



The Boston Home

Notes from Home | 2022

Spasticity Clinics Offer Comfort, Easier Care

Often defined as involuntary stiffness or contraction of the muscles, spasticity is a common problem for people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Dr. Stephen Koelbel of South Shore Psychiatry and Spasticity Management LLC estimates that as many as 50 to 70% of people with MS experience spasticity problematic enough to interfere with daily life. Dr. Koelbel has been providing spasticity management treatment to residents of The Boston Home (TBH) for 22 years. In the beginning, Dr. Koelbel treated residents at his clinic. However, after a few years, Koelbel and TBH leadership determined that an on-site spasticity clinic would be both time and cost saving. Since 2004, Dr. Koelbel has visited TBH twice a month, providing on-site treatments such as botulinum toxin injections which can “turn down the volume” on nerve signals that cause muscles to go into spasm, intrathecal baclofen which is a type of muscle relaxer that works at the spinal cord to reduce abnormal signals that cause spasticity, and phenol nerve blocks which work by selectively denervating a nerve branch to a particular muscle that is spastic. Currently, Dr. Koelbel treats about 40 of TBH’s 96 residents. Residents are referred to the spasticity clinic through TBH’s Rehabilitation department, who often are first alerted to the resident’s need for treatment by a nurse or nursing assistant who notices that the resident is struggling during daily care. Spasticity management treatment can make a significant difference in a person’s quality of life, notes Dr. Koelbel: *“Treatment can improve a resident’s comfort and positioning in his or her wheelchair and bed, which, in turn, can also reduce the risk of pressure sores. Reducing spasticity can also make it easier for caregivers to provide care such as bathing and dressing, which then means that they are able to do more for residents in the time that they have with them.”* While Koelbel has specialized in spasticity management since 1999, he observes that the treatment is not widely available. It is offered at only a few Boston area locations, including Koelbel’s practice in Braintree and TBH’s dedicated on-site clinic. TBH is grateful to Dr. Koelbel for his ongoing care of residents.



Dr. Stephen Koelbel consults with TBH resident Marc L.



Students from the Leahy-Holloran Community Center learn about 3D printing custom wheelchair joysticks.

STEM Students Take On Assistive Tech at TBH

The Boston Home is proud to partner with Dorchester’s Leahy-Holloran Community Center to offer a hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) program for local youth. Students have been visiting the Wheelchair Enhancement Center (WEC) twice a week after school, where they work with Assistive Technologist Corinne Curran to learn how assistive technology can help people with disabilities live more independently. A generous grant from the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association provided laptop computers, an oversized classroom monitor, 3D printers, and supplies for the program. Once students have mastered the basics of 3D printing, they will begin working with residents of The Boston Home to design customized solutions to challenges that the participating residents are facing. *“I am so grateful to all the partners supporting this program,”* says Curran. *“Getting young students involved has brought a whole new energy to the WEC.”*

The Boston Home Is...

*From Christine Reilly
CEO, The Boston Home*



Check out our video library:



*Dr. Cassandra Munger of the Harvard
TH Chan School of Public Health
presents at The Boston Home*

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel



*Board Member Karen Quigley and CFO
Fran Murphy enjoy The Boston Home's
annual resident Art Show.*

An Ever-Growing Family

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, I am mindful of many blessings—foremost among them, the ever-growing community that is The Boston Home family. This year, several new residents have joined that family, each bringing their own unique life experiences and perspectives, enriching our conversations, opening our minds to new ideas, and allowing new friendships to grow. Meanwhile, the loving support of past residents' friends and families keeps memories of those we have lost close and always in our hearts. We are so very grateful and proud of the continued commitment of family members like Meg and Patrick Barry, who honor Meg's late sister Kristen through the Kristen Vea Coffman Scholarship Award for The Boston Home staff. It is gratifying to feel the warm support of longstanding friends as we embrace the new and continue to build a bright future for The Boston Home.

