

Help Wanted: City of New Bedford hiring Seasonal Building Custodian

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

SEASONAL BUILDING CUSTODIAN \$12.43/HR

DEPARTMENT OF FACILITIES AND FLEET MANAGEMENT

Provides custodial and minor maintenance functions for municipal buildings. Performs custodial duties. Cleans, dusts, sweeps, buffs and washes floors; washes windows; changes light bulbs; polices grounds; sweeps sidewalks; mows lawns; removes snow and ice; maintains custodial equipment; empties waste receptacles; operates low pressure ventilating systems; orders custodial supplies; makes minor repairs to buildings, facilities, equipment, lighting, ventilation and plumbing systems. Operates pick-up trucks, dump trucks, and panel trucks with a rated capacity of three tons or under, and passenger automobiles. Operates power equipment or tools utilized by the department including, but not limited to, lawnmowers, weed whackers, leaf blowers, litter vacuums, hedge clippers, and power pruners. Performs related work in all assigned areas as required. Moves and sets up furniture and equipment.

Working knowledge of equipment, materials and supplies used in building and grounds maintenance. Working knowledge of equipment and supplies used to do minor repairs. Knowledge of first aid and applicable safety precautions. Skill in operation of listed tools and equipment. Ability to work independently and complete daily activities according to work schedule; Ability to lift heavy objects, walk and stand for long periods of time; Ability to communicate orally and in writing. Must possess ability to use equipment and tools properly and safely; ability to understand and follow written

and oral instructions; and ability to establish effective working relationships. High school graduate or GED equivalent preferred. Any combination of experience and training, which demonstrates the knowledge and experience to perform the work. Must possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license and good driving record. Must have a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, mandatory by MGL Chapter 6 Sec. 172C.

For more information, please visit www.newbedford-ma.gov or contact the Personnel Dept., 133 William St., Room 212, 508-979- 1444. Resumes are only accepted with a completed employment application. Applications will be accepted until a suitable candidate is found. **New Bedford has a residency requirement.** EE0

No matter what your language, JR computer is there to fix the problem!

By Jonathan Comey

JR Oliveira has been fixing electronics for most of his adult life, but that doesn't mean he's done learning.

He's got a wall on the back of JR Computer in the business district on Acushnet Avenue covered with certification and course completion plaques, and the number is always growing.

"You have to stay ahead of the game," he said. "And I always do, I always will."

Whether it's a computer point-of-sale system for a business, a

laptop repair or a quick iPhone walk-in fix, Oliveira makes it a point of pride to get return business.



“Customer service and price, that’s what makes us stand out,” Oliveira said.

However, there is one more thing – the ability to speak different languages (as well as the ability to speak computer, which we all struggle with.)

“We also live in an area with many different cultures, so I think it’s a real bonus for us that we speak English, Spanish and Portuguese.”

While he does have refurbished computers and electronic supplies available, it’s his overall expertise as a certified Windows and Apple professional that keeps people coming back.

Oliveira’s coolest client is the New Bedford Airport, which

brought him on to assist, but he also serves Regal House, several area restaurants and single-operator businesses.

JR Computer has been open for almost a decade in New Bedford, and during that time many computer repair shops have come and gone.

Much of his business is online, but he and trusty sidekick Ana are open for business in New Bedford and encourage walk-ins.

With a son having graduated from New Bedford High and into a career as a marine, and a daughter at GNB Voc-Tech, Oliveira is passionate about wanting to help his local community.



“It’s important to me that people know that they have a good local option,” he said. “People come in from Best Buy or Staples, and they’re frustrated because their laptop lies on the shelf for 3 weeks untouched. Here, you’re going to come in and deal with me or Anna, and we’re going to get the work done fast and right.”

JR Computer offers a quick and easy PC/laptop tuneup program, screen replacement, virus removal, and POS system maintenance for business. Oliveira also offers instruction classes on request for any individual or business looking to get a working understanding of computer basics specific to their field or job.”

Finding a good computer electronic tech that does fast, fair work is like scoring a great auto mechanic – it tends to be a relationship that lasts for life.

