

THE EGRAM

Summer 2022

Toward Independent Living and Learning, Inc.

The Key to Life is Happiness

It's the simple things in life that make us SMILE!



From the President



Dear Friends, Families, and Colleagues,

This issue of our TILLegram showcases TILL's energy and commitment to all of the individuals whom we support and – by extension – their families and friends. Our talented and dedicated staff members, who have

chosen to work for TILL, bring this energy on a daily basis and continue to be the backbone of the organization.

Getting through a pandemic was new to all of us, but a few fiercely held guiding principles got us through and continue to propel us forward: our energy and passion to create new opportunities for people who present as different from the norm and the majority. We believe in learning by doing and not just talking about it. Our vision for a world full of career opportunities for people who want to apply their talents and skills to helping others enjoy life to its fullest has kept us going through the past 28 months. One hears so much about needing to “re-energize.” At TILL, this vision never took a break. We maintained our energy despite the very real challenges so many people faced daily. To follow your passion for new experiences and make a difference in someone else's life is the backbone of TILL.

I am so appreciative of you, our families and supporters, who continue to trust us to learn with you and create new opportunities for relationships, for growth, for fun. It is why we continue to develop new housing, renovate older homes, expand day and clinical supports, promote travel, and finally, just for fun, create an affiliation with our own movie theatre and creamery. If you aren't moving forward, you are moving backward. Come forward with us and let's keep doing what we do best.

Sincerely,
Dafna Krouk-Gordon
Founder and President
TILL, Inc.



Recruiting for Success

Where do you find dedicated, high quality staff? Just ask one! TILL rewards employees who refer qualified candidates for employment with a bonus check when the person is successfully employed for 3 months and again at 6 months. 98 of TILL's 216 new hires last year were employee referrals!

Choices at TILL

In addition to full and part time employment, TILL offers per-diem work through our Choices Program. Choices offers flexibility for relief staff and a valuable staffing resource for our day and residential programs.

TILL's Relief staff are skilled direct support staff who provide temporary support when needed due to schedule changes, staff leave or vacancies. Choices is aptly named as it allows relief staff to choose the shifts that work with school, family or career obligations. Relief staff provide a consistency of care throughout our programs, as well as a pipeline for hiring into permanent positions. In FY 2022, 25 relief staff were promoted to Residential Support Professional, LPN and Residence Manager positions with TILL.

Here We Grow Again

TILL continues to grow in areas defined by the needs of the people we support. We are pleased to announce that we were recently awarded 2 new residential contracts by the DDS Metro Region to provide supports for young adults with intensive needs. In addition, TILL is currently developing a home in Billerica to provide residential support for adults affected by ABI (Acquired Brain Injury) under contract with DDS – our 7th home offering this specialty. With this growth, TILL is able to create an ABI division within our **Residential Services Department** to develop a variety of specialized supports.

Breaking News

We look forward to sharing these highlights in our next TILLegram, on our website and on social media:

Ngozi Carol Ejindu, Manager of TILL's Peabody residence, has been selected to receive the 2022 Providers' Council Volunteer of the Year Award at their Annual Convention in October.

Once again, TILL will be included in the Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in MA by the Commonwealth Institute (TCI) at their October 2022 celebration.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and tillinc.org/news

Stay in Touch

Now, more than ever, we want to stay in touch, sharing news and updates as information becomes available. Connecting by email saves time, trees and postage, and TILL uses Constant Contact to send and manage our email messages. We also follow up by mail with important notices to ensure that you get the information you need.

You can help us stay in touch by emailing info@tillinc.org to update your mailing and email addresses, as well as contact preferences. Thank you!





TILL's newest service model – TILL On the GO – is an individualized and flexible experience for adults with specialized needs including autism spectrum disorder, learning differences and acquired brain injury. This unique offering is an alternative to site-based programs, taking place in a variety of settings within the community.

TILL On the Go offers interesting and functional activities to enhance or develop skills for independence, individualized choices to promote engagement, new opportunities to build on interests, skills and previous experiences, and social connections with peers and within our community. For more information, contact day.services@tillinc.org.



