



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.*

Winter 2008

Volume 15 Issue 1

Renovations and Improvements at The Children's Place

Last fall, the United Way of Mid-Maine awarded the Maine Children's Home a grant for \$20,000 for The Children's Place, A Comprehensive Early Care & Educational Facility. Specifically, the grant allows MCH to increase the size of the pre-school program, ages 3-5 years old, while ensuring school readiness.



The current pre-school room, with 24 students, is being divided into two classrooms with 14 students in each room. A second lead teacher is being hired and the student to teacher ratio will be lowered. This will provide each child with more individual attention and will allow the lead teacher more time for one-on-one instruction.

Construction started on February 2, 2008, and will be completed on February 18. All work is being done on the weekends so as to not interfere with the daily classroom schedule.

The original grant request called for a moveable wall, but, after meeting with the Fire Marshall's office and contractors, it was discovered that a moveable wall was far more expensive than a permanent wall, plus there were safety issues such as sprinklers and smoke detectors and exit doors to deal with.

Part of the grant allowed MCH to purchase new assessment tools and curriculum to enhance each child's readiness for school. We will also be upgrading educationally supportive objects and teaching aids that will provide a challenging and motivating environment for our pre-school aged children.

Increasing school readiness was the number one issue identified by the Community Impact Team of the United Way of Mid-Maine last year.



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A Message from the Executive Director



Sharon H. Abrams

With an organization that has a history of almost 110 years, and an Executive Director who has 34 years with that same organization, you might think that we have things down. Oh, if that were only true! Yes, we are proud of that history, but we shouldn't and won't rest on those laurels, too much would be at stake, namely the lives of countless children and families who clearly get that "The Home is not where you live, but where they understand you."

Over the years, the Maine Children's Home has worked diligently to meet the needs of children and families. There has most definitely been an increase in the complexities of their needs and conversely the environment in which we exist as a social service organization has grown tremendously more challenging. What does that mean? It means we need to look a little more closely at how we do business. It means, in the case of our Adoption Unit and Turner Family Counseling, that we move from hiring employees with benefits to contracted social workers and clinicians. It means preparing and assessing children in our childcare center for school readiness, as well as starting the three-year process of accreditation. It also means networking with our peers, in and outside our field, to collaborate and learn from each other in any way we can.

For instance, for years we have served on various committees with staff and administration from Good Will-Hinckley. Through numerous conversations and mutual interest in the children we both serve, it became clear that together we could provide a meaningful program that would benefit both organizations and, more importantly, the teens in our care. Good Will-Hinckley is now a resource that provides apartments for our teen parents that comes with 24 hour support, transportation to various appointments, and independent living skills, while still maintaining the resources through the Maine Children's Home of the Teen Parent School Program, child care and counseling through our Turner Family Counseling Center. We are also in the process of collaborating on a new program called YETE (Youth Empowerment through Employment), which is a financial literacy program that will include students from Good Will-Hinckley, Maine Children's Home and Waterville Public School. This program, if funded, will utilize the resources of the aforementioned as well as the Waterville Public Library and the Waterville Rotary Club as the program moves from an after hours classroom to mentoring and ultimately summer employment.

When news of The Hague came along, and it's impact on our ability to provide international adoption services, it was clear that we would need, at least initially, to become Hague Accredited thru the Council on Accreditation. One of our cohorts for many years in the adoption field has been the International Adoption Service Center; both organizations quickly saw the advantage of working together, as it turned out for months, to pull together the Self-Study required for the accreditation process. Both organizations are stronger individually as a result of this collaboration and are already discussing ways we can continue this process thru shared trainings and other methods of streamlining service.

For almost 34 years, the Maine Children's Home and the Waterville Public Schools have collaborated, before that became a buzzword, and all the area school districts have utilized the program. With the growing needs of our students and our shared building space with Waterville Alternative Education, walls are coming down between those two programs to better address the issues of the students.

A Message from the President of the Board



Linette E. Gamache

This is my second round as President of the Board of Directors. I served as present in 1999 during our capital campaign.

Some of you may know that I am a 1977 high school graduate, with the help of The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers. I went on to obtain two college degrees with the confidence I gained from the caring teachers in that program, specifically, Sharon Abrams as my teacher.

