

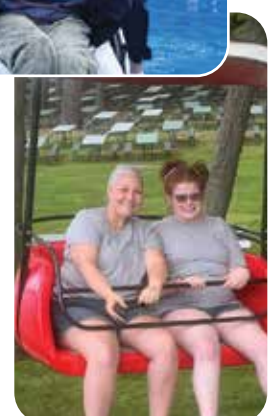
# THE TILL EGRAM

Summer 2024

Toward Independent Living and Learning, Inc.

## Thank You, Summer. It's Been Great!

While our four seasons offer a continuing change and renewal, there is nothing quite like the promise of a New England Summer to get us outdoors, appreciating opportunities to connect with nature and each other. Thank you to our staff members who photograph and capture these special events, outings, and the simple moments of each day that bring so much joy. We are honored to share these special moments.



## TILL Kick Starts Human Services Soccer League

Inspired by the turnout of its first International Soccer Game during the Fall of 2023, TILL challenged other human service agencies to get involved in a soccer league. Northeast Arc and the Guild for Human Services accepted, and the Heroes Soccer League was born. The 2024 Heroes Soccer League Season inspired camaraderie among teammates and competitors alike, and the games became a favorite weekend event for many

individuals and staff from our residential and day programs. Thank you to Randolph High School for providing the playing field, and to TILL's Kingsley Brown for organizing the league. Thank you to players and fans whose dedication to TILL resounds on and off the fields. Congratulations on your winning season, TILL Vipers!

## From the President



Dear Friends, Families, and Colleagues,

Human Services has seen tremendous change for the better over the past five decades. Those changes are largely due to families and human service professionals who were not satisfied with the

status quo. TILL is fortunate to have many employees on staff who share this philosophy. The stability we enjoy centers around our ability to attract and retain staff who believe in TILL's mission and bring it forward every day at their job. We want to return that commitment by offering opportunities for the professional growth of our workforce.

We are investing in creating a pipeline for those entering the workforce as well as recognizing long-term retention of employees. This summer, we launched our Urban Youth Internship Program to encourage young adults exploring career options to experience the benefits of working in human services. Our TILL EDGE Program rewards longevity at TILL while offering simultaneous growth. Our partnership grant with Bay Path University, our adult education project made possible by the Cummings Foundation, and our Respite Innovations Grant all have one goal in common: to recognize our new and future employees and caregivers for their dedication to the field of human services, and to invest in their professional and personal growth and foster their continued passion. Together we celebrate their unparalleled ability to bring the best out in another person as they work together to make a difference every day.

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



## Stay in Touch

Help us stay in touch by emailing [info@tillinc.org](mailto:info@tillinc.org) to update your email and mailing addresses. Connecting by email saves time, trees and postage! We always send important notices by both email and mail to ensure that you get the information you need.



## Bill Flynn Inspires With His Work Ethic

*Earlier this year, Bill Flynn, a well-known member of TILL's community, celebrated his 35th year working at Phillips Academy Andover. Bill's success reflects his work ethic and positive attitude and epitomizes the importance of community, purpose and support. Congratulations, Bill!*



Photo Credit: Phillips Academy

Bill Flynn - known as "Billy" on the campus of Phillips Academy Andover - has worked at Paresky Commons since 1989. What started out as a two-week trial period for a 20-year-old has turned into more than 35 years on the job. As a Custodial Supervisor of Food Services, he ensures that everything runs smoothly and is in charge of ordering and restocking custodial supplies. Bill loves the work and relishes the relationships and light-hearted moments that come with it, including in 2023 when the kitchen named a pizza after him: "Bill's Pizza," a meat-lovers delight, sold out quickly. One of his favorite days of the year is Employee Appreciation Day, where he is handed the microphone and, without a speech rehearsed, speaks from his heart to say "thank you" for all the great years he has had and for those to come.

"Everyone here is my second family, and I'm proud to be a member of this community," Bill says. "I simply love working here."

