



# BFAIR BUZZ

2021 Volume 2



Patti Messina,  
Board Clerk

## A Note from the Board Advocacy Committee

On behalf of the agency's Board of Directors, I would like to introduce you to our Board Advocacy Committee. I became a Board Member because I believe in BFAIR and everything this organization does for people served. BFAIR has become my second family and throughout the pandemic our staff went far beyond their "job" supporting my brother David and all people served keeping them safe and connected to their families. I became a member of our Advocacy Committee to find ways to support BFAIR, our staff and for those who may choose to work for an outstanding organization.

The committee's overarching goal is to create lasting, positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities served by BFAIR and others, true solutions rather than temporary fixes. A very important aspect relative to strengthening services and advancing the rights of people with disabilities includes advocating with our legislators for our Direct Support professionals, promoting a greater understanding of the essential work they perform and enhanced compensation which reflects their critical work.

Thank you on behalf of the Advocacy committee which includes Board members Alex Figueroa, Committee Chair and attorney Steve Narey. We hope you will join us along the way to help the committee achieve our important objectives.

## BFAIR's New Learning Lab

BFAIR's Employment Services Department was excited to launch its state-of-the-art Learning Lab. Creating the Learning and the curriculum was the realization of a creative vision by BFAIR's Employment services management team that was made possible through funding from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's Pre-Employment Training Program (Pre-ETS).

This program prepares students for the workforce through five components in the areas of:

1. Work readiness
2. Job exploration
3. Work-based learning experiences
4. Self-advocacy
5. Post-secondary counseling



To qualify, students must be between the ages of 14 to 22, be enrolled in high school or post-secondary education, and receive special education services or qualify as a student with a disability under Section 504. BFAIR's Pre-ETS program works with students attending local high schools.

For more information on Pre-ETS scan the QR code.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Assistant Director of Employment Services, Kayla Brown-Wood at [kbrown-wood@bfair.org](mailto:kbrown-wood@bfair.org).



SCAN ME



BOTTLE & CAN REDEMPTION CENTER

## BFAIR Bottle & Can Redemption Center Partners with Boston College School of Social Work

BFAIR was excited to partner with the Boston College School of Social Work on a project with graduate students for spring 2021 as part of its Creating and Sustaining Social Enterprises course.

This course focuses on important concepts and stages in considering revenue-producing programs in a nonprofit setting to add financial stability. Students are involved in basic data gathering and analysis and organize their conclusions in a business plan for the enterprise effort.

The students conducted a brief survey of local residents focused on providing BFAIR with information to support our community with a valuable service that provides employment for people with disabilities and is beneficial to the environment. BFAIR's owned and operated Bottle and Can Redemption Center located in North Adams helps our community by providing residents with a way to exchange redeemable bottles and cans for cash while remaining true to our mission.

The culmination of the course resulted in an expansion of BFAIR's Bottle and Can Redemption Center in the form of a "pop-up" service working with the North Adams Housing Authority, Berkshire Housing, and the City of North Adams. The pop-up service will give these locations the opportunity to redeem or donate their bottles during certain time frames during the week at six different locations in North County starting in June 2021.

## BFAIR's Family Advisory Committee (FAC) Sends Gratitude Magnets to Staff

The Committee worked with both Day Programs to create art, providing 3x3 stock cards which they painted using water colors, some including drawings. Once the art work was completed, inspirational quotes/words were gathered from FAC members and placed on the back of each card stock, laminated and placed a magnet on each.



*Mission/Purpose of BFAIR's Family Advisory Committee:  
The Committee's goal is to support the Board and Mission of BFAIR and most importantly our Direct Care professionals who have been instrumental in providing quality care to people we support. BFAIR's Family Advisory Committee recognizes the consistency, commitment, and positive affect our Direct Care professionals work has on their family members and people supported.*

## Employees of the Quarter

Congratulations to BFAIR's Employees of the Quarter!

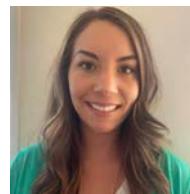


Kayla Brown Wood



Michelle Crockwell

Another staff accomplishment to note: Kayla Brown-Wood, Assistant Director of Employment Services graduated from the 2021 Berkshire Leadership Program.



Congratulations, Kayla!





# Provider's Council Caring Force Rally & BFAIR's Caring Force Ambassadors



The Provider's Council held its Tenth Annual Caring Force Rally on Friday, May 14th. Over 1,300 human service professionals gathered including many BFAIR staff and Board Members who recognized the importance of this event.

Since the Council launched the initiative in 2011, more than 28,000 have joined this grassroots advocacy movement. Because of the Caring Force and staff self-advocacy, service provider agencies like BFAIR have made strides making the public and our legislators aware of the essential need for human services in our communities and across the state as well as the crucial work of Direct Support professionals.



## Choose to Challenge

Our Diversity Committee realizes the crucial importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in our workplace. One committee initiative focuses on monthly themes providing awareness of DEI shared with all of our employees through our Workplace Diversity Facebook page. Recently our Diversity Committee along with several employees, joined in on the #ChooseToChallenge, an International Women's Day (IWD) campaign. The campaign called to raise your hand up high to show your support and call out gender bias and inequality, to celebrate women's achievements.



## Berkshire 150 Challenge



Once the weather turned nice our staff, individuals supported and members of our Board of Directors got moving!

Three teams were formed to participate in Berkshire Health System's Berkshire 150 challenge. This 6-week program kicked off on Sunday April 18th and collectively our Church Street, Roberts Drive and the "Goal Getters" logged 67,183 active minutes! Another important achievement in our Health and Wellness Campaign. Next up just in time for the really warm weather - the Hydration Challenge!

### Our Top 3 Individual/Program Participants were:

- Kelsey - 4,282 minutes
- Bonnie - 3,007 minutes
- Aiyana - 1,887 minutes

### Our Top 3 Staff/Board Finishers were:

- Tonia Canavan - 4,604 minutes
- Kim Baker - 2,659 minutes
- Cathy Leveque - 2,190 minutes

## BFAIR's First Virtual Annual Meeting



We hope you had a chance to join us for our first virtual Annual Meeting. Even though we wish that we could have met in person with our usual 300+ supporters, we enjoyed providing a video update of our achievements in 2020. While the year wasn't without enormous challenges, we couldn't have done it without YOUR SUPPORT! If you'd like to watch our video use the QR code below.

SCAN ME





Berkshire Family & Individual Resources

771 South Church Street | North Adams, MA 01247

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