



HMEA News

Reach for Independence

HMEA Celebrates 55 years of distinguished leadership and services for people with disabilities.

We are Celebrating!!! 2016 ushered in HMEA's 55th Anniversary as a leading human services agency and over 400 people came out to Lake Pearl Wrentham in October for an evening of celebration and special awards. Special guest speakers, State Representative **Jeffrey Roy** and State Senator **Richard Ross**, opened the evening with special commendations for HMEA and the work done by the dedicated and committed staff. Many staff and support-



ed individuals received special accomplishment awards following the presentation of three Community Awards (*Corporate Partner Award – Larry Cancro and The Boston Red Sox; The Corporate Foundation Award – Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation; and The President's Award – Dell/EMC2 Disability Employee Resource Group*).



Tony Furfuro., Mark Ferrari, Andrew Martin, and Odette Silvera all received the *Eric Rodgers Memorial Award* for demonstrating significant personal accomplishments and overcoming barriers and challenges with courage and determination.



The *Outstanding Employee Award* was given to **Douglas Russell**, and **Peter Rometti** for being exemplary co-workers and having increased hours worked in a supported employment program.

Nichole Flannery was awarded the *Shared Living Award* for significantly enriching the lives of two individuals that she shares her home with and for becoming a catalyst for their positive personal growth.

For significantly enriching the lives of our supported individuals by supporting meaningful relationships, increasing community participation and empowering people in decision making, **Richard Cobbinah** and **Jennifer Thibeault** received the *Board of Directors Award*.

Two amazing teams won the *Team Award* for effectively working together to serve the people supported at HMEA. Those teams were **The Darnell School** and **I.F.F.S. Family Supports** program.



Sue Deblois (a 30 year employee) and **Tracy Andryc** both received the *HMEA Award* for giving consistently outstanding performances and demonstrating energy, enthusiasm and a positive outlook.

The *Kevin McMullen Memorial Award* was presented to **Samuel Amoah** for his 100% commitment to the people he supports, seeing the best in every situation and being a positive role model.

For her unyielding devotion to children and their families, always going the extra step and remaining positive at all times, **Lauren Bernasconi** received the *Kathy Gilchrist Memorial Award*.

Three New Board Members Welcomed



David Powell, CPA

David Powell recently joined the HMEA Board in support of HMEA's Finance and Audit Committees.

David is currently the CFO of a software company headquartered in Boston, with two international offices in Copenhagen and London. His prior roles include CFO of Digilant, a leading Boston-based advertising technology company, and as the Corporate Controller of TechTarget, Inc. based in Newton, MA.

David holds an M.B.A. and Masters in Accounting from Northeastern University and resides in Bellingham with his wife and two boys.



Kristine Biagiotti-Bridges, IT Professional and President of the Disability Employee Resource Group at Dell/EMC

Kristine Biagiotti-Bridges was also named to HMEA's Board. She is an IT professional and the current President of the *Disability Employee Resource Group* at Dell/EMC Corporation in Hopkinton.

At Dell/EMC Kristine is committed to a diversified work environment, serving as board member, Vice President and President of the Disability Employee Resource Group. During her tenure at EMC, she has won several awards including the Motivator Award 2010 for volunteer activity and the Excellence at EMC award for dedication to Diversity and Inclusion. She has spoken at the Dell/EMC quarterly on the importance of volunteering and giving back. In addition to her accomplishments

at Dell/EMC, Kristine has received numerous awards and recognition for commitment to inclusion, advocacy, running, and philanthropy.

She currently volunteers her time as a special education and health care advocate focusing on the needs of those in the disability community. She speaks at local and state levels for health and special education issues involving legislation, awareness and education. Kristine is also the race director and founder of a local 5K that raises funds to provide social programs within the community for "all abilities" regardless of their ability to pay. An active participant in the Boston Marathon, Kristine and her daughter Kayla continue to raise awareness for inclusion and fundraise for local charities.

She earned a BS degree in Electronic Engineering Technology from Wentworth Institute of Technology. Kristine is married and the mother of a daughter diagnosed with Mitochondrial Encephalomyopathy, and two step-sons, the youngest with Landau Kleffner Syndrome and is on the autism spectrum.



Mark O'Reilly

Mark O'Reilly has a wealth of accounting, auditing, tax, and consulting experience with closely held businesses in numerous industries including health care, construction, manufacturers, wholesalers and service companies.

In addition, Mark has experience with governmental cost certification and other government agency audits as well as cost analysis and calculation of unit cost multipliers, overhead, and other burden rate calculations.

He was introduced to HMEA by a current board member, and after conducting some research on the company Mark was impressed by the agency's Mission and Values statements.