Investing in Our Home

The Boston Home's interior is brighter and more beautiful than ever, thanks to recent renovations. With support from the Yawkey Foundation, we recently updated flooring throughout the facility, and we have also replaced outdated wall coverings with fresh new paint colors. The renovations have already made a tremendous difference in the feel of our living and working environment, and there is so much more in store. Over the coming year, we plan to construct a four-season solarium adjacent to the Activities room, with support from the Rita A. DiMento Foundation, and develop a new accessible garden at the front of campus. We can hardly wait to share these exciting developments with you!

Grateful for Your Support

We hope you share our excitement about The Boston Home's growing family and the wonderful improvements to our facility and campus, because they would not be possible without you. Your support helps to ensure that when an individual reaches out in need of highly specialized 24 hour care, our staff have the resources they need to welcome that new resident to our community, and to provide compassionate care, customized technological support, and life-enhancing programs in a warm, supportive, and enriching environment.

With warmest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Reilly". The signature is fluid and cursive.

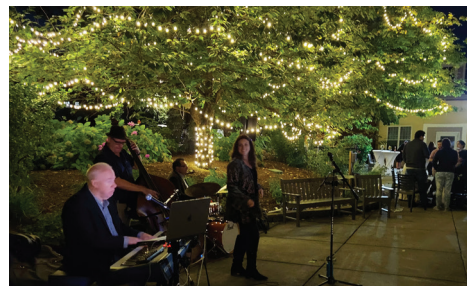
Christine Reilly
Chief Executive Officer



Joey D. dances along to steel drummer Justin Petty.

Music in the Garden

Music can lift our spirits, recall special memories, and bring us together to celebrate. The Boston Home garden was filled with music throughout the summer, thanks to talented performers like Justin Petty, the Jeff Williams Jazz Ensemble, and TBH family member John Robie.



Jeff Williams Ensemble performs at the Art Show.



Spotlight

JEFFREY MORRISSEY

ACTIVITIES ASSISTANT & CHORUS LEADER

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH THE BOSTON HOME (TBH)? I came to TBH quite by chance. When my mom passed in 2014, I found I now had too much time on my hands. As a retired nurse, I knew I wanted to be in a healthcare setting, so I started my search at the Carney Hospital. Lucky for me, they don't accept volunteers. On my walk home, I noticed TBH and stopped in to inquire. I had the pleasure of meeting Rev. Johnson, who told me how much he loved his work with TBH. When I met with Kerry and her staff, I knew I wanted to be a part of this community.



Jeff enjoys a Barn Babies Activities visit with Bob M.

I volunteered for 4 years, and when a position opened up, I applied. Now I get paid to do what I loved doing for free! Retirement is good.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS AN ACTIVITIES ASSISTANT? Activities is very busy. We hit the ground running with coffee orders. I'm not exactly a barista, but I try my best. Later in the morning, I like reading the paper with the residents, sharing opinions, making jokes, all while keeping them informed of current events. The afternoon groups vary from day to day and could include Broadway music, trivia, word games, or short stories, always with the goal of engaging and entertaining the residents.

TELL ME ABOUT TBH CHORUS: The healing power of music is well documented. It's a powerful, restorative force. Music can transport us to another place and time. It can strengthen and encourage us, comfort and console us, move us to tears of joy or sorrow. It's been an important part of my life since I can remember. The chorus has evolved and I hope we continue to grow. Initially we got together in early December to sing holiday songs, but we've expanded our repertoire and now we meet year-round. I'd encourage everyone to come check us out. We could benefit from a few more male voices, too.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT AT TBH? I've always been a home-body and COVID has cinched the deal. I sing with the Boston Gay Men's Chorus, which requires weekly rehearsals, as well as memorizing all of the music. I also enjoy cooking, especially soups and stews in the cold weather, and I'm starting to get back into my yoga practice. Otherwise my free time is spent with my cat, Jasper, Netflix, and Kindle Unlimited.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR WORK? The thing I love most about working at TBH is seeing how the residents support, encourage and advocate for one another. They are warm and welcoming to new residents and staff. It's a rare but wonderful thing to see in action. I leave work happier than when I arrive.

