

# INDEPENDENCE

from Generation to Generation

# 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024



NORTHEAST INDEPENDENT  
LIVING PROGRAM INC.



# INDEPENDENCE FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

## OUR MISSION

The **Northeast Independent Living Program** (NILP) is a consumer controlled Independent Living Center providing advocacy and services to people with all disabilities who wish to live independently in the community.

## OUR VISION

We are a community of people who open doors to create an all-inclusive community free of communication, attitudinal, economic and architectural barriers for all people with disabilities.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

Independent Living philosophy states that individuals with disabilities are the best determinants of their own needs and service choices.

Through role modeling and peer counseling, with other individuals with disabilities, they become empowered to make changes in their lives and become more self-sufficient and self-reliant.

## ADVOCACY ACTIONS

### LEGISLATIVE FORUM

NILP's annual Legislative Forum took place in March at the Elks in Lawrence. Over 88 people attended between staff, consumers, local legislators, and community members and discussed the important issues of the day to those with disabilities.



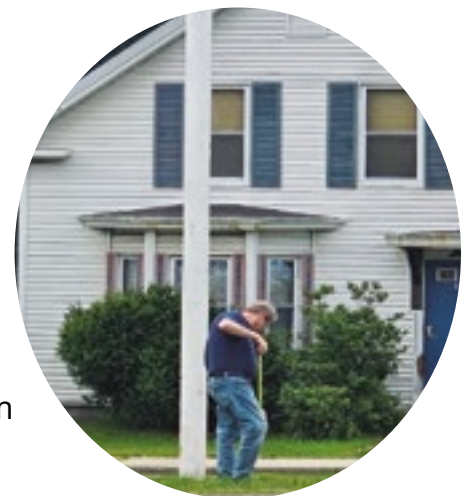
### ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN AGAINST PROPOSED CUTS TO THE PCA PROGRAM

Along with other advocacy organizations, NILP participated in an advocacy campaign that successfully prevented cuts

to the vital Personal Care Attendant program that were proposed in the Governor's budget.

### TOWNSEND ADA PROJECT

The Town of Townsend partnered with Northeast Independent Living Program, Inc. (NILP) to update the Town of Townsend's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. The review covered 110 active and passive recreation sites and town buildings/ public properties and evaluated them on their ability to be used by people of all ages and abilities according to the standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



# DEAR FRIENDS, SUPPORTERS AND CONSUMERS OF NILP:

I recently completed my first year as Director of the **Northeast Independent Living Program** and what a whirlwind it was. It was a year of learning, listening, understanding, and a feeling of humbleness towards the responsibility placed in me.

Our organization's mission of empowering individuals to live independently in the community, which includes fighting to protect the rights and services that advocates before us have gained, has never been more relevant.

Earlier this year, NILP, along with many other organizations and partners within the independent living and disability community, participated in an advocacy campaign against planned cuts to the eligibility for MassHealth's Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program. This campaign was successful in keeping these cuts out of this year's state budget. The self-directed PCA program is vital to many of our consumers' ability to maintain their independence and dignity, and it cannot be weakened.

Along with our advocacy efforts, we continue to be at the forefront of innovative services to help those with all types of disabilities.

NILP increased its role in the Veterans Directed Care (VDC) program through partnerships with local VAs in Boston and Bedford. This is another self-directed program specifically for veterans who need home and community-based services.

Also, this year NILP was selected by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to participate in the Supportive Living Expansion (SLX) Pilot Program. Our Northeast Recovery Learning Community certified peer support specialists are part of a care team to consumers with behavioral health services that are currently admitted at skilled nursing facilities. NILP staff collaborate with partner agency staff to ensure a smooth discharge back home with services. This initiative aligns with our IL core service of transition to community.

Finally, we were thrilled that our Youth Services Program's popular adaptive driver's education class featured on the local WBZ-TV news!

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. I look forward to all that we will achieve together in the coming years.

