Easterseals greatest strength has always been its commitment from the local community. Our supporters empower us to empower those we serve to reach for, and, realize their full potential.

26%

1 in 4 adults in the U.S. have some type of disability

Easterseals greatest strength has always been its commitment from the local community. Our supporters empower us to empower those we serve to reach for, and, realize their full potential.

WE’RE STRONGER TOGETHER

Our vibrant community of friends, board members, and supporters stand with those who face challenges by volunteering, advocating, donating and participating in events that inspire us all and sustain our cause.

We see the whole person, support the entire family, and spark real change together with our communities.
Easterseals has officially entered its second century, and in Massachusetts we are in the final quarter of that journey. Our 75th anniversary year was a busy one as we continue to strive to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities to live, learn, work, and play.

*Those four words are so important to everyone involved with Easterseals Massachusetts.* No matter how you are connected to the organization, you have no doubt heard those words spoken and they probably mean something very specific to you. Whether you’ve been motivated by someone’s use of technology, their ability to access accessible recreation, or something else entirely, you no doubt have a picture of what equal opportunities means. We have chosen some stories to highlight each area, and how our services can impact all aspects of a person’s life. Sometimes in ways different than you may expect.

The love for our mission and the variety of our services drove us to launch the *Empower Massachusetts Campaign* this year. This has been such a nice opportunity for people new to supporting Easterseals to choose a specific aspect of the mission they want to champion. They join our amazing group of established volunteers and donors who have made the work we do possible for 75 years.

Thank you. Nothing in these pages is achieved without this community effort to serve unmet needs.

After reflecting on 2019, I’m looking forward to the 20s and all of the changes they will surely bring. There are many barriers for us to tackle, but it is never as daunting when we do it together. As staff, volunteers, clients, and community partners we will change the way the world views and defines disability. Thank you for being leaders in serving our mission at Easterseals Massachusetts.
**TOTAL SERVICES**

Easterseals Massachusetts provides services for children and adults with disabilities, as well as Veterans, throughout Massachusetts.

**ADULT SERVICES**

Our services for adults include assistive technology, augmentative and alternative communication, vocational evaluation & support, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language pathology, veteran services, and behavior analysis.

**CHILDREN SERVICES**

Our services for children include assistive technology, augmentative and alternative communication, pre-employment services, youth mentorship, recreation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language pathology, student service aides, and behavior analysis.
Each of these stories will unpack what it means for a person to truly live, learn, work, and play in one's own community regardless of age, setting, or background.

For 75 years, Easterseals Massachusetts has had unrelenting commitment, experience, and leadership in effectively resolving the complex unmet needs of people with disabilities and Veterans in our local communities. All of our programs and services can ultimately be described by the simple themes of live, learn, work, and play. But, bridging the historic gap of equality to these themes is not always simple and often looks different for each individual.

Easterseals prides itself on a strong person-centered philosophy to services, where OUTCOMES AND GOALS ARE LED BY THE INDIVIDUAL within the individual's unique setting. Our programs embrace multiple, if not all, aspects of living a full and meaningful life.

Our therapists, as well as our youth, employment, and transition teams are experts in their fields and provide services in a wide range of settings. Easterseals wide scope of expertise makes it the most comprehensive service agency in the state. Services may be offered in an individual's home, in the community, or at our facilities.
When you first meet Jake, you almost can’t imagine him being vulnerable with the physique of a professional bodybuilder and the warm affect of your favorite middle school teacher. But, like many Iraq War Veterans, Jake has been living with significant PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) which he acquired in his 12 years of service in the National Guard. Similar to nearly 4.7 million Veterans with a “service-connected disability,” or the hundreds of Easterseals clients with an acquired disability, Jake never imagined he would have to heavily adapt his daily experiences due to a disability incurred through unfortunate life experiences. After an honorable discharge, Jake became a police officer hoping to continue a theme of serving and protecting his community, but he experienced frequent complications due to his PTSD and ultimately left the force.

**THE BURDEN OF "RETURNING HOME"**

Many people don’t realize that despite the existence of many Veteran assistance organizations, rates of suicide, homelessness, and drug overdose continue to skyrocket both locally and nation-wide for Veterans. Unfortunately, Jake found himself living out of his car due to the inability to work and complications at home due to the associated depression of Jake’s PTSD. Indeed, **Massachusetts has the largest absolute growth in Veteran homelessness when compared to all other states from 2017-2018!** What’s more, MA ranks in the top ten for highest rate of drug overdose deaths involving opioids—an issue strongly related to depression and mental health. Jake reports; “…it was truly terrible. I was scared. I honestly had no self-worth; felt no purpose with life other than my children.”

**SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS**

Jake first encountered Easterseals Military & Veteran Services after his wife found the “Household Budgeting” class on the Veterans Count Facebook Page. After meeting Adam Costello, Veteran Services Coordinator, Jake was offered Easterseals emergency financial assistance, in which Adam helped Jake resolve some outstanding car payment issues. Adam also challenged him to pursue a job at a new local gym, Impact Fitness (Auburn, MA). Jake is very happy and engaged as customer relations coordinator at Impact Fitness. **Jake comments…**

“…Adam helped me get over that first barrier, and then made me realize that, although my career worsened with my PTSD, I can still help people/veterans in other ways.” - Jake, Veteran

**VETERANS COUNT CHAPTER**

Once Jake was back on his feet and at home, he decided to join the Central MA Veteran’s Count Chapter as a volunteer. The chapter meets once a month, where various business owners, volunteers, and Veterans get together to not only plan fundraising events, but to simply enjoy each other’s company in interactive social settings, like the Black Ale Project at Wormtown Brewery. Adam emphasizes the importance of social bonding as he believes social isolation is the biggest driver of Veteran depression and ultimately suicide. The importance of this can’t be overstated with Veteran suicide in MA nearly doubling from 2006 to 2016!

Jake eventually helped facilitate an awesome fundraiser for Easterseals at Impact Fitness, “The 500/1000 lb challenge” which was a friendly competition among Veterans, Civil Servants, and gym members to use training and fitness as a platform for Veteran awareness. Both Jake and Adam, loved the idea of using a community to embrace physical achievement and wellness to engage the public and Veterans around their “Live” theme.
“I WANT TO SHOW PEOPLE THAT YOU CAN LIVE, AND BE SUCCESSFUL WITH PTSD. AND, THAT THERE ARE POSITIVE WAYS TO CANCEL THE NEGATIVITY BROUGHT ON BY IT, AND THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU’RE FEELING LOW, DOESN’T MEAN YOU STILL DON’T HAVE PURPOSE.”

- JAKE

TEAM LIVE

$10 a month helps directly support weekly Military & Veteran seminars for local Massachusetts Veterans and their families. live.eastersealsma.org
Darnell Younge, better known as “DJ” by his friends and family is 8 years old and currently in the second grade at the East Taunton Elementary School system. He was born with congenital fiber-type disproportion; ventilator and g-tube dependent. DJ was evaluated by Easterseals in June of 2018 for AT (Assistive Technology) and in November of 2018 for AAC (Augmentative & Alternative Communication). He was referred by his school team, who recognized his abilities and wanted assistance with maximizing his school participation and success.

"Our strength is the fact that we [Easterseals] work on-site at the school so we are able to work in conjunction with the people who see the students every day."

-Kristi, DJ’s AAC Specialist

AT & AAC | A STELLAR TEAM

DJ was seen by two Easterseals specialists: Catherine Fradenburg, AT Specialist and Kristi Peak-Oliveira, Speech Language Pathologist and AAC Specialist. Catherine recommended the Microsoft Surface Pro, Surface Pro Pen, as well as other wireless devices. Kristi recommended an iPad with the Touch Chat with Word Power communication app, along with a custom made mount from Rehadaopt that allows DJ to use his iPad even when seated at a desk. Kristi and Catherine say that part of the reason they feel Easterseals is such a leader in disability services has to do with its focus on effectively collaborating across Easterseals service lines as well as other institutions like public schools.

INCLUSION

DJ required AAC and AT to participate fully in class. He can’t use his hands to access the curriculum which is why Catherine recommended the Surface Pro tablet, etc. DJ can mouth words, but it can be very difficult to understand him. That’s why he received an iPad with an AAC app. Some agencies only practice a therapy within an isolated context - the plan might not be successful outside of these conditions.

The school reported during his site check visit with Kristi that DJ has become a leader in his class, and shared a story about a visit from a local firefighter. The firefighter was visiting the classroom and looking for questions. One of DJ’s teachers said:

"The class was overall being very shy, but DJ used his iPad to ask questions, and the other students began to feel more comfortable about speaking as well!"
“THE SCHOOL TEAM IS WONDERFUL. THEY HAVE SUPPORTED DJ’S USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR COMMUNICATION AND ACADEMICS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, ADVOCATING FOR HIM AND MAKING SURE HE HAS WHAT HE NEEDS.”

-KRISTI PEAK OLIVERIA, AAC SPECIALIST

TEAM LEARN

$10 a month allows a student with a disability to receive services for one week in our College Navigator program. learn.eastersealsma.org
At a young age Cesar Rodrigues was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy which affects the skeletal muscles responsible for movement caused by a loss of motor neurons. Because he was an artist who originally used typical paint brushes and pencils, symptoms of his condition became an obstacle. After becoming unable to use both of his hands for painting, he needed another solution to continue his work; that’s where Easterseals Massachusetts (ESMA) came into the picture.

Equal Opportunities to...

WE ARE THE EXPERTS

Originally, Cesar was utilizing ESMA services to acquire an adaptive bed control. But, during installation of the bed, Cesar had expressed to his ESMA Assistive Technology (AT) therapist, Tom Quattrociocchi, how much he missed being able to paint during the installation of the adaptive bed. After sharing his preliminary design ideas for handling the canvas and pouring the paint, the team at Easterseals built Cesar a custom painting box. Tom, an engineer and assistive technology expert, used the basic concept of the design and modified it based on available materials, the method of control he required, flexibility and versatility of use. Tom explained:

“I wanted to make [the box] easier to build, maintain and move,” for him. The box uses Bluetooth technology, through which Cesar can pour paint from a cup attached to a linear actuator. Next, he can tilt the canvas in various directions to spread the paint around into the mysterious terrains or roads that his style commonly depicts.”

