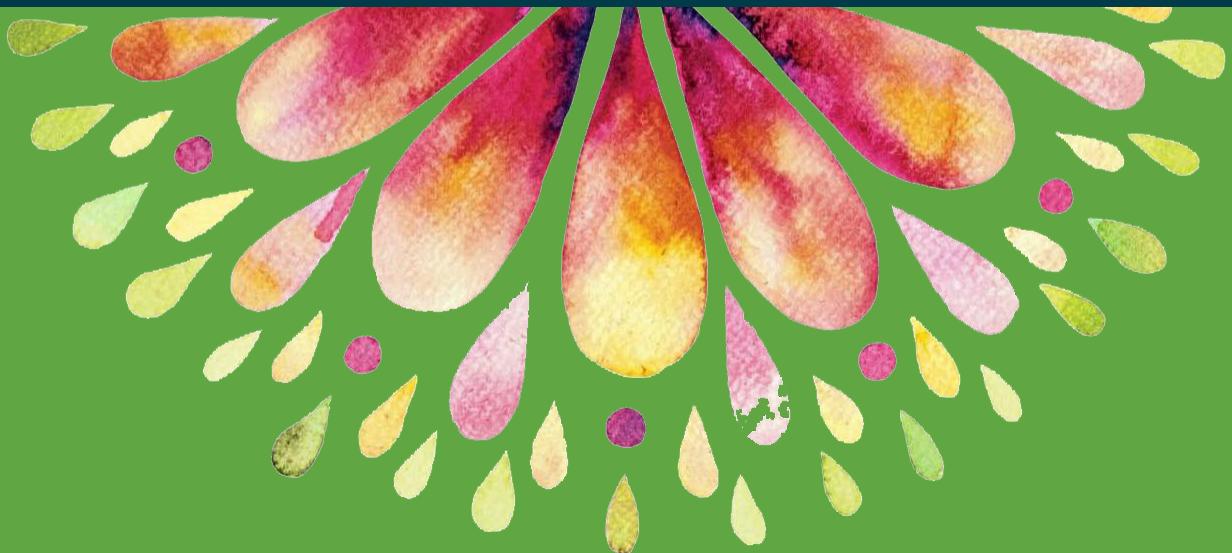


# 2019 Annual Report



# BFAIR

Berkshire Family & Individual Resources

INSPIRING ABILITIES,  
CREATING LIMITLESS  
POSSIBILITIES

*From the Chairperson of the Board*

# Alex Kastrinakis

From a modest beginning in 1994, the agency celebrated its milestone 25th anniversary in 2019. While much has changed with respect to the range of services offered and the number of people with disabilities receiving supports each year, BFAIR staff remain steadfast in their dedication to the mission: Striving to positively change people's lives one day at a time as evidenced by excellent service options and quality, committed staff and leadership and caring concern for people of all ages and disabilities.

Celebration was an enjoyable aspect of 2019, however progress remained steadfast. Notably, BFAIR's Day Habilitation and Adult Foster Care programs achieved a three-year national CARF accreditation.

The survey team reported that BFAIR staff are strongly invested in an agency working to optimize service quality as well as delivering a high degree of family and individual satisfaction with services.

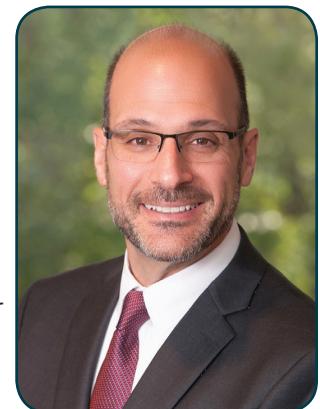
In what may pose a challenge to the typical work of a human service agency, in 2019 the agency acquired a redemption center located in North Adams, however our new Bottle & Can Redemption Center provides employment for people with disabilities and by doing so they acquire vocational skills with the support of staff in our Employment program. The Center serves as a terrific stepping stone for people with disabilities moving on to competitive employment while fully integrating into our north county community. Also, continuing as with the past several years, the agency broke ground on the development of our third residence for adults with acquired brain injuries located in the Pioneer Valley which is scheduled to open in the summer of 2020.

Our strategic plan facilitates on-going commitment to provide quality services. In support of this goal, the range of services offered and geographic expansion, the management team was restructured in 2019 promoting Ethel Altiery, a 20-year BFAIR veteran, to the position of Executive Director while adding the position of VP of Quality Assurance to focus on continual improvements and the support of the Family Advisory and Self-Advocacy committees.

