



Advocates

Caring Partners. Creative Solutions. Better Lives.

Celebrating 50 Years

*Honoring Our Community
and Envisioning Our Future*

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

President's Message

Dear Advocates Community,

This year's 50th anniversary has been a meaningful time of celebration and reflection for all of us at Advocates. For me, it is also deeply personal. After 40 years with this extraordinary organization, I will retire in June 2026 with immense pride and gratitude for the community that has shaped Advocates' journey.

What began in 1975 as a small family-founded coffee shop has grown into a comprehensive, person-centered organization serving more than 45,000 individuals and families across Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The integration of HMEA and Family Continuity with Advocates marked an important step forward, bringing together more than 2,600 staff. Their diversity, expertise, and lived experience strengthen our work every day and ensure that each person we support is met with dignity, compassion, and respect.

In 2025, we continued expanding our impact across programs. We embedded clinical support in our Autism Resource Center, reinstated the Assistive Technology Conference of New England, and expanded The Friendship Project, our volunteer initiative. One memorable moment came at Fenway Park in July, when Peer Specialist Heidi Trainor threw the first pitch, an inspiring reminder of the strength and resilience within our community.

2026 will bring an important leadership transition. Regina Marshall will become Advocates' next Chief Executive Officer. I am grateful for the thoughtful transition we are undertaking together and confident in Regina's leadership. Throughout her 10 years at Advocates, Regina has spearheaded transformative initiatives to strengthen quality and service delivery. She led the development and implementation of our new Strategic Plan, outlining our priorities for the years ahead and featured later in this report.

We continue this work amid a challenging funding environment and rising demand for services. As the human services landscape evolves, the partnership of our public and private funders, along with the generosity of our donors, is more critical than ever. Your support sustains essential services, strengthens our workforce, and allows us to respond to emerging community needs. We are deeply grateful for your continued trust and collaboration.

As we honor 50 years of Advocates, I want to thank our staff, Board of Directors, community partners, funders, donors, and most importantly the people and families we serve. Leading this organization has been one of the greatest honors of my life. With deep appreciation for all we have accomplished together and great confidence in what lies ahead, I look forward to the next chapter for Advocates.



With Gratitude,

Diane Gould

Diane Gould, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer

Celebrating Our History

As we mark Advocates' 50th anniversary, we celebrate the people, partnerships, and milestones that shaped our journey from a small coffee shop to one of the largest human services organizations supporting people facing developmental, mental health, and other life challenges. Today we serve more than 45,000 individuals and families each year, supported by 2,600 staff from 32 countries who speak 29 languages. This timeline honors the people and progress that brought us to this moment—and continue to shape our mission.

1970s Founding and Firsts

1975

Family and friends of people living at **Westborough State Hospital** open a coffee shop to foster inclusion and community. They are known as **Advocates for Mental Health**.

Fund Balance: \$814

Revenue: \$250



*Westborough State Hospital c. 1975
Photo courtesy of Westborough Center
for History and Culture.*



*Advocates' first residential
program and main office.*

1978

First residential program opens in **Framingham** to provide an alternative to hospitalization for people living with serious mental health conditions.

1979

Advocates' **first main office** opens on third floor of Framingham residential program.

1980s

Growth and Community Integration

1980

Residential programs expand,
now serving **25 people**.



Bill Taylor

1982

Bill Taylor is appointed **Executive Director**.

Expansion of services to support people with developmental disabilities prompts name change to **Advocates, Inc.**

1983

Advocates' mental health residential programs become the first in the state to be **licensed by the Department of Mental Health**.

1987

First residential program to support people with **co-occurring mental health and substance use challenges** opens in Framingham.

First residential program to provide tailored supports for adults with **Prader-Willi syndrome** opens.



*Babs Fenby, Bill Taylor, and Jim Grasberger
at program open house.*

1990s Clinical Expansion and Innovation

1990 Merger with **Together, Inc.** brings **outpatient clinics and bilingual services** to Advocates, expanding capacity to serve diverse populations.

