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THE PROVIDER

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October 2024

TCF regional rally series heads to Westfield for W. Mass. convening

Envision the Possibilities to take place Oct. 21



Clockwise from top left: Gándara Center CEO Lois Nesci (left), state Sen. Jacob Oliveira, Viability President/CEO Colleen Holmes and Council President/CEO Bill Yelenak pose for a picture; Sen. John Velis addresses the crowd outside; Rep. Carlos Gonzalez speaks from the podium; Holmes (right) introduces speaker Nereida Pagan.

When Nereida Pagan moved to Westfield, she acknowledged being in a "tough place" as she navigated life in a new community.

"I was feeling depressed and unsure of what to do with myself," she said. "I lived in shelter for about 9 to 10 months, and I saw firsthand the challenges and bad situations people go through."

Pagan noted she didn't know anyone when she started navigating her community, but that changed quickly thanks to Forum House, a clubhouse program at Viability. "Once I started attending regularly, things began to change," she added. "Being part of Forum House takes my mind off things and helps me focus on my future."

Forum House operates with a belief of "recovery through work," and Pagan is a shining example. She joined other human services workers, program participants, legislators, Caring Force members and more than 100 attendees at Westfield State University in mid-September at the Caring Force RALLY, see page 7

A dynamic keynote speaker, two awards ceremonies, four scholarship presentations, 34 workshops and nearly 60 exhibitors are all highlights of the Providers' Council's 49th Annual Convention & Expo, Envision the Possibilities, which is taking place at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel in Boston on Oct. 21. More than 1,100 attendees are expected at the event, which sold out in mid-September. Providers' Council members can join a waiting list by emailing convention@providers.org and will be notified if space becomes available.

"We're looking forward to joining our members, friends, and other supporters of the community-based human services sector in October to celebrate the work done in this incredible field and Envision the Possibilities for the future," said Providers' Council President/CEO Bill Yelenak.



Xavier Ramey, CEO of Justice Informed, will be the event's keynote speaker. Justice Informed is a social impact consulting firm based in Chicago, IL, which focuses on working with clients to increase the impact of their diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. In September, the Council also announced that Boston 25 News Anchor Ray Villeda would host the Peer Provider Awards during the afternoon luncheon, where three Providers' Council members will receive the prestigious honor.

Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Kate Walsh will offer attendees a special greeting in the morning, and Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus will deliver remarks at the afternoon luncheon.

The Convention and Expo will also feature 34 workshops covering topics including AI tools in behavioral

CONVENTION, see page 7

Council, members help register voters through CareVote campaign

More than a dozen Providers' Council members have joined with CareVote – the Council's nonpartisan voter engagement initiative – to help employees, consumers and others register to vote and learn about the civic process in the weeks leading up to the general election in November.

The Council has hosted voter registration tables at member organizations; provided posters, stickers and other materials; and supported human services organizations across the state. The CareVote initiative also provided a voter registration table at the Western

Massachusetts Caring Force Rally on Tuesday, Sept. 17, which was National Voter Registration Day. Council members wishing to engage their staff in voting can contact CareVote by emailing carevote@providers.org for more information about the initiative.

"CareVote was created to empower human services workers and the communities they serve by encouraging voter participation in elections," said Caroline O'Neill, Manager of Public Policy and Communications at the Providers' Council. "As a nonpartisan initiative, CareVote's goal is to ensure CAREVOTE, see page 7



Council Manager of Public Policy & Communications Caroline O'Neill (left picture, on left) helps with voter registration at the NEEDS Center; a NEEDS Center employee proudly wears a QT voting sticker. (see commentary page 5).



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Triangle names Kaprielian new CEO

Triangle, a Malden-based human services provider, announced in September that Rachel Kaprielian would succeed Coleman Nee as Triangle's new CEO effective September 25th.



Rachel Kaprielian

Kaprielian has been serving on Triangle, Inc.'s Board of Directors since 2018. She has previously had a lengthy career in the public sector, serving as a Massachusetts State Representative and was appointed to the Massachusetts Registrar of Motor Vehicles in 2008, a post she held for six years.

Teles named VP of Mission Services at Goodwill

Shannon Teles, an accomplished human services executive with more than 20 years of experience, has joined Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries as Vice President of Mission Services.



Shannon Teles

Goodwill's mission is to help individuals with barriers to self-sufficiency to achieve independence and dignity through work. Goodwill is a leading provider of workforce development services in Massachusetts. Teles will oversee its broad array of job training and career services that helped over 7,100 individuals across the state last year.

Letourneau joins Viability as CoS

Viability Inc. announced in September the appointment of Danielle Letourneau as Viability's Chief of Staff.

Letourneau possesses a wealth of experience in operations, strategic project management, and service to and

with people, complemented by a comprehensive understanding of nonprofit organizations and public sector entities.

"Ms. Letourneau brings her value of mission-driven work, a roll-up-her-sleeves energy, and a range of experience complementary to our exceptionally dedicated leadership team. Viability is excited to have her join us," said Colleen Holmes, Viability's President and CEO.



Danielle Letourneau

Council adds Lynch, Lee in communications and public policy roles

The Providers' Council in September announced the hiring of Maureen Lynch as its Communications and Media Coordinator and Isabella A. Lee as its Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator.

Lynch will also serve as editor of *The Provider* newspaper, while Lee will act as project manager for The Caring Force, the Council's grassroots advocacy initiative. Members can email them at mlynch@providers.org and ilee@providers.org, respectively.

Lynch is originally from Wallingford, Conn. and graduated from Assumption University with a bachelor's degree in communication and media. Lee, a Chilean-American from Greensboro, N.C., graduated from N.C. State University with a bachelor's degree in political science and from Columbia University with a master's degree in international affairs.



Maureen Lynch



Isabella A. Lee

Sen. Warren visits ABCD Head Start



U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (center, seated, in purple) is joined by Sharon Scott-Chandler, president and CEO of ABCD (seated in pink); Malden Mayor Gary Christenson (seated in suit); and Flossy Calderón, ABCD's vice president of Head Start and children's services during a visit to ABCD Head Start & Children's Services in Malden in mid-September to meet parents and participants. Sen. Warren told families she would take their stories back to Washington and would continue to fight for funding to expand the program nationwide, according to ABCD.