And that's exactly what JR Oliveira is hoping for.

"I'm here to stay when others maybe aren't, because I care about the customers, I offer a fair price, and I'm fast," he said. "That's all people want. I'm not your regular tech, but I'm a regular guy, and I love it when the customer leaves with their computer fix and feeling like 'Wow, that was easy.'"

JR Computer

1549 Acushnet Ave.,

New Bedford

Phone: (800) 988-8520

Email: info@jrcomputers.org

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sundays & After Hours/Emergencies: Available by Appointment

Website: jrcomputers.org

Facebook: facebook.com/jrcomputersrepairs/



12 Things To Do This Weekend (Mar. 24 – Mar. 26)

Well, while the weather will be rather pleasant this weekend in terms of temperature – from mid 40s to mid 50s – we'll have rain, then rain and some more rain. The good news is that the rain will not be continual. We will have showers that will pass through and some periods of precipitation. We're hardy New Englanders – what do we care about a little rain? We have Hurricane parties and play in the snow after a blizzard. Nothing will stop us from having fun this weekend!

Lastly, a piece of very important advice in light of recent sad news: beware of carbon monoxide when running heaters and please take precautions.

FRIDAY MAR 24	SATURDAY MAR 25	SUNDAY MAR 26
		
46°/40°	56°/37°	44°/35°
An afternoon shower or two	A little rain; not as cool	A rain or snow shower; cooler

As always, click on the title for more or detailed information on the event. Most of the events were pulled from our [event calendar](#) where you can find hundreds of local area events each month. The event calendar is FREE, so if you are a local business, and not taking advantage of FREE publicity, shame on you! Are you a local business and want to sponsor this high traffic, weekend guide? Contact info@newbedfordguide.com for more details. Have an event to add? Add it [here](#). Know of another event this weekend? Post a reply!

Friday, March 24th

Drug Story Theater: The Price You Pay at the Z (7:00pm-9:00pm)

Drug Story Theater's The Price You Pay delivers powerful, real-life stories direct from teens struggling with drug and alcohol abuse in a unique and innovative approach to prevention. The improvisational theater-style production integrates teens in recovery, their parents and information about adolescent brain development to inform and educate audiences. This performance was originally scheduled for Feb. 9, but has been rescheduled due to weather. Tickets will be honored for the new date or refunded.



Catch real life stories at the Zeiterion – “Drug Story Theater.”

“Forbidden Broadway: Greatest Hits” Cabaret Theater Show (8:00pm-10:00pm)

Anyone who enjoys Broadway musicals will get a big kick out of this brilliantly wicked show. The show combines the funniest and most well-known moments from the show. Laugh out loud as the cast parodies selections from Fiddler on the Roof, Annie, Wicked, Les Miserables, Phantom of the Opera, Cats, Rent and many more moments from the Great White Way. Holy Family Holy Name School, 91 Summer Street, New Bedford.

Live Music: “7 Day Weekend” at the Greasy Luck (9:30pm-12:30am)

Bringing you all the hits from every generation, 7 Day Weekend is truly unique in their brand of fun, diversity and variety. Current Top 40 hits, rock anthems, country classics, a mix of 90’s hip hop, even classic Michael Jackson, Isley Brothers, Grease, or even a surprise or two. At New Bedford’s hottest new spot: The Greasy Luck Brewery at 791 Purchase St. New Bedford, MA.

Saturday, March 25th

MA Law Enforcement “Freezin’-For-A-Reason” Polar Plunge to benefit Special Olympics (9:00am-12:00pm)

Plunge alone or form a team. Creative dress encouraged!!! Print our pledge form and raise money to offset the forgotten costs of cancer care for local families. 100% of all proceeds will aid with hidden costs associated with this illness, such

as: co-pays, childcare, parking fees, gasoline, etc. East Beach, New Bedford, MA. See poster below for more details.

Oxford Book Haven & Cafe Book Sale (Fairhaven) (9:00am-1:00pm)

We have a large selection of books—most are 50 cents. We currently have a special section for our DOLLAR- A-BAG-BOOK SALE. Coffee, tea, soda and home-made coffee breads are available. We welcome anyone to join us in working on our puzzle. Computers and WiFi is available to the public. 357 Main Street, Fairhaven.

