



Now that the holidays are over, we have begun implementing PBIS, our new behavior support/management program. Short for Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports, PBIS is based on behavioral principles for teaching our students positive behaviors and using positive reinforcement to develop and maintain these positive behaviors. Not only will there be a lot less focus on negative behaviors, but those students who do well every day will be getting reinforced for their positive behavior every day.

We are doing Cushing Spirit Week this week to kick it off...Hat Day on Monday, Mismatch Day on Tuesday, Blue/White day on Wednesday, Crazy Hair Day on Thursday, and Sports Day on Friday. We are holding assemblies/pep rallies and an ice cream social to celebrate as well. (Shhh---these are also times to teach our students about our PBIS system and our core values!)

If you would like to get in on the fun, please ask your student about the Cushing Cares Values (Care for Self, Others, Environment) or about Cushing Comets (our new mascot AND our new school store currency on campus!)

The School Store will be a very important aspect of the success of PBIS. This is the place where students can spend the Cushing Cash they have earned to buy reinforcers that are meaningful to them. To help us supply the store with lots of goodies, we are asking for donations of unwanted holiday gifts, gently used games, toys, CDs, DVDs, phone cards, iTunes Cards, or any other items that might be reinforcing for our students, as well as monetary donations to purchase reinforcers. All donations will be greatly appreciated!

**SAVE THE DATE REMINDER!!!**

**Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> PAC Meeting—7pm staff dining room**  
“Adult Services and Transitions”  
Cushing’s adult services, guardianship

**DIRECTOR’S LETTER**

**Larry Sauer**

Happy New Year to you and your families. I hope that all of you had a wonderful holiday season. The holidays were very busy here at Cushing. There were many events, parties, celebrations, etc. We are all looking forward to the coming year as one of new beginnings and new possibilities.

As you may already know, one of our new beginnings is the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports Program we put into effect campus wide beginning Monday January 4, 2010. We are kicking off this new program with a Spirit Week during the entire first week of January. We also introduced our new school sports team name, the Cardinal Cushing Comets! We look forward to this new program bringing a renewed positive spirit for the students and staff.

As new projects and new initiatives are begun, we will keep you informed through the newsletter. I hope to see many of you at the PAC meeting on February 2, 2010! ♥

**CARDINAL CUSHING IN THE COMMUNITY**

- **President/CEO Now Blogging**  
Jo Ann Simons, our President/CEO blogs regularly about what is happening at Cushing. You can read her blog and join in the conversation by going to <http://cardinalcushingcenters.blogspot.com/>. You will be able to find out more about daily life at Cushing, special events and you can even read about her meeting with Cardinal Sean O’Malley.
- We had a wonderful holiday season with many community events including our tree lighting ceremony and many parties sponsored by community groups. Many thanks to everyone who made the season so much fun for our students!
- Our students are having art shows in many locations recently—see the education report inside!  
♥



**Holiday Season—Giving Tree Update!**

Many thanks from Margaret Lelakes, Director of Volunteer Services and the “Giving Tree” Committee to everyone who so generously donated items, money and time to this year’s Giving Tree program. The many gifts were so appreciated by our students and their families! ♥

**CLINICAL/STUDENT SERVICES**  
**DEPARTMENT NEWS**

**Mary Bettley**

- We are bidding a fond goodbye to Loren Walsh, mental health clinician. Loren is off to new experiences in her life outside of Cushing. We wish her well---and thank her for all her contributions to our program.
- Our learning and planning for helping a program become restraint/seclusion free by using evidence-based practices continues this month with the development of the steering committee and the start to our monthly meetings. This is a federal and state mandate that we will continue to work on by developing some new programming and approaches including PBIS. We are busy developing models for individualized “crisis de-escalation” plans for each of our students which include sensory interventions, DBT skill sheets, and processing plans.
- Our Student Service Coordinators continue with their work in developing measurable IEP goals that meet the standards of the federal laws. We appreciate everyone’s work to help this process along.

If you have ideas or topics you would like to see covered in more in-depth articles in upcoming newsletters, please be in touch with Mary ([MBettley@coletta.org](mailto:MBettley@coletta.org)). ♥



THANK YOU FOR  
EVERYTHING, CLAIRE  
and LOREN—  
WE WILL ALL MISS  
YOU!

**PAC News**

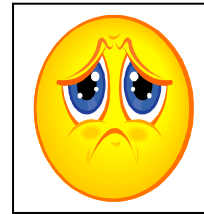
**Mary Bettley (coordinator)**

Please be in touch with Mary ([MBettley@coletta.org](mailto:MBettley@coletta.org)) if you want to become more involved in the PAC or have new ideas for the PAC, newsletter, or meeting topics!