I believe Sharon and I share a vision for the Teen Parent School Program to create an endowment that will sustain this program. Young women need education, confidence and connections to resources to feel empowered and their children deserve a strong, stable parent to teach them in loving environments.

I will be asking you for your support for this program and many others programs that provide support and services to children and their families.

Teen Parent Story

Susan, age 16, came to the Teen Parent School Program at The Maine Children's Home in September, 2007, 7 months pregnant from another country and culture. Through TPSP, she is receiving her high school education and referrals for community services. She receives prenatal and parenting education classes and individual and group counseling services. Because of the availability of on site childcare at The Children's Place, and the support of the staff in both The Children's Place and in TPSP, Susan has been successfully breastfeeding her baby, who was born October, 2007.

A critical service that Susan was lacking, and we are now able to supply, was safe housing for herself and her infant. Susan is living in an apartment close to the TPSP and has both day and evening caseworkers available to help her, due to collaborative agreements with Good Will-Hinckley.

Happily, Susan and her baby are thriving. Susan's goal is to pursue a nursing degree, and she is fully capable of going the distance with the education she will need in the future to complete this goal. If all goes well, next year Susan will be eligible for some scholarship help from TPSP



The TPSP offers support for the students after graduation for individual counseling and aftercare services to promote their transition into living as adults on their own.

A Message from the Executive Director Continued:

Classrooms and staff offices have been moved. The TPSP Director, who is an LCPC with certification in Art and Expressive Therapy, is now available for counseling to all students and both programs are now sharing the part-time secretary/receptionist.

All our programs have been infused with interns from UMO, UMA, USM UNE, and UMF. The enthusiasm, intelligence and new creative methods they bring with them are infectious and truly benefit and stimulate these programs.

We are proud to say that this past year our Christmas Program served over 1,300 children, that 105 children experienced a wonderful week at summer camp, 66 children from infancy to school age were in our child care program, 322 lives were touched thru our adoption program, 225 children and adults were counseled at our Turner Family Counseling Center and 25 teen parents attended our TPSP, 4 of which graduated and are attending some form of post secondary education, thanks in large part to scholarships available through the foresight of their surrogate Grandmother, Thelma Swain .

The truth is that during these challenging times it takes each and every one of you to truly make a difference in the lives served thru The Maine Children's Home. Yes, we always need financial resources to meet the obligations that come with the work that we do, but more and more we need the people and organizations within our community to help thread the network to success. People like our Friend's organization and all our countless volunteers who give selflessly of their time and talents to make a difference in this community, together with the incredible staff and Board of The Maine Children's Home, create hope for the future. I challenge you to go to your work, school, church or wherever life takes you and help link that connection back to the Home to benefit thousands of lives in meaningful ways. Together, as is our mission, there is hope for the future and a better quality of life.

WATERVILLE'S BIGGEST YARSALE

MAY 10TH 8 A.M. – 3 P.M.

**MAINE CHILDREN'S HOME
93 SILVER STREET, WATERVILLE**

HELP SEND SOME KIDS TO CAMP



RENT A SPACE AND TABLE (\$25) AND SELL YOUR OWN ITEMS THAT DAY. CALL 872-0261 TO RESERVE A SPOT

The Waterville Friends of The Maine Children's Home will be holding their giant annual yard sale, as a fundraiser to send underprivileged children to camp, at the same time. We have space for 100 additional tables!



The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers 2007 Contributors

Unfortunately it is impossible to list every donor in the Annual Report, however, without the cumulative gifts of all, growth in income and services could not have occurred. We apologize for any errors in spelling or omissions within the Levels of Giving contained in this report. Please bring the errors to our attention so that future lists will be correct.

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The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers

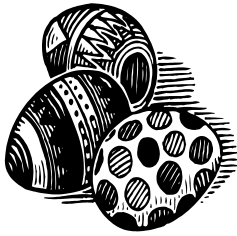
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EASTER EGG HUNT



SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND

MAINE CHILDREN'S HOME
93 SILVER STREET
WATERVILLE



Toddlers to age 3 start at 9 a.m. (parents are NOT allowed in the egg hunt area)

Older children in pre-school, kindergarten, first and second grades will start at 9:30 a.m.