Our 25th Anniversary Gala celebration held last October raised an amazing \$114,000. A special thank you to our Gala's principal sponsor and wonderful partner, Adams Community Bank, as well as a terrific showing of generosity from our donors which include our committed employees and the event planning committee.

BFAIR now serves nearly 600 people with disabilities with a staff of 350. While this report is focused on 2019, I would be entirely remiss not to acknowledge the incredible commitment and dedication of our direct support professionals, the definition of essential workers, as well as the tireless efforts of our administrative and management teams efforts to support the health and safety of the people we support in residential and community services during the COVID-19 epidemic. Knowing what's been required of them, the phrase, "Heroes Work Here" is an understatement.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank you for continuing to support BFAIR's Mission, for the unwavering work of our direct care and administrative staff as well as our donors, families and friends.



## *From the Board Treasurer*

# Dana Mullen

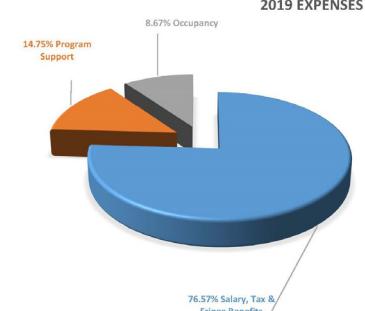
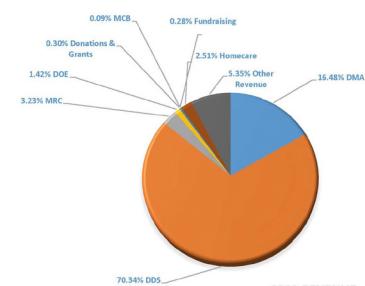
I am pleased to report that BFAIR experienced another year of financial stability and growth. Fiscal year 2019 saw a 5.4% increase over FY18, totaling a \$14.6 million operating budget. FY19 was not without financial challenges however including managing expenses associated with EMAC, the Employee Medical Assistance Contribution, as well as the Paid Family Medical Leave Act.

Contributing factors to the growth in the agency's operating budget include:

- A second year of increased capacity to serve adolescents with autism through our in-home Applied Behavior Analysis clinical support services. An 86% increase in the number of children and families served by our Clinical department led to additional billing for services rendered.
- A substantial increase in the number of referrals for the agency's Community Living program for adults with acquired brain injuries. 2019 represents the second consecutive year of BFAIR's enhanced capacity to serve adults with acquired brain injuries.
- A full year of state funding for our residence located in Westfield for adults with acquired brain injuries. An additional expansion of residential services in the Pioneer Valley is planned for 2020.
- Employee wages increased by \$223,000 in 2019. The increase in wages is indicative of services offered by BFAIR to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Salary and benefits account for 76% of total expenses.

Our greatest asset to our continued fiscal stability and success is our staff. Jane Patenaude-Lebeau, CFO and the Finance department staff are to be commended for their oversight of BFAIR's financial operations, strong use of internal controls and safeguards which are directly tied to excellent audit results. The agency's management team deserves recognition for closely monitoring expenses and creating efficiencies wherever possible which contribute to delivering quality services.

I would also like to thank both the Northern Berkshire United Way and the Williamstown Community Chest for their support of BFAIR's Mission as well as all of our corporate sponsors and private donors whose generosity have the most positive effect on improving the lives of people with disabilities.



## **Volunteer of the Year**

# **Attorney Greg Howard**

*The Volunteer of the Year is presented to a community, business, group, or person that has worked closely with BFAIR and its program participants to advance the mission of the organization's work.*



Attorney Gregory Howard volunteered to join BFAIR's Human Rights Committee on February 14, 2012. Since this time, he has been a beneficial addition to the committee. His keen input is greatly appreciated as well as the unique legal perspective he brings to the meetings.

"Since my first meeting, I have been continually amazed and impressed by the professionalism and dedication of all of the Human Rights Committee members, which include, BFAIR staff, clients and community members. These individuals volunteer their time to ensure that the human rights of every BFAIR client are adequately protected. Before joining, I did not realize how many care plans and medical decisions required review by a Human Rights committee. Having now been part of that process

for nearly a decade, it is my firm hope that every similar organization employs the same review mechanism as BFAIR. It is paramount that we ensure the human rights of all people are protected, especially those most vulnerable to human rights violations," said Howard of his experience on BFAIR's Human Rights Committee.