The tentative dates/topics are:

- Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>** “Adult Services and Transitions”  
Cushing’s adult services, guardianship
- April 6<sup>th</sup>** Medications (Dr. Joseph)
- June 1<sup>st</sup>** Parents Experiences of Services  
—PLUS elections

We usually meet in the Staff Dining Room in the Culinary Building at 7pm. PLEASE JOIN US! ♥



**Health Center Happenings**

**By Claire Lehan, RN**

To all Parents/Guardians:

It is with mixed emotions that I am leaving my position as Director of Health Services. I will especially miss my interactions with the students. Although they are at our facility for their education, I have continually learned humility, resilience, tolerance, and love from the examples they have set.

I have truly enjoyed working with the various members of all the departments at Cardinal Cushing School. I especially appreciate the work of the direct care staff, their professionalism, and their ability to communicate any concerns to nursing thus ensuring the health and safety of the students.

Danielle Nicholson has accepted the position of Director. In her 5 years as a member of the nursing staff, she has always ensured that the students receive the highest quality of care. This decision was made easier for her because of the excellent staff Cardinal Cushing is fortunate to have working in the Health Center. I am confident that I am leaving the department in good hands.

Sincerely,

Claire Lehan, RN ♥

**Please see the Education and Recreational Calendars for January on our website!!**

## Recreation Update for January 2010

**Tom McElman, Anne Matheson, Terri Keenan**

Happy New Year from the Recreation Department! We hope that 2010 will be great year for our Cardinal Cushing families and friends.

- Basketball is up and running with our four teams and skills group. We are in the process of finalizing our basketball schedule and will post it on our web site as soon as possible.
- Thank you to everyone who purchased Cushing active wear. For those who missed it, we will be offering it again in February, with some new items to include long sleeve t-shirts, golf shirts, and more.
- It was a busy month for our students between all of the holiday parties, basketball practices and crafts. We would like to thank the staff who help make our holiday season a great success and we hope everyone had fun.
- We look forward to a great year in recreation and if you have any suggestions or ideas, we welcome your input. Happy New Year –Anne, Teri, & Tom. ♥

## Education Department

Guest Reporter-Randy Wiskow

The Art Program has been very busy in 2009! We are very proud to welcome our new music therapist, Rose Ana, who brings life to the halls with singing, drum beating, instrument playing and choir performances. She is doing an outstanding job, we are lucky to have her!

We started out the school year with creating art to be displayed at the three fundraising golf tournaments for the school, the golfers loved the student art and we even sold a few! Another great adventure we have started was the opening of the Cushing Trader, our on-campus Art store. The store is open daily, except Sundays; hours are longer during the Holidays. We feature all student created products, painted furniture, framed art, ceramic creations and much more. If you have not visited, please do!

Our students were lucky enough to have their Art shown at the local Starbucks for the months of November and December. We currently have a small show at the Department of Social Services in Brockton and have a show coming up in Cambridge at University Place in mid February. A highlight of this month is that Nick M., a student in our Voc. Department is having a one man Art show in Cambridge at ZuZu for the month of January. We are all very proud of him!

As always we are busy decorating the campus, creating centerpieces for school functions, having fun, creating art and enjoying our time in the Art room, whenever you are on campus, please visit us in the basement of the main school building!

Randy and all the art students! ♥

## Vocational Education Department

Doug Frazier

I hope everyone had a great holiday! 2010 is just starting and it gives us time to reflect on past and future happenings.

### 2009:

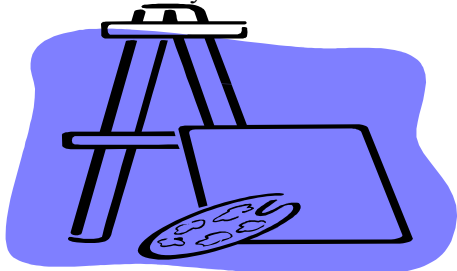
- Project Forward at Cape Cod Community College has been a challenge but has been a great success! Congratulations to the students that attended in the fall and will continue this spring.
- Cushing Trader store opened in September. This has been a great collaboration between departments – vocational, education, art, specialized services and many other departments.
- Sister's Inn opened in the summer and has had guest from various states and countries.
- All vocational sites are equipped with computers.
- Recycling work site expanded to five days per week.
- Three area public schools are sending students for vocational training on our campus due to the many vocational experiences we can offer.
- We are offering café services to Cushing Residence on a weekly basis.