1996 First annual **STAR (Staff Talent and Achievement Recognition) Awards** ceremony celebrates the contributions of Advocates employees.



Advocates staff at the STAR Awards.



Advocates logo in 1997.

1997 Advocates launches new **website** along with a **new logo** and **tagline**.



Alternative Home Inc. office.

1999 Merger with **Alternative Home Inc.** brings expansion of mental health residential services.

2000s

Diversification and Partnerships

2000 Advocates launches **Deaf Services** to provide residential supports for Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults. First Deaf Services group home is purchased.



Then-Rep. Karen Spilka (now Senate President) with jail diversion team and police partners.

2003

With support from the **MetroWest Health Foundation** and **now-Senate President Karen Spilka**, Advocates and the **Framingham Police Department** launch the first **Co-Response Jail Diversion Program** in Massachusetts to respond to the needs of community members in crisis.

2007 Advocates begins partnership with **Supportive Living, Inc.** to provide services for adults living with **brain injury**.

2008

Chapter 257 reforms funding for human services. Bill Taylor is recognized as a driving force in passing the bill to support fair and adequate pay for workers.



Bill Taylor with Governor Deval Patrick at signing of Chapter 257.

2009

Advocates opens an innovative, **community-living model program** in Framingham for people recovering from mental health challenges, developed in collaboration with families in the community.

Advocates merges with **Autism Alliance of MetroWest**, one of seven Autism Support Centers in Massachusetts.



Autism Alliance Annual Kite Day

2010s

Leadership Transition and New Models

2013

Life Skills and Learning Center opens in Ashland, supporting adults with disabilities to learn, grow, and engage meaningfully in their communities.

Advocates opens the state's first **Deaf Respite** program to support Deaf people experiencing mental health crises.



Diane Gould

After more than 30 years of visionary leadership, Bill Taylor passes away. **Diane Gould** is appointed **President and CEO** of Advocates.



Advocates leadership at Life Skills and Learning Center ribbon cutting.

2015

Advocates unveils a **refreshed brand** to reflect a bold, forward-looking vision.



Advocates logo in 2015.



The Living Room

2018

The Living Room opens in Framingham as a 24-hour, peer-run crisis alternative, the first program of its kind in MetroWest.

Advocates

2020s

Adaptation and Growth

2020 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **Advocates adapts programs** to ensure continuity of care and **launches telehealth services**.

2023

As part of the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Roadmap, Advocates opens **Community Behavioral Health Center** locations in Framingham and Waltham, offering routine, urgent, and crisis care.



Advocates leadership at Framingham CBHC ribbon cutting.



Advocates team members at agency BBQ.

2024

Advocates, Family Continuity, and HMEA merge, growing services, expanding reach, and strengthening care for more than 45,000 people annually.



Diane Gould

2025

After 40 years of dedicated service, **Diane Gould announces she will retire** in 2026. The Board of Directors appoints **Regina Marshall** the next **President and CEO**, effective July 1, 2026.



