



From virtual Bingo to formal Fridays, residents and staff at our residential homes have found uplifting ways to connect with each other and the community in the midst of isolation protocols and stay at home advisories. With day and vocational programs closed, residential staff have become full-time coaches and activity directors to fill the void for individuals who usually spend their weekdays in structured day settings, or employment training.



TILL's mission is centered on finding ways to help everyone we serve live the best life possible, so we geared up quickly to embrace this new normal, finding creative outlets and building new daily routines within each of our residences. Paula Aiesi and Kingsley Brown of our Community Connections department poured their energy and creativity into activities to support, inspire and connect our

residences to minimize the disruption, particularly the loss of the daily routine, which can be especially difficult for the people we support.

TILL is known for creating challenges as a form of engagement, and the ever-favorite April Madness went virtual this year, and has continued into May, June and beyond.



Fitness challenges are inspiring exercise – in houses, yards, on neighborhood walks, and in online yoga and fitness classes. Virtual music performances, Bingo and Pokeno games connect all of the smaller residential communities and build those important daily routines.





Giving back to the community by volunteering continues, in safe but fulfilling ways. TILL's Lexington residence, focused on lifting other people's spirits, sent greeting cards to the VA Hospital

in Bedford. TILL's Lynnfield residence built on their Kindness Rocks project – embellishing and distributing rocks with paint and messages to promote random acts of kindness – as a means to show their appreciation for caregivers and essential staff on the front lines in area hospitals. *(See TILL Cares article on page 3)*

The strength of these positive connections cannot be underestimated at this time. These lessons of resilience and community will stay with us when we are able

to transition back to more familiar routines.



From the President



Dear Friends, Families, and Colleagues,

The year 2020 has so far been unlike any other. Many events have shone a spotlight on issues that cannot be ignored. I would like to take this opportunity to once again share TILL's statement regarding social justice.

There are no words to express the

emotions resulting from George Floyd's tragic death. As an organization, TILL stands for the values of equality regardless of one's race, ethnic background, religion, gender, and ability. Each person reading this letter has been a part of making life a better place for people with different needs and learning styles. It is therefore even more disheartening, disappointing and disgusting to know that hatred, inequality, systemic racism and bigotry are still very much alive.

Whether you are working for TILL as an employee, a volunteer or are connected to TILL because we support you and or your family, you have been part of the message of equality. Collectively, we have made a difference in society's views of the value of every human being. We have never been complacent or arrogant in thinking that our work was done. But this heinous death proves that we must speak this message even louder and with more emphasis on everyone's value, than ever before. The events of these past weeks have been horrific. Whether it is the views held by the few or by many, is irrelevant. They are views which cannot exist regardless of the numbers.

Inclusion, respect for differences and fairness are at the core of TILL's culture. We need to be even more vocal as an organization to recognize that differences do not have a value judgement of right or wrong. Our strength as an agency comes from our diversity, our common ground of making a difference in someone else's life through our relationships.

At TILL we are committed to increase the opportunities for dialogue among all staff, individuals and families to ensure that this culture is clearly articulated throughout the agency. Our Diversity and Inclusion Council will add to its membership to ensure that the conversation is real as we continue to educate ourselves about issues of social justice, and push to recognize and confront any issues of injustice in our own organization. Please contact us at diversity@tillinc.org if you would like to know more about the committee. We will expand the training and conversation using our video discussions around race and equality within our required trainings. The 60 nationalities represented in our workforce brings us strength. We all need to continue learning from one another.

Hatred stems from fear of the unknown and of stereotypes that are perceived as truths when left unchecked by one's imagination. Let's make it each of our responsibility to make sure we do our part to care for each other at this period of great unrest. Each one of us can continue to make a difference in eradicating hatred.

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



TILL has once again received 100 percent compliance in a CORI audit conducted by the Commonwealth of MA Division of Investigations.

Thanks go to Chris Sweeney and her HR team for achieving this excellence year after year!

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!



