Bay Cove to Develop New Multi-Service Behavioral Health Program

Bay Cove will soon have the exciting opportunity to be part of realizing a modern, innovative and inclusive vision of behavioral healthcare. The agency was recently informed that we’ve received—in partnership with Boston Medical Center and Boston Healthcare for the Homeless—a Federal grant administered through SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) to form a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC).

CCBHCs are non-profit organizations (or units of a local government behavioral health authority) set up to provide nine types of related services—with an emphasis on the provision of 24-hour crisis care, evidence-based practices, care coordination with local primary care and hospital partners, and integration with physical health care.

Essentially, the goal is to create a sort of “one-stop shop” for all needs related to health, behavioral health, and social determinants of health—a comprehensive array of services needed to create access, stabilize people in crisis, and provide the necessary treatment for those with the most serious, complex mental illnesses and substance use disorders. It’s the type of program that directly aligns with Bay Cove’s specific objectives of meeting each individual where they are, designing a program of care that is unique to each person, and helping people deal with multiple challenges in a well-structured, collaborative setting—all while making it as easy as possible for a person to seek and receive the help they need.

“We at Bay Cove are tremendously excited by the opportunity to develop—in collaboration with our partners—a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic,” says Carley Lubarsky, Vice President of Mental Health Services for Bay Cove. “This service is so vitally important because sadly, our current community-based behavioral health care system does not work effectively for many of Boston’s most vulnerable children, adults, and families—especially when their symptoms escalate and collide with the already overwhelming circumstances of living in poverty and the insidious impacts on social determinants of health.”

Carley adds: “Far too often, essential services—mental health, addiction treatment, primary care—are just too disconnected from one another. This separation of services places a heavy burden on clients and families, as they are left with the Herculean task of trying to piece together the right mix of services from a scattered array of sources. It is our mission to ensure that people can receive high-quality, comprehensive care 24/7 and have their needs met in one place.”
If you were to think about what you were doing a year ago at this time, you may remember mundane things like making the daily commute to your office or place of business. You might’ve been looking forward to a family trip you were planning to take during school vacation week. But the narrative quickly changed for all of us on March 10, when Governor Baker declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts, in response to COVID-19.

One year later, we have all found ourselves in a very different world, and the last 12 months have seen every one of us dealing with significant personal and professional challenges. It is my fervent hope that each of you—and those closest to you—have managed to find your way through the COVID-19 pandemic safe and well.

At Bay Cove, the members of our staff and the people we’re privileged to serve have dealt with the same struggles as everyone else—while simultaneously contending with the challenges of living with (or supporting someone living with) mental illness, developmental disabilities, substance use disorder and/or homelessness. These issues are hard enough to tackle at any time—during a pandemic, they have become exponentially more difficult.

However, for nearly a year, our incredibly dedicated staff have come to work each day (when others could work remotely) to continue providing the kind of compassionate care Bay Cove is committed to—indeed, during the earliest days of the pandemic, many staff simply lived at their programs for weeks at a time to keep themselves, their clients and their families safe. We’ve worn masks and gowns, washed hands thousands of times, maintained social distancing (while learning on the fly how to provide services remotely and what “Zoom” is), and taught those in our care the skills needed to keep themselves safe. Our staff’s efforts have been truly heroic, and we cannot thank them enough for all they do.

For nearly a year, the individuals we serve have demonstrated even greater lessons in strength and resilience than the ones they’ve amazed us with in the past.

And for nearly a year, our friends that make up The Bay Cove Community have been by our side, generously supporting our efforts at a time when such help is desperately needed. Your ongoing partnership in the work of serving thousands of people, one person at a time, has helped us continue to provide vital services to the people who need them the most.

It’s been a profoundly difficult year, but we have begun to catch glimpses of a light at the end of the tunnel with the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines. Bay Cove staff and those we serve began receiving the Pfizer vaccine in February (see p.7 for more about this), bringing cautious optimism and—above all—hope that the darkest days of the pandemic are behind us.

Bay Cove has always believed—because we see it every day—that by working in partnership, individuals can overcome great challenges. In 2020, we saw that on an even greater scale, as the Bay Cove Community came together to take on the most extraordinary challenges of our lives. By doing so, we have comforted the sick and mourned those we’ve lost; honored all those who have worked tirelessly to uphold Bay Cove’s mission; supported the individuals in our programs; and come through it all with new skills learned, new reservoirs of perseverance, resolve and gratitude, and an even stronger sense of unity and reliance on each other. I believe the future will be brighter for all of us, and for Bay Cove—thanks to our shared commitment to each other. As always, I thank you for being a part of it.
Bay Cove Staffers Receive Honors from Their Human Service Industry Peers

In the fall, a trio of outstanding Bay Cove employees were recognized by some of the state’s leading human services advocacy organizations for the exceptional work they’ve done at the agency.

