



Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION,
FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

CELEBRATING OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY

Annual Meeting & Gala



June 8th, 2023
6 to 10pm

The Hellenic Cultural Center
23 Bigelow Ave
Watertown, MA

Keynote Speaker: Leo V. Sarkissian
Executive Director
The Arc of Massachusetts



EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

MESSAGE FROM STEP'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Virginia A. Connolly

"Embracing Life Through Inclusion, Friendship & Opportunities" is a recurring theme at Beaverbrook STEP. From STEP's fledgling beginnings through 50 years of progress and growth, this theme reflects the mission, goals and values of our organization. Working collaboratively with self-advocates, family members, support staff, community members, medical professionals, educators and government leaders, STEP has developed a widely acclaimed network of community based support services.

These alliances allowed advocates to overcome formidable challenges and barriers. Our Keynote Speaker, Leo Sarkissian, Executive Director of The Arc Massachusetts can attest to how our advocacy networks (especially The Arc) won multiple court battles that forged new service paradigms and funding streams; changed outdated ideas and attitudes; and forged a new foundation for future generations to build upon.

Prior to our incorporation in 1973 Beaverbrook STEP joined with a committed group of families and staff to establish our first community residence in Watertown, MA. This residence became the home of a small group of women who were among the first adults to leave Fernald State School, an institution where they had resided for most of their lives. Now as adults living their respective lives, these women finally had a home of their own in the community, just like others.

This promising beginning set in motion STEP's 50 years of revolutionary development and innovation. Each successive generation has devoted its energies to improve and further expand STEP's community based services. Our predecessors' ambitions, actions and perseverance built a solid base for the creation of new visions that expanded and personalized our services over the decades.

Today as we celebrate STEP's 50th Anniversary milestone, we call upon upcoming generations to carry the torch, propelling our organization to even higher levels of accomplishment and success. The progress of each new generation certainly is the key to building Beaverbrook STEP's future legacy -- an individualized world for people of all abilities that has no boundaries. **Join us as we continue our journey "Embracing Life Through Inclusion, Friendship & Opportunities."**



Sincerely,
Virginia A Connolly, MEd, LCSW, LMHC
Executive Director



EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

MESSAGE FROM STEP'S BOARD PRESIDENT

Stan Kruszewski

The term 'pioneers' is often used to describe the early founders of community based services. Indeed, these advocates were explorers in a new land, a land rich with innovative and bold ideas, as well as risks and demands. Looking back upon the field of intellectual, developmental and related disabilities, we admire and honor these pathfinders who challenged the way society regarded and treated children, adolescents and adults with disabilities. From very humble beginnings, generation after generation forged ahead, creating new philosophical tenets, visionary programs and a life affirming community based service system.

Over the past 50 years, Beaverbrook STEP's community services framework has continuously expanded and thrived. Today STEP provides a comprehensive array of community living, working, health care, social, advocacy and specialized support services to 275 individuals and 200 families in eastern Massachusetts. With an annual operating budget of \$24 Million, STEP employs 425 full and part time staff. STEP has established 32 community residences, 15 private apartments and 5 embedded Options Community Based Day Services sites. Beaverbrook STEP continues its total commitment to providing support services that reflect a community that is diverse, inclusive and equal in opportunity.

Our initial trailblazers would be truly awed by the growth, sustainment and promise of **"Inclusion, Friendships and Opportunities"** available in our community today. The advances in community based services that past generations worked so hard for remind us that we have an outstanding and valuable heritage which we must vigilantly protect and build upon. The formidable achievements of the past and the challenges of the present and future must be honored and preserved for our future vision to be fully realized.

I hope you enjoy Beaverbrook STEP's 50th Anniversary celebration. This event is a celebration of life: a tribute to our robust community based services system; recognition of the achievement of a major milestone to be honored; and the gateway to future **"Inclusion, Friendships and Opportunities"** for new generations to build upon.



Yours truly,
Stan Kruszewski, BS, MBA
President, Board of Directors



EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

50th Anniversary Celebration

Program of Events

6:00 PM: Music, Drinks & Appetizers

Enjoy the lovely sounds of Arreaux Strings, a Quartet, while having your favorite beverage. Mingle with your friends and associates while posing for a photo or two on the Beaverbrook STEP RED CARPET.