In his spare time, Bill enjoys socializing with his housemates at the Andover home he shares. He recently began boxing lessons, and a video clip from his phone shows the intensity of the workout as he punches the heavy bag, practicing his technique. With Paresky Commons closed for a late summer break, Bill was looking forward to a visit to Vermont to see his family. Come September, he'll be at TILL Games at the Reggie Lewis Center, where he'll see his friend Suzanne and the many other friends who make up his community within TILL. Bill loves being active and says he plans to work as long as he can.

"When I do finally retire, I would want to spend the mornings talking with friends at Dunkin' Donuts and relaxing." That sounds like a great plan.



## Efforts to Increase MAP Certification Rates a Huge Success

TILL's program to increase the number of MAP certified direct care staff has been extremely successful. Medication Administration Program (MAP) certification is necessary to administer medications in our day and residential programs. Increased access to training and a \$250 bonus for employees who successfully complete training and certification within two months of employment accounted for a dramatic boost. The "passing" rate on the MAP exam has increased from 56% to nearly 90% among TILL staff pursuing certification. This success was a collaborative effort of our nursing, training, HR, residential and day programs.



## Celebrating our Nursing Staff

Nurses Week, May 6-12, was a perfect opportunity to recognize our amazing Nursing Team who provide care, comfort and friendship throughout our residential and day programs. We appreciate all you do! Nursing Team members (pictured at right) Amy Williams, Christine Granata and Marian Adedeji were honored to participate in the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Nurse Appreciation Conference in Wareham.

## TILL Opens New Residences

TILL opened new residences in Ashland and Maynard – both supporting young adults receiving services through the MA DDS Turning 22 Program. TILL currently operates a total of 68 residences, with additional homes set to open in FY 2025.



## Something New at TILL Farms

Something new cropped up at TILL Farms over the winter. A new barn with

heat, lights and plumbing will improve accessibility for people of all abilities who attend programming at the farm! Thank you to Eastern Bank for supporting this project with a community donation.

And, thanks to Farmer Nathan, farm interns and TILL on the GO participants, Dedham staff get to enjoy a weekly Farmer's Market featuring fresh veggies, fruits and fun conversations.

## Summer Interns Learn About Careers in Human Resources

We were so pleased to welcome our group of 10 summer interns, thanks to a partnership with the **Urban Youth Collaborative Program**. An initiative of MA DDS, UYCP introduces teens and young adults to career paths in human services. Our interns spent the summer working alongside staff in our Technology, Accounting, Human Resources and Clinical Services divisions; at our TILL on the Go, Watertown and Billerica Day Programs; and at our Braintree Residence. Fantastic job everyone!





# Not All Heros Wear Capes

April Madness 2024 officially began with “Packet Pickup” at the JFK Library in Dorchester in late March, with Paula Aiesi and Kingsley Brown of TILL’s Community Connections launching one of TILL’s most popular events of the year. The annual competition, celebrating its 25th year, featured amazing challenges, events and fundraising activities.



## Fundraising for Important Causes

Billerica Day, Cluster 1, held events in Billerica and Dedham, selling handmade crafts and beautiful flower arrangements to raise money for Dig Deep, an organization that brings running water into people’s homes in Navajo Nation. Billerica Day has contributed more than \$10,000 over several years. Chelsea Day collected old cell phones, tablets and accessories, which are recycled to minimize the mining of coltan, decreasing the destruction of gorilla habitats, for Gorillas on the Line - Answer the Call.

## Parties Galore

TILL’s Maynard Residence threw an April Madness party for TILL friends and family. Emma Riffelmacher and her band *Beach Day* provided the music! Watertown Day Program’s *Superhero Party* was non-stop fun for everyone. From a fabulous BBQ lunch to karaoke, face painting, and more, it was a day full of activities fit for our many real-life superheroes. Thanks to *Music with Mike* for keeping the party going and to guests who joined from Chelsea and Billerica Day Programs, and the Dedham office.



Superheroes united for April Madness Hall of Fame Zoom parties to celebrate the results of our 25th annual competition. Our “not all heroes wear capes” theme brought out the best in teamwork, community involvement, volunteering and plain old fun. A special thank you to Nina Nieves of TILL’s HR Department who shared her talents performing as Mirabel, from the popular Disney movie *Encanto*, at the JFK Library.



