Early Intervention Helps Children “Talk to Learn”

Studies have shown that a child’s speaking ability is one of the major indicators of their level of development, and the way that we all learn to talk is from having people talk to us. Unfortunately, children in low-income households often find themselves behind the curve: indeed, a study conducted by Betty Hart and Todd Risley in the early ‘90s revealed that by the age of 3, children from affluent homes with well-educated parents have heard 30 million more words than children living in poverty.

This summer, Bay Cove’s Early Intervention program initiated a new, cutting-edge project called “Talk to Learn” with a number of the young children we serve. The goal of “Talk to Learn” is to increase the amount of talking parents do with their children by gaining an accurate record of how much verbal stimulation a child is receiving in their home from their primary caregiver, and using that data to coach and encourage parents in the most effective ways of talking with their child.

“When I learned about this, it seemed an absolute no-brainer to me that we should do it,” says Candace Chang, Bay Cove’s Director of Child & Family Services. “If a child isn’t talking by age 3, it’s a strong predictor of later struggles with reading and school performance.”

“Talk to Learn” utilizes Language Environment Analysis (LENA) digital language processors to measure the number of words a child hears; the number of utterances from the child; the number of conversational turns; and the amount of time the television or other electronic media is on.

“It’s a common misconception that kids learn language from TV—the data we’ve seen is just the opposite,” says Chang. “It’s frequent and regular dialogue between parent and child that makes a difference.”

The LENA devices are small, electronic recorders that fit snugly in the pockets of clothing made from special acoustic fabric—everything from vests, to shirts, to overalls—that the child wears. The device is used to record a full day of interactions. It is then returned to a child’s Service Coordinator, who uploads the data to a computer equipped with special software (cont. on p.3)
I’m well aware of just how fortunate I am to have a job that I enjoy as much as I do. As the CEO of Bay Cove, one of my favorite parts of the job is greeting new staff on their first day of orientation. We start a new group of staff each Monday, and, at lunchtime, I welcome them and talk to them about Bay Cove. My comments include a description of what the agency does, who we serve and the many kinds of services we provide. I talk about the thousands of people we serve every day, always emphasizing that we serve each person “one at a time.” I talk about how each person we serve should be treated the way we would want a loved one of ours to be treated if they needed the services we provide: with dignity and respect.

Bay Cove Human Services is really a people business, with a staff of more than 1,800 employees. Our success in delivering the best services and fulfilling our mission is dependent on hiring the right people, offering them the right training and supervision, and reinforcing the values that have been a part of Bay Cove for all of our 40-year history. Of these new staffers joining Bay Cove, some are fresh out of school, some are embarking on a new career, and some are joining Bay Cove after having worked for other human service agencies. During a recent “new staff” orientation, the group also included several interns from local colleges. We know that some of them will spend the semester or the year with us and then move on, but we also know that we will hire some of these interns, and they will work with us and the people we serve for years to come.

I’ve worked in this field for a long time, and I’m faced with that realization every week when I welcome new staff, many of whom are the age of my children and most of whom weren’t born when I got my first job as a direct care worker for an agency in Framingham. But, each week my faith in the longterm success of Bay Cove Human Services is renewed. Not every new staff person will be successful and only a percentage will stay at Bay Cove for the long term, but that renewal each and every week of committed new staff to our mission and the people we serve reassures me about the future of our agency and our industry.

We work in a challenging field. The people we serve are among the most challenged in the Commonwealth. Our staff doesn’t make the money that they could in another profession. Yet, each week, new people join our agency and bring energy, commitment and fresh ideas to our field. At Bay Cove, we are committed to grooming the next generation of human service workers, managers and leaders. We are bringing new people into the fold. We are training direct care workers to assume supervisory roles. We are training young managers to be ready for greater responsibility, and we are training senior managers to be Bay Cove’s leaders of the future.

Bay Cove fills a vital role in our community and addresses needs that aren’t going away. I want to assure all of you who care about our agency and our mission that, in addition to all of our day-to-day work, we are regularly paying attention to, and planning for, the future. And I, for one, think the future of Bay Cove is very bright.
Save the Date: The 2015 Changing Lives Gala Set for May 7

Building off the excitement created by our record-setting 40th Anniversary Gala this past spring, plans are moving ahead for next year’s edition of Bay Cove’s biggest annual fundraiser.

On May 7, 2015, we will be hosting The Bay Cove Human Services Changing Lives Gala, returning once more to the scene of last year’s popular event—The Seaport Hotel in Boston.

The gala’s new name takes its inspiration from the Changing Lives Award, which was awarded for the first time in May to Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. The recipient of the 2015 award will be announced soon.