On October 16, Lia Beltrame—Director of Clinical Operations for our Addiction Services division—was honored by the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) during their virtual Salute to Excellence event. Lia was chosen as the recipient of the 2020 Excellence in Innovative Practice Award for her creativity and commitment to clinical excellence for individuals with substance use disorder.

Then, on October 28, Olufunke Sowemimo—Senior Program Director of Day Services within our Long Term Support Services division—was presented with the 2020 Supervisor/Manager of the Year Award from the Massachusetts Providers’ Council during their weeklong convention & expo, Speak Up 4 Equity.

Finally, on December 10, Theresa DiPietro—Bay Cove’s Director of Housing Services—received a profound honor from one of the state’s leading advocacy organizations for individuals experiencing homelessness. At their 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting, the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) presented Theresa with its Cornerstone Award. In past years, the Cornerstone Award has generally been presented to an organization or foundation, rather than an individual, making Theresa’s selection even more impressive.

“I’m excited, humbled and grateful to be receiving this award,” said Theresa, of the honor. “It’s a recognition of the commitment and passion I have for working with homeless individuals, but I think it also says a lot about Bay Cove’s mission and who we are. I’m so honored to be part of that team.”

All of us at Bay Cove salute Lia, Olufunke and Theresa for these well-deserved recognitions, and offer our heartiest congratulations and gratitude for the extraordinary work they do every day on behalf of the people we serve!

Bay Cove proudly salutes Lia Beltrame (pictured, top, with Vice President of Addiction Services Lydie Ultimo-Prophil), Olufunke Sowemimo (pictured, middle), and Theresa DiPietro (pictured, bottom, filming an acceptance speech for the MHSA Virtual Annual Meeting) for their respective awards and for their exceptional work at the agency.
Serving Our Most Vulnerable Neighbors During the Pandemic

While Bay Cove adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by making many of our Mental Health, Child & Family and Long Term Support Services at least partially virtual, there are certain services our agency provides that cannot operate as anything other than in-person. This is true of our range of Homelessness Services—programs that offer day and overnight shelter and access to vital services to unsheltered individuals in the Boston and Cambridge area.

One of the biggest impacts the Coronavirus had on Bay Cove’s ability to deliver homelessness services was the obvious need to address social distancing. Any program that was to remain open had to address and reduce capacity. For our Emergency Services Center overnight shelter in Cambridge, this required establishing—in partnership with the City of Cambridge—the entirely new Cambridge Temporary Shelter (see next page) to allow us to maintain the same number of shelter beds, but spaced out over two locations.

At our Cardinal Medeiros Center day shelter, pre-pandemic, the program would see up to 100 people a day, and distribute 60-70 meals between breakfast and lunch. Post-pandemic, the shelter had to reduce capacity to 25 at any given time. "We did it by letting the flow of people happen organically, rather than setting time limits," says Brenda Cassidy, Bay Cove’s Director of Homelessness Services. “Rather than congregate mealtimes, we set up a meal service of pre-packaged meals that people can pick up to go. One benefit to this—beyond keeping capacity down—is that it’s allowed staff to reroute energy and time into directing people to services rather than serving meals.”

Guests at the Medeiros Center can still come and do their laundry, and also have access to a shower. "To be able to keep yourself as clean as possible during a pandemic is so key," Brenda adds.

Bay Cove’s Homelessness Services programs have been rigorous about observing all COVID-19 protocols. Guests coming into our shelter programs get temperature checks and questions about symptoms at the door. The shelter has an isolation area, should anyone present with a fever or concerning symptoms, and staff will then encourage them to go for a medical assessment. And right from the start of the pandemic, our staff have played an important role in educating our guests about the things that they, personally, can do to combat the virus. “Our staff were the ones who made sure people knew about the risks from COVID, and how to protect themselves and stay in compliance with masks and handwashing,” says Brenda.

The arrival in February of the vaccines was, of course, a game-changer, and our Boston Night Center and the Emergency Shelters were among the first Bay Cove programs to offer the Pfizer vaccine.