2 Special eggs will be hidden. Each is worth a NEW BICYCLE

This is a FREE community event presented by
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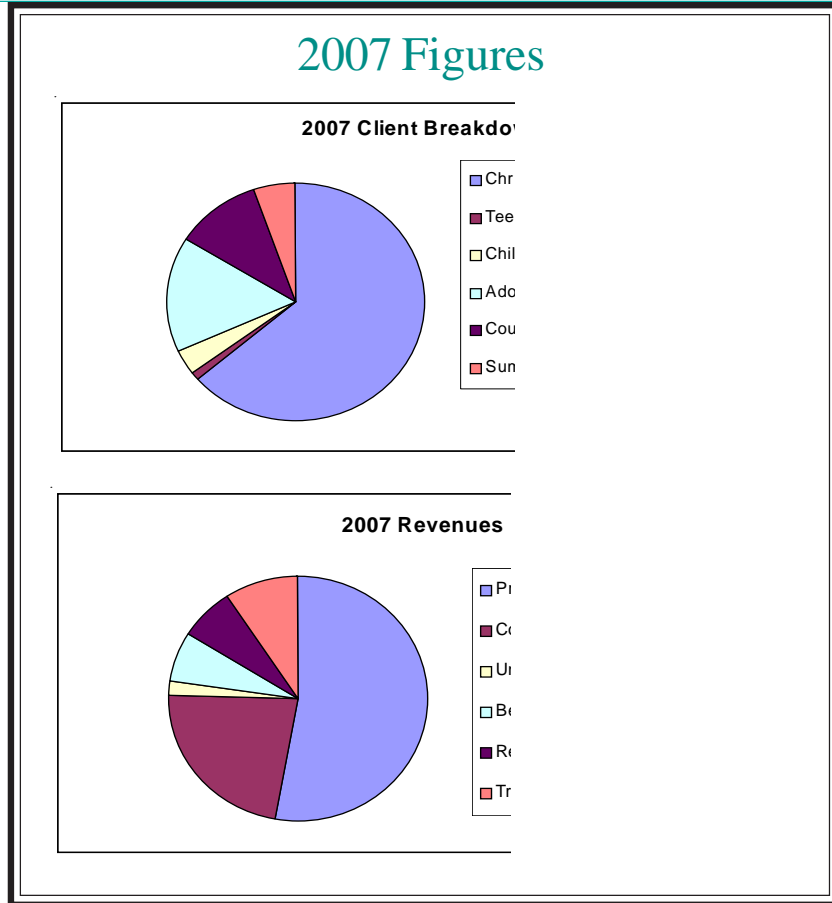
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The Maine Children's
Home for Little Wanderers
would like to thank all of
our 2007 contributors.

Thank You.



WALK FOR CAMP

**APRIL 26TH
REGISTRATION AT 9 A.M.
MAINE CHILDREN'S HOME
93 SILVER STREET, WATERVILLE**



Help send underprivileged children to a weeklong overnight camp experience

Form a team or walk as an individual. Bring the children and dogs. Display your company logo on hats and t-shirts.

Every walker will receive a t-shirt.

Pledge forms are available at The Maine Children's Home or call 872-0261 and we will mail them to you.

This year's goal is to send 150 children to camp. It costs \$255 for each child. We must raise a minimum of \$38,250.

EVENT SPONSOR: ACADIA TRUST

Another BIG Christmas

The Maine Children's Home served 1,300 children this past Christmas. Many of the requests for assistance came from Kennebec and Somerset county, but we also helped people from East Millinocket, Jackman, Waldoboro, Bethel, Sanford and many towns in between.

Thanks to all the generous people, businesses, churches and organizations that donated clothes, books and toys, many needy families, who are struggling on a daily basis, were able to provide a happy Christmas morning for their children.

In all, more than \$111,000 worth of inventory was donated. More than 200 volunteers helped pack the hundreds of boxes, which were generously donated by Huhtamaki.

In the past five years, The Maine Children's Home has assisted 6,419 children at Christmas. We have given away inventory valued at \$487,000.

Now, as we look forward to Christmas 2008, it's time to plan. With clearance sales in full swing, there is no better time to pick up winter clothing and bargain priced toys. We accept donations year round. For more information and guidelines concerning donations of Christmas items, please visit our website, www.mainechildrenshome.org

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

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Development

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Fax: 207-872-0278

Adoption

Family Care

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Fax: 207-872-7548

The Children's Place

Tel: 207-877-2258
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

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