

# connection

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRICE CENTER



The Price Center looks forward to moving into our new home at 25-27 Christina Street in Newton.

## New Building and Gala “Homecoming Weekend” Taking Shape

The year 2015 will be enshrined in Price Center history as a time of extraordinary growth and transformation.

At the center of it all is the agency’s spectacular new facility on Christina Street in Newton Upper Falls, where work continues on the interior build out of the 52,000 square foot facility, with a projected opening in March, 2015. But even as drywall is going up and new spaces for therapy, learning and client support are being created, The Price Center’s staff, volunteers and supporters have been busy making plans to support and celebrate our new home in a big way.

Those plans include a major capital campaign to pay for the building and a transformation of this autumn’s 25th annual Gala into a spectacular “Homecoming Weekend” at the new space. Peter Mahler, chairman of The Price Center’s Board of Directors, said all the exciting new efforts are focused on the same goal.

“The bottom line here is the clients; they are going to be much better served,” said Mahler. “It will be a whole new atmosphere.”

Using the new building to reintroduce The Price Center to Newton will be a key part of the capital campaign, Mahler said. Located just off a major commercial corridor, the building will literally give the center a bigger footprint and more visibility in the city.

**“We want to say: ‘Look where we are now!’ and make sure people know we are proud of this.”**

That is key to the campaign’s strategy of seeking support from significant individual benefactors, family foundations and smaller charitable funds close to home.

*NEW BUILDING, continued on page 3*

### Save the date!

Join us on **April 25** as we partner with Sara Campbell and Lasell College at our first

### PRICE CENTER FASHION SHOW

#### In This Issue >

New Building and Gala	1
Healthy New Year	1
President’s Perspective	2
Advocacy Curriculum in ASCENT	2
United Parish Church of Auburndale	3
Food Drive	4
Just One of the (5) Guys	4

### Healthy New Year

Physical transformation is emerging as a theme for The Price Center in 2015, and it’s not just about bricks and mortar.

With an assist from the West Suburban YMCA and some helpful employers, numerous Price Center clients have made a serious commitment to personal fitness that is benefitting them physically, mentally and emotionally.

Wellness specialist Christine Burke takes a group to the YMCA on weekday mornings, utilizing 10 floating memberships donated to The Price Center. On a recent morning the group of five women power-walked the indoor track, rode stationary bikes and shot baskets in the gym.

After sinking several free throws in classic underhand fashion, client Marian Irwin said she loves the feeling she gets after swimming or exercising at the Y.

“I feel happy,” Marian said. “I have more energy.”

Burke said the clients love the social aspect of working out together and in the community. She said the group talks about diet as well

*HEALTHY, continued on page 2*

## HEALTHY, *continued from page 1*

as exercise, and that the clients have started to reinforce each other's positive behaviors.

"A lot of them like to drink soda, but just the other day we were eating lunch and one was talking to the other and saying, 'Why don't you just have soda one day during the week and on the rest have water, and the other one said 'You know, you're right, I'll work on that,'" she said. "And I thought to myself, wow, it's working."

Director of Employment Services, Lori Harrington, said employers are also helping clients improve their health. Lucho Velazque works two days a week at the YMCA and works out after his shifts, but also uses the exercise facilities at Mt. Ida College, where he works three days a week.

As a result, Lucho has not only lost a significant amount of weight, he's also become a vegetarian. Meanwhile, Sharon, who works at Boston Sports Club, has also been staying to exercise after her shifts.

"She works out regularly and has been paying attention to what she eats," Harrington said. "She's really proud of her weight loss and success."



YMCA exercise crew



Sue shoots.. and scores!

## President's Perspective



I hope that you have been surviving this very intense winter season. Dealing with such a volume of snow has been challenging for the agency, resulting in many

snow days and worries about houses and facilities overloaded with snow. At this time, the thaw of spring seems very far away, but I'm sure by the time you read this newsletter it will seem imminent.

In spite of the weather, The Price Center has had a very busy few months preparing for our upcoming move to Christina Street. The renovation has been very involved and time consuming, but we hope the final product will justify the effort. We also are working on all the arrangements necessary to ensure a smooth transition from our current program sites to the new building. We will be updating individuals and families with the move schedule when we have it.

When we get into the building, we will want to give tours to all our stakeholders. Please let us know if you are interested! We are planning a variety of events at the new building to let people see the facility. The first event will be a fashion show produced in collaboration with the designer Sara Campbell and Lasell College. The Lasell students will be overseeing the event planning, marketing, and sponsorships, and the fashions being modeled

will be designed by Sara Campbell. Individuals we serve and staff will model the outfits. It should be a great collaboration. The event is currently scheduled for April 25th. Please join us!

The most exciting part of the move will be the ability it will give us to expand existing programs and to offer new programs. In the last few months, we have launched our new intensive behavioral program serving individuals with higher needs such as the autistic population. Jim Ellis, a clinical psychologist and BCBA is helping set up the program. We will be able to take additional individuals once we are in the new space.

The past year has been a busy and productive period for The Price Center. In order to carry forward these successes, we find ourselves even more dependent upon the financial support of our donors. We are launching a capital campaign to help us pay for the building renovations. We will be getting in touch with all of our friends and supporters to let them know about naming opportunities available in the new building. Don't hesitate to contact me if you would like more information about this.