Also visit Beaverbrook STEP's Resident Artists' Exhibit this evening, a wonderful sampling of our talented artisans. Finally, commemorate this evening and preserve its memory for the future: participate in our 50th Anniversary Video as we record and project the activities all night long. Don't be shy—join in the fun and memorialize your experience at STEP's milestone event!

7:00 PM: Welcome & Opening Remarks

Stan Kruszewski, President and Virginia A. Connolly, Executive Director of Beaverbrook STEP, Inc. will welcome our constituents, guests and distinguished award recipients. They will introduce our keynote speaker, Leo V. Sarkissian, Executive Director, The Arc of Massachusetts.

Keynote Speaker – Leo V. Sarkissian
Executive Director, The Arc of Massachusetts

Award Presentations

Leo Sarkissian, Leadership & Advocacy Award

Presented by Stan Kruszewski, President and Virginia Connolly, Executive Director

Dr. Johnnie Hamilton-Mason and Dr. Hugo Kamya, Diversity-Equity & Inclusion Awards

Presented by Ray Tanis and Ron Ssebunya, Co-Chairpersons of
the Beaverbrook STEP Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Community Advocates Board (CAB), Self-Advocacy Award

Presented by Laurraine Lecorps, Board of Directors
Accepted by Roseann Adamian and Robert Mallory, CAB Member Representatives

8:00 PM: Dinner and 50th Anniversary Cake





EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

Beaverbrook STEP's History 1973-2023

"To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."

Henri Bergson, philosopher

Prologue

Starting in the 1950's and 1960's, many families with children with intellectual and development disabilities decided to raise their children at home rather than place them in an institution. Families formed their own support and advocacy groups and as volunteers began offering nursery school, camp, recreation and therapeutic services for their children. The Arc of Massachusetts and other local advocacy groups were first established at this time. Parents began to demand community and education services for their children, too.

The Deinstitutionalization Movement

In the early 1970's, parent and advocacy groups organized and went to court to demand community based service options. They lobbied for Special Education legislation which was passed in 1972 in MA. In 1973, Beaverbrook STEP was incorporated after opening one of the first Community Residential Programs in MA for a group of women who were leaving Fernald State School in Waltham, under the landmark court-ordered Ricci Consent Decree that heralded in a new era of community based services. Not long afterward, STEP opened a second home for a group of men transitioning from Fernald.



The Normalization Era

The deinstitutionalization era was rooted in a philosophy advanced by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, that promoted living as normal a life as possible in the community for people with intellectual, development and related disabilities. "Normalization" established new values and policies for community based services that demanded dignity and respect; independent living and learning; and the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities afforded to everyone, of all abilities.

In 1975, STEP established a Cooperative Apartment program with case management services for adults with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities who wanted more independent living arrangements. Throughout the 1980's, Beaverbrook STEP continued to transition adults living in institutions into new residential homes and cooperative apartments. The demand for community based services grew and 'wait lists' for State funded services soon became the norm.

The Passage of the American with Disabilities Act in 1990

The passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the subsequent ADA Amendments Act (2008) are often considered the greatest legal achievements for the advancement of inclusion and equity for people with disabilities. Demand for community based services, affordable housing, accessibility and equal rights exploded.



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Beaverbrook STEP's History

1973-2023

Continued

Residential Support Services

In the period between 1990 and the early 2000's families and advocates succeeded with creating more humane, personalized and supportive options—based upon the advancement of a philosophical movement that focused on Person Centered Planning, individualized supports, choice and technology. Services were designed around each person's needs, desires and future vision. Circles of Support were formalized to support each individual with establishing this future vision through inclusive and personalized services, meaningful relationships and community membership.

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc. continued its expansion of residential services, developing a wide variety of models designed to meet the needs of adults with intellectual, developmental, behavioral, autism spectrum disorder, physical and medical disabilities. Growth continued with the opening of new homes and the expansion of STEP's Supported Living community apartments. Specialized homes with intensive staff support services were developed for elders and individuals with specialized medical, mental health and behavioral needs. In-home support services for children living at home were provided along with programs for adolescents and adults transitioning out of special education services. Today, Beaverbrook STEP provides residential, housing and supported living services to 135 individuals.



