

minority (60 percent Latinx and 10 percent Black). Our direct care staff is 86 percent Latinx, our support staff is 95 percent Latinx and 25 percent of our staff are in recovery.

Greater Boston; and co-located primary care services through a partnership with Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program.

ing nursing care, individual and group therapy, psycho-educational groups, case management, health education and after-care planning.

serves on the Board of Directors of the Association for Behavioral Healthcare as well as the Providers Advisory Committee for the implementation of the state's 1115 Waiver.

SALUTING THE CARING FORCE

Growing passion fuels Sandstrum, Brosnan

Starting from scratch is never easy. When Todd Sandstrum started as the new Senior Grower at **Victory Programs'** ReVision Urban Farm this spring, he was not only stepping into a new role at a new location, he was also responsible for creating new policies and training a new team. He was fortunate to find a strong, second-in-command in Conor Brosnan, an educator looking for an opportunity to turn his passion for growing things into a career transition.

Between them, Sandstrum and Brosnan have more than 20 years of experience with agriculture, nutrition and maximizing production. For Sandstrum, working at ReVision represents an opportunity to apply the knowledge he has gleaned about state-of-the-art farming practices from working on large-scale agricultural projects across the state to optimize results in a small, urban setting. For Brosnan, it represents a chance to merge his passion for food production with his love for education. Both growers are dedicated to the Farm's mission to bring affordable, locally-sourced, sustainably grown produce to the Dorchester and Mattapan communities.

"Did you know Boston is the end of the rail system?" asks Sandstrum. "By the time food grown down South or on the West coast reaches us, it is older than food delivered to any other location." He noted that both the aging process and the process by which big producers keep food fresh for shipping deplete the nutritional value and the flavor of produce shipped in from large farms. This is why he feels it is so important for local communities to have access to locally grown



Conor Brosnan, left, and Todd Sandstrum started from scratch to regrow Victory Programs' ReVision Urban Farm.

produce, in season.

Sandstrum and Brosnan hit the ground running with a greenhouse full of seedlings to kick off the growing season in early spring. As they've settled into their roles, they have actively sought opportunities to build efficiency, track results and use technology to improve production during this year's growing season. Between that and the weather, production is up and the farm is thriving. The staff works hard to stay abreast of the latest production guidelines and organic best.

Sandstrum and Brosnan are eager to share their work with community members and the public. The farm is open five days a week, the farm stand on Blue Hill Avenue is open Wednesday afternoons and Revision is at the Roslindale Farmers Market on Saturdays. For more information, visit www.vpi.org/revision.

HMEA's Griffin is a Caring force

As a longtime employee of Franklin-based **HMEA**, Ashley Griffin knows that everyone counts: The individuals receiving services and the staff who provide supports.

That's why she respects and encourages self-determination among HMEA supported individuals, and is an active member of The Caring Force, advocating on behalf of the Massachusetts human services workforce.

Griffin, who is celebrating 14 years of employment with HMEA this summer, is a residential coordinator with the organization, supervising a network of residential homes for adults with developmental disabilities in six towns in Central Massachusetts.

Described as extremely dedicated and compassionate, Griffin enjoys working to better the lives of the individuals receiving services. She knows the likes, dislikes, preferences and nuances of her staff and the supported individuals in her network of residential homes.

"I put myself in their shoes and can feel the day-to-day challenges," Griffin said. "Putting a smile on their face is what is important, along with the care and oversight."



Ashley Griffin, right, and her group from HMEA take a photo during a recent Caring Force State House Rally in Boston.

And both the staff and individuals acknowledge that. According to staff:

- "Ashley is caring, committed to our mission and the folks we support ..."
- "She goes above and beyond daily, advocating for our people ..."
- "She has enriched the lives of so many over the years. She consistently demonstrates excellence and is a strong advocate ..."

Griffin's beaming, infectious smile says it all: She is willing and caring enough to do what it takes to make the lives of her staff and supported individuals as best as they can be.

In essence, Griffin is one of HMEA's brightest stars.