Goodwill celebrates at annual Good Party



Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries recently held its annual signature event *The Good Party*. Goodwill participant Denise Alves shared how Goodwill provided training, helped her secure a job and become more independent. With Denise is Tyler Michels, her case manager. Last year, Goodwill provided job training and career services to more than 4,600 individuals. Photo by Christine Hochkeppel.



Boston Marriott Copley Hotel
110 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02116

We can't wait for the 49th Annual Convention & Expo: *Envision the Possibilities!* See you on October 21 for a day of engaging workshops, incredible award ceremonies, and an inspiring keynote speaker!

Sincerely,

The Providers' Council

PROVIDER PROFILES

PERNET FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE, INC.

237 MILLBURY STREET • WORCESTER, MA 01610 • 508.755.1228 • PERNETFAMILYHEALTH.ORG

About the Agency

Pernet Family Health Service, located in Worcester, has a mission to “strengthen Worcester area families facing economic, social, and health needs to become self-sufficient, healthy, and community engaged.”

Founded in 1955 by the Little Sisters of the Assumption, Pernet has a longstanding commitment to social justice and lifting up underrepresented people and families. Building off its deep roots in the community, the organization has created a forward-looking agency, committed to strengthening vulnerable families. Its programs include emergency assistance (food pantry and infant formula and diapers), maternal and child home health care, early education and care, and family support.

Pernet is a Dept. of Public Health-certified home health agency, providing home nursing care for mothers and young children, as well as early intervention services for children with, or at-risk for, developmental delays. They collaborate with many governmental, nonprofit, and spiritual organizations to improve the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual health of well over 12,500 people each year. Much of its work focuses on children and their mothers. Pernet views society as one family, and it works to promote social justice and human rights for all people, gradually improving society – one person, one family, one community at a time.

Pernet helps families with pressing needs



Youth from Pernet Family Health Service visited Clay Times Studio in August.

Pernet Family Health Service has been serving and supporting vulnerable Worcester families since 1955. While it is committed to providing equitable access to supportive services for all, its primary focus is on supporting underserved communities. Pernet works to promote the physical, social, psychological and spiritual development of vulnerable Worcester families by providing home-based health and social services that lead to long-term strengthening and enhancement of family and community life. Pernet is a vibrant, family-centered multiservice agency that offers Emergency Assistance, a Youth Program, Parent support programs, Maternal & Infant Nursing, Early Intervention, and Day Care services.

As Pernet’s founders did when it first opened a food pantry at the request of the neighborhood nearly 70 years ago, it continues to provide and improve programs that meet some of the most pressing needs for vulnerable families. It is that commitment that led them to expand their Maternal & Infant Nursing program to begin offering Universal Newborn Visitation to all infants born to Worcester residents. A grant from the Worcester Reimagining Fund in 2021 made

the early phases of this program possible. More recently, ARPA funds in 2023 helped to expand the program. A grant from the state Attorney General’s Office in the same year made it possible to add lactation support targeted to low-income BIPOC mothers to the array of supports offered within the program. Pernet continues to work with community partners to ensure that all new parents have access to this program and that the program continues to offer the resources most needed by the people we serve.

In April 2023, Pernet merged with Webster Square Day Care, a long-standing provider of quality, safe, and nurturing childcare for low-income families. Webster Square Day Care Center now operates as a program of Pernet Family Health Service, which means that Webster Square families see no change to the daily care their children receive, but now will have greater access to the supportive services provided at Pernet. Additionally, Pernet clients have greater access to the childcare seats at Webster Square Day Care Center, as well as the 33 local family home care providers under our umbrella.

Pernet serves vulnerable families predominately from the city of Worcester who live at or below the poverty line. They face many daily challenges in addition to food and housing insecurity; some members of the family may live with the stigma of justice involvement, the struggles of substance use disorder, mental illness, educational challenges, language barriers and immigration issues. Many are single-parent households. More than two-thirds identify as people of color. Its Emergency Services Program provides not just food, but also case management services and referrals to additional resources and support. This program is so important because it allows economically fragile families to maintain or even regain their footing in precarious times.

Executive Leadership

Sheilah Dooley, RN, executive director of Pernet, graduated from Boston College School of Nursing and later obtained a master’s degree in human resources. She worked in L&D Postpartum Nursery after graduating before raising four sons. She believes in the importance of strong families growing up in a family of 10. She worked as a nurse home visitor for mothers and babies before becoming director of nursing at Pernet, eventually moving into the position of executive director. She has been at Pernet for 33 years and serves on many local boards and initiatives.



Sheilah Dooley

Joel Wallen is the associate executive director at Pernet Family Health Service and has 17 years of experience developing youth programming, leading community collaborations, and helping drive communities in achieving measurable outcomes within the nonprofit sector. Joel sits on the City of Worcester Community Development Advisory Committee.



Joel Wallen

SALUTING THE CARING FORCE

Lightfoot embodies org’s mission

James Lightfoot III is currently serving his second term at the **Urban League of Springfield, Inc.**, after having worked with the organization from 2019 to 2021. Lightfoot returned with renewed energy to serve the youth of Greater Springfield as the Director of Education and Youth Engagement.

Lightfoot currently manages the Project Ready program, which prepares historically underserved youth in grades 8 through 12 for college and careers. The Project Ready program has a focus on Postsecondary Success in three broad areas: Academic Achievement, Social Development and College/Career Readiness. He also manages the Urban League’s summer camp, Camp Atwater, located in North Brookfield, MA.

In addition to his responsibilities at the Urban League of Springfield, Lightfoot serves on multiple boards, advocating for the right to education for our youth.

One of Lightfoot’s main goals is to encourage graduating high school seniors to adopt healthy routines and behaviors, ensuring a smoother, more

successful transition into the working world. He works with students and educators to help seniors navigate the path to adulthood.