Essential Employees

TILL continues to provide essential services throughout these challenging times. We are very proud of the positive energy and resiliency we see daily from staff, individuals, families and supporters alike.

Our priority throughout this period continues to be the safety of the people we support and of our staff, and we are gratified by our successes as we face unprecedented challenges.

In March, all day programs were closed by the state, creating a loss in structure and routine for participating individuals. Our residences were suddenly not only responsible to maintain roundthe-clock coverage, but to navigate a variety of needs in-house. Each of our clinical and support services as well as individualized support, employment supports and social programs were immediately impacted. In spite of these unexpected challenges, our teams never missed a beat, creating new opportunities and connections, resulting in so many positive outcomes.

- Our essential direct care and nursing services have continued without interruption, with clinical services and counseling making the rapid transition to telehealth to ensure consistency of services.
- Our administrative office has remained open to coordinate staffing and safety of all services, ensuring payroll and essential accounting functions, with administrative support and many others keeping our agency operating at full capacity. Facilities and transportation staff have risen to the occasion as they work through a unique set of challenges.
- We obtained sufficient quantities of PPE and continue to seek out supplies and specialized equipment to ensure safety for all when working in close proximity is part of providing essential care.



- We developed a robust online curriculum with interesting challenges that cover academics, fitness, health, nutrition, arts and cooking enthusiastically engaging our individuals, staff and family members.
- Our IT department has worked to improve digital access to ensure all of our programs have up-to-date technology and can fully engage and connect with each other.
- We recognized that many of our employees have been impacted financially, and temporarily raised direct care salaries. We sent checks to 800+ people to show our appreciation and set up a COVID relief fund, funded by the generosity of staff and available to anyone requesting it.

As we move into FY2021, there are many unknowns as we face these unprecedented challenges; however, we know that together we will continue to provide these essential services to the individuals and families who count on us, as we have for these 40 years.

We sincerely appreciate your dedication, resilience and creativity today and tomorrow as we face this extraordinary time together.

TILL Cares

Staff and individuals at TILL's residential home in Lynnfield have not only embraced the Kindness Rocks project, but showed their support and appreciation for the medical community with their TILL Cares Packages!

The group began selling the Kindness Rocks DIY Kit to friends and family wanting to create their own inspiration while supporting the Kindness Rocks educational mission. By adding an additional \$5 donation for each kit sold, the group was able to fund their very unique TILL Cares project!

TILL Cares Packages, assembled by staff and residents, are filled with treats, small personal items like hand cream and messages of appreciation for medical staff.

One hundred TILL Cares boxes were distributed to eleven hospitals and one hospice house in Massachusetts, as well as a hospital in NY (where a former Lynnfield employee is now a doctor). The responses have been amazing, with photos and social media posts sharing the joy.



What Makes a Hero?

hero is a person who combats adversity through feats of ingenuity, courage or strength. We are proud to share just a few highlights of TILL's many heroes.

Super Shoppers

"S&S has paper towels!" "Wow – can you pick up a package for us?" "Sure – see you tomorrow!"

At the beginning of the pandemic, finding essentials like toilet paper, paper towels and cleaning supplies was almost impossible. The diligent cleaning necessary to prevent the spread of the virus put an extra strain on household supplies. **Teamwork to the Rescue** – as managers, coordinators and staff pooled their resources to share supplies. Meeting up at a convenient spot, this team

"shopping and swapping" has meant more time to focus on essential care.

TILL Farm Visits

Although TILL Farms remains closed to the public, Farmer Jim and farmers-



in-training have continued growing luscious produce to share with our homes. Residences schedule a visit, pick up their fresh vegetables, and spend some time in the fresh air and sunshine, visiting the animals.











Families Care

Families have always been our strongest supporters and aren't about to let a pandemic stand in the way of showing their love! Our families found creative ways to show their support – remotely – through calls, emails, face time, and videos; dropping off care packages of treats, craft supplies, games and gifts; arranging deliveries from local restaurants and needed supplies from online retailers. We are in this together and we appreciate all you do.