Options Community Based Day and Employment Services

Beaverbrook STEP began our Options Day Services program in 1995, opening Options Alternative Services for 15 adults with intellectual and development disabilities in a storefront on Main Street in Watertown. Over the next 28 years, services evolved into a highly acclaimed, comprehensive Community Based Day Services (CBDS) and Employment Training program serving 125 adolescents and adults with intellectual, developmental, autism and other disabilities. Today, there are five local, embedded Options CBDS locations in Watertown and Belmont.

- Each participant's individualized plan is designed to meet his/her personal life vision and preferred activities and goals, focusing on five major, inter-related components: Employment Training, Volunteer Services, Social Relationships, Recreation, and Education.
- Options individuals receive support leading to a community job; an internship or volunteer placement; and/or other employment training at Options operated businesses—Meals on Wheels, Gifts at Peppermint Place, Sweet Deals Boutique and ReUseAble Thrift. Key to Options' success is a varied daily schedule of community activities with myriad choices of recreation, social, sports and cultural activities.

Beaverbrook STEP's Specialty Teams

Over the past decade, Beaverbrook STEP has developed a full service Clinical Team (licensed medical, nursing, Alzheimer's, social work, behavioral, mental health, forensic and addiction focused practitioners) working collaboratively, to afford everyone we serve with immediate access to life enhancing specialists. An Assistive Technology Team of IT specialists was also created to work with both organizations and individuals to advance each person's independence and quality of life.



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50th Anniversary Keynote

Leo V. Sarkissian
Executive Director,
The Arc of Massachusetts



Leo Sarkissian has worked in the field of disabilities for 45 years. During that time, he directly assisted persons with disabilities, families, and staff; managed services and organizations; and advocated for progressive policies. His leadership included the full range of home and community based services: early intervention, counseling, emergency services, day and employment services, residential and respite services.

In the fall of 1991, he assumed the leadership of The Arc of Massachusetts. The Arc works to enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, and their families through advocacy for community supports and services that foster social inclusion, self-determination, and equity across all aspects of society.

Accomplishments

During the time that Leo has served at The Arc, the organization has advanced collaborations to achieve policy goals and promote choice. Some examples include: increased Turning 22 services for adults that provided options to high school graduates; orchestrated numerous legal actions to expand home & community services and reduce institutionalization; expanded services to persons with autism and developmental disabilities; maximized personalized options such as self-determination and personal care attendant services; and expanded Family Support, Day/Employment and Residential services. Leo is the recipient of numerous Local, State and National awards for his achievements.

Before coming to his present position, Leo served in various roles including CEO of The Arc of the South Shore, director of residential services at Lifeworks, and community advocate in the Coastal Area office of the Dept. of Mental Health. He is a LICSW and has a graduate degree from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. He lives in Newton, Massachusetts with his wife Mary. He has two grown daughters and three grandchildren.



EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

50th Anniversary Awards

LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY AWARD

Leo Sarkissian, Executive Director, The Arc of Massachusetts

Presented By: Stan Kruszewski, President and Virginia Connolly, Executive Director, Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

It is an honor and a privilege to present Leo Sarkissian with STEP's Leadership and Advocacy Award this evening. His 45 years of leadership and advocacy have left an indelible mark on the community based service system in Massachusetts. Leo's progressive, creative and inclusive vision, coupled with his superb collaborative and administrative talents have taken our service system to new levels of achievement that were unimaginable 50 years ago. Today, Leo is a powerful and accomplished defender of our broad based community service system. His expertise, perseverance and guidance always strive to encompass all constituents as we move forward. He is a powerful and accomplished leader and advocate for everyone.

DIVERSITY - EQUITY & INCLUSION AWARDS

Dr. Johnnie Hamilton-Mason and Dr. Hugo Kamya, Simmons University, Boston, MA

Presented By, Ray Tanis and Ron Ssebunya, Co-Chairs, Beaverbrook STEP Diversity & Inclusion Committee

The Committee is proud to confer Diversity-Equity & Inclusion Awards to two exceptional professors from Simmons University, Dr. Johnnie Hamilton-Mason and Dr. Hugo Kamya, experts in Social Work and Diversity. These professionals provided comprehensive training, support and consultative services to Beaverbrook STEP staff, support directors and volunteers throughout 2021, 2022 and 2023, leading an outstanding workshop series "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion."

