

MetroWest Center For Independent Living



2022 Annual Report

Serving 26 Communities

Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Foxboro, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Plainville, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Wayland, Wellesley, Weston and Wrentham



Message from the Acting Director

Mission Statement

MWCIL enhances the full participation of persons with disabilities in the community.

Vision

All people with disabilities are empowered to choose how they experience Independent Living.

Leadership Team

Rose Quinn—Acting Director

David Correia—Director of Advocacy

Danya DelMonaco—Director of Services

Winifred McGraw—Executive Assistant

Board of Directors

Joe Bellil—President

Edward Carr—Vice President

Michael Kennedy—Treasurer

Tyler Terrasi—Clerk

Sebastian Leu

The year 2022 will go down as a watershed year in the history of the MetroWest Center for Independent Living, as we suddenly and unexpectedly lost our Executive Director and guiding force of the center for the past 30 years, Paul W. Spooner.

To say the loss was devastating is an understatement, especially coming at a time when our office had just completed a long-awaited move to an accessible first-floor office suite that had been the centerpiece of Paul's vision of the future.

As the person who has worked closely with Paul from the outset of his leadership, now charged with carrying on his responsibilities until the next director is chosen, I have a much better understanding of how enormous those responsibilities can be! During this time, I have been most grateful for the direction and support of MWCIL's Board of Directors, as well as our entire leadership team and staff. I am very confident that same level of support will continue for our organization's next executive director.

Looking forward to 2023, we are hopeful that any new manifestations of Covid will be mild, (if not non-existent), and many missed in-person gatherings will be able to resume. This year's IL Education Day at the State House will take place on March 23rd, when IL staff and consumers will be able to hear from and communicate directly with their legislators. This valuable opportunity was lost to Covid over the previous three years. Planning sessions are also underway for the return of the SILC conference in September. Although CARES funding has ended, several innovative federal and state initiatives on housing and transportation access are being rolled out this year to advance community living options for persons with disabilities.

Most importantly, in behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of MWCIL, I would like to express our profound thanks to the countless friends of the center, both organizational and personal, who offered their respect and fond memories of Paul, and made our burden lighter.

Sincerely,

Rose Quinn





Statements of Activities for the Period Ended June 30, 2022

Support and Revenue

Government Funded Contracts	\$1,235,592
Service Fees	17,183
Gifts, Grants and Contributions	7,537
Other Income	
Total Support and Revenues	1,260,312

Functional Expenses:

Program Services:	
Independent Living Services	897,390
Statewide Independent Living Council	112,792
Total Program Services	1,010,182
Supporting Services:	
Administrative	222,594
Total Supporting Services	222,594
Total Functional Expenses	1,232,776

Changes in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	27,536
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Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions — Beginning of Year	437,665
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Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions — End of Year	\$465,201
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Financial

Statements of Financial Position for the Period Ended June 30, 2022

Assets

Current Assets:

Cash	\$204,843
Accounts Receivable, Program Services	290,336
Deferred Compensation Account	13,445
Prepaid Expenses	18,127
Total Current Assets	526,751

Property and Equipment:

Office Furniture and Equipment	21,583
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(21,583)
Net Property and equipment	

Non-Current Assets

Deferred Compensation Account	
Security Deposits	24,162
Total Non-Current Assets	24,292

Total Assets	\$550,913
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Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities:

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$9,522
Accrued Payroll and Related Costs	49,962
Deferred Revenue	12,783
Deferred Compensation Plan Obligation	13,445
Total Current Liabilities	85,712

Non-Current Liabilities:

Deferred Compensation Plan Obligation	
Total Current Liabilities	

Total Liabilities	\$85,712
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Net Assets:

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	464,201
Total Net Assets	465,201

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$550,913
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The Core Services

at MetroWest Center for Independent Living

Total number of staff	13
Staff with disabilities	8
Consumers Served	572
Individual Services	1804
Service Hours	5143

Options Counseling

For individuals needing long term care services, we provide information and assistance in connecting with appropriate resources. This service is typically needed during a time of crisis or when an individual's situation is changing dramatically. Learning their options allows consumers to make informed decisions about their care and where to receive it.

