

SPRING 2025

QUARTERLY

# NWSLTR

NASHUA CENTER HAPPENINGS FROM MARCH TO MAY!



**LIFE-OP clients spent a spring day at Joppa Hill Farm in Bedford—visiting with animals, walking the trails, and sharing lunch in the fresh air. It was a fun and relaxed outing that encouraged exploration, conversation, and time together. Experiences like this reflect the heart of LIFE-OP: learning, connecting, and enjoying everyday moments out in the community.**

## **We're Home for Good:**

Nashua Center Purchases Its Building After 31 Years

**04**

## **Taste of the Towns 2025:**

A Night of Flavor and Purpose

**08**

## **Our Remarkable Person**

Meet Erica

**11**

 **Nashua**  
**CENTER**  
Where Independence Grows...

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

As we wrap up the spring season, I want to take a moment to thank you for being part of our Nashua Center community. The past few months have been filled with new experiences, meaningful advocacy, and the kind of everyday moments that remind us why our work matters.

From March through May, we’ve seen clients lead ASL classes, create beautiful works of art, and speak up at the State House in defense of vital services. We’ve hosted conversations with community partners, launched new tools to support communication and accessibility, and celebrated our 22nd annual *Taste of the Towns*—a night that brought together great food, generous support, and a shared commitment to inclusion.

In this edition of our newsletter, we’re excited to share highlights from the season—stories of growth, creativity, and connection that reflect the heart of Nashua Center.

Thank you for your continued support. We’re heading into summer with momentum, gratitude, and a strong commitment to the individuals and families we’re proud to serve.

Warmly,

  
Emily K. Manire  
Executive Director



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## MISSION

**Nashua Center is committed to providing the highest quality of specialized care and support to each individual served while promoting growth in independence.**

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We invite you to be part of our work in building a more inclusive and supportive community. Your generosity helps sustain the programs and services that empower individuals to grow, thrive, and live with greater independence.

Make a gift today—and take a meaningful step toward lasting impact, brighter futures, and real change.

Visit [NASHUACENTER.ORG](https://nashuacenter.org) to make a lasting gift.



SCAN TO DONATE

# We're Home for Good: Nashua Center Purchases Its Building After 31 Years

We are excited to share some incredible news—Nashua Center is now the proud owner of our building at 18 Simon Street. After leasing the space for the past 31 years, this purchase marks a significant step forward in securing our future.

This opportunity came together quickly, and while the decision to buy wasn't long in the making, it was made with confidence and a clear sense of purpose. For over three decades, this building has been our home. It's where relationships have been built, programs have grown, and individuals have found meaningful support. Now, for the first time, the space where so much good has taken place truly belongs to us.

Owning our building gives us a stronger foundation—literally and figuratively. It offers long-term stability and allows us to take a more strategic approach to how we use and improve our space. From updating rooms to better suit the needs of our programs, to making physical upgrades that enhance accessibility, we now have the freedom to shape our environment in ways that reflect and support our mission.

We're incredibly grateful to everyone who helped make this moment possible—from our board members who navigated the process to the many individuals who continue to support our work each day. Purchasing the building is more than a financial decision; it's a commitment to our future and the people we serve.

After 31 years, we're not just leasing space—we're planting roots. And we couldn't be more thrilled to call 18 Simon Street our permanent home.



# Spring Grants Highlight: Bank of America Foundation Supports Workforce Readiness

We are pleased to announce that Nashua Center has received a \$5,000 grant from the Bank of America Foundation in support of our LIFE-OP and Day Services programs.

This generous funding is specifically designated to enhance workforce readiness for the individuals we serve—supporting skill development, job exploration, and hands-on learning opportunities that prepare participants for meaningful roles in their communities.

Through both LIFE-OP and Day Services, Nashua Center provides person-centered programming that fosters independence, confidence, and community connection. With the support of Bank of America, we are strengthening the tools and resources needed to help individuals with disabilities explore their interests, set goals, and work toward greater autonomy.

We are deeply grateful to the Bank of America Foundation for recognizing the importance of inclusive workforce development and for investing in the potential of the people we serve. Their support helps us create more pathways for individuals to participate fully in community life—and to define success on their own terms.

Thank you to Bank of America Foundaton for standing with us and believing in our mission.

# This is Advocacy, the Nashua Center Way Real People. Real Impact.

Earlier this year, we introduced **WeCAN**—Nashua Center's *Community Advocacy Network*—as a way to bring families, staff, and supporters together around a shared goal: speaking up for services that support individuals with disabilities. This spring, that effort came to life in meaningful ways.

