No “Snow Days” at Bay Cove

When The Blizzard of 2013 (a.k.a. “Winter Storm Nemo”) hit the Northeast on February 8, dropping more than two feet of snow in Boston, the city came to a virtual standstill, with a statewide driving ban instituted, businesses shut down and non-essential workers told to remain in their homes. To the thousands of people that Bay Cove serves everyday, though, no workers were more “essential” than our staff.

While Bay Cove did join most Boston businesses in dismissing administrative and business staff early on the Friday the storm hit, the same option was not available to the large number of direct care and residential workers who are required to staff the many Bay Cove programs that do not, and cannot, ever close their doors.

Bay Cove’s response to the storm actually took shape in the days immediately preceding the arrival of “Nemo.” Programs like Meals on Wheels and the Bay Cove Treatment Center provided customers with additional food and medication in advance, anticipating an inability to operate at the height of the coming storm.

Staff also worked with clients who live independently, preparing them for the possibility of being homebound without support for a few days. Michele Lockwood, Director of Individual and Family Support for Developmental Disabilities Services, says that her staff helped individuals shop for food, batteries and other essential storm supplies in the days before the blizzard. And, during the storm, support staff were in regular contact with the men and women they serve. “We only had a few individuals lose power,” she says, “and we made regular check-in calls with them throughout the storm, even as we connected with the utility companies to stay apprised of the situation.”

According to Ralph Sinacola, director of Bay Cove’s Property Department, the physical conditions at agency program locations and residences held up quite well. With the exception of a few programs that lost power, the only problems reported were a handful of properties that weren’t dug out in a timely manner—and in almost all those circumstances, Ralph reports, “It was due to the streets surrounding the buildings being unplowed by the City, which kept our contractors from getting in to do their work.”

During the blizzard, there were countless stories of Bay Cove staff exceeding the call of duty: The program manager who made multiple trips through barely passable roads to drive stranded employees home and pick up employees who couldn’t otherwise make it into work; the staffers who stayed at their posts for up to 5 consecutive shifts when relief staff couldn’t get there; the employees that shoveled for hours on end to clear entries and evacuation routes; and staff who even traveled miles on foot to get to work.

President/CEO Bill Sprague praised this dedication, saying, “It is in times of great challenge that our staff demonstrate their incredible commitment to the work we do and the people we serve. So many went above and beyond during this storm, and I want to thank everyone for all they did to keep our programs operating and our people safe.”
I’m regularly reminded of—and consistently impressed by—the incredible commitment that the staff at Bay Cove has for the work we do. In this issue of the Bay Cove News, you’ll have the opportunity to read about some of the extraordinary efforts by our staff during the recent blizzard (p. 1). You’ll also learn about our marathon team, who are training for the upcoming Boston Marathon while also working hard chasing friends and family for donations to support Bay Cove (p.7). These are just a couple of examples of how staff at Bay Cove goes above and beyond, but there are many more instances, large and small, that happen each week. They may not all get special attention, but they all reflect the commitment to our mission and to the people we serve shown by our staff, and they are all noticed and appreciated.

I’ve certainly written in this column many times about how the work that our staff does is difficult and challenging. It’s also, unfortunately, work that isn’t always sufficiently valued by our society. That’s not to say that people don’t appreciate the work we do, because I know, from personal experience, how many of you there are out there who passionately support Bay Cove’s mission. You’ve consistently demonstrated this over and over again through the years with your efforts and much-needed financial support of our services—and there are many others who share your commitment.

When I say it’s not sufficiently valued, I’m actually referencing the priority we, as a society, give human service work when it comes time to build state and federal budgets. Even though the services Bay Cove provides are essential to the well being of some of the most vulnerable members of our community—men and women who struggle daily with the challenges associated with mental illness, developmental disabilities, addictions and aging—we still have to fight, year in and year out, for adequate funding for our services and the money necessary to pay our staff a fair wage. In fact, many of you reading this have helped us in this effort through phone calls and letters to your elected officials, and we are very grateful for that.

