

THE TILLGRAM

Winter 2024

Toward Independent Living and Learning, Inc.

Every Adventure is a Story to be Told



From the President



Dear Friends, Families, and Colleagues,

Happy New Year to everyone! We have exciting plans for 2024 as we embark on TILL's 44th year. In 1980, it was clear that society had done a disservice to people who were not in a position to advocate for themselves. Parents were the catalyst to make dramatic changes in society's perception

of people with special needs. Ironically, it was easy to create new and exciting community based services after decades of isolation, segregation and being hidden in the shadows of society. We didn't have the answers, but we certainly knew the questions. TILL is proud of the pioneering role it played in helping families achieve their dreams for their children.

Growth and size bring the danger of forgetting the mission, the very purpose for which we started this revolution in the late '70s and carry on to this day. TILL is prioritizing its 2024 focus on investing in employees who are the basis for carrying on the mission of community, inclusion, and engagement. We are investing in our staff to ensure that they view human services as a rewarding career path by creating new opportunities for professional growth, through scholarship and educational benefits and robust training opportunities. Simultaneously, we are creating new respite supports for families providing full time care for their family members.

We are fortunate to have an extensive longevity with senior management staff who have grown with TILL. We applaud and thank the hundreds of employees, direct care, clinical, management and support staff who make TILL the organization it is today. Your talent and commitment have changed the lives of thousands of people.

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

Stay In Touch

Email 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.



Honors

For the ninth year in a row, TILL has been named to the list of the **Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts** under the leadership of Dafna Krouk-Gordon. The Boston Globe and Women's Edge celebrate women in the workplace with the annual Top 100 list of leaders, using factors such as revenue, diversity in the workplace and innovation to compile the list. TILL staff and supporters joined Dafna at the awards ceremony in early November at the Boston Marriott Copley Place to celebrate this honor.



TILL was honored to receive the **Providers' Council "Peer Provider Recognition Award"** at the Council's 48th Annual Convention. Every year, Providers' Council members nominate fellow members to receive one of the Council's most prestigious awards. Nominated by the **May Institute**, the award applauds TILL's "accomplishments and leadership in providing quality human services on behalf of the residents of the Commonwealth." **Thank you to the May Institute and the Provider's Council for this honor.**

Kingsley Brown, Assistant Director of TILL's Community Connections, received an Honorable Mention at the 2023 Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP) Annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards Ceremony. Kingsley has been with TILL, Inc. for 29 years, starting as an intern and growing professionally over time. Kingsley is passionate about his work and inspires those around him on a daily basis.



Nominated by colleague Glynis Ilyas, Kingsley's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) is evident in his interactions with new employees from different backgrounds. He approaches cultural differences with humility and grace, making him a true embodiment of DEIB. Congratulations, Kingsley.

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week

Each September, we are pleased to take this opportunity to honor our professional and compassionate staff members throughout all of our programs and services. Thank you to all our staff for dedicating yourselves to supporting others and making sure that every day is filled with opportunities for growth and happiness.

No matter what holiday you celebrate, sharing it with others creates community, camaraderie and JOY.





Dance Group

Since ETC opened a new fitness center and healthy kitchen to expand our wellness curriculum last spring, Zumba Dance has been a huge hit! At a recent holiday party, dancers showed their amazing dance moves to a very enthusiastic audience.



TILL Shops got the holiday shopping season started early with a pop-up holiday market in the Dedham office. TILL Shops also attended the holiday marketplace hosted by Northeast Arc's gift shop, Parcels, in the Liberty Tree Mall. Their beautiful handcrafted items make the perfect gifts – for any occasion.



Making up TILL Shops are our talented artisans from Cravings, ETC and TILL Farms. Pop into ETC Gifts at 1300 Hyde Park Ave., Hyde Park, MA or Cravings Café and Gifts at 64 East Pearl St., Nashua, NH to see what's in store for you.

TILL Wave Gallery

The Wave Gallery's collaboration with the Watertown Art Association brought together amazing art from 52 different artists for their exhibit "Fall Art Extravaganza" which was on display through November 4, followed by the "Edible Plants 2023" exhibit on behalf of Watertown's Public Arts & Culture Committee. The project aims to "uplift the importance of local flora" and connect residents to the natural environment outside their doors - using visual art and creative writing.

For more information about the Winter Showcase and upcoming Calls for Art, visit: www.facebook.com/TILLWaveGallery

Above & Beyond Recognitions (July to December 2023)

John Baptiste Ssepuuya,
Chelmsford Residence Manager

Your leadership and commitment to excellence makes our Chelmsford residence an exceptional place to live and work.



Christine Granata, RN,
Program Nurse

This award recognizes your active engagement with the individuals, program managers and team members with whom you work. You take the time to get to know the individuals you support, are aware of any potential medical issues that could arise, and always provide an outstanding level of care.



Residential Team,
Andover Street

You each provide incredibly high-quality care and handle any challenges that come your way. Your professionalism, effort and empathy help make Andover Street an amazing place to live and work.



Marilyn Kuhn,
Billerica Day Program

You have played an instrumental role in developing and implementing the new Individualized Staffing Support service, and your commitment to training and accuracy is remarkable. You facilitate access to vital services and continue to elevate the lives of the individuals you support.



Ekamma Aiworo,
Residential Support Professional,
Peabody

You go out of your way to assist the individuals with walking exercises each evening and take ownership of every project assigned to you. You enthusiastically guided everyone through many exciting April Madness challenges, making and presenting scrapbooks to document the activities – and the fun.



Nicole Laine,
Documentation Specialist,
Billerica Day Program

You have quickly learned documentation procedures for Individualized Staffing Support for individuals, and take on additional tasks with a high level of professionalism and optimism.

TILL's International Ambassadors



TILL's International Ambassador Program traveled to the Azores as part of an international learning experience. Begun in 2001, this unique travel program explores the best in international human service practices. In October, Dafna Krouk-Gordon led 10 TILL staff members to San Miguel, the largest of the nine islands that make up the Azores, to meet with Azores University students and professors, parents and advocacy groups, to discuss each country's approach to human services. Tours of San Miguel's stunning volcanic scenery, flora and marine life were an incredible part of their learning experience.

Thank You for Your Support

Thank you to all of our generous supporters who have responded to our Annual Appeal; honored the memory of a loved one; and doubled their donations through Matching Gift programs. With your support, we grow, learn and thrive together.



TILL Games - Better Than Ever

On September 9th, TILL Games 2023 marked its 26th year showcasing racing excellence. Back in person for the first time since 2019, the daylong event celebrated the TILL spirit of inclusion, empowerment and friendly competition. More than 100 athletes came together to challenge themselves and their peers in multiple events including a one-mile race, youth race, wheelchair races, race-walks, assisted race walks, 50- and 100-meter runs and a four-person team relay race.

Thank you to all of the athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators who showed up to compete, celebrate and cheer at TILL Games at the Reggie Lewis Athletic Center.



TILL's First Annual International Soccer Game



TILL's First Annual International Soccer Game showcased the athleticism, spirit and camaraderie of TILL employees, with more than 25 talented players taking the field and dozens more cheering them on.

TILL's CEO Yesim Taskor, who grew up playing soccer with her brothers in Turkey, says the game was exhilarating. "Camaraderie you build on the field spills over into strong and supportive working relationships and shared goals," Yesim says.