Easterseals' AT services are unique because they are provided in someone’s home, in their school, or more importantly; in the real environment that the technology or devices will be used. Eric Odelfieson, VP of AT services, emphasizes performing evaluations in a non-institutional or clinical environment, wherein the client inevitably faces complications or hardships implementing the prescribed services at home. “Our clinicians are not only experts in their technical skill set, we are experts in facilitating people's individual goals in unique contexts. In fact...

...we’re not trying to create skills, the skills exist, we’re circumventing a problem and getting people there!”

Cesar was only in search of a bed control when he realized through conversation with the therapist that Easterseals may be able to help him devise a piece of technology to help him start painting again- a passion he feared would just inevitably fade away. Easterseals was able to help Cesar not only delve back into his passion but maintain his livelihood as a professional artist. His independence is greatly restored with the use of technology.

ACCESSIBILITY = EQUITY

Cesar’s story exemplifies the importance of ESMA's Assistive Technology Program while also demonstrating how limitless the possibilities are in this ever-evolving field. Cesar’s work has now been featured in Agora Gallery, Dzian Gallery, Arts Worcester, and the Sprinkler Factory.
“Life can take you in many different directions. Not everything ends up how one might expect, but the beauty of life is in the possibilities of those different routes.”

Artist Cesar Rodrigues conveys this idea in his work, stating his paintings, “…take your mind in many directions, leaving the door open for conversation.”

-Cesar

TEAM WORK

$10 a month provides an assistive technology training session to a child or adult with disabilities in need. work.eastersealsma.org
Meet Lenny Cournoyer from Holden, MA! He’s been a successful student in our Accessible Martial Arts Worcester, where people with and without disabilities can learn exciting self-defense techniques in a fun, supportive environment. He became involved with Easterseals about 4 years ago after joining the YLN (Youth Leadership Network), a program recommended to his family through Parents Advocates- a program adults with disabilities turning 22. Lenny’s mom, Sharon, comments;

“Sometimes, disability programs treat the individuals as children. The YLN stood out right away because it was truly a place of peer to peer activities with people treating each other with full respect and dignity.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), adults with a disability have obesity at a 1.5x higher rate, heart disease at 3x the rate, and diabetes at 2.3x the rate, than people without disabilities. Furthermore, in Massachusetts, nearly 50% of adults with disabilities do not meet basic aerobic physical activity as compared to only 21% of people without disabilities. Even if the motivation and knowledge of fitness is present for a person with a disability, most fitness centers lack accessibility and/or adaptive programming compounding existing health risks for this population. Easterseals keeps class fees very low and offers scholarships to students who are in need.

Fortunately, Lenny accomplishes his monthly exercise and movement goals while feeling empowered in our classes. It’s important to note that self-confidence and exercise is not just a subjective experience. There is scientific consensus on the connection between exercise as a metabolic and molecular anti-depressant, which strongest with aerobic exercises like the ones structured in Accessible Martial Arts. A 2018 study at Harvard Medical School confirmed "exercise supports nerve cell growth in the hippocampus, improve nerve cell connections, which helps relieve depression." Lenny’s parents are grateful that Accessible Martial Arts has increased to bi-weekly classes because it is a meaningful social and fitness focused activity in their own community.

Lenny’s parents are grateful that Accessible Martial Arts has increased to bi-weekly classes because it is a meaningful social and fitness focused activity in their own community.

“Lenny will go home and practice the techniques. It’s a self-esteem boost, he says to himself ‘I can do this’ and then displays a positive self-image. That’s a big step for people with disabilities. They always hear what they can’t do, not what they can do. The classes are great for self control; emotional, mental, and physical.” - Sharon, Lenny’s mom
"I love breaking the board with Paul. It makes me feel like I can do anything!"

-Lenny

TEAM PLAY

$10 a month allows an individual with disabilities to attend 24 Accessible Martial Arts classes a year. play.eastersealsma.org
**Financials**

*As of August 31st, 2019*

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Service Revenue</td>
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### Expenses

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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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### Assets

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Fees Receivable, net allowance</td>
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<td>for doubtful accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid expense and other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted Cash</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Assets held for others</td>
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<td>Property &amp; Equipment, net</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets:</strong></td>
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### Liabilities

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable &amp; accrued expenses</td>
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<td>Notes Payable</td>
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<td>Pension Benefit Obligation</td>
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<td>Assets held for others</td>
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<td>Deferred revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities:</strong></td>
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### Net Assets

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Operating</td>
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<td>Property &amp; Equipment</td>
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<td>Board Designated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total without donor restriction</td>
<td>2,793,834</td>
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<tr>
<td>With donor restriction</td>
<td>1,523,711</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets:</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,317,545</strong></td>
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</table>

Our full audited financial report is available online at [financials.eastersealsma.org](http://financials.eastersealsma.org)
Board of Directors

Chair
James Dennison
Vice Chair
David S. Hoffman
Vice Chair
Michael Oxton
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Kathy Kittle
Assistant Treasurer
Miranda McCarthy
Secretary
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Danielle Dimond
Jordan Bray
Matthew Jameson
Shaun Crimmins

SPECIAL SHOUT OUT TO WESTERN REGIONAL BOARD MEMBERS!