Capital Campaign Impact Update

Home Improvement: Exciting Projects Are Taking Shape at TBH

Interior Renovations and New Indoor/Outdoor Spaces

If you have visited The Boston Home in recent weeks, you will surely have noticed many projects underway! Funds raised through the Compassionate Care Capital Campaign, completed in 2021, are having a big impact. A generous grant from the Yawkey Foundation has made it possible to replace worn flooring throughout the building. Following flooring installation, all corridors and common areas are being painted with fresh, new paint colors. Thank you to our friends at Elm Park Flooring and Teehill Painting for carrying out this extensive project with exceptional care and consideration to minimize inconvenience to residents.

Another exciting project is beginning to take shape this month as we break ground on a beautiful new accessible garden at the front of The Boston Home campus. Designed by Ryan Associates Landscape Architecture and Planning, the new garden will offer winding paths, surrounded by a stunning selection of trees, flowering shrubs, and perennials. The new garden has been thoughtfully designed to include spaces where residents can enjoy solitude or a shady retreat for quiet conversations with family or friends. Just as exciting as the new garden is the prospect of enjoying nature year-round, a long-held wish which will become a wonderful reality for residents in the coming year through the generosity of the Rita A. DiMento Foundation whose grant will make possible a four-season solarium, currently under construction.



Before & After: New flooring and paint gives the entire facility a much-needed update.



Design scheme for The Boston Home's new garden at the front of campus.



Solarium to be installed in the coming year.



Dr. Robert Zivadinov, Director of BNAC, presents MRI data from the CASA-MS study.

CASA-MS Research Update

CASA-MS is a groundbreaking research study driven by the partnership between The Boston Home Institute (TBHI) and the University at Buffalo Neuroimaging Analysis Center (BNAC) toward a shared goal of better understanding why 5-10% of people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) become significantly disabled while others do not. The study, a *Comprehensive Assessment of Severely Affected Multiple Sclerosis*, seeks to address the glaring lack of research currently available to document the experiences of people living with the most disabling forms of MS. Outcomes from the study could help clinicians identify those at high risk, and inform future treatments. CASA-MS researchers have matched residents of The Boston Home (TBH) with individuals living with less severe forms of MS according to study criteria such as age, gender, and date of diagnosis. Since the study launched in 2019, all participants have completed an extensive series of cognitive and motor function tests, as well as interviews and MRI analysis. With Phase 1 of the study complete, clinicians from both TBHI and BNAC are beginning to share their findings with the broader MS community. Several abstracts for initial analysis comparing physical, cognitive, and radiological data between TBH and Buffalo-based participants from Phase 1 of the study are currently being submitted to the American Committee for Research and Treatment in Multiple Sclerosis (ACTRIMS) for their February 2023 annual forum and to the Consortium of MS Centers (CMSC) for their May 2023 annual meeting.

The Auditory Test of Processing Speed (ATOPS) is a new, brief, repeatable neuropsychological assessment developed for CASA-MS by Dr. Ralph Benedict and colleagues at the University at Buffalo. Zachary Weinstock, a member of the BNAC research team, soon plans to publish a paper based on the data collected during Phase 1 of the study that will make this evaluation tool available to the neurology community. In the future, Alex Burnham, Director of The Boston Home Institute and Rehabilitation Services, also plans to begin integrating ATOPS into TBH's admission assessment process for new residents in order to acquire baseline neurocognitive data. Recently, BNAC Director Dr. Robert Zivadinov, BNAC Advisory Council Chair Larry Montani, and Pamela Jacobs, wife of BNAC's late founder and pioneering MS researcher Dr. Larry Jacobs, visited TBH and discussed plans for Phase 2 of CASA-MS, anticipated to begin in 2023-24 with participation from 20 to 30 TBH residents.

Participants in the study have expressed excitement in knowing that their experiences could contribute to better outcomes for people diagnosed with MS in the future. To learn more, visit www.bnac.net/casa-ms.