Attorney Howard works for Donovan, O'Connor, and Dodig, LLP in North Adams. He graduated from Boston College of Law and since has been very active in his community practicing in both MA and VT under both state and federal courts.

He is a member of both the Berkshire Bar Association and the Bennington Bar Association. As a member of the Berkshire Bar Association's Executive Committee he has given Legal Education Seminars on Electronic Discovery and Social Media in litigation. Attorney Howard has also volunteered his time to both the North Adams District Court and the Bennington Superior Court Criminal Division as conflict counsel and with the Berkshire Immigrant Center in a clinic to assist individuals prepare legal documents to ensure for the care of their children.

## *Employer of the Year*

# The Log – Ramunto's

Emma Mulligan & Kara Mears, owners of The Log at Ramunto's located on Spring Street in Williamstown, took over the bustling brick oven pizzeria in August 2019. When approached by BFAIR, Emma quickly agreed to hire one individual to help with kitchen tasks. "Almost a year later, BFAIR and we are proud to say that we have one individual that works nights and weekends and a team of three that works three days a week. The team works together on several tasks such as dishwashing, cleaning the restaurant, and assembling pizza boxes. It is quite apparent when you enter the restaurant that customers enjoy engaging with Ray, Kerri, Bobby, and Craig," said Emma.

"The BFAIR team is part of the Ramunto's family, they work great alongside the other employees and add a great energy to the business," according to Kara Mears. "They have a wonderful demeanor, do a great job working for us, know their routine, and get straight to work when they arrive," she adds. When Bobby was asked what he liked best about working at Ramunto's he responded with "It's nice there. I enjoy it. I do my cleaning, the vacuuming, and the windows. I work with other people. I look forward to going back and I like all the people there."

Even when faced with challenges, such as having to close for an extended period of time this Spring, Ramunto's still made every effort to keep the BFAIR team employed and adjust their work hours in order to maintain their employment for as long as they could.



When asked why this employer was chosen for this award, Becky McAllister, Director of Employment Services at BFAIR, had this to say. "It's not every day that you find a business willing to explore opportunities for employment of people supported by BFAIR's employment program. Emma and Kara have not only done that, but have truly made Kerri, Bobby, Craig, and Ray an integrated part of the Ramunto's family and we are very grateful they have."

This is one of the many reasons why Emma Mulligan and Kara Mears are so deserving of BFAIR's Employer of the Year award.





## Edward Frampton Self-Determination Award

# Timothy Franchere

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



Tim Franchere, a young man and resident of Lee embodies grace and perseverance. He enjoys cooking and baking along with completing many home improvement projects with his mother. Most recently, they rebuilt the deck but also find time to enjoy outdoor recreation such as camping and fishing, especially while visiting Cape Cod.

Tim works part-time as a Service Clerk at Big Y in Lee, a position he has held for the past two years. For the past four years, Tim volunteered his time as one of the assistant football coaches for the Lee High School 'Wildcats'. This year, the team went to the State semi-finals and Tim, as has always been the case, was a tremendous support to the team.

With driver's license in hand, in 2019, Tim began to work out at the gym with a new personal goal in sight; training for a Spartan Race scheduled to take place in just a few short months. No small feat, a Spartan Race is a series of obstacle races of varying distance and difficulty ranging from a 5K to a marathon. Tim participated with a family friend in his first Spartan Race held in Vernon, New Jersey in November. Goal accomplished! Tim was proud to have finished the race, noting it was extremely challenging and exhausting. Not to be dissuaded though, he is currently training for a race scheduled for August 2020, in Charlton.

According to Tim, when asked how BFAIR has helped contribute to his success he said, "In a lot of ways, what you all do with the outreach. There is a huge community out there you can explore with staff's help and it makes life easier."

Tim always has an upbeat demeanor and treads through his day with a smile on his face, which clearly is a ray of sunshine for us all!



## **Edward Frampton Self-Determination Award**

# **Patty Moran**

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

Over the past year, many associated with BFAIR noted that Patty experienced the loss of her father. Patty was a very close companion with her father and upon his passing moved in with her brother Joey and sister in-law Bessie. In close succession to this traumatic time in her life she also took on the challenge of acclimating to a new job. To those who knew Patti before and after this challenging time in her life, she came out a stronger woman.