# Superheroic Efforts, Skill Development and Fun

Individuals and staff at TILL have many opportunities to take to the track, the gym, the water, and the dance floor. Individual and team sports build confidence, boost mood and inspire friendly competition.





Congratulations to the SUPER RESIDENCES inducted into the Hall of Fame!

- Middleton Residence **Best in Show!**
- Andover Street, Danvers **2nd Place Tie!**
- Peabody **2nd Place Tie!**
- Doris Road, Bedford
- Union Street Weymouth - CLO
- 250 East Main Street, Westboro
- Summer Street, Danvers
- Braintree
- Maynard
- Elmbrook Road, Bedford
- Lynnfield
- Marrett Road, Lexington



Congratulations to the SUPER DAY PROGRAMS inducted into the Hall of Fame!

**Day Programs Best in Show!** was a tie between:

- Watertown Day Upstairs
- Watertown Day Downstairs

**TILL Central Best in Show!** was a tie between:

- Cravings in Nashua
- Autism Initiative - Billerica

Welcome to the April Madness Hall of Fame!



## Team TILL Walks and Wheels for Hunger

Team TILL puts its volunteer spirit into action every year - rain or shine! - for Project Bread's Walk for Hunger! This year hundreds of individuals and staff from TILL's Residences and Creative Living

Options showed up on Boston Common to walk and wheel to raise money to fight food insecurity. We are so proud of our incredible group for turning miles into meals.





## TILL's Grant Funding Opens Doors to New Opportunities

TILL was one of 40 statewide recipients of a **Respite Innovation Grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services**. The grant program provides free and innovative respite programming to give family caregivers time away from caregiving responsibilities to recharge and renew, knowing their loved one is in good hands. TILL's programming includes overnight getaways, spa days, social events and assistance with household chores. TILL's affiliate **Rewarding Work**, which offers an online directory and job board to help families find and hire respite care providers, is assisting with the grant, which will attempt to determine whether regular respite breaks will extend the number of years family caregivers can provide care.

Note: Contact us to get involved if you are a family caregiver (or know someone who is). Email: [familyrespite@tillinc.org](mailto:familyrespite@tillinc.org) View our programming at: [www.tillinc.org/respite\\_innovation](http://www.tillinc.org/respite_innovation)

TILL was one of 150 local non-profits selected to receive a grant from the **Cummings Foundation** as part of its \$30 million grant program. This generous three-year funding will help TILL establish much needed adult learning sites within our day and vocational programs. **TILL, Inc., Cooley Dickinson Health Care and Bay Path University** have together been awarded a \$1.7 million Workforce Success Grant to provide training and placement services for people pursuing careers in healthcare and human services. The three organizations will work together to recruit, train and hire Healthcare Assistants, Medical Assistants, and Residential Support Professionals. TILL also was awarded a grant for recruitment and retention innovation as part of a **New Hampshire Workforce Initiative**. Finally, a **Transportation Grant** funded the purchase of two new vehicles for TILL programs.



*(Pictured above) Dafna Krouk-Gordon and Sandy Cummins, VP of Program Services, pictured with Joyce Cummings at the Cummings Grant Celebration. TILL staff celebrated the grant announcement.*



*(Pictured above) Dafna Krouk-Gordon and Allison Reardon, Director of Systems Administration, attended The Workforce Success Grant Celebration in Western MA. Family caregivers enjoyed time to relax at Puttshack in Natick, as part of our respite grant programming.*

## DEI Council Hosts Dinner and Discussion

TILL's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council met with program managers and enjoyed delicious and beautifully prepared Caribbean food at the Orchid 7 Fusion Bar & Grill in Dedham Square. Discussions centered around the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and how the DEI Council is an important resource for TILL employees, who represent 52 different countries from around the world.