With Gratitude,



**Matt Pellegrino**  
Executive Director



**Matt Pellegrino**



**Matt on  
Methuen  
Community  
Television**

# 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND LEADERSHIP STAFF

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jeff Wilson, President**

**Gary Hale, Vice President**

**Lisa Visone, Treasurer**

**Mark Kelly, Clerk**

Kevin Hatch

Eric Pearson

Allen Larkin

David Ellingson

Ron Lassman



## SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

**CEO (Chief Executive Officer):** Matt Pellegrino

**CFO (Chief Financial Officer):** Lisa DiGiuseppe

**VP of Community Development & Advocacy:**  
Jim Lyons



## PROGRAM DIRECTORS/MANAGERS

**Director of Human Resources & Operations:**

Lynette McRae

**Director of PCA:**

Alicia Thyne

**Director of NERLC:**

Gabe Fonseca

**Director of Independent Living Services:**

Leo Tonevski

**Youth Services Program Manager:**

Steve Michelson

**Billing Manager:**

Yojabel Santana

**Resource Development Manager:**

Jacky McDonough

**Operations Manager of RLC:**

Rachely Ramos

**Manager of Older Adult Peer Services:**

Amanda Orfanos

**Long-Term Services & Supports Manager:**

Justine Carlton

**Community Advocacy & Accessibility Manager:**

Grant Murphy

**Accounting Manager:**

Cyndi Wood





# A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT:

Dear NILP Community,

Approaching both the end of my time as a board member and my first year as President of the board of NILP provides me with an opportunity for reflection. I am always amazed by the staff and management of this fine agency.

Several years ago, as a consumer I attended one of our annual legislative forums and left the event with a palpable feeling of inspiration as I considered the fantastic work our staff do within the disability community. I could feel the sense of reward that they must experience when they hear consumers recount their stories of the significant impact NILP had on their lives in their hour of need. It was then that I decided that I wanted to become a part of NILP and joined our Board of Directors after retiring from the workforce in 2016.

Over the past seven years, I have seen numerous instances of positive transformation occurring throughout this agency.

In 2020, with its onslaught of unprecedented challenges caused by the pandemic, no task was too tall for this group as we dealt with a pandemic that changed how we work our nine-to-five days. Even though NILP was transformed into a work-from-home model seemingly from out of nowhere, we still served our peers with unflinching effectiveness and dedication.

One of the biggest highlights of my service was the board taking on the task of finding our new CEO, Matt Pellegrino. We worked extremely hard for most of the summer of 2023, and I am convinced we made the right choice, picking Matt to lead the agency forward for the years to come.

In my first year as president, I was thrilled to coordinate a discussion between our NERLC and the The Bridge Club of Lowell, to discuss possible collaboration in assisting our consumers in recovery and finding their path to wellness.

Together with our very capable staff, management, as well as with Matt and our board, we can anticipate ongoing growth and success with our community partners and our consumers. NILP continues to be a force for good in our community, and I am excited for the future together.



**Jeff Wilson**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Wilson". The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Jeff Wilson, Board President**



**NILP STAFF APPRECIATION DAY**

# ISABEL: SUPPORTING OLDER ADULTS IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY

Isabel has worked at NILP for the past two years as a Certified Older Adult Peer Support Specialist (COAPS) within the Northeast Recovery Learning Community. She assists those 55 or older who have experienced trauma, mental health challenges and/or substance abuse by offering companionship and community experiences to foster healthy social interaction and personal growth.

She connects with her peers through weekly calls and groups at local senior centers, offering unwavering support and encouragement, drawing from her own experiences with mental health recovery and the aging process.

One of the peers that Isabel works with, Evan, shared how her advice has made a difference in his life. “This morning, I thought about what you suggested—to get motivated and do things, even if it’s just going out for a little bit,” Evan told her during a call. He had ventured to the supermarket, something he hadn’t done in a while, and on his way home, he found himself thinking about Isabel’s

encouragement. When she called, Evan expressed his gratitude, saying, *“Your motivation is contagious. It’s helping me stay positive and live in the moment, instead of dwelling on the past.”* Isabel’s support had even inspired him to reconnect with an old friend at a coffee shop, a step toward rebuilding his social life.

On another occasion, Evan said he was sad but couldn’t pinpoint the reason. With her characteristic warmth, Isabel gently guided him through strategies to boost his mood and focus on his well-being.

They shared a few laughs, and Evan thanked her again, saying that her positivity always lifted his spirits. Isabel reassured him that she’d check in again soon, leaving him with a renewed sense of hope. Isabel’s work, along with the efforts of the entire

COAPS team, continues to impact the lives of many older adults profoundly. Their commitment to helping people age gracefully while maintaining their mental health and well-being remains at the heart of NERLC’s mission.



“

Your motivation is contagious. It’s helping me stay positive and live in the moment, instead of dwelling on the past.

—Evan





# CONSUMERS

worked on their Independent Living Goals with a Community Supports skills specialist.