Besides counseling, Elizabeth normally spends significant time in outreach at hospitals, senior centers and other area institutions, so that when a crisis hits, individuals are aware that MWCIL Options Counseling can help them analyze their situation and select the best choices. This year, with limited access, Elizabeth pivoted to phone calls, keeping our services well known in the community.



MWCIL is committed to serving the diverse members of the community. Danya, the Director of Services, has kept the staff working effectively, in spite of Covid19.

Information and Referral

MetroWest Center for Independent Living provides disability and community related information to all individuals with disabilities, family members, service providers, and community members who request it. We hold housing and driver's education workshops.

Peer Support

One-on-one peer mentoring helps people with disabilities develop mutual support, assistance, confidence and understanding. MWCIL provides peer support in a consumer-directed manner over the telephone, in person at the center, or at a consumer's living site.

Advocacy

MWCIL participates in Advocacy based on consumer and/or community issues. MWCIL advocates for needed legislation as well as funding and enforcement of existing laws to improve the quality of life for all people living with disabilities. MWCIL also supports consumer self advocacy which empowers consumers to be assertive and articulate when faced with obstacles to independent living goals.

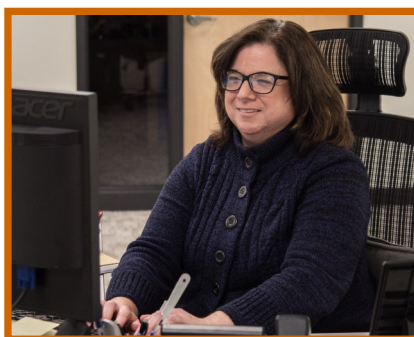
Independent Living Skills Training

Independent living skills training is personally tailored to achieve consumers' goals. Some skills relate to personal growth, others relate to learning more about how to handle and navigate services and responsibilities.

Transition

Since 2015, Transition has been recognized by the Administration for Community Living as a fifth core service. At MWCIL, we have always supplied transition services as we move consumers from institutions to the community, as we work with youths transitioning to adulthood (TAP), and as we aid consumers living with changing disabilities to maintain their independence.

The lack of access into Nursing Homes/Hospitals had an impact on transition services we were able to provide.



Other Services

Transition to Adulthood Program

The TAP Coordinator works with local students as they prepare for higher education, work, and life after high school. Outreach is key, as the student population changes every year, and we expand throughout our service area.

Goals may include college preparation, obtaining a driver's license, improving time management, financial and social skills, job search and interview skills. The TAP Coordinator advocates at IEP meetings, and supports senior projects that match student interests and strengths. The Coordinator tailors services to the individual needs of students and works with families and schools to support their community involvement.

While curtailed, we continue to offer Drivers Education prep classes to TAP consumers.

Community Transition

We are experts on helping people move out of nursing homes and into the community. This process is long and complex. The sometimes daunting tasks include:

- Navigating housing
- Setting up a new household
- Acquiring new services
- Maintaining good health care
- Learning transportation systems

No one should have to live in an institution.

TAP—Transition to Adulthood Program

The Transition to Adulthood Program serves 14-22 year old students with disabilities. Most youth services are no longer available after age 22, so it's critical for students to plan and prepare for their transition into adult services. Our traditional IL Core services are tailored to young people and their age-related needs. Students learn skills and self-confidence so they can successfully transition from special education to an independent adulthood. Expectations for students with disabilities are evolving with broader opportunities for internships, job placements and advanced education and training. TAP seeks to help students connect to these opportunities and become active participants in the community.

One Care

One Care is an option for adults age 21-64 at the time of enrollment who are eligible for both MassHealth and Medicare benefits. The goal of One Care is to offer a better, simpler way for people with disabilities to get all the care they need in one streamlined, integrated, person-centered plan. MWCIL staff serve as Long Term Supports Coordinators and assess consumer goals, needs and supports. As part of the Integrated Care Team, MWCIL staff work with our contracted One Care partner (Commonwealth Care Alliance), to get appropriate supports approved and put in place. Examples of services include arranging homemaking services, transportation, and home health services.





2020 In-Person Forum

Legislators' Forum

The annual Legislative Forum was held remotely on February 4, 2022 and was sponsored by the MetroWest Center for Independent Living and Easter Seals of MA. Karen Langley from REquipment attended as well as MWCIL and Easter Seals staff.

