

VOICE

News and information for friends and supporters of Vinfen



Rosemarie and Jane.

Becoming Part of a Family

Rosemarie Marshall never had a sister, but her Shared Living Provider Jane Gelin is as close to her as any sibling could be. Before moving in with Jane, Rosemarie lived alone and rarely left home. When Rosemarie's apartment building was to be demolished, Director of Community Living Meg Gaydos stepped in to help out. Meg knew that Jane would be a fabulous provider given her warmth and openness. She also felt confident that Jane would be able to support Rosemarie through the transition. "You made me feel comfortable and safe," said Rosemarie to Jane.

Rosemarie's life changed when she moved in with Jane. Jane and her family welcomed Rosemarie by throwing her a birthday party. Jane and Rosemarie are now inseparable. They love to go to Foxwoods Resort Casino. During the summer, they dance at outdoor concerts and drive bumper cars at Salem Willows Arcade and Park. Rosemarie has also developed a special fondness for Jane's sister Carolyn, with whom she shares a love of cats. Carolyn's apartment is only one floor away and the two sometimes stop by for a sweet treat.

Jane is always encouraging Rosemarie to be independent and to be out in the community. She also encourages Rosemarie's interest in gardening. Meanwhile when Jane experienced health problems, Rosemarie made sure she was comfortable and entertained. Both are supportive of each other.

Thanks to Shared Living at Vinfen, Rosemarie has become part of Jane's family. "I'm not by myself anymore," said Rosemarie.

"It's the family she's never had," remarked Meg.

The two were honored with a Family Recognition Award at Vinfen's 11th Annual Celebration of Family Partnerships on October 3. You can view a short video on their family experience on Vinfen's YouTube channel.



President's Message

Bruce L. Bird, President & Chief Executive Officer

In our last VOICE issue, I wrote about the workforce crisis, which is impacting human services nationwide. Many human services organizations forecast a major shortage of caregivers over the next 20 years.

There are no easy answers to this crisis, but two trends promise some help. One is the movement of services from residential group homes to a variety of community-based programs. Programs like Shared Living, a form of adult foster care, achieve Vinfen's mission to support people to live productive lives in their community. Vinfen is working with the Department of Developmental Services to support people in more programs like this. Meanwhile over the past decade, the Department of Mental Health has crafted services that have reduced dependence on group residences and increased the number of people with psychiatric conditions supported within their own homes.

Another trend is the explosion of technology that connects people in their own homes to medical, clinical, and direct support staff, and peers who can offer coaching based on their lived experience. Vinfen continues to invest in evaluating technology that enhance in-home services and delivery of care.

These trends continue the movement from large institutions to a range of community living and supports. These changes are warmly welcomed. People want to live independently, and they are excited to have more choices in their care.

Vinfen will continue to advocate, develop innovative approaches, and support policies for a variety of community support models. We do this not only to find novel solutions to the workforce crisis, but we strive to provide services that support the kind of lives that the people we serve and we ourselves all want.

spotlight family partnerships

Celebrating Family Partnerships



Jackie Desharnais (center) was honored with a Family Recognition Award. She received the award with her son Andrew.

Vinfin honored the dedicated family members, guardians, advocates, self-advocates, and staff who support the people we serve at the 11th Annual Celebration of Family Partnerships. The event was held on October 3 at the Four Points by Sheraton in Norwood, MA.

Susan Wornick, former WCVB-TV anchorwoman, entertained the audience as Master of Ceremonies. Developmental Services Commissioner Jane Ryder and Department of Mental Health Northeast Area Director Sue Wing greeted attendees. Honored guests at this year's celebration included Massachusetts State Representative Denise Garlick, recipient of the Public Official of the Year award; Deb Thompson and Todd Reis, recipients of the Craig Smith Self-Advocate award; and Doreen Hiltz, recipient of the Helen Fantasia-Arraj Staff Recognition award.

Emily Perl Kingsley was the keynote speaker. Kingsley is an American writer who joined the *Sesame Street* team in 1970 and retired in 2015 after 45 years with the show. Her son Jason Kingsley was born with Down syndrome and her experiences with Jason inspired her to include people with disabilities into the *Sesame Street* cast, including Jason himself. In 1987, Kingsley wrote *Welcome to Holland*, a widely published and translated piece, which compares the experience of someone finding out their child has a disability to having a trip to Italy rerouted to Holland. Kingsley has written over 20 children's books and two *Sesame Street* home video releases. She has won 23 Daytime Emmys and the Secretary's Highest Recognition Award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Over 20 Vinfin staff members received merit certificates for their commitment to family partnerships, advocacy, education, and leadership. They were chosen based on the nominations from families they work closely with each and every day.

