

# VOICE

News and information for friends and supporters of Vinfen

## Celebrating Meaningful Lives



Vinfen's Elizabeth Rouillard, CPS, and Elizabeth Cella MS, LRC, CRC, CPRC, with Michael Stuart Garfinkle, PhD, Lieutenant Frederick Cabral, and Boston Medical Center Lauren Snieder, MS.



Director of Service Development Kathleen Catano, MS, with the comedy troupe *Asperger's Are Us*.



Audience members fill up the amphitheater.

Vinfen held our 12th annual Moving Images Film Festival, Meaningful Lives | Outside the Lines on March 2 at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center in Boston, MA. The festival explored the importance of meeting people where they are and providing them with the services they need. It also raised awareness of the ways systems can succeed and fail to support people.

Over 400 people attended to view the seven powerful films and three panels. The morning began with the films *Fighter* and *Off the Rails* and a panel about the intersection of the criminal justice and mental health systems. After lunch, guests were treated to the films *Bonnie Brown* and *Myra Brown* and *Asperger's Are Us* followed by a panel with stars from *Asperger's Are Us*. The comedy troupe discussed the impact of *Asperger's* on their lives, weaving jokes throughout.

Guests then watched the films *Looking for Luke*, *I Jumped Off the Golden Gate Bridge*, and *Beyond Silence*. During the panel, stars from *Beyond Silence* described conquering feelings of hopelessness, the value of support, and the importance of finding one's passion. "I realized the power in being able to not live in this shadow, not live with such stigma, shame, and fear of how I would be judged. I realized it was so liberating to be able to share that story," said star and Founder of Go Fetch Wellness Jeff Fink.

A special thank you to all our panelists, volunteers, committee, and sponsors: Shaevel, Krems, O'Connor & Jackowitz, LLP; Ozzy Properties; MSG Staffing; Jackson Lewis, P.C.; and Parker, Brown, Macaulay, & Sheerin, P.C., who made this year's festival a success.



## President's Message

Bruce L. Bird, PhD, President & Chief Executive Officer

This year has been one of great change, especially in the Department of Mental Health's primary community services system, which changed to a new community model of care, Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) in July. These contracts require providers change focus from care coordination to clinical and rehabilitation activities designed to help people self-manage their recovery. Vinfen provides these services to 2,500 individuals in 6 areas of the state through 22 outreach teams and 73 residential programs. It's a huge undertaking.

For this new system, Vinfen's leadership spent months adapting over 30 clinical interventions that are research-supported, Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) and then launching a massive program to train hundreds of clinical and support staff to implement these approaches.

Last year at a conference of the Mental Health Corporations of America, I presented a TED-style talk called *Homework*. The talk summarized efforts in every organization where I have worked, from Johns Hopkins in 1975 to Vinfen today, which involve the critical task of translating sometimes complex EBPs to simple self-management actions a person can select (with guidance) then use to change their emotions, behavior, and self-beliefs. These protocols are designed for people and their clinicians, caregivers, and family members. No matter how sophisticated and effective the EBP treatments, the interventions won't succeed unless they are translated into formats therapists and coaches can use.

Vinfen is currently building an EBP content library where "homework" adapted from EBPs will be imbedded in a new electronic health record and in mobile technologies. This will make it easier for people to use, collect data on their use, and allow us to assess effectiveness and make improvements for people and the system.

This task of developing and helping people select and use effective content to manage their challenges and achieve their life goals is really what all of our work is about. **And we are on it.**

# spotlight on peers

## Congratulating our Champions

Vinfen is proud to announce that Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) Lead Peer Specialist Don Lonergan, CPS, is the recipient of the Vinfen 2018 Peer Leadership Award. The award recognizes the achievements of a staff person who has lived experience and has made contributions to the organization and peer movement. Don has been a peer at Vinfen for over seven years. "To be able to use my own lived experience to help others on their road to recovery has been a privilege," exclaims Don.



*Director of Recovery Services Adam Whitney, LSW, CPRP, CPS, congratulates Don Lonergan.*

## Developing Leaders

Home Health Program Manager Kristi Taylor, RN, was accepted into the Massachusetts Institute for Community Health Leadership. The institute's mission is to develop leaders who are able to address the challenges and opportunities in community-based, low-income, and uninsured health care. "We are thrilled that Kristi was selected because of her expertise in directing new initiatives to address health disparities," says Director of Integrated Care and Innovation Elizabeth Cella MS, LRC, CRC, CPRC. "Her dedication to nursing and human services inspires both her team and the people she serves."