### 2010:

- Partnership/collaboration with the Best Buddies organization to offer community based work experiences for students.
- Continued growth in working with public schools to offer their students vocational experiences – One more school system has joined.
- Planned separation of the Greenhouse program from the Cushing Trader (Business Arts program).
- Project Forward – Semester 2!
- Senior Disney Trip scheduled for May 2 – May 7.
- Graduation Ceremony scheduled for June 13, 2010.

I probably forgot a number of items but I wanted to mention a few of the highlights past, present and future. I would like to thank everyone for their continued support while the entire vocational education department and I look forward to providing a great experience for our students. Happy New Year!

P.S. The Cushing Trader/Greenhouse program sold 403 Christmas trees! – Thank you.



**Guiding the Transition to Adulthood:**  
**A three part series on Guardianship, Chapter 688**  
**referrals, and Adult Services**  
**(Mary Bettley with the Student Services Team)**

Just as you and your son/daughter/student have gotten settled at Cardinal Cushing and you've become familiar with what you can expect from us, your son/daughter nears 18 on the way to 22, and you find yourself faced with a whole new realm of unknowns. By this point, you have probably heard all kinds of stories about what lies ahead of you and your young person during his/her upcoming transition to adulthood and adult services, but it is often hard to decipher what is and is not true.

This second entry in the series of three articles in our parent newsletters will help explain what you can expect in the upcoming years between your youth's 18 birthday and turning 22. If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please contact the Student Services Coordinator assigned to you and your son/daughter. Of course, please know that none of us are lawyers, and for the most accurate advice on legal processes, you should use an attorney.

Additionally, if you have questions about transitions and adult services that you feel other parents may also have, please contact me at [mbettley@coletta.org](mailto:mbettley@coletta.org) and I will incorporate the answers to your questions in future parent newsletters.



**Part II: 688 Referrals**

As your child nears 18, you may hear talk about a Chapter 688 referral in IEP meetings and other team meetings. Chapter 688 is a provision of the Massachusetts General Laws which was created for youths with disabilities who will need continued support and services after turning 22 or at the time of graduation, whichever comes first. This law provides your child with a planning process designed to identify his/her future needs after he/she is no longer entitled to special education services. Filing a Chapter 688 referral creates a documented need for services and supports for adults with severe disabilities. The primary goal of filing a Chapter 688 referral is to plan for needed adult services for students. In those cases where a student is determined to be eligible and services are not provided due to a lack of funding or program availability, agency personnel can advocate to increase funds in the budget planning process for the next fiscal year in order to provide the needed services.



**What is Transition?**  
**What are the laws/regulations?**

There are two laws (IDEA and Chapter 688) that provide very different types of transition requirements for youth with disabilities. These different requirements can be confusing because although they both are called "transition" and they involve many of the same players (parents, school district, human service agency representatives, and the young adult); the two transition processes do very different things.

**IDEA** -- The federal special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains a number of requirements related to transition, which focus on the school district's obligation to provide transition services before a young adult graduates or turns 22 and exits special education. These are school services which will help ensure that young adults will live, work, and/or go to post-secondary school as independently as possible when they leave public school.

**688** -- Chapter 688 (commonly referred to as the "turning 22 law") establishes a planning process which identifies services or supports which may be needed through the adult service system once the student has graduated or turns 22 and special education entitlements have terminated. It provides a two-year planning process for young adults with severe disabilities. As part of the 688 process, an adult human service state agency will work with 688 eligible individuals to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). 688 is designed for the young adult with severe disabilities who, if provided appropriate support services, will continue to learn and develop throughout his/her life but is not a continuation of special education nor entitlement to guaranteed services.



**What is the role of the parent/guardian and student?**

A possible 688 referral should be discussed at the IEP Team meeting at least two years before the student is expected to graduate or turn 22 as part of transition planning. (In Massachusetts, transition plan should be happening as part of the IEP Team meeting for students starting at age 14, so this is just a continuation of this.) The 688 referral must be signed by the parent, legal guardian, or by the young adult who is 18 or older. This application is sent directly to the area office of the Transitional Agency (TA) which will best meet his/her needs (i.e. Department of Mental Retardation, Department of Mental Health, and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission). Sometimes, an application will be sent to more than one agency, in which case one of those agencies will be determined to be the Lead Agency in planning the services.

Every three years, prior to your child's three-year reevaluation IEP, the school system will provide you with a permission form for testing to be completed. Among the tests will be a psychological evaluation which will provide IQ and functional level indicators. Ideally, your child should be assessed through administration of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) which can be given as young as 17 years of age or the Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale.