The evening would not have been possible without the Vinfin Family Advisory Council and our incredible sponsors. Thank you to the Rae and Aaron Alberts Foundation, HUB International, Conlin's Resident Care Pharmacy, Reardon Associates, and the Tiffany Ballroom at the Four Points by Sheraton Norwood.



Keynote speaker Emily Perl Kingsley (right) along with Vinfin Family Advisory Council Chair Serena Dee and Master of Ceremonies Susan Wornick.



State Representative Denise Garlick (center) along with Serena Dee and President and CEO Bruce Bird.



HUB International Senior Vice President of Employee Benefits Consultant Kent Campbell and Vinfin Program Director Osayomwanbor Obaze.



Adam Whitney
Director of Recovery Services

Shifting the Norm to Disclosure

When I first started working in Human Services, I chose not to disclose my lived experience of mental health challenges. As an undergraduate psychology major newly hired at Vinfen through Northeastern University's Co-Op program, I was following what I thought to be standard policy in my role as a Residential Counselor. I kept my personal struggles to myself, not out of a sense of guardedness or shame, but out of a misguided belief that sharing the fact that 'I've been there' would be inappropriate. That it would be a gross violation of boundaries; something

that certainly had no place in the work of a mental health professional. I held with my policy of non-disclosure while working in a variety of settings, including several major hospitals where a culture of silence prevailed. Providing care to people on those units, many of whom were there against their will, felt awkward and hypocritical knowing that I too had been treated in different emergency departments for similar struggles.

Only after finishing my degree and rejoining Vinfen as an Outreach Worker did I learn about the role of a Peer Specialist. It was exciting and eye opening to hear that such a position existed, one in which I could work in the field I had grown to love and share my experiences with the people I serve. As a Peer Specialist, I could send the message that recovery is not only possible, it is realistic and attainable. I could provide a sense of hope.

When I first started working at Vinfen back in 2007, I never thought I would find myself where I am today – having accepted the position as a Director of Recovery Services. I am thrilled to be joining my colleague and Co-Director, Jodi Johnson, as we partner in guiding Vinfen's peer workforce through the transition into the new Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model. In this new model our outreach teams are welcoming triple the number of Peer Specialists we had previously. The message sent by this expansion is clear: Peer Support Services are more than a valued addendum to traditional treatment, they are a vital core component of our modern mental health system.

To fill these newly created positions, we turned to our existing workforce in the division. We found people willing to say, "I've been there too," and transition from other positions into Peer Specialist roles. It is my hope that this trend of openness continues and that more human services workers, whether in peer roles or not, feel comfortable and free to share their own stories of struggle. So many in our field have either firsthand experience of struggles with mental health or have a friend or family member who has faced similar challenges. We are now undergoing a shift in culture away from silence and non-disclosure and toward a new norm of saying, "I know what this feels like." It is a shift I welcome fully.

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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 and advocacy 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

Exercising their Right to Vote

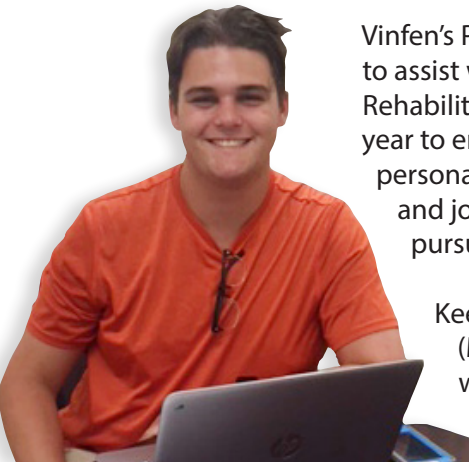
Members from the Metro Boston Self-Advocacy Group were proud to vote in the Massachusetts' primary election on September 4, 2018. After completing a training on voting, learning about the candidates, and registering, members of the group were ready to make their voices heard and encourage others to vote as well.

Donald was excited to vote for the first time. Kim, meanwhile, had voted in the past, but wanted to do more to advocate for herself and others with disabilities. "I loved it! I feel empowered!" Kim responded when asked how she felt about voting. During the voter initiative training, Kim said she learned a lot and decided which candidates she thought would best represent her positions. Kim plans to vote in the upcoming general election and hopes everyone in the group will as well.



Kim proudly shows off her "I Voted" sticker.

Advocating for Independence



Keegan hard at work.