Lightfoot has been working in the field since the age of fourteen, when he began as a childcare staff support at the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit. It was there that he discovered his passion for serving youth, which has shaped his career. He has worked with children in the classroom and teaches performing arts. Lightfoot holds a bachelor’s degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University in Allendale, MI, and a master’s in Organization Management and Leadership from Springfield College.

Lightfoot’s passion for preparing a pathway for children and teens to succeed is what energizes him and keeps him working towards the success of others. He fosters an inclusive and creative environment, bringing relevance and reality to not only his work but also to the children he serves. Lightfoot truly embodies the mission of the Urban League of Springfield.



Lightfoot has helped teens at Urban League get ‘Project Ready.’

Music man Morley makes impact

As a lead member support professional in **House of Possibilities’** (HOPE’s) CBDS program, Matt Morley has been an integral part of the team since joining just a year ago. A recent graduate from the University of New Hampshire with majors in communications and music, Morley quickly found his stride, evolving into a steadfast advocate for HOPE clients, called “members.” He leads daily activities, facilitates meetings and ensures smooth operations both on-site and in the community. His dedication to members’ well-being shines through in his compassionate and patient leadership.

Morley’s passion for the arts has a profound impact on members, most notably through his popular music appreciation class that’s always at capacity. He launched the HOPE Band, introducing the community to instruments and music theory. Morley also leads the Tech & Media group where members produce news segments for local television and can express themselves through interactive programs with podcasting and radio.

evident in his ongoing education and his pursuit of a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) certification. Additionally, he recently attended the ABLE Assembly Conference at the Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education, where he focused on making his music and media classes more inclusive for individuals with disabilities. Morley’s interest in positive behavior supports and ABA techniques has enhanced his ability to effectively address even the most challenging moments.

His supervisor remarked, “Morley’s passion for serving others inspires all at House of Possibilities. His enthusiasm for music education enriches our community. Always putting members first, Morley’s dedication and leadership make him a valued part of our team.”

When asked why he works in human services, Morley says, “If you have the ability to help others, then there’s no better way you can spend your time.”

Morley’s dedication to fostering growth, creativity and member care has solidified his reputation as a trusted leader at HOPE, making him a valuable asset for future success.



Matt Morley, an integral part of the House of Possibilities team, has a passion for the arts.

EDITORIAL



William Yelenak
President / Publisher

Regional rallies make advocacy local

Geraldine, Todd, Rosalee, Deborah, Steven, Artemas, Damian, Kim, Neredia, Jose and Alberto all have a connection to the human services sector as workers or participants, as friends or family members – and some fit more than one category.

Even with all the differences between them, they still have something in common: They're proud members of The Caring Force.

This year, they've joined with friends and colleagues to participate in rallies held by The Caring Force across the Commonwealth – in Peabody, Taunton, Framingham and Westfield. And they've all shared personal stories – discussing why they do the work or how the essential services provided by the sector have improved, and in some cases, saved, their lives.

Rallies are nothing new for The Caring Force. In its first year, TCF held a rally so big at the State House that we literally shut down the building. We had expected a few hundred participants, but more than 1,000 people came out for that first event. While we were energized to see the excitement for our rally, we knew that we'd need to limit our attendance at the State House to comply with building codes.

This means, unfortunately, that only a few hundred people can join our State House rallies. We held the 12th annual event this May in the Great Hall, and while it was successful, we knew that many people who wanted to be there wouldn't be able to make it due to a variety of factors. The cap on attendance was just one problem – it's also difficult to drive into Boston, pay for parking, navigate Beacon Hill and the State House, and get the time to travel to and from the event.

When we brought Caring Force Captains together in late 2023 to discuss ideas for the coming year, an exciting one arose – instead of having people travel to Boston for the rally, what if we brought the rally to them? From there, the Caring Force Regional Rally series was born, and we began planning for regional events in 2024.

These rallies allowed us to meet legislators in their district, involve more member organizations in the planning and feature more Caring Force members who told their personal stories. We found talented Caring Force members who could emcee the events, provide music services, cater breakfasts and host roundtable conversations. Some regional rallies had inclusive bands participating; others had DJs and dance parties. Each one was unique, and each one was important to telling the story of the human services sector and the impact that it can have.

Geraldine, for example, talked not only about her experience as a human

service worker – but also as a mother to her son who was receiving services. Deborah talked about loving her work as a residential counselor but finding it tough to make ends meet due to rates of reimbursement from the state not supporting better salaries. Program participants Artemas and Steven lauded the work of human services workers, but noted the pay led to frequent turnover, making it hard to have a consistent relationship with staff. Neredia, Jose and Alberto all have stories well documented in this issue's story on the Western Massachusetts Caring Force Rally we recently held in September.