In many cases, the school system will indicate that this evaluation is not necessary; stating that the student has already qualified for special education services and his/her IQ is not likely to have changed enough to affect this eligibility. They will ask you to sign the permission form waiving this portion of the full battery of tests. We would suggest that you do not waive psychological evaluations at any time. Part of the guardianship process includes a legal document called the Clinical Team Report which states that the student requires an adult guardian because they are unable to make informed decisions on their own. In order to support that conclusion, a full battery of tests, including recent IQ scores, is necessary. (The court defines recent as within 3 years of the completion of the CTR).



**What usually happens with students at Cardinal Cushing?**

For Cardinal Cushing students, 688 referrals are frequently sent to the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS). To be eligible for DDS services, 4 criteria must be met. Your child must be older than 18, a resident in Massachusetts, have a diagnosis of Mental Retardation or another developmental disability that has an impact on intellectual functioning before age 18, and have a full scale IQ of less than 70. In the last several years, DMR has created a procedure and assessment process titled the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Process (MASSCAP). This procedure has four main components. All four components will be assessed and combined to create an individual MASSCAP profile for the student.

The first, and most important, component is the Inventory of Client and Agency Planning (ICAP). This is a measure that is used to determine a student’s developmental level and functional limitations. This measure consists of a number of questions about the student’s ability to perform various tasks ranging from the ability to swallow to the ability to write a letter. It is being administered by DMR transition workers and DMR supervisors. Parents may or may not be told that the questions they are being asked are part of this measure.

The other three components of the MASSCAP are also factored into the student’s overall MASSCAP profile. The second component is resource availability. DDS is looking at resources that are available to the student, including financial resources of the family. The third component is individual characteristics such as medical, mental health, and socio-behavioral issues which require more intensive supervision and support. There is some leeway in providing 24/7 care to students who fall in the 40-69 range and have significant issues that in these areas. The fourth component is caregiver capacity or the ability of caregivers to provide ongoing care in the home. This includes the number of caregivers in the home, the age and health of these caregivers, and the number of other dependents that these caregivers are responsible for.

Our advice to parents is to be honest with DDS workers when they ask questions about your child’s abilities and functional levels. Let them know exactly how many cues your child needs to complete tasks and whether or not they need reminders to begin tasks. Be specific, quantify everything, and refrain from using subjective words, such as independent. We know that parents like to paint their children in a good light and we encourage you to not lose sight of your child’s strengths. However, make sure to be honest and express your child’s true abilities to DMR workers during the transition period. It is also essential to remember that the complexity of your child’s needs is not the only factor being considered in the determination of services (including residential support). DMR will also be looking for any limitations in your resources to care for him/her in your own home. As such, it is essential to reveal any factors which may limit this such as your age, health, the number of available caregivers in the home, the number of other dependents for whom you are responsible, and your capacity to provide a safe, supervised environment for your child. Lastly, before making this determination, DMR will also take into account its own professional judgment, as well as its resource availability.

Additionally, should your child be found ineligible for services that you feel they need, you have 30 days from the receipt of your denial letter to appeal this decision. The appeals process begins when you request an informal conference. This meeting will be conducted by the Regional Eligibility Manager and the Regional Psychologist to meet your child and review the decision. If the decision is upheld, you will have two additional opportunities to appeal. The first is to submit a written request to the Commissioner for a Fair Hearing. A Fair Hearing Officer will then be assigned as a neutral party to review the application and the appeal and make a final ruling as to whether or not your child is eligible for DDS services. Should the denial be upheld once again, you can make a final appeal to the Massachusetts Superior Court. The process for each level of appeals is included in any denial letters that you receive from DDS.

Undoubtedly, this 688 process and your child’s transition to adult services can be quite overwhelming. As such, Cardinal Cushing is prepared to help guide you through this process, as much as possible. Please feel free to contact your child’s Student Services Coordinator with any questions or concerns as they arise.



**Do I really need a lawyer to do all of this?**

We get asked this question---a lot. The answer depends upon your family finances, your comfort at asking questions, and in going into a courthouse to file any necessary papers. The good thing about using an attorney is that if you choose someone who is very familiar with this process, you can be sure that an expert is thinking about all the possible options for your son/daughter’s care and you have a knowledgeable person managing all the paperwork and filing requirements.



**Where can I get help?**

Undoubtedly, these various processes and your child’s transition to adult services can be quite overwhelming. As such, Cardinal Cushing staff are prepared to help guide you through this process as much as possible. We can complete assessment forms, answer questions, and provide you with any information or referrals that you may need. Please feel free to contact your child’s Student Services Coordinator with any questions or concerns as they arise. ♥

