



## From the Desk of the CEO



Happy Holidays to everyone! This has been a very fast year and a great many positive things have occurred. To cover just a few; our PBS Coordinator Justine Buckley has made excellent progress toward having all of our programs on-board with PBS. We celebrated another staff recognition dinner and recognized thirty four staff who have been with the corporation for five to twenty five years, congratulations everyone and thank you for your commitment to Life-Skills, Inc., and to the individuals with whom you work.

We purchased a new building for our FRS Day Habilitation program, it is a wonderful building in a great location

and I know that everyone is enjoying being in the new space. The open house will be on December 18, from three until five.

As most everyone knows, a tornado touched down in Webster earlier this year and did some extensive damage to property. We were fortunate in that the damage was limited to only a broken fence, downed tree and roof damage at our Brodeur Avenue home. One of our staff was not as fortunate, she and her family lived in one of the buildings in downtown Webster that sustained significant damage and had to be demolished. She was unable to enter the building to retrieve anything, so her family had to rebuild their lives from scratch. Fortunately, no one was severely injured and thanks to the support of the Red Cross, staff from Life-Skills, Inc., and other community resources, they are putting things back together and moving forward. Our maintenance crew, assisted by outside contractors has

done an amazing amount of work this year to upgrade and repair our residential homes and day programs.

As we move out of 2018 and into 2019, I want to thank everyone for their work on behalf of the people who we support, moving forward there are many new things in the works that will benefit everyone and add significantly to everyone's lives.

Please be careful during the Holiday Season, there will be lots of parties and opportunities for good times with families and friends, please be safe when driving and remember that the choices that you make impact so very many people that it is wise to play it safe. Call Uber or friends and be here for the exciting things that will happen in 2019!

Tom Amick, CEO

### Inside this Issue:

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PBS Corner  
Save the Date



## IN MEMORIAM

I met Gary in 2005. I look back at all the precious memories I have shared with him. I thank God I have had the opportunity to share my time with him while he was here.

Gary touched everyone's heart that he encountered with a big "hello", or "you look pretty" and often a big wet kiss on the cheek and a hug. Gary would turn any stressful moment around that you were having with his larger than life personality every time he saw you. My first encounter with Gary in the community is when we went to Price Chopper and upon entering the store, Gary spotted a friend across

the store and proceeded to yell, "Hi, Zia". I learned then how this very special man shared his happiness and enthusiasm with everyone no matter where he was.

Gary also showed me how to get to local attractions in town by pointing to the correct street and turns I should take, except once I drove down the sidewalk at Webster town hall.

Gary loved his family and was always very respectful to his mother. Mrs. Norcross would bring Gary back from a weekend at home and she would always wave her finger at him and state "you behave for these girls". Gary would always laugh and

reply "Yes, mother".

We have lost a beautiful soul much too soon, but Gary was already an angel that had been sent to share his joy of life with all of us. He has earned his wings and I know he is enjoying himself in heaven with endless loads of laundry to wash and calling Bobo home.

Rest in peace my dear friend.

**Submitted by:**  
**Diane Mioduszewski**





## **Life-Skills, Inc. is currently seeking new board members for our organization.**

Life-Skills, Inc., is a CARF accredited non-profit corporation providing a wide variety of services to individuals with intellectual/developmental, physical, and emotional disabilities throughout Central and Western Massachusetts.

Formerly known as Southern Worcester County Rehabilitation Center, Inc., we have served area citizens for over 45 years, and currently offer Residential, Day Habilitation and Community Based Day Support programs in Auburn, Dudley, Fitchburg, Gardner, Greenfield, Lancaster, Leominster, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Webster, Winchendon, and Worcester.

### **Responsibilities:**

- \* Understand & support the organization's mission, services, policies and programs.
- \* Help to promote & enhance Life-Skills, Inc. public profile and network within the business community.
- \* Ability to attend monthly board meetings.
- \* Support corporate fundraising activities through donations, participation and activism.
- \* Oversight, review, and approval of the policies and procedures of Life-Skills, Inc.
- \* Financial management, including adoption, oversight and approval of the annual budget.
- \* Actively recruit, orient, and train new board members.
- \* Term commitment: 3 years.