Vinfen's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) partners with students who have disabilities to assist with the transition between high school and adulthood. Funded by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Pre-ETS works with 15 students between the ages of 16 to 22 per year to enhance work-related skills through trainings and paid internships. Each student receives personalized training and support including vocational assessments, career planning, job searches, and job placement. Pre-ETS encourages participants to be self-advocates and empowers them to pursue a career in their preferred field of employment.

Keegan, an individual who received Pre-ETS, landed a job at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) after his internship there. "Pre-ETS was extremely helpful for me orienting myself into work environments," he shared. "By using strategies I learned in Pre-ETS, I never really felt overly stressed." For more information on these services, contact Supported Employment Director Stephen Moulton at 617-441-1812 or moultons@vinfen.org.

Quitting Smoking



Martin with Vinfen Outreach Worker Nina Cherilus.

For the past two years, Vinfen has been participating in a study to find the best way to help people with serious mental illness quit smoking. Smoking rates are high among people in this population, and they often do not receive support to quit. Research shows that people with serious mental illness have life spans 25 years shorter compared to people without, often due to health conditions worsened by smoking.

The study tests whether targeted education to providers alone or education combined with support from community health workers (CHWs) will help more people to quit. The study is led by Director of the Center for Addiction Medicine at MGH Dr. A. Eden Evins and funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. Vinfen and Bay Cove Human Services lead the study's clinical component, which includes more than 1,100 people who receive care at 50 Boston-area community health clinics. If successful, the study's methods could be used in Medicaid programs and mental health departments nationwide.

So far, the preliminary results look promising. Of the 234 participants from Vinfen and Bay Cove, 12% have quit smoking while 35% have attempted to quit. In addition, 68 participants from Vinfen have talked to their primary care physicians about quitting smoking and cessation medications.

vinfen making a difference

Making the Holidays Bright

Eight years ago, Evelyn was living in a nursing home. She was isolated and lonely, and rarely left the facility. Today she shares a home with three other women and talks fondly of the staff who have become like family to her.

Evelyn looks forward to the holidays each year. Her face lights up as she describes trimming the tree and enjoying a special meal with her housemates. But for many in our services, the season can be marked by sadness as they lack the family, community, or means to make the holidays special. Our Holiday Giving Program is one way to ensure that the people we care for feel valued and recognized.

We invite you to make a difference and help create great memories for the people we serve. Your donation of \$25, \$50, \$100, or more allows us to provide a small gift for those such as Evelyn.

Thank you for being a partner in transforming lives and creating a meaningful and bright holiday season for the people we serve.

"I have no family. I just have the staff here. They are terrific and very lovable and a tremendous asset in my life."

—Evelyn



Giving All Year Round



As we approach the holiday season, make a New Year's resolution to transform lives with us. One way to show your support is to sign up for recurring gifts, which can provide steady funding for Vinfen. Donors can make a big impact while determining what works best for their budget.

Setting up recurring monthly gifts is easy. Visit Vinfen's donation page at www.vinfen.org/donate and select 'monthly' under donation frequency. Have questions about recurring gifts? Contact Development and Special Events Manager Ann Bausman at 617-441-1896 or bausmana@vinfen.org.

You Can Contribute to Vinfen in Many Ways

- Direct, unrestricted donations
- Matching gifts from your employer
- Gifts in memory, in honor, or in celebration
- Gifts of bequests or planned giving
- Contribute online. Visit www.vinfen.org/donate to make a secure and convenient gift to Vinfen.
- Donate your used vehicle. Visit www.v-dac.com or call 877-999-8322 and select Vinfen as the nonprofit you wish to support.

A donation envelope is also enclosed for your convenience. For more information, please contact Development and Special Events Manager Ann Bausman at 617-441-1896 or bausmana@vinfen.org.

Mail



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vinfen happenings

Bringing Youth Together



Youth Leadership Coordinator Cynthia Peralta, TIP Team Leader Angela Zepeda, and Francesca Ferrara at the Youth Day.

Vinfen's Transition to Independence Program (TIP) hosted their annual Youth Day on June 27 at Winnekenni Castle in Haverhill, MA. The event included board games, soccer, a photo booth, a DJ, and prize drawings. Over 185 guests attended, which included staff and young adults who receive services from the Department of Mental Health, Lahey Hospital & Medical Center, Bridgewell, Northeast Independent Living Program, and You Forward.

Camping and Collaborating



Tammy and Sabrina enjoy camping together.

