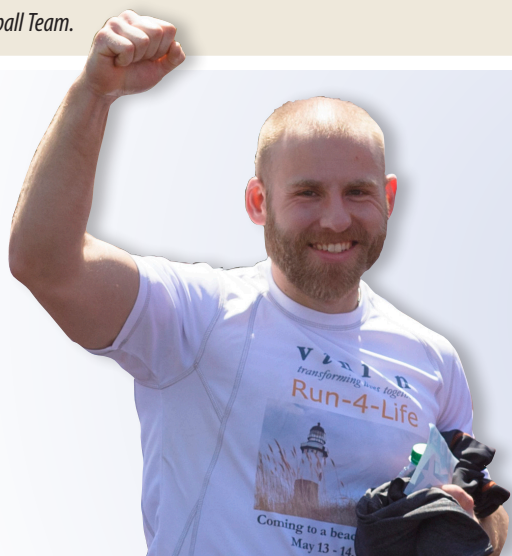
Vinfen Board Chairperson Philip Mason and DDS Commissioner Elin Howe.

Vinfen recognized the dedicated families, advocates, self-advocates, and staff who support the people we serve at Vinfen's 9th Annual Celebration of Family Partnerships on October 26 at the Four Points by Sheraton in Norwood, MA.

Former WCVB-TV anchorwoman Susan Wornick served as Master of Ceremonies and welcomed attendees along with Department of Mental Health Commissioner Joan Mikula and Department of Developmental Services Commissioner Elin Howe. Honored guests included Massachusetts State Representative and Public Official of the Year Liz Malia; Craig Smith Self-Advocate award recipient Marie Saldi; and Helen Fantasia-Arraj Staff Recognition award recipient Joel Trinquere.

Educator of the Year Michael Plansky delivered a keynote address about the positive experience his son Max has had with the Northeastern Men's Basketball Team. In response to the remarkable difference the team has made in his son's life, Michael founded You're With Us!, a nonprofit that creates opportunities for individuals with disabilities with college clubs, groups, and teams.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: HUB International, the Rae and Aaron Alberts Foundation, and the Tiffany Ballroom at the Four Points by Sheraton in Norwood.



Runner James Green celebrates at the 2016 Run-4-Life.

Running For Better Health

Four teams of Vinfen staff, supporters, and people we serve will run together in the annual Run-4-Life relay on May 12 and 13. The 190-mile run from Hull to Provincetown, MA raises awareness and funds for health and wellness initiatives for people with psychiatric conditions served by Vinfen.

Support a runner, donate today at www.vinfen.org/run-4-life.

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY IN COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE

Friday, September 8, 2017

**Joseph B. Martin Conference Center
Harvard Medical School**

Conference: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE

Join Vinfen and national experts in the field for a conference focusing on new, innovative technologies in community health care. Presented by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Citizens Bank.

Following the conference, a celebratory reception will recognize Vinfen's 40 years of transforming lives.

vinfen happenings

Reveling in Recovery



Clinical Coordinator Amy Saunders and Viesia Novesielki. At the event, Viesia performed a poem about obtaining housing thanks to Vinfen's support.

Vinfen's programs in Cambridge and Somerville hosted their 7th Annual Community Celebration on November 10 with a Mardi Gras themed party at Arts at the Armory in Somerville, MA. Dozens of friends, family, staff, and persons served spent the evening celebrating one another with a New Orleans-style dinner, dancing, and entertainment.

Making Music Together



Palaver Strings' violinists play at Webster House.

Palaver Strings, a musician-led string orchestra, held a live interactive concert at Webster House on December 10. Together with Webster House members, Palaver Strings created music using traditional folk song melodies and rhythms, Klezmer music, Eastern European and American folk songs, and popular holiday tunes. Dozens of members, staff, and supporters participated in the event.

Advocating for Disability Rights



Massachusetts State Representative Kay Khan, Vinfen President and CEO Bruce Bird, and State Representative Ruth Balser at ADPP's Legislative Luncheon.

Vinfen attended the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers' (ADDP) Annual Legislative Luncheon on January 24 and the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts' (BIA-MA) Advocacy Day on February 1. Both events were at the Massachusetts State House and gave people with disabilities, their family members, advocates, self-advocates, and service providers a chance to meet with legislators and advance the cause of disability rights in the Commonwealth.

Housewarming in Haverhill



Relief Certified Nurse Assistant Everlyn Kariuki with Michael Maher.

Vinfen celebrated the opening of our new residence in Haverhill, MA on December 9 with an Open House. Four individuals living with brain injuries were delighted to move into their new, state-of-the-art home. The residents joined dozens of Vinfen staff members, family, friends, and representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Disabilities to celebrate the grand opening.

vinfen connecticut

Dancing the Night Away

Vinfen Connecticut hosted its 17th annual Winter Wonderland celebration at the Asylum Hill Church in Hartford, CT on January 26. Over 100 people served, their family members, and support staff attended the masquerade ball-themed event. Guests enjoyed dinner, music, and dancing.