Another of the most popular elements of the 2014 gala is set to return, as well: veteran Boston broadcaster Susan Wornick, whose auctioneering skills helped Bay Cove raise an unprecedented $330,000 at the 2014 gala, will once again be leading the evening's live auction.

For more information on the 2015 Changing Lives Gala, keep reading future issues of the Bay Cove News or visit www.baycove.org.

EI Program Helps Children Have a Voice (cont. from p.1)

that analyzes and charts the results.

The cost of the “Talk to Learn” project is $30,000, and has been made possible by generous donations from a variety of sources: including $10,000 from The Marianne J.H. Witherby Foundation, $5,000 from the Department of Public Health, $5,000 from the Boston Evening Clinic Foundation and a $10,000 donation from Bay Cove supporters Bill & Jo Lawson.

Chang says the response to the project has been enthusiastic. “We started out small, but once parents heard what it was all about, we had a lot who wanted to participate,” she says. “We had to work some of the bugs out of the process—initially, for example, some of the parents didn’t leave the device on long enough, so we wouldn’t get enough of a sample size.”

The project calls for recording children and parents twice a month, over a six-month period. Chang is looking forward to seeing the differences six months after the initial recordings. “Our intent, from the very beginning, was not to use this as a research tool, but as a treatment tool. Parents see the data from the recordings, can see how it changes as they increase the amount they talk to their child, and we offer them coaching about the most effective way to talk with their child. We feel that it has the potential to altogether change their approach to talking with their children.”

While the data is not complete on the Bay Cove EI clients using “Talk to Learn,” other children and parents who have used the LENA devices and monitoring software have seen (after a six-week period of feedback to caregivers) a 31.6% increase in adult word count, and a 24.9% increase in conversational turn count.

To Chang’s knowledge, Bay Cove is the only organization in the state to be utilizing the LENA technology, something she believes was very helpful in getting DPH to offer financial support. “I think there was definitely a desire for someone to step forward and try something like this,” she says, “and we were excited to be the ones to do it.”

Having begun the project in July, Chang and her staff hope to have measurable data by the end of the year. But everything she’s seen so far already has her very encouraged. “We know that if we can get parents talking to their children more, they can really make an impact on their child’s future.”
Bay Cove’s technical capabilities—and, by extension, the agency’s ability to help the people we serve—received a huge boost this summer with the news that technology giant Microsoft has made a donation of $2.1 million worth of software products to the agency.

This phenomenal act of generosity—administered as part of Microsoft’s global Corporate Citizenship efforts—represents, by far, the largest single private donation to Bay Cove in the agency’s 40-year history. The donation will allow VP of Technology/Chief Information Officer Hilary Croach and his team to update the agency’s 900+ desktops to the newest version of Microsoft Office, and to update all Windows server software to the newest, highest levels available.

“This gift is going to represent a significant step in moving us forward, as an agency, to a new level of engagement with technology,” says Croach. “That’s going to be a catalyst we can use to help push Bay Cove forward.”

Crouch is particularly excited about the opportunities afforded by the grant to move Bay Cove increasingly away from a desktop system and further into the cutting-edge world of cloud computing. “A big benefit that I see from this grant is that it will help us toward a future where e-mail and spreadsheets aren’t tied down by the maintenance and security issues that exist when everything is centered on desktops,” he says. “This will offer a smoother transition toward using the Microsoft platform in the cloud, and will offer us flexibility, as we grow and change, to better respond to changes in technological standards.”

There was a fair amount of serendipity involved in Bay Cove’s receiving the grant—specifically, a chance meeting on a commuter train between Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Kerry Horgos and Steve Ramsay, Director of the Microsoft Technology Center in Cambridge. After Horgos intrigued Ramsay by telling him all about Bay Cove and the work we do, the Microsoft exec encouraged Horgos to pursue a grant through the Citizenship program, and was, himself, a personal advocate for the agency during the process.

The $2.1 million in software is set to be deployed through all parts of Bay Cove over the next two years, with Bay Cove providing quarterly reports to Microsoft on the progress made in implementing the software. Croach does caution that, in a company the size of Bay Cove, the process of updating software in each individual computer will take some time to complete.

“My team will be working hard to incorporate this software as quickly as possible,” Croach says. “As we replace old computers with new ones, we’re upgrading them with the new software. Our standard practice is to replace about 25% of all agency desktops each year—because of this donation, we’re now trying to accelerate the process and upgrade all computers and software within the next two years.” Hilary adds that he and his team, in conjunction with senior leadership, are currently “developing a plan to identify the biggest areas of need and top priorities.”

In addition to all the new technology that comes Bay Cove’s way as a result of the grant, Croach is excited by the agency’s opportunity to partner with a global innovator like Microsoft. He and members of his team have spent time at the Cambridge offices, discussing ways that Bay Cove’s infrastructure and everyday business can grow with the grant, and came away even more impressed with the company. And, he believes, the feeling was mutual.