$26,000 raised!
from Western MA events and sponsorships
500/1000LB CHALLENGE

Since 2018, Veterans fundraisers have brought in $220,468 in donations and grants. This new event created an important community partner in Impact Fitness and attracted an entirely new cohort of Easterseals supporters in the Veteran & Fitness community.

FAMILY FALLAPALOOZA

$11,100 raised!
67% revenue increase!
250% sponsor increase!

ADAPTIVE SWIM

Our 3rd year running a swim program with DCR at Bennett Pool in Worcester for children and teenagers with disabilities has been a major success. Our participation increased greatly in 2019 with the first session at capacity and a waiting list for our second session.

TEAM MIT vs. TEAM HARVARD

EASTERSEALS SOFTBALL, A 19 YEAR TRADITION!
Evening of Empowerment

$195,685 raised

Conrad Wetterau
Team Hoyt Award

Rick & Dick Hoyt
Empowerment Award

Adriana Mallozi
Equal Opportunities Award

Premiere Sponsor
Quality Beverage
$460,546 RAISED

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNITY EVENTS
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT (TECH ACT)

Congress to increase access to, availability of, and funding for AT through state efforts and national initiatives. It forms the basis for the Assistive Technology Act, signed into law in 1998 (amended 2004). This law affirms that technology is a valuable tool that can improve the lives of Americans with disabilities.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

ADA is signed designating people with disabilities as a protected group and thus creating constitutional recourse for many inequalities. Specifically, it created concrete legal language and a basis for accessibility accommodations.

PROJECT TECH IS LAUNCHED

Key corporate support from Digital Equipment and Mass. Rehab got Easter Seals Assistive Technology kick-started. Easter Seals becomes the first to emphasize access to computer technology as part of disability accessibility.

LEADERS IN EXPERTISE

By end of decade, the key driver for Easterseals is expertise, not hardware and software. Sharing expertise makes Easterseals the leader in assistive technology in the state of Massachusetts.
Comcast teams up with ESMA to set up broadband cable/internet for clients to test out the new hi-tech Xfinity Accessible Remote; clients can control it with eye-gazing among other types of accessibility features.

"I’ve been coming to the Boston ATRC for years and years. Unless you actually try it, you don’t know if it’s going to work for you."
- Adriana Mallozzi, ESMA Board Member


The new design is conducive for demonstrations for educators, schools, therapists, and people with disabilities. The ATRC makes it possible for people to easily borrow or learn about hi and low tech equipment without investing substantial income.

"We learned about and celebrated not only new accessible technologies but more broadly the vital role programs like ours can have to empower and inspire a new generation to innovate."
- Ann Shor, Director of Independent Living & AT at Mass Rehab Commission

NBC 10 Boston visited the office to cover the grand reopening and celebrate the last decade’s advancements and new collaboration with Comcast. Find the full live stream on Facebook or the official Comcast PSA video at atrc.eastersealsma.org
2019 was a busy year for Public Affairs, Youth Services, and Recreation. From transportation grants to retreats and camps, our programs flourished in participation across the state!

**DISABILITY IN THE CITY**

47 youth attended mentorship retreat weekend!

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**$70K TRANSPORTATION GRANT**

To improve the transit system accessibility in Worcester and to have people with disabilities fill decision-making roles in local transit policy.

**YOUTH SERVICES**

**$75K LEVEL CONTRACT**

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will be contracting again with us to run the Youth Leadership Network Program at the $75K level. We are signing an MOU with Bridgewater State University which we hope will increase the attendees in our SE area.

**RECREATION**

**30% ACCESSIBLE MARTIAL ARTS**

Our popular Accessible Martial Arts program has been running for almost 3 years and we have increased our participants for our Boston session by more than 30% this year. Easterseals is currently raising money to open a new location in Brockton MA!

play.eastersealsma.org
This year marks continued growth for these programs partnering with over 142 organizations. This team of clinicians supported schools districts, day habilitation programs, skilled nursing facilities, early intervention programs, and home health services.

This is the largest scope of Student Service Aides and Community Programming that has been provided in schools districts and in collaboration with Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children. Over 135 employees provided services for children and young adults to be able to equally access educational and community programs.

Our team of certified therapists continues to grow allowing for an impressively wide scope of services throughout the state of Massachusetts. Over 50 staff members donated/participated in various events and volunteer opportunities throughout the year!
President's Council

Our President’s Council recognizes annual gifts of $1,000 and above. Over the years these generous individuals and families have helped sustain Easterseals MA programs and services and those who count on them.