### **Experienced volunteer candidates for our Board of Directors with expertise in the following areas are needed:**

- \* Law
- \* Finance
- \* Advocacy
- \* Corporate Governance, Strategic Planning
- \* Outreach, networking, peer support groups
- \* Real Estate
- \* Fundraising

### **Benefits of Serving:**

- \* Leadership Opportunities
- \* Personal & Professional Development
- \* Experience to serve this unique population
- \* Networking

**Community minded candidates interested in getting involved and helping to build a brighter future for adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities, please contact:**

Mike Toomey, Board President at (774) 200-8241 or email: [mit1963@charter.net](mailto:mit1963@charter.net)

[www.life-skillsinc.org](http://www.life-skillsinc.org)



## most valuable players



### July

**Sabbatina Konadu - Auburn**  
**Pamela Lessard - Chestnut Hill**  
**Tori Palmerino - Delaney Ave**

### August

**Catherine Ackah - Brodeur Ave**  
**Gladys Tsibo Bondah - Auburn**  
**Tanya Jure - Delaney Ave**

### September

**Emmanuel Barjolo - Auburn**  
**Margaret Carver - Brodeur Ave**  
**Mercy Jubin - Delaney Ave**  
**Kristina Mundell - Chestnut Hill**

### October

**Patricia Farley - Brodeur Ave**  
**Katelen Healy - Delaney Ave**  
**Jose Ruiz - Auburn**

## inside scoop



The above photo is of Dorothy Riley Claydon in her United States Coast Guard SPAR uniform. Dorothy served as a SPAR during WWII. The statue is a replica of a statue she designed in 2003 which was unveiled on D-Day for Female Veterans in the state of New Jersey.

There was a contest to pick a design and Dorothy won out of hundreds of entries. The original statue is in the Wrightstown, NJ Veteran's Cemetery and there is a copy of the memorial that sits in the Paramus Veteran's Home in NJ. She continued her involvement in Veteran Affairs and was appointed by then Governor James Florio to the state Commission for Women's Veterans.

Dorothy passed away this November 15, 2018 at the age of 96.

**Submitted by: Dorothy Claydon**  
**Program Manager, Sawyer Street**



Life-Skills, Inc. was awarded a 3-year CARF accreditation in the service area of Community Integration. The following day programs were surveyed to earn this accreditation:

Gardner Day Hab, Greenfield Day Hab, Centre Place Day Hab, FRS, Day Hab 1, and Morris Street Day Hab.

Thank you to the Program Managers and staff who welcomed the surveyors in to their programs presenting their hard work in the area of community inclusion and services.

## LICENSE & CERTIFICATION

**Department of Developmental Services - Office of Quality Enhancement** completed a 5-day survey in January 2019. The survey represented a full licensing and certification review.

As a result of the survey, Life-Skills, Inc. will receive a 2-Year License for our Residential and Individual Supports service group. Certification was renewed for this service group. The agency also received a 2-Year License for its Day and Employment Group. This

service group was certified as well.

OQE states that the results of the survey for Residential, Individual Supports, and Vocational services were exceptional and exemplify high proficiency in these adult services.



**Submit content to be featured in future newsletters!**  
[tlewandowski@life-skillsinc.org](mailto:tlewandowski@life-skillsinc.org)





## what is professionalism?



If you talk to different people, you'll find that the word **professionalism** means something different to each one of them. It doesn't matter what you do for a job. It could be mowing lawns, running a Fortune 500 corporation, or working in a human services agency such as Life-Skills, Inc. There are characteristics that define a working person as a true professional. In other words, your job doesn't make you a professional but your attitude about your job can.

What really is a "professional"? Is it the money a person makes? Is it the degree or certification that a person has? Not necessarily. Someone can make a million dollars and have a corner office but if that person treats others rudely or is arrogant, you won't think of them as a professional. In fact you won't even want to work with them!

So what makes a professional? Many managers and senior staff will say that professionalism is a combination of attitude and behavior. It means not just knowing how to do your job but demonstrating a willingness to learn, cooperating and getting along with others, showing respect, and living up to commitments.

It doesn't matter what you do for a job. If you behave like a professional, you'll be treated like one. And the benefits can be substantial. Everyone from managers to co-workers to clients will take you more seriously if you behave the way you're expected to on the job, and you'll be more likely to be considered for available

promotions or important projects. It's the people who behave like amateurs that find they have lost control of their careers.

**Professional** - a skilled practitioner or expert.

Thank you to all the hard working, dedicated PROFESSIONALS that we are fortunate enough to have as employees of Life-Skills, Inc. And if you don't see yourself as a professional, look around at the attitudes and behavior of those that are.... and maybe find yourself a role model.



