



# The Lamp

SUMMER 2009

T H E C H A R L E S R I V E R C E N T E R

*Enhancing lives of children and adults with developmental disabilities since 1956.*

## *Building a Dream 2009... our most successful Gala yet!*

*by Maria McTernan*



The giving spirit of The Charles River Center community shone brightly the night of May 21st when Charles River hosted its 14th annual *Building a Dream* benefit gala.

Held at the elegant Boston Park Plaza Hotel, this much loved tradition and signature fundraising event provided families, board members, community supporters and friends the opportunity to celebrate Charles River's successes, recognize some special individuals and help raise critical funds during these challenging economic times.

This year, *The Sam Gerson Humanitarian Award*, named in memory of former Chairman of the Board of Filene's Basement and longtime

friend of Charles River, was presented to Bud and Eileen Roche and the Roche Bros. family for their generosity and passionate commitment to all in our community. Their early and ongoing practice of hiring people with disabilities has demonstrated that each and every employee can successfully work and add value to business, while their leadership gifts have enabled Charles River to build quality programs and accommodate many more families in need.

We were also pleased to recognize our program participant, Freia David. Living in a home managed by The Charles River Center, Freia has worked at McDonald's for the past 22 years. Freia was presented with the *Lifetime Achievement Award* in honor of her proven work ethic and employment success.

*Building a Dream 2009* was fortunate to have longtime friend and emcee Bob Lobel return to conduct the live auction along with the assistance of our own John Feeley, a former director on Charles River's Board. With their usual flair and skill, Bob and

John entertained the audience and sent winning bidders home with some wonderful prizes including a trip to Paris, six Red Sox vs. Yankees tickets, golf packages, sports memorabilia and more.

*(continued on page 4)*

## **The Charles River Center Receives High Level Certifications**

*by Anne-Marie Bajwa*

This year began with a burst of activity at The Charles River Center. Our programs, services and administration underwent two independent accreditation and certification processes in three months. In January, our therapeutic day program was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Then in March, our residential and employment services were reviewed by Department of Developmental Services' (formerly the Department of Mental

*(continued on page 2)*



**The Ellie Bloom Olympics Return**  
 Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009  
 DeFazio Field  
 Needham

*For more information, please contact Hilary Ryan at 781-972-1007 or hryan@charlesrivercenter.org*

# Needham Exchange Club Scores Hole in One for Merritt Building

by Maria McTernan

Thanks to the Needham Exchange Club, their 22nd annual Charity Golf Tournament to benefit The Charles River Center was a great success. Held at the championship golf course, Blue Hill Country Club on June 29th, the event raised more than \$25,000!

This year's tournament funds will help pay for the capital expansion of our Therapeutic Day Services wing in the Paul Merritt Building. This 1700 sq.-foot addition will enable us to accommodate about 35 more individuals with developmental



*"...members of the Exchange Club have helped shape, guide and ensure the success of all Charles River programs and services."*

disabilities transitioning to adult services.

The Charles River Center and the Needham Exchange Club formed a partnership in 1956 that continues to this day. Through volunteerism, fund-raising efforts and representation on the Charles River Board of Directors, members of the Exchange Club have

helped shape, guide and ensure the success of all Charles River programs and services.

Thank you to all sponsors, contributors, players and volunteers who generously supported this great event.

*(continued on pages 6 and 7)*

## High Level Certifications

*(continued from page 1)*

Retardation's) Office of Quality Enhancement (Q.U.E.S.T.).

It is with great pride that I can report that in both instances, we received the highest level of certification bestowed by each survey team!

CARF is an independent, international accrediting body whose purpose is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of human service agencies such as ours. Its standards are rigorous to ensure that services reviewed are among the best available. The Charles River Center received a three-year accreditation with exemplary commendation in two specific areas. CARF praised Charles River for demonstrating outstanding performance in our personnel performance system and in our Accessibility and Barrier Review system. Put simply, the surveyors found our two systems to be among the best on a national scale. This is especially rewarding as we have worked diligently to integrate these self-analysis processes into our programs and services in a manner that not only meets our own

quality improvement criteria but also exceeds CARF standards.

The Q.U.E.S.T. review of our residential and employment services resulted in a two-year certification with distinction! This is the highest level of certification possible for agencies receiving Department of Developmental Services funding for programs and services. The surveyors reported, "Across all settings, the organization continued to actualize on its commitment toward valuing the individuals it serves. The agency ensured that people's personal well-being remained a priority."

These awards are essentially two independent testimonies that speak to the quality of work produced daily by hundreds of Charles River staff. They are direct reflections of our dedicated, passionate, professional staff, who work tirelessly to improve the lives of the people whom we have the privilege to serve on a daily basis.

Congratulations to The Charles River Center Staff!



