

CONNECTION



THE PRICE CENTER

News and Highlights from The Price Center • Summer 2019

NEW FITNESS CENTER FULFILLS A NEED Support from the Kantar Family Makes It Happen



Ruth Kantar, shown with her son, Josh, says the fitness center is usually busy.

Thank you to the following individuals who donated exercise equipment to the new fitness center:

Murielle and Arthur Berke
Martin Lowenthal
Emily Prenner
Beth Putnam

Thanks also to
Mike Sumcizk, Piece By Piece
Moving and Storage

“Since the fitness center opened, I’ve received around 30 hand-written thank you notes.”

— Ruth Kantar

A fitness center was not part of the original plan for The Price Center’s expanded space. Now that it’s off and running, all agree it was the perfect addition. Although Price Center individuals still use the YMCA, they now have the option of working out and attending classes on site.

The space was available, but what about the equipment and instructors needed to turn it into a true fitness center? Ruth Kantar and her family made it happen. “The fitness center was pretty much a family-generated idea,” says Ruth, whose son, Josh, attends the Specialized Supports program. “Our kids’ lives can be sedentary. Being active is good for them physically and psychologically, and it builds their confidence.”

Ruth, who lives in Newton, put the word out on Nextdoor, an online network, that she was interested in exercise equipment to be donated to The Price Center. “I plucked the best I could find, including two ellipticals, a treadmill, a stationary bike and a rowing machine,” she says. Her husband, Jonathan, helped set up the equipment.

The Kantars went further by making a \$10,000 gift to establish the Specialized Supports Enhancement Fund. Josh’s grandparents, Connie and Bill Kantar, also contributed. The fund’s goal is to provide the Specialized Supports program with flexibility and options. “The funding helps pay for events we otherwise couldn’t afford,” notes Karen Manning,

Program Director. “For example, we recently took 12 people to Create a Cook, where they made a meal together. They loved it.”

The fund also covers the cost of bringing in a fitness trainer and yoga and Zumba instructors, as well as the purchase of additional equipment such as weights; yoga mats, blocks and straps; and medicine balls.

The new fitness center has led to greater interaction between individuals in the Community Based Day and Specialized Supports programs. “Also, our staff can use the equipment during their work breaks,” Karen notes. “It’s great to have families helping us.”

Ruth says her goal is to help forge a productive partnership between families and Price Center staff. “What can we do to make employment at The Price Center a more enjoyable and rewarding experience?” she asks. “We know that when the staff is happy, our kids are happy.”

She is gratified when she stops at the center and sees people using the exercise equipment. “I love helping out with the fitness classes,” says Ruth. “At a recent session, about 15 participants were working up a sweat using the weights, working on their balance and core strength and, in general, having a blast. That’s just what we want.”

A MESSAGE FROM LOU MACDONALD

Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends:

I recently joined The Price Center as Chief Executive Officer. I am honored and privileged to be here. Allow me to introduce myself.

I was born and raised in Newton, attended Newton South High School, was a camp counselor at Camp Echo Bridge (where I met my wife of more than 30 years, Catherine) and served as an assistant teacher in a special education class at Oak Hill Elementary School. Upon graduating from UMass-Amherst, I had the opportunity to become Director of Special Needs Programs for the City of Newton, a position I held and loved for almost four years.

I left that position to obtain an MBA at Suffolk University and, shortly thereafter, embarked on a successful management career in high-technology, holding various C-level positions, including Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating



Officer in a number of organizations ranging from startups to Samsung. Along the way, I met and learned from some great entrepreneurs and managers.

While my experience in technology was educational and rewarding, I have always missed my days working with my friends in Newton and the sense of purpose it provided in my life. I see the opportunity to help advance the goals of this impressive organization as the most exciting and important mission of my career. I hope to earn the support of each one of you and to apply my skills and passion to make The Price Center an even greater environment for the individuals we serve.

NEWTON BUSINESS OWNER COMPLETES BOSTON MARATHON

Susan Laughlin Raises Key Funds for The Price Center

Approximately 30,000 runners participated in the 123rd Boston Marathon on April 15, but only one ran to support The Price Center. Susan Laughlin raised close over \$7,000 for the center.

According to Susan, this was the year she would finally run the Boston Marathon. “It was a long-term goal for me,” says the physical therapist, whose practice, Optimal Fit PT, is located in Newton. “I thought I could pull off the training required, so I contacted the Mayor’s office to see if there was an organization I could support, and they directed me to The Price Center.”

Susan was already aware of The Price Center. In fact, it was a good fit. “My brother, Ted, has Down syndrome,” she explains. “Also, I’ve worked in schools with kids who have disabilities for many years. With that suggestion from the Mayor’s office, I contacted The Price Center, and they invited me to come take a tour.”

Like all who walk into The Price Center for the first time, she was impressed. “I was struck by the positive feeling throughout the building,” Susan recalls. “First, it’s a clean and beautiful place, and everyone who works there seems happy to be there. The fact that they have so many different levels of support is impressive.

“Most importantly, the individuals in the various programs seem content, safe and happy, like they are in their home away from home. I could see that, at The Price Center, people are treated as individuals.” That means a lot to her. Thanks to her brother, Susan says she learned early in life to accept everyone. “It’s a gift,” she says.