**Why is Professionalism Important at the Work**



The Mad Hatter (Peggy Z.), Mario (Colleen S.), a witch (Ashley S.), and a Siracha Sauce bottle (Maranda A.) all walked into the Halloween party of the year over at Chestnut Hill - and the party began! The ladies were filled with excitement as they walked into a party where they saw their friends, junk food, and welcoming staff.

The ladies not only ate, but they danced, and socialized. Besides the Halloween party, the ladies

indulged in many Fall activities such as pumpkin picking, attending the Webster Fire Station Open House where Maranda and Colleen got a tour of a Safe House and a brief education in fire safety.

On a perfect morning during the season, the ladies went apple picking with staff and brought home countless numbers of apples. Another apple event took place at Center Road (Nichols College) called AppleFest. Colleen attended, and

to her surprise, there were firefighters from the Dudley Fire Department, and she joined them for lunch. Afterwards, Colleen used her knowledge of fire stations/ firefighters and gave a tour of the fire truck to a few children which she enjoyed very much.

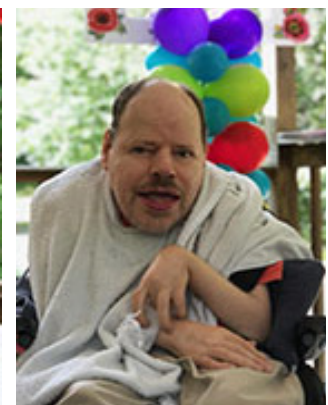
During this chilly season, the ladies would occasionally go for a dance at Point Breeze and dance the night away with their friends! Among these fun activities, cozy movie nights also took place here at Delaney where the ladies ate popcorn and talked about their Christmas wish lists as they patiently waited for a new season to begin.



**Submitted by: Delaney Ave**



**Submitted by: Sawyer Street**



Staff organized a barbeque and advocacy gathering Labor Day weekend at 36 Sawyer Street. Everyone had a great time! Individuals from other residences also attended. The topic for the

advocacy meeting was "Voting" and one of our staff, Violeta, made a voting booth (which you can see in the photo) along with Ruthie and Gary from Sawyer Street. Violeta was also the great

griller - never leaving her post so nothing would burn!

All the staff and individuals really enjoyed themselves and would like to come again to Sawyer Street for the next celebration.





## measuring progress, celebrating success

Nicholas ("Nick") has been a delightful member of the FRS family since 2015. He started at the program with so much enthusiasm and potential for success and was regularly utilizing therapy equipment such as the supine stander and Rifton gait trainer. He always had a smile on his face and was willing to participate in any activity

presented to him.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of 2017, he was hospitalized for several months due to significant medical complications. When he returned to program he had lost a lot of strength and endurance, which rendered him no longer able to utilize those pieces of adaptive

equipment.

Over the past year, Nick has worked towards success on an unsupported sitting goal overseen by this clinician. The hope was to regain the strength and endurance he lost so that eventually he would be able to return to his functional abilities pre-hospitalization. His dedication, positive attitude, and perseverance to succeed finally paid off this past week as Nick was able to tolerate being in the Easy Stander for the first time in over a year and a half! This was a collaborative effort between all therapy staff who were able to assist and be present for this monumental achievement.

This clinician would like to thank all of the therapy staff, direct care staff at FRS, and Nick for all of their hard work in making this possible. Keep up the good work everyone!

**Submitted by:**  
**Heather Socha, OTR/L**

## Submitted by: Arland Drive

The men at Arland Drive have kept busy by dining out and attending as many local dances as they can. Wild Willy's is one place in particular where they always have a good time. Another favorite destination is the Hale YMCA in Putnam, CT.

One of our individual's, Nick, enjoys taking the time to bake cookies for the Firemen at Southbridge Fire Department.



Here is Nick looking very festive while delivering his Christmas cookies. The Firemen really enjoy his visits...and not just for the cookies!