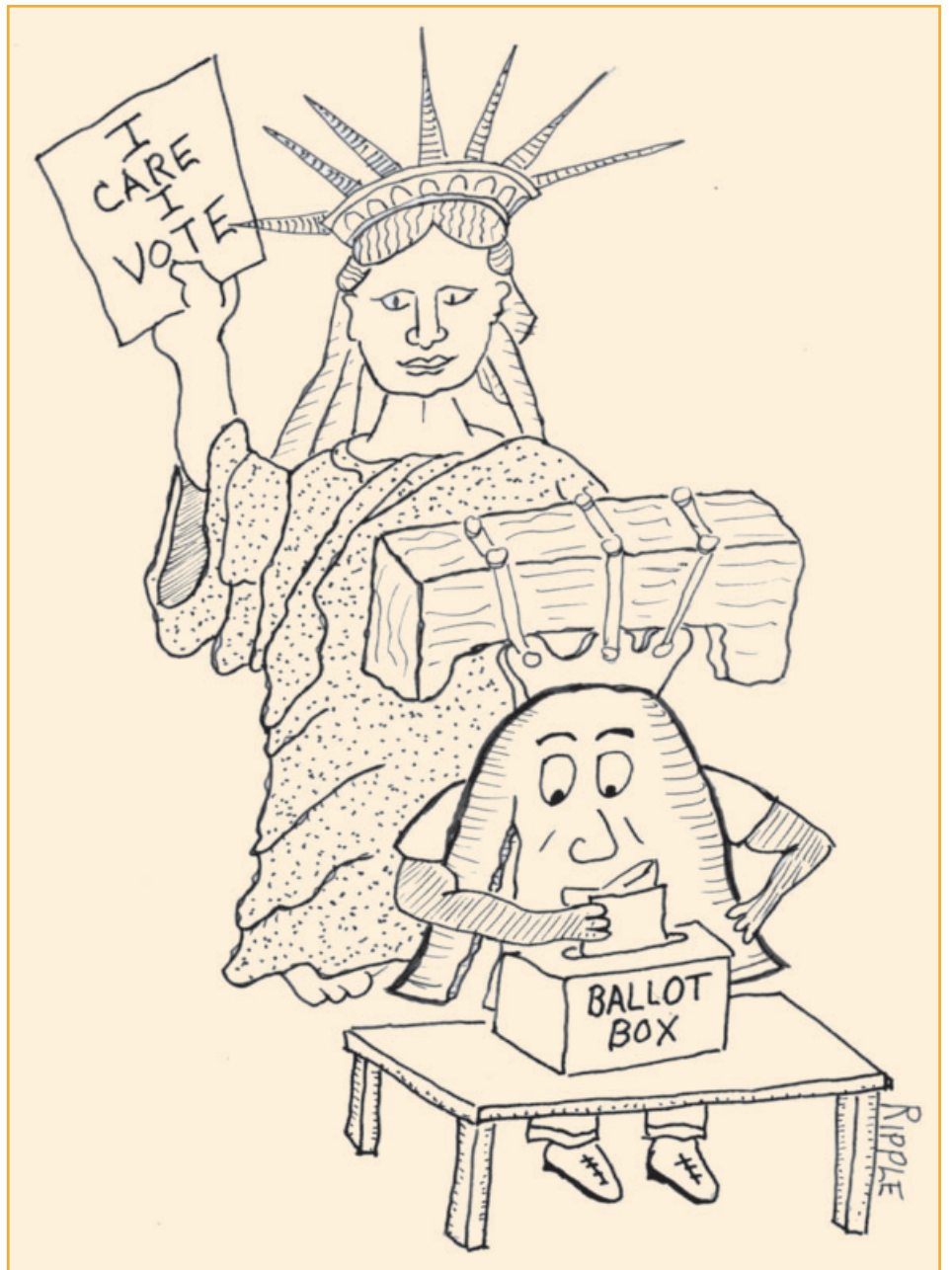
I wanted to take time to write about our regional rallies for two reasons:

First, sharing these stories is key to effective advocacy and driving change on Beacon Hill. All of these regional rallies attract local legislators, and it's critical for them to hear about the incredible work being done in this sector to help their constituents in local communities. As powerful as these words are on Beacon Hill, it's almost more impactful to be telling the story to legislators while being at an event in their district. We're meeting workers and program participants where they are for these rallies – and we're showing legislators these are real issues impacting real people in their communities.

And second, if you've met one human services worker or program participant – then you've met one human services worker or program participant. Everyone has a different story of why they do the work or how they got engaged in a human services program. And it's up to The Caring Force to keep telling the stories of our more than 32,000 members as often as we can and in every community across the state.

I'm unbelievably proud of the impact The Caring Force Regional Rallies have made in our first year of doing them, and I hope it's something that we'll be able to continue doing for years to come. There are so many incredible stories out there, and no shortage of program participants, workers, family members and others to tell them. I hope you'll join us in Worcester to hear more from these dedicated Caring Force members as we wrap up this year's Regional Rally series on Oct. 11. Register here to join us in Worcester later this month: <https://bit.ly/CentralRally>.

For recaps of The Caring Force regional rallies in Peabody, Taunton, Framingham and Westfield, please visit The Caring Force blog on its website at <https://providers.org/the-caring-force-2/blog/>. For more information about the regional rallies, please email Isabella A. Lee at ilee@providers.org



EDITOR'S NOTE: The Council is appreciative to our longtime cartoonist Michael Ripple, who drew his last cartoon for us in 2021. We'll share some of Michael's "greatest hits" this year, as well as highlighting artwork from members' program participants.

Want to highlight the artwork of your program participants?
Contact Maureen at mlynch@providers.org for more information.



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CareVote helps The NEEDS Center with voter registration and outreach

By Matthew Seidell

This past August, The NEEDS Center partnered with CareVote, a nonpartisan voter engagement initiative by the Providers' Council, to host three voter registration events across Massachusetts. These events were designed to empower the people we support, our staff and community members to register to vote, learn about the electoral process and take a crucial step toward civic engagement.

Voting is a fundamental right and responsibility that allows individuals to shape policies and leadership that directly impact their lives. For the autism community, this includes critical issues like healthcare, education and social services. At The NEEDS Center, we believe it's essential to empower our community to use their voices and push for the changes they want to see. We partnered with CareVote to ensure that the people we serve have access to voter registration and election information so they can advocate for themselves and their community.

We kicked off our voter registration initiative on Thursday, August 8, at our Beverly Day Program. Though turnout was modest, those who attended were eager to engage, ask questions, and register to vote. These conversations also helped us gauge the challenges many people with disabilities face when registering and voting, which will guide our future outreach efforts.

The second event in Tewksbury on Thursday, August 15, saw increased participation. Many individuals were excited to take advantage of the opportunity to register, recognizing the importance of having their voices heard in the democratic process. We were encouraged by the growing interest as people realized that their votes could directly influence local and state policies that impact their daily lives.

Our final event on Thursday, August 22, at the Rowley Day Program, was the largest, with people registering on the spot and engaging in conversations about voting. The enthusiasm for civic participation was inspiring, showing the eagerness within the community to advocate for themselves and others. Many of the people we support even expressed plans to vote for the first time, demonstrating the power of accessible voter education.

For many individuals with disabilities, voting is a vital way to advocate for policies that directly impact their lives. From healthcare to employment opportunities, their voices are crucial in forging the future of their communities. These events were not just about registering to vote; they were also about empowering those we support to become active members of the electoral process.