Senate President Karen Spilka and Senator Jamie Eldridge attended. Representatives who participated included Kate Hogan, David Linski, Carmine Gentile, Jack Lewis and Jeffrey Roy. Staff for Representatives Alice Peisch and Carolyn Dykema also contributed.

Senator Spilka highlighted the many successes of the past year, including money to service workers, easier navigation between agencies, tax credits for employers who hire workers with disabilities, housing money, drug costs help and the Mental Health ABC Act. Senator Eldridge spoke of discrimination faced by disabled parents.

Representatives Roy and Gentile highlighted \$22 million to the Turning 22 program. Representative Hogan spoke of additional funds to MWCIL, as well as Special Needs Trust legislation.

Thank you to all of the legislators and staff who attended our 2022 Legislative Round Table with Easter Seals MA.

2023 brings redistricting changes. Our next forum will be in-person.



Advocacy



MWCIL continues to promote equal access for individuals with disabilities to activities within the community.

The Advocacy Director, David Correia, worked with several towns on variances and technical support. 35 new access complaints were filed within our service area.

- Needham—Perry Park playground
- Millis—Tangerini Farm
- Weston—37 Village Road complex
- Ashland—Walking Trail on Winter Street, the Senior Center, downtown sidewalks and curb cuts, the High School football field and the Fire/Police Station
- Franklin—Sweat Park

David participated in the Voting Polls Survey Project sponsored by the Disability Law Center to ensure that polling sites in our service area meet or exceed the required accessibility regulations for all voters. He visited sites in Framingham and Franklin.

David also surveyed all COVID-19 vaccination locations in our 26 communities for accessibility. His results are available on our website.

The State swore David in as a voting member of the Statewide Independent Living Council. He continues as the chair of the Public Information and Education (PIE) committee.

David and Paul fought hard in 2022 for legislating MA standards to comply with 2010 federal standards for accessible design. This compliance will increase the number of accessible homes and accessible jobs.

Paul was a key force in two 2022 successes: the expansion of the CommonHealth program that was approved by federal officials and the creation of a special commission to study the history of state institutions for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. (see photos from 2022 Metfern Cemetery event)

MWCIL continues to be a strong partner for REV UP Massachusetts by sponsoring and maintaining the RevUpMA.org website and email list service to help inform voters on their voting rights. In addition to helping with polling access, MWCIL supported electronic vote by mail, which was new in 2022.

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts (DAM) is dedicated to securing fundamental changes in the provision of long-term services, support and care. With a long list of bills supporting transformative change, MWCIL will continue to advocate for change at the state and federal levels. MWCIL maintains the DignityAllianceMA.org website and email list.



Remembering Paul Spooner

Massachusetts' most stalwart disability rights advocate Paul W. Spooner died unexpectedly on October 8th, after a brief hospital stay. His life partner, Winifred McGraw, was by his side. He was 67 and had been a resident of Taunton for the last 28 years.

Paul was born in Hawaii and lived in both Japan and Switzerland, where his parents taught in the American schools, before returning to the United States at the age of 8 to be treated for a medical condition that ultimately left him with a permanent disability. He graduated high school from the Massachusetts Hospital School in the class of 1973. He earned an undergraduate degree from Southeastern Massachusetts University (SMU) in 1981 and a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College in 1989.

The roots of Paul's disability advocacy were born during his time at SMU, where he made strong connections with students who returned from the Vietnam War. He saw the crossover effects of being a Veteran and being a person with a disability and wanted to do something to improve access to education for all.

While going to school at SMU he volunteered for a disability agency and became an original incorporator of Independence Associates in Lakeville, MA. He left the board and became an employee, holding several positions before leaving in 1992 to work for what is now known as the MetroWest Center for Independent Living (MWCIL) in Framingham, as executive director, until the time of his passing.

During his 3 decades at MWCIL, he worked hard in the trenches to see legislative decisions come to fruition that not only improved the lives of people with disabilities both locally and nationally, but also for the caring and dedicated personal care attendants who remain instrumental in insuring that people with disabilities remain in the community as full and equal participants. His temperament garnered him respect from his peers as well as with the cascade of legislators he worked with over the years. His crowning success was just confirmed on September 28th when word came down that a proposed expansion of the CommonHealth program was approved by federal officials. This will allow eligible individuals with disabilities who have worked in Massachusetts to retire without the loss of their major health insurance program. Paul will not see the benefit of this program for himself, but he's sure to still be smiling over this success for others. Paul was never in this game for any type of accolade or personal gain. His mission was solely to insure a better existence for all people with disabilities.