Kristen Vea Coffman Scholarship Recipients



Marie Joseph, Evening Coordinator, and Khai Vo, RN

Kristen Vea Coffman was a resident of The Boston Home (TBH) for 24 years, from 1986 until she passed in 2011 at the age of 66. During her stay at TBH, Kristen's family established a scholarship fund for staff members who wanted to forward their education. This year, with heartfelt appreciation for TBH staff as well as a deep love for and commitment to Kristen, her sister Meg, her brother-in-law Patrick Barry, and their daughter Liz have re-instituted the scholarship fund in her memory. Meg says that the scholarship fund is a special way to stay connected to TBH: *"The staff are so loving and their genuine compassion shines through and touches families as well as residents. We wanted a way to say thank you, and it's nice to know that there is a ripple effect. That those who benefit from the scholarship will go on to help others."* Meg and Patrick Barry, along with TBH community, offer their warm congratulations to Khai Vo, RN and Marie Joseph, Evening Coordinator, who have been awarded this year's Kristen Vea Coffman scholarships.

Khai has seen first-hand how vulnerable residents are to pressure ulcers and other types of wounds. The Kristen Vea Coffman Scholarship will allow Khai to participate in a wound care training course that will prepare him for the certification exam to better serve The Boston Home residents and help advance his career.

A mother to four sons, three of whom have autism, Marie feels her work has reaffirmed her passion for taking care of people, which is why she is currently pursuing her nursing degree. Marie will use the Kristen Vea Coffman Scholarship to pursue her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Laboure College.

Resident Spotlight



Mindy

Writing Her Own Story at The Boston Home

WHEN DID YOU MOVE TO THE BOSTON HOME?

I moved here in 2007. It was becoming difficult for my mother to care for me at home, so she and my brother asked me if I would like to move to The Boston Home with my friend Dickie. I knew him from a program that we used to attend together. I said yes because I knew it was the best decision for me and my family, even though it was very hard to move away from my mom and I cried a lot at first. Later my friend Ginger moved here, who also attended the program with me and Dickie. They are like a brother and sister to me, and watch over me so much.

HOW DO YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY?

I talk to my mom every single day. I also talk to my brother. Even when he is at work, I can always call. I am an aunt to my brother's children, and also a great aunt because one of my brother's children has two little children. I love being an aunt. I go to my mom's house every Friday. I always have to tell my mom to put her feet up and rest, because she never rests.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT LIVING AT THE BOSTON HOME?

It's fun here. I like music, so I like to go to Activities whenever there is music.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU LIKE TO DO?

I love to go to my day program. I want to become a peer counselor, and help people by talking with them. We also have parties there sometimes, and they serve some of my favorite foods, like macaroni & cheese and ham sandwiches.

TELL ME ABOUT THE BOOK YOU ARE WRITING?

I have been working on it for a long time with Cindy Walsh*. It is about my life, my family, and The Boston Home. There is a part about a penny candy store that I went to where there were all kinds of chocolate. I love chocolate, even though I cannot eat too much of it. Cindy is going to help me publish the book, probably through Barnes & Noble. It is almost ready. It is called *Love, Mindy*.

**Former Director of Clinical Services at The Boston Home.*

The Boston Home for the Win!



Resident John D. plays bocce with Jim Farrow of the Boston Self Help Center.

Adaptive Sports: a Hit with Residents

The Boston Home community has enjoyed some playful partnerships this year through which we have been able to introduce new adaptive sports and recreation activities. In the spring, the Boston Self Help Center joined forces with students from Northeastern University to offer a series of Adaptive Sports and Recreation Demos, with The Boston Home as a host site. Our residents and B.Fit! program participants had so much fun that we scheduled a second event for the fall in collaboration with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) for their annual employee service day. Grant funding from BCBSMA and the City of Boston allowed The Boston Home to purchase adaptive bowling and bocce ramps, target games, and adaptive online gaming equipment so that residents can enjoy these activities throughout the year.