Our partnership with CareVote and Providers' Council played a pivotal role in the success of these voter registration events. CareVote, which focuses on increasing voter registration by those working at or served by human services organizations, provided valuable resources and support. This collaboration allowed us to ensure that the registration process was accessible and inclusive for all individuals supported by The NEEDS Center.

The success of these voter registration events has motivated us to continue promoting civic engagement within the disability community. We plan to host additional voter registration tables during future election cycles, ensuring that our community members have continued opportunities to register and participate in the democratic process when election time comes around.

At The NEEDS Center, we are committed to helping individuals advocate for themselves and their needs. Civic engagement is a powerful tool in this process, and our voter registration efforts are just one way we are fostering empowerment within our community. We aim to make the democratic process more accessible and ensure that everyone can exercise their rights as a citizen and advocate for their community.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Providers' Council for their support and to everyone who participated. Voting is one of the most powerful ways we can create a brighter future for ourselves and others. Every vote makes an impact, and every voice deserves to be heard. If you haven't registered yet, visit the Massachusetts Secretary of State's website for more information. It's never too late to make a difference with your vote!

Matthew Seidell is the marketing coordinator at The NEEDS Center.

Games are inclusivity at its best

By Rebekah Roulier

With the summer Paralympic Games wrapping up just a few weeks ago in Paris, there is much to reflect on and relish. Established in 1960 in Rome with 400 athletes from 23 countries, this past summer's Games featured over 4,400 athletes from over 170 delegations.

The Paralympic Games are a remarkable showcase of resilience, competition, and the power of sport to transcend physical and social barriers. While the athletic achievements are inspirational, what stands out is the profound sense of community, support, inclusivity, connection and celebration among the athletes and everyone involved. This spirit of camaraderie is awe-inspiring.

As an organization founded on harnessing the power of sport-based mental health therapy to foster brighter futures for youth around the world, the Games are germane to what we strive to achieve every day. They offer some valuable – and attainable – lessons in how to promote inclusivity that we can apply to our own coaching practices. More broadly, they can also be applied by mental health and human service providers looking to build community, foster connection, and drive positive outcomes through movement-based interventions and sports-themed activities. Among them are:

1. Sometimes You're the Athlete, Sometimes You're the Guide. One of the most inspiring aspects of the Paralympic Games is seeing the crucial role of guides – those who run alongside athletes, give cues during events like the long jump, or tap equipment during blind soccer. These partnerships remind us that our role is sometimes to lead and other times to support and guide. Coaching means many things and understanding what's needed in the moment is part of the art form.

2. Adaptability and Creativity. Paralympians and their coaches develop innovative ways to train and compete, adapting traditional sports to meet the unique needs of athletes versus a one-size-fits-all model. Sport is open for redesign to fulfill its greatest social purpose. Likewise, service providers can tap into the creativity and flexibility inherent in movement-based interventions to create tailored, engaging experiences.

3. Fostering a Positive, Inclusive Culture. By fostering a team or group culture that values each athlete's

unique contributions, we create an environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. This spirit is demonstrated throughout the Paralympics, from the celebratory atmosphere of the opening ceremonies to moments like Jaydin Blackwell helping another athlete at the start line before breaking a world record. These examples emphasize the importance of creating spaces where individuals can perform their best.

4. Honoring Athletes' Experience and Interests. While the Paralympics showcase elite athleticism and raise awareness about disability, it's crucial to recognize that many athletes want to be acknowledged for their performance first. We must listen, seek understanding, and respect our athletes' experiences and interests. Focusing on their training, development, and competitive goals ensures we center their narratives. While advocacy is important, our priority should be supporting their pursuit of excellence and ensuring they feel seen.

In the midst of the wonder of the Paralympic Games, we must also recognize there can be unique circumstances families and caregivers face when raising a child with a disability. There are often costs associated with daily living, especially when specialized services and activities are necessary to support the child. Autism Speaks estimates it can cost up to \$2.4 million to raise a child with a disability over a lifetime, while estimates to raise a non-disabled child are between up to \$407,000. And, not all families have local resources.

The recent Games bring to mind something that Nelson Mandela said at the Laureus World Sports Awards: "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand."

Incorporating lessons from the sports world into our respective areas of practice can be instrumental in building more inclusive, supportive, and effective programs where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Rebekah Roulier, LMHC, is the managing director of Doc Wayne Youth Services, Inc.

William James' Behavioral Health Service Corps creates pathways

By Gemima St. Louis

More than one in five children and adults in the United States experience mental health challenges that impact their work, education and family life. Here in Massachusetts, one-third of residents in need of behavioral health treatment are unable to secure an appointment. For those seeking a provider who specializes in the treatment of children or older adults, or someone who shares their cultural background, finding a clinician is even more challenging. The fact is, far too few therapists treat children or older adults, and nearly ninety percent of behavioral health professionals nationwide identify as non-Latino white.

William James College is committed to making meaningful change by leading initiatives that expand and diversify the behavioral health workforce. In keeping with its mission, the college trains teachers, first responders, business leaders and other professionals in primary prevention techniques to support those in need of behavioral healthcare through its Graduate Certificate in Crisis Response and Behavioral Health and its Graduate Cer-

tificate in Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools.

Advancing Mental Health, Responding to Need

For half a century, William James College has worked to advance mental health programs, services and education. More than an educational institution, it is a community of leaders, conveners, practitioners and helpers, dedicated to creating healthy, productive organizations and increasing access to high quality behavioral healthcare for all.

The college's Center for Workforce Development oversees several career ladder programs offered at the pre-bachelor's level (Community Health Workers Training Program), post-bachelor's level (Behavioral Health Service Corps), and post-graduate level (Leadership in Community Behavioral Health). These programs are designed to meet the changing needs of the communities the college serves. William James College has invested more than \$5 million in scholarship funding to reduce barriers for its students while partnering with community-based agencies to recruit and retain a culturally diverse be-

havioral health workforce.