With a fundraising page on The Price Center website, adequate training under her belt and plenty of motivation,



Susan completed the 26.2-mile race. “I’ve always run, but it was hard,” she admits.

She attended a pre-marathon gathering for runners who were supporting Newton charities. “Mayor Fuller stopped in to chat with us,” says Susan, in reference to Mayor Ruthanne Fuller. “When I told her I was running for The Price Center, she lit up. That was nice.”

TO SUPPORT “TURNING 22,” GOVERNOR BAKER TURNS TO THE PRICE CENTER



Governor Charlie Baker was joined by Price Center individuals and staff; Jane Ryder, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services; and Kay Khan, state representative who lives in Newton.

When Governor Charlie Baker decided to promote full funding for the Commonwealth’s “Turning 22” program, he headed to The Price Center for a visit on May 20. The “Turning 22” initiative provides funding so that young adults leaving school-based special education can make a smooth transition to adult services, from employment opportunities to help with independent living.

The Governor noted that The Price Center “does a really terrific job.” Members of the press attended, which gave

Peter Johnson, a participant of The Price Center’s Community Based Day and Employment Services, a chance to deliver his own endorsement for the program to WCVB-TV. “The whole philosophy of Turning 22 is it’s the first step, and you feed off that,” he said. “If your son or daughter has a disability, I will be a voice for them.”

With a big smile, Governor Baker turned to Peter and said: “Do you have any idea what a great public speaker you are?”

The Price Center Receives Important Accreditation

CARF International Survey Yields Impressive Results

The Price Center received a three-year accreditation from CARF International in March after a comprehensive survey was conducted at the center—assurance that the center’s programs and services meet a high standard of quality. CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) currently accredits more than 59,000 programs and services.

Preparations for the arrival of CARF surveyors were two-pronged, says Shannon Teles, Vice President of Programs. “They reviewed all our policies and procedures and assured they are being followed, and they checked to see that we have conducted evacuation drills and completed audits,” she notes. “They also spent time observing our programs, including the interactions of Price Center staff with individuals.”

As was made clear in the CARF exit summary, the surveyors were impressed with The Price Center. “They specifically noted how well the staff handles challenging behavior with kindness and patience,” says Shannon.

When the CARF report arrived three weeks later, it listed several strengths observed by the surveyors during their on-site visit. The report endorsed The Price Center’s strong, committed board, many of whom have family members in center programs; how the center is actively involved with the community, including local businesses; and how the facility has expanded to accommodate growth and add popular new features, such as the fitness center. The report also cited the skills and competence of the staff, how training is standardized, Employment Services’ successful track record and the culture of commitment, leadership and longevity that has shaped The Price Center.

“When the report arrived, we were thrilled to receive a three-year accreditation,” says Shannon.

LEADERSHIP GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

A Way to Acknowledge Generous Donors

The Price Center recently established the Leadership Giving Council, which is designed to honor those who make a one-time or cumulative unrestricted gift of \$1,000 or more to the Annual Fund within The Price Center’s fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

For more information about joining the Leadership Giving Council or to make a gift of any amount, please contact Suzanne Kinsellagh at 617-244-0065 ext.1008 or skinsellagh@thepricecenter.org.



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THE NEXT STEP CAMPAIGN IS GAINING STEAM

Your Gift Supports the Building Expansion,
Infrastructure and More

As The Price Center's fiscal year came to an end, everyone agreed it was a year of many accomplishments, notably the expansion into the entire Fineberg Building. The Next Step Campaign is intended to support the various renovations necessary to execute the expansion, as well as a number of required infrastructure upgrades and capital projects.

The Price Center now has a larger, more professionally equipped Employment Office with space for training and private offices. Individuals in the Community Based Day Program have more places to socialize. The fitness center, featured on page one, is being used and enjoyed by program participants and staff alike.

Funds raised through the Next Step Campaign will cover:

- Creation of new, outdoor recreational space: including shady spots so that our Day Habilitation participants can enjoy the outdoors.
- Reconfiguration of the parking lot: it will be repaved and redesigned for safer van drop-off and pick-up.
- Purchase of equipment and vehicles: This includes lift systems to transport individuals from wheelchairs and new vans so that Price Center participants can go on community outings.
- Building infrastructure upgrades.

THE NEXT STEP Campaign

Richard Slifka, Chairman of Global Partners, recently made a \$100,000 pledge to the campaign. "I became acquainted with the incredible work done at The Price Center some time ago," he explains, noting that he is good friends with both Dan Frank and Jerry Fineberg, who have been key supporters of the center from the start. "I've known each of them forever." Dan is a committed and effective fundraiser on behalf of the center.

Richard, a long-time supporter of The Price Center, says he is impressed with the results of the recent expansion. "The new space is fabulous," he exclaims. "There is no question: it represents a big step for The Price Center."

Richard's gift is being made in memory of his brother, Alfred. "It's a pleasure to support The Price Center, and I'm glad to make a gift in my brother's memory," he says.

Please support The Next Step Campaign!