Gifts of $100,000+
- Roy & Diane Brazelton
- Barry & Judith Bronstein
- Estate of Elaine & Sherman Olson
- George & Sybil Fuller Foundation

Gifts of $50,000+
- Paul F Lavallee

Gifts of $20,000+
- Ladd & Tammy Lavallee
- Team Hoyt

Gifts of $10,000+
- Dawn and Robert Seiple
- Walter S. & Anna S. Skrobot in Memoriam
- Jay White
- The Zagrobski Family

Gifts of $5,000+
- Patricia L. Davidson
- Meredith and James Dennison
- Kirk and Sheila Joslin
- Paul and Jennifer Medeiros
- Peter A. Roque
- Harry and Debra Salerno

Gifts of $2,500+
- Anissa Battaglino
- Youcef (Joe) and Linda Long-Bellil
- Alexander Bosworth
- Eric H. Burt
- Alison Coady
- Vic & Karen DiGravio
- Caroline Larson
- Phyllis Rubin
- Jay Shields
- T. Conrad Wetterau
- Patricia Abruzese-Johnston
- Amanda Border
- Margot H. Brickelmaier
- John and Jean Childs
- John and Maura Cleary
- Adriana Corinaldesi
- Sevan Demirdogen
- Jim Devins
- Raymond and Paula Doherty
- Stephen J. Doherty
- Jill Falconi
- Sean and Susan Flanagan
- Thomas and Diane Foley
- Paul Foley
- John C. Fort
- Ivor W. Freeman
- John and Linda Freeman
- Janice and Mark Fuller
- Marcel Gaudreau
- Nancy Gibson
- Dr. Pauline C. Hamel & Dr. Tobe Berkovitz
- Michael Heberlein
- Daniel Hinckley
- Tom & Kelley Hippler
- Kathy and David Hoffman
- Richard and Tracy Joslin
- Katherine I. Kittle
- Marilyn K. Kucharski
- Leslie M. Leslie
- Harry Lohr and Judy Karp
- Diane Macdonald
- Brian and Sandra Mahoney
- Kathleen McDermott
- Susan R. Mitchell
- Suzanne and Andrew Murray, Jr.
- Michael and Samantha Oxton & Family
- Louie and Lisa Psallidas
- Thomas and Jan Racca
- Owen Richardson
- Charles Rodman

Gifts of $1,000+
- Ken and Diane Saleski
- Audrey Schuster
- Susan Scully-Hill
- William Serjak and Betsey Blackmer
- David Slozak
- Kimberly Sokol
- Robert and Susan Soldani
- Debbie and John Stevens
- Savithri Subramaniam
- Gregory Summe
- Michael L. Waitukaitis
- Scott and Susan Whitlock
- David Yas
- Nafisa Zafar
- Mary Zupkus
Stewards of Empowerment

These donors go above and beyond, not only are they generous individually, but also do the vital work of convincing others to support the Easterseals Massachusetts mission.

**Independence Level**
(Gifts of $25,000+)

Roy & Diane Brazelton
Meredith & James Dennison
Cindy Hanam
Adriana Mallozzi

**Empowerment Level**
(Gifts of $10,000+)

Ted Audet
Alison Coady
Peter Roque
William Wagner
The Zagrobski Family

**Opportunity Level**
(Gifts of $5,000+)

Stephen Connulty
John Cleary
Kara Cronin
Kirk & Sheila Joslin
Miranda McCarthy
Robert & Susan Soldani

**Dignity Level**
(Gifts of $2,500+)

Patricia Abruzese-Johnston
Stephen Bosworth
Patricia Davidson
Stephen Murphy
Michael Oxton

**Ability Level**
(Gifts of $1,000+)

Joseph Andrews
Meagan Barrett
Jordan Bray
Paul Foley
Pauline Hamel
Randy Johnson
Tim Jones
Karim Lakhani
Harry Lohr
Jennifer Medeiros
Susan R. Mitchell
David Slozak

Legacy Society

Easterseals Massachusetts Legacy Society recognizes donors who have established planned gifts through their estates and gifts that create income and other financial benefits. Deep gratitude is extended to all of our Legacy Society members and their families for leading the way for others in support of Easterseals Massachusetts’ mission.

Herbert S. Alexander
Carl H. Allen
Jeffrey Becker
Youcef J. Bellil
Roy D. Brazelton
Claire Carvalho
Martha K. Chase
Alison A. Coady
Meredith & Jim Dennison
Peter W. Evans
Judith H. Fleming
Kirk N. Joslin
Kathy I. Kittle
Selma & Paul Kwasnick
Caroline H. Larson
Philip A. Lemere
Cheryl Lonsdale
John McKay
James H. McLaughlin
Susan R. Mitchell
Cheryl E. Mongell
Henry J. Newell
Daniel Pitts
Judith Poole
Phyllis Rubin
Daniel C. Sacco
Susan & Robert W. Soldani
Pang-Ling Ting
Ronald V. Waters
Jay A. White
John E. Winske
#TeachDisabilityHistory

- 2009 -
A group of students with disabilities from Easterseals MA advocated for disability history to be recognized by local government resulting in General Laws.

Section 15LLLLLL: "The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart the month of October as Disability History Month to increase awareness and understanding of the contributions made by persons with disabilities. Appropriate state agencies and cities and towns and public schools, colleges and universities shall establish programs designed to educate and promote these objectives."