Behavioral Health Service Corps, A Pathway to a Meaningful Career

William James College's Behavioral Health Service Corps (BHSC), a paid year-long service and learning opportunity for college graduates, offers a unique pathway to careers in the field. BHSC Scholars are guaranteed an entry-level job experience in behavioral healthcare along with credits towards a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. These students spend the year immersing themselves in related career opportunities, understanding the needs of different populations and receiving mentorship. The BHSC seeks to recruit individuals who represent the often-marginalized groups most likely to face barriers to behavioral health services – namely, ethnic, linguistic, racial or religious minority groups; first-generation college students; individuals with disabilities; LGBTQIA+ groups; and military/veteran personnel.

Evelyn Monks, a BHSC graduate, is now enrolled in the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program at William James Col-

lege, where she is pursuing a concentration in LGBTQIA+ Studies. Monks graduated from college during the pandemic and was accepted into the BHSC. The program met her needs because it offered graduate school credits, clinical experience and a paid position. She is one example of a BHSC member filling the gaps for underrepresented populations in the human services sector.

From the outset, BHSC ensures that students receive the guidance they need through weekly supervision, support from administration and regular mentorship. For her practicum, Monks worked at Walden Behavioral Care where she gained a deeper understanding of eating disorders – and clarity about her career options. During her tenure at Walden, Monks realized she wanted to continue her work in the mental health field to better support clients who are struggling. Like Monks, more than 70% of BHSC alumni remain in the field or pursue graduate training in mental health with generous scholarships provided by Mass General Brigham.

Partnering with the Community

William James College recognizes the critical work being done every day across human services agencies and understands that in order to succeed, collaboration is essential to make a real, measurable impact. Students today seek flexibility so they can continue to work while earning a graduate degree. That's why the college has partnered with organizations across the Commonwealth to provide options. Through its extensive network, students can pursue higher education and obtain the licensure and credentials needed to support the behavioral health needs of underserved and unserved populations in our communities. William James College thanks all those who partner with it and looks forward to building a workforce that meets the needs of everyone who calls Massachusetts home.

Gemima St. Louis, PhD is the Vice President, Workforce Initiatives and Specialty Training at William James College.

A VIEW FROM THE HILL

A commentary from a legislator on human services



ADUs help loved ones, those with disabilities age in place

By State Rep. James Arciero

It has been a distinct honor, and a major highlight of my time in public service, to help shepherd the *Affordable Homes Act* to Governor Maura Healey's desk this summer.

As signed on August 6th, the *Affordable Homes Act* is the largest housing investment in Massachusetts' history with the investment of \$5.2 billion dollars in capital authorizations.

It is monumental legislation that provides critical funding for all sectors of our state's housing landscape: public housing, supportive housing, production for middle-class and low-income families, tenant protections, green housing initiatives, assistance for first-time homebuyers, veterans housing, municipal conversion projects, local housing authority projects, community-based housing, foreclosure programs and programs to help de-lead our aging housing stock.

And a major, crucial policy change to make sure our families, friends with a disability and aging loved ones are safely housed that cannot be overlooked: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by-right in our cities and towns. This is a policy I am particularly proud to advocate for because it reinforces a good governmental ideal: making sure our loved ones have a safe place to reside so they can live with dignity. This critical tool for homeowners across Massachusetts, which goes into effect on Feb. 2, 2025, provides much-needed density to our municipalities in need of upzoning and is projected to bring about the creation of 8,000 to 10,000 new housing units.

The language in the bill permits ADUs – 900-square-foot dwelling units that can either be attached or detached to a home – to be built by-right in single-family zoning districts in all communities. The new law prohibits owner-occupancy requirements and parking mandates within half a mile of transit. It also states that owners seeking to build more than one ADU must go through the special permitting process. ADUs will still have to comply with all applicable rules and regulations before getting built, including submitting architect and engineer-approved plans for review and inspection by a city or town's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) or building inspector. They are still required to have safety measures like sprinkler systems, proper ventilation and carbon monoxide detectors.

Think of an ADU as a smaller, independent living space located on the same lot as a primary home – either atop of it, as a refurbished garage, or a small lot in the backyard. They are often referred to as “granny-units” or in-law apartments by some, often being lived in by seniors who want to live closer to their families or family members with a disability that want some independence or autonomy.

Studies and reports have shown ADUs offer a variety of benefits to communities. They help increase a community's housing supply, and since they cost less than a new single-family home on a separate lot, they are an affordable housing option for many low- and moderate-income families looking to downsize or rent their home.

Aesthetically, they can be designed to blend in with the surrounding architecture, maintaining compatibility with established neighborhoods and preserving community character. Those looking to build an ADU also do not need to develop new infrastructure, since ADUs can be connected to

the existing utilities of a primary dwelling.

Allowing ADUs is an efficient use of existing housing stock, helps meet the demand for housing to keep costs lower, and offers an alternative to major zoning changes that many communities do not pursue.

While ADUs are not new to Massachusetts (Lexington, Barnstable and Wellfleet have been modulating their ADU bylaws since at least the early 2000's) and have become more well known nationally in recent years – with states like California, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Oregon, Vermont and Utah broadly allowing them – the new language in the *Affordable Homes Act* has been called one of the most “bold, and inclusive ADU laws on the east coast” by some advocates I've spoken to.

“People with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families face a severe housing crisis in Massachusetts,” Maura Sullivan, CEO of The Arc of Massachusetts, recently told me. The Arc of Massachusetts is a nonprofit that advocates at the Massachusetts State Legislature to help enhance the lives of individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“ADU's will help alleviate the shortage of appropriate housing options while providing the opportunity for community living, independence and supervision. ADU's allow individuals with disabilities to thrive in their community, where they are familiar and have natural supports,” Sullivan said. But even with all the high praise, numbers and technical language, this is, ultimately, about safely housing our loved ones.

Policies like ADUs by-right is about giving our aging parents a place to stay. Providing housing for our young adults looking to jumpstart their careers and start a family. Making sure a loved one with a disability has a place to live with dignity. All worthy, accomplishable goals made possible by ADUs by-right.