St. Julie Billiart Parish Hall Rummage Sale (9:00am-1:00pm)

Clothes, books, toys, tools, household items, domestics, knick-knacks & much, much more. St. Julie Billiart Church Hall, 494 Slocum Road, Dartmouth, MA. Sponsored by the St. Julie's Ladies Guild.



Have fun and help a great cause!

A Robert Wyatt Lecture: A Master of Marvel: Andrew Lloyd Webber (10:00am-12:00pm)

British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber has created a global empire unrivaled in the history of musical theater. In 1983, he was the first composer to have three musicals appear simultaneously on Broadway and in London's West End, a feat he duplicated five years later. Mr. Webber has collected a variety of honors including knighthood, seven Tony Awards,

three Grammy Awards, seven Olivier Awards, a Golden Globe, an Oscar and the Kennedy Center Honors Award. His ninth musical, The Phantom of the Opera, celebrated its 10,000th Broadway performance in 2012. Highfield Hall & Gardens, 56 Highfield Drive, Falmouth, MA.

Portuguese Canvas Paint Night (5:30pm-7:30pm)

Get creative with your Portuguese side! Have some fun with your family and friends, paint your own canvas with the famous Portuguese rooster, Galo de Barcelos! ONLY \$25.00+TAX/ADULT BYOB EVENT MUST BE 21+ INCLUDES: -12X16 Canvas -All painting supplies – Our Artist Jill to help step by step -Portuguese music to inspire and of course to have fun! Dream Land Walk-ins, Party & Event Center, 358 Main St., Fairhaven.

Sunday, March 26th

The 2nd Annual LCpl Matthew Rodriguez Run to Remember 5k (10:00am-2:00pm)

The LCpl Matthew R. Rodriguez Memorial Foundation was established in 2014 and is an approved 501(c)3 non-profit organization. LCpl Matthew R. Rodriguez was a United States Marine from Fairhaven, MA that was killed in action in Now Zad, Afghanistan on December 11, 2013. We serve the community with the same patriotism and honor that Matthew served the United States of America with. To register, please visit <http://www.teamsmilingwarrior.org>. Fort Phoenix State Reservation, Fairhaven, MA.

New Bedford WELL Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford

Wellness program For Adults

Sunday, March 26th Schedule
Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford

10:30am... Qigong with Marcia Rath
11am Aerobics: Self Defense with Donna Bosworth
12pm Nutrition: Henry Bousquet
Meal Prep for success in weight loss
1pm Yoga: Dana LeAnne Brown
2pm Mindfulness: Jonathan
2pm Open 3 on 3 Basketball

Certified Instructors FREE Open to the public www.NBeWell.com

Get healthy, stay

healthy!

New Bedford Wellness Program For Adults (11:00am-3:00pm)

Special NB Well Sunday: "Sense of Peace" with Qigong, massage, nutrition, yoga, and sound healing. Peace in ourselves, peace in our world.

"Forbidden Broadway: Greatest Hits" Cabaret Theater Show (2:00pm)

Anyone who enjoys Broadway musicals will get a big kick out of this brilliantly wicked show. The show combines the funniest and most well-known moments from the show. Laugh out loud as the cast parodies selections from Fiddler on the Roof, Annie, Wicked, Les Miserables, Phantom of the Opera, Cats, Rent and many more moments from the Great White Way. Holy Family Holy Name School, 91 Summer Street, New Bedford.

Musicians from the Handel & Haydn Society (3:00pm-5:00pm)

PROGRAM Telemann: Sinfonia Spirituosa Handel: Cantata ("Un' alma innamorata") HWV 173 Geminiani: Concerto Grosso No. 3 in E minor Telemann: Don Quixote Suite Purcell: Trumpet Sonata Handel: Let the bright seraphim Bach: Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen. Westport Point United Methodist Church, 1912 Main Road, Westport, MA.

Want to sponsor this weekend guide? Contact info@newbedfordguide.com for more details.