Nursing Heros

Always part of our essential services, TILL's nursing staff has been extremely busy providing clinical support, information and training to ensure the safety of individuals and staff during these challenging times.



We were proud to recognize all of our nursing staff during National Nursing Week in May. Thank you for all you do!

Community **Connections: Together at Home**

TILL's Community Connections Dept., led by Director, Paula Aiesi, with Kingsley Brown, Assistant Director, has morphed our much-loved April Madness into four months of themed TILL Madness activities, challenges and quests. Community Connections brought the fun into every home with virtual BINGO and Pokeno games, Karaoke, Yoga, Fitness and Music starring the talents of our own TILL staff

and available for folks to join in anytime. TILL Madness has been a unifying force, reminding everyone that we are in this together, thanks to the teamwork of Paula and Kingsley.

Staying in Touch

Keeping in touch with housemates who chose to stay with family took some ingenuity but didn't stop our creative folks! In addition to phone calls and FaceTime, friends connected through window and driveway visits, holding handmade

signs and dropping off packages.

New Skills

Shifting gears seemingly overnight, staff dove into a myriad of new guidelines for safety with stay at home restrictions, from protective equipment, hourly cleaning schedules, social distancing and

more. Technology allowed people to keep in touch with family and friends, access









counseling and therapy through Telehealth, and participate in many virtual activities. Again, our staff stepped up to the plate, figuring it all out to support these important connections.

Pivoting to Remote Support

TILL's Clinical and Support Services, including Strattus Mental Health Clinic, In-Home Behavioral Services and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), quickly pivoted to a remote services model using Telehealth to ensure that important counseling and therapies continued without interruption during this overwhelming time. TILL's Autism Support Center remains open to provide support and resources, as well as online support groups for families.



International Connections



TILL and the Neuerkerode Community in Germany have participated in exchanges of music, cultural and learning over the years, but in June it was our burgers that travelled the world! TILL joined Neuerkerode in spirit for their virtual somerfest "Burgers for Citizens" festival, grilling a variety of burgers and sharing them on social media. Stiftung Kleiderverwaltung Braunschweig made a donation to Neuerkerode for each burger posted.

Keeping Connected With Springboard

Can't connect in person? Go Virtual! Springboard is offering a full calendar of virtual outings and shared experiences for members, from online tours, games like BINGO and Trivia, to Book Club, Movie Nights with intermission breaks to converse, and step-by-step DIY Crafts. Sports are more fun to watch with your buds, so grab the popcorn and peanuts, and log in!



ETC and Cravings Get Creative

When ETC Café and Gifts in Hyde Park and Cravings Café and Gifts in Nashua were required to close to customers, the creative crew found new ways to engage. Cravings sharpened their sewing skills, creating stylish and functional masks, which they distributed to our programs. ETC's Cabin Fever Pizza kits (available curbside) provided a delicious activity for families, who shared their results on Facebook.



TILL Micro-Apartments: Transitional Supported Living

TILL's Micro-Apartments in Chelsea provide transitional housing 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. The welcoming community room provides space to share meals and socialize. TILL support staff work with each person on assessed skill areas such as money and time management, personal organization, meal preparation, and oversight of self-medication, while providing the "invisible net of support" which is so valuable for growth.



To learn more about TILL's Chelsea Micro-Apartments, please contact Alan White, Director of Individualized Support Options, at alan.white@ tillinc.org or 781-302-4695.



Call for Art

This spring, TILL's Wave Gallery adapted to a remote world, showcasing artists with a virtual tour and participating in Art Week Boston "At Home" themed events. Now it is time to show what you have created during this challenging time with our newest Call for Art – **My Corona: Art in the time of Corona.**

This call is open to all artists, solo and collaborative for original art created during the COVID-19 pandemic

stay-at-home and All restrictions. mediums Poetry, Diaries, Photography, Visual and Video Art are accepted. _ Artists may submit up to three items for consideration. Deadline submissions for October 1, 2020. Email tillartwave@tillinc.org for more information.