FRS

BEFORE & AFTER



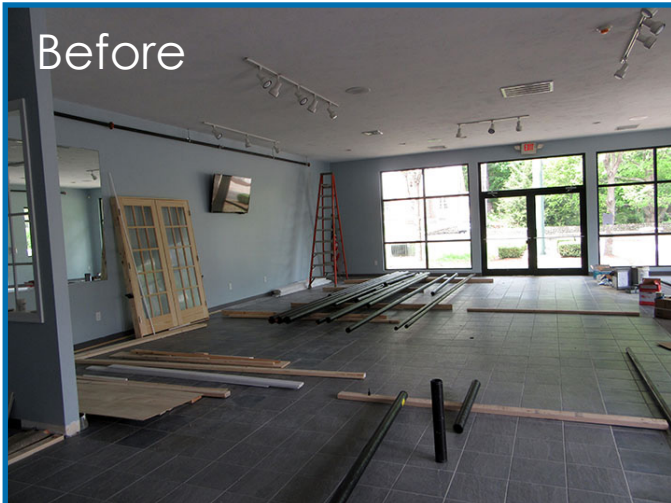
Before



After



Before



After







Life-Skills, Inc. conducted an Open House on December 18 at our newly purchased and renovated FRS location at 163 Main Street in Dudley, MA.

The open house provided an opportunity for parents and individuals who attend the program to stop by and meet Life-Skills, Inc. CEO, CFO, Director of Day Habilitation, and Program Manager of FRS, and to also chat with some of the staff members who were there as well. We also had our business partners from TD Bank, Bollus-Lynch, and Mass Development, as well as representatives from the



South Valley Department of Developmental Services in attendance.

Tours of the building were provided to our visitors, as well as discussions of the excellent supportive programming provided by our direct support team.

Everyone that dropped by enjoyed meeting staff and the refreshments provided. We'd like to thank the Yankee Xpress who sent Ms. Janet Stoica, staff writer, to cover the event and prepare an article on Life-Skills, Inc.

and our FRS program.

On behalf of everyone at Life-Skills, Inc., we thank you for attending the Open House and we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



(David Kline, Director of Day Habilitation; Tom Amick, CEO of Life-Skills, Inc.; Mark Wojcicki, Senior Manager of Bollus Lynch; Robert Seega, Vice President, Investment Banking of Mass Development; Joselyn Magrey, FRS Program Manager; Kathy Nolan, CFO of Life-Skills, Inc.; James A. Ciociolo, Vice President, Relationship Manager of TD Bank)



(Robin Olson, South Valley DDS; Barbara Cordell, FRS Case Manager; Joselyn Magrey, FRS Program Manager; Lisa Rei, South Valley DDS; Dave Kline, Director of Day Habilitation)



## The Advantages Employers Receive from Hiring People with Disabilities



### Studies have shown that people with disabilities:

- \* are more aware and conscientious of safety in the workplace than their counterparts without disabilities.
- \* take less absent days.
- \* are highly motivated, leading to increased productivity.
- \* are more likely to stay on the job longer than workers without disabilities.
- \* are consistently ranked as good or very good on work quality, motivation, engagement, integration with co-workers, dependability and attendance.
- \* help promote an inclusive culture that appeals to the talent pool organizations want to attract.

Source: "The Advantages Employers Receive from Hiring People with Disabilities." Bizjournals.com, The Business Journals, [www.bizjournals.com](http://www.bizjournals.com)

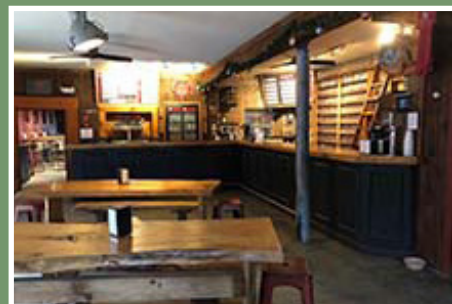
Life-Skills, Inc. will be celebrating the progress and accomplishments of our individuals throughout the year, and also highlighting the businesses who employ our individuals.



Billy Smith, from our Morris Street Day Hab program, is employed by RapsCALLion Brewery. He works there one day a week, and his job coach provides transportation and oversight.

Billy enjoys cleaning the bar area and working for Cedric, the owner. When asked what Billy likes most about his job, he replied with "they are very, very nice people and I love it"!

The team at RapsCALLion Brewery truly care about the local community and



fellow business owners. They often contribute to the charitable efforts of a variety of local causes and truly encompass what giving back means in today's society.





2018

South Central

# Christmas PARTY

On December 7, 2018, South Central Residential once again had a wonderfully, successful annual Christmas Party. The venue was "The Lodge Restaurant" here in Webster and we want to thank everyone at The Lodge for the great food and great service!

Santa brought good cheer and gifts for all who attended. Thank you Santa for always being able to fit us into your busy December schedule. Also, a most heartfelt "Thank You" to all who so generously donated money, which enables this tradition to continue. It truly is a special day!