He feels the support HMEA provides to people with disabilities and their families is its most important work. And, while not directly affected by disabilities, Mark has been inspired by close friends who are dedicated to the support and care of their two children who are disabled.



A Whole New Look

But all the same quality service and supports HMEA is renowned for.

In celebration of our 55th Anniversary and to reflect the continuum of valued supports our 700 caring, committed and competent staff offers to 4000 children and adults with disabilities, HMEA has launched a new website and logo. This logo reflects the family centered approach to a lifetime of supports that is all inclusive and truly defines the needs and goals of each individual supported on a 1:1 basis. In the logo, the parent and the child together on their journey through life, reach for the star of independence.



Jan Bolton, Darnell School former Educational Administrator and now Vice President of Children's Services, shows off the celebratory cake.

Darnell School Celebrates 10 years!

In December, the Darnell School in Hudson celebrated their 10th anniversary. Over 50 staff, family members, students, donors and visitors attended the event.

A beautiful cake commemorating the anniversary was served and organizers arranged for tours of the school, as well as making sure there were plenty of fun games for everyone to enjoy. Special thanks to the hard working teachers, and much of appreciation and gratitude to the school's great sponsors, The Corkin Foundation and Avidia Bank.



Bonita Blakinton reconnecting with her niece, Cindy, after 50 years

After 50 Years a Family Reconnects

HMEA has some of the most caring, devoted staff and that was never more apparent when recently they facilitated a family reunion. The staff members who support **Cindy** spent years searching for her family and this October they were able to see their efforts come to fruition and witness this family reunited after a very long absence.

Cindy came to live at one of HMEA's residential programs in 1988. Her mother had just passed away the prior year, but she was in contact with her father until his sad passing in 2007. In an effort to connect Cindy with her other family members, her team scoured the phone book to no avail. Little did they know that Cindy's family was searching for her too.

Thanks to the world of social media, staff was able to find Cindy's aunt, Bonita Blakinton. Bonnie and Cindy were reunited on October 12, 2016; they had not seen each other in 50 years. It was a touching and heartwarming reunion as the two were able to spend time reconnecting.

Chris, who works for Cindy, said of the reunion, "We are so grateful that these two wonderful women were able to connect and are inspired to know that a loving and bright future lays ahead for them both"

Cindy's team deserves kudos for their compassionate, caring efforts to bring a family together; just in time for the holidays.

Other things
may change us
but we start
and end with
family



Jodie Toure, Program Supervisor at HMEA's Hopedale Employment program, presenting a certificate to Holland and Linda Wright from Marshall's in Franklin



Melissa Prudhomme (center), Program Supervisor at Sterling Employment, standing with Brian Kiontke who is presenting a certificate to Janet Stoica from Worcester Elder Services

2016 Employer Appreciation Brunch

October 27th, 2016 HMEA Day Services Employment Programs hosted its 2nd Annual Employer Appreciation Brunch in the Plainridge Park Casino Banquet Room, in Plainville, MA. The event was our way of saying "thank you" to the many employers who do **make a difference** in the lives of people with disabilities.

More than 80 people attended the event and many were moved by the stories from individuals currently receiving supports through HMEA. Individuals supported by the agency spoke about what working and earning a living means to them and how proud they are to be working and making their own money. In addition, staff talked about how being competitively employed helps to restore self-image, instill a sense of purpose and integrate people into their communities, and how that is also true for those people not living with disabilities.

We thank the many local area businesses who participated



Nancy Michelson, Job Developer at HMEA's Plainville Employment program, standing with Melissa Benharris who spoke about the three jobs she has through the program.

in the brunch and of course a special thank you to all those who support people with a disability and for being a part of HMEA's Employment Solutions program. We greatly appreciate your effort to help people 'Reach for Independence'.

Please consider patronizing those companies listed, that can be whenever possible.

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| <p>ADDP
Big Y Supermarkets
BJ's Wholesale Club
Chartwells
Clinton Hospital
DDS – Worcester Office
Eagle Stainless Tube & Fabrication
Engage 2 Excel
Equinature
Franklin Elks Lodge
Habitat for Humanity
Hilco Company
Hillside Nursery
HMEA's Autism Resource Central
HMEA's TRACS Office
Holiday Inn Mansfield
Home Goods
Instron Materials
King & Gage</p> | <p>Mansfield High School
Market Basket Supermarkets
Marshall's Department Stores
Mass Action & Awareness
Mass Pro
Meals on Wheels
Ocean State Job Lot
Panera Bread
Plainridge Park Casino
Price Chopper
99 Restaurant
Salvation Army
Sodexo at Dean
Starbucks
Stop & Shop Supermarkets
Target
The Arc
THM, Inc.
TJ Maxx
Vaccon Vacuum Products
Worcester County Food Bank</p> |
|--|---|

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day;
teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.*

Maimonides, Philosopher
March 1135 - December 1204



Katharine Richer and David Cadogen having their holiday picture taken at the Day Services Holiday party!