TILL on the Go

Offering an individualized day experience, ideal for adults served by ABI-MFP waiver and anyone benefitting from a flexible, non-site based model.

Our latest initiative, TILL on the GO, offers adults the opportunity to share in the benefits of full community membership through peer support, prevocational services, supported employment, and transportation services. For additional information about TILL on the Go, contact: Arelis Williams, Director of Vocational Services at 781-302-4609 or arelis.williams@tillinc.org



Leaving a Legacy



A remembrance from Dafna Krouk-Gordon

This spring, TILL experienced two very sad losses with the passing of **Tom Nordberg** and **Tanya Gagnon**, within one day of each other.

There are no words to adequately express the emotions one feels at the loss of someone who occupied such an important role in one's life, and both Tanya and Tom touched the lives of so many people at TILL over their years with us; Tom for over 29 years and Tanya for more than 14 years.

If one's legacy is to be remembered from the acts of kindness that one does in their lifetime, then both Tom and Tanya have much to be proud of.

I knew Tanya throughout all of her roles at TILL, as a manager and coordinator, initiator of so many activities and projects that always involved the individuals in the most inclusive way possible. She did what she did naturally and spontaneously because it was simply who she was. She simply knew it and felt

it and her presence made everyone feel good about themselves. I knew her to be fun, loyal, always ready with a smile and a willingness to do what was needed, often before it was needed. She was famous for her brisket and her key role in our Passover Seders every spring.



Tom was a "fixture" at TILL. In his 29+ years with TILL, he transformed so many of our facilities and transportation systems with a desire for perfection that always had the safety and comfort and care of our individuals and staff foremost in his mind. His presence was very much felt in every construction project, every renovation and our systems to ensure ongoing care of all facilities. His professionalism and caring nature guided the facilities department to grow into its current size. The Nordberg influence was



definitely a family affair at TILL - Tom first started working for his father, Carl, who was a Property Manager then Director. When his father retired, Tom took over that role and developed it in his way. Tom's brother Rob was landscaping manager for TILL's Mowtown, and he continues caring for several of our properties.

Tom and Tanya will be sorely missed in their spheres of influence at TILL. I don't have the right words to express my gratitude for their being a part of our family and also to express my sadness at the big hole that both leave in our agency.

Remembering Friends

A life that touches others goes on forever.

James Thurber Vincent Fantasia Jose Soto Gary Greenaway Suzan Stewart Joanna Williams Charles Watts Steve Kuzmitch Bruce MacNab Michael Rzeppa Donna Cimino Tayno Hyden Ronald Martell

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

Saquish Foundation For Recruitment and Training of TILL employees James and Christine Connor Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation For TILL and COVID-19 efforts

Patron \$5,000-\$9,999

Howard and Deborah Reef For TILL and Springboard Gustav and Vibeke Christensen Jim and Carol Herscot John Campbell and Susanna Peyton

Benefactor \$1,000-\$4,999

The John A Scileppi Foundation For Pinecrest Rd. residence Blue Cross Blue Shield Sharon and Mitchel Slapik In Memory of Vicky Evans, for Chelsea Day Raymond and Elizabeth Geraneo For Littleton residence, from Chris Neil and Maria MacDonald For Forest St. residence Blanche and Joel Seifer For Family Quarters Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund For Team TILL/ Molly's Run Marathon Lisa Birkdale In Honor of daughter, Stephanie Birkdale Glenna Weiss TILL and COVID-19 efforts Darren and Isabelle Nordone David and Linda Van Der Merwe Edward Batchelder and Susan Senator Jeffrey and Debra Lieberman Thomas Flannery Jr and Deborah Flannery Matthew Gromet and Phyllis Schultz