The knowledge and insight provided through this training have been instrumental to the growth and viability of STEP's Diversity and Inclusion Committee as Beaverbrook STEP continues to move ahead in this critical area. STEP's Diversity and Inclusion Committee members have advanced this critically important work through sponsorship of major agency events, engaging all stakeholders in thoughtful discussion, and proactively celebrating the diversity that is ever present in our community.



Dr. Johnnie Hamilton-Mason 9



Dr. Hugo Kamya



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50th Anniversary Awards

SELF-ADVOCACY AWARD

Community Advocates Board of Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

Presented By: Laurraine Lecorps, Board of Directors

Accepted by: Rosann Adamian and Robert Mallory, Member Representatives CAB

Staff Advisors: Jessica Kirwan, Ray Tanis & Roberta Altamari

The Community Advocates Board is comprised of 30 self-advocates who receive services from Beaverbrook STEP, Inc. These self-advocates meet monthly to discuss, plan and initiate recreational, social, leisure and civic activities. This group also communicates regularly with STEP's administrators about their satisfaction with services, new services they desire and other initiatives of interest.

Of major importance, members of the CAB educate and support all of Beaverbrook STEP's participants about self-advocacy and how to accomplish their own advocacy goals and priorities. The CAB promotes: **self-actualization, effective communication techniques, and positive social and community relationships.**

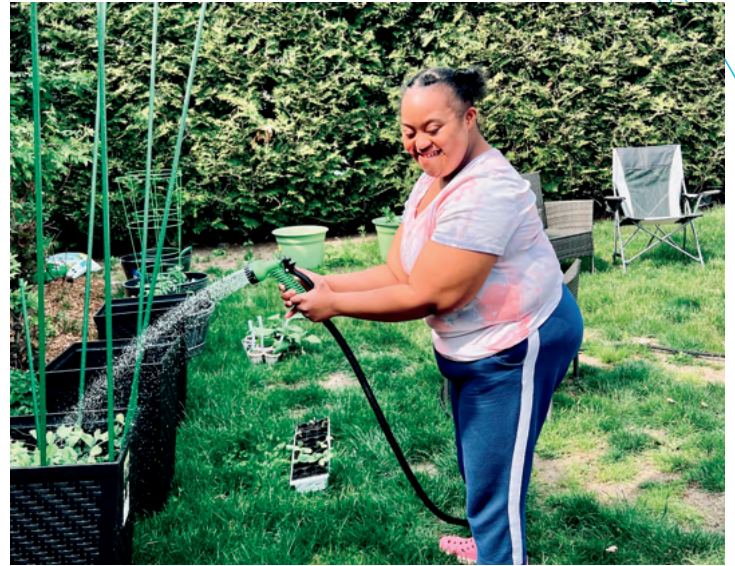
Inclusion of individuals of all abilities into the fabric of community life is fostered through active volunteerism, use of community services and civic responsibility, particularly voting and communicating with government and elected officials. The CAB is affiliated with the Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS) and the National Convention of Self Advocates.

The CAB also sponsors an annual community BBQ for Beaverbrook STEP self-advocates, staff, volunteers, families and community members. This large outdoor event celebrates community inclusion and community partnerships that enhance our lives.





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A Community Success Story

[A vitally important key to Beaverbrook STEP's 50 years of progress is the highly successful and innovative collaborations formed with all of our community constituents. Below please take a closer look at the Teddie Peanut Butter and Beaverbrook STEP story, as just one example of all of STEP's outstanding partnerships.]

The Journey

JAMES HINTLIAN is a young man with Down Syndrome who has a story to tell. Born into a loving and nurturing family 28 years ago, James grew up in a suburban area north of Boston, supported by his mother and father, Carolyn and Jamie Hintlian, his siblings and an extended Hintlian family. His childhood was filled with social, recreation and sports activities with his friends, schoolmates, neighbors and family members. This is James' story—a story of success and collaboration—a story of community and inclusion—a story of friendship and opportunities.

As he approached his 22nd birthday, James and his parents visited several Community Based Day Services (CBDS) and Employment Services programs in the Greater Boston area. They selected Beaverbrook STEP's Options program because Options would support James working at the family business, Teddie Peanut Butter in Everett, while providing many additional employment-training, social, recreational and community opportunities.