Right now, there is great debate going on at all levels of our government that will ultimately determine the future of our services and the people who receive them. The divide at the federal level over taxes and budget cuts threatens funding for many vital services to the poor, disabled and/or elderly. At the state level, we are grateful that the Governor has proposed an FY14 budget that addresses a number of funding needs for human services, education and our transportation infrastructure—all areas that impact the people we serve. (If you would like to see the Governor’s proposed budget in full, it can be found at www.mass.gov.) However, this budget hinges on a significant tax increase that will generate close to $2 billion in new state revenue.

Raising taxes is never a popular move, and elected officials are often hesitant to take a stance that, while important, comes with political risk. That’s why it’s so important to let your elected officials know that you value the services we provide, and that you’ll back them when they support the revenue growth necessary to make sure that these services remain adequately funded and available to all those who need them.

On behalf of the people we serve, and the staff who support them, I thank you!

Bill Sprague
President & CEO
Since December of 2007, one of the most popular offerings at Kit Clark Senior Services has been Fit-4-Life, a program that combines nutritional counseling and daily physical activities tailored to the elder population. The program services a full spectrum of aging adults by offering fitness classes designed to enhance activities of daily living by addressing the functional needs of seniors relating to strength, balance, coordination, aerobic capacity and mobility. A registered dietician offers dietary screening, individual and group counseling to help members learn more about nutrition and improve their eating habits, and assistance with weight management.

Program Coordinator Garry Sanon says that Fit-4-Life is about putting seniors in a position where they can feel their best and get the most out of their golden years. “There can be a lot of obstacles for the population we serve to improve their health,” he says. “You’re talking about people with deeply ingrained habits, many of whom are on fixed incomes and are from a mix of different cultures. It’s a great success to see them offered choices and have them opt for the healthy ones that will improve their quality of life.”

Seniors who participate have the option of taking a variety of drop-in classes like Tai Chi, Zumba and simple circuit training at the Madden Senior Center in Dorchester. Fit-4-Life has been made possible by generous support from The Tufts Health Plan Foundation and The Dorchester Health Initiative at Tufts Medical Center. To learn more, visit www.baycove.org.

Supporter Spotlight: Joe Ailinger

For an agency like Bay Cove, which has been called “one of the best-kept secrets in Boston,” a key objective is to find ways to spread the word about the organization’s important work to the community-at-large. On page 5, you can read about the advocacy efforts of Charles Hollins, but Bay Cove also has another vital resource dedicated to making Bay Cove Human Services a household name: Board of Directors member Joe Ailinger.

Joe’s original involvement with Bay Cove came through his employer, BNY Mellon, where he’s Vice President for Media Relations/Internal Communications. BNY Mellon—a longtime financial supporter of Bay Cove—has also provided in-kind and professional support to the agency, and Joe was initially asked to offer input on a Bay Cove press release. “That went over well, and so they came back to me when the agency was looking for a new tagline,” Joe recalls. “I offered about a dozen ideas, and one of them was ‘Reaching People. Changing Lives,’ which was well-liked and eventually adopted.”

That led to an invitation to Joe to join the agency’s Board of Advocates and, roughly a year later, to join the Board of Directors. They were roles Joe was only too happy to assume, strengthening his connection to Bay Cove.

“Right from the get-go, I was just so impressed with the passion and compassion displayed by people at every level of the agency,” says Joe. “The fact that Bay Cove is able to serve so many different groups and populations that could otherwise fall through the cracks is something I find very admirable.”

Joe also had a personal understanding of some of the work that Bay Cove does. Not only does he have a brother who works with senior citizens as the manager of a nursing home, but Joe’s own father struggles with Alzheimer’s Disease. “I’ve seen the type of work that goes into helping seniors with dementia, firsthand,” he says. “And so I wanted to see Bay Cove’s profile raised and the agency recognized.”

