



## 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



# BFAIR

Berkshire Family & Individual Resources

INSPIRING ABILITIES,  
CREATING LIMITLESS  
POSSIBILITIES

## **From the Chairperson of the Board**

# Antoinette Cariddi



Alex Kastrimakis (Vice Chair)

Patti Messina (Clerk)

Antoinette Cariddi (Chair)

Summing 2015 up in a single word: growth. But not just any kind of growth, **strategic growth** that meets the needs of the community. At BFAIR, many of our programs saw great expansion in 2015. Homecare Services, started in late 2014, began with 11 elders served and is currently **assisting nearly 90 elders in their own homes** throughout Berkshire County. That program grew to meet the needs of an aging population that wants to remain independent and in their homes.

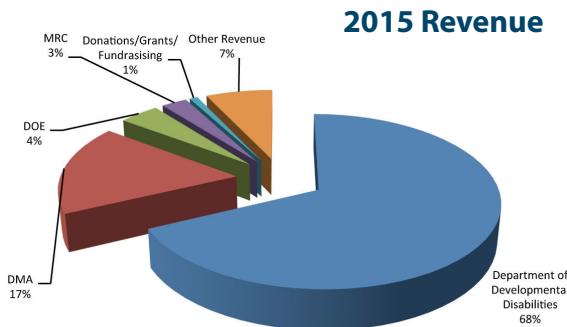
BFAIR's Habilitative Services also saw an expanded footprint, extending services to a new satellite campus on Roberts Drive, North Adams. In 2015, BFAIR completed the renovation of a space that is now the home to a facility for people receiving day habilitation services and also a community-based day services program (CBDS). CBDS will provide structured day services with a community-based component, including volunteering. As an accolade to the stellar services of the Day Habilitation Program, the program was **re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for three years.**

In response to the need for residential services for people living with acquired brain injuries, so that they can live in a home-like setting versus a long-term care facility, BFAIR made the **acquisition of two new residences in Pittsfield and West Stockbridge**. Those will open in the spring of 2016 and serve eight people.

Finally, I cannot say enough to commend the **dedicated staff** at BFAIR. They support the people we serve in the most respectful and dignified manner. In addition, our staff is the single greatest donor to our Annual Campaign.

2015 was an amazing year for BFAIR on all fronts. The momentum is strong enough to carry us well into 2016 and beyond.

# Financial Report



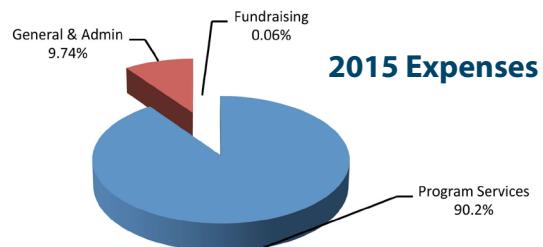
The overall growth and expansion from 2014 to 2015 at BFAIR is nothing short of impressive. Under the leadership of Jane Patenaude-LeBeau, Director of Finance, BFAIR has continued to provide exemplary services, while maintaining fiscal responsibility. We've met the programmatic needs of the community, while supporting growth in all of those need areas.

Overall **agency revenue saw a 27% increase from \$8.7 million in 2014 to \$11.1 million in 2015**, with over 90% of those revenue dollars spent directly on program services.

In regard to programs, BFAIR's **Homecare Services** began in late 2014 with nine referrals. By July of 2015, the **program provided service to 66 people, an increase of 633%** - BFAIR's fastest growing program to date. The number of **service hours provided to people living with acquired brain injuries grew by 108%** in 2015, an increase from 3,430 to 7,127 service hours through expanded contracts.

The programming services provided by BFAIR is a massive undertaking that requires an eclectic workforce, dedicated to the people that BFAIR serves. The number of **staff grew to 261 employees** in 2015, an increase of 13%. The largest economic impact within the community for this increase is in staffing – **over \$7.6 million in salary, tax & fringe benefits** in 2015 (an increase of 31% from 2014).

Finally, our 2015 **Annual Campaign totaled over \$15,500** in donations from friends, family, and our biggest group of donors, BFAIR employees. The Campaign, along with support for the Northern Berkshire United Way and the Williamstown Community Chest, has greatly contributed to our ability to continue to support all of the people that we serve.