STEP's Options

Community Based Day and Employment Services

For the past 6 years, James has thrived at Options Community Center in Belmont, where he has made dozens of friends and developed close relationships with community members and staff. Except for a time during the pandemic when day services were delivered remotely, James has enjoyed a wide variety of inclusive, supported community opportunities including:

- Volunteering at an organic farm in Lexington every Friday.
- Visiting the library where he borrows new movies, a favorite hobby he shares with his father and friends.
- Delivering Meals on Wheels to elders, greeting everyone on his route with a huge smile.
- Walking in the community.
- Shopping for cleaning supplies at Target each week.
- Working 2 mornings per week at Teddie Peanut Butter in Everett, MA as a proud team member!



James working on the production line



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A Community Success Story

Continued

Teddie Peanut Butter—A Family & Community Affair

James' parents, Carolyn (Chief Technical Officer) and Jamie Hintlian (Chief Operating Officer) along with Jamie's brother, Mark Hintlian (Chief Executive Officer) and other family members, operate this highly successful business that manufactures all natural peanut butter and other nut products sold across the world. The family has been instrumental in forging an outstanding community partnership between Teddie Peanut Butter and Beaverbrook STEP. Carolyn and Jamie are described by Beverly Demby Tucker, Options Employment Specialist as "super engaging and helpful" and totally involved in working with Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

James' Great Grandfather, with whom he shares his name, founded Teddie Peanut Butter in 1925. As stated on the company's website, "Supporting our local community is of utmost importance to Teddie." The company also partners with charities and organizations across New England, including Best Buddies' King James Buddies cycling team, The Boston Celtics and The Greater Boston Food Bank (www.teddie.com). Observing James in the Teddie Peanut Butter factory environment motivates all of the employees. The team spirit and cooperative working relationships are very evident and inspirational. James is thriving there! His fellow team members recently awarded James the Teddie Peanut Butter Achievement Award for his "dedicated work and unfailing cheerfulness."

James' Progress At Teddie Peanut Butter

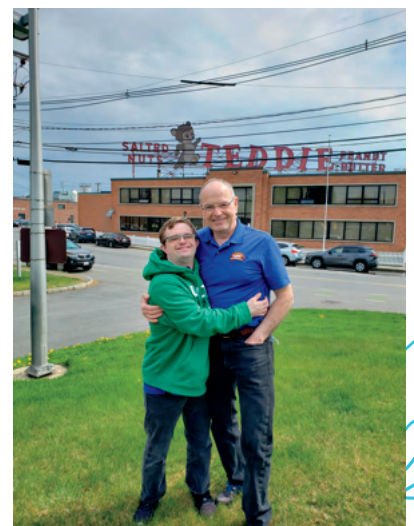
Options CBDS program staff support James two mornings per week at Teddie Peanut Butter. Most often he works on the assembly line setting up jars and cans to be filled with the nut and peanut butter products produced at the factory. James can also be found in the office where he enjoys filing and shredding jobs; sometimes he sorts nuts in the Nut Lab. Options staff provide on-the-job training and educational services including:

- Safety training, particularly focused on this factory environment with heavy machinery and forklifts.
- Structure of a routine of duties and tasks that James can embrace and follow.
- Job readiness skills training such as work appearance; business etiquette; office protocols; cleaning skills; sorting and labeling skills; packaging; stacking pallets; transportation and community skills.
- Communication skills such as speaking louder and making eye contact.
- Dietary and nutrition skills, such as maintaining his gluten-free diet.



James, Carolyn, James, Mark and Alex Hintlian

James and his father, Jamie





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A Community Success Story

Continued

James' Journey Continues

Three years ago, James moved from his family home to a supported apartment operated by Beaverbrook STEP in Watertown. He is very proud of his new home and is quick to tell you that he totally enjoys living with his four housemates. With part time supports from Beaverbrook STEP's residential support staff, James has fully embraced community living and continues to be more independent. In fact, James is often reluctant to visit his childhood home because he "doesn't want to miss anything happening" in his new residence.

This move for James is totally supported by his parents, Carolyn and Jamie Hintlian, but they do miss James. His father misses staying up late with James watching movies together. James' mother misses him too. "I miss James doing his chores at home, such as getting the mail, going to the neighbors to borrow items needed and helping around the house." James often brought his mother Carolyn 'coffee in bed,' a treat she still misses since he moved to his new home.