As a person with lived experience, Kristi is also able to show others that recovery is real. "I am so excited about the possibilities this program will offer for self-development and the information and ideas I will be able to bring back to Vinfen," she says.



## Recognizing Recovery

ACCS Lead Peer Specialist Elizabeth Rouillard, CPS, knows recovery is possible. Sharing her story gives others hope when things are hard. Following an injury, Liz was prescribed painkillers and developed an addiction. While in rehabilitation, she met a man and became pregnant. Though she struggled at first, her pregnancy changed her life. "Somehow through all of the darkness, there was a tiny pinhole of light," Liz says. With the help of Subutex, a safe way to detox while pregnant, Liz attended AA meetings and got a job. A few months later, she had a healthy and adorable daughter. With continued motivation, Liz obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology. She also gave birth to a beautiful boy.

Liz then began working at Vinfen. "I was flabbergasted that a company was willing to hire me. But, grateful. I was hired as a Peer, and I knew that this was where I was supposed to be," she shares. Liz credits her support system as the key to her success. Today, she loves her job and is working toward a master's in social work. "I love who I am today and would not change this life for anything," Liz beams.



*Liz with her son and daughter.*

If you are a person with lived experience and are interested in joining our Peer work force, please visit [www.vinfen.org/careers](http://www.vinfen.org/careers).



Jodi Johnson, CPRP, CPS  
Director of Recovery Services

## Discriminating in Medicine

As I began my journey to recovery, I was filled with hope and unlimited pride. I felt I had accomplished goals that I, as well as others, thought would never come to fruition. I had to acknowledge that I had challenges I needed to overcome, and I was not ashamed of it.

When I started working for Vinfen, I was excited to learn how shared experience could change people's belief systems. I was able to be open and share the story of my journey with others. I felt

privileged to watch people transform into their own true beings and grow in their recovery. My favorite saying for recovery is "never be afraid to be you."

I accepted one of two positions for Directors of Recovery at Vinfen in July 2018. My colleague, Adam Whitney, accepted the other position. Not only have we been given the opportunity to see people grow, we are able to support the idea that peer work is essential for the new ACCS to succeed. Breaking down barriers of discrimination and prejudice for people we support is an important way for all to have equal rights and respect in the community. This is important in any setting, but particularly in the areas of medical and psychiatric health.

For example, I had some personal physical challenges that caused me to seek the care of a rheumatologist over the past year. This physician did not know me and had only looked at the documentation sent by my primary care physician. As this stranger looked at me from across his desk, he asked me why I was taking a certain medication. I described that I was on this medication for a thought disorder. He nodded, casually sat back in his chair and suggested an antidepressant might be what I was looking for. Astounded at what he was suggesting, I felt the need to defend myself and stated emphatically that I had been in recovery for a long time and that my present symptoms were something different. Without responding at all to me, he turned to my partner and asked if my mood had changed recently. I interrupted him, stating that if he was not going to assess my current symptoms, we were done. I then sought out another physician's services, and this doctor was able to address my medical symptoms, rather than assuming that my physical symptoms stemmed from my mental health condition. This is a very common experience for those with long-term mental health conditions, and it needs to change.

As workers in psychiatric rehabilitation, part of our jobs must include working to break down the walls of prejudice and discrimination through education and empowerment. Equal rights are for all, despite the labels placed on people by certain elements of our society.

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## Mission Statement

*Vinfen transforms lives by building the capacity of individuals, families, organizations, and communities to learn, thrive, and achieve their goals. Our services and advocacy promote the recovery, resiliency, habilitation, and self-determination of the people we serve. As a human services leader, we strive to be the provider, employer, and partner of choice.*

## vinfen leading the way

### Excelling in Program Leadership

Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) Residential Director Heather Ness was honored at the Association for Behavioral Healthcare's Salute to Excellence celebration with the Award for Excellence in Program Leadership. Heather's exceptional direction has been a driving force behind Vinfen's successful transition to ACCS.

"Heather has always provided the highest quality of services and supports to her programs under the most difficult circumstances. She has touched many lives during her tenure, and we are grateful she is a part of our Vinfen family," shares Director of Service Chuck Tuplin, MS.



President and CEO Bruce Bird, PhD, and Heather Ness with her award.

## Finding Hope and a Better Life

Before working with Vinfen, George struggled with homelessness, keeping a job, and taking care of his mental health. "Economic stability has been hard," George shared. But now, with the support of Employment Specialist and Certified Work Incentive Counselor Sarah Cowart, George not only has found a place to live, but he is working with a financial advisor to save money to buy a home of his own. George drives for a rideshare company and is starting to think about going back to school so he can help others going through the same struggles. "My goals are falling into place," said George. "I'm a lot more hopeful than I was a year ago. Having someone in your corner saying 'yes, you can accomplish this' is extremely helpful and motivating."