TILL Shops is thrilled to be selling some of our unique hand-crafted gifts at Parcels, Northeast Arc's gift shop at the Liberty Tree Mall in Danvers. Artisans and trainees at ETC in Hyde Park and Cravings in Nashua carefully create each piece. We are proud of the work at each location, which encourages growth in cooking, crafting, woodworking and art.

TILL Vocational Services offers customized employment training, job placement and coaching, from job search, to application, interview and beyond, with supports as needed to ensure long-term success. Job placements are as varied as the person's skills and interests and include medical office support, retail pet supplies, restaurants, day care and specialty schools, data entry, bookkeeping, customer service and more.



TILL Transitional Support



TILL's Micro-Apartments provide Transitional Supported Living with a flexible level of support for adults with learning differences. Each studio-style micro-apartment includes a kitchenette, sleeping quarter, living area, and bathroom, with community space for shared meals and social activities. TILL support staff work with each person on assessed skill areas such as money and time management, personal organization, and meal preparation.

This spring we celebrated Christian's success with family and friends as he moved from this transitional setting to his own living arrangements. We wish him all the best!



TILL's Culinary Certificate Program is a specialized 12-week hands-on vocational training program, for adults (18+) with learning differences, to support development of the skills necessary for employment. This hands-on course prepares students for jobs in a variety of food service environments, with instruction from trained chefs, food service professionals, and experienced job coaches. Culinary training occurs on-site in our commercial kitchens in Hyde Park, MA and Nashua, NH.

April Madness Contest

This year's April Madness theme - the Key to Life is Happiness - has never been so true. From kite flying, visits to local libraries and fire stations, to making healthy snacks, participants across our day and residential programs spread happiness among each other and throughout their communities.

These creative efforts were celebrated at two summer festivals where the much-anticipated April Madness Contest Winners were announced.

TILL Residences and CLOs enjoyed a virtual Beach Party from the sandy Eastbrook Rd. Beach. The Middleton residence took Best in Show, followed by the Littleton, Lynnfield, Maynard, Brookline, Andover (P), Peabody, CLO-Weymouth, Danvers, Braintree, Andover (A), and Westboro homes, with Danvers and Lexington wrapping up the honors list with a tie! The Littleton residence won the "Most Wowable Wow Award" with their video capturing the essence of "What is Happiness?"



TILL's Education Through Travel

TILL's Education through Travel (ETT) offers people with learning differences the opportunity to gain interpersonal and social skills through the transformative experience of world travel.



ETT travelers, led by Dale Belcher, TILL's Community Service Coordinator, visited sunny Spain, with stops in Madrid, Barcelona, Toledo and El Escorial. Among the many highlights were exploring Madrid and the Royal Palace, the Prado Museum, the art and architecture of Toledo, and more!

"Being a TILL Travel Guide was a life changing experience! Traveling overseas is always an eye-opener, but traveling with TILL Springboard was a heart-opening experience for me!" *Beth McEachin*

TILL NOW Day programs enjoyed a virtual day at the circus “Under the Big Top.” Watertown and Chelsea TILL NOW programs tied for the coveted Best In Show Day program, while top honors for TILL Central programs went to Billerica TILL Central. Billerica Cluster 1 and Billerica Cluster 2 also received recognition for their “Outstanding Jerusalema Wheelchair Dancing” videos.



TILL Wave Gallery News

The TILL Wave Gallery, at 264 Arlington Street in Watertown, is an inclusive space for artists of all abilities. Their spring 2022 exhibit “**A World of Color, Bursting Out with Spring**” featured artists of all media, including paintings, sculptures, photography, 2-D and 3-D art. The Wave recently held an Opening Reception for their 2022 Summer Exhibition “**Tiny Art.**” Come see the exhibit that proves great things do come in small packages. Open Wednesdays, 1-5pm and by appointment, Tiny Art will be on exhibit through September 9, 2022.



YardArt is an annual town-wide celebration of creativity, with installations on front yards all over Watertown. The Wave Gallery “planted” a Peace Garden of art with the help of many hands (and hearts) including the artisans at ETC, TILL Farms, and the Watertown Day program who brought this garden to life.