During the eight years he’s been associated with Bay Cove, Joe has been involved in a number of projects, including working with Bay Cove leadership on developing an agency communications strategy. Joe has also had an integral role in publicizing and conceptualizing the annual Pearl fundraisers.

“It’s been a truly personally rewarding and gratifying experience to be involved with Bay Cove,” Joe says. “The things we’ve been able to do have ranked up there as some of the things I’m most professionally proud of. I’m excited to see Bay Cove thrive, and to contribute however I can.”
The material traditionally associated with a 10th anniversary is, believe it or not, tin. However, for Bay Cove Human Services, the only thing on the agency's mind as a notable decade comes to an end is a “Pearl.”

Each year, Bay Cove takes one night to celebrate the accomplishments of its staff and, more importantly, those of the people we serve, with a gala evening of fine cuisine, fundraising auctions and other surprises. Since it began, 10 years ago, the popular event has been known as The Pearl.

This year’s 10th anniversary edition of The Pearl—presented by Bay Cove and lead sponsor Liberty Mutual Insurance—takes place Wednesday, June 12, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Seaport World Trade Center’s Harborview Ballroom. Tickets start at $250.

Each year, The Pearl seems to grow bigger and more exciting. Last year’s event was the most successful in the agency’s history, raising more than $320,000. This year’s Pearl promises to be another wonderful evening for all who attend.

Not convinced yet whether you should book your tickets for The Pearl 2013? Then—with apologies to David Letterman for blatantly stealing his bit—we’d like to offer you our Top 10 List of Things About Bay Cove You Can Celebrate at The Pearl's 10th Anniversary Event.

10. Bay Cove serves the most vulnerable members of our community: people facing the challenges associated with addictions, aging, developmental disabilities and/or mental illness.

9. Bay Cove serves those whom others can’t, or won’t—helping more than 16,000 people each year at over 160 program locations in Greater Boston and Southeastern Massachusetts.

8. Bay Cove serves one person at a time. No other large human service agency offers such a broad continuum of care with such an individualized approach.

7. Bay Cove’s Kit Clark Senior Services makes it possible for seniors to live with dignity and independence in our community.

6. Bay Cove’s Developmental Disabilities Services help those we serve to make self-directed choices, which lead to houses that are homes and jobs that become fulfilling careers.

5. Bay Cove’s Mental Health Services are designed with the understanding that people can, and do, recover from mental illness and go on to become active, contributing members of our community.

4. Bay Cove’s Addiction Services provide a continuum of care that supports people in all stages of recovery.

3. Bay Cove Academy helps to transform the lives of teens whose educational and social needs go beyond what traditional public and private schools can accommodate.

2. Bay Cove’s Early Intervention Program promotes the physical, educational and emotional development of more than 400 developmentally-delayed or at-risk young children each year.

1. In its first decade, The Pearl has raised more than $1 million to support the work of Bay Cove, and there is much more work to do.

For all those reasons, and so many more, we urge you to join us at the Seaport World Trade Center on June 12 to support Bay Cove and be a part of The Pearl’s proud legacy. For more information about purchasing tickets to the event, or to learn about sponsorship opportunities, visit [www.baycove.org/pearl](http://www.baycove.org/pearl) or call the Development Office at 617-619-5930.
When Charles Hollins, Bay Cove’s Director of Advocacy, goes out into the community-at-large to talk about the men and women who administer and receive our services, he need only reflect on his own history with the agency to offer firsthand accounts of the successes that can be achieved.

It was 1996 when Charles joined the Bay Cove staff, working as the Program Director of Walnut House, a residential program that was transitioning from another human services agency over to Bay Cove’s Mental Health Services. Overseeing what immediately became one of Bay Cove’s largest residential programs, Charles led the development of a day program for elders at Walnut even as he rose through the ranks as a Senior Program Director and became involved in writing curricula for Bay Cove’s Training Department.

“I was always of the fundamental belief that people with disabilities have the same aspirations and hopes for a fulfilling life as anyone else,” says Charles. “I believe in the potential of each individual and in client empowerment. I guess advocacy was just a natural progression from that.”