- 2019 -
The Easterseals Youth Leadership decided to create a #TeachDisabilityHistory campaign focused on educating, inspiring, and empowering people with and without disabilities to build the most inclusive future.

The ultimate goal of the campaign is to mandate disability education for Massachusetts public schools through the documentary; "The Great Fight For Disability Rights."

ADA 30th Anniversary
July 26th, 2020 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) being signed into law, prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities. This important piece of legislation is a crucial piece of teaching disability history. The YLN plans to build momentum for a public celebration through the social media campaign.

"It was a day that you saw us as your peers, and not as someone you needed to help." - The Great Fight for Disability Rights

THE MORE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PAST, THE BETTER PREPARED YOU ARE FOR THE FUTURE

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"It was a day that you saw us as your peers, and not as someone you needed to help." - The Great Fight for Disability Rights
The campaign not only makes people aware of the available curriculum, but encourages a broader audience to see the importance that teaching disability history will have on society.

Join us in spreading the word about teaching disability history by sharing why you think it is important to #TeachDisabilityHistory on social media.

Get Involved!

“Increased disability history education and awareness will decrease stigma towards disability.”

- Desi Forte, ESMA Youth Program Manager
Joe Bellil started his relationship with Easterseals Massachusetts nearly 50 years ago as a participant in Easterseals adaptive swimming programs. Born in Africa to a U.S. missionary mother, Joe contracted polio when he was just 8 months old, in which he grew up using braces and crutches for mobility. Joe eventually moved back to New England grew up a local kid in Worcester earning his BS at Worcester State University with an eventual MBA from Anna Maria College. In 2004, Joe was hired at Easterseals to oversee Public Affairs and eventually youth programming. Bellil’s role requires he takes on a wide range of issues related to transportation, employment, healthcare, and accessibility.

In October of 2018, Joe was awarded for his outstanding contribution to the disability community and, in October 2019, 15-year tenure as an Easterseals employee! Many Easterseals supporters are familiar with Joe due to his powerful work with local state legislatures for disability advocacy as well as his commitment to accessible recreation for Massachusetts youth. You can often see Joe attending the Accessible Martial Arts (Worcester) classes! Despite Joe’s physical disability, he recalls how much he enjoyed sports as a youth, especially kickball;

“I could always pick the fastest kid to be my runner and that way I could always guarantee a hit,” recalls Bellil, who as a kid was also active with weightlifting, wheelchair basketball, and Boy Scouts.

It is no wonder Joe is passionate about creating accessible and affordable recreation opportunities for youth with disabilities. Joe has expanded the Accessible Martial Arts program attendance by 30% in Boston this year, and he plans to open a new program in Brockton! Joe is also working on expanding his accessible swim program in Worcester and collaborating with Easterseals NH to send more youth to accessible summer camp.

Joe is also quite proud of the YLN (Youth Leadership Network), which ensures that youth with disabilities in all regions of the state have monthly meetings for activities and interactive discussions about communication, disability rights, and career interests. The YLN facilitates mentorship and community inclusion so that new cohorts of youth with disabilities have the resources and confidence for self-determination in their local civics.

For example, the YLN worked with statewide Independent Living Council and other stakeholders to generate enough money to fund the Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration Day. Every year, the YLN culminates in a weekend retreat at Bridgewater State University. This year’s retreat was so popular that a waiting list had to be created!

Learn more: youth.eastersealsma.org
Joe's devotion to inclusion and fair representation has recently taken the form of advocating for accessible transportation in his home city of Worcester, MA. While there has been great progress made since the signing of the ADA in 1990, there are still fundamentally unfair facts of public transit and transportation (Taxis/Uber/Lyft) for people with disabilities. Joe has formed the Accessible, Affordable, and Available committee with other activists in Worcester to lobby for equality in the transportation. Joe says;

“In Worcester, there is ONLY ONE wheel-chair accessible taxicab. Worcester is investing so much in improving cultural and social amenities, but people with disabilities don’t have the same opportunity to enjoy it. It’s not only an accessibility problem, it’s a quality of life issue.”

Joe and Easterseals secured a $70K grant in 2019 to work with community groups to improve the transit system. Rob Bilotta, member of the Worcester Commission on Disabilities and fellow Easterseals employee, works diligently with Joe on this issue. Both are working closely with WRTA (Worcester Regional Transit Authority), city officials, state legislators, and local organizations to perform studies and research, and to recruit both people with disabilities and older individuals with mobility issues to help with training.

planning, and advocacy. According to Joe and Rob, the primary goal is to get people with disabilities and older adults in decision making roles; “nothing about us, without us.” The second goal is to improve “on-demand” options such as working with Uber/Lyft and the city for more accessible vehicles. The third focus is working with the Transportation Advocacy Coalition to establish a reduced fare structure for buses with the WRTA. Affordable public transit encourages disabled and non-disabled riders to use the bus while also helping the growing problem of traffic congestion in the city. This issue is ever-evolving and has gained public momentum in the local news and social media. As a result, Worcester is one of the only cities in the country now strongly considering a free fare pilot program. Stay informed with the community Facebook group; “Waiting for the Bus.”
Champions of Equal Opportunities

We’re grateful to these foundations, corporations, and organizations for their generous support of Easterseals Massachusetts.