"I'm really proud of him," said Sarah. "He has come a long way this year. He is slowly becoming his own advocate."

George is just one of 3,000 individuals participating in the Supported Employment Demonstration, a six-year study funded by the US Social Security Administration. Study participants, like George, are people who are already receiving disability benefits for a mental illness. The demonstration's purpose is to examine how employment services combined with integrated behavioral health care and social services can help people with mental illness work toward a career. The study is looking into employment since most people with mental illness want to work, see it as a part of their recovery, and a way off disability benefits. "It is not just about getting people jobs, but getting them careers and helping them live independently," states Team Leader and Care Manager Christa Mullaly.

Vinfen was selected to be the Metro-Boston site. Like Sarah, each staff member works hard to connect people to resources that may help them in their quest for better employment. Already, Vinfen is seeing success with 75 of their 80 participants actively engaging in the study within the past year. The demonstration's findings could have a huge impact. If results show participants are more successful in finding and obtaining employment, the Social Security Administration may have all people with mental illness on disability enrolled in the program.



Sarah Cowart and George.

# vinfen making a difference

## Joining Forces to Help the Homeless

Vinfen's Homeless Outreach and Engagement Team (HOET) helps people on Cape Cod who have psychiatric conditions and are homeless get back on their feet and find a place to live. This past December, Mashpee Middle-High School senior Sarah McNamara organized a way to give back to her community by donating bags full of toiletries and other essential items. Through a partnership developed by ACCS Assistant Team Leader Lisa Holmes, LCSW, and Mashpee Teacher Aphrodite Purdy, HOET was able to distribute over 80 backpacks to homeless people living in Hyannis. They plan to deliver more through the next few months. This is one of many ways Vinfen partners with the community to support the people we serve.



*Outreach Worker Lavard Blanche, Peer Recovery Specialist Tammy Szymakowski, Team Leader Gene Carey, CAD, LMHC, and Clinician Frances Bradshaw, LMHC, CCFC, CCDVC.*

## Making the Holidays Bright



Thanks to everyone who helped us make the holiday season bright for the people we serve! We surpassed our previous year's totals and raised more than \$23,000 to purchase over 1,800 gifts for the people we serve.

Our generous sponsors include W.B. Mason; Denterlein; G. Greene Construction, Co. Inc.; Suburban Pharmacy Long Term Care Pharmacy; Wegmans Food Markets; Casner & Edwards, LLP; Wilson, Marino & Bonnevie, P.C.; Interior Resources; Brushworks Painting; Devaney Energy, Inc.; and Market Basket.

## Becoming through Brushstrokes



Gateway Arts artist Ruby Pearl was recently highlighted in the National Council for Behavioral Health's #ArtinMind. The project was developed to promote awareness, fight prejudice, and celebrate the artistic accomplishments of people with psychiatric conditions and substance abuse challenges.

For Ruby, art is like breathing. "Each stroke of my brush not only validates who I am from the darkness of my childhood, but also celebrates who I've become," she exclaimed. "I've finally been loved—loved by myself!"

## You Can Contribute to Vinfen in Many Ways

- Direct, unrestricted donations
- Matching gifts from your employer
- Gifts in memory, in honor, or in celebration
- Gifts of bequests or planned giving
- Contribute online. Visit [www.vinfen.org/donate-now](http://www.vinfen.org/donate-now) to make a secure and convenient gift to Vinfen.
- Donate your used vehicle. Visit [www.v-dac.com](http://www.v-dac.com) or call 877-999-8322 and select Vinfen as the nonprofit you wish to support.



A donation envelope is also enclosed for your convenience. For more information, please contact Director of Communications and Development Erin Tighe, MA, at 617-441-1736 or [tighee@vinfen.org](mailto:tighee@vinfen.org).

# vinfen happenings

## Legislating for All

Vinfen is committed to advocate for people with psychiatric conditions, intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injury, and behavior health challenges. During the winter, Vinfen took part in many legislative activities at the Massachusetts State House. These events offer the people we serve, advocates, self-advocates, and staff an opportunity to speak with legislators and to promote the rights of people with disabilities. On January 23, Vinfen participated in the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers' (ADDP) Annual Legislative Luncheon. Vinfen attended the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts' Advocacy Day on February 12.