'Tis the Season to be Jolly

They were certainly *rockin'* around the Christmas tree at the Day Services Holiday party on December 8th at Lake Pearl in Wrentham. For more than 15 years, HMEA's staff and supported individuals, with their family and friends, have donned their holiday apparel to come together and celebrate *the most wonderful time of the year*.

This event has grown every year and nearly 500 people joined in the festivities this year to enjoy the good food, the great company and do the "jingle bell rock".

More than 90 raffle prizes were donated, which meant



All dressed in their holiday finery, Linnea (center) and her parents Albert and Doris Kalter have their photo taken in front of the Lake Pearl fireplace!

many people went home with a gift or two for the holidays. Our program Helping Hands Florist, from the Plainville Employment Program, was featured and they had on hand several beautiful holiday arrangements for sale. Thank you to all those who made a donation or provided a prize for the raffle.

A very special thank you to the LaSalette Shrine for its generous donation which helped to make this holiday party another success. And, we would also like to mention how much we appreciate the staff and crew of Lake Pearl Wrentham for always making this event so very special for everyone at HMEA.



Guests enjoying a delicious Holiday Buffet at HMEA's 2016 Annual Shared Living Holiday Party

HMEA's Shared Living Program Celebrates!

At noon on Saturday, December 10, 2016 the Milford/Boston Double Tree Hotel was in full swing when HMEA hosted its Annual Shared Living Holiday Party.



Reggie Fouch and his family, Shared Living Providers with David Mongeau having their picture taken beside the Christmas Tree

Individuals, families, providers and staff all came together to eat, dance, sing and be merry! There were just over 50 people who attended and enjoyed the nice holiday buffet, and DJ Danny Roy entertained the group by playing seasonal music and requested tunes for some serious dancing. As an added bonus, for anyone wanting to raise their voice in song, Karaoke was also provided and was a big hit!

Everyone had a wonderful afternoon!

Can you believe it?

HMEA's incredABLE** Day 2017**

16th annual walk, run and all-day family fun

is just 5 months away!

You won't want to miss it so...

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

and plan to join in the fun

SUNDAY, MAY 21ST, 2017

DELL/EMC² ♦ 50 Constitution Blvd. ♦ Franklin

More information to follow.



Grant Gariepy (left) from one of our Residential West Area homes handing a staff member from Our Fathers House in Fitchburg a bag of blankets and pillows.

Tis the Season

In the *Spirit of Giving* the Worcester Chapter of M.A.S.S. Self Advocates selects a charity where advocates can donate specific items based on a determined theme by the chapter. This year the 'theme' is "helping the homeless keep warm".

The charity of choice was Our Fathers House in Fitchburg, and 11 advocates from seven HMEA residences in East Douglas, Gardner, Grafton, No. Grafton, Oxford, and two in West Boylston purchased and donated 11 blankets and two pillows to help the cause.

Congratulations on a job well done to HMEA's West and North Area self-advocates! Thanks to your generosity the homeless in your area will be little warmer this year as the winter approaches.

COMING IN APRIL...

The 3rd Annual Central Massachusetts Autism Summit presented by HMEA, Inc.

HIRE AND HIGHER:

Leveraging the 'Autism Advantage' to Meet the Region's Workforce Demands

TUES APR 11.17

College of the Holy Cross • Worcester, MA

for more info please visit www.hmea.org

HMEA Awarded Several Foundation Grants

Recently HMEA was the fortunate and grateful recipient of a number of grants.



The Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation in the amount of \$10,000 to support HMEA's new program - Students For Higher: Rising Up for Autism (SFH), which is a collaboration with Assumption College, and soon to be many others. The program addresses the shortage of Applied Behavior

Analysis (ABA) therapists for children with autism (ASD) and respite for their caregivers. The project's goal is to create a replicable pipeline of trained ABA therapists and respite workers to serve children currently waiting for ABA services and families in desperate need of respite. Like most ABA service providers, HMEA currently has a waiting list of more than 100 families in need of ABA services for their child/children. ABA is the only proven treatment for autism.

The Walmart Massachusetts State Grant in



the amount of \$25,000 to support many of HMEA's employment initiatives helping to train individuals to seek, apply and retain gainful employment.