With the New Hampshire state budget and federal funding both under discussion, our community came together to protect access to vital supports like Medicaid. Through **WeCAN**, people wrote letters, followed hearings, and reached out to lawmakers—some even made the trip to Concord to share why these services matter. We also welcomed legislators to Nashua Center to learn more about our programs and meet the individuals behind them. These visits offered a chance to see the day-to-day impact of the services they're asked to fund—beyond the numbers and policy language.

**WeCAN** is grounded in the belief that advocacy doesn't have to be loud or complicated—it just has to be real. A conversation, a story, a show of support—all of it matters. If you'd like to be part of this growing network, visit [nashuacenter.org/advocacy](https://nashuacenter.org/advocacy) to learn more and sign up for updates. Together, we're helping ensure that voices are heard, lives are valued, and support systems stay strong.

# #SpringHighlights: Exploring, Creating, and Speaking Up—Together

Spring at Nashua Center was full of meaningful moments—big and small. From speaking up for Medicaid funding to learning new skills, enjoying the outdoors, and finding new ways to connect, the season brought plenty of reasons to feel proud. Here are just a few highlights from March, April, and May that reflect the energy and heart of our community.

## Raising Our Voices for Medicaid

Throughout spring, Nashua Center remained actively engaged in efforts to protect Medicaid funding. Staff, clients, and supporters participated in organized letter-writing campaigns, urging lawmakers to oppose proposed cuts that would affect essential services. Several clients also traveled to Concord—sharing their stories and speaking out for themselves and others who rely on these supports. While the legislative session has moved forward, our advocacy continues.

## Thoughtful Conversations Over Coffee

In April, we hosted a *Coffee and Conversation* in partnership with United Way of Greater Nashua. The discussion centered on Medicaid and what proposed funding changes would mean—not only for those we serve, but for individuals and families across our greater community. The gathering brought together nonprofit leaders, legislative representatives, and concerned citizens for an open, impactful exchange of ideas and concerns.

## Creative Spring Projects

Spring was full of color and creativity. Clients enjoyed seasonal craft projects, including floral-themed DIY magnets

and other hands-on activities that celebrated the warmer weather. These moments of creativity encouraged self-expression, fine motor skill building, and most importantly—fun.

## Lunch Outside with Friends

As the snow melted and sunshine returned, clients and staff embraced the opportunity to move lunch outside. Gathering on the patio or at picnic tables, these casual meals became a daily highlight—bringing people together to enjoy good weather and even better company.

## Expanding Access to Communication

This season, we installed a Sorenson Video Relay System to better support Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients. This technology provides direct access to video interpreting services, improving communication and independence in real time. It's a meaningful addition that enhances accessibility and helps ensure everyone can fully participate in our programs.

## Learning and Sharing ASL

Thanks to recent grant funding, we also purchased new American Sign Language (ASL) learning tools to support language development across the Center. These resources are already making an impact—one client has even taken the initiative to lead a beginner ASL class, teaching basic signs and everyday phrases to peers. It's a wonderful example of leadership, inclusion, and shared learning in action.

## A Return to a Favorite Routine

With winter weather behind us, one of our book-loving clients happily returned to her regular visits to the local library. A longtime reader, she treasures her time browsing new titles and enjoying the peaceful atmosphere. These visits offer

not only enrichment but a comforting routine that supports independence and personal enjoyment.

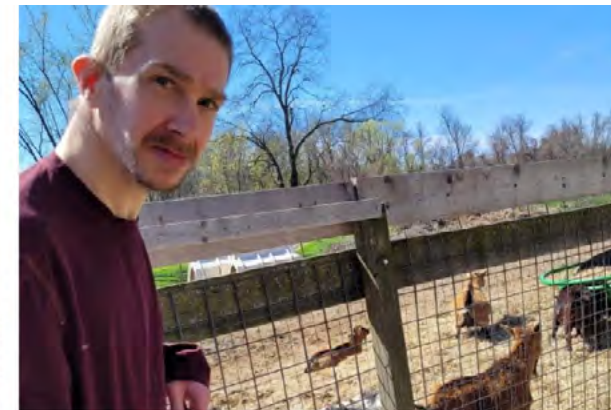
## Crochet and Craftsmanship

This spring, one of our clients has been proudly sharing his passion for crocheting—a hobby he's loved since his grandmother first taught him years ago. His colorful, intricately made blankets have caught the attention of staff and peers alike, offering not only a creative outlet but a meaningful source of pride and accomplishment.

## Taste of the Towns

May brought our signature fundraising event, *Taste of the Towns*, where community members, sponsors, and friends came together in support of Nashua Center. The event featured local flavors, a vibrant crowd, and heartfelt generosity that made the evening unforgettable. Thanks to all who helped make it a success.