“Microsoft is very smart and deliberate about the grants it administers,” Croach says. “They don’t award these grants to companies that they don’t think have the capacity to run with it and make the best possible use of it. So, the fact that we were recognized as a well-run, efficient and strong agency is something that we can, and should, all be quite proud of.”
Bay Cove 100 Kraft Challenge Brings in Dollars, New Donors

As a devoted philanthropist, New England Patriots owner Robert K. Kraft understands that building a strong base of private support is critical to helping any non-profit grow. A cash donation from a corporation or foundation will help today, but growing a non-profit’s devoted core of supporters will pay dividends well into tomorrow.

With this in mind, Mr. Kraft challenged Bay Cove in September to find 100 new supporters and raise $50,000 over a month-long period, and put his money where his mouth is—pledging to match, dollar-for-dollar, every single donation to Bay Cove should we reach that 100-supporter target.

We’re delighted to report that the fundraising initiative—which was dubbed The Bay Cove 100 Robert Kraft Challenge—was a resounding success! We thank all the donors, new and old, who participated in the challenge and who—hand-in-hand with the generosity of Bob Kraft—generated more than $100,000 to support the men, women and children served by Bay Cove.

“All of us at Bay Cove are profoundly grateful to Robert Kraft for spearheading this creative and unique fundraising effort, and for his own personal generosity in matching the contributions of Bay Cove supporters,” said David Hirschberg, Bay Cove’s Vice President of Development. “The Kraft Challenge has raised much-needed funds to support our varied programs, while also helping Bay Cove recruit new friends who will contribute new energy, new ideas and new avenues of support for Bay Cove in the years ahead.”

Bay Cove Celebrates Abilities Expo

A number of men and women from the Social Recreation Program—a part of Bay Cove’s Developmental Disabilities Services—attended the 2014 Abilities Expo in Boston, at the Boston Convention and Expo Center September 5-7.

The group was able to participate in a spirited basketball game using specially augmented equipment for individuals with physical and mental disabilities. The weekend-long event featured cutting-edge products and services, compelling workshops, information about local organizations and resources and fun-for-the-whole-family activities geared toward everyone from persons recovering from immobilizing accidents and seniors with age-related health concerns, to children with disabilities, people with vision and hearing impairments and developmental disabilities and many others.

Representatives from Bay Cove also manned an informational booth at the event, which returns to Boston from September 18-20, 2015.

Robert Kraft—philanthropist, businessman and owner of the New England Patriots—issued a challenge to Bay Cove to increase its supporter base, while also making a significant donation to the agency himself.
New Developments in Bay Cove’s Development Department

Bay Cove is always growing, and in the second half of 2014, its Development Department has grown and evolved right along with it—with the arrival of two new staff members, and a change in job titles and responsibilities for two veteran staffers.

Julia Londergan is the Director of Development for CASPAR, a role she took up three years ago after previously running her own consulting business. She is dedicated to recruiting new donors for CASPAR, fostering relationships with longtime supporters and raising awareness about the range of addiction services CASPAR provides to the communities of Cambridge and Somerville. She can be contacted at 617-619-5950, or via e-mail at jlondergan@baycove.org.

In August, Mary Long joined Bay Cove as the Senior Manager of Development for Kit Clark Senior Services, after 8+ years at HESSCO Elder Services in Sharon. In her new role—made possible by a generous capacity-building grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation—Mary is dedicated to identifying grant opportunities and funding sources for KCSS, as well as cultivating new donors, and growing community awareness of all the vital services Kit Clark provides. “I want to remind people about the magic that happens in our programs on a daily basis,” Long says. To learn more about Kit Clark, or to arrange a tour of the Madden Senior Center, call Mary at 617-533-9138 or e-mail her at mlong2@baycove.org.

Kate Fazio received a promotion to Development and Communications Coordinator, and is now the database administrator for the department. And Alcurtis Clark is now Manager of Development and Volunteers, as the agency seeks to better coordinate and expand its opportunities for volunteers.

“We really wanted to formalize our volunteer program, develop more opportunities for people to give of their time and more chances to support Bay Cove through their efforts,” says Clark. “We’re beginning with fall yard clean-ups at a number of our programs, including Oct. 25 at Adelaide Street in Jamaica Plain, Nov. 1 at Connors House in Revere, and Nov. 8 at Cook Avenue in Chelsea and Winthrop Street in Winthrop.”

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, or to sign up for fall clean-ups, please contact Alcurtis at 617-371-3184 or via e-mail at aclark2@baycove.org.