Sustainer \$500-\$999

Scott and Gladys Olson Brian and Carolyn Stewart In Honor of sister, Julia, for Reo Rd. Mark and Kathryn Lagunowich For Carlisle B residence Eleanor Faye For TILL and COVID-19 efforts Jack and Alice Flynn In Memory of Michael Rzeppa Gayle and Mark Lewin In Memory of Richard Williams, for Lyman St. residence Stephen Fay Susan and Peter Staecker Stephen Dillon and Victoria Leblanc-Dillon

Sponsor \$250-\$499

Phyllis Fanger Ann Yos In Honor of Linda Naclerio Diane McCormack and Thomas Taranto For TILL and COVID-19 efforts Bernadette O'Halloran In Memory of Frank O'Halloran John and Ellen Sabino Brad and Andrea Stokes For Union St. CLO Dahlia Mann In Honor of Dafna Krouk-Gordon Kenneth and Diane Saleski Barbara Jackins Elissa Franco

Supporter \$100-\$249

Network For Good Kristina Powers Robert and Phyllis Tobin In Honor of Carly Tobin's fight against cancer James and Gale Habeeb In Honor of Lena Magazzu, for Lyman St. residence Thomas and Anne Larkin In Honor of Littleton Residence Manager and Staff Janet Mahoney and Jack Whitehouse In Honor of Marrett Rd. residence Robert Hey In Memory of Marilyn Casanave Julian Wierzbicki Elizabeth Viesca Julie Casanave Robert & Meryl Lindenberg Amazon Smile Ruediger Becker From Neuerkerode Community Dafna Krouk-Gordon The Ardemis Handalian Special Needs Trust Guy Marchmont Roger and Marie Tulin Rhonda Weinstein For Springboard Sally Milewski In Honor of Sandy Brook Rd. residence Frederick Foppiano In Memory of Eileen Foppiano, in Honor of Stephen Carmela Bumbaca In Memory of Joseph Bumbaca Felix Balder Linda and Michael Loeb In Memory of Paulette Wexler Anne Devaney For Springboard Patricia Fries In Honor of Christopher Leichtman Orazio and Frances Magazzu In Honor of Lena Magazzu Esther Levine In Memory of Bruce and Jerry Levine Janet McDonough In Memory of Cliff Furman's sister Charles Meins and Gwen Ratte Meins In Memory of Marilyn Casanave Elaine and Chuck Keefe In Memory of Mark Quirk Charles and Susan Sulzman In Memory of Richard Williams, for Lyman St. residence Juergen and Susan Nordhausen John and Cynthia Brown Frank Weber

Russell and Geraldine Vanderbaan Anita and Thomas Stinson Andrew and Janice Krim David and Sherry Ahearn Mary and Thomas Brennan Virginia Newes Kelly Sutton Arnis Berger Norman and Nancy MacVicar Super Flash T-Shirts Ruth Parry Margaret Spence Renee Brant Thomas Vancor David and Marianne James William and Beverly Matarese

Friend Under \$100

Harry and Donna Leigh Karen and David Weinberg Kathleen and William Ferguson For TILL Games Joan Mahoney and Kathleen Ferguson For TILL Games Julie Williams For TILL Games Edward and Catherine Simisky In Honor of Dale Bortolotti Shirley Duggan In Honor of Paul McElroy's birthday Enrico and Julia DiChiappari In Memory of Bernadette Gillis, for Springboard David Coyle In Memory of Leslie Pickering Joseph and Shirley Quirk In Memory of Mark Quirk Evelyn and Leland Goldberg In Memory of Paulette and Laurence Wexler Lauren Blair In Memory of Paulette and Laurence Wexler Bruce and Jaclyn Logue In Memory of Paulette Wexler Altina Moura and Maria Bairos Thomas Pilleri Erika and Robert Bianchi David and Christine Hayes Marcia Crawford Kathleen and William Hamilton William Larkin Mary Barry Rich and Dorothy Robison Kerri and James Sheehan James and Mildred Kane Mary Dixon Smith Silicon Valley Bank Malcolm and Mona Roberts John and Elaine Chaisson For TILL and COVID-19 efforts Joan Katz Martin and Joan Taubman For TILL Games Carol Meaney George Muszynski Siraj Paneru John Gajda Michael and Regina LaRose Donald and Marilyn Garand Linda Sullivan Nancy Schurian Alon and Victoria Bodnya