## **Lifetime Advocacy Award**

# The Sartori Family

*The Sartori Family is the first-ever recipient of the Lifetime Advocacy Award. Created this year, the Lifetime Advocacy Award recognizes the selfless activism to ensure that people living with disabilities are provided with the same opportunities and options as someone without them.*



*Mark, Bobby and Dennis Sartori*

suffered from developmental disabilities, Doris and Aldo began their mission as advocates. Fighting for Dennis to receive a quality education, Doris pushed the public school system to provide a private tutor for Dennis, something that was nearly unheard of in the 1950s. Dennis has skills like no other. Even as a child, he would spend the nights dismantling furniture, mechanical instruments, and whatever he could get his hands on. Doris acknowledges, "This was just Dennis. It's what he does." All the while Dennis was causing entertaining havoc, Carol was a stellar big sister, guiding Dennis through the days and being ever so tolerant of how her belongings were always missing (only to be found in the heating ducts of the family home).

Two children, one with challenges, was work, but the Sartori's relished in their family. In 1965, twelve years after Dennis was born, the family grew again – by two. Doris gave birth to unexpected twin boys, prematurely. It was almost immediately clear that Mark and Bobby suffered from developmental impairments.

As most parents know, advocating for the needs and treatment of your child is a big part of the job. When Doris & Aldo Sartori began their family in 1949, they had no idea what the road ahead had in store for them. Their first and only daughter, Carol, was born a joyous, happy, typical baby in 1949. The Sartori Family expanded in 1953 with the birth of their son, Dennis. Dennis didn't seem to progress as quickly as Carol, but he was the baby, so Doris considered it to be typical. As it became increasingly clear that Dennis

With odds stacked against Doris and Aldo, they pressed on. Doris recounted a time when Bobby & Mark were in their crib; she sat next to them crying, wondering how her family could possibly do it all, how God had given her three children with developmental disabilities. And from out of somewhere, Doris snapped out of it and recalls saying to herself, "Doris, what is the matter with you? These are your children. You're going to love them. When they misbehave, you're going to correct them, and when they need your loving, you're going to love them." From that day forward, Doris and her strong family never looked back.

The three boys quickly grew into young men. Supported by their family and community, Dennis was educated by a tutor, and Bobby and Mark received special education services through public schools. Never giving up on their children, Doris & Aldo continued to advocate every step of the way. Mark resided at home until his teenage years, Dennis until 2011 and Bobby continues to live at home and assist his mother. Aldo passed away several years ago, but Doris, now 86 years young, has never lost sight of what it means to love and advocate for her family.

Continuing to succeed today, Mark resides in a group setting in Pittsfield, while Dennis and Bobby receive residential, habilitative, and supported employment services through BFAIR, respectively. If you've spent any time during the past 20 years at Big Y in North Adams, you are sure to have met Bobby, he's been a model employee.

In a recent interview with Doris and Carol, they both expressed how the support of all the service providers over these many years has been a major player in the success of Dennis, Mark, and Bobby. The Sartori family is far too humble. Met with nearly insurmountable obstacles, they did it – they offered a supportive, loving family life, and home, never seeing any disability, only opportunity.

"The Sartori family's unwavering advocacy and dedication to the success of all of their children needs to be recognized as the standard for how families with children living with disabilities are measured."

*Rich Weisenflue, BFAIR Executive Director*

## **Edward Frampton Self Determination Award**

### **John Miller**



The Edward Frampton Self Determination Award is presented annually to a person with a disability who demonstrates self determination and self-advocacy while overcoming a significant hurdle or fulfilling a personal goal.

John Miller is certainly determined. When visited on the job and asked what John would like to see in the future, he replied, "I'd like to be the boss". Being the boss isn't a far stretch for John; he has been supported through BFAIR's Employment Services

Program for more than four years. During his tenure, John has evolved not only into a hard-working and dedicated employee, but a leader amongst his co-workers. John is the first to offer a supportive word, or, often more appropriate, a quick witted joke.

As a resident of BFAIR's Wood Street home, John also shows leadership qualities. Curt Foehl, Home Life Support Counselor, says that " John's got a good heart, likes to volunteer, and is generous with his time and help to others." John contributes to the daily operations of the residence, assisting with chores and completing his laundry.

John currently works at a job site at the North Adams City Hall, where he supports the packaging effort for Gammelgarden Creamery.