Program Spotlight: New Day

One of several programs to join Bay Cove in 2014 through the agency’s merger with addiction services agency CASPAR, New Day was one of the state’s first residential substance abuse treatment programs where pregnant and parenting women could live with their newborns. The program offers a supportive, clean and sober treatment experience, in an effort to improve birth outcomes for infants, and to support these mothers in leading a sober and healthy life. New Day offers on-site individual and group counseling, support groups, psychoeducational groups, legal assistance and specialized services for at-risk infants, as well as referrals to support groups and social and medical services in the community.

At New Day, residents learn to parent positively in a setting that instills information on child development, nurturing and behavior management. Women receive prenatal, OB/GYN and pediatric care, as they learn to live and parent alcohol- and drug-free. Since 1988, New Day has been home to more than 300 healthy babies.

New Day residents are allowed an extended stay, so that they can practice healthy lifestyles after delivering their babies and solidify their recovery before moving on to sober housing. The program assists clients in developing support systems in the community so that when they graduate, they will have a well-established recovery-oriented network. In many cases, mothers are able to reunite with their other children because of their participation in the New Day program.

To learn more about New Day, visit www.casparinc.org.

A group of newborns who spent time residing at the New Day program while their mothers received treatment for their substance abuse and learned the techniques and healthy lifestyle choices they needed to be loving and effective parents.
On October 14, more than 100 golfers were expected to make their way to the beautiful Myopia Hunt Club in South Hamilton for one of Bay Cove’s most popular annual traditions: The George C. Cutler Memorial Golf Tournament, presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance.

The event, now in its 19th year, is played in memory of George Cutler, a founding member of Center House (now part of Bay Cove) and one of its most ardent supporters. Cutler served on the Center House Board of Directors for more than 30 years and was passionate about the need to provide quality care for individuals with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities.

All proceeds from the Cutler Golf Tournament benefit our Center House programs – helping adults overcome the challenges presented by their mental illness and/or developmental disabilities. At press time, pre-event, this year’s tournament had already garnered in excess of $100,000 in sponsorships and donations, putting the event on a record-setting pace.

The success of the Cutler Golf Tournament depends on the collaborative efforts of many peoples from inside and outside the agency. Bay Cove wants to recognize and extend special thanks to: our Presenting Sponsor, Liberty Mutual Insurance; our Platinum Plus Sponsors, Riemer & Braunstein and Walmart; our Gold Sponsors, Marsh, USI and Bob Walters; all of our Silver Sponsors; all of the companies who purchased program book ads; the many staff and volunteers who have helped out with the tournament, leading up to and on the day of the event; and our planning committee chair, Steve Weinstein, and committee members Greg Buscone, Denise Ruddy Cugini, Bob Thomas, and Bob Walters.

**Calendar of Events**

**NOVEMBER**

- **Saturday, Nov. 1 & 8** -- Fall Cleanup Volunteer Days, Various Bay Cove programs. See story, p. 6.
- **Tuesday, Nov. 4** -- **ELECTION DAY**! Be sure to head out to the polls, as Massachusetts votes for a new Governor, as well as state senators, representatives and other elected officials. Let your voice be heard!
- **Monday, Nov. 17** from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. -- **The Providers’ Council 39th Annual Convention & Expo**, at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel in Boston. The event is New England’s largest human service convention, featuring a full day of workshops for members of non-profit providers, businesses and state agencies. Dan Pallotta of Pallotta Teamworks delivers this year’s keynote address. For more information, visit [www.providers.org](http://www.providers.org).

**DECEMBER**

- **Thursday, Dec. 4** -- **Kit Clark Senior Services Holiday Wreath Stroll** at Madden Senior Center, 1500 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester. Celebrate the holiday season with a festive gathering at Kit Clark, where you can view and/or purchase specially-designed wreaths created by neighbor organizations and area luminaries. All proceeds benefit Kit Clark Senior Services. For more information, call Mary Long at 617-533-9138.
- **Tuesday, Dec. 9** at 5 p.m. -- **Bay Cove Annual Meeting**, at Microsoft, One Cambridge Center, Cambridge. Bay Cove staff, board members and special guests gather for a review of 2014 and a look forward to the agency’s plans for 2015. For more information, call Alcurtis Clark at 617-371-3184.
Bay Cove Wish List

Often, one very simple item can make a real difference in someone’s life. Would you or someone you know be able to donate new (or, in some cases, gently used) items like:

- New sheets and blankets for our Emergency Services Shelter
- An iPad for a person with developmental disabilities
- Furniture for a formerly homeless person’s apartment
- Business apparel for a job interview
- Books for our Family Support and Parent Support Resource Rooms
- Arts and crafts supplies for Occupational Therapy and Art Therapy programs

If you’re able to help, please contact the Bay Cove Development Department at 617-619-5930, and thank you!

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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