Lloyd and Lisa Bishop Anne Halidy Donna Yaroszewski In Honor of daughter, Kimberly Baia Evelyn Cushing Nora Bogot Maria Gordon

In Memory of Gary Greenaway

Armand and Monique Circharo Lori Byrne Lori Baker Patricia Jome George and Nancy Murphy Elizabeth McMahon Robert and Tammy Murphy

In Memory of Kenneth Saleski

Walter and Vee Zagrobski Christine Falvey Jane Larrow Appleton Partners Elizabeth Millard Frank and Dorothy Kelley Ginny Riley Laurie Ann Zastrow Cohasset Golf Club Suzanne Dever William Woomer Elizabeth Ripley Ann Demick Mary Lu Kjer

In Memory of Thomas C. Nordberg

Diane Nordberg Donna Carroll Joy Desper Thomas and Marie Nordberg Joanne Bloom Alycia Matthews

Special Thanks to

The Town Of Andover, for permits and renovation of Alden Rd. residence

Team TILL/Molly's Marathon

Molly Giffen Matching Gifts from: Loomis, Sayles & Company LP Arbella Insurance Foundation, Inc.



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. These employees were honored during TILL's FY2020.

- Abraham Dualu, Day Support Professional
- Acton School Street Staff
- A Carla Ingalls, Job Developer
- A Carlington Harris, Assistant Kitchen Manager
- 🕆 Chelsea Day Habilitation Staff
- A Collins Badu, Residence Manager
- A Daniel Opare, Residence Manager
- * Eslene Jn Baptiste, Residential Support Professional
- * Evelyne Vincent, Residential Support Professional
- ☆ Flor Poueriet, Residential Coordinator
- A Jacqueline Maldonado, Senior Day Support Professional
- A Jane Pfeiffer Residential Alternatives Coordinator
- A Jennifer Polischuk, Residence Manager
- A Jesenia Rivera, Day Support Professional
- A Job Nyandat, Residential Support Professional
- ☆ Joel Njuguna, Relief
- A John Sseppuuya, Residential Support Professional
- A Juana Melendez, Residential Support Professional
- A Judith Dargenson, Residential Support Professional
- 🛠 Kelly Megowen, Licensed Practical Nurse
- A Kwo Hong, Bookkeeper
- A Lurdes Arruda, HR Coordinator

- **Naoko Conway**, Administrative Assistant
- A Paul Mukuye, Residential Support Professional
- * Paula Walsh, Director of Health Services
- * Rachel Schwemin, Artisan, ETC
- * Renee Brunelle, Senior Artisan, Cravings
- ☆ Sandy Brook B Staff
- 🛠 Sonia Rosado, Site Supervisor
- 🛠 Svetlana Magao, Residential Coordinator
- A Tom Graef, Shared Living Manager
- 🕆 Tunisha Guy, Residence Manager
- A TILL Farms Team:
 - ☆ James Stelmokas, *TILL Farms*
 - 🕸 Sasha Dualu, TILL Central Billerica
 - A Elyse Etienne, TILL Central Watertown
 - 🕸 George Mwaura, Hudson Day Program
 - A Giordany Robert, TILL Central Hudson
- ☆ TRASE Team:
 - A Diane Dixon
 - 🛠 Shade Freedman
 - A Merry Jones
 - 🛠 Raquel Liriano
 - 🕆 Julissa Rodriquez

SMILE

Amazon Smile allows customers to select their favorite nonprofit to receive a donation each time they shop at no cost to the customer. Simply pick Toward Independent Living and Learning and Amazon donates 0.5% of your purchase to TILL. Thank you!



Help Us Stay In Touch with You!

To update your mailing and email addresses, please email: info@tillinc.org