Sincerely,

**Justin Sallaway**  
President

## ASCENT Program Stresses Self-Advocacy

A young man returns home after a long day at work. He just wants to rest, but his roommates want to be social and do something as a group. He's not sure what to say.

A young woman has been feeling great about her job, but one day at work a colleague treats her disrespectfully. She's unsure whether to speak up.

Managing these sorts of situations can be tricky for anyone, but The Price Center's ASCENT Program has launched a new self-advocacy program designed to help the programs young adult participants be

more assertive in situations that call for them to take control of their own destiny.

ASCENT coordinator Karen Manning says trainers and peer mentors from the group Mass Advocates Standing Strong have been working with Price Center clients on learning about their rights and on being confident and calmly assertive in situations where they need to stand up for themselves.

"Sometimes people with disabilities are so used to others taking care of them, speaking up for your self can be difficult," she said.

## SAVE THE DATE! Gala Weekend October 2nd and 3rd, 2015

AT THE NEW BUILDING: 25-27 Christina Street in Newton

- Donor Appreciation Dinner
- Family and Community Day
- Evening Celebration on Saturday night



**NEW BUILDING**, *continued from page 1*

“Most of these people don’t know about The Price Center,” he said. “And many of them give to nonprofits outside the city. Our pitch is community first: If you’re going to make a charitable contribution to improve the community, why not start right here?”

The campaign’s three-pronged strategy will also target large foundations and corporations outside of Newton and continue to seek support from The Price Center families and friends who have been so generous over the last 35-plus years.

Putting The Price Center’s new home front and center is also the goal of the Fundraising Committee, which is currently planning the most fundamental changes to the Annual Gala in its 25 years.

“Everyone was clear that we wanted to make this about the new space,” Gala chairwoman Michelle Fineberg said. “We want to say: ‘Look where we are now!’ and make sure people know we are proud of this.”

The transformation includes expanding the celebration from a single Gala night into a “Homecoming Weekend” with a number of different activities, and moving the venue from the Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel (where it was

for the last two years) to a large tent in the spacious parking lot of the new Christina Street building.

Fineberg said plans for Homecoming Weekend are still being formulated, but currently include three major components:

- A Friday night donor appreciation dinner to honor those who have given The Price Center significant financial support;
- A family and community day on Saturday which will extend a special welcome to families and children;
- An evening celebration on Saturday night with small plates and entertainment.

Fineberg said the decision to bring the party home to Newton was also driven by a desire to lower the overhead cost of the event and make sure more money from donations, sponsorships and ticket sales flowed directly to The Price Center’s core programs and services.

The change in the format of the Gala also coincides with the retirement of committee member Dan Frank, who came up with the original idea for the fundraiser 25 years ago. Fineberg said the



Construction is in progress at The Price Center’s new home at 25-27 Christina Street in Newton.

committee will be eternally grateful to Frank—whose efforts helped raise more than \$8 million—even as it looks optimistically toward the future.

“This is a very exciting time,” Fineberg said.

## United Parish Church Helps Spread Holiday Cheer

Independence can be a two-sided coin. Being on your own can be liberating and empowering, but it can also get a little lonely, especially around the holidays.

Tom Sheehan has been a success story living in Auburndale in one of The Price Center’s supported apartments. But after Thanksgiving, it became clear

to Director of Family Services Karen Manning that Tom’s holiday social calendar was a little light and that he was due for some extra Christmas cheer.

Enter the United Parish Church of Auburndale. Manning reached out to the City of Newton’s Volunteer Services Department, which connected the church with The Price Center. A \$200 donation

paid for a Christmas tree, some decorations, holiday food and eggnog. He also got a new pair of comfortable sweatpants and a pair of sneakers as a gift.

“It helped him to feel a little bit special around the holidays like everyone likes to feel. Manning said. “It was a really nice thing.”



## Food Drive

Job Coach Lars Knakkegaard and Price Center clients delivered food from a holiday Food Drive to the Centre Street Food Pantry in Newton Centre this December. Food donations were collected at Boston Sports Clubs, Harris Cyclery and The Price Center.



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## Just One of the (5) Guys

The classic rock is always pumping in the dining room of the new 5 Guys Burgers and Fries restaurant, and that's just fine with Ben Bardeen.

Ben grooves to the music as he clears tables, restocks cups and condiments and interacts with the families and other customers who come for the hand-formed burgers and fresh-cut fries.

***"It's work, but it's fun.  
It's fun every day."***

"We have fun. I sing, too," Ben said of the Needham Street burger spot. "It's work, but it's fun. It's fun every day."

Kelsey Silviero, the training manager for the relatively new store, said Ben has been a great employee. Not just competent at his job, she said, his positive and friendly attitude has added greatly to the restaurant's atmosphere and sense of community.

"The dining room looks great, and the little kids and families love him," she said.

Silviero said she would highly recommend that



Kelsey and Ben at Five Guys.

other businesses hire people with intellectual disabilities, especially if they're well supported like Price Center clients.

"At the end of the day, he can do this dining room as well as I can."