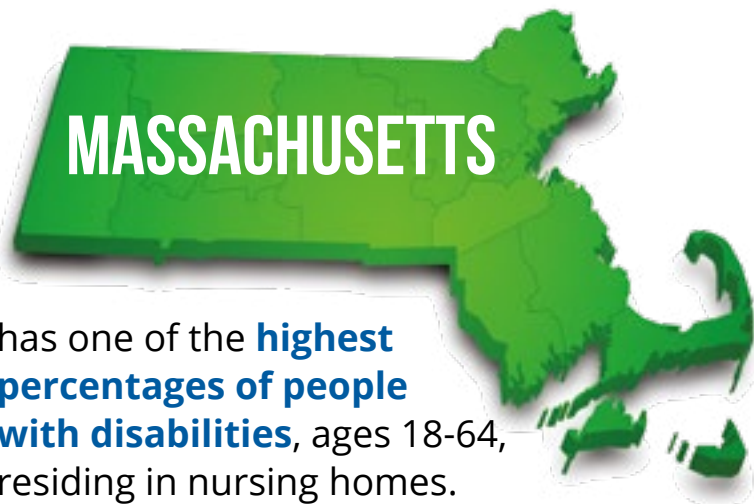
## 14 CONSUMERS

successfully transitioned back into the community after long-term stays in a nursing facility or institution.



## 259 CONSUMERS

received Options Counseling.



has one of the **highest percentages of people with disabilities**, ages 18-64, residing in nursing homes.



## 40% OF PEOPLE

with disabilities in the U.S. experience low-quality housing, difficulty paying bills, unmet need for health care, or food insecurities.

# A YOUNG MAN'S JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE: THE ROAD TO DRIVING SUCCESS

For 19-year-old Adi, living with autism hasn't stopped him from pursuing his dreams. One of his most significant accomplishments was earning his driver's license, a milestone that filled him with pride and a sense of freedom. "It was an incredible feeling," Adi recalls, the excitement of finally navigating the world on his own terms.



Many of us know the thrill of getting our driver's license, but it represented so much more for Adi. "I don't have to ask my parents, 'Can you drop me here, drop me there,'" he says, reflecting on how this newfound independence has changed his life.

The Youth Services Program Manager at NILP, Steve Michelson, shares Adi's enthusiasm for fostering independence. "We want them to take the wheel, to be the ones navigating their independence," Steve explains. "When a student wants to work, how are they going to get there?" Through their program, open to students ages 14-22, NILP provides unwavering support to help young people like Adi overcome barriers. "We won't say no to anybody," Steve emphasizes.

One tool that significantly impacted Adi's journey was the Special Driving Simulator. It offered him a safe space to practice critical driving skills like using directionals, accelerating, and braking. "I think it helped my confidence," Adi says, crediting the simulator with giving him the skills he needed to succeed on the road.

Learning to drive was one of Adi's biggest challenges, and NILP was there every step of the way. **"Their goal is to help people with disabilities get to where they want to be,"** Adi proudly states. And with his license in hand, Adi is well on his way on the road to independence.







partnered with  
**NILP 18 SCHOOLS**



Served

**41 STUDENTS**

in internships



at **20 DIFFERENT  
BUSINESSES**

**42 STUDENTS**  
attended our  
Driver's Education Trainings



Served

**196 STUDENTS**



Almost **10%** of the students  
in the U.S. have a disability.

# NORTHEAST RECOVERY LEARNING COMMUNITY: A CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY'S JOURNEY OF HEALING AND HOPE



In the heart of Lowell, a group of Cambodian Older Adult Peer Specialists work within the community as part of the Northeast Recovery Learning Community (NERLC). Their stories are powerful, rooted in trauma experiences many can only imagine. In Cambodia, concepts like recovery and mental health are not widely recognized, yet these Peer Specialists have faced unimaginable challenges and have emerged with a profound sense of resilience.

To honor their journey and inspire others, NERLC organized an event where they shared their stories with the community. It was an opportunity to bring people together, to speak openly about their lived experiences, and to show that even after surviving the traumas of war, fleeing their homeland due to



the Khmer Rouge, and adapting to a new life in a foreign country, they have found strength and hope.

The event wasn't just about recounting hardships but celebrating survival and cultural identity. The Peer Specialist shared what it means to embrace their heritage, to maintain pride in their country despite the painful circumstances that forced them to leave, and to be part of something bigger than themselves.