Volunteer Pete Cahill and Assistive Technologist Corinne Curran introduce resident Richard G. to adaptive online gaming.

The Rich History and Impact of the Boston Foundation

Established by father and son Charles E. and Charles M. Rogerson in 1915, the Boston Foundation makes grants in response to community needs, dating back to assisting Bostonians through two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the polio epidemic. The Boston Foundation continues to bring people and resources together to solve Boston's big problems. It also serves as a think tank and advocacy organization, commissioning research into the most critical issues of our time, promoting civic engagement and helping shape public policy that advances opportunity for everyone in Greater Boston. The Foundation works in close partnership with its donors, with more than 1,100 separate charitable funds established for the general benefit of the community or for special purposes.

This past July, the Boston Foundation awarded The Boston Home with a \$75,000 general operating grant from the endowed Edith M. Ashley Fund. These funds are earmarked for exemplary Open Door applicants or grantees whose work aligns with the Foundation's field of interest funds which includes supporting older adults and people with disabilities. Donors establish these funds to identify causes they care strongly about and wish to support over time—sometimes beyond their own lifespan.

Edith M. Ashley was an elegant recluse who lived at the Copley Plaza Hotel her entire adult life. When Edith died in 1960, she left her books to the Boston Athenaeum, one of the oldest independent libraries; her clothes to Morgan Memorial, now known as Goodwill; and her estate of \$3M to the Boston Foundation. Born in 1872 of an old New England family, Edith independently turned a small inheritance into a significant fortune through shrewd investment. Today, the Edith M. Ashley Fund is a major resource for Bostonians with disabilities.



TBH resident Tracy J. and family enjoy a visit in the garden.

A civic leader and one of the nation's top philanthropic organizations, the Boston Foundation has not only acknowledged the health inequities of adults with disabilities in Massachusetts, it has responded to it. After back-to-back years of supporting The Boston Home's B. Fit! day program and Wheelchair Enhancement Center through its Open Door grant program, The Boston Home was thrilled to receive the unanticipated grant from the Edith M. Ashley Fund. General operating support is vital to the operation of The Boston Home, allowing the organization to respond to the rising costs of inflation and the ongoing challenges of COVID. The Boston Foundation's focus on equity aligns with The Boston Home's commitment to addressing health inequities of adults with disabilities in Massachusetts. The President & Chief Executive Officer of the Boston Foundation M. Lee Pelton is dedicated to dismantling systemic, structural and commonplace disparities. Inspired by the pandemic, the economic devastation it caused, and the very public exposure of the racial disparities that have long plagued the country, the Boston Foundation has launched

a new strategic vision titled "Our New Pathway."

Dr. Pelton emphasizes, "We must be bold, courageous, and even daring, in leveraging our remarkable history and continuing to be deeply rooted in and connected to human experience and endeavor." As the Greater Boston community awaits the unveiling of the Boston Foundation's new strategic vision, The Boston Home looks forward to witnessing—and participating in—the impactful, life-changing work as the Foundation maintains its longstanding commitment to organizations that support and empower people with disabilities.



Fair Foods Partnership Delivers Groceries and Smiles to The Boston Home Staff

With grocery prices rising to all-time highs over the past year, CEO Christine Reilly began looking for ways to help The Boston Home staff stretch their bi-weekly paychecks. She found the perfect partner organization in Fair Foods, a local nonprofit whose mission is to reduce food waste and make a healthy diet of fresh fruits and vegetables affordable. The Boston Home teamed up with Fair Foods in June to begin sponsoring a bi-weekly grocery delivery program through which every staff member receives a free, plentiful bag of groceries, containing fresh produce, breads and more. Staff truly appreciate the program and enjoy finding out which delicious foods are included in each delivery. Plantains, fresh greens, mangoes, strawberries, and cinnamon raisin bread have been a few favorite items.



CEO Christine Reilly presents Dietary Aide Pierre Buissereth with a Fair Foods grocery box.

Get involved with TBH fundraising or volunteering: contact Ali Cahill at acahill@thebostonhome.org or 617-326-4261.



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