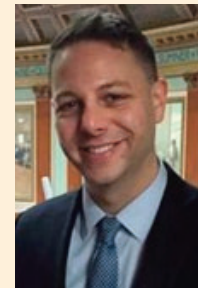
Amidst an overwhelming housing crisis, its smart policies like ADUs by-right that make a tangible, material difference for our citizens while also not overwhelming our municipalities and towns or negatively impacting our neighborhoods.

Representative Christine Barber, of Somerville, and Representative Andy Vargas, of Haverhill, have been huge advocates for this important policy as well – working closely with myself and the members of the Joint Committee on Housing to making sure loved ones with a disability and family members looking to stay within their community, and can do so with the support and with the dignity they deserve.

For the human services community, this vital policy—and legislation—is a positive step towards a more inclusive, fair and dignified Massachusetts.

I am incredibly proud of this accomplishment by the state government and cannot wait to see it implemented for our citizens and families across Massachusetts.

Representative James Arciero represents the 2nd Middlesex District of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and is the House Chair of the Joint Committee on Housing.



Rep. James Arciero

Care providers deserve housing affordability **VIEW FROM THE HILL** PAGE 6
 Bridges Homeward builds permanency **PROVIDER PROFILE** PAGE 3
 Climbing the hill of belonging **EDITORIAL** PAGE 4

THE PROVIDER

Vol. 44 - No. 6 The Newspaper of the Providers' Council June 2023

Hundreds demand livable wages, loan repayment at TCF Rally



A direct care worker for ServiceNet, a Springfield provider, is her role as a direct care worker. Moultrie is an actor for only measure is to "pay it goes away."

SWM budget includes \$173M for Ch. 257

The human services sector will almost certainly receive millions of additional state dollars next year following the early-May release of the Senate Ways & Means Committee's FY '24 budget proposal, a \$55.8 billion spending plan. Just like the budget proposals from Gov. Maura Healey's and the House Ways & Means Committee, the Senate proposal increasing \$173 million in the Chapter 257 Reserve line item (1999-6963), representing an increase of \$94 million, or nearly 119%, from FY '22. The Council compared the Chapter 257 line item to the FY '22 budget, rather than the FY '23 budget, because the number of Chapter 257 rates reviewed by ECHOED alternate in proportion every other year. With the three groups all wanting the same

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Join Us!

THE CARING FORCE

Central MA

Caring Force Rally

Heroes in Human Services:

Thanking Legislators and Workforce

When: Friday, October 11th at 9 a.m.

Where: Tilton Hall, Clark University, Worcester, MA

Why: Workers, program participants and legislators are rallying to celebrate their work to strengthen the human services sector and support our communities!



Scan to RSVP!
or go to bit.ly/CentralRally

Sponsored by:



RALLY: Western MA Rally draws TCF members to Westfield

Continued from Page 1

Western Massachusetts Rally.

Pagan wasn't alone in sharing her powerful story. Jose Rivera-Suarez, a direct care worker, and Alberto Santiago, a program participant – both from Hairston House, a substance use recovery program at Gándara Center – discussed their experiences as well.

"When I was 11, my dad passed away as a result from a drug overdose. Working at Hairston House, I realized I could help prevent others from going through what I experienced," Rivera-Suarez said. "We're not just helping individuals – we're working to change lives, to integrate people back into the community, and to fight the epidemic of addiction."

"The center's services and community support became a cornerstone of my recovery," Santiago said. "Hairston House provided the guidance and resources I needed to continue my healing journey and reinforced the importance of community involvement."

The personal stories shared by Pagan, Rivera-Suarez and Santiago resonated with those in attendance, including state Sen. John Velis who represents the Hampden and Hampshire district. Even though a fire alarm evacuated the building before Velis was to speak, the rally carried on outside and he shared with attendees his own story of addiction.

"When I didn't know where to turn, in the throes of my alcoholism and drug use, someone came up to me, extended their hand, and said, 'You know what, it's going to be okay,'" Velis told attendees who gathered in a circle outside the building on a grassy area to hear him speak. "There are countless people here who have extended their hand. Whether it's behavioral health, sub-

stance abuse, or disabilities, people here, multiple times a day, say, 'It's going to be okay.' Compassion and caring—these are things we need in abundance today."

State Rep. Carlos Gonzalez also addressed attendees at the event, and Sen. Jacob Oliveria and Rep. Kelly Pease attended to meet workers and connect with event attendees. Westfield Mayor Mike McCabe and Westfield State President Dr. Linda Thompson delivered remarks, recognizing the contribution of workers and the efforts of program participants. Colleen Holmes, president/CEO of Viability, emceed the event, while Providers' Council President/CEO Bill Yelenak provided a brief welcome.

The event ended with more networking, opportunities for connection and a dance party, thanks to Mark Watkins (aka DJ Mystery), the director of housing operations at the SHINE program at Gándara Center who provided music after the event.

The event was hosted by 18 Degrees, Berkshire Family and Individual Resources (BFAIR), Gándara Center Mental Health Association (MHA) and Viability, and it was one of several Caring Force regional rallies in 2024, following similar events in Peabody, Taunton and Framingham.

The final event of the regional rally series hosted by The Caring Force will be the Central Massachusetts Caring Force Rally, taking place at Clark University on October 11. Caring Force members can RSVP for the event here: <https://bit.ly/CentralRally>. Members can send any questions about The Caring Force or regional rallies to Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator and TCF Project Manager Isabella A. Lee at ilee@providers.org.

CONVENTION: Ramey, Villeda, Secs. Walsh and Augustus to speak



From left to right, Xavier Ramey of Justice Informed will be the keynote speaker; Ray Villeda of Boston 25 News will host the Peer Provider Awards; HHS Secretary Kate Walsh and HLC Secretary Ed Augustus will deliver special remarks.

Continued from Page 1

health human services, improving employee wellness, and inclusion and authentic belonging for individuals with disabilities. There will also be nearly a dozen workshops that highlight the in-

tegral role of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging.

For the latest information on this year's Convention and Expo, visit providers.org or email the Council at convention@providers.org.

CAREVOTE: Council initiative promotes nonpartisan engagement

Continued from Page 1

that human services workers and those they serve can make their voices heard."