Many thanks to all the staff and managers who make sure everyone looks their holiday best and work both behind the scenes helping Santa know the perfect gift for each individual, and at the party working to ensure food textures and every other need of each and every individual is met.

A great time was had by all and we can't wait to repeat it again next December!

Residential

Submitted by: Nancy Marlborough,  
SC Residential Director





## employee recognition 2018

On September 26, Life-Skills, Inc. honored employees celebrating 5, 10, 15, & 25 year milestone anniversaries at Point Breeze Restaurant in Webster, MA.

"This event recognizes the staff whose commitment to supporting the individuals served by Life-Skills, Inc. extends well beyond the norm. This year, we are celebrating the achievement of 34 staff ranging from five to twenty-five years. Congratulations to all of you for this exceptional achievement," said Tom Amick, Chief Executive Officer, "Those of you sitting in this room, who are soon to receive an award, have enriched the lives of the people with whom you have worked with for years. Actually, for any number of our individuals, you are their families. Thank you for being here tonight, and for being part of the Life-Skills, Inc. family."

Congratulations to our honored Life-Skills, Inc. employees – our success would not be possible without all of the compassionate and caring team members at all levels of our organization.

### 2018 Award Recipients:

#### **25 Years**

Lisa Morgan

#### **20 Years**

Ann Audet, Tammy Lewandowski

#### **15 Years**

Violeta Arroyo, Eileen Beringer, Cherry Bonin, Deborah Depasquale

#### **10 Years**

Benjamin Atuquayfio, Marie Ange Cherenfant, Bethani Colon, Angela Grenham, Rafael Guerra, Jennifer Ruane, Liz Rodriquez, Katty Taveras, Sandralea Thibodeau

#### **5 Years**

Justina Ansah, Casey Bourque, Nancy Dawso, Maria Diaz, Jennifer Durfee, Patricia Farley, Chalice Gomes, Shalainna Humphrey, Matthew Kender, Courtney Levesque, Jayme Maguire, Kimberly Ouellet, Jillian Robichaud, Ziarty Tobo, Angelie Vermette, Amber Wheaton, Rosemarie Wheaton





# staff appreciation breakfast

Employee appreciation celebrations took place at our south central day habilitation programs (north central to follow). Staff enjoyed breakfast prepared by administrative staff in recognition of all their hard work and contributions to our agency and the individuals we serve. You help to make a difference every day!





# 9th ANNUAL CHARITY **BASS FISHING** *Tournament*



48 boats participated in our 9th Annual Charity Bass Fishing Tournament on Webster Lake on Sunday, October 14, 2018.

It was a brisk 39 degrees in the morning, but eventually warmed up to 60 degrees,

making this a relaxing day on the water. Fishing was extremely challenging for most of the field.

We were able to raise \$3,800 for the agency through this event. Special thanks to O'Connor Insurance, Co., our

Major Tournament Sponsor, and many thanks to the fishermen, sponsors, donors and volunteers that helped make this tournament such a great success!

See you in April!



## **Congratulations to the winners of the tournament:**

- 1st Place** – Martin/Warhurst – 15.15 lbs.
- 2nd Place** – Anyon/Anyon – 13.25 lbs.
- 3rd Place** – Jaskolski/Thibeault – 12.85 lbs.
- 4th Place** – Kempel/Jaskolski – 12.35 lbs.
- 5th Place** – Salloum/Duval – 11.00 lbs.
- 6th Place** – Daniels/Yeulenski – 10.90 lbs.
- 7th Place** – Mendes/Stotswski – 10.65 lbs.
- 8th Place** – Mazzone/Barry – 10.55 lbs.

**Lunker Large Mouth** – Karwowski/Salvidio – 4.30 lbs.  
**Lunker Small Mouth** – Yeulenski/Daniels – 2.90 lbs.



# THANK YOU SPONSORS



**BARRY'S**  
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**The Allaire  
Family**



JESSE VIA CONCRETE  
SERVICES, INC.