The Vinfen community also took part in the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Legislative Breakfasts Series. During the Southeast Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast held on February 13, DMH Commissioner Joan Mikula recognized Atlantic Clubhouse, Baybridge Clubhouse, Cove Clubhouse, and Plymouth Bay House who had exceeded their 2019 employment goals. "Our program has grown as have our employment numbers," shared Vinfen Atlantic Clubhouse Program Director Janette Tibets. "We went from 11% in September 2017 to 31% this past January."



Road to Responsibility President and CEO Chris White, State Representative Kay Khan with President and CEO Bruce Bird, PhD, at the ADDP Annual Legislative Luncheon.



COO Sophie Jones, MBA, Janette Tibets, and DMH Southeast Area Director Howard Baker-Smith at the Southeast Area Citizens Legislative Breakfast.

## Coming Together for Recovery



Summer, Linda, and Jay enjoy the celebration together.

Vinfen's Cambridge Somerville program hosted their 9th Annual Community Celebration on November 16 with a sports-themed party at Arts at the Armory in Somerville, MA. Friends, family, staff, and people we serve were treated to a dinner, dancing, and live performances including singing, comedy, and poetry.

## Showing Off Art this Winter



Clubhouse Counselor Laura Morgan and Webster House artist Hilde with her work.

Webster House held its opening reception for their winter art exhibit, It's Showing!, and Holiday Card Sale on December 6. The show featured paintings, drawings, mixed media works, and holiday cards.

## vinfen connecticut

### Dancing the Night Away

Vinfen CT held their 2019 Winter Wonderland on January 17 at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bloomfield, CT. The silver and gold themed event welcomed 125 people. "Attendees started dancing the moment they walked in and continued throughout dinner and into the night," shared Training Manager Ashley Blain. Dinner was provided by the Vinfen Vocational Training Center Day Program kitchen staff in collaboration with the Windsor Ave residential program. The celebratory night also had a photo booth, which guests thoroughly enjoyed.

Thank you so much to Vinfen CT staff and volunteers without whom this event would not have been possible.



*Birdie strikes a pose at the Winter Wonderland.*

## vinfen arts

### Savoring Great Taste in Art

Join Vinfen for A Taste of Gateway on Saturday, April 27 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Gateway Arts Studio. Guests will enjoy an art swap, a live and silent auction, live music, delicious food, and beer and wine. Tickets at \$175 include an original piece created by a Gateway Artist. Attendees will choose an envelope that contains an image of art valued up to \$400. Guests are encouraged to swap their works with other ticket holders to receive a piece of art that reflects their own style. Event-only tickets are \$100.

For more information or to buy tickets, visit [www.gatewayarts.org](http://www.gatewayarts.org).



*Gateway Advisory Council member Beth Kantrowitz (right) and her husband, Ben Scheindlin, at last year's A Taste of Gateway.*

### Striving for Ambition

Be sure to visit Art Connection Studio for their most ambitious art show to date, *1001 ABSTRACTS*. The opening reception is on Friday, May 3 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

As the name suggests, the exhibit will display 1001 abstract paintings. Each canvas will be available for purchase at the affordable price of \$30. Fiber art, jewelry, and other works will also be for sale.

For more information, please visit their website at [www.artconnectionstudio.org](http://www.artconnectionstudio.org).



*Artist Calandra Clarke paints some of her canvases that will be shown in 1001 ABSTRACTS.*

*Art by Elizabeth Barnett, Art Connection Studio*



COMMUNITY CARE PARTNERS

# Meet Kerry + Duncan



*"I had a lot of trauma in my life and I was in the hospital for a while missing Duncan. Vinfen and CCP has done a lot for me. They have been really supportive with things. I think I'm doing better. I feel more comfortable. I'm in the hospital a lot less. It feels great. It gives me more time with Duncan and more time to myself."*

—Kerry

Kerry receives services from Vinfen through Community Care Partners (CCP). It is a new way to receive services. CCP offers integrated care coordination services to MassHealth enrollees who have complex medical and behavioral health needs. Our Care Teams partner with enrollees to meet their health and wellness goals. Clinical Care Manager Leilani Diaz, LCSW, has worked with Kerry over the past year to ensure she is able to attend her doctor appointments, get her medications, and make her house safe from falls as she frequently experiences seizures. As a result in the past six months, the number of times Kerry has needed to go to the Emergency Room has gone down. "I'm taking better care of myself," states Kerry.

For more information, contact Director of Care Coordination Lisa Goldsmith, MA, at 508-364-9438 or goldsmithl@vinfen.org.

# vinfen

*transforming lives together*

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# voice

spring 2019

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