Bay Cove also operates a number of supportive housing programs for individuals who have moved from homelessness to housing placements. In Permanent Supportive Housing programs like North Star, Chelsea Community Center and Journey to Success, the goal is seamless transition from shelter/street living into housing that people can keep and maintain. Once a person receives placement, Bay Cove staff provide case management services through home visits. A similar system exists for the 38 men living in our special Senior Congregate Housing Program.

“Since the pandemic, we’ve had to change the way we do home visits,” says Brenda. “We still conduct them, based on how vulnerable people may be. If someone’s in crisis, we still see them at least once a week—that hasn’t changed. However, we’re now augmenting these in-person visits—wherever possible—with phone check-ins. We’ve distributed program phones to clients in housing. They can call their case managers, or we can call them.”

(cont. on following page)
The additional challenges of serving unsheltered individuals during the pandemic have been many, and Brenda admits that the already difficult work of protecting this vulnerable population has gotten significantly harder. However, she has been encouraged by the successes that the Homelessness Services division has seen over the past year.

“We've had a lot of success at the Night Center and at Medeiros in referring people to detox services and in getting people IDs—which helps them get ready for housing opportunities as they become available,” Brenda says. “Our referrals to outside resources have increased. People have been seeking support more, and finding it.”

“Our staff and clients are well-educated about preventing the spread of the virus, and I think that has shown itself in the small number of COVID cases we’ve seen amongst our guests,” she adds. “And our staff have continued to work hard and show their dedication day after day to keeping people housed and safe. Being able to keep people sheltered during this pandemic has been crucially important, and I think our biggest win.”

Established in April 2020 following the advent of the COVID-19 crisis, the Cambridge Temporary Shelter allowed Bay Cove/CASPAR to decongregate our Emergency Services Center—preserving our capacity to serve people experiencing homelessness while reducing overcrowding at the ESC shelter on Albany Street in Cambridge. The newly set-up temporary shelter was located for several months at the War Memorial Recreation Center at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

In December, the temporary shelter underwent a transition out of the War Memorial location to a new home at Cambridge’s Spaulding Hospital, located at 1575 Cambridge St. The new city-funded facility is known as the Transition Wellness Center (TWC), and features 58 beds on two floors. The TWC offers shared rooms (2 to 5 individuals per room with ample space for social distancing), and has been renovated to serve the needs of guests through the pandemic.

Bay Cove is thankful to all our partners in Cambridge—including the Mayor’s Office, Cambridge City Council, the City Manager and all at the Dept. of Human Services, Cambridge Police and Fire Departments, Cambridge Public Works Dept., the Cambridge Public Health Dept., and Spaulding Hospital—for their yeoman efforts in making this new resource for serving our unsheltered neighbors a reality.

“Bay Cove/CASPAR is the largest single provider of services in Cambridge for adults experiencing homelessness, but the Transition Wellness Center is just one piece of the broad community of support services available in the city,” says Nancy Mahan, Bay Cove’s Senior Vice President of Services. “We’re proud to be a member of that community of providers, and proud to be part of the effort to help our most vulnerable neighbors receive the services they need.”
A Strong Foundation of Support for Bay Cove in 2021

Bay Cove is tremendously grateful for all the generous support from corporate and philanthropic institutions that provide funding for our programs through charitable grants. The new and continuing grant funding we're receiving in 2021 from the following organizations will have an immense impact on the vital work we're able to do at Bay Cove and CASPAR in the upcoming fiscal year:

Bay Cove is thrilled to be continuing our partnership with The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, now in its third year of a five-year commitment, to transform the state's emergency behavioral health programs into a comprehensive, community-based behavioral health urgent care system. Through this work, our Cape Cod Emergency Services Program has forged a reputation as a trusted behavioral health urgent care (BHUC) provider. Our approach includes extensive outreach and education in the community, including police and municipal services; a follow-up program to help patients stay on track with treatment plans; and integration of peer support services.

We're currently in the second year of a three-year grant provided by The Sidney R. Baer Jr Foundation to fund Bay Cove's Recovery Education and Learning (REAL) Program, a first-of-its-kind program that supports individuals with lived experience who are interested in becoming Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) or Mental Health Providers. The REAL Program provides Pre-CPS & Pre-Employment Training, while also offering opportunities to put these new skills into practical use through paid internships. The majority of initial students in the REAL Program were people receiving services from Bay Cove, and once they graduated, they brought their new understanding of recovery back to the programs.