## MA DDS Recognizes Residential Staff for Excellence

TILL Residential Coordinator Michelle Lannan and Ashraf Muguluma, RSP at **TILL's Littleton Residence**, received the Recognition of Excellence Award from the Northeast Region of MA DDS at its annual event recognizing provider staff. Michelle and Ashraf were honored for the amazing adventure they took with the Littleton individuals, and which they so beautifully chronicled in the video: *The Trip of a Lifetime*. Watch the video clip at: [facebook.com/tillinc](https://facebook.com/tillinc)



## TILL Rallies at the State House

Kingsley Brown, Assistant Director of Community Connections, was one of three speakers at the annual Caring Force Rally at the State House on May 22nd. Kingsley shared his experiences of working in the Human Services field for 31 years and advocated for the direct care workforce throughout Massachusetts.

“I have worked at TILL for more than 29 years and am passionate about the work I do. I feel I have the greatest job in the world. I am a part of my company’s training staff and leadership team, and I’m able to impact the lives of so many of the individuals and staff I work with daily. This has been my heart’s work.”

“Both the livable wage and student loan repayment bills the Caring Force is advocating for are necessary. Many human service workers put their dreams for a college education on hold and juggle multiple jobs to make ends meet. After all, one job should be enough.”

The Caring Force, a project of the statewide Providers’ Council, seeks to strengthen human services by advocating for our essential direct care workforce. Thank you to individuals and staff from Chelsea Day and TILL Central; Billerica TILL Central and Watertown TILL Central – who attended the rally to show their support.

## Thank You, Volunteers

Our artisans at ETC made beautiful Mother’s Day Cards for mom, grand moms, aunts and friends. Thank you to Deb Goodman of Goodman Advisory Group LLC and her group of volunteers for this special card-making session.



TILL Games celebrates its 27th year of running, walking, wheeling, teamwork and all-around racing excellence on September 7 at the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center in Roxbury Crossing.

We will be excited to see many of you there!



## ETT Travels to the Emerald Isle

TILL's Education Through Travel (ETT), which offers people with learning differences the transformative experience of world travel, led a trip to Ireland for the Riverview School in Sandwich, MA. Dale Belcher, TILL's Community Service Coordinator, led the March 2024 adventure, which began in Dublin, with stops in Northern Belfast, Tipperary, Cork, Kerry and Killarney. As one parent said: "Thank you for providing an opportunity of a lifetime."



## Springboard Gala Returns

TILL's Springboard Social Club, our popular club for adults with learning differences, held its annual Spring Gala to the delight of all. The gala's April in Paris theme was a perfect theme as it ties into the group's upcoming trip to France with ETT. Springboard members have many other club activities, events and weekends away on the schedule.

## TILL Wave Gallery

**TILL's Wave Gallery**, a space for artists of all abilities located in Watertown, **featured six art exhibits during FY 2024**. Exhibits included: Reminiscence; Fall Art Extravaganza in collaboration with the Watertown Art Association; Edible Plants on behalf of Watertown's Public Arts & Culture Committee; Winter Showcase; Looking Up Looking Down; and Dog Eat Dog House. Empowerment Through Art, in partnership with the DDS Metro Region Cultural Diversity Committee, opened July 2024. For public viewing hours, visit: [www.facebook.com/TILLWaveGallery](https://www.facebook.com/TILLWaveGallery)



## Free Lunch Fridays

Monthly Free Lunch Fridays in Dedham are a great way to relax with co-workers, enjoy a delicious lunch, and learn or try something new. This year's lunches included a Superbowl party, a 3-D printing workshop, a charcuterie board contest, a make your own 4th of July door bow, and a Paris Olympics celebration, complete with trivia and contests.