Vinfen's annual Clubhouse camping trip took place over Labor Day weekend at Camp Lyndon in Sandwich, MA. More than 70 people from each of the seven Vinfen Clubhouses participated in the event. Members engaged in fun activities like boating, hiking, swimming, archery, and even zip lining. In the evenings, members relaxed and enjoyed delicious s'mores and music around the campfire. The event was a positive community-building experience and a way for members and staff from the Clubhouses to meet.

Jazzing It Up



Guests celebrate in 20s style, complete with a photographer taking black and white photos.

Baybridge Clubhouse recently celebrated its 30-year anniversary with their Silence the Stigma Speakeasy event held on September 13 at the West End Restaurant in Hyannis, MA. Evoking the roaring 20s, attendees enjoyed a night of networking, highlights from Clubhouse members, live music, dancing, decadent hors d'oeuvres, DIY mocktails, custom ice cream sandwiches, and a silent auction. A special thanks to the many local businesses who sponsored the event.

Having Fun in the Sun



Leslie and Vinfen Residential Counselor Amanda Young.

Vinfen CT families and staff enjoyed the 16th Annual Family Fun Fest on August 24 at Northwest Park in Windsor, CT. Over 200 individuals, their families, and staff enjoyed the festivities including local percussionist Mark Zarrillo from Drumming Spirit who led a drum circle and a DJ from Blain Entertainment who 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

On May 29, people we serve, families, and staff attended Vinfen CT's 6th Annual Celebration of Families in West Hartford. Emmy-award winning sportscaster and documentary producer John Holt was the Master of Ceremonies. Many individuals were honored at the event, including Self-Advocate awardee Stephanie Williams.

Keynote speaker Ryan Martin shared his story. Born with spina bifida, Ryan had both legs amputated at a young age. He discovered a love and talent for basketball at age 12. After attending college, he played professionally. He then established The Ryan Martin Foundation to help athletes with disabilities lead productive lives through sports training, mentoring, and education.

A special thanks to all the event supporters and sponsors: Suburban Pharmacy, Brothers Oil Co., Inc., Geriatric Medical, Donna C. Webber, Comtrust, Coffee Break Company, Basketball Hall of Fame, Tastefully Simple, Leroy Emmenthal, Linda and Bill Lamy, and Larry McNeff.



Family Partnership awardees Frank and Karen Palma with Vinfen CT Executive Director Jana McClure.

vinfen arts

Acquiring One-of-a-Kind Art

Gateway Arts will host their Annual 100 and Under exhibition beginning November 12 and closing December 24. This is a delightful opportunity for patrons to own a one-of-a-kind piece of art from Gateway Arts for under \$100. This show will be accompanied by a solo exhibition featuring one of Gateway's artists.

For more information about Gateway Arts, visit their website at www.gatewayarts.org.

Blossoming Creativity

Art Connection Studio held their Fall 2018 exhibition, Artist Bazaar, on September 21 at their studio in Hartford, CT. Having a flea market like feel, the exhibition featured abstract paintings, fiber art pieces, jewelry, and living art.

Kyle Gonzalez who painted *Blossoming Branches*, one of the many pieces of artwork that was available for purchase, said, "I was super excited about the Artist Bazaar!"

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

Piece by Gateway Artist Paul Stevenson.



Jane Tarlow (left) and Ruby Pearl (right) near their artworks at the Art and the Self exhibit, which opened September 10 and continues through November 3.



Zach Albert, Kyle Gonzalez, and Tyler Duchesneau and their works of art that were available for purchase at the Artist Bazaar.



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how we
can partner
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Introducing the Community Partners Program A New Way to Receive Services with Vinfen

- Vinfen now offers integrated care coordination services for MassHealth enrollees with psychiatric conditions, intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health challenges, brain injuries, and substance use disorders.
- These new services are offered by Vinfen as a member of Community and LTSS Care Partners.
- Our Care Teams partner with MassHealth enrollees to meet their health and wellness goals. We collaborate with their healthcare providers and community-based organizations to offer better support. These services are part of the MassHealth Benefit at no extra cost to enrollees.

For more information or to inquire about our services, please contact Vinfen Director of Care Coordination Lisa Goldsmith at 508-364-9438 or goldsmithl@vinfen.org.

vinfen
transforming lives together

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voice
fall 2018

Contributors: Bruce Bird, Adam Whitney, Rebecca Batzold, Ann Bausman, Rachel Heafield, and Erin Tighe

Designer: Rachel Heafield

Featured Artists: Zach Albert, Kyle Gonzalez, Tyler Duchesneau, Ruby Pearl, Paul Stevenson, and Jane Tarlow