Our friends at Life Science Cares have awarded CASPAR a substantial grant to support our FirstStep Street Outreach Team. Additionally, their engagement model amplifies the grant by bringing in volunteers to do donation drives and the like. We're gratified to be continuing our enduring partnership with the organization, which successfully expanded into San Francisco and San Diego in 2020.

Our Child & Family Services division received grant support for 2021 from funders old and new. Bay Cove’s longest-standing corporate sponsor, Liberty Mutual Foundation, has continued its dedicated partnership with our agency, awarding us grant funding to support Bay Cove's Early Intervention program. Additionally, a brand new funder, The Cabot Family Foundation, is offering support to our Small Wonders Nursery School with a special project grant to replace the facility's HVAC system.

Finally, The Boston Evening Clinic Foundation has awarded us grant funding to expand capacity at our Bay Cove Treatment Center, as part of a larger initiative to increase access to substance use disorder treatment for people of color.

We are grateful to the aforementioned funders, as well as the following organizations that generously provided grant support to Bay Cove for 2021 which will support a wide range of programs and services at the agency: Cambridge Community Foundation, Cambridge Savings Foundation, Campbell and Hall Charity Fund, Charlesbank Homes, Edward Austin Trust, Franklin Square House, Lassor and Fanny Agoos Charity Fund, Linde Family Foundation, MIT Community Service, Perpetual Trust and Whole Foods.

The 2020 George C. Cutler Memorial Golf Tournament—held Tuesday, September 22, at Myopia Hunt Club—was a wonderful day, and a great success for the agency. The event raised more than $70,000 for Bay Cove’s Center House programs, and a fun, safe, socially-distanced time was had by all who attended.

Despite the complexities posed by hosting an in-person fundraiser in these challenging times, the weather was gorgeous, the golfers enjoyed their time out on the links, and we raised money to support our vital services. We couldn't have done it without the dedicated support of our Platinum Sponsors, Riemer & Braunstein LLP; our Gold Sponsors, USI Insurance Services; and all our other generous sponsors, golfers and committee members, whose efforts made Cutler the terrific day it was.
Join Bay Cove For Our Virtual Spring Fundraisers!

Bay Cove is happy to announce that this spring, two of our agency’s most popular fundraising events will be taking place in a whole new format!

Both the CASPAR “Strengthening Our Community” event and the Bay Cove Human Services Saving Lives Virtual Gala have been reimagined as online events that will allow members of our community to come together and celebrate the amazing people we serve, and the vitally important work that Bay Cove and CASPAR do every day to support them.

On Thursday, April 29, at 5 p.m., we’ll be hosting “Strengthening Our Community” to honor members of the Cambridge and Somerville community who have provided crucial support to CASPAR’s work with individuals dealing with the challenges of homelessness and/or substance use disorder. This year, we’ll be recognizing The City of Cambridge COVID Response Team and Pfizer KSQ with the Carl F. Barron Catalyst For Change Award, for their work as “COVID Heroes,” honoring their extraordinary work in response to the pandemic, and the individual commitment to CASPAR that so many of their employees have demonstrated through volunteer work, advocacy, and personal support.

Bay Cove’s annual Changing Lives Gala has always been in support of helping people overcome challenges and change their lives. But this year, our work has also been literally saving lives, and we wanted to reflect that in the name of the 2021 Bay Cove Human Services Saving Lives Virtual Gala.

The event will take place online on the evening of Thursday, May 6, beginning at 5 p.m., and will be hosted by Boston broadcasting legends Susan Wornick and Bob Lobel, feature a special conversation with Major League Baseball Hall-of-Fame pitcher Dennis Eckersley, and highlight some remarkable stories of Bay Cove clients’ perseverance during the pandemic.

Please visit www.baycovehumanservices.org/casparevent and www.baycovehumanservices.org/gala for more information, including how to register for the events, or become one of our sponsors! We can’t wait to see you there!

Vaccines Arrive at Bay Cove!

In February, Bay Cove received some real and palpable hope in the battle against the Coronavirus, as the agency began receiving the COVID-19 vaccine at on-site clinics. After a tough year, this was an extraordinary moment for our staff and those we serve, as members of our community were able to take opportunity of the newly available weapon in the fight against the virus.

Several Bay Cove direct care workers, as well as individuals we serve—like Edith (pictured)—were excited to share their stories of receiving the vaccine.