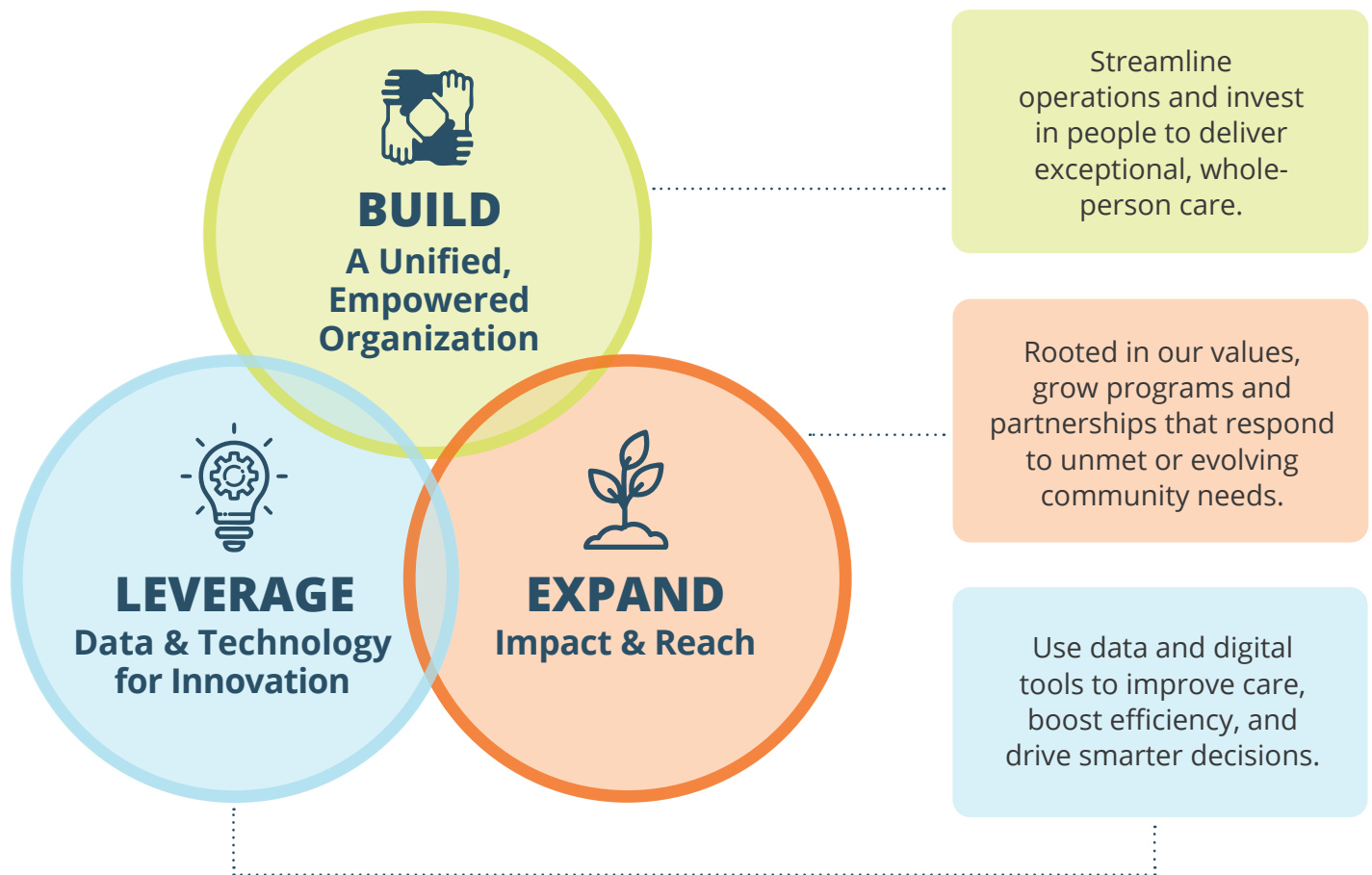
Regina Marshall

Envisioning Our Future

Strategic Plan 2025–2030

By 2030, Advocates will be widely recognized and trusted across New England as the leading provider of high-quality, whole-person, and family-centered care. Our innovative and integrated services will empower people and strengthen communities, with success defined by the experiences of the individuals and families we support. Guided by their expressed needs, preferences, and aspirations, and dedicated to equity, excellence, and impact, we will be the provider, employer, and partner of choice.

Our Goals



Learn More About Our Goals
Advocates.org/StrategicPlan



Honoring Our Community

Because of Your Support...



10,000+

adults with autism, brain injuries, and developmental disabilities are building meaningful lives—with choice, dignity, and connection—supported through community-based services, day and employment services, residential programs, and more.