**ART landscaping**





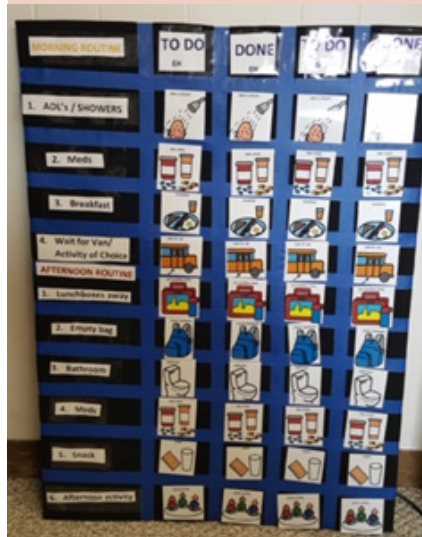


## The Importance of a Consistent Routine That Allows for Choice and Promotes Independence

Our residential program in Auburn is one of twelve Life-Skills, Inc. programs that have fully implemented the Universal Supports tier of Positive Behavior Supports. Universal Supports, the first of three tiers of the PBS model, is universally applied, but in individualized ways. Auburn has done an exceptional job of evaluating how they can improve the Universal Support strategies we all learn in Universal Supports training to their site-specific needs. Auburn voted to work on a team PBS goal with focus on improving routine and consistency for the individuals this year. The staffing team hopes providing a little structure will help the individuals know what to expect and reduce stress levels of both the individuals and staff members, especially during transition times.

They identified that providing consistency for the individuals requires staff members to communicate as a team and be on the same page. They began working on this goal in November of 2018. As a team, Auburn developed a visual schedule board outlining morning and afternoon routines

The visual schedule board serves as a reminder to staff of what the individuals' routines are, but also provides a visual expectation for the individuals and is a way for staff to further engage individuals in their own routines. For example, instead of saying to an individual, "Ok, it's time to put your lunch box away", staff members can direct individuals to the schedule board and say "Ok, what's first in this afternoon's routine?" When the task is completed the individual can move it to the done section and staff can provide social reinforcement for completing steps in the routine.



**(Pictured above: visual schedule board utilized at Auburn)**

Within the schedule board, there is room for choices. There is time for activities on the schedule, but the individuals are given choices of what activities they would like to participate in, or not participate in. Flexibility within routines and empowering the individuals to make choices within a structure is imperative to their success.

The schedule board also promotes independence and

sets individuals up to need less prompting and have a greater sense of accomplishment and involvement in their own lives. This is essential to the well-being of the individuals we serve at Life-Skills, Inc., and to any human being. Let's take a minute to apply these concepts to ourselves by asking ourselves a few questions: What if every day you went to work and had no idea what was expected of you? What if one day it was okay for you not to clean the bathroom and the next day it was a requirement? What if you were allowed no flexibility within what was asked of you?

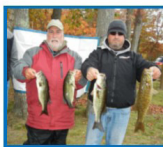
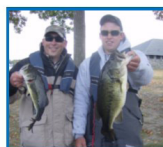
Auburn has been implementing use of the visual schedule board described and has been meeting their goals around use of the board. Sometimes a simple tool like adding a visual component can make a big difference in implementing Universal Support Strategies effectively!

I would like to take a minute to recognize the staffing team at Auburn as they have been one of the sites who have excelled with PBS implementation. They have met their PBS goals each month and PBS data shows improvement. They have also showed enthusiasm and work ethic. I would like to specifically recognize Rosdely Perez who is one of Auburn's PBS standouts. Rosdely continues to show leadership within PBS and effectively models PBS strategies for her coworkers. She is a great communicator regarding PBS goals and strategies and goes the extra mile. Thank you Rosdely, and the entire staffing team at Auburn, for all that you do!

**Submitted by:**  
**Justine McDonald, Positive Behavior Support Coordinator**



## 8th Annual Charity ICE BREAKER



**Sunday, April 7, 2019**  
**8 am - 4 pm**

**Memorial Beach (Webster Lake)**  
**Webster, MA 01570**

**Entry Fee: \$110 per team**  
**(Includes Parking)**

*\*Register Early—Payment order will determine launch order\**



Phone: (508) 943-0700 x2105  
Email: [tyeulenski@life-skillsinc.org](mailto:tyeulenski@life-skillsinc.org)

**Lunker Pool**  
**Small & Large Mouth**

*12th Annual*

## East Meets West

Health & Business Fair



**VENDORS & SPONSORS  
WANTED!**

This is a great opportunity to  
market your business while  
supporting a great cause!

*\*Proceeds benefit programs & services for adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities*

**Saturday, April 27, 2019**

**11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Bartlett High School Gymnasium**  
**52 Lake Parkway**  
**Webster, MA 01570**

**FREE to Public**  
**Blood Drive \* Free Screenings \* Demos \* Samples \***  
**Raffle Prizes & More!**

**Conventional and Holistic Vendors & Local Businesses Featured**  
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Event info: [www.life-skillsinc.org](http://www.life-skillsinc.org)



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