Whether speaking up at the State House, crafting with friends, leading an ASL class, or sharing a quiet moment at the library, the heart of spring at Nashua Center was connection. These experiences—big and small—reflect our commitment to building independence, fostering inclusion, and supporting each person's unique journey. As we move into summer, we carry that momentum forward, continuing to grow as a community where everyone is seen, heard, and empowered to thrive.



# Taste of the Towns 2025: A Night of Flavor and Purpose

On May 8th, Nashua Center hosted its 22nd annual *Taste of the Towns*—and what a night it was. Close to 300 guests came together for an evening full of delicious food, personal stories, and heartfelt support for the individuals and families who are part of the Nashua Center community.

Each year, *Taste of the Towns* brings together some of our favorite local restaurants to share small bites with big flavor. This year's event also featured tastings from local breweries, wine shops, vineyards, and a Tito's Handmade Vodka station. From savory dishes to sweet treats, craft beverages to specialty pours, there was something for every guest to enjoy. But as always, the most memorable part of the evening wasn't just the food or drink—it was the sense of shared purpose among everyone in the room. Guests had the chance to learn more about the impact of our programs and meet the people whose lives are changed by the services Nashua Center provides every day.

Throughout the night, we celebrated a few of the incredible individuals and organizations who help make that impact possible. Brown & Brown of New Hampshire received our *Corporate Ally Award* in recognition of their longstanding partnership and generous support. Morgan P., one of our clients, was honored with the *Trailblazer Award* for the leadership and confidence she brings to every space she's in. Reese L., the youngest of the night's honorees, received our *Tiny Trailblazer Award*, reminding us all that the ability to inspire others doesn't come with an age requirement. And the Gurney Family was presented with the *Inclusivity Champion Award* for their continued efforts to build a more welcoming and accessible world

for people of all abilities.

This year's auction included some exciting items, like Red Sox tickets and travel experiences, but the standout pieces were the beautiful works of art created by clients in our LIFE-OP program. These pieces weren't just visually striking—they were full of personality, effort, and pride. Guests responded with enthusiasm, and it was clear how much the artwork meant to those who created it and those who brought it home.

Adding to the beauty of the evening were floral centerpieces generously donated by Key Floral. These arrangements were part of the evening décor, adding elegance and color to each table. After the event, guests were invited to purchase them—many as thoughtful Mother's Day gifts—adding another layer of impact to a generous donation.

The atmosphere was made even more special thanks to live music from our very own Rich S., Nashua Center's IT Support Specialist. Having someone from our team share their musical talents added a personal and memorable touch that many guests mentioned as a highlight of the evening.

Most importantly, the event raised critical funds to support Nashua Center's programs—including LIFE-OP, Day Services, Residential Services, and The Children's Pyramid. These programs provide the structure, support, and encouragement individuals need to grow in independence, build confidence, and live with dignity. Events like *Taste of the Towns* help make that possible, and we are truly grateful to everyone who played a part—from our generous sponsors and volunteers to each guest

who purchased a ticket or raised a paddle.

As we reflect on the evening, we're reminded that this event is more than just a fundraiser—it's a celebration of what's possible when a community comes together to support inclusion, respect, and opportunity for all. We're already looking forward to next year's *Taste of the Towns* and hope you'll join us again as we continue this important work—one meal, one moment, and one step forward at a time.

**Save the date for next year's event - May 7, 2026.**



## Faces of Nashua Center:



KATHY WASON



MINGMA SHERPA



BRYAN LORD

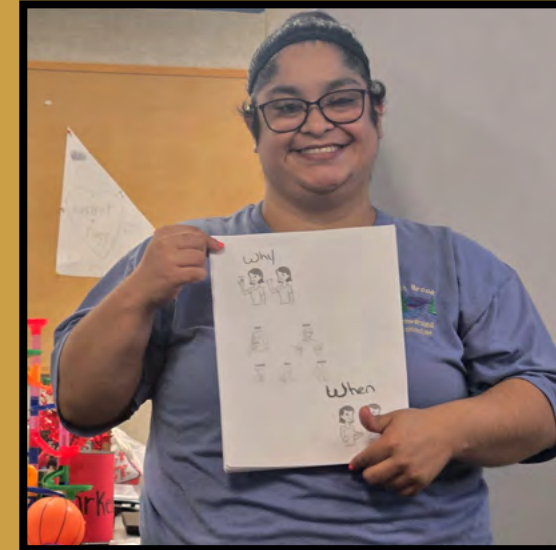
Each month, Nashua Center proudly recognizes a staff member who goes above and beyond and reflects the values at the core of our mission. For March, we honored Kathy Wason, our incredible occupational therapist at The Children's Pyramid. Since joining the team in 2012, Kathy has provided essential services, thoughtful consultation, and steady support to countless families and colleagues. She brings creativity, compassion, and deep listening to her work—always celebrating every milestone, no matter how small. Kathy also takes initiative beyond her direct role, organizing a vision screening clinic with the Lions Club and coordinating a toy donation and swap for families around the holidays. Her dedication to creating meaningful opportunities for children and caretakers is evident in everything she does.