# 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  
Jim and Carol Herscot  
Saquish Foundation  
*For recruitment, training and international exchange*  
Christine and James Connor  
John Campbell and Susanna Peyton  
Howard and Deborah Reef  
*For Springboard*

## Patron

\$5,000-\$9,999

Matthew Gromet and Phyllis Schultz  
*In Honor of John Meehan*  
Heather Tuttle  
*In Memory of Adrienne Tuttle*

## Benefactor

\$1,000-\$4,999

David and Tanya Mahoney  
Charles and Therese Giacobelli  
Dafna Krouk-Gordon and Les Gordon  
Susan and Peter Staecker  
Robert and Marian Kaplan  
Sharon and Michael Slapik  
*In Memory of Vicki Evans for Chelsea Day Program, Cluster A*  
Susan Senator and Ned Batchelder  
John Houston and Katherine Read  
Darren and Isabelle Nordone  
Mark and Katheryn Lagunowich  
*For Carlisle B Residence*  
Neil and Maria MacDonald  
*For Chelsea Day Program*  
Deb Goodman, Goodman Advisory Group, LLC  
*For TILL Games Photo Booth*  
Sally O'Malley  
John and Ellen Sabino  
Sid Wolinsky  
John Keith  
James and Donna Currie Jr.  
Daniel Biales  
*For Thoreau Street Residence*

## Sustainer

\$500-\$999

Barbara Larsen  
Elizabeth Viesca  
*In Memory of Norma Gail Holmes*  
Michael and Tammy Ward  
Teresa Dwyer  
*Thank you Billerica Staff*  
Eleanor Faye  
Thomas and Deborah Flannery Jr  
Sue Fuller  
Gayle and Mark Lewin  
Norman and Nancy MacVicar  
Margaret Spence  
One Digital

## Sponsor

\$250-\$499

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*In Memory of Barbara Richardi*  
Robert and Meryl Lindenberg  
Kristina Powers  
Peter Camozzi, Arrow Auto Body  
*For TILL Soccer Game*  
Jason Holmes and Stephanie Buzzell  
*In Memory of Norma Holmes*  
Michael Gallahue  
Henry Workman  
Give Lively Foundation  
Dahlia Mann  
*In Honor of Dafna Krouk-Gordon*  
Kerri Kreiss  
*In Memory of Miriam Harris, on behalf of the Harris Family*  
Timothy Miranda Jr.  
*Thank you for all you do, from LeeAnne Miranda, Hamilton Street Residence*  
Stephen Fay  
Law Office of Elissa Gordet Franco  
Alma and Martin David Ring  
Ann Yos  
Gerald Pendleton  
Deidre Fisher Photography

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*In Memory of Charles Harrison*  
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*In Memory of Ernest Henry Penta*  
Toni Thornton  
*In Memory of Kay Desimone*  
Elaine and Karen Keefe  
*In Memory of Mark Quirk*  
Marjorie Nesson  
Judith Beningson  
*Thank you for all you do for Bill Flynn*  
Gladys and Scott Olson  
Robert and Catherine Callaghan  
Barbara Tuttle  
*In Memory of Adrienne Tuttle and Jennifer Cordish*  
Carmela Bumbaca  
The Ardemis Handalian Special Needs Trust  
Robert and Phyllis Tobin  
Janet and Brendan Fee  
Janet Cadogan and Patrick Cadogan  
*Thank you to ETC*  
Edward and Catherine Simisky  
*In Honor of Dale Bortolotti*  
Sally and Sarah Milewski  
*In Honor of Kevin and Staff at Sandy Brook A Residence*

Orazio and Francis Magazzu

*In Honor of Lena Magazzu*  
William and Michele French  
*In Memory of Justin Doyle*  
Karen Scordino  
*In Memory of Kay DeSimone*  
Joan Smith  
*In Memory of Marilyn Casanave*  
Scott Johnson  
*In Memory of Martha Johnson*  
Phyllis Fanger  
Anne Devaney  
Diane McCormack and Tom Taranto  
*For TILL Games*  
Nancy Bacon  
Margery Bennett  
Margaret Callahan  
Patricia Fries  
Mark Gaudette  
David and Christine Hayes  
William and Beverly Matarese  
Patricia Soriano-Lapon and Milton Lapon  
Alan Stanzler  
Gail and Stephen Trask  
Michael Brooks  
Stephen Copp  
Lynn Dombroski  
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Paul and Julie Goldberg  
Anna Litten  
Melissa Primeau  
Stephen Tougas  
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Peter Wyatt  
Mary and Thomas Brennan  
John and Elaine Chaisson  
Altina Moura and Maria Bairos  
John Scileppi

