Photographer Reveals the Faces of Bay Cove

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and never more so than when taken by a skilled professional. In recent months, Bay Cove has had the chance to see a number of the diverse and unique individuals served by the agency through the lens of a gifted artist.

It was late last year when professional photographer Aynsley Floyd volunteered to take some holiday photos of clients with developmental disabilities at our Day Habilitation programs at Bradston Street. The pictures managed to perfectly capture the vibrancy and joy of these 10 men and women, and helped to spark an idea for a special project that is just now nearing its fruition.

This year, Bay Cove’s Annual Report is set to prominently feature a number of Floyd’s photographs of clients from across the agency’s many service areas. For months, Floyd has graciously donated her time, visiting programs like Kit Clark Senior Services, Center Club, New Hope and Early Intervention to take portraits that offer intimate, striking and intensely real images of the people Bay Cove serves.

“Working with Bay Cove has been a wonderful and gratifying experience,” says Floyd. “I’ve been hugely impressed, not only with the vast array of services Bay Cove provides, but by the enthusiasm, professionalism and the heart of the staff. Hearing stories from the people they serve about the importance Bay Cove has in their lives is very moving, and I’m proud to be able to contribute in my own way.”

Floyd, a Massachusetts native who returned to the Bay State in 2010 after several years as an in-demand photographer in Chicago, learned about Bay Cove through some longtime friends who are supporters of the agency. “I’d been looking for opportunities to put my photography skills to use in a helpful way, and through their introduction to Bay Cove, I’ve been fortunate enough to find just that opportunity.”

The Bay Cove Annual Report comes out this December. To see some of Aynsley Floyd’s non-Bay Cove work and learn more about her photography, visit www.aynsleyfloyd.com

(Above) Two of photographer Aynsley Floyd’s recent subjects: on the left, a member of Center Club, a clubhouse for individuals with mental illness; and, on the right, a young woman receiving services from the New Hope Transitional Support Services (TSS) program in Bay Cove’s Addiction Services division.
The leaves have started to turn, there’s a chill in the air and the days have grown shorter -- another summer has officially come and gone. The summer months tend to be just a little slower-paced for most of us, and hopefully you were able to take some time to get away and recharge the batteries. Many of us at Bay Cove did just that, but that doesn’t mean that the summer was an uneventful one: at Bay Cove, we serve thousands of men and women everyday, 24-7-365, and that doesn’t change because of the season.

In July, Bay Cove opened its newest program, the Transitions of Boston Clubhouse, a welcome addition to our Mental Health Services. The club, which serves approximately 40 men and women with psychiatric disabilities, provides its members with a full range of services -- from housing and educational supports, to access to technology and employment resources, to the simple daily social interaction with peers that we all desire. We expect to soon move Transitions into its own space in the Dorchester area, but for the moment, it’s sharing the building at 31 Bowker St. that houses Bay Cove’s longest-running program, Center Club.

There’s a nice symmetry to be found there: Bay Cove’s oldest program and its newest one, both occupying a common space. And, with both programs being MH clubhouses, they share quite a bit more than a building. Long ago, we here at the agency defined the goals of Center Club using the old analogy of the “three-legged stool,” in which the success of the clubhouse was based on three pillars of equal importance. We asked ourselves “What does everyone need for a happy life?” and came to the conclusion that the essentials were: a safe place to live, meaningful activities to fill one’s time, and, lastly, a community to be part of. Since 1959, Center Club has done its best to help its members access all of those things, and today, Transitions picks up the same torch and runs with it for its own members.

And, thinking about it, those three keys are really the basis of most everything Bay Cove does as an agency. Obviously, with more than 160 programs serving 20,000 individuals each year, we provide an extensive and diverse range of services agency-wide, but the roots of most of them can be found in that “three-legged-stool” our clubhouses are built upon.

We provide safe and comfortable permanent residences throughout the Metro Boston area for men and women with mental illness and developmental disabilities, all of which are appropriately and professionally staffed to provide varying levels of independent living to suit the needs of individual clients. We also provide temporary homes for individuals who are battling addictions and need a safe place to receive such treatment, such as our detoxification center, Andrew House; our transitional program, New Hope; and our short-term residence, Charlestown Recovery House.