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bank Hometown
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Webster Five Foundation
Through contracts and collaborations with our many community partners, Easterseals MA provided programs and services in 56 cities and 295 towns throughout Massachusetts in 2019.

**Community Partners**

ABI
Abington Public Schools
Acclaim Home Health Care, Inc.
Advocates, Inc.
Alliance HealthCare
Apex K Homecare
Arlington Public Schools
Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District
Assabet Valley Collaborative
Athol-Royalston Regional School District
Attleboro Enterprises Attleborough Public Schools
Auburn Public Schools
Ayer-Shirley Regional School District
Baker Katz Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
Baldwinville Nursing and Rehab Center
Bay Cove Human Services
Beaumont Nursing and Rehabilitation
Bedford Public Schools
Belmont Public Schools
Berlin-Boylston Regional School District
Billerica Public Schools
Blackstone-Millville Regional School District
Boston Center for Independent Living
Boston Collegiate Charter School
Boston Preparatory School
Boston Public Schools
Brockton Public Schools
Brewster Public Schools
Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District
Brookhaven at Lexington
Brookline Public Schools
Buckland-Shelburne Elementary Bureau of the State House
Cambridge Public Schools
Canton Public Schools
Carver Public Schools
Central Massachusetts Collaborative
Charms Collaborative
Chelsea Jewish Community, Inc.
Chelsea Public Schools
Christopher House of Worcester
Commonwealth Care Alliance
Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services
CO-OP
Criterion Child Enrichment
Danvers Public Schools Dedham Public Schools
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Department of Conservation & Recreation - Universal Access Program
Department of Developmental Services - Ergonomic
Department of Developmental Services
Department of Fire Services
Department of Youth Services
Dighton-Rehoboth School District
Don Orione Home Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation
Easton Public Schools
Edward Brooke Charter School
Everett Public Schools
Evergreen Center
Excel Academy
Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development
Fairhaven Healthcare Center
Fall River Public Schools
Fitchburg Public Schools
Framingham Public Schools
Franciscan Hospital for Children
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Groton - Dunstable Regional School District
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Helen Y Davis Leadership Academy Charter School
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Holliston Public Schools
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MAB Adult Services
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Mashpee Public Schools
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Match Charter Public Middle School
May Center
Medfield Public Schools
Medway Public Schools
Mendon - Upton Regional School District
Merrimack Health Group
Methuen Public Schools
Middleborough Public Schools
Milford Public Schools
Minute Man Arc
Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District
Money Follows The Person
Monomoy Regional School District
Monson Public Schools
Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries
Nantucket Public Schools
Nashoba Learning Group
Nashoba Regional School District
Natick Public Schools
Nauset Regional Schools District
Needham Public Schools
New Bedford Public Schools
New England Pediatric Care
New England Sinai hospital
Newbury Court - Rivercrest Wellness and Rehab
North Andover Public Schools
North Attleborough Public Schools
North Reading Public Schools
Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School
Northshore Education Consortium
Norwell Public Schools
Office of the Attorney General
Old Rochester Regional School District Opportunities for Inclusion
P.R.I.D.E. Inc.
Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children
Park Place Skilled Care and Rehabilitation
Pembroke Public Schools
Pernet Family Health Service, Inc.
Pittsfield Public Schools
Pleasantville Public Schools
Plymouth Public Schools
Preferred Therapy Solutions
Quabbin Regional School District
Quincy Public Schools
Reading Public Schools
Rehabilitation Associates, Inc
Rehabilitation Services of Massachusetts
Remedy Therapy Services
Revere Public Schools
Roxbury Prep Charter School
Sancta Maria Hospital DBA Sancta Maria Nursing Facility
Sandwich Public Schools
Saugus Public Schools
Scituate Public Schools
Seaport Academy
Seekonk Public Schools
Seekonk Public Schools
SEEM Collaborative
Sharon Public Schools
Sherborn Public Schools
Shrewsbury Public Schools
Silver Lake Regional School District
Sizer School
Community Partners

Somerset Public Schools
Somerville Public Schools
South Shore Educational Collaborative
Spencer - East Brookfield Regional School District
Sudbury Pines Extended Care
Sutton Public Schools
Swansea Public Schools
Taunton Public Schools
The Arc Brockton Area
The Arc of Opportunity
The Cardinal Cushing Center
The Charles River Center
The Guild for Human Services
The Public School of Northborough and Southborough
Thrive
TILL, Inc.
Triton Regional School District
United Arc
United Cerebral Palsy of MetroBoston
UP Academy Charter School
Uxbridge Public Schools
Venture Community Services
Veteran Assistance
Wachusett Regional School District
Wakefield Public Schools
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Webster Public Schools
Wellesley Public Schools
West Boylston Schools
Westborough Public Schools
Westfield Public Schools
Westwood Public Schools
Whitman-Hanson Public Schools
Wilmington Public Schools
Winchendon Public Schools
Woburn Public Schools
Worcester Public Schools
Work Community
Independence
Wrentham Public School

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

Our mission is not only sustained through contracts with other service providers (community partners), it is amplified through partnerships with non-service industries such as local breweries, newspapers, chambers of commerce, universities, and even professional athletic teams!