**The younger generation, eager to learn, filled the audience.** They listened intently, asked thoughtful questions, and connected with the stories of survival and perseverance. The Peer Specialist, working with NERLC, alongside other staff and participants, stood as representatives of this journey during the "Recovery through Community Event (RTC)." The event concluded with a shared meal, symbolizing unity and the strength of community ties.

The event's focus was clear: to bring stories to the forefront, educate, and speak openly about traumas and truths. Through their courage in sharing their experiences, these peers embody the true meaning of recovery. Their stories inspire hope and foster a stronger, more connected community.



# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH LANGUAGE-DIVERSE PEER SUPPORT



NERLC has provided **804** Peer Support Groups, trainings, and events across the year.



**KHMER**

**SPANISH**

**95 OLDER ADULTS** received Peer Support.

## NERLC DOMAINS



# PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE: A FAMILY'S JOURNEY



Susan is a devoted mother of three children with complex medical needs who have been part of the **Personal Care Assistance** (h) program since they were about five years old. Now approaching their teens, they continue to thrive with the help of their dedicated PCA. This caring individual supports them with essential daily activities like eating, bathing, and brushing their teeth and brings joy and comfort, always ready to lift their spirits with a spontaneous ice cream outing when times get tough.

The PCA has become more than just a caregiver; she is a mentor, a role model, and a trusted friend to the children, forming a unique bond with each of them. Her support extends beyond the typical duties of a PCA, offering invaluable help to Susan as she navigates the challenges of raising her children.

Susan, who describes herself as *"a mom doing the best she can,"* is also a passionate advocate. She actively fights for the rights of parents to serve as PCAs for their children at both the local and state levels. Susan acknowledges that every family's journey is different. Still, she believes that, at the core, all parents share a common goal: to ensure their loved ones can live independently and avoid institutionalization.

## IMPACT OF THE PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



### TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

**3234** served from **Personal Care Assistance** program

**41 CHILDREN**  
under 5

**837 INDIVIDUALS**  
under 19







**1337 PEOPLE**

received Information and Referral (I&R) services, where individual needs are assessed and resources such as employment, personal service assistance, advocacy, legal support and housing are identified.

**896 PEOPLE**

received information about **Personal Care Assistance** information.



**161 PEOPLE**

received information about advocacy/legal services.



**274 PEOPLE**

received information about housing.



**140 PEOPLE**

received information about employment.

**112 PEOPLE**

received information about the Americans with Disabilities Act.



# NILP COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AdLib  
AgeSpan  
Amesbury High School  
Bernie & Phyl's  
Billerica Council on Aging  
Billerica Community Services  
Boston Center for Independent Living  
Boys and Girls Club of Worcester  
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association  
Candy Store in Newport  
Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled  
Carparts of Plaistow  
Center for Living and Working  
City of Lowell Senior Center  
Commonwealth Care Alliance  
Community InRoads  
Community Teamwork  
Concord Art  
Department of Mental Health  
Dignity Alliance of Massachusetts  
Disability Law Center  
Disability Policy Consortium  
Disability Resource Center  
Easterseals Massachusetts  
Essex County Community Foundation  
Executive Office of Elder Affairs  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Fitchburg Courthouse  
Ginny's Helping Hand  
Gleason Library  
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council  
Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Lynn Senior Services  
Greater North Shore Link  
Haverhill Public Library  
Household Goods  
Independence Association

Keybrews Coffee  
Kid's Club  
Lawrence Community Access Television  
LPTE (Lawrence Partnership for Transition to Employment)  
Lawrence Industrial Parks Association  
Lexington Recreation  
Long Hill Farm  
Lowell Telemedia Center  
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind  
Massachusetts Office on Disability  
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council  
MassHealth  
Merrimack Tire  
Merrimack Valley Accountable Care Organization  
Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Methuen C.A.R.E.S.  
MetroWest Center for Independent Living  
Minuteman Senior Services  
MEVA  
Mystic Valley Elder Services  
National Council on Independent Living  
Northern Essex Community College  
Pettingill House  
Red Hawk Cart  
Senior Care Inc.  
Southeast Center for Independent Living  
Spirit Products  
Stavros  
Tempus Unlimited  
Tom's Discount Store



Tufts Health Plan  
United Healthcare  
Uncommon Threads  
Vinfen  
Waystone Health & Human Services  
Whittier Tech  
YMCA at North Shore



