



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.*

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Maine Children's Home and the Alford Youth Center Form New Collaborative

The combined years of experience the Maine Children's Home and the Alford Youth Center have been committed to serving youth and families in our communities spans well over 175 years. There has always been a collegial relationship between these two organizations - often finding each other at the same tables promoting all areas that better the lives of children and their families. This summer, the two organizations formed a different kind of relationship and worked together to provide a weeklong overnight camp experience for children.



Sharon Abram, Executive Director of Maine Children's Home and Ken Walsh, CEO of Alford Youth Center.

Now that Alford Youth Center's Camp Tracy has expanded its facilities to provide an overnight camp opportunity during the summer, Maine Children's Home has added Camp Tracy to the choices offered through the camp scholarship program. All applications are processed by Maine Children's Home to insure that children qualify at 135% of poverty guidelines. This past summer, 20 of the 132 children who received scholarships thru the Maine Children's Home, attended Camp Tracy. This collaboration will certainly expand.

The newest service that is now being provided, in full collaboration, is counseling services.

The Maine Children's Home is licensed by the state as an Out-Patient Mental Health Counseling Center., and has been providing that service for almost 10 years. Starting this October, the Maine Children's Home has a clinician who will be providing counseling at the Alford Youth Center's after school program Tuesday – Friday and by appointment only on Saturday. A room has been set-aside at the Alford Youth Center for private counseling, which is often most appropriate. Facilities of the Center are also available for youth that need the diversion of the gym or other options available to help lessen the stress involved and break down barriers that may be present, initially.

Billing associated with this service, and maintenance of all licensing requirements, will be handled by the Maine Children's Home. Both organizations are hoping to apply for grants to defer the cost of this counseling, hoping that any child, regardless of their insurance or financial situation, will be able to utilize this much needed service.

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A Message from the Executive Director



Sharon Abrams

In spite of the dreadful economy, and perhaps in some instances because of it, Maine Children's Home continues to be busier than ever. We have now created new policies and procedures as part of our Hague Accreditation and will be submitting our Self-Study to the Council on Accreditation before Thanksgiving. Our actual site visit, by their evaluators, will occur in early February 2010. Our adoption inquiries, home studies and placements have almost doubled, due in part to our Temporary Hague Accreditation, but also ads placed in Down East Magazine and Public Service Announcements that were donated by Bangor Savings Bank and featured on Channel 6, WCSH TV, in both the Bangor and Portland Stations.

We have also hired Nancy Marshall Consultants to assist us in developing a 5-year marketing plan that will insure our future and let people throughout Maine know about all our good work. If this organization has had a downfall, it is that we have gone about our important work without publicizing our accomplishments. That is going to change. Our plan will include utilizing a new website and even on-line fundraising to expand our resources. We will also continue to network and collaborate with organizations to meet the needs in our communities. An example of this is the ability to work with Inland Hospital to make the Maine Children's Home a site for HINI vaccinations. We are also working to provide the services of a mobile dental unit to serve the children in our child care center along with the children in Woodford's Family Services here on Campus, which combined serve between 75-80 children under 5 years old.

The TPSP is in full swing and working well with Waterville's Alternative School. Thanks to new 2 year funding from the United Way of Mid-Maine, we are now able to provide a clinical group for students in both programs. This group will also be available during the summer school vacation, which can be a difficult time for these students who miss the structure and support the programs offered during the academic year.

Believe it or not, the Christmas season is already upon us. Intakes are coming in quickly and our dedicated volunteers are already packing. Because of the increasing number of children served by this program, we will be distributing the gifts this year at the Waterville and Augusta Armories. Thank God for the National Guard who will also be trucking the boxes to both locations.

I have to send out a special thanks to Sharron and Bill Carey, and all those connected to the Battle of the Bridges, a new fundraising event that took the football rivalry of Waterville vs. Winslow and created an opportunity to donate hundreds of toys for needy children as well as cash to purchase items, as needed. This is a great example of how a community can come together during difficult times to help their neighbors.

I know we will be stronger in many ways, despite this difficult economy, thanks to our volunteers, donors, board members and staff.

A Message from the Board President



Rosemary Winslow

Fall Greetings!

Is it time to prepare for a long, well-deserved rest? Not in this day and age. The Maine Children's Home has a vibrant core from which our employees and volunteers work. They move our network of programs forward and they do it with vitality.

The staff and Board work to meet the needs of our changing world. Identifying the Children's Home's goals has generated a focused level of energy. Acknowledging the assets, strengths and areas ready for further development have illuminated many layers of work that have quietly been taking place on behalf of the children and their families.

We're looking at strategies to keep the Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers' work available to those who need it through mediums that people use now-a-days.

Is it time to pause and give thanks? Definitely.

When you go by the Maine Children's Home campus, read what's below the sign to be reminded of programs that are our focus: Teen Parent School, Adoption, Mental Health Counseling, The Children's Place, the Summer Camp Program and the Christmas Program. Our employees, our volunteers, our benefactors: we are the team and we continue to get a lot done for this generation and the next. On behalf of them, thank you.

