Support the 2014 Bay Cove Marathon Team!

As tough as we’ve all had it through the chilling cold and the mounds of snow this winter, at least most of us have the advantage of not trying to train for a 26.2-mile run in the midst of it all. Yet another reason to salute the eight dedicated members of the Bay Cove Boston Marathon Team!

If you haven’t already done so, don’t forget to check out the Bay Cove team’s fundraising page at www.baycove.org/marathon! At press time, the Team had raised just over $24,000, close to one-third of its $75,000 goal with six weeks left until the race. Remember, every dollar you donate goes directly toward the men, women and children served by Bay Cove programs.

The money contributed to our Marathon Team truly makes a real and tangible difference in the lives of the people we serve. For example, funds donated in support of last year’s Marathon team paid for:

• Approximately 2,000 hot meals for seniors through the Kit Clark Senior Services Senior Nutrition Program
• A year’s worth of therapeutic toddler groups for four children in our Early Intervention program
• Summer outings for people receiving services in our Developmental Disabilities programs
• A smartboard (interactive whiteboard) for Bay Cove Academy
• Health and wellness activities for people receiving services in our Mental Health programs
• Educational materials for clients in our Addiction Services programs

Then, on April 15, beginning at 6 p.m., all are invited to a special reception at Busker’s Lounge, located just across the street from the Bay Cove offices, where you can celebrate with the runners, Bay Cove staff and supporters over hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar. (A suggested donation of $10 is requested.)

And, if you can’t make it to either event but still want to support the Bay Cove team, there are other ways to help. On race day—Monday, April 21—Bay Cove supporters traditionally make their way to line the route and cheer on the team. All who donate to the Marathon effort will receive an e-mail in the weeks to come detailing locations where Bay Cove fans will be gathering to root on the runners. We hope to see you there!
As I write this column, the first hints of spring are finally starting to break through this long cold winter. It’s not quite as cold as it’s been. It’s light out a bit later each evening. And, when it snows, it melts faster. It’s also the time that I start to see more people along the Charles River when I go for my morning run. It’s been a challenging winter for runners—snow, ice and cold, all the components of a New England winter, have been present in abundance.

I run each morning regardless of the weather. I run because it’s great for my health (physical and mental) and because I’m in training to run “Boston” again this April. Running the Boston Marathon has become an annual event for me. This is my 7th year in a row running to raise money for Bay Cove. In 2008, Bay Cove received three numbers through the John Hancock Non-Profit Bib Program. That year, Jim Laprade, Ed Barrett and I made up the first Bay Cove marathon team. We’ve been fortunate to get at least one number (and as many as five) every year since.

For me, training begins in earnest right after the holidays with regular weekday morning runs and a progressively longer run every Saturday. I enjoy the challenge and the sense of accomplishment from completing the race, but I will admit the training is a lot of work. There’s many a snowy morning with single digit temperatures when I would much prefer to stay in bed rather than respond to my 5:15 alarm. However, the fact that the training I’m doing prepares me to run a race with as much tradition as the Boston Marathon—and for an agency and a mission I believe in as strongly as I do for Bay Cove—provides all the inspiration I need.

When I think about running for Bay Cove, I am constantly reminded of how the effort I make to train for and run the marathon pales in comparison to the efforts the people we serve must make every day. The challenge is there every day for an addict fighting to stay off drugs or alcohol, or a person with mental illness struggling to face the many obstacles each day presents, or a person with a developmental disability practicing over and over again to master a task that most of us take for granted, or an elder who has difficulty doing the same things that were once everyday routines and are necessary to maintaining some independence. The 6,000 people Bay Cove serves every day face bigger challenges—and work harder to overcome them—than any of us running the marathon. My former colleague Megan Hoffman (a Bay Cove marathoner in 2013 and 2014) summed it up when she said “for them, the race never ends.”

I’m proud to run the marathon for Bay Cove every year, just as I’m proud of all the things we accomplish each day after I finish that morning run and change into my work clothes. Each of you has a relationship with Bay Cove, be it as an advocate, friend, family member, supporter or all of the above. I hope you’re always proud of that relationship as well, and I hope you take the time to remember the tremendous accomplishments that happen here each and every day.

P.S. I encourage you to check out the story on page 1 of this issue of the Bay Cove News to learn more about the Bay Cove Marathon Team and how you can support their efforts. To make a donation to the Marathon Team, please visit www.baycove.org/marathon. Thank you!

Bill Sprague
President & CEO
Join Us For The Bay Cove 40th Anniversary Gala!