Accomplishments and Advocacy

- Present at the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act on the White House lawn in 1990
- MA Personal Care Attendant Program - Paul worked with and spiritedly challenged advocates and state policy-makers, helping the program grow into one of the most successful independent living programs in the US. Statewide, about 40,000 people whose lives are fuller and less restricted because of their access to personal care attendants owe some element of their independence to Paul. (Source: Bill Henning quote in the Boston Globe)
- President and Vice President of the [National Council on Independent Living](#)
- Board Member of the [National Rehabilitation Association](#)
- Chair and Vice Chair of the [MA Statewide Independent Living Council](#)
- Treasurer of the (established 2020) [Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- Recently helped pass legislation to create a special commission to study the history of state institutions for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (2022).
- Championed the 2022 expansion of the CommonHealth program that was approved by federal officials.
- With Paul's direction, MetroWest Center for Independent Living has helped several MA advocacy organizations, including [Dignity Alliance MA](#) and [Second Thoughts MA](#).
- Paul developed [MA Tales of Independent Living](#) - a series of videos where people with disabilities share their varied journeys to successful lives. Each person champions Independent Living. Bill Allan interviewed and created each video.



Consumer Stories

These Consumer Success Stories are written by MWCIL staff. All names have been changed. As these stories demonstrate, *every situation is different*. Sometimes a person needs something relatively simple to remain independent while other situations are very complex.

Will

Will began working with MWCIL in 2017. In January of 2019, Will enrolled at MassBay Community College. He was taking a general studies curriculum with an interest in film while struggling with organizational and executive functioning skills, often making academic deadlines at the last minute. Will transferred to Framingham State College for the Spring semester of 2020, began taking film courses and declared his major in film studies. Will excelled motivationally and academically and as he became more invested in his course work, required less and less assistance with academic planning. Will graduated in June of 2022, making the Dean's list.

Joshua

Joshua has worked with our TAP program since May of 2019. In that time, he has accomplished many of his independent living goals, but more recently he has accomplished his larger goal of working toward employment. Along with the support of his Youth Services Coordinator, Joshua worked diligently to develop pre-employment skills at the library. In the beginning his mother was very involved but then took a step back, remaining in the main library, while Joshua went to the section where he volunteered and displayed his ability to work independently for the first time. Joshua will continue to work with his YSC on his employment and IL goals.

Madeline

Madeline was referred to TAP during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2020. As a person with autism, she was very self-conscious, struggling with low self-esteem, and anxious thinking about graduating from high school, overcoming her challenges and being able to find a college or employment which would accommodate her disability. Through consistent encouragement, positive reinforcement and support during meetings with the TAP Coordinator, Madeline has learned to look beyond her challenges, open her mind to the possibility of improvement and most importantly, to embrace her unique gifts and talents as potential sources for self-employment in the future. Madeline has a very impressive skill in baking and decorating cookies and cakes, which although self-taught, can compete with the most highly trained culinary artists in the market. While at first she demeaned this skill, rejecting the idea that she could make a living, with positive reinforcement, research and development guided by the TAP Coordinator she has come to believe in herself and the prospect of being her own boss in the future. Together with the TAP Coordinator through consistent peer counseling and skills training, Madeline has learned how to employ positive-self-talk to rebut negative/self-demeaning thoughts, coping strategies when anxious or feeling down, how to value and price her time (which she has been continually reluctant to do due to low self-esteem) and most importantly, how to value herself beyond her disabilities.

Madeline is well on the road to entrepreneurship and will hopefully use MRC/disability resources to get established as a professional home-based baker with help from her TAP Coordinator.



Consumer Stories

Pierre

Pierre has been a TAP consumer since August of 2022. When Pierre started working with MWCIL, he wanted to accomplish two main goals. One was getting his learner's permit, and then work to obtain his driver's license. Pierre's second goal was finding a part-time job. Pierre has worked very hard on his goals. Pierre passed the learners permit exam, has enrolled in a driver's education program, and is working hard to get ready for the road test. Pierre has also accomplished his other goal of finding a part-time job and currently works at Price Chopper in Hopkinton in the meat/deli department. We are very proud of all of Pierre's hard work and look forward to assisting him with future goals.