Worcester Chamber of Commerce
75 Years of Service Award

Wormtown Brewery
Black Ale Project for Veterans

Connect 4 a Cause 2019
Night Shift Brewery

Co-Founder of Night Shift Brewery
Michael Oxton
Worcester Pirates & Barefeet w/ PBS

Worcester’s very own professional arena football team volunteered to run a Accessible Martial Worcester class. After class, the players signed autographs and surprised everyone with free tickets to a home game! It was a great demonstration of inclusion with professional athletes and people with disabilities performing the exercises together.

Emmy® Award-winning travel host, producer and dancer, Mickela Mallozzi attended a Accessible Martial Arts Boston class to experience Easterseals adaptive dance. Mickela graciously used her large platform to raise awareness around Easterseals 2020 expansion goals for accessible recreation. Check out a video of the class: PLAY.EASTERSEALSMA.ORG

Boston Parents Paper

Easterseals MA joined the ranks of Boston Children’s Hospital as the only other service organization with it’s own landing page for The Boston Parents Paper, one of the most well respected special education publications in New England. Visit bostonparentspaper.com/easterseals-massachusetts

Our expert therapists have featured 10 insightful articles thus far discussing the importance of IEPs, the special education process, and transition planning for life after high school. This magazine and website is a critical resource for all parents, caregivers, educators, and schools. The ultimate goal of the collaboration is to create the best environment for children and young adults with disabilities to prosper in different learning settings by sharing resources and expertise.

Mass Academy STEM

The Worcester ATRC (Assistive Technology Regional Center) earned plenty of attention in the news for its partnerships with local colleges and high schools, particularly a collaboration with students from Mass Academy to engineer assistive technology. The picture to the left displays a “root water system,” designed by students at the Easterseals ATRC. It enables a person with disabilities to automatically water plants despite limitations in fine motor skills. The project idea was given to the students by Easterseals ATRC coordinator, Rob Bilotta, who has a physical disability and struggled with maintaining his plants at home.

Mass Academy of Math and Science earned the No. 10 spot among the top 5,000 STEM high schools for 2019 per rankings by Newsweek and STEM.org. Director Michael Barney thanked Easterseals MA in a press release; “There are so many who work together to create an amazing learning environment for our students–our legislators who vote to support this district each year... creating a partnership with the university which makes this school so unique...”
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE | 9/11 MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

Veteran’s Count hosted a memorial breakfast on 9/11 with Assumption College and various community leaders such as Ed O’Connor, Director of Veteran Services for the City of Worcester and Francesco Cesareo, President of Assumption College. The event focused on ways to create a network of support for Veterans in Central MA. The breakfast also raised $4,000 for Easterseals Military and Veteran Services.

Ed O’Connor praised Easterseals for its uniquely collaborative outreach and service approach in Central MA; “It is to remember how much we have in common with each other and how much stronger we are united—especially in today’s polarizing climate.”

BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY

The Easterseals 2019 Mentorship retreat weekend took place this past June at Bridgewater State University. The overnight event brought together over 40 individuals between the ages of 14 and 45 with various disabilities from across the state.

The goals of both the female group, Thrive, and male group, B.A.D. (Brothers Against Discrimination) during the retreat were to help strengthen community bonds of women and men with disabilities as well as promote empowerment within these communities. We had a variety of interactive activities as well as dynamic speakers from the disability community. Topics included accessible exercising, facilitating healthy relationships, and empowerment through art.

BRUINS FOUNDATION

Recently, Patrice’s Pals (Patrice Bergeron Charity) hosted a group of our Easterseals MA Youth Programs B.A.D. (Brothers Against Discrimination) Male Mentoring program at the TD Garden. The Boston Bruins Foundation has been doing some amazing things in the local community lately and Easterseals MA was happy to collaborate. Pictured to the left is Dan Harris with Bruins Superstar, Patrice Bergeron. Pictured below is Jake Louzan soaking up his private box seats!

Dan and Jake have been involved with Easterseals services and programs since young children. A hallmark of Easterseals relationships is that clients often become long time friends because Easterseals services often span over an individual’s developmental trajectory. It’s amazing to see Dan and Jake now helping mentor upcoming Easterseals youth. Most importantly, Easterseals goal of providing “equal opportunities to play” is truly realized with engaging and exciting social outings like this Bruins game!
The Annual Employee Campaign surpassed its goal this year. Employees raised $17,414 with 5 new donors and 37 returning donors! Easterseals MA employees are committed to enhance our clients’ lives. When ESMA employees choose to support their own organization by giving back, it sets a wonderful example for our external donors and highlights the importance of being able to provide our programs and services to those who need them most. Together, we are changing the way the world defines and views disability!

**Employee Giving**

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO...

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...LIVE, LEARN, WORK, & PLAY.