*John Grugan,  
President*

As many of you know, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts faced an unprecedented decline in revenue during the past fiscal year, with FY 2010 projected to see revenue decline even further. As a result, the Governor proposed a budget that would have cut an enormous amount from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The House of Representatives and the Senate also proposed cuts that were less severe due to the inclusion of a new 1.25% addition to the sales tax.

After much wrangling between the Governor, House and Senate, and effective advocacy by Arc Massachusetts, we have a new budget for FY 2010 that while containing significant cuts is much improved over several earlier versions. We are now negotiating with various Area Office Staff of DDS to determine how these cuts will affect Charles River and the people we support.

The cuts will focus on three major service areas: Day and Employment Services (primarily at the Dwight Center); Day Habilitation Wraparound Supplemental funds that support our most disabled people; and Family Support Services funding, such as stipends for respite care, DESE/DDS grants, etc. The state budget also failed to provide funds for modest increases in direct care staff wages despite the fact that most state employees will receive a raise this year.

The cuts to Day and Employment Services will be achieved by cutting services primarily to individuals who live at home and by eliminating any vacancies that currently exist. While discussions have not been completed, Charles River will lose funding for approximately 12 individuals funded by DDS and 9 individuals funded by the Mass Rehabilitation Commission's EEP Program.

Fortunately, we anticipated many of these cuts and have been working hard to find ways to mitigate them to avoid

sending anyone home. First, in collaboration with DDS, we eliminated funding for several day program slots that were temporarily vacant. Second, two individuals who hold competitive jobs will be taken off our employment contracts and supported on an intermittent basis on an hourly rate agreement. This will allow us to continue to provide support but at a much less intensive frequency. Third, several individuals will be considered for transfer to our Medicaid funded Day Habilitation Program in the Merritt Building. In addition to these measures, anticipating significant budget cuts and recognizing the growing number of individuals served at the Dwight Building whose needs are changing, Charles River will be opening one of the first "Adult Day Health" programs focusing on individuals with developmental disabilities in our area. This program is a Medicaid funded service open to any individual eligible for Medicaid. It will be located in the Merritt Building but could move to a different site if its growth makes a new site feasible. Finally, many of the individuals funded by the EEP program located in the Dwight Building will have funding restored by DDS utilizing funds cut from Day Habilitation Wraparound Support funding.

There may remain some individuals with no state funding. The Charles River Center is committed to trying to continue to serve them for as long as we can.

The cuts to Wraparound Supplemental Supports for needy individuals in our Day Habilitation Program will add to the difficulties we encounter in serving individuals who need more intensive staffing than the 1 to 4 staffing ratio maximum allowed in the Day Habilitation Program. At this point we were able to negotiate some wraparound funds to continue serving our most needy individuals in the Merritt Building Day Habilitation Program. We will tighten our belts and closely monitor how these cuts affect our operations in the coming year.

The cuts to Family Support remain less clear at this point. Families should be prepared to see their Family Support stipends reduced significantly. Many of the programs we offer in Family Support, such as our after school, school vacation and weekend programs, are paid by families utilizing their stipends. Programs may be adversely affected as families cut back on the services they utilize. As group size diminishes, the

economies of scale work against us. We hope to continue providing these services and will meet with families in focus groups to help us plan going forward.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the staff of Arc Massachusetts. This year the Arc and the Association for Developmental Disabilities Providers worked in a very effective collaboration. While we will suffer some cuts, they pale in comparison to some of the budget proposals that came out of Beacon Hill. Leo Sarkissian and Gary Blumenthal did a great job getting access to and educating the legislative leadership as to how devastating some of the budget proposals would have been to people with developmental disabilities.

I would like to thank all those families and staff who actively participated in a variety of legislative advocacy efforts during the entire budget process. Thank you all for your resilience as it seemed that as soon as we had overcome one threat to our budget, another branch of government came up with another. This unfortunately is how the process works. I hope we have learned from this year's battle as I think we may need to redouble our efforts next fiscal year.

I hope that more families join our advocacy efforts as far too many families stood on the sidelines while other worked so hard. We will need all the voices we can muster to prevent the ongoing erosion of the community service system. Families need to join the Arc, pay our modest dues and participate in all advocacy efforts. While we absorbed most of the cuts this year, further cuts to our budget will undoubtedly result in scaling back services and laying off staff.

We will also ask families to support our fundraising efforts each year as these funds will become even more important to us as state revenue declines. We have a great organization that needs the support of all the people it supports. Once again, a few people provide a lot of fundraising support while others do very little. Please join with us to ensure that The Charles River Center and The Arc of Charles River remain vibrant resources for so many needy individuals.

John Grugan



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## Freia David Doubly Honored by Charles River and McDonald's

by Joan Johnson

This has been a special year for Charles River Community Living Resident, Freia David. After receiving the *Lifetime Achievement Award at Building a Dream 2009*, Freia was honored in July by her long time employer, McDonald's in Needham.