Tina

Tina was referred by a consumer whom MWCIL helped years ago. At the time she was working at a sober house on the night shift. In August, after living 3.5 years in at Sage house, Tina received an apartment through Framingham Housing Authority. Tina had been in her apartment for about 1 year and during that time had been sleeping on a recliner chair. Tina has severe back problems and had also suffered a stroke. MWCIL got in contact with Tina and she was very happy that we would be able to help her. She said that the recliner was comfortable up to a certain point but after a while it was affecting her back and not allowing her to achieve a good night's rest, making her unable to enjoy her new apartment.

We assisted Tina in applying for Part B funds to purchase a proper bed and other necessary household items. Upon receiving the items Tina was so grateful, even asking about volunteer opportunities at MWCIL so she could give back to the community. I let her know we were just happy that she will now be sleeping in a bed, able to rest comfortably and continue working without problem.

Alice

Alice, who has vertigo and chronic pain, was referred to MWCIL by one of our ADRC partners in September 2021. She was facing eviction from her assisted living facility as she could no longer afford the rent. She was assigned to work with an IL Coordinator and quickly jumped into the process of looking for alternative and affordable housing. She had already completed the CHAMP application with her elder agency prior to her MWCIL referral. This was a very frustrating and stressful period for Alice, as her deadline was approaching quickly, yet housing was not readily available. Nonetheless, Alice persevered and in late January was happy to let me know that she had been offered a studio apartment which she had visited, and loved. She completed her leasing paperwork and was approved. She moved in mid-February.

MWCIL was able to assist Alice to purchase some household items that she needed, using Part B funds. She has quickly developed some acquaintances with her close neighbors. We are continuing to working on community supports such as transportation, homemaking, etc.

MWCIL in the Community!

Story and photo from the [Framingham Source](#), and the MWCIL 704 Report.

FRAMINGHAM - Olivia sustained a severe brain injury at birth resulting in spastic quad cerebral palsy and blindness.

At 4, Olivia is unable to sit up, stand, feed herself, and is nonverbal. She relies on the use of her adaptive wheelchair on the van to be transported to and from school each day.

In late March, Olivia's mother contacted MWCIL, looking for assistance with a wheelchair ramp for their back deck so that April could exit their home safely using mobility equipment and participate in family activities. While discussing this with several coworkers, we learned that there was a

family willing to donate a ramp that they no longer needed, as long as the recipient was willing to absorb the cost of removal. Our Advocacy Director, David Correia, went into action and coordinated a team of volunteers that included himself, Martin Garvey from 360 Motor Sports in Holliston, the MWCIL IL Coordinator, Lou, who was working with the family, the Framingham Access Compliance Inspector, Mark Dempsey, members of the Ashland DPW, Framingham's Fire Department Chief, Assistant Chief and four firefighters. One team assembled at the donor's home and loaded the ramp on a trailer. Waiting at the consumer's home was another team ready to unload the ramp. The family was able to take it from there and have the ramp installed on their home.

"We are extremely grateful for all of these people. With all of the stressors in the world today it is so nice to see people helping people. We need more people like this," said Olivia's mom Erin.

"This is going to be a game changer for Olivia", she said.

The last update we received was that the donor wanted to meet the family. She was incredibly happy to learn that a child was benefiting from the ramp once used by her now deceased husband.



IN / OUT PLANNER													
NAME	IN	OUT	IN CONF	VAC	WILL RETURN								
					9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5
Brittney T.		●											
Dan H.			●										
Danya D.		●											
Dave L.			●										
David C.			●										
Diane C.		●											
Elizabeth D.		●											
Erin B.			●										
Lou K.													
Rose Q.		●								●			
Sue R.		●											
Wini M.			●										

Staff



Rose



David



Danya



Elizabeth



Dan



Lou



Brittney



Erin



Diane



Sue

and Wini!

MetroWest Center for Independent Living

was created by people with disabilities seeking full integration into society. MWCIL empowers people with disabilities with the practical skills and self-confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. MWCIL works to promote access and change within society and responds with programs and services to meet the needs of people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities.



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