## **Employer of the Year**

# The City of North Adams



Great things come from great partnerships. BFAIR believes that the partnership that they share with the City of North Adams has certainly been the basis for greatness. The City of North Adams provides three job sites for crews from the Employment Services Program at BFAIR. These sites, including City Hall, Windsor Lake, and the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Skating Rink, are the base of operations for people with disabilities to receive training, job coaching, and a sense of self-worth in safe and healthy work environment.

"BFAIR has been and continues to be a wonderful community partner serving the unique needs of folks with disabilities and their families. The success of their programming rests in part with the relationships they have fostered here in northern Berkshire. The City of North Adams could not be more pleased with its relationship with BFAIR, but most importantly with those who work with us each and every day."

**North Adams Mayor Dick Alcombright**

Kelly Brennan, Director of Employment Services at BFAIR, concurs with Mayor Alcombright. "We have really worked to cultivate BFAIR's relationship with the City of North Adams and it has paid off tenfold," said Brennan.

Mayor Alcombright offered a most poignant reflection: "Work gives all of us a true sense of self-worth and accomplishment. Placements of clients in the workforce gives those employed a sense of joy, pride, resilience, perseverance and most remarkably a sense of abilities that far surpass any disabilities."

## **Quintal Award**

# Melisa Larabee



*BFAIR Employment Counselor*

The Quintal Award is presented each year to a BFAIR employee that shows exemplary commitment to supporting the dignity, human rights, and quality of life for people with disabilities.

For Melisa Larabee, her job as an Employment Counselor is far more than just job skills. For twelve years, Melisa has worked hard to see that the employment program participants that she supports are always treated with dignity and respect. “I’m the eyes and ears of the people that I serve,” said Melisa. And that certainly rings true when you watch her coach her crew.

Whether at the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Skating Rink or at the campground of Windsor Lake, Melisa assists her crew in getting the job done, but goes further. Melisa said she’s “interested in making sure that they’re getting the most out of their career.” And she does that well, according to Jason Godfrey, Assistant Director of Employment Services.

When it comes to protecting the rights of the people that she works with, Melisa said “it comes as a second nature.” – That’s evident when you see the crew in action.

“Melisa maintains the standards of the work that the crew does, but most importantly, maintains an enormous level of respect for each and every one of the crew members.”

*Jason Godfrey, Assistant Director of Employment Services*

## Crosby Award

# Nate Belanger

The Crosby Award is given annually to a staff member who embodies the deep commitment to community service and advocacy that former BFAIR employee George Crosby possessed.

In what many would view as a tiring job - five years as an overnight Home Life Support Counselor in BFAIR's Residential Services Program - Nate Belanger has tirelessly done it with nothing but vigor and energy. Nate is an essential conduit for engaging experiences for the people that he serves.

Nate is passionate about the mission of BFAIR. When asked about his commitment to working with people with disabilities, he said, "I've often said that the denigration of people with disabilities is one of the last widely accepted bigotries in our culture, and this is largely due to the public's lack of exposure to the differently abled. Therefore it is of utmost importance that we teach the individuals to be active members in the community. It is our duty as staff to show the community what wonderful people our individuals are."



BFAIR Home Life Support Counselor

"Nate is an integral part of the Birchwood team. Night in and night out, Nate's caring and compassionate approach helps to enrich the lives of the people he supports. Kind, gentle, steady and team player are just a few of the words and phrases co-workers use to describe Nate and what makes him such a deserving award winner."

**Steve Conroy, Director of Residential Services**

Nate certainly shows the community to the residents that he works with. "I've had the pleasure of helping expose individuals to things like museums and music concerts, but I think that a simple walk in the woods can be one of the most gratifying experiences for the people we care for," said Nate.

## **Board of Directors' Award**

# Jane Patenaude – LeBeau



The Board of Directors' Award is given to an employee that exemplifies "The BFAIR Way" by continually going above and beyond their core responsibilities.

When we asked Jane how long she had been committed to the mission of BFAIR, her reply was precise: "26 years, 2 months, 21 days, 8 hours and 35 minutes – you know me, I'm a numbers person and I like to be exact!" The

qualities of being "a numbers person" and her need for exactness makes Jane an ideal recipient of the Board of Directors' Award. Jane continues, "Being part of the agency for so long, I feel very invested in it and in its success. If you don't have sound financial records and internal controls it will affect every part of the agency – and not in a good way."

David Bond, BFAIR board director and former treasurer concurs, "Jane is the perfect recipient of this award. Her grasp of the industry and organizational skills are outstanding, which are paramount in keeping tabs on a business as complex as BFAIR. Jane is a true professional and a tremendous asset to BFAIR."