Recognized for her perseverance, hard work and admirable spirit, Freia demonstrates what one can accomplish, given the opportunity. Just ask her boss at McDonald's where Freia has worked since 1987. "Freia is a great employee. She works hard and is so good natured," says manager Charles Broughton. "She's happy to be here and we love to have her here," he adds.

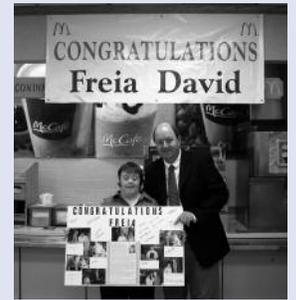
Not only has Freia proven her dependability over her long work history, she delivers on the job every day as she works McDonald's busiest hours from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

If you stop in for lunch, you will find Freia at the fry station, keeping hot, fresh fries coming. Later she helps clean up and interacts with the customers, many of whom know her by name. Freia's co-workers love working with her and have bestowed her with their own affectionate nickname, "Freita."

Freia has participated in Charles River's Community Living Program for the past four years, but her relationship with Charles River began much earlier in 1966, when at the age of three, she attended nursery school here. Through the years, she has participated in several Family Support Program activities including the Ellie Bloom Olympics. Freia also proudly represented her community at the Special Olympics for many years. Today, Freia is a resident at Charles River's West Street home in Needham where she enjoys socializing with her housemates and preparing breakfast every morning.

Growing up surrounded by books, Freia developed an early interest in reading and has become a frequent library visitor. She especially enjoys books about nature and animals. Freia also enjoys swimming, exercising at the YMCA, watching old TV sitcoms like *The Andy Griffith Show*, and, of course, working at McDonald's.

"Freia loves her job," notes Anneliese David, Freia's mother. "She talks about it all the time. She's just happy to go to work every day."



*A big thank you* to our Sponsors who helped underwrite the costs of the event, all who donated items for our auctions, advertisers in our program booklet, individuals who purchased tickets and raffles, and to the many volunteers and committee members who helped make this a special evening. Giving spirits were indeed shining brightly – together we raised \$200,000, making this our most successful gala yet!

Thank you to all of our *Building a Dream 2009* Sponsors. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

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# THE NEEDHAM EXCHANGE



## CRES Salutes Loyal Customer, Jack Smillie, Inc.

by Frank Stockwell

On the day of the Needham Exchange Club's golf tournament to benefit Charles River, among the items golfers received in their goody bags was a shrink wrapped baked bean pot filled with candy coated peanuts, better known as Boston Baked Bean candies. Produced by Jack Smillie, Inc., a candy and fancy food wholesale distribution company in Woburn, the bean pots are the product of a long-term relationship between Charles River Employment Services and Jack Smillie.

Family owned and operated, Jack Smillie has been in business for over 76 years. They've faced many challenges through the years and in the early 90's one such challenge brought them to Charles River. They needed some product packaging done and were pleased to learn that CRES had the expertise and facility to accommodate them.

Within a few days, we worked out the pricing and turnaround times and set to work on our first orders. Our individuals assembled and packaged different types of candies into clear acetate boxes, labeled them, and put gold ribbon around the

boxes. Jack Smillie was delighted with the quality of our work and our new relationship was off to a great start.

After much trial and error, filling and packaging the Boston Baked Beans candies became the defining job of our long-term relationship. It was very difficult to meet their quality standards for a smooth shrink wrap around the round pot. It took us about six months of experimenting with different shrink films before we found the right product. We finally mastered the process, and since 1994, individuals at CRES have been packing and shrink wrapping the bean pots which Jack Smillie sells to gift shops up and down the east coast from Maine to the Chesapeake Bay, including Boston at Logan International Airport.

We are grateful to Jack Smillie, Inc. for providing individuals at CRES the satisfaction of a job well done for over fifteen years. We also wish to thank Jack Smillie for donating the bean pots and candy for Needham Exchange Club's golf tournament. We look forward to continuing our long and fruitful relationship for many years to come.

# CLUB GOLF TOURNAMENT



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Joan Johnson, *The Lamp Editor*  
Howe Associates, *Graphic Design*

# Cheers!

*for Temple Beth Shalom Brotherhood!*

Many thanks to members of the Temple Beth Shalom Brotherhood for hosting an ice cream sundae social for residents in our Community Living Program. About 60 individuals were treated to ice cream and toppings while socializing with friends and listening to music. Special thanks to Arthur Bloom for organizing this event which provided a bright ending to one of the cloudiest Junes on record!



Will your company support a  
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*Please consider a gift to The Charles River Center*

Our UW code number is 358488

***Thank you!***



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