30,000+

individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges, are receiving critical, compassionate, and culturally responsive care through outpatient counseling, crisis intervention, peer and recovery support, residential, community justice services, and more—including residential and respite care for people who are Deaf.



8,000+

children, families, and caregivers are finding greater stability, belonging, and community through family supports and children's services.



Meet Maryann and Jandira

Shared Living brought Maryann and Jandira together, but love made them a family. Their home is built on belonging, trust, and choice. Together, they enjoy free concerts, apple picking, and going on road trips.

“We will live our lives to the fullest every single day.”

—Jandira, Caregiver

Meet Michael

After 27 years in institutional care, Michael now lives independently in the community. Through his resilience, strength, and determination—and the support of Advocates—Michael has built a life where he can thrive and advocate as a human rights champion for others.

I'm happy I'm part of Advocates...this is my home...and I've made so many friends."

—Michael



Watch Michael's Video

bit.ly/MichaelCelebrating50



Thank you for making what could have been a very difficult time a time of reflection and personal growth. Thank you for going above and beyond what was expected of you.

Read a Letter of Gratitude from CG

After reentering the community following involvement with the justice system, CG took the time to write a touching, handwritten letter expressing his gratitude to a mental health clinician who had a lasting impact on his life.

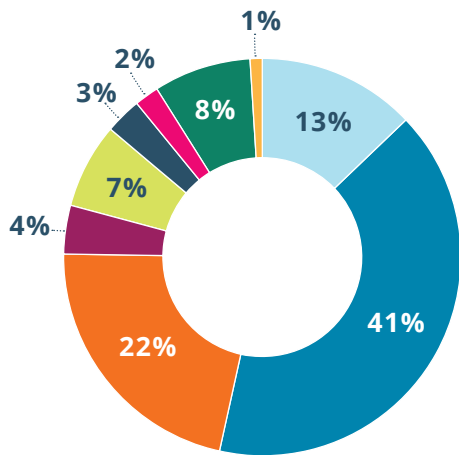
Meet Our Community In Action

Hundreds of families and children joined in summer fun at The Cape Cod Family Resource Center's Family Fest & BBQ. Held at the Hyannis Youth and Community Center, the day was filled with food, fun, and goodies like beach towels, sunglasses, sunblock, and more.

Sun + Connection and Community Spirit = A Day Filled with Joy!



FY25 Financial Report *(Values in \$000)*



Operating Revenue

Department of Mental Health	13%	\$29,825
Department of Developmental Services	41%	\$97,660
Medicare/Medicaid/MassHealth	22%	\$51,515
Other State Agencies	4%	\$8,394
Private Insurance	7%	\$15,866
Client Fees and Rent Subsidies	3%	\$7,995
Grants and Donations	2%	\$4,913
Other	8%	\$18,872
Non-Operating Revenue	1%	\$2,343

Total	100%	\$237,383
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Operating Expenses

Residential Programs	50%	\$115,036
Outpatient Mental Health and Care Management	17%	\$38,777
Psychiatric Emergency Services and Crisis Stabilization	3%	\$7,362
Adult Family Care	6%	\$14,452
Day and Employment Services	7%	\$15,730
Community Justice	3%	\$7,194
Family and Person Centered Services	3%	\$7,047
Children's Services	6%	\$13,420
General and Administrative	4%	\$8,930

Total	100%	\$227,948
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Expenses by Function

Personnel	82%	\$186,717
Occupancy	8%	\$17,640
Supplies and Client Needs	3%	\$7,115
Information Technology	3%	\$7,496
Transportation	2%	\$3,671
Training	0%	\$776
Other	2%	\$4,533

Total	100%	\$227,948
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Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary

To cap off the year, Advocates' 50th Anniversary Gala in November brought together more than 330 supporters for an evening of celebration and reflection. Senate President Karen Spilka presented a special citation to Diane Gould, and Michael received the 50th Anniversary Human Rights Award. We extend heartfelt thanks to all who have championed our mission across the decades.

Through the years...

