



CARDINAL CUSHING SCHOOL/HANOVER NOVEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

SAVE THE DATE REMINDERS!!!

Tues Nov 10-7pm

First Parent Advisory Council Meeting

9am-1pm Fri Nov 20th-
Open House

**Please see the Education and Recreational
Calendars on our website as well!!**

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Larry Sauer

Welcome back to the first issue of the newly revived Cushing Parent Newsletter! The newsletter has been on hiatus for awhile, but when we met with the Parent Advisory Committee Officers in September, they let us know how much the newsletter has been missed, so we are reinstating it.

The newsletter will be a little different this time. For every parent who has given us an e-mail address, we'll be sending a monthly e-mail with links to the newsletter, our recreation calendar, and our school calendar for the month. These links will take you to the Cushing website where you'll find all of these items. We are hoping to get it out to everyone around the beginning of the month. For parents who don't have an e-mail address, we will be sending out a hard copy in the mail, however, it may come a little later than the e-mailed copy.

Part of our reason for sending the newsletter and calendars by e-mail is in support of our Go Green initiative that has been going strong at Cushing for more than a year. We are making a great effort to cut down on the amount of unnecessary paper that we use. We also have the Green Team on campus. This vocational site teaches students (and staff) to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. The Green Team collects paper and plastics for recycling. They have also gone to Fenway Park on several occasions with other students and staff to participate in their recycling program by collecting recyclable plastics from the fans!

It has been a very busy beginning to the school year here in Hanover. We opened a new retail vocational site, the Cushing Trader, to sell artwork,

crafts, jewelry, and other items made by our students. This new boutique has been quite a hit and we anticipate a significant increase in traffic as the holiday season approaches.

We have also opened two residences as transition units called ACHIEVE. These programs are focused on greater independence and greater responsibility for the students with the goal of preparing them for life in the adult world. Most of the students in these programs are attending Project Forward at Cape Cod Community College. This has been a challenging program for our students, but they have really stepped up to the plate and are shining in this new educational environment.

Each month I'll be telling you about a few of the many new initiatives we are working to develop here at Cushing. I hope to see many of you at our first Parent Advisory Committee meeting in November. We'll be electing the PAC officers in addition to a presentation described elsewhere in the newsletter.

Whether I see you at the PAC Meeting or not, I hope each of you and your families have a happy and safe Thanksgiving and Holiday Season! ♥

OPEN HOUSE INVITATION

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We are pleased to invite you to our annual Open House in recognition of National Education Week. This year's open house will be held on Friday, November 20, from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. There will be a performance in the auditorium at 9:30 A.M. and Soccer awards will be given out in the afternoon after lunch.

We are also happy to announce that our newly opened Cushing Trader will be available for your shopping pleasure. You will be pleased to see the many student-made items for sale. (See the coupon at the end of this newsletter for savings!)

Please RSVP to Kathy Doyle. You may call her at 781-826-6371(x 1211) or email her at kdoyle@coletta.org

CARDINAL CUSHING IN THE COMMUNITY

- Jo Ann Simons recently had the honor of meeting with Cardinal Sean O'Malley together with John Boucher, Chairman of our Board and former Board member and Chancellor of the Archdiocese, Jim McDonough. Cardinal O'Malley expressed great interest, fondness and understanding of our organization and we can look forward to welcoming him here in the future. We are all fortunate that he is providing leadership in our community. We also found out that Cardinal Sean blogged about the meeting on his website.
- We are partnering with Tufts Medical School and the School of Nutrition to design and bring the best possible health and wellness program to our organization. Led by Professor Aviva Must (recently quoted in a Sunday's Boston Globe front page story on college diets) and Professor Christina Economos (recently pictured with Governor Patrick, in the Boston Globe's Names section for receiving an Innovator in Health Award), students at Tufts are developing innovative program options for Cushing and met with program staff to understand our school and students.
- Larry Sauer, Vice President for Student Programs and Services, was re-elected to the Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools (MAAPS) Board of Directors in September and on October 27th was elected to serve on the Executive Committee of the Board as the Clerk.
- We are also partnering with Best Buddies Massachusetts and their jobs program to develop community based jobs for our older Hanover students. Under this agreement, a Best Buddies Employment Consultant will work with up to 16 of our students annually to identify their employment interests, find jobs, provide job coaching and follow up support. ♥

BREAKING NEWS!

