



# THE MAINE CHILDREN'S HOME *for little wanderers*

*Our mission is to build and strengthen families and their children,  
instilling hope for the future and a better quality of life.*

Fall 2007

Volume 14 Issue 4

## Successes of Last School Year Teen Parent School Program

In May of this year, four girls graduated with a Waterville High School Diploma. Three of those four girls are attending college. One is going to Thomas College and two will be attending Kennebec Valley Community College in the spring.

Each of the three students attending college applied for a Thelma Swain Scholarship and will receive assistance. This money is to help them meet some of their college expenses. The maximum grant amount is \$1,500.



A collaboration with Good Will-Hinckley's Independent Living Program made apartments available for young mothers and their children. Currently, two students have apartments, which provide a safe and secure place to live while they pursue their high school diploma. Some students are estranged from their families, live with friends, or, in one case last year, lived in a car with her child for several months. If the girls are under the age of 18, they are not eligible for many social services.

A collaboration was also formed with the Good Shepard Food Bank to supply healthy snacks and diapers for the students. Many of the students use this service which operates out of the Development office at the Maine Children's Home.



As we begin the new school year, there are eight seniors hoping to graduate and attend college next fall.

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## A Message from the Executive Director



*Sharon H. Abrams*

I am thrilled to share some exciting news about our Adoption Program. Over the last several months, we have worked diligently to write new policies and procedures in order to submit our application for Hague Accreditation for International Adoption.

We are now awaiting the date of our “desk review” by the Council on Accreditation (COA) in New York. COA is the organization chosen by the U.S. State Department to evaluate an agency’s readiness to follow certain exacting guidelines in order to be considered “accredited.” The end result of this intensive work, on our part, will be the designation of The Maine Children’s Home for Little Wanderers as a Hague Convention-accredited agency for a two-year period.

This is only the first step in our preparation to expand and enhance our Adoption Program. We have now selected a total of 15 adoption workers, from various parts of Maine, who will be trained to provide home studies and post-placement reports for residents in Maine who are interested in International and Domestic Adoption. These clinicians will be providing these adoption services within a one-hour radius of their hometowns and will be paid per home study and post-placement visit and report.

Since the majority of these adoption workers are independently licensed LCSW’s and LCPC’s, future plans are to utilize these same clinicians, as needed, for post-adoption counseling services for the families with clinicians they already know and trust.

The Maine Children’s Home has partnered with two agencies who have vast experience in International Adoption, Holt and Children’s Home Society & Family Services of Minnesota, to provide the international connection with the foreign countries. The Maine Children’s Home will provide the home study, post-placement visits and reports in Maine.



### Where & When

**PORTLAND** Monday, October 15, 2007 ~ 6:30-8:30pm  
Acadia Trust, 511 Congress St., Portland, ME

**WATERVILLE** Tuesday, October 16, 2007 ~ 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Eskelund Community Center- Maine Children’s Home,  
93 Silver Street, Waterville, ME

**BANGOR** Thursday, October 18, 2007 ~ 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Bangor Savings Bank, 99 Franklin St., Bangor, ME

**RSVP:** Sharon Abrams, 207-873-4253 or  
sabrams@mainechildrenshome.org

The Children’s Home Society & Family Services of Minnesota has been in existence since 1889, while the Maine Children’s Home dates back to 1899. These organizations came together through a mutual membership in the Children’s Home Society of America with representation from 20 states across America. The Children’s Home Society of America represents the countries leading agencies serving children and families and dates back to the original Children’s Home Society movement launched by Rev. Martin Van Arsdale in Illinois in 1883.

## **Teen Parent School Program Continued:**

### **Educational Endowment**

In the spring of this year, Thelma Swain of Hallowell donated \$50,000 to establish an educational endowment fund for the TPSP. The purpose of the endowment is to give a TPSP graduate a “helping hand” with college costs if they wish to continue their education after high school.

Thelma’s gift was combined with other money that had been donated in the memory of Chris Winkin and Harland Turner. The total amount in the Educational Endowment is \$71,551.69. Three of our graduates applied for a scholarship and their request was granted.

When Thelma established the endowment, she said, “I want this to be a helping hand for a girl – like a grandmother would help a granddaughter.”

### **Teen Parent School Endowment**

When our building in Augusta was finally sold this summer, \$250,000 was placed into a new endowment account specifically for the TPSP. “We have been talking about starting an endowment for this program for a year. With the money from the sale of the building, it is now a reality,” said Sharon Abrams, Executive Director.

The goal for the endowment is \$3,000,000. The Board of Directors allows 4.5% of an unrestricted endowment account to be used for operating expenses. \$3,000,000 will take care of the TPSP forever. The program was started in 1974 and has never broken even. It runs a deficit every year.