So, it was hardly surprising, in 2004, that then-Bay Cove President Stan Connors picked Charles to lead the agency’s newly established Advocacy Department. Uncommon among human service agencies, an entire department devoted to Advocacy was, to Charles’ mind, a piece of forward thinking on Bay Cove’s part, and he jumped at the opportunity.

And when he’s not delivering the Bay Cove message to the general public, Charles can be found telling our story on Beacon Hill to the legislators and policymakers whose support is so crucial to the human services industry. “We need to ensure that our elected officials and budget deciders understand why they need to fund services. It’s my job to make them understand the impacts of budget cuts and policy changes on those that we serve and those who work for them—to show them why not compensating human service workers will have a trickle-down effect on the lives and well-being of everyone.”

Talk to enough people at Bay Cove, and you learn that a thread which commonly unites many agency staff is past (or present) personal experience with the kind of challenges our consumers face. Charles is no exception. “I grew up in a family that has needed some of the services Bay Cove provides,” he says. “I have a sister that suffered a major stroke, and the lingering damage that comes from that. My brother battled substance abuse for many years. And, at the same time, I come from a lifelong faith-based background—I believe, fundamentally, that people should be there for each other. And that informs the work I do at Bay Cove.”

Charles concedes that there are challenges to being able to concisely speak to an external audience about everything Bay Cove does, considering the size and scope of the agency. “Certainly, we are very broad and comprehensive, and as a result, I’m still learning about this agency every day, myself! We’re constantly adding state-of-the-art services and developing new best practices in various areas, so I’m always in contact with people throughout the agency to keep up to speed.

“But, from a broader perspective, I consider it incredibly easy to talk about Bay Cove, because I believe in the quality of what we do, the exceptional staff and the passion we have for delivering services,” Charles says. “In my career, I’ve worked at a number of the largest human service organizations in Massachusetts, but the cultural values at Bay Cove are so parallel to my own personal values. That culture has kept me here all these years and inspired me to the best I can be at my job.”
From CHES to EI: A Very Special Delivery

The men and women who participate in Bay Cove’s Center House Enterprises program (CHES) do so as a way of gaining new employment and community integration skills. It’s a way for individuals with developmental disabilities to gain greater independence and self-confidence as they learn new job skills, and then go out and put those skills to use at local businesses, earning their own money, serving members of the community and meeting new people.

However, another aspect of the program is volunteering, which gives CHES participants the chance to get out in the community, doing a variety of tasks that they are not paid for, but which have a helpful impact on the lives of others. It’s a valuable opportunity for individuals who have received services and assistance throughout their lives to experience what it feels like to assist others. And one of the most popular volunteer opportunities at CHES is actually one that benefits another group of Bay Cove service recipients.

Two or three times a month, CHES sends representatives to Cradles to Crayons—an organization based in Brighton that distributes items like clothing, toys, baby furniture and equipment to low-income children from birth to 12 years of age—to pick up donated goods and deliver them to the Early Intervention (EI) program at the Daniel Boynton Child Development Center in Dorchester.

“The EI runs are very popular with our men and women,” says Kate Garrity, a CHES Program Manager. “People who don’t generally pursue outside jobs frequently sign up for this one. I think it’s just very enjoyable for folks, especially when they have opportunities to see the children at the Child Development Center.”

The program participants from CHES began working the deliveries in December of 2011, when Director of Child & Family Services Candace Chang put out an agency-wide appeal for volunteers. “Up until that point, I’d been doing the runs myself, but once [Cradles to Crayons] moved to Brighton, the logistics started to get too complicated,” she says. “So, the folks from CHES stepped in, and it’s just been fabulous.

“About 80% of the families we serve are living in poverty,” Candace adds. “They may not have winter coats, or much in the way of toys or books. They aren’t always able to rush out and buy the next size up in clothes. So these donations of warm clothes and items that foster intellectual stimulation...they’re so helpful.”