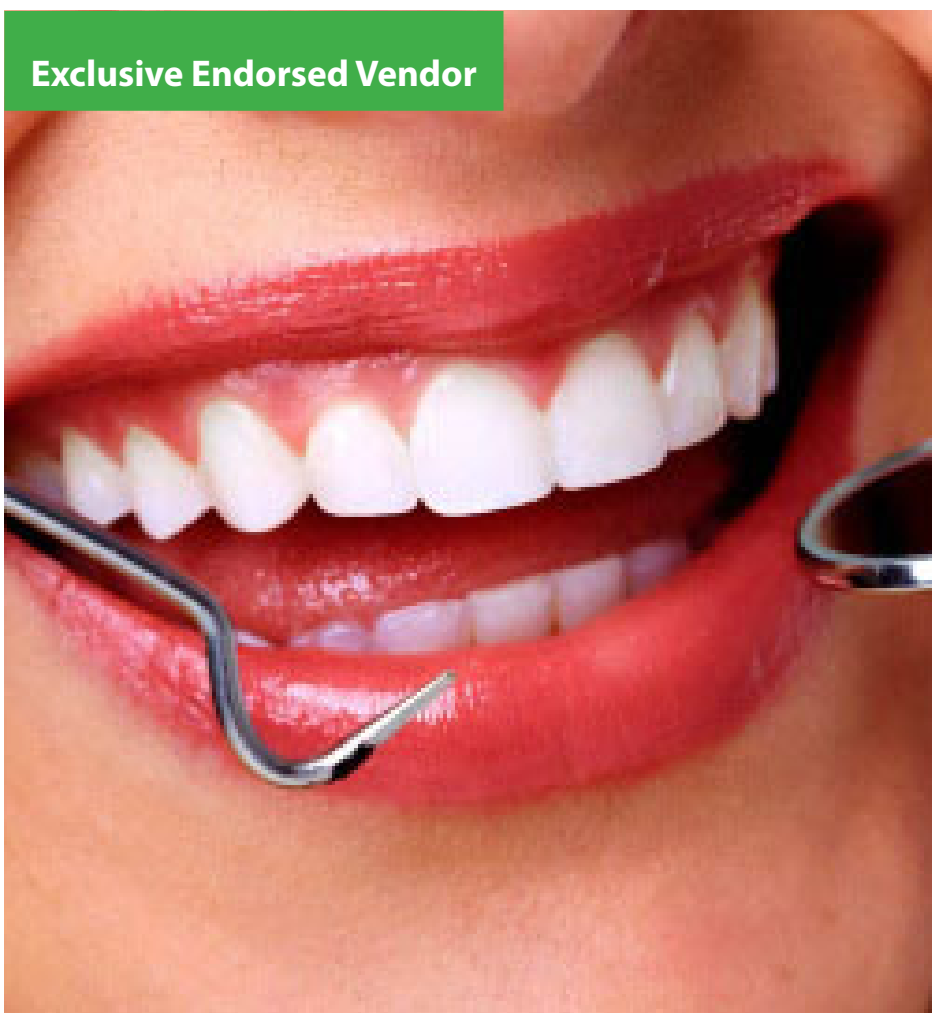
Several Council members have participated in CareVote activities this fall, including 18 Degrees, Center for Living and Working, Community Resources for Justice, Greater Lynn Senior Services, Housing Families and Venture Community Services, New England Village, NFI, The NEEDS Center, Viability, Victory Programs and WORK, Inc. Many organizations have hosted voter registration tables and shared information with staff and program participants. (Read a commentary from The NEEDS Center about their experience on pg. 5).

Massachusetts offers online voter registration through the Secretary of

the Commonwealth's website at sec.state.ma.us/ovr/. To find your election information – including your elected officials and where to vote – you can visit www.wheredoivotema.com.

The general election takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 5, and polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. that day. Residents can also visit the Secretary's website to learn more about voting options, including voting by mail, voting early or voting absentee. Early voting will take place beginning Oct. 19, and mail-in ballots must be postmarked by election day.

For help setting up a voter registration effort or drive at your own organization, contact Providers' Council Manager of Public Policy & Communications Caroline O'Neill at caroline@providers.org.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS • FALL 2024

What: **Provider Member Webinar: What You Don't Know about ADHD in Women and Older Adults**

When: Tuesday, October 8

Time: 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Presenter: David W. Goodman, M.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Where: Online via Conversations for Caring Platform

Cost: \$25

What: **Free, Members-Only Webinar: Empowering the ME in Team**

When: Wednesday, October 9

Time: 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Presenter: Kate Rosenkranz, LICSW, Community Clinical Coordinator at NFI Massachusetts

Where: Online via Zoom

Cost: Free; Event for Council Provider Members only

What: **Provider Member Training: Understanding and Treating the Complex Puzzle of Non-Suicidal Self-Injury**

When: Thursday, October 17

Time: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Presenter: Barent Walsh, Ph.D.

Where: Online via The Bridge Training Institute Platform

Cost: \$109 for Council Provider Members only

What: **49th Annual Convention & Expo, Envision the Possibilities - SOLD OUT**

When: Monday, October 21

Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: Marriott Copley Place Hotel, Boston

Cost: This event is currently **sold out**. To join the waitlist, please email convention@providers.org.

What: **Certificate in Supervision Series (Fall 2024)**

When: Wednesday, October 23

Time: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Presenters: Jim Ognibene, Visioneer Consulting
Comma Williams, Comma Williams Enterprises
Ginny Maglio, Optimum Development

Where: Online via Zoom

Cost: \$700 for Council Members; \$1,000 for non-members

What: **Provider Member Training: Understanding, Managing and Treating Suicidal Behavior**

When: Thursday, November 7

Time: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Presenter: Barent Walsh, Ph.D.

Where: Online via The Bridge Training Institute Platform

Cost: \$109 for Council Provider Members only

Pre-registration for these events is required unless otherwise noted.

Please visit providers.org/events to learn more and register for the event you wish to attend.

Questions? Call 508.598.9800 or email Nina Walat at nwalat@providers.org.



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