The Maine Children’s Home hopes that donations and planned gifts will be made to this endowment account.

### **Partnership**

The Maine Children’s Home and Good Will-Hinckley, organizations that provide education and support services for troubled or underprivileged youth, have joined forces to help single mothers find a place to live.

Young mothers in the Teen Parent School Program are eligible to live in Good Will-Hinckley apartments for free. If accepted, applicants are automatically enrolled in the GWH Independent Living Program.

The young mothers will be working towards earning their high school diploma, live in a safe environment with their child, and receive the support of GWH in terms of independent living skills and job skills while continuing to receive counseling through their MCH counselor.

The young tenants are expected to act in a responsible manner. There are program rules against alcohol, drugs and overnight guests.

## Planning for Christmas



***Monicah, Yuliya and Alissah Paquette are getting ready to start their annual Crayons Are For Kids campaign to support the Maine Children's Home Christmas effort.***

Although it's mid-August, rather warm, and Christmas is months away, Monicah, Yuliya and Alissah Paquette, daughters of Cory and Tamiko Paquette of Hinckley, are starting their annual campaign to secure 2,500 boxes of crayons for underprivileged children in Maine.

This is the third year that the Paquette girls have helped the Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers make Christmas morning merry for needy children. Last Christmas, the Maine Children's Home provided Christmas for 1,425 children from 700 families, many of them in central Maine; however, requests were filled from Houlton to Saco.

Each child receives a Christmas box containing two pairs of mittens and a hat, thinsulate gloves, a reading book, a coloring book with crayons and markers, a large toy and a small toy, a family game, an outfit of warm clothing or warm top, special items when requested – if available.

Each year, more than 300 volunteers are needed to organize and distribute the Christmas boxes. All of the items given away are new. Individuals, businesses, organizations and churches have "Giving Trees" and Toy Drives during the holiday season. It takes more than \$290,000 in inventory to make Christmas possible for so many children.

Monicah, Yuliya and Alissah have their donation letter ready to be mailed to approximately 50 friends, relatives, and area businesses who have helped them meet their goal in the past two years. The girls have collected over 4,000 boxes of crayons in the past two years.

When asked why they are willing to work so hard for others, Alissah replied, "I want to do this to make more people merrier during Christmas. We can help moms and dads with Christmas for their children. Christmas is about love. It makes me feel happy to help other people and make them feel happy, too."

Monicah said, "Christmas should be a time about giving. We are doing Crayons Are For Kids because kids should get a couple of gifts a year so they know they are loved. It makes me feel great to help others."

## CAMP REPORT



The Maine Children's Home, with the help of many individual donors, businesses, the Friends of the Maine Children's Home and radio station 107.9, sent 105 children to a weeklong overnight summer camp experience. This was a 42% increase over the previous summer.

The children attended either Camp Fairhaven in Brooks or Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop.

A total of \$30,030 was raised for this program. Parents who applied for their children had to meet income eligibility guidelines.

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## Spring Clean-up

*Some ambitious volunteers lend their time (and muscles) to our annual spring clean-up. Over 30 volunteers, including Colby students, Waterville Friends of MCH, community members and members of the Winslow Baptist Church raked, swept, weeded and washed windows to get our campus in tip top shape for spring. Following the clean up, participants enjoyed a barbecue.*



## Waterville Friends

*The first Waterville Friends meeting was held on September 11th. Joining the Friends this year are several new members from the community including students from Messalonskee High School. As always, The Maine Children's Home welcomes any new members to the Friends organization.*

## A Message from the Executive Director Continued:

We are very excited that the partnership with Children’s Home Society & Family Services of Minnesota will come together here in Maine, the week of October 15 –18, when our two organizations will be co-hosting international adoption meetings in Portland, Waterville and Bangor for prospective adoptive parents.

The meeting presentations will include an overview of the international adoption process, timelines and fees, and features of the Children’s Home Society & Family Services individual country programs. There will be ample opportunity for Q & A and there will be literature available for people to take home and review.

This is indeed an exciting opportunity for the MCH and CHSFS. More importantly, however, this is an exciting opportunity for Maine people and for the children whose lives will be positively changed forever. Information on the locations, times and dates are on page 2 of this newsletter if you are interested in attending.

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## Mid-Maine United Way Awards \$20,000 Grant

The Maine Children’s Home received word that the United Way of Mid-Maine will award a \$20,000 grant to The Children’s Place, A Comprehensive Early Care & Education Facility.

In April, Sharon Abrams, and other staff members, wrote a grant to increase the size of the pre-school program, ages 3-5 years old, while ensuring school readiness.

Specifically, the request asked to divide the current room, with 24 students, into two classrooms with 14 in each room. Also, another lead teacher will be secured and the student to adult ratio will be lowered. New curriculums will be purchased, a screening instrument, as well as other educational tools and enhancements.