When asked to evaluate the support services the family receives from Beaverbrook STEP Options Day Services and Support Staff at his apartment, Jamie Hintlian responded "There is a good rhythm at the moment." James and his mother, Carolyn, agreed.

Beverly Demby Tucker: Options Employment Specialist

Beverly Demby Tucker is an enthusiastic 10 year veteran staff member at Beaverbrook STEP. After working in STEP's residential services, she moved to the Options Community Based Day Services program where she recruits employers, scouts for generic training programs (like CVS) and matches interested Options participants with jobs at local companies. She oversees each person's placement and training, assigns job coaching staff and liaisons with company staff.

Beverly works closely with James' parents, who are part of the staff team at Teddie Peanut Butter. She indicates that James and his parents are "one of the most compassionate families that I have met." And James "is always concerned about his peers and enjoys socializing with family, extended family and friends. He is soft spoken and has a sweet disposition...a true pleasure to know."

Several months ago, Beverly was instrumental in expanding the Teddie Peanut Butter and Options Day Services collaboration. With the support of the Hintlian family, she placed another Options participant, Loukas Flessas-Finocche, into a new part time position at Teddie. Loukas and James travel together to their jobs at Teddie, working the same 2 day part time schedule (in separate areas of the factory). As Carolyn Hintlian states "Loukas and James are very much appreciated by their fellow employees and they both add to Teddie's team."

Future goals for James and Loukas include fading out of job coaching, an achievement at hand once they master taking their STEP transportation service independently to and from work. They are working on it!



James, Beverly
and Loukas



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Programs & Services

Today, STEP is a \$24 Million organization that provides a comprehensive array of services to nearly 275 children, adolescents and adults with intellectual, developmental, autism spectrum disorder and related disabilities and over 200 family members. Throughout its history, Beaverbrook STEP has consistently achieved the highest level of licensing and accreditation from the Mass. Department of Developmental Services, Office of Quality Management and Quality Enhancement.

LIVING & HOUSING SUPPORTS

- 24 Hour Residential Homes
- In-Home/Supported Living
- Shared Living
- Agency with Choice Services
- Family Support Respite Services
- In Home Children's Support Services
- Specialized Residential Services for Aging, Behavioral and Medical Needs

OPTIONS COMMUNITY BASED DAY SERVICES & EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

- Community Based Day Services (CBDS)
- Employment Training & Placement Supports
- Individual Supported Employment - Group Supported Employment - Competitive Employment
- Volunteer and Internship Services

RECREATION, SOCIAL & SELF-ADVOCACY SERVICES

- Recreation, Sports & Social Events
- Mentoring Services
- Travel Services
- Education Services
- Community Advocates Board

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- Clinical & ABA Services
- Nursing/Health Services
- Autism Spectrum Disorder Services
- Elder & Alzheimer Services
- Assistive Technology Supports
- Corporate Guardianship Program

AFFILIATIONS

- UMass/Boston
- Simmons University
- Cambridge College
- Member: National Guardianship Association



EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

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Vice President: Shirlee Purcell
Treasurer: John Kennedy
Clerk: Sandra Tomasetti



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Arthur Millman
John Saunders
Katherine Roche
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Provisional Member: Estelle Fox

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Daniel Burger - Attorney
Jill Weiss - Self-Advocate
Bonnie Wilkins - Family Member, Nurse Practitioner
Tom Martin - Community Advocate
Sean Fleming - Community Advocate
Margaret J. Mehm, Esq. - Family Member

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Community Advocacy Board

Member Representatives

Roseann Adamian & Robert Mallory
30 Beaverbrook STEP participants
Staff Advisors: Jessica Kirwan, Ray Tanis &
Roberta Altamari



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EMBRACING LIFE THROUGH INCLUSION, FRIENDSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

With sincerest appreciation to all of our supporters and heartfelt gratitude to the
50th Anniversary Committee.

Chair: Michelle Awtry

Members: Roberta Altamari, Maggie Coleman, Ginny Connolly, Rick Currier, Phoebe
Goodman, Esra Gurel, Jessica Kirwan, Ron Ssebunya, Carole Tagg, Ray Tanis

Thank you,
Virginia A. Connolly
Executive Director

Thank you for joining us this evening!

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