Bay Cove Human Services’ largest fundraising event of the year—the agency’s 40th Anniversary Gala, which takes place May 22, at the Seaport Hotel Plaza Ballroom—is shaping up to be an unforgettable event.

As previously announced, the event’s guest of honor will be Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. A longtime friend of Bay Cove and a true champion to the people we serve, Mayor Walsh will be accepting the first annual Bay Cove Changing Lives Award, in honor of his longtime role as a dedicated supporter of human services.

Guests will get to enjoy truly delicious cuisine, provided by acclaimed Dorchester chef Chris Douglass, owner of popular restaurants Ashmont Grill and Tavolo, who will be designing a special menu for the evening.

The event will feature both a silent auction and a live auction. This year’s auctioneer will be David Brown, former longtime meteorologist for WCVB-TV Channel 5. Guests will have a chance to bid on fantastic items, including a trip to Italy; a weeklong Paris vacation that includes accommodations in a spectacular apartment overlooking the Seine; a Red Sox travel package to see the Olde Towne Team take on the Blue Jays in Toronto, and many more.

“This year’s gala will be unlike any event we’ve done before, as we’ve decided to tell the Bay Cove story in a very different way than we have in past years,” says Vice President of Development David Hirschberg. “In addition to recognizing Mayor Walsh’s extraordinary leadership, and savoring the wonderful food of Chef Douglass, this year’s attendees will enjoy an entertaining and powerful program featuring live music and a few unforgettable surprises.”

For more information on the event itself, contact Kate Fazio at 617-619-5930, or visit www.baycove.org/gala.

Bay Cove Advocates In Action

On Friday, March 7, advocates from across the state journeyed to The Massachusetts State House to speak before the House Ways & Means Committee in support of greater funding for human services. Among the crowds in attendance at the public hearing were a number of Bay Cove employees, representing The Caring Force.

Present to show their support were (back row, left-to-right): Jesse Tokarz, Chris Blonda, Ed Barrett, Kevin Brown and Mike Gattoni; (front row): David Burgess, Kate Fazio and Laurisa Wojcik.
Supporter Spotlight: Gopal Kalluri

Bay Cove’s supporters come to the agency in a variety of ways, and for a variety of reasons. Some of them have family members who have received services from one of our programs, while some learn about Bay Cove through their connection to one of our enthusiastic staff members.

Gopal Kalluri learned about Bay Cove in 2007 through our current Board of Directors Chair Bob Walters. “We worked together at the time, and he spoke to me about this organization he was passionate about,” recalls Gopal, an Acton resident who is now a Principal at Encapsulate, a firm that provides technology and business consulting to a range of corporations and government agencies. “One of my first contributions to Bay Cove was playing in the [annual] Cutler Memorial Golf Tournament, but I kept in touch with Bob after his retirement, and I felt as though there was more I could do for Bay Cove.”

Today, Gopal serves on Bay Cove’s Board of Advocates, taking an active role in promoting the Bay Cove name and telling our story. In addition to that work, he has been unafraid to roll up his sleeves and provide support for various agency programs in the most hands-on way possible. For the past 8 months, Gopal—with the help of fellow volunteers from his church, The Sai Center of Boston—has spent one weekend each month at a different Bay Cove program, assisting with whatever projects need doing.

Last spring, Gopal and his group built special flower boxes for Bay Cove’s Freeland Street residence for individuals with developmental disabilities—boxes that allowed wheelchair-bound individuals to participate in the growing of their own flowers and vegetables. The volunteers have also taken on painting projects and landscaping at other houses. “We look for projects that can be done in a day,” Gopal says, “but things that carry real value.”

Members of The Sai Center participate in a wide range of service projects for groups and organizations around Boston and Cambridge, according to the church’s service coordinator, Neeti Bharatan. “One of the goals of our organization is to serve people without any expectations in return,” she says. “So, members of our church regularly take on group service projects—anything from musical performances at nursing homes, to working in soup kitchens, to clothing donations and more.”

“Church members that have participated in the Bay Cove service projects feel very satisfied to see a project completed,” says Bharatan. “I think they feel good that they are having the opportunity to help people with mental and physical challenges that have serious needs. The experience has been a very positive one for everyone involved.”

Gopal says that, for Bay Cove, he’s interested in service projects that do more than address a problem that can be solved by writing a check. “We’re hoping to do things that are sustainable—we want to fill a need that will, in turn, help the people who live there be able to do things going forward that they couldn’t previously do for themselves.”

He says that Bay Cove has been a favorite organization to work for because of the “extraordinary dedication of the agency staff and supporters, and the feeling that we’re really making a difference for people who really need our help. We would like to be partners with Bay Cove for a long time to come.”