This year, the United Way Community Impact Team identified school readiness as their number 1 key issue. The grant was written specifically to address that issue.

The Children’s Place provides early childhood care and education to children 0-5 years old. Currently, 58 children are cared for each day.



*Grouping and classifying objects is one of the experiences that helps a Preschooler build competence in math*

# *Passion for Fashion Gala*

*ladies  
night  
out*

proceeds to benefit  
maine children's home

wednesday, october 17, 2007

6:00 ~ 9:00 pm

steve's restaurant  
14 silver street, waterville

cocktails/dinner

fashion show

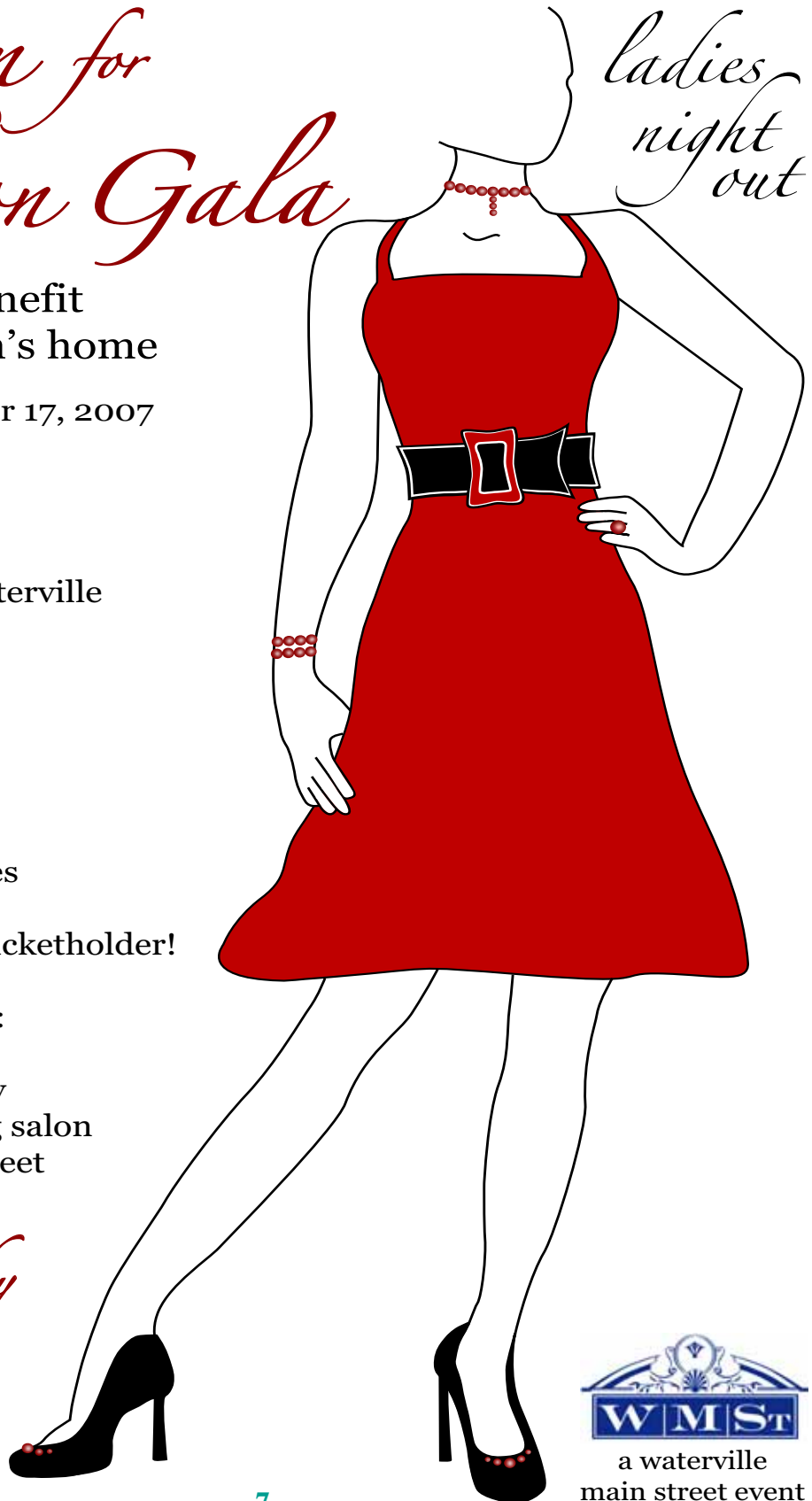
bachelor auction

door prizes & raffles

free gift for every ticketholder!

tickets available at:  
earth bound  
the clothing gallery  
millennium styling salon  
waterville main street

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## Sharon Abrams Receives Award

Sharon Abrams, Executive Director of the Maine Children's Home, received the Spirit of Partnership Award from the United Way of Mid Maine.