Cardinal Cushing Schools has received approval for the SEVIS—a process that now allows us to accept students from other countries. Congratulations to all the staff who worked so hard on this application and process. There will be more on this and our plans for international students in the next newsletter.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Roberta Pulaski

We have had a very exciting fall season this year. Along with several new teacher assistants, we started the school year with Lindsay McMahon, a new teacher in our Atlantis class and our Music Therapist, RoseAnna Cyr. We have several new spaces this year as well with separate rooms for science lessons/materials, for health classes, and a small space for a new venture – the Jewelry Lab. Our new library is under construction but you may still see it at Open House imagine what it will look like.

We are making jewelry from purchased beads and from the handmade clay beads that are made by the vocational students for the new Cushing Trader boutique. Our new venture is offering us many educational teaching opportunities for all of our students in all classes. As a result of this new program, we have had some wonderful experiences with meeting new people. The folks at Gem-O-Rama in Hanover, a wholesale bead company, have been great to us in helping us order beads and we are all on a first name basis. The owner of the company even came to see our products! The BJ Company, wonderful supporters of our students, gave us the opportunity to have a “trunk show,” which means that we were able to set up a table at one of their stores. Both staff and students had a four day period to meet people and tell “our story” about the Cushing programs.

The students have been working hard on their lessons, and especially seem to enjoy Science. We are studying different biomes and have been actively using our surroundings to experience environments first hand. We have collected many different plants and flowers that we have then identified and studied back in the classroom. Thanks to Karen we were able to study a baby turtle (don't worry we also successfully returned him back to his home)!

We continue to have staff from the Shriver Center/University of Massachusetts Medical Center working with our students, conducting their research programs. Mr. Quackenbush, an educational archeologist, gave a great presentation for Archeology month and helped some classes in their studies. And, as always, we have hosted many volunteers who come to assist us.

See you on November 20th at Open House! You will be able to see the new store, The Cushing Trader and we also have a surprise presentation for you. We are looking forward to all the new and exciting things that this school year will bring! ♥

VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENT NEWS

Doug Frazier

Since this is our first newsletter for the Fall I thought I would share some updates/ happenings within the Vocational Education Department:

- We opened a new business on campus – Cushing Trader store. Along with the education department we offer goods made by our students – art, jewelry, photography, silk screening, furniture, home accessories and ceramic works. It has become the Business Arts program offering both business experiences and creative art sessions to students.
- With the establishment of Cushing Trader the need to establish a separate Greenhouse program has been recognized – a seasonal program has started to emerge – more news to follow.
- The Department has established a Health and Wellness program and curriculum for voc. ed.
- We continued to organize and implement the Hospitality program focusing on the new Sister’s Inn which provides accommodations for friends/families of Cushing and work for our students.
- In collaboration with the Residential Department, we transitioned a number of students to Project Forward at Cape Cod Community College. We set up this new program to include morning classes, change of schedules, transportation, living arrangements and support for these students.
- We began a program offering vocational skills training to area public schools for their students.
- Finally, we changed the names of our two Pre-Voc classrooms to Vocational Skills classrooms to better reflect the student’s involvement in vocational training and life skills.

The fall season is all about changes so the vocational program has also been changing and developing to better serve our students. ♥

RESIDENTIAL LIFE DEPARTMENT

Chris Pike

This month I would like to highlight a few activities that involve our students and the community, guided by the principles of our Cushing’s three C’s--Caring for Self, Caring for Others, and Caring for the Environment. We are participating in activities that demonstrate a strong sense of giving back to and

building our connections with the local community by caring for others.