(Above) Bay Cove Board of Advocates member Gopal Kalluri. (Below) A group of volunteers from The Sai Center of Boston work on building flower boxes at a Bay Cove residence.
Bay Cove has a reputation for longevity among its staff—which, in an industry that sees a lot of turnover, is somewhat unusual. One of the many positives that comes from this is that it’s not difficult to find, within the agency, human service professionals who can share firsthand stories about how Bay Cove has changed and evolved over the years in terms how it delivers its services.

Even amid such a rich array of institutional knowledge, though, the stories of Hilary Croach stand out—you see, Bay Cove’s Chief Information Officer and Vice President for Technology can talk about a day when Bay Cove’s use of “technology” was a far cry from what it is today.

“When I started here, in 1996, the agency had no technology staff,” Hilary recalls. “There was no computer network. [Former agency head] Dan Boynton would repair the computers—which were really just glorified typewriters—on a long workbench outside his office.”

Technology was really only a sideline for Hilary prior to joining Bay Cove. He was working, at the time, as the Assistant Director of Housing for the Metro Boston Area Office of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, and was familiar with Bay Cove as an industry leader, Hilary also offered technology consulting services to a number of human service agencies, and during a meeting at Bay Cove was asked to help them draft a job description for a PC technician but, instead, he suggested that the agency would benefit more from a Director of Information Services.

“To my surprise, they asked if I’d be interested in such a position,” says Hilary. “I thought it was a cool idea, so I decided to interview for the job. Bear in mind, my official resume included things like my housing work, stained glass making and grave digging—but Dan and I just hit it off!”

Hilary built Bay Cove’s tech systems from the ground up, starting with just a part-time computer tech and, later, a single developer. In 2000, they implemented the agency’s first venture into the World Wide Web ("initially, it was just for listing jobs," he recalls). The department continued to grow, building an actual network that brought the increasingly spread out pieces of Bay Cove together. Today, Hilary oversees a team of 14 tech professionals, and is proud of the advances they’ve made and the efficiency with which they keep today’s much larger Bay Cove humming along.

“We’ve built an incredible infrastructure that works very well, and we’ve become skilled at doing things cheaply,” he says. “In 2004, we developed the BEST (Boston Emergency Services Team) web application from scratch, which allows the emergency teams to go out in the community and offer triage services to people with psychiatric illnesses, and keeps an electronic health record for these people who are outside the system. It’s a vital service, and it actually brings in revenue, as we’re paid for running it. And now with significant changes in regulatory requirements, we’re building a new, improved version that’s about 10 times more complex than the original.”

Hilary deals everyday with the challenges of being a technologist for a non-profit agency—he knows that he oversees a domain that’s relatively expensive, yet is sometimes mistakenly thought of as “peripheral” when compared to the costs of direct care. “In the for-profit world, technology is regarded as a vital investment because it’s tied to creating better products that can increase productivity and generate more customers and more sales,” he says. “But that’s not necessarily the case for a non-profit human services agency.”

Instead, he says, the value and importance that technology carries within human services comes down to helping an agency being able to better deliver its services to clients, as well as meeting the greater-than-ever compliance and reporting needs that it faces on a daily basis. “Technology can offer transparency in what we do, can help program managers respond to industry changes, and allows us to track how much our services cost, so we know when and how to bid for services—just to name a few ways,” says Hilary.

Hilary says that it’s the Bay Cove mission that drew him here, and that’s what kept him and some of his veteran team here. “If you come here for the tech challenges, you’ll eventually go somewhere else where you can earn more,” he says. “I’ve stayed here because I’ve always been a person who believes we have an obligation to the people who are most vulnerable.

“I’ve been incredibly fortunate to have had bosses that gave me fertile ground upon which to grow,” Hilary says. “The Bay Cove culture is very much about collaboration, flexibility and the mission of serving the people that others can’t, or won’t. The job we do may be similar to what other agencies do, but I think there’s more of a family feeling here that welcomes you in, and turns you into an advocate and an evangelist for the people we serve and the work we do.”
Program Spotlight: Transitions of Boston

One of Bay Cove’s newest programs received a brand-new home in February, when the Mental Health Services clubhouse Transitions of Boston moved into a permanent home at 1960 Washington St. in Roxbury.