HELP WANTED: Southcoast

Autism Center is hiring for Applied Behavior Analytic (ABA) Therapists

Do you want to help a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder reach their fullest potential? The Southcoast Autism Center is hiring energetic, outgoing, and passionate individuals to become Applied Behavior Analytic (ABA) Therapists.

The Southcoast Center, located in Fall River and Fairhaven, provides intensive services to children aged 18 months to 6 years and after-school groups for school age children. Bachelor's degree in Psychology or related field is preferred. Experience working with children, especially those with Autism or other developmental disabilities, as well as experience with children ages 2 to 5 is preferred.

QUALIFICATIONS

A. EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, Education, Social Work, or related field required

B. WORK EXPERIENCE

At least two years experience with Applied Behavior Analysis in a direct service, training and/or school-based setting and/or experience working with the toddler/preschool age population.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The collection of data for each goal/objective during each session or as frequently as defined in the teaching program.
2. Participation in Clinical Review meetings for all individuals on assigned caseload.
3. Maintain a professional and cooperative relationship with

referred client's caregiver(s).

4. Communicate any clinical or family concerns to immediate supervisor in a timely manner.

5. Participate in staff training and submit video samples of session as requested.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Confirmation of scheduled sessions to the Billing Department on a daily basis.

2. Attendance at monthly staff meetings.

3. Completion of daily student notes.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Performance of other reasonably related duties as assigned by the Supervising Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

SUPERVISION

ABA Therapist report directly to the Supervising Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

You can download an application at southcoastautismcenter.com/careers.html.

Faces Of New Bedford #95: Lee Heald

Meet Lee Heald, 63-year-old Director of AHA New Bedford.



Lee moved to the area in the nineties to work at the Whaling Museum as the Vice President of Education and Exhibitions. During her time at the museum, she worked under a large grant that connected communities of whaling with the cultural institutions that collected the information on its history. This project did a lot to help educate New Bedford on its history as a whaling port and opened opportunity to connect our community with others across the world that also shared a similar history.

In 1999, Lee worked to write a grant to fund the first AHA project, not knowing that she would eventually run the organization it became. In 2007, she left her position at the Whaling Museum to take on the Director role at AHA. She loves that AHA is about collaboration and that it is always about the people. It's designed to connect six different sectors: Arts and Culture, Health and human Services, Environment, Education, business oriented and communities of faith.

When you look at the AHA platform, It's not just arts and culture but the community. One of the things that they have demonstrated that it is really possible to build a brand that is inclusive of all of the parts of the community.

"If we are a community that supports all creativity at all

levels, we need a place to celebrate.”

Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to colton@coltonsimmons.com

Follow Colton on Instagram:
<https://instagram.com/simmonscolton>

HELP WANTED: Country Whip Inc., is seeking to fill two part-time positions

Country Whip INC is a family-owned, seasonal ice cream parlor & full service restaurant located off Route 105 in Acushnet, MA. We are seeking (2) part time (15-20 hrs/week) employees with the potential for more hours if they want it. We are looking for a candidate with flexible availability, with a mix of weekday and weekend shifts. Shifts run either 11am-4pm or 4pm-9pm. We are open 7 days a week. We are a small mom & pop restaurant & looking for someone to join our family.

Requirements & Qualifications: We would like someone with some type of kitchen experience, as the position requires cooking with the fryolater and grill. The job also entails light cleaning & dishes. Our menu consists of burgers, sandwiches & fried seafood. We are a fast paced environment but we don't serve fast food – we serve good food fast & we want someone who takes pride in their work and what they serve.

To apply for the position, we ask that they come into the

restaurant any day between the hours of 10am – 7pm, to fill out an application & speak to our head chef. Please ask for Amanda or Ruben when you come in.

Our address is: 1173 Main Street, Acushnet MA 02743, so **APPLY IN PERSON ONLY**, no calls or email.

Monthly Access Dances Bring in 100+ Adults with Disabilities

The value of socialization and friendship is no surprise. Engaging with new people, creating friendships, interacting... it's all part of how we learn, grow, and enrich our lives. This becomes especially true for our consumers, and other adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These individuals often do not have the same amount of social opportunities, nor events that cater to their unique needs.