The Corkin Foundation in the amount of \$15,000 to support the work and environment of HMEA's Darnell School in Hudson



The TJX Co. Foundation in the amount of \$10,000 and The **Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation** in

the amount of \$5,000 in support of HMEA to expand business ventures including additional facilities and provide more opportunities for employment. Expansion includes implementation of a website for HMEA's *Helping Hands Florist* program and expansion into the Millbury facility, as well as expansion of the horticulture program to Sterling; including training and support for more individuals. Equipment and supplies will increase the capacity of all programs.





In the picture, (from left to right) Stephanie Guitard, Vice President of HME A's Employment Programs, Kevin Grampietro, Harriet Dwobeng, Stephanie Mazariegos, Brianna Curran from Wells Fargo, and Doug MacPherson, HME A's Vice President of Development and Public Relations

Wells Fargo Foundation Donates \$10,000

...for HME A's Employment Options and equipment and supplies for horticulture program and landscaping business.

Thank you Wells Fargo Foundation and Briana for your support of our Employment programs.

BEATLES FOR SALE

Join us for a nostalgic night of Beatles music!
Come listen & dance to your favorite Beatles tunes from 1962 through 1970!

Friday, February 24, 2017
Black Box Theater
15 West Central Street • Franklin, MA
7:00 PM to 10:00 PM (DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 pm)

Lots of Good Food ♦ *Mega Raifiles ♦ *Cash Door Prize
*Must be present to claim prizes

\$20.00/person — Advanced ticket sales can be made at www.hmea.org/BeatlesConcert
All proceeds benefit HME A



The Horace Mann Promise Society

A promise is a declaration of what will be done in the future and here's your chance to be an inaugural founding member of it.

Horace Mann was a revolutionary thinker, politician and an advocate for quality education for all — including people with Autism and other developmental disabilities. Months before he died, Horace Mann implored the people of Massachusetts to “be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity”.

HME A has furthered Horace Mann's vision throughout Massachusetts by offering hope, help and a bright future for those in greatest need of services, treatments and supports. We claim victory when a person with Autism or a developmental disability reaches his or her full potential and lives as independently as possible.

Your legacy becomes a promise to make a difference.

The Horace Mann Promise Society honors the donors who include HME A in their estate plans. Donors of all walks of life at all income levels can promise that HME A's vital services and supports continue for decades to come.

As a member of the Horace Mann Promise Society, you'll make a significant difference to the infants, children and adults that HME A serves, supports and guides every day. Your support ensures that people with Autism and other development disabilities receive the very best treatments and their families receive the support they need in perpetuity.

It's easy to join the Horace Mann Promise Society! To discuss how you can leave a bequest through your will, or name HME A as a beneficiary on your insurance policy, bank accounts, or Special Needs Trust, please contact: **Doug MacPherson**, Vice President of Development, 508-298-1105, dmacpherson@hmea.org.

For the first time in over a decade, new federal autism statistics suggest the prevalence of autism has steadied. However, the U.S. CDC states that it is still a staggering 1 in 68 school-age kids across the country that are estimated to have autism.

Source: <https://www.disabilitycoop.com/2016/03/31/cdc-no-change-autism-prevalence/22113/>



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To learn more about HMEA please visit us online at www.hmea.org

FY'17 Annual Fund Campaign is Underway

HMEA is proud to say that 100% of your donation goes to support children and adults with disabilities. Your gift really does *make a difference* in their lives. Our staff and family are appreciative of the extra resources you provide and, as throughout our 55 year history, we will continue to make dreams and goals a reality for the 4000 individuals receiving supports through HMEA.

Your gift allows us to:

- provide training to help people enter into the workforce.
- install handicap ramps so families can keep their children at home.
- equip supported individuals with adaptive technologies to assist in communication.
- provide in-home ABA therapy to children with autism.

And there is so much more! Your support also goes a long way toward enriching the lives and promoting independence for the people supported at HMEA.

Please consider giving generously to HMEA's 2017 Annual Fund campaign with this form or online at our website...

www.hmea.org.

THE HMEA ANNUAL FUND

\$1000 \$500 \$300 \$100 \$50 Other: \$ _____

I pledge \$ _____ to the HMEA FY '17 Annual Appeal.

Please designate my gift: unrestricted

In honor of (please print): _____

In memory of (please print): _____

Payment Method:

Check made payable to **HMEA Annual Fund**

Credit Card: MasterCard VISA Discover Amex

Card Number: _____

Expires: _____ CID # _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Your Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Your Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

I would like to receive more information on becoming a Founding Member of the new **Horace Mann Promise Society**.

A Matching Gift Form is enclosed (see your Human Resource department for a matching gift form).