

## Activities and Festivities

From the first falling leaves to the ball drop on New Year's Eve, the holiday season is filled with celebrations and events. We are thrilled to share some highlights of the season.



## From the President



Dear Friends, Families, and Colleagues,

We enter TILL's 42nd year as we welcome 2022, with a renewed sense of appreciation for each and every person who is a part of TILL's history, present and future. Crises bring out the best in humanity and TILL's workforce has proven that to be the case again and again. We are reminded daily of the heroic efforts of our direct care, management and administrative

staff during this pandemic, which refuses to leave us. Together, with our shared belief in TILL's mission and in the power of relationships and connections, we can survive almost anything.

Building on lessons learned during the past 22 months of these unprecedented times, we concentrated on expanding our use of technology for both the individuals we support and our staff. We developed new programs for people with acquired brain injury and reinvigorated our day habilitation programs with our curricula of engagement called TILL NOW. Connecting family caregivers with needed supports, our Rewarding Work online directory expanded in several states.

As "the Great Resignation" in the country takes hold in so many industries, our challenge is to confirm the value of human services as a career path. Thank you to the hundreds of TILL employees who show that retention with TILL and in the field of human services is the rule and not the exception. Families, employees and our community partners alike are all "essential." We could not accomplish our goals of engagement, support and growth were it not for your collective efforts. Together, we look forward to a healthy and exciting new year.

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

## Stay In Touch

Email [info@tillinc.org](mailto:info@tillinc.org) to receive important news via email, update your mailing address or find out more about TILL's services. Keep up with the news, events and more: like [tillinc](#) on Facebook, follow [@tillinc](#) on Twitter, and [@till.inc](#) on Instagram.



## Celebrating Commitment

Congratulations to the TILL employees who celebrated special work anniversaries ranging from 5 years to 40 at our annual luncheon at the Kernwood Country Club in Salem on September 8. Our staff's dedication and longevity of service is truly impressive! Thank you to Mike Ward at OneDigital for hosting us at this lovely location.



## Top 100 Women Led Businesses

For the seventh year in a row, TILL is honored to be included in the list of the **Top 100 Women Led Businesses in Massachusetts**, a joint project of *The Commonwealth Institute* and the *Globe Magazine*.

Dafna Krouk-Gordon is quick to share the credit for this honor with TILL's employees, who work tirelessly to support our mission. "We are proud that our mission to support people through innovative community based services has earned us this recognition," Dafna says.



## Our Essential Workforce

At TILL, we value each and every employee who contributes to our strong and caring workforce—and are pleased to continue to offer creative initiatives to recruit and retain staff—including a recent pay raise for direct care staff!

**Word of mouth continues to be our best source of recruitment.** Last year alone we had 105 referrals from TILL employees, who earned generous recruitment bonuses of up to \$500 for each successful referral.

## Holiday Happenings

**Oh Deer!** TILL's Day and TILL Central programs celebrated with live music by John Stevens, special treats and their own version of reindeer games!

**Zoo Lights** – residents and staff from our TILL homes met at Stone Zoo for a stroll through a winter wonderland of twinkling lights and seasonal displays, followed by merrymaking with live music and friends – including the jolly Mr. and Mrs. C - in a festively decorated heated tent.

TILL Office staff once again showed off their most outrageous holiday garb at the annual **Yankee Swap and Ugly Sweater** contest.

**Thank you** to Community Connections Director Paula Aiesi and Assistant Director Kingsley Brown for all their work and creativity, and to John Stevens for continuing to make the holidays extra festive for all.



## Making a Difference

We are grateful to our many supporters who have responded to our annual fundraising appeal and throughout the year. Thank you for making a difference through your compassion and generosity.

### TILL Receives Technology Grant from HarborOne



TILL is thrilled to be the recipient of a technology grant from the HarborOne Foundation. The grant will fund additional supportive technology and smart home devices for TILL residences, allowing uninterrupted access to curriculum, social/recreational opportunities and communication with family and friends. Thank you to the HarborOne Foundation for their ongoing support of our mission.

### TILL Wave Gallery and WAA Create Art for All

TILL's Wave Gallery has partnered with the Watertown Art Association, to offer exciting collaborative events at our inclusive gallery including the winter exhibit "RE-EMERGENCE - Awakening the Artist Within," the WAA's annual Mad Hatter's Tea Party, a fun Holiday Make & Take, and a special evening with local artists.

The TILL Wave Gallery is an inclusive space for artists of all abilities, showcasing local solo and collaborative artists, through exhibits, workshops, and events. Art for All – Art by All!

For details, follow @TILLWaveGallery on Facebook and visit WAA at [watertownart.org](http://watertownart.org).



### Handcrafted Quilts Lift Spirits

Members of the Proper Bostonian Quilters Guild have generously gifted a stunning variety of beautiful handcrafted quilts. From lap quilts to keep off the chill, to cozy covers for beds, these unique pieces of art in fun and traditional patterns are greatly appreciated by the men and women in our residential homes. Thank you to the PBQ Guild for your thoughtful generosity.



