

The Supporter News

September 20, 2018

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Letter from the President

Dear CLASS community,

July was a very challenging month for CLASS as we finalized the contract with our direct-care workforce. We appreciate your understanding as we completed this process and we're excited to completely focus on "redefining what's possible!"

Starting now, we want to help all our families understand the challenges we face this year.



- CLASS is 99 percent funded by state contracts.
- Over the last four years, the **state contract rate increased only 1.2 percent** for individuals requiring the highest level of support in our Day Habilitation program. Meanwhile, **minimum wage increased 37 percent.**
- Janitors and file clerk positions, requiring only a high school education and limited responsibility, are paid higher wages on average than our direct-care staff.

We're grateful for your continued engagement, support and caring about CLASS's future. Now we're asking you to join us as we urge the Governor, state legislators, the Department of Developmental Services and MassHealth to support human service providers with rate increases proportional to the increase in minimum wage, due to increase every year until it is set at \$15 an hour in 2023.

Please add your voice to ours in our ongoing letter campaign for higher rates to support higher wages. Please tell us you're on board - call me or your case coordinator to add your name to our list of willing advocates.

Sincerely,

Alfred J. Frugoli

Under our Roof

TREE plants seeds for job success



Shaun Cohan, shop teacher at Greater Lawrence Technical High School, gives Eric, left, tips on how to measure and cut boards for the bench.

As production manager for CLASS's TREE (Treatment. Responsibility. Empowerment. Employment.) program, Nancy Price balances training, worker productivity and contract deadlines. She ensures TREE individuals are fully engaged in their assigned tasks, such as facility maintenance and light construction, packing gourmet cookies, hand-weaving colored threads with recycled videotape on a loom to produce unique fabric, and checking hangers for quality control then straightening them for reuse.

After an individual completes and masters each task, they learn to manage more responsibility.

"Involving individuals in the entire process helps them gain skills that will be useful in community employment," Price says. "Opportunities are coming because of the skills acquired in the TREE program."

Since the mid-1980s, the TREE program has supported individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental illness, brain injuries and significant histories of unsafe and/or socially maladaptive behaviors. Funders, families and guardians recognize TREE as a safe and predictable work program with person-centered, evidence-based treatment and supports.

"Our goal is community inclusion for every individual," says TREE Director Jessica Perrault. "We want to help individuals become more self-sufficient and we achieve that by understanding what their goals are and figuring out how to help them get there."

In the Community

For Andrew, it's working

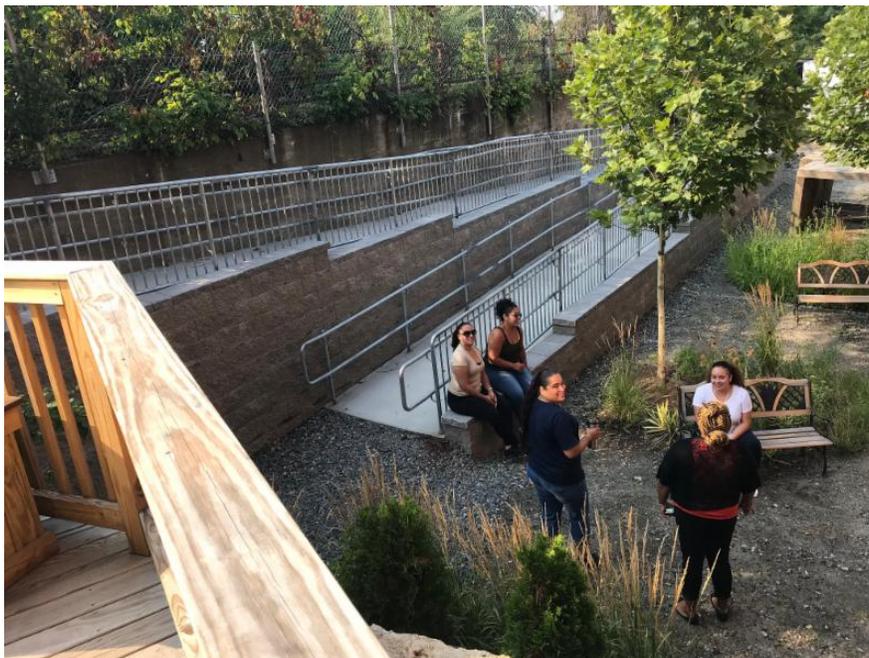
Andrew, a full-time employee at Nordson MEDICAL in Salem, N.H., manufactures and inspects balloon catheters that save people's lives.

Click on the photo of Andrew and his supervisor, Anna Prata, to see him talk about his employment success, what he likes about his work and what his day is like.



Facilities Update

Outdoor Ramp Installation



CLASS staff members enjoy an early-morning coffee break next to the brand-new ramp connecting our deck to the ground level. We've had a lot to celebrate this summer! Thank you, Steve Doherty and Diamond Iron Works, for donating the ramp metalwork to make our outdoor space accessible by all!

Storage Shed for Facilities Equipment



Thanks to Shaun Cohan, shop teacher at Greater Lawrence Technical High School, for teaching woodworking skills to individuals like Liz, left, in the TREE program at CLASS. We now have a place to store facilities equipment that can't be stored indoors.

Events

The 26th Annual Barry Faye Memorial Golf Tournament

Monday, Oct. 1, 2018 | Andover Country Club
12 p.m. Shotgun Start | Scramble Format

The 26th Annual Memorial Golf Tournament is held in honor of Barry Faye, who was a member of the CLASS Board of Directors for 15 years. Proceeds from the Golf Tournament help people with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities flourish by making it possible for them to volunteer, obtain jobs and earn a paycheck, learn living and social skills, and find their place in their communities.

For more details visit:
www.CLASSincGolf.org

Fall Classic

Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018
10 a.m. | Hogan Regional
450 Maple Street Danvers, MA 01923

Join us as we cheer on CLASS individuals participating in the Fall Classic, a chance to showcase their physical abilities in a specially made obstacle course.

For more information, contact:
Sarah Benjamin at SBenjamin@CLASSinc.org

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