- On Saturday November 7th from 12-3, students (led by staff member Jim Teixeira and Shannon Cleary) will be participating in a diaper drive for A Baby Center, another non-profit charitable organization on the Cape which provides diapers and other necessities to families with young children in need. Our staff and students have been working to advertise a drive to support this organization and on Nov 7th, we will be welcoming staff, families, and the community to drop off diapers so the students can then bring them to the donation center in Hyannis. We believe this altruistic gesture brings awareness for our students about the need to help our neighbors, a real Franciscan value.
- On this same weekend another activity in which our students will be participating is a bazaar at St. Mary’s parish in Hanover. Our students will be displaying art work and jewelry that they can sell. They will also share information about the school with the local community.

We will be seeking ideas for future community involvement and giving back. Feel free to share your ideas with us as we strive to improve students’ awareness of the importance of Caring for Others. ♥

Holiday Season—Giving Tree Update!

The Halloween decorations are ready to go back in the attic, the sales of frozen turkeys are already in our Sunday papers, and it is time to put together the list for holiday shopping. At this time we open our doors and hearts to make the offer for you to privately let us know that you could use a helping hand for the holidays, or perhaps you would like to help those who may be struggling. Cardinal Cushing has some students with no families, others with very loving families who are struggling to make ends meet, and generous donors who would like to help those in need. If you fit any of these categories, please feel free to privately contact Margaret LeLakes, Director of Volunteer Services and chair of the “Giving Tree” Committee at 781-826-6371 ext. 1246 or contact your student’s Student Service Coordinator.

CLINICAL/STUDENT SERVICES

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Mary Bettley

Happy Fall to everyone! It has been a very productive and busy Fall season in our department as well, so like the other Department Directors, I thought I would share our updates and changes that we have made to improve our services for all of you.

- We have welcomed several new staff to our department. In addition, our department now includes three graduate level interns from Boston College School of Social Work and Massachusetts School for Professional Psychology who help out with clinical groups, therapy, the support team, and behavioral planning during the school year. We hope that many of our interns will return to work at Cushing after they graduate.
- All of us are busy learning about the changes to Guardianship/Rogers laws that went into effect in Massachusetts in July 2009. Several of us also attended the presentation of Ken Shulman, JD at the Harvest Festival. We continue to provide assistance with getting the court reports/assessments done for our students and continue to consult on the most effective ways to write up results so that the court process goes more easily.
- We have been very focused on our leadership of PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Support), the new behavioral initiative on campus. We will present more about this at the upcoming PAC meeting and will feature it in an upcoming newsletter. For those of you who have heard from your students about “oranges or OJ (Outstanding Job) stickers”—this is part of the program that most students have heartily embraced!
- All of us in our department are also very busy becoming trained/certified in various clinical techniques in our diverse disciplines. Additionally, we are beginning the process of implementing the new state initiative focused on “restraint reduction.” For those of us at Cushing, this means increasing our skills in de-escalating students when they are emotionally or behaviorally dysregulated with more individualized/specialized plans, increased sensory interventions, “quiet spaces” rather than timeout rooms, positive behavioral interventions, teaching new emotional regulation skills to our students, increasing campus-wide use of Dialectical Behavior Therapy skills (an evidenced-based practice), and many other possibilities for helping students calm themselves without the need for restraint.
- Several of our clinicians were recently certified in “Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy”—an evidence-based practice for working with clients with trauma backgrounds.

- Andrea Lundquist, a Student Service Coordinator, attended a two-day training on improvements for our software program we use to write IEPs. This new program will help us track information more clearly and give you and your home schools more timely reports and due dates for upcoming meetings.
- Many of you have been approached by your Home School regarding “Massachusetts Municipal Billing” for therapy and specialist services. This is a way that the state reimburses school systems for these services if the student is covered by MassHealth medical insurance. For schools to bill MassHealth, they need significant information from us, so we have developed monthly documenting systems to provide to the schools.
- We continue to consult and seek out training on the new state and federal guidelines for writing Transition Plans in student IEP’s starting when the student is 14 and will be developing articles for upcoming newsletters about this topic and transition in general.