Serving Our Community

For more than 25 years, volunteers from TILL day and residential programs have sorted and transported donations from the Boston Food Bank and served up dinner at My Brother's Table in Lynn, the largest soup kitchen on the North Shore, committed to nourishing the community with hospitality, free meals and unconditional love.



TILL Annual Fund Donations

We sincerely appreciate the generous donations made by our families, friends and supporters over the past year. Gifts made in memory of loved ones, for specific purposes or programs and grants help to further TILL's mission and provide necessary support for our innovative programs.

President's Club

\$10,000 and above

Gustav and Vibeke Christensen
Susan and Peter Staecker
James and Christine Connor
In Honor of TILL's Work
Saqwish Foundation
For recruitment and training
Jim and Carol Herscot
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For supportive technology and training
John Campbell and Susanna Peyton

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In Honor of John and the Littleton staff
The Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism
In Honor of Nadege Poirier-Nye
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Tom Flaherty, Bacon Flaherty, LLC
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Alma and Martin Ring
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Sally Milewski and Sarah Kaiser
In Honor of Kevin Milewski and the wonderful staff at Sandy Brook A Burlington
Orazio and Frances Magazzu
In Honor of Lena Magazzu
Paul and Sandra Palefski
In Honor of Sheree Wynter for her excellence
Gail and Stephen Trask
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In Memory of Cameron Archibald

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Allison McEachern
Vandana Nagpal
Marie Reil
Michael Robinson
Sandra Smith Granahan and Richard Granahan

In Memory of Sumner Fanger

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Sylvia Green
Elizabeth Kozart
Barry Putterman
Charles Warshaver

Corn Hole 4 a Cause

Charles Greenstein
Emmanuelle Langlais
Paul and Patricia Murphy
Evan Rasmusson
Paul Ridikas
Thomas Riley
Tori Sabbag
Sherri Sabbag
James Sabbag
Thomas Sabbag
Michael and Susan Weiner

"We are problem solvers, innovators and social entrepreneurs who work together to build relationships and make a big impact, one person and one program at a time."

– Dafna



RewardingWork

Connecting to Care

Free Training for Caregivers

Everyone needs a break, especially those caring for someone they love. If you enjoy caring for others, you can give them that break when you learn how to become a respite care provider.

Rewarding Work, an affiliate of TILL, is pleased to offer the opportunity to enroll in FREE Respite Care Provider Training. The online training program builds knowledge, skills and confidence about providing respite care - and helps you build your caregiver resume!

- Online - take at your own pace.
- Earn a certificate upon completion
- Add this valuable training credential to your resume
- Visit: RewardingWork.org/respite



Each month, TILL's Professional Development Committee awards a Certificate of Appreciation to employees who have gone that extra step in the performance of their duties.

Employees Honored during TILL's FY2022

- ☆ **Billerica, Hudson, Autism Initiative and TILL Central Day Program Teams**
- ☆ **Andrew Coleman**, *Residence Manager*
- ☆ **David Daigle**, *Senior Direct Support Professional*
- ☆ **Delisa Barton**, *Relief Staff*
- ☆ **Edwin Gonzalez**, *Driver, Transportation Dept.*
- ☆ **Farouk Kawooya**, *Residential Support Professional*
- ☆ **Jamie Dussault**, *Senior Direct Support Professional*
- ☆ **Joseph Aruna**, *Residential Support Professional*
- ☆ **Kwo Hong**, *Bookkeeper, Finance Department*
- ☆ **Lucy Carimbocas**, *Relief Staff*
- ☆ **Martine Pierre**, *Autism Service Coordinator*
- ☆ **Mary Carr**, *Administrative Assistant*
- ☆ **Rutendo Gomwe**, *Residential Support Professional*

Remembering Friends

A life that touches others goes on forever.

Robert Stearns
George Kiernan
Norma Holmes
Paul Thompson
Jeanette Bouffard
Ronald Charlantini
Patrick O'Connor

Robert Schurian
Diane Polk
Karen Fisher
Paul McElroy
Elizabeth Souza
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