As a result, Better Community Living is proud to host the community's monthly Access Dances. The dances take place monthly, and have proven to be truly successful in bringing these persons together, and adding quality to their lives.

Starting in the early 90s, Access Dances have been hosted in the Greater New Bedford Community for nearly 25 years. As of July, this program has now merged with Better Community Living as its primary host.

One person who sees the true value of these dances in action is Joanne Rego, who has been working the dances every single month since they began.

Looking back to 1977, Joanne says, "I've always worked in this field. A lot of these people have become like family and friends. It's not like a relationship with a client. You become very close with people and you recognize that there is a need." Joanne has been running the Access Dances since the very beginning.

"There certainly aren't a lot of opportunities to socialize in the community, not like this...," she says. "We have some that come every single month... never miss a dance. I would say close to 50% never miss a dance, but then most others come pretty regularly, every 2-3 months."

When asked some of the things she sees and loves most, Joanne said, "Watching people get comfortable, watching them sing and dance, seeing wheelchairs on the dance floor..." She even said that many stay for karaoke at the end of the night. "It's fun to see them slowly get the courage to go up there and sing."

Typically 100-125 people attend the Access Dances every single month. Joanne says there are new people at every dance, plus a strong attendance provided via a half dozen other agencies, such as the Nemasket Group, SAIL, Lifestream, MOLife, Crystal Springs, Fall River agencies, and numerous others.

These dances help those adults, who often have less opportunity for socialization, to meet new people and develop friendships. Joanne notes that some consumers when they first attend are, "profoundly disabled." She says, "Their social skills aren't good. They're just quietly looking around... Like this one guy in particular. At first, he had a hard time, but then he walked in and he was so comfortable. He was literally coming in hopping like a bunny, just so happy to be there!"

Even better, the Access Dances provide meaningful relationship building and lasting friendships. "It's sort of an adult atmosphere where many people connect. They might find romantic interests, meet someone from another program. It's opening

their social circle.”

“While there are a lot of dancing events in the city, I just don’t know where people would go. This is an opportunity to have a social event in a public building, in the community, open to the building, and it’s catered to their advantage, those who are there.”

Access Dances take place on the 2nd Friday of every month, from 7:00pm – 10:00pm. They are held at the VFW Poirier Post located on the corner of Ashley Boulevard and Appleton Street. Access Dances are open to BCL consumers, members and groups from other agencies, and they are open to the general public. Admission is \$10.00 which includes a snack and free soda all evening. BCL consumers host the Access Dances, therefore, admission is waived. Music is provided by DJ Rockin’ Rick – Richard Brennan.

Supported Employment Network Provides Meaningful Work and Loyal Employees

The mission and purpose behind Better Community Living is to provide opportunities that support independence for adults with disabilities. In order to fully accomplish this mission, BCL emphasizes the importance of integrating skilled individuals into the workforce.

For more than 20 years, Better Community Living has collaborated with the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce to provide work opportunities through its “Supported Employment Network.” The program bridges a connection between chamber

members and job seekers with disabilities who wish to secure employment.

The program has found tremendous success, assisting hundreds of skilled adults with disabilities to obtain meaningful employment. In addition, the program has achieved great strides by simply educating the business community on the benefits of hiring a person with disabilities.

Joanne Rego, Coordinator of the employment program, assists BCL consumers, as well as others served by Lifestream, M.O.Life, and the Department of Developmental Services.

“My role is to link the Chamber membership with the agencies, and to try to inspire businesses to hire an individual with developmental disabilities. Part of that process is we have an article in every Chamber Focus newsletter. We either highlight an individual who’s looking for employment, or someone who has been successfully employed.”

When asked about the benefits she communicates, Joanne says, “I let them know we have a very skilled and eager workforce that is looking to be a valuable employee to businesses. Individuals with disabilities receive top job support and job development training.”

“They’re eager, very loyal, and we don’t have a high turnover. A lot of times they’ll work in positions that typically do have a high turnover, whether it’s packing in a supermarket or working in a fast food restaurant, or general maintenance. Many will stay for 20 years... so employers aren’t constantly training and retraining for a particular job.”