The club, which has an enrolled membership of 140 men and women, joined Bay Cove in July 2013, and spent its first six months sharing a common location with the agency’s other Mental Health Services clubhouse, Center Club. After an exhaustive search for just the right property, Transitions moved into the spacious Washington Street location, conveniently located across from Jim Rice Field and close to other useful resources for clients—such as the Gill Wellness Center in Jamaica Plain (headquarters for Bay Cove’s Community-Based Flexible Supports teams) and the Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center.

Transitions is dedicated to the principles of self-help, peer support and empowerment, and offers a full complement of services to its members—everything from vocational and educational supports, to health and wellness resources, to life skills training, group social activities and meals each weekday and on holidays.

Pictured at the Feb. 28 Transitions of Boston Open House (clockwise from top left): Otis, a Hyde Park resident and Transitions member; samples of artwork by Transitions club members; Assistant Program Director Melissa Marien poses in the kitchen with club member Rozelle; Bay Cove’s Vice President of Mental Health Services Carley Lubarsky and President/CEO Bill Sprague.
The Bay Cove Speakers’ Bureau
Wants to Talk To You!

As part of its ongoing mission to tell the Bay Cove story and increase awareness of the great work we do, the agency has decided to turn the floor over to the people who know that great work best: its staff and supporters.

Officially launched at the end of 2013, The Bay Cove Speakers’ Bureau is a new initiative that will see agency staff venturing out into the communities where our programs are situated and speaking directly to the public (civic groups, church organizations, business associations, etc.) about who we are and what we do.

Discussion topics will range from general informational overviews about Bay Cove to coverage of much more specialized topics that fall within the agency’s various service areas—anything from demystifying methadone treatment, to how to spot developmental delays in children.

The Speakers’ Bureau already has close to two dozen participants who have signed up to make presentations. They will be able to help Bay Cove cultivate partnerships with neighborhood associations, elected officials, law enforcement, current and potential donors, and many other members of the public crucial to the continued growth and success of Bay Cove.

The group is currently booking engagements, so if you have an audience that would be interested in learning more about Bay Cove and its programs, or other topics related to services for individuals with mental illness, addictions and/or developmental disabilities, please visit www.baycove.org and check out the “Request A Speaker” page under the website’s Advocacy section. Or, for more information about the Speakers’ Bureau, contact Director of Advocacy Charles Hollins at 617-788-1746.

#BayCoveIsOnTwitter!

For those who prefer to get their news via the digital world, in quickly digestible bullets of 140 characters or less, you’re in luck: Bay Cove is now on Twitter!

You can now keep up with all the latest Bay Cove news in the Twittersverse, by following the agency at @BayCoveMA.

And one more reminder for social media enthusiasts—don’t forget that Bay Cove is on Facebook! Like us on www.facebook.com/bay-cove-human-services and stay up to date about agency happenings!

Calendar of Events

APRIL

Tuesday, April 8 at 10 a.m. -- Rally at the State House, Beacon Hill, Boston. Members of human services advocacy organization The Caring Force will gather with service recipients, legislators and other supporters for a morning of speeches and a chance to meet with lawmakers to express support for the funding of human services.

Monday, April 21 -- The 118th Boston Marathon. Among the thousands of elite and amateur athletes running the 26.2 miles from Hopkinton to Boston will be eight Bay Cove staffers and supporters raising money for the agency (see story, page 1.) Come on out to cheer them on and experience one of Boston’s legendary sporting events!

MAY

Saturday, May 10 -- Artesani Park, along the Charles River in Brighton (Soldiers Field Road), plays host to the annual NAMI Walk to raise public awareness and battle the stigmas associated with mental illness. For more information, or to form a walk team, contact NAMI Mass. events manager Karen Gromis at 617-580-8541.

Thursday, May 22 -- Seaport Hotel Plaza Ballroom, 1 Seaport Lane, Boston. Join us for The Bay Cove 40th Anniversary Gala! The agency’s biggest night of the year returns, with an evening of cocktails, delicious cuisine by top Boston chef Chris Douglass, live and silent auctions and much more. (See story, page 3.) For more information, visit www.baycove.org/gala.

JUNE

Tuesday, June 17 -- 66 Canal St., Boston. The Bay Cove Board of Directors quarterly meeting. For more information, call Joelle Nims at 617-371-3129.
GO TEAM BAY COVE!
WWW.BAYCOVE.ORG/MARATHON

Seniors connect with friends, receive nutritious meals and engage in social activities at Kit Clark Senior Services’ Madden Senior Center in Dorchester.

MISSION Improving the quality of the lives of individuals and their families who face the challenges of developmental disabilities, aging, mental illness, and drug and alcohol addiction. We will accomplish this mission by providing effective and compassionate services and through advocacy and leadership.

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