During this already stressful time in Patty's personal life, things were about to change for her at work as well. In June of 2019, BFAIR purchased the Bottle & Can Redemption Center where Patty now works. After the first couple weeks learning the ropes of her new job, Patty became the biggest motivator of her peers. After these first few weeks in her new occupation, her co-workers, BFAIR Employment staff and her close friends were truly able to witness Patty's resilience, determination, and personal growth. All would agree that she really stepped up to the plate, helping wherever she was needed and took tremendous pride in learning new tasks.

A member of BFAIR's Self-Advocacy group, Patty takes her personal goals very seriously and set two important ones for herself, when under the circumstances others simply may have not. Typically, a strong worker behind the scenes, with the support of her Job

Coach, Patty began assisting customers, working the register, and cashing out a steady stream of customers for their redeemable cans and bottles.

When asked about her work and how she is feeling lately Patty said, "I am in a better place with my attitude, and really love my work. The harder I work, the better I am at my job. I'm healthier and take walks in my neighborhood."

"To be able to witness the personal growth and perseverance that Patty has displayed over the past year has been an honor," to quote Becky McAllister, Director of BFAIR's Employment Services.



## Crosby/Quintal Award

# Tonia Canavan

*The Crosby/Quintal Award is given annually to a staff member who embodies deep commitment to community service and advocacy that former BFAIR employee George Crosby possessed. This employee also shows commitment to supporting the dignity, human rights, and quality of life for people with disabilities.*



Tonia has worked in BFAIR's Day Habilitation program at South Church Street since April of 2015. Tonia is a compassionate, dedicated and supportive employee who ensures that the members attending the program have opportunities to excel each and every day. Tonia can often be found planning and preparing with the program's team for an event such as the Day Hab's "Family and Friends" picnic or planning a diversity event for the Day Hab members. Tonia is a positive role model for her peers and providing support and guidance to new employees.

Tonia works hard to lead a series of nutritional initiatives to focus on the health and wellness curriculum area and encouraging everyone attending the Day Hab to focus on healthy eating habits. She pays close attention to

important details like incorporating low sugar snacks and meeting other dietary needs of participants.

Tonia's orientation toward helping others is evident in her personal life as well. She volunteers regularly with her children assisting with the free community lunch program, at their sports team concession stands, and you will also not be surprised to find Tonia lending a helping hand to those in need shopping for groceries.

"Tonia perseveres, has a positive approach and outlook on life," said Theresa Gelinas, SVP Day Services. Kim Baker, Board Member and 2019 Gala Committee Chair also expressed her appreciation for Tonia volunteering her time after work to help make the agency's fundraising event a success.

Tonia loves her job at BFAIR, "I have always wanted to do this job and I give it my full commitment every day. I have a daughter with special needs and my work transitions at home as well. I use the techniques and skills that I learn at BFAIR to help my daughter."

## Board Award

# Melanie Moran



Melanie Moran, Staff and Training Developer, has been with the Agency since 2017, joining as BFAIR's Recruiter until transferring to her current role in October of 2018.

In the short period of time Melanie has been in her current role, which she helped define, she has had such a positive impact on BFAIR. She is trusted by staff and her advice is sought out by all levels of management when it comes to training and staff development ideas. Melanie is the HR department's go-to person for troubleshooting training issues, solving a tricky database concern with the learning management system, or other newly implemented staff development systems.

"Melanie is proactive in her approach; she is constantly scanning for opportunities to enhance an employee's job experience and provide them the tools through training to excel. She helps managers come up with solutions to improve staff performance through re-training or considering new methods in which to get the mission/vision of BFAIR to trickle down. She is truly invaluable on the HR team; her input, knowledge and can-do spirit are welcomed," said Michelle Baity, VP of Human Resources.

Melanie has grown so much in the past year; she beams with confidence, not only recognizes issues but comes armed with solutions and ways to implement them. Melanie is always volunteering to help regardless if it's sprucing up the office for the holidays or helping with the Annual Staff Appreciation Picnic. Melanie has a drive and ambition that is contagious. She sits on the agency's Diversity committee, serves as Chair of the Training committee, and organizes/plans/executes all quarterly supervisor and management training programs.

Additionally, she brings her outside experience to the agency where she is a member of Head Start's policy council. "I love being able to support our staff to better serve our individuals. It is a privilege to work beside people who are dedicated to the betterment of others," said Melanie.



# Thank You

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