Joanne says that the program provides incredible value to the individuals it serves. “For the same reasons that you and I want to have a rewarding job,” she says, “There’s a feeling of self-worth... and everyone likes a little money in their pocket.”

Many jobs also fulfill the individual dreams and wishes of BCL consumers. "There's one lady with BCL that said she always wanted to work in a bakery, in a restaurant, and she's doing that... which is exactly what she wanted. She wanted to be in food service."

Not only has the Supported Employment Network impacted individual lives, it has made a major impact locally, nationally, and even globally. Over the years, the program has received widespread recognition and has even been used as a model program for other locations.

The development of a video highlighting successful job placements titled, Supported Employment: Make it Work For You, was shown at the ADA's 10th Anniversary Celebration resulting in the Network receiving an Outstanding Program Award. In addition, the program was reviewed by the National Technical Assistance and Research (NTAR) Leadership Center to which it was then listed as a "STAR" program and utilized as a case model in the U.S. Department of Labor's Handbook on hiring employees with disabilities.

The Network was also highlighted in an issue of the United States Chamber of Commerce's newsletter, and a collage of photos in the New Bedford Chamber of Commerce's newsletter highlighted 46 employees with disabilities that had been employed for five years or more.

The Supported Employment Network Program also had the opportunity to provide a presentation to Rotary members who were visiting New Bedford from Russia. The visiting Rotarians were so impressed with the Supported Employment: Make it Work for You video that they requested to use it in Russia during seminars in the larger cities in Russia, including Moscow, St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk.

To learn more, contact Joanne Rego, Supported Employment Network Coordinator, at 508-999-5231, ext. 28 or email

Children's Programs Provide Families the Tools to Succeed

The mission of Better Community Living is to support and enhance the lives of those with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Though known for its quality services for adults, Better Community Living serves the unique needs of children with disabilities, and their families as well.

The Children's Program at BCL provides support to individuals ages 3-22, who are at home living with their families. The goal is to assist the family to maintain the family unit and avoid the out-of-home placement of a child. Several programs are offered, ranging in services from advocacy and support, to direct in-home assistance, and recreational programs. Supports are also catered to meet each individuals' needs in areas that include medical, social, educational, housing and transportation.

Cathy Tremblay, Coordinator for the Children's Program, has devoted 11 years to BCL, and says she particularly enjoys her work with children and families. She cites the many successes across all three programs offered, helping youth to grow and develop and helping families during challenging processes, changes, and new experiences.

One program, Intensive Family Flexible Support (IFFS), provides direct family outreach and home visits on a weekly basis, typically for a short amount of time ranging between 6-12 months. During this time, Cathy works with families who may be in crisis, those who may have multiple children with

disabilities, or those who simply struggle with the challenges of a child with limitations and/or challenges.

“It can include referrals, PCS services, maybe the family needs Mass Health... Children with IDD qualify for all those services,” says Cathy, who then assists the families with obtaining access to anything they need. She visits weekly, then bi-weekly, and then monthly, until the family is able to continue and support their child without further help.

An additional program offered to children and families by BCL is their DESE/DDS Program. Families served in this program, unlike the IFFS program, receive support for an unlimited amount of time. In fact, the ages range from 6-22, and individuals remain in the program until they are 22 years old.

“We provide family navigation, different supports and assistance, and we provide staffing 6-8 hours per week, focusing on goals, providing ABA services...” says Cathy. Visits are monthly and parents are able to play a role in who is staffed to assist the family and the child. “Parents have a say in who is hired,” Cathy says. She will then also assist these families with guardianship, DDS eligibility and application processes (especially when individuals must reapply at age 18), and any needs pertaining to MassHealth, food stamps, and housing. The program also focuses on each individual’s IEP (Individualized Education Program).

The third, and perhaps most fun program offered to children by BCL is their Children’s Recreation Program – a collaborative initiative with the Arc of Bristol County. The program is held on Friday evenings right at BCL, offering everything from dance to gymnastics, tae kwon do, and more.