Massachusetts Statewide  
Independent Living Council

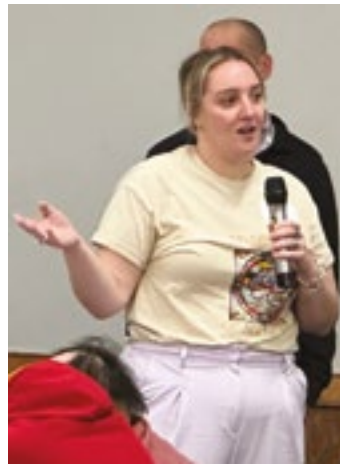




Annual Golf Tournament raised **\$47,000** and hosted a record number of golfers—**over 100!** The tournament also attracted a great number of new sponsors, golfers, and businesses!



NILP staff raised funds for gift cards to spread holiday cheer to consumers. The staff exceeded their goal, **raising \$1,625**. This allowed the staff to give **35 consumers gift cards**.



# STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF JUNE 30, 2024

ASSETS	2024	2023
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$4,770,991	\$4,826,243
Accounts Receivable	\$1,036,927	\$917,431
Prepaid Expenses	\$35,193	\$6,841
Property and Equipment — net	\$586,606	\$596,656
Other Assets	\$20,095	\$20,388
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$6,449,012</b>	<b>\$6,367,558</b>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$130,556	\$68,379
Accrued Expense	\$322,042	\$204,122
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	\$34,375	\$17,222
Long-Term Debt	\$284,701	\$335,762
Deferred Revenue	\$460,486	\$757,670
Other Current Liabilities	\$3,658	\$8,580
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$1,235,918</b>	<b>\$1,582,815</b>
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	—	—
Unrestricted	\$ 5,213,094	\$4,784,743
Designated by the Board for Operating Reserve	—	—
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$5,213,094</b>	<b>\$4,784,743</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$6,449,012</b>	<b>\$6,367,558</b>

Financials are in draft format and are subject to change.

## WAYS TO GIVE

Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, relies on your support to help people with disabilities live independently.

Consider donating through:



### ANNUAL PARTNER:

PLATINUM: \$10,000  
GOLD: \$5,000  
SILVER: \$3,000



### EVENT SPONSORSHIP:

Opportunities include the Annual Golf Tournament, Anniversary Events, and more.



### GIFT PROGRAM:

Honor a loved one through memorial or celebration gifts acknowledged to the recipient or family.



### PLANNED GIFTS:

Include NILP in your bequests, annuities, trusts, or life insurance.



### DONATE BY CHECK TO:

NILP, 20 Ballard Rd,  
Lawrence, MA 01843

For more info, visit [www.nilp.org](http://www.nilp.org) or contact Jacky McDonough at 978.291.5594 or [jmcdonough@nilp.org](mailto:jmcdonough@nilp.org).



## GRANTS & PARTNERSHIPS

Town of Townsend	AgeSpan
Minuteman Senior Services	Senior Care
Mystic Valley Elder Services	Tufts Health
Greater Lynn Senior Services	Fallon Health
United Health Care	
Senior Whole Health	



## MAJOR FUNDING SOURCES

Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Mental Health  
MassAbility (formerly MRC)  
Commonwealth Care Alliance  
Veteran's Affairs



# NILP DONORS

Aaron McCraine  
Adam Wise  
Adam Fitzpatrick  
Adam Wise  
AgeSpan  
Alicia Thyne  
Alison Ullman  
Alyson Ferro  
Andrew Mazze  
Andrew Novelline  
Anthony Coelho  
Cross Insurance  
Asahi-America  
Bianca Flores  
Blue Bumble Creative  
Boston Center for  
Independent Living  
Brad Howell  
Brandon Dumas  
Brian Albert  
Brian Keenan  
Brian Lowe  
Brian McLarney  
Candice Pechillis  
Carini Santiago  
Carl Campbell  
Cape Organization for  
Rights of Disabled  
Chris Bolla  
Chris Harrop  
Chris Dias  
Christian Procaccino  
Corey Gelormini  
Cure-aid Pharmacy  
Cyndi Wood  
Dan Flores