In April, we recognized Mingma Sherpa for his outstanding commitment as a Direct Support Professional. Mingma is known for his calm, steady presence and his ability to connect with individuals in a way that makes them feel truly seen and supported. He shows up each day with reliability, integrity, and a strong sense of purpose—whether he's offering encouragement, lending a hand to a colleague, or simply being a source of reassurance to those around him. Mingma's compassion and professionalism help create a respectful and caring environment where everyone feels valued.

Bryan Lord was our May honoree, and his recognition speaks to years of dedicated service across multiple roles at Nashua Center. From Direct Support Professional to Team Leader to Provider, Bryan has always led with heart. He consistently goes above and beyond—whether supporting daily routines, helping with transportation, or stepping in wherever he's needed. Bryan has opened his home to individuals in our care and, together with his mother, created a space where they feel truly at home. His warmth, humor, and flexibility are appreciated by clients and staff alike, and his longstanding commitment makes a lasting impact on the people he supports and the team around him.

Thank you to Kathy, Mingma, and Bryan for the care, professionalism, and dedication they bring to their work each day. We're proud to recognize them as part of what makes Nashua Center so strong.

## Meet Erica:



Our *Remarkable Person* spotlight honors individuals who bring energy, creativity, and connection to Nashua Center—and Erica has been doing just that since the day she arrived. Now celebrating her one-year anniversary with us, Erica is part of both our LIFE-OP and Residential Enhanced Family Care Programs, where she continues to brighten every space she's in.

Erica is best known for her playful spirit and quick sense of humor. April Fools' Day is her favorite "holiday", and she's been pulling pranks since childhood. One of her favorite stories is of tricking her grandmother by pretending to have a cut on her leg—then peeling off a bandage with an enthusiastic "Gotcha!" and a mischievous smile that only Erica could deliver. That same lighthearted energy is something she brings to Nashua Center daily, where she loves to tease staff and share laughs with friends.

But there's a deeply thoughtful side to Erica, too. As a deaf individual, Erica knows how important communication is—and this year, she took the initiative to launch a pilot class in basic American Sign Language (ASL) for our staff and clients. Her goal is simple but powerful: to help others communicate more easily with her and with others in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. The class has been a hit so far, and Erica hopes to offer another session this fall. She even created personalized sign names for each participant, adding a meaningful and creative touch to the experience.

Outside of Nashua Center, Erica works two days a week at Market Basket as a bagger and helps keep the store clean and organized by sweeping aisles and tidying shelves. She takes pride in her work and enjoys being part of the team. In her free time, Erica loves to paint—following along with video tutorials to create watercolor pieces. One of her recent pieces was featured in our Taste of the Towns silent auction, where it sparked a bidding war and raised funds to support Nashua Center programs.

Erica and her roommates also share their home with four dogs. She recently welcomed a new pup named Wednesday into the mix and quickly discovered that walking all four at once is a comedy show in itself. "Now I do two at a time," she laughs. "Much easier!"

Outside of her busy schedule, Erica enjoys relaxing with some of her favorite hobbies—reading anime, playing video games, and spending time at the beach. One of the most meaningful parts of her routine, though, is visiting her grandmother, who lives just a short walk away. The two are very close and share a special bond, along with a love for animals—especially her grandma's two cats, Sunny and Milo. Sunny is Erica's favorite because she has "a personality just like mine," while Milo is more of a cuddler who prefers to nap.

Whether she's leading a class, helping at the supermarket, painting a new piece, or sharing a laugh, Erica brings her full self to everything she does. We are so proud to recognize her as this quarter's Remarkable Person.

Erica's story is just one example of the confidence, creativity, and everyday moments of success made possible at Nashua Center. Through personalized support, inclusive programs, and a strong belief in each person's potential, we're proud to help individuals like Erica lead fulfilling lives—filled with independence, purpose, a whole lot of heart, and plenty of fun.

Thank you for being you, Erica.

Ph: (603)883-6163 | Fax: (603)881-7198 | [www.NashuaCenter.org](http://www.NashuaCenter.org)

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