BCL also utilizes their Day Hab room two Fridays per month for their “Friends Nights” where 20-30 consumers will get dropped off, ranging in age from 3-22. “Parents will say, my kids have real friends now... It’s opportunities that they wouldn’t have

been able to find without these facilitations,” says Cathy. “Parents also connect with each other. They are isolated so often. The entire evening really comes together nicely.”

Cathy truly is a wealth of information on area resources and offerings for these families. She notes that even the local AMC Dartmouth Mall offers monthly sensory-friendly films. Child and family-friendly movies occur on the 2nd Saturday of every month, and films for adults are offered on the 2nd Tuesday of month. These sensory-friendly movie nights cater to the needs of those who have various disabilities, including welcoming those who need to get up and move around mid-film.

Since facilitating the Children’s Programs Cathy says, “We’ve had a lot of successes.” Starting in the field 21 years ago, Cathy began working with adults with ADD and helping them with job development. She then started working with families, and then in family support. This, she says, is rewarding and defines what she loves about her work.

“I really enjoy working with families and giving them the tools to succeed and grow... best part of my job. Even though I start off helping, it’s getting them to continue that on their own... Giving them the tools and putting all those pieces together.”

Better Community Living’s Children’s Program serves individuals from Dartmouth to Wareham. The program helps children and young adults with any type of intellectual disability, including autism. For more information, call 508-999-4300 or email cathy_tremblay@bettercommunity.com.

Shared Living: Friendship, Family, and Enhanced Quality of Life

At Better Community Living, Inc. (BCL), great emphasis is placed on offering integration, independence, and relationship building to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. All of these are central to helping these individuals lead fulfilling lives. While BCL is known for providing homes to its consumers, the agency also offers another valuable option – Shared Living.

Shared Living engages families and individuals to fully open their homes to BCL consumers. These providers then support an individual's daily living skills, and help them to fulfill their personal goals.

Individuals are welcomed into the home as a member of the family. They are fully integrated into daily routines and the family's social life. They attend events together, help run errands, participate in meal planning, shopping, and prep as much as they are able to do so. Providers also help the individuals to engage better in community and social activities, develop self-sufficiency, and build strong relationships, as well as assist with transportation and medical appointments.

Further, the individual who lives with a provider has great autonomy and independence. They'll have their own bedroom with a bed and bureau, a dresser for their clothes, and a lock on their door. They have a right to invite family/friends over to visit. With the assistance of their provider, they attend events and participate in outings of their choice – and even plan out vacations! Overall, shared living aims to help BCL consumers achieve greater quality of life.

BCL's Placement Services Director visits a potential provider's homes to learn more about them, know their personality, inspect the home, and determine if their house qualifies. The best possible provider is someone who has the physical space, as well as the time and availability to provide quality companionship and support.

If selected, Shared Living Providers then receive training and a memorandum of understanding. By the time their individual moves in they'll be fully trained in first aid, CPR, home safety, how to deal with intellectually disabled persons, and how to be an effective provider to reach certain goals. Providers will also understand medication, money plans and money management, and how to approach ISP's.

An ISP, or Individual Support Plan, outlines each individual's unique goals. One of BCL's existing Shared Living Providers says, "My guy's goal is to interact with friends and interact in the community. Another thing is that he likes photography, so one of the goals is to build a collage and set up a place for his pictures."

This is exactly what Shared Living is all about. It's about supporting a person's interests, and helping them to further their goals. It's also about skills development and enhancing one's social abilities and comfort. Many, over time, come out of their shell. They become more trusting. They become more open to trying new things, meeting new people, and at the same time, they learn more about who they are and what they enjoy.

Shared Living Providers are Independent Contractors through BCL and receive a monthly stipend, which is tax free as allowable by law. As an added support, Providers also weekly support if they cannot help with an individual's transportation, and they also receive two weeks of respite per year. Learn more at www.bettercommunity.com.

To learn more about the Shared Living Program, contact Tenina

Ramos at 508-999-4300 Ext. 220 or
tenina_ramos@bettercommunity.com.