Mary Derosier, Executive Director of UWMM, stated, "The award goes to an agency person who demonstrates a strong spirit of partnership. Sharon served for two years on the annual Campaign Cabinet, the second year as a mentor for her successor. She personally contacted agencies to encourage their participation and she served for four years on a Community Impact Team. Sharon has made meeting space available for many non-profit agencies, at no cost. She is an example of community collaboration. She very quickly understood the United Way change to impact and outcomes and not only attended all the trainings, but she brought the trainer in to work with her own staff. Thank you, Sharon, for all you have done for United Way and all that you do for everything you do in the community."

### 2007 Bottle Drive

**At Bay Street Redemption** All you have to do is bring your bottles to Bay Street Redemption and tell the Bottle Clerk that you wish the deposit monies to be applied to The Maine Children's Home Account.  
That's it. Simple, easy and foolproof!



### Pat Ferland Retires

Pictured are Sharon Abrams with Pat Ferland at her farewell reception held in July. Pat had been a valued employee for 20 years, and prior to that was a Foster Mother and long time Friend's member. She has also served as President of the Friend's organization.

## Christmas Is In The Air.

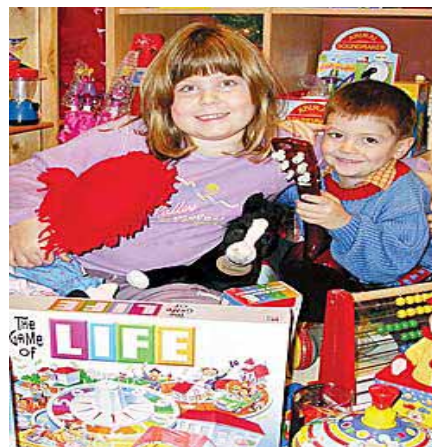
The leaves may just be turning, but the Christmas Program at The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers is well under way for the 2007 season. The Christmas site has been cleaned and organized in preparation for new inventory which is just beginning to arrive from individuals hoping to make the season brighter for the financially disadvantaged children throughout the state of Maine. Last year, the program served 1425 children in 750 families.

Each child participating in the Christmas Program receives:

- A Hat
- A Pair of Thinsulate Lined  
Gloves or Mittens
- 2 Pair of Homemade Mittens
- An Outfit of Clothing
- A Large Toy
- A Small Toy
- A Book
- A Coloring Book
- Crayons or Markers
- Family Game

Each child also receives extra items, when we have them, and we do our best to fill special needs for items such as boots or jackets.

As always, there is expected to be a shortage on some items such as Thinsulate lined gloves , coloring books, super hero action figures, lighted musical infant toys, infant board books, Barbies, crafts for older children, complete warm winter outfits in sizes 6 and under, warm tops in sizes 7 and above, Legos and more.



Businesses and organizations are encouraged to become involved with the program by hosting a Toy Drive or a Giving tree and donations are always accepted from individuals at our Christmas site in the Development building at The MCH campus.

If you'd like to volunteer or need more information about The Christmas Program, please contact Cristen Sawyer at 872-0261 or by email at [csawyer@mainechildrenshome.org](mailto:csawyer@mainechildrenshome.org).

**Happy Holidays!**

**The Maine Children's Home**  
*for Little Wanderers*

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Fax: 207-872-7548

*Teen Parent School Program*

Tel: 207-873-4253

Fax: 207-872-7548

*The Harland A. Turner*

*Family Counseling Center*

Tel: 207-873-2330

Fax: 207-873-3795

*Website Address:*

[www.mainechildrenshome.org](http://www.mainechildrenshome.org)

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CharityBlast.com is a great website that will donate a portion of every purchase you make at online stores like:

- Adidas
- Bath-andBody.com
- Best Buy
- Children's Place
- Circuit City
- Dick's Sporting Goods
- Disney Store
- eBay
- Orbitz
- K-B Toys
- Old Navy
- Gap
- Target

At no additional cost, you can now support The Maine Children's Home. For the complete list of online stores please visit [www.charityblast.com](http://www.charityblast.com) and shop for our cause.



Use [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and money from their advertisers will benefit the Maine Children's Home.

GoodSearch donates a penny per search, to the charity selected by the user. If 1,000 Maine Children's Home supporters searched just twice a day, we would receive \$7,300 per year to fund our programs.

You use GoodSearch just as you would any search engine. It's powered by Yahoo!, so you get proven, high-quality results.

Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and enter The Maine Childrens Home for Little Wanderers as the charity you want to support.

Please spread the word!