Asked about what the vaccination process was like, Edith replied: “I got the shot because I want to be healthy, and I want to be safe. The nurses were very nice, and I didn’t even feel it. After the shot, I sat in another room for 10 minutes, and they asked if I was okay, and I said ‘I’m fine.’”

As March began, the agency was proud that Edith—and nearly 2,000 members of the Bay Cove community—had already received both doses of the vaccine, with more folks signed up for this month.
The winter months are always hard for the men and women served by Bay Cove who are experiencing homelessness.

In December, our agency conducted a dedicated Winter Warmth Drive with the goal of providing holiday meals, winter gear and items of need to thousands of people that we serve. This campaign was supported by a holiday drive from the Bay Cove Young Professional Advocacy Board, and we were thrilled to raise nearly $20,000 to support individuals during the holiday season and beyond. We are deeply grateful to the many individuals and organizations who supported this year’s Winter Warmth Drive.

That same month, our CASPAR programs in Cambridge and Somerville were engaged in the third annual Give Homelessness the BOOT drive, which provided new boots, new coats, winter gear and other necessities for guests at CASPAR’s Shelters and people served by CASPAR’s FirstStep Street Outreach Team. This drive encouraged donors to sponsor items for a person we serve—or a group of people—to provide individuals with a pair of hearty winter boots, new winter coat, a pair of blue jeans and more. We’re proud and grateful to say that, with the generous support of individual and corporate donors, we were able to equip close to 275 people we serve with these vital winter needs.

Our profound thanks go out to the following CASPAR supporters who made this year’s boot drive a huge success through their donations and volunteer support: Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, The Bowdoin Group, Cadent Therapeutics, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Cambridge Community Foundation, Cambridge Crossing, Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC), EverQuote, Hereva Consultants, John Ice and Judy Fiola, Intellia Therapeutics, Kendall Square Business Association, LabCentral, Life Science Cares, MIT, Nizhoni Health, ShellTech, The Tearney Lab and T3 Advisors. And a special thank you to all the many individual donors who sponsored this year’s boot drive, for the tremendous difference they made to so many this holiday season.

Finally, February saw the third straight year of a true community effort in support of CASPAR, as the Warm Hearts for Warm Feet wool sock drive returned. This campaign—led by Cambridge Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Vice-Mayor Alanna Mallon, and the Cambridge Police Department—brought in over 2,000 pairs of warm socks (like those pictured, right) for our shelter programs to distribute to individuals in need. We thank our partners at the City of Cambridge; Cambridge retailers Hilton’s Tent City and Olympia Sports, who acted as drop-off locations for donations; and Alexandria Real Estate Equities, BioMed Realty, Cambridge Crossing, the Cambridge Police Department, CambridgeSide Galleria, Life Science Cares, Councillor Marc McGovern, MIT, Teddy’s Shoes, and all the other generous individuals and organizations who donated socks (or cash to purchase socks) to help keep those we serve warm and safe this winter!
A New Look For Bay Cove!

Change is a constant at Bay Cove, and 2021 figures to be no exception. One change you may have noticed—if you checked out our latest annual report, or have visited our website or our social media channels lately—is that the agency has gotten a new look, including our updated logo!

That new look will be carrying over to the Bay Cove News—keep your eyes peeled this summer for our new redesign, which we’re excited to share with everyone!

Reach Out with Bay Cove’s Hand-Crafted Greeting Cards!

Social distancing doesn’t have to mean losing touch with friends and loved ones. At a time when we’re all looking to stay connected with the people important to us that we’re not able to see face-to-face, you can send a message of love, caring or friendship with a beautiful greeting card, all while supporting Bay Cove and our programs!

These gorgeous cards feature original artwork and photography by artists Sissy Ahern, John Gardner and Harry Plourde—talented individuals who are all served by Bay Cove programs. Best of all, proceeds from all card sales benefit Bay Cove’s vitally important programs and services for individuals facing the challenges associated with mental illness, developmental disabilities, homelessness and/or substance use disorder.

The cards cost $15.99 (plus shipping) for a 6-pack, and are available as a set of 6 of any image, or a combo pack offering a variety of different pieces—all packaged with 100% recycled materials. These special greeting cards are available for order NOW at www.plymouthcards.com/collections/bay-cove-human-services, and new designs for spring are coming soon!

So, why not reach out and send a note of support to someone you love—while also showing your support for the work we do at Bay Cove and the people we serve?

THE BAY COVE MISSION:

Bay Cove Human Services partners with people to overcome challenges and realize personal potential.

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