Even Jane wants to spread the wealth, so to speak, "I couldn't do the work that I do each day and keep the agency's finances in top form without the support of the entire Financial Department. Each person in the department contributes to the department's success and in turn the agency's success."

### **2015 Board of Directors**

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Suzan Cahill, Director  
Rebecca Dravis, Director  
Walter Lother, Director  
Mary Ann Maroni, Director  
Peter Mirante, Director



### **COMING SOON**

*A place for people with memory issues and their caregivers to unwind.*

*It's not about remembering or forgetting... it's about coming together.*

# Thank You *to the 2015 Friends of BFAIR*

## **Benefactor (\$0 - \$25)**

Alderman, Jackie  
Arasimowicz, John  
Boesse, Amber  
Cancro, Susan & Jonathan  
Cariddi, Antoinette  
Carlson, Justyna  
CATA  
DiLego, Mike/  
Samara Logic Web Development  
Domenichini, Joseph  
Harpin, Marie  
Harrington, Kate & Marshal  
Hopkins, Paul  
Howcroft, Crystal  
Karo, Dawn  
K-M Motor Sales, Inc.  
Larabee, Melisa  
Louison, Stephania & Conklin, Susan  
Maroni, Mary Ann  
Martin, Leanne  
Martin, Lorie  
Mills, Carlyne  
Nichols, Arthur  
Pasquini, James & Joanne  
Richard, Shaun  
Scarfoni Associates  
Underwood, Sandra  
Vallieres, Tara

## **Friend (\$26 - \$100)**

Anonymous  
Baker, Kim  
Balance Rock Investment Group  
Baran, Laura  
Beck's Printing  
Belanger, Amanda  
Belanger, Nathan  
Blackmer, Bill & Lisa  
Bond, David & Karen  
Bourdon, Hope  
Bushika, Sue  
Cariddi, Gailanne  
Chesbro, Krystal  
Choquette, Angela  
Collier, Christa  
Conroy, Edward & Anne  
Cook, Deborah  
Davignon, Colleen  
DiDonna, Debora  
Dravis, Rebecca  
Ferrelli, Justin  
Foehl, Curtis  
Fox, Carol  
Gerlach, Marion  
Goodermote, Marie  
Gregory, Kristin  
Hawkins, Brenda  
Jones, Teri  
Kolesar, James  
LaBonte, Jim  
Lemaire, Kelsey  
Lothes, Walter  
Martin, Stephanie

McBee, Teresa  
Messina, Patti  
O'Connell Oil  
Raymond, Lisa  
Ritcher, Rebecca  
Smith, Matt & Susan  
Sorel, Kasandra  
Wampler, Kristen  
West, Eileen  
Wild Oats Market  
Wilkinson, Herb  
Winnie, Mark

## **Associate (\$101 - \$250)**

Berkshire Copier  
Blair, Terry & Jim  
Brown, David J.  
Butler, Laurie  
Civello, Jen  
Cunningham, Linda  
Dunn, Jessica  
Haas, Crystal  
Harsch Associates  
Hoag, Amanda  
Lamb, Dick & Taylor, Holly  
Lawrence V. Toole Insurance Agency  
Little, John  
Mirante, Peter  
Neep, Kris  
Patenaude-LeBeau, Jane  
Pera Mediterranean Bistro  
Petropoulos, Beth

Phykitt, Julia  
Ridgeway, Wendi  
Rivera-Boucher, Jasmine  
Robare, Missy  
Shea, Erin  
Skalski, Jason  
Wandrei, Barbara  
West Oil Company  
Westall Architects  
Wheeler, Sarah

## **Investor (\$251 - \$500)**

Adams Community Bank  
Advanced Flexible Composites  
Altiery, Ethel  
Anonymous  
Denette, Eric  
Denette, Theresa  
Duprat, Bonnie  
Geary Builders  
Kastrinakis, Alex & Lynsey  
Little's HSC Pharmacy  
Oberst, Gail

## **Ringleader (\$501 and above)**

Barb Hassan Realty, Inc.  
Conroy, Steve  
Fazio, Michael & Mary  
Forth, Joyce  
Moresi & Associates  
Weisenflue, Rich

## **SAVE THE DATE**

*for our upcoming fundraising event*



June 25 • Adams on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail  
Berkshire Family & Individual Resources



Berkshire Family & Individual Resources

771 South Church Street | North Adams, MA 01247

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