A special thanks to the local vendors and volunteers whose tremendous support made this wonderful night possible.



Tyler Duchesneau and Program Director Alzira Perez at this year's Winter Wonderland.

vinfen arts

Celebrating Great Taste

Join Vinfen for A Taste of Gateway on April 22 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Gateway Arts Studio. Guests will enjoy a live and silent auction, live music, an art swap, beer and wine, and delicious food. Tickets at \$175 include an original piece of art created by a Gateway Artist. Attendees will be asked to choose an envelope that contains an image of artwork valued up to \$400. Guests are encouraged to swap their images with other art ticket holders to ultimately receive a piece of work that suits their personal style and aesthetic. Event-only tickets are \$75.

For more information or to buy tickets, visit www.gatewayarts.org.



Eleanor Peters and Jonathan and Patti Kraft were guests at the 2016 Taste of Gateway.

Commemorating Five Years of Art

Art Connection Studio celebrated their fifth anniversary with an Opening Reception for their Winter Exhibition on December 9. The studio was packed with dozens of Art Connection Studio artists, staff, friends, family, and local supporters. The reception was also attended by Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy and First Lady and CEO of the Greater Hartford Arts Council Cathy Malloy who are longstanding supporters of the studio. Artists had a wonderful time chatting with the Governor and First Lady about their work.

For more information about Art Connection Studio, please visit www.artconnectionstudio.org.



Governor Dannel Malloy with Artist Angel Vandel.

vinfen making a difference

Joining Together to Grow a Garden

Thanks to your donations to Run-4-Life, Vinfen's Cambridge/Somerville Recovery Learning Center (CSRLC) was awarded a Vinfen microgrant for a community garden project that brought together CSRLC members, people we serve, volunteers, and staff to plant and care for a garden.

Vinfen staff Joseph Spinale, Greg Ronco, June Turner, Linda Raibert, and Audrey Hayward partnered with CSRLC volunteer Bob Steinberg and person served Quanita "Q," to manage the garden. Q is credited by staff for her integral role in writing the grant proposal and ensuring the project's success.

The project provided an opportunity for individuals to learn about gardening and the therapeutic benefits of tending a garden.

"The idea of caring for something, working to keep it alive, helped keep me alive," Q said. "It was such a wonder to watch it happen, and say I contributed to keeping that plant alive."

This project was made possible by you, and all those who support runners in Vinfen's Run-4-Life. Thank you for transforming lives together with Vinfen.



Q at Tomato Fest, the Garden Project's culminating event on September 28. Attendees learned how to make salsa, fried green tomatoes, and pasta sauce from scratch.

Sharing Your Holiday



Eddie Barnacle with his artwork.

Thanks to your generous donations to the Vinfen holiday gift fund, we ensured that all the incredible people we serve had a gift to open and enjoy this year. For some of these individuals, this was the only gift they received.

"It means a lot and it helps me out," Eddie Barnacle told us, "It makes me feel good that someone is thinking about me and I'm not forgotten."

By sharing your holidays with Vinfen, you helped us raise nearly \$17,000 to bring smiles and good cheer to the people we serve. Your kindness makes all the difference.

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 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 Director of Communications and Development Erin Tighe at 617-441-1736 or tighee@vinfen.org.



you transform lives

See more inspiring news and stories inside!

Brushing Away Prejudice and Discrimination



Each year, Vinfen showcases artwork by an artist from a Vinfen arts-based vocational program. This year's painting was created by Gateway artist Joanne O'Connell. Since Joanne joined the program in 1992, her work has been exhibited nationally and has won awards by Mencap and the Ebensburg Center.

"I like that I get to make art. I draw and paint. Creating things is something I love. Gateway is a fun place; it's quality time and the staff is nice."

—Artist Joanne O'Connell

For her artwork, *Untitled*, Joanne used acrylic paint and paint markers. "I like filling up the canvas and using a variety of color," she said. "I also like to write the words from songs I listen to on my piece." Joanne was excited her work was chosen for the festival. "It made me happy," she exclaimed. "It feels good to know I will be sharing my artwork with other people. I hope that it will make people feel good."

You can see the piece at this year's film festival, *Progress from Prejudice*, on April 1. Register at www.vinfen.org/moving-images.



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voice
spring 2017

Contributors: Lisa Berger, Bruce Bird, Rachel Heafield, Erin Tighe, and Alexandra Yellin
Designer: Rachel Heafield
Featured Artists: Eddie Barnacle, Amy Caliri, Joanne O'Connell, and Angel Vandel