“It’s a really nice volunteer opportunity,” said Shanell Crawford, a CHES employee who oversaw a recent pick-up in February. “It’s a great outing for our people. They’re doing work that makes them feel good, and it’s a nice way for them to get further community integration.”

The three CHES volunteers on that unseasonably warm winter day—Judy, Godfrey and John—were enthusiastic as they loaded bag after bag of goodies (“one of the biggest orders I’ve seen,” remarked Shanell) into a Bay Cove van.

Godfrey summed up the whole spirit of the program, remarking that he was excited to take part because “I like that we’re able to help some little kids get things that they don’t have.”
Bay Cove Marathoners Hit Home Stretch

There’s only a few weeks left until the running of the 117th Boston Marathon, and if the training period for those running the race was equated with the route itself, it could be said that marathoners like Bay Cove’s own Bill Sprague, Leanne Bragdon, Megan Hoffman and Jim Laprade are hitting the much-dreaded Heartbreak Hill. However, the four Bay Cove staffers running the famed race—and raising money and awareness for Bay Cove—are undeterred.

Each of the four have been training tirelessly for months, through a winter that’s boasted at least one official blizzard (and plenty of other stormy weather), while also making substantial progress toward soliciting their goal of $40,000 in support.

As of early March, Bill estimated he was running “about 40 miles a week. When I trained for my first marathon, years ago, I would run about 60 miles a week. That would probably make me injure myself today.”

He also hadn’t let the seemingly weekly snowstorms affect his training regimen much. “I ran the Sunday after the blizzard. I had to drive all over town trying to find an area clear enough to do it, but I ran.”

Megan said that she actually enjoys running when the streets and sidewalks are somewhat snowy. “Your time’s nowhere near as good, but there’s something peaceful about it.” A marathon rookie, she’s been participating in a training group with other aspiring long-distance runners, gradually ramping up her distances until peaking with a 21-mile run in mid-March that put her and her fellow road warriors on the actual marathon route. “They dropped us off at a parking lot in Framingham, and we went from there!”

Jim—like Bill, a veteran of several Boston Marathons for Bay Cove—has had an extra wrinkle to deal with during his training this time around: a pair of minor surgeries he underwent this winter. “So far, I haven’t felt too much difference,” he said, “but I’m absolutely keeping that excuse in my back pocket for when I check my race time!”

There’s still time to support the Bay Cove Marathon Team, and in ways that are far less grueling than running 26.2 miles. Online donations can be made by visiting www.crowdrise.org/TeamBayCoveHumanServices, where you can support the entire team by clicking the big yellow “donate” button, or support an individual runner by clicking his or her picture at the bottom of the page.

Or, spread the word by sending a quick message via e-mail, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, carrier pigeon or whatever to your friends, family and contacts, telling them about the work we do and inviting them to support our team via the aforementioned Crowdrise link!

Or, make a truly grueling sacrifice for our runners by attending the “Go Team Bay Cove” party at Ned Devine’s (Quincy Market Building at Faneuil Hall Marketplace) on April 3, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. For a suggested $10 donation, you’ll get free hors d’oeuvres, access to a cash bar and raffles for great prizes. Call 617-619-5930 for more information.

Calendar of Events

APRIL

Monday, April 1 at 12:30 p.m. -- Easter Luncheon, at Center Club, 31 Bowker St., Boston. The annual holiday luncheon unites Club members, family, friends and supporters. Admission: $1 for Club members, $3 for non-members. Call 617-788-1000 for more information.

Tuesday, April 9 at 11 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 your support for the funding of human services.

Monday, April 15 -- The 117th Boston Marathon. Among the thousands of elite and amateur athletes running the 26.2 miles from Hopkinton to Boston will be four Bay Cove staffers raising money for the agency (see story, left.) Come on out to cheer them on and experience one of Boston’s legendary sporting events!
Development Wishlist

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:

- 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
- 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!

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.