Dan Carroll  
Daniel Burke-Starr  
David Bradburn  
David Dalton  
David Trainor  
David Stickney  
Disability Resource  
Center  
DTech Associates  
Dustin Connally  
Elizabeth Sherman  
Emily Soares  
Enterprise Bank  
Essex Home  
Health Care  
Gary and Lynn Hale  
Grace Tymann  
Guido Timmerman  
Herb Chambers  
Hirsch Roberts  
Weinstein LLP  
Isabel Soto  
Jack Curran  
James F. Lyons  
Jean-Christophe  
Boudreau  
Jeffrey Hirsch  
Jennifer Bonn  
Jennifer Broderick  
Joe DiSorbo  
John Carlstrom  
John Tumolo  
John Warden  
Josh Perkins  
Joshua Liebow  
Justine Carlton

Karen Sartell  
Kathy O'Brien  
Keith Stickney  
Keric Kelly  
Kevin Waddington  
Kristin McLeod  
Kurt Burczynski  
Kyle Gavin  
Lenzi's Catering  
Lisa DiGiuseppe  
Loretta Guyett  
Lowell Housing  
Authority  
Lynette McRae  
Maritza Cedeno  
Mark Campbell  
Mark Kelly  
Matt Pellegrino  
Matthew Roderick  
Mike Tiberii  
McLarney & Company  
Mimi Cruzado Davila  
Mobility Works  
All at Home Health,  
Nancy Cerezo  
Nanette Goodwin  
Naomi Martinez  
Neil Shanley  
Nicholas Accardi  
Nicole Fortier  
Nikaury Female  
Dejesus  
Nisaely Sanchez  
Noemi Alvarez  
Omni Print  
Omo Specialties

Patrick Grant  
Patrick Donovan  
Pentucket Bank  
Rachely Ramos  
Rebecca Burke  
Royal Comfort  
Home Care  
N-Tek, Inc.—  
Rick Mulloy  
Risk-Strategies  
Sareth Sory  
Sean Connelly  
Shawn Cotreau  
Shawn Ray  
Shelley Bergeron  
Stephen Harrington  
Stephen Trombly  
Steve Dumas  
Steve Harrington  
Taytitannays Diaz  
Terry Shanley  
The Savings Bank  
TJ Audy  
Todd Berberian  
Tony Coelho  
Wade Burke-Starr  
Wayne Lamoureux  
Wendy Garcia  
Wesley Locke  
Wesley Silva  
William Gozzo  
Yojabel Santana



SCAN HERE TO DONATE

# IN MEMORY OF NANETTE GOODWIN

SEPTEMBER 21, 1957 – SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

Nanette dedicated 38 years of service to NILP and the independent living community. She was an integral part of our agency and a key part in upholding our agency's mission, vision, and philosophy.

Nanette was born in South Bend, Indiana and moved to Lowell, Massachusetts shortly thereafter. Nanette learned quickly to not let her disability be an obstacle to what she wanted to achieve in her life. She attended Northern Essex Community College and the University of Lowell where she discovered an interest in health services, psychology, and sociology.

Nanette began her career with NILP as an Administrative Assistant in 1986. She held various key roles under three different Executive Directors during her 38 years with NILP. As Human Resource Manager, she coordinated the hiring and introduction of many new employees to our mission. As Assistant Director, she played a key role helping our previous CEO implement her priorities as the agency grew significantly. Nanette also served on the Statewide Independent Living Council for over 10 years.

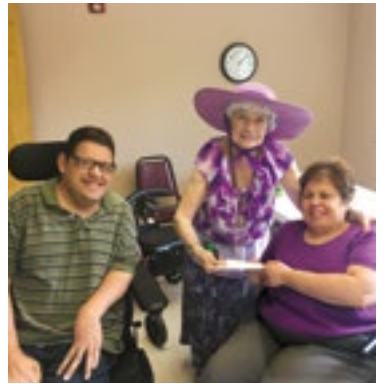
Nanette will be remembered for her willingness to support her fellow staff and the consumers who visited our office. She loved sharing the latest news about her husband Brian, son Brandon, and granddaughter Ava.

Nanette's consistent presence over the years will leave an indelible mark and her absence will leave a large void in our NILP family.

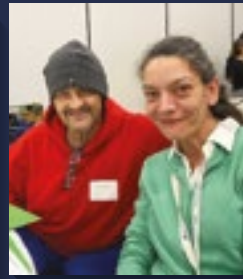
May she rest in power.











**NILP** *Peer2Peer Resources for  
People with Disabilities*

**NORTHEAST INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM INC.**

20 Ballard Road | Lawrence, MA 01834 | 978-687-4288 | [www.NILP.org](http://www.NILP.org)

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