We also have program sites that offer those “meaningful activities” that are so important. Whether it’s adult day health programs for the elderly at Kit Clark Senior Services, job training through Center House Enterprises, daily high school classes at Bay Cove Academy or the workshops, classes and activities that promote good physical and mental health at the Gill Wellness Center, Bay Cove offers our clients plenty of opportunities to put their time to meaningful use.

As for the final leg of the stool, those of us who’ve worked in this field know that for people with disabilities and mental illness, people who may have been institutionalized during their lives, and for elderly individuals who may be without families around them, isolation can be a very real problem. I’ve seen, over and over through the years, how Bay Cove programs have given the people we serve the chance to forge bonds with each other, as well as with the staff who work so hard on their behalf.

And, of course, the assistance that our supporters have provided Bay Cove with over the years has had a huge part in showing the men and women we serve that they don’t have to go it alone. To our longtime friends, I thank you for your continued generosity and commitment, and for anyone reading the Bay Cove News for the first time, I invite you to become a part of our community.
Senior Singers Celebrate a Harmonious First Year

When Minister Hershel Walker and his wife, Corrie, walked into Kit Clark Senior Services’ Codman Square location in September of 2012, they came with few specific plans, but one overriding desire: to be of service to the senior citizens in the Adult Day Health program.

“We had recently returned to the area after living in upstate New York,” recalls Minister Walker, who came back to reestablish a Church of Christ in Dorchester after the old church’s relocation to Mattapan, “and we just wanted to offer our services in whatever way they would be most useful. I didn’t know where they particularly needed help, but at some point, it was mentioned, ‘Well, we have some people here who like to sing....’”

From there, it was a quick progression to the formation of The Kit Clark Senior Singers, an a cappella choir group led by Minister Walker that usually features about a dozen men and women who gather each week to sing gospel and inspirational songs to an audience of their fellow seniors.

On Sept. 10, the group celebrated its first anniversary with a concert that saw a group of 10 singers delivering heartfelt and uplifting renditions of classic spiritual songs like “Love Lifted Me,” “How Great Thou Art,” “Were You There?” and “Oh, How I Love Jesus.”

Special guests in attendance at the concert included Arlene Lopes and Elizabeth Shore, both members of the Kit Clark House Council. Ms. Shore is the daughter of Katherine (Kit) Clark, the founder of Kit Clark Senior Services.

The performance also featured a solo by Mrs. Corrie Walker, who prefaced her rendition of “He Looked Beyond My Faults” by thanking the Senior Singers for being a source of comfort to her in the last year while she mourned the passing of her mother. “Being here with you has helped me through my own sorrow,” she said. “Thank you for giving me something I couldn’t get anywhere else.”

“It’s been a blessing for us,” said Minister Walker. “Some of our singers have problems with their memory, some don’t even speak English... but these songs seem to offer a sort of universal language. It’s a wonderful opportunity for us all to come together through music.”

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

Tuesday, Oct. 15 -- The 18th Annual George C. Cutler Memorial Golf Tournament, held at Myopia Hunt Golf Club in Hamilton. Presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance, this annual event hosted by Bay Cove is played in honor of the late George Cutler, a passionate advocate for mental health services. All proceeds benefit Bay Cove’s Center House programs. For more information, visit www.baycove.org/golf.

NOVEMBER

Wednesday, Nov. 6 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. -- The Provider’s Council 38th 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. Boston Marathon legend Dick Hoyt delivers this year’s keynote address. For more information, visit www.providers.org.

DECEMBER

Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 5 p.m. -- Bay Cove Annual Meeting. Bay Cove staff, board members and special guests gather for a review of 2013 and a look forward to the agency’s plans for 2014. Further details coming soon; 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:

- Books for our Family Support and Parent Support Resource Rooms
- An iPad for a person with developmental disabilities
- Furniture for a formerly homeless person’s apartment
- Business apparel for a job interview
- Arts and crafts supplies to be used in Occupational Therapy and Art Therapy programs

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

A Bay Cove staffer uses an iPad to help an individual at our Bradston Street Day Habilitation program enhance their job and life skills.

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.