## Friend

Under \$100

Sid Haynes  
Janice Post  
Deborah and Mark Christopher  
Malcolm and Mona Roberts  
*In Honor of Tabia Roberts*  
Enrico and Julia DiChiappari  
*In Memory of Bernadette Gillis*  
Kenley Branscom  
Marcia and Robert Crawford  
Kathleen and William Ferguson  
Kathleen and William Hamilton  
James and Mildred Kane  
Robert Lee  
Anita and Joseph Milano  
Ken and Nancy Pondelli  
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Frederick and Nancy Mark  
Thomas Pilleri  
Raymond Shih  
Moirra Spalten  
Elizabeth and Thomas Glick  
Nora Bogot and Ida Davidson  
Maria Gordon

## Special Donations

### In Memory of Donald Vander Baan

Kenneth and Lisa Foppema  
Marian and Paul Buma  
Shelley Buma  
Russell and Geraldine Vanderbaan  
Tom and Eileen Dixon  
Robert and Althea Koopman  
Robert Vander Baan  
Rhonda Adams  
Dawn Lefrancois  
Earl Wielsma  
Jeffrey and Laurie Vanderbaan  
James and Marcia Arnold  
Cynthia Baker

### In Memory of Jake Scileppi

Christopher and Deeny Bennett  
Liss Walls  
Samuel and Donna Glover  
Theresa Pasley  
Susan Ros  
August Sisco  
Nancy Spadafora  
Frederica See

### In Memory of Teresa Vaughan

Martha Hansen  
Leslie Vaughan  
Martha Burnham  
Edith Desmond  
Christina Marsan  
Dana Frazee  
Philip Belanger  
Francine Brasseur  
Elizabeth Doyle  
Karen Vaughan  
Ann Murray  
Debra Weinstein  
Paul Couvee  
Robert Wilson  
Ann Stanton

### In Memory of Rahsaan Daniels

Lonnie Daniels  
Hannah Ginley  
Julie O'Neill  
Behind the Dark Veil  
Teresa Desmond



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 FY2024

- ☆ **Andover Street Residential Team**
- ☆ **Ekamma Aiworo**, Residential Support Professional
- ☆ **Pierre Calvaire**, Relief Staff
- ☆ **Bill Dearing**, Strattus Clinician
- ☆ **Evans Diya**, Residence Manager
- ☆ **Christine Granata**, RN, Health Services Educator
- ☆ **John Baptiste Ssepuyya**, Residence Manager
- ☆ **Marilyn Kuhn**, Senior Day Program Manager
- ☆ **Nicole Laine**, Documentation Specialist
- ☆ **Charles Mbirizi**, Residential Support Professional
- ☆ **Pinecrest Road Residential Team**
- ☆ **Watertown Day Program Staff**



### Remembering Friends

*A life that touches others goes on forever.*

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Monica Beasley</b>     | <b>Keaton Sakowich</b>      |
| <b>Thomas Butler</b>      | <b>John "Jake" Scileppi</b> |
| <b>Jennifer Cornish</b>   | <b>Robert Sequeira</b>      |
| <b>Alexander Cotto</b>    | <b>Adrienne Tuttle</b>      |
| <b>Alan Crusco</b>        | <b>Grace Ursin</b>          |
| <b>Christopher Mackey</b> | <b>Donald Vander Baan</b>   |

## TILL EDGE Helps Employees Grow Their Careers

TILL EDGE is our new professional development program providing education, training and mentoring based on an employee's unique strengths, abilities and professional goals. Participants receive an achievement bonus after completing each level of achievement - Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. We are pleased to introduce you to our inaugural TILL EDGE Team!



**Benjam Aryee**  
Residence Manager,  
Charlestown



**Nochard Bernard**  
Senior Residential Support  
Professional, Bridgewater



**Christopher Desjardins**  
IT Operations Manager  
Dedham



**Jim Pierre**  
Accountant, Dedham



**Ekaterina Saykina**  
Behaviorist, Residential Services



**Alex Tisme**  
IT Specialist, Dedham