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). We are planning articles on PBIS, Updates to Guardianship/Conservator laws, Transition Plans, Dual Diagnosis issues of Intellectual Disability/Mental Health and Evidence-Based clinical practices, but welcome your other ideas as well. ♥

PAC News

Mary Bettley (coordinator)

The current officers of the Parent Advisory Council recently met to review the calendar for the year and to discuss how Cushing can be more of service to our parents. Our discussion included more use of the website for calendars/information, the revival of the monthly newsletter, and setting the dates/topics for our quarterly meetings. All the officers welcome new people into the leadership of the PAC—please be in touch with Mary (MBettley@coletta.org) if you want to become more involved or have new ideas for the PAC, newsletter, or meeting topics! The tentative dates/topics are:

- Nov 10th “What is new at Cushing” and PAC Elections H1N1, PBIS, new program initiatives, restraint reduction state initiatives
- Feb 2nd “Adult Services and Transitions” Cushing’s adult services, guardianship
- April 6th Medications (Dr. Joseph)
- June 1st Parents’ experiences and PAC elections ♥

RECREATION UPDATE

Tom McElman, Anne Matheson

Terri Keenan

- We hope everyone had a great time at the Harvest Festival. The hay ride was a big success with the new team of horses. Bonnie the Creepy Crawley lady tells us that this is one of her favorite places to bring her family of snakes, turtles and bugs.
- Sr. Boy Scout Troop 376 has been busy this fall working towards their Citizenship in the Nation Merit badge. At this point they have visited the State House in Boston, met a State Representative, went on a tour of the Moakley Federal Court House and will go to New Bedford for a tour of historical sites.
- The Jr. Boy Scouts and Jr. Girl Scouts are working on their Pet Merit badge and will be visiting Petco in November.
- Our Sr. Girl Scout Troop spent two day in the Berkshires hiking to several scenic waterfalls, and went to the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge. The highlight of the trip was spending the night at the Comfort Inn, swimming in the pool and hanging out in the Jacuzzi.
- On October 25th three of our soccer teams participated at the Southeast Sp. Olympic Soccer Assessment Round held at North Attleboro High School. Special recognition to Matt F, Ryan C. & Will for their outstanding goal keeping. The Mass. Special Olympics Fall Tournament will be held on Sunday November 8th at Governors Academy in Byfield, Ma.
- Our Cardinal Cushing Soccer Awards ceremony will be held as part of the school's open house. We hope that many of you will be able to join us.
- Basketball and Cheerleading tryouts will be coming up in November, please remind your Cardinal Cushing athlete that they must attend the tryouts in order to be put on a team.
- On November 24th we will be holding a Turkey Trot in conjunction with our annual Grand Turkey Celebration. We will be trotting around our new track and finishing up at the gym. We hope that you can join us for this big event.
- Please give us a call or email us if you have any questions or suggestions. ♥

SPECIALIST NEWS

Patti Nelson

To Treat or Not to Treat?

The specialist team includes members from Physical, Occupational, and Speech Language therapies. The tracks of service model helps to explain our role within our integrated model of service delivery and the rationale behind the decision making process. Often times, families/guardians may find themselves in a position to wonder how/why their student is being serviced by the specialist team here at Cardinal Cushing School/ Hanover. In conjunction with a student's team, we make decisions about tracks/levels of services that we offer in an individualized, specialized way. We hope by sharing this with all of you, there will be a heightened understanding of this process.

- Track #1--Direct Service—reflected on IEP in service delivery grid and can be individual or small group service to work on specific, identified goals
- Track #2--Therapeutic Trial—usually is not on IEP but a short-term (1-3 month) trial to see if a service will be beneficial and/or to determine longer intervention goals
- Track #3--Group intervention—this may or may not be reflected in the IEP and is used in many different settings (classroom, residential unit) to reflect services provided to a group with a group goal
- Consult/referral only—a consult and/or referral may be appropriate for a change in the student's status, progress or decline in a student's skills, or for a specific issue that may have arisen as a result of moving residential units or being introduced to unfamiliar/difficult vocational tasks ♥



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for the Family &
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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