Memorials and Honorariums

A memorial or honor gift is a lasting tribute to someone you love and is a personal way to tell the family of the deceased that you care. It honors a life well lived and enhances the quality of life for future generations. A gift given in memory of someone is a wonderful way to establish a link with the past and promote a vision of the future. The Maine Childrens Home gratefully acknowledges the following memorial and honor gifts from July 1st to November 17th, 2009.

Memorials and Honorariums have been received for those in bold.

Irene Bickford

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Misiuk

Daniel Carey

Mr. & Mrs. Norman Giroux

Ms. Jean Libby

MaineGeneral Medical Center

Ms. Cathy Seluke

Peter Dutil

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Mitchell

Ruth Grenier

Mr. & Mrs. D. Barry MacGibeny

Florence Jelinski

The Altshuler Family

The Arbach Family

The Dribbon Family

The Harabedian Family

Mr. & Mrs. William Jones

Mr. & Mrs. Herman Koch

The Kovac Family

The Murphy Fmaily

The Puglias Family

The Rosen Family

Thomas Knobloch

Ms. Virginia Rickeman

Naurine Lord

Ms. Barbara Baker

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Cooke

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Damren

Mr. & Mrs. David deFlario

Mr. & Mrs. Jon Flagg

Ms. Mary Foster

Ms. Susan Foster

Ms. Marcia Haigh

Phronie Hammond

Ms. Anne Harris

Mr. & Mrs. Heuberger

Ms. Wilda Keem

Mrs. Marion Lord

Ms. Lou Parnell

Mr. & Mrs. Doug Small

Mr. & Mrs. John Sutton

Mr. & Mrs. Kempton Tobey

Mr. & Mrs. Philip Wettengel

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Workman

Ivy Mills

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Rozos

John Pray

Ms. Coral Herbert

Ms. Rachel Johnson

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Pieczynski

Mr. & Mrs. Millard Pray

Telecompioneers

Ms. Beverly Wrigley

Edith Record

Mr. & Mrs. Dick Locke

Tough Times



Steve Mayberry, Development Director

I am now in my fourth year as Development Director for the Maine Children's Home. I have never found it necessary to write a column to our readers, but that has now changed.

For the past three years, we have been fortunate enough to be on schedule with our fund raising efforts. That is not the case this year. Last year, at this time, we had achieved 71% of our goal and, thanks to our donors, not only reached our goal, but exceeded it. This year, we are at 54% and, personally, I'm worried.

I think the soft economy has caught up with us. Many other non-profits in the social service business have scaled back their operations to adjust to the weak economy. We have not. In fact, we are committed to doing more than last year. The need out there is great and the Maine Children's Home can't deny people who need our help. It's not right and we haven't even had that discussion.

Right now, we are behind \$34,000 from where we were in the month of October last year. We need your help. We need your donation. If you haven't given yet, please consider doing so. If you have already given, perhaps you could consider making an additional gift. I hope you can because we're depending on you.

We've started taking calls for Christmas assistance. We're committed to helping 1,600 children believe that there is a Santa Claus and that someone out there cares about them. You can be the difference this year.

2010 Annual Dinner

Please join us for our 2010 Annual Dinner and Silent Auction.

January 21, 2010
Waterville Elks Banquet Center
76 Industrial Street

Corporate Table for 8 \$300
Individual Tickets \$25

Tickets must be purchased in advance.

For ticket information call 872-0261
or email smayberry@mainechildrenshome.org

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It's Not Easy

Alexis is a 16 year old, pregnant teen who was referred to the teen parent school program by her high school guidance counselor when she disclosed her pregnancy. Her mother had just died and she was grieving and extremely sad. She has never known her father's identity and her relationship with her mother had been strained because of her mother's drug use. Alexis has a half-brother with whom she has never lived. At the time of the referral, this brother was the only family member she had and she was trying to live with him. Their relationship was highly conflicted and it was not a safe place. The brother had many of his own troubles, including a girl friend with drug problems and an arrest record. This brother did not have legal guardianship of Alexis and had made no effort to become her guardian. Essentially, Alexis was, at that point, an orphan. Her only parent had died and no one took guardianship.

Soon after she came to the Teen Parent School Program at the Maine Children's Home, the staff called both the Department of Health and Human Services and the local District Court. Both agencies referred us to the other simultaneously stating, "We have no idea what to do in such a situation. Why don't you call them and see what they say."

Staff went to the District Court to obtain papers to help Alexis secure emancipation. Emancipation takes several months and requires a court hearing and proof that the young person would be able to live on his or her own. Alexis completed the paperwork with staff help, filed the paperwork and then awaited the appointment of an attorney to help her and a court date for a hearing.