### New Home in Westwood

TILL's newest residence officially opened in Westwood on October 4, becoming our 6th home designed specifically for people served by the Acquired Brain Injury Waiver. The waiver supports the person wishing to move from a hospital setting back to their community. We are proud to expand our services in this area.



## VGo Robot Joins the Team

TILL is excited to be part of a pilot project with Vecna Healthcare, using their VGo Telepresence Robot. The robot, which combines two-way video and audio communications – from another room or location – and includes remote controlled mobility, is on long-term loan to TILL's Littleton residence. TILL will provide feedback on how robotics can assist with routine activities and help inform future changes in the design.



## Lynnfield Residence Honored as Volunteers of the Year

TILL's Lynnfield residence earned the Provider's Council 2021 Volunteer of the Year award for their ongoing support of their local community. Providers' Council President & CEO Michael Weekes honored the group at its annual awards ceremony, saying TILL Lynnfield "demonstrated both ingenuity and great generosity in their support of Project Bread, whose mission of feeding the hungry in Massachusetts is of the utmost importance."

In addition to the "Cookies for a Cause" kits that benefited Project Bread, individuals and staff created "TILL Cares" kits for frontline hospital staff during the pandemic, and continued to support the Make a Wish Foundation of MA and RI. Dafna Krouk-Gordon, president and founder of TILL, says the Lynnfield residence's commitment to volunteerism is extraordinary. "They use the power of volunteerism to become truly involved in community life and all that it has to offer."

## Rewarding Work Selected for Respite Provider Pilot

TILL's Rewarding Work, the online directory and job board connecting individuals and families with caregivers, has been selected by the ARCH National Respite Network and the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin to participate in a pilot project testing a competency-based respite provider training curriculum and recruitment campaign.



**RewardingWork**  
Connecting to Care

The program is designed to better meet the specialized respite needs of families, particularly in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workforce. Rewarding Work will implement the free respite training program in Massachusetts and Kansas, joining colleagues in 9 additional states. [www.rewardingwork.org](http://www.rewardingwork.org)



## Woodland Guest House Partners with DDS

TILL's Woodland Guest House in Lexington offers short-term planned respite care services with 24-hour support for adults (22+) with learning differences, developmental disabilities or autism spectrum disorder, in partnership with the Central Middlesex and Merrimack Valley DDS Area offices.

The Woodland Guest House offers cozy single bedrooms and welcoming common areas for up to 4 guests, with individualized support and around the clock supervision from our experienced staff. Guests enjoy exciting recreational activities and opportunities to practice social and independent life skills, while allowing their family members time off from caregiving responsibilities, confident in the care and supervision provided by our experienced staff.



For more information, contact [guesthouse@tillinc.org](mailto:guesthouse@tillinc.org)

## Kevin Stock, VP and CFO, Leaving a Lasting Legacy

How do you say goodbye to someone who has seen TILL from its infancy to maturity?

Kevin has been with TILL since 1981, one year after it began. He has held many roles in those four decades, and has brought his wit, intelligence, strong work ethic, sense of ownership and dedication to each one. His commitment to the people we support has been constant and evident in everything he has undertaken.

From his first position as residence manager of TILL's first group home in 1981 to his total transition to Chief Financial Officer in 2007, he consistently set a high bar for quality performance and hard work for himself and his staff.

Kevin has been involved in the development of many of TILL's policies and procedures and his influence is apparent in most operations of the organization. His natural curiosity brought us into the digital age with our very first Wang computer many years ago. He undertook learning about computer systems in the same way he took on other challenges which brought efficiencies and diversity to TILL's programs and services. He will be missed but his legacy will continue beyond him.

So, how do you say goodbye to someone after 40 years?

You don't. You say Farewell.

Sincerely,  
Dafna Krouk-Gordon



## TILL Welcomes New CFO

TILL recently welcomed James Voyer as Chief Financial Officer. James brings more than 20 years of experience in leadership roles, with experience as a controller, financial planner and analyst, most recently in the transportation and food industries. He has a graduate degree in accounting/finance from Bryant University. James has worked closely with Kevin Stock, TILL's Vice President of Finance, as he transitioned into this role.



Dafna Krouk-Gordon welcomed James to TILL, saying "Together, we will take on the challenges of the next decade using the systems and accountability procedures put in place over Kevin's tenure as CFO with TILL." Welcome, James!

## CARF Survey Successfully Completed!

TILL was recently awarded a Three-Year Accreditation for our Day Habilitation and Community-based Support Programs by CARF International, a nonprofit organization that offers accreditation services for health and human services programs worldwide.



CARF surveyors, experienced professionals in the field of human services, conducted a comprehensive review of policies, systems and practices, in addition to many virtual visits and interviews. In their feedback, surveyors commended our safety precautions and systems, as well as our ability to promote individuality and engagement in very meaningful ways.

Thank you to all whose ongoing commitment to quality services resulted in this very successful survey!