Because Alexis had no guardian and was not emancipated for many months, while she was waiting her emancipation hearing, she could not obtain health insurance, sign for her own healthcare, go to a local homeless shelter or get on a waiting list for Maine State Housing. She considered getting a job while she waited for emancipation but because she was under 17 she was not allowed to enroll in adult education or sit for the GED. Therefore, she could not get a job since she needed to be in school.

Alexis became more and more hopeless feeling that she was without options. At that point, despite the support of the TPSP and Maine Children's Home, she fell into a severe depression. The program was able to provide intensified individual counseling with several sessions a week and group counseling weekly with classmates who could be understanding of her plight.

After several months and many setbacks, Alexis had her day in court, accompanied by a TPSP counselor. Thankfully, the judge was able to understand the complexities of her case. She was granted emancipation. Since that day, she has been faithfully enrolled in school. Her baby is due soon; she has an apartment and even attended a support group TPSP provided last summer. Alexis has gone to great lengths to help herself. At this point, she is on her way to being a self-supporting adult. She has plans to attend a nursing program when she graduates this spring.



*Elizabeth Dostie, Clinical Director,
Bodhi Simpson, Teen Parent School
Director, Carol Lozito, Receptionist*

It's Not Easy Continued...

The TPSP currently serves 20 students from the central Maine area who are pregnant or parenting. Each one of them has a story just as Alexis has her story. These students receive birthparent counseling, prenatal education, parenting classes, group and individual counseling, and on site childcare that is free of charge to them. The students are connected to services available to them but over the past couple of years those services have been dwindling.

What these young parents need is love, support, guidance and mentoring so that they can be good parents to their children and break the cycle for the next generation of young people. Their babies are the future and they will be in the public school system in less than 5 years.

Our students come to school because they are motivated to be good parents and they want to set a good example for their children. They desperately want to learn how to function autonomously in our society.

Some people say “these children shouldn’t have children at such a young age – why would, should the government help them?” Or: “They made their bed, let them lie in it. – Why should WE be responsible for THEIR mistakes?”

The truth is, there are many complex reasons why young teens end up pregnant. Unless we address some of the core problems or work to challenge and change prevailing attitudes, then the situation for teen parents in Central Maine will remain sad.

Someone has to care for and about the babies and the housing issue is not being sufficiently addressed. Here are some other things to consider:

- Teen parents under the age of 18 can sign off on healthcare for their children, but often they cannot pick up their own child’s prescriptions.
- Unless teen parents are married, emancipated or in the armed forces, they cannot sign for their OWN healthcare.
- They are not allowed to stay at a local homeless shelter unless they are 18 or over. What does a 16-year-old pregnant or parenting teen do when she finds herself homeless? She may live at a different friend’s house each night, stay in an unsafe situation or simply live in her car.
- She cannot apply for housing if she’s less than 18 even if she is emancipated.
- She cannot attend adult education or obtain her GED if she is under 17.
- She usually cannot sign for her own apartment – although that depends on the individual landlord.
- If the teen mother and father are together, trying to make a life together, there is little or no state support for them.
- If teen parents live with their own parents, many times they do not qualify for assistance on their own to help the situation because the parents’ income exceeds guidelines.

Pregnant and parenting teens are often in troubling and complicated situations at a time when they need help the most – not just for themselves but for their infants and young children as well.

Christmas Comes Early at MCH



In October, The Maine Children's Home began packing Christmas boxes with clothing and toys for needy children throughout the State of Maine who, without our help, may not have a Christmas this year. We are expecting to take applications for 1600 children, ages 0-12, who are counting on us. As of right now, we have taken applications for about half of those 1600 or more children whose families have asked us to help make their holidays happy and bright. Applications have come from as close as next door, to as far away as East Millinocket and continue to accumulate each day.

Unfortunately, our packing has already come to a halt as we do not have enough items in inventory to meet our demand. This creates a number of

problems for us as we wait for donations to show up and the boxes needing to be packed pile up. We work on a deadline and must have all boxes packed and ready for pick up by December 12. If we don't get inventory soon, we cannot get boxes packed on time.



We are completely out of coloring books, we have no infant and toddler toys, our clothing inventory is very low, all infant/toddler hat and mitten sets are gone as well as Thinsulate lined gloves in all sizes.

While there are many generous individuals, businesses and organizations out there willing to help, it is hard to convince people that the time to help is right now.

Understandably, many people like to wait until the Thanksgiving leftovers are packed in the freezer before they start to think about Christmas. At the Christmas Program, we must start thinking about it, planning for it and collecting inventory for it, long before the Christmas season truly begins. Getting adequate inventory here soon enough for our needs is always our biggest challenge.



Simply said, we need your help and we need it now. Won't you please consider donating some new clothing or toys? A list of needs can be found on our website at www.mainechildrenshome.org. You may also contact us at 872-0261 for more information.

The Maine Children's Home
for Little Wanderers

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The Harland A. Turner

Family Counseling Center

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Website Address:

www.mainechildrenshome.org

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