

Rallying for Maine Children and Teens

Newsletter | December 2024



NEWS AT MCH:

Our Christmas / Winter Essentials Program is expecting to give care packages to 25% more children and teens this year, and to families in all 16 counties of Maine!

Our care packages, young parent support, post-adoption support, and the accessibility of our mental health care all exist thanks to the dedication of our community, whose giving and volunteering makes our programs possible.

Want to be involved?

Find all the ways you can join us on our website, which expands on the work that we do to help strengthen families in Maine and beyond. MaineChildrensHome.org

Stay Connected

  
[@mechildrenshome](https://www.instagram.com/mechildrenshome)



Did you know that 42% of families in Maine struggle to meet their basic needs?*

That's nearly half of Maine's families! This is why we at Maine Children's Home (MCH) have decided to expand our Christmas / Winter Essentials Program to serve youth through the age of 17. The program previously served up to age 12.

Every year, more than 1,400 Maine children whose families face financial hardship are served through MCH's Christmas / Winter Essentials Program. ***This program is the only one of its kind in Maine that provides children and teens in need with brand new clothes, winter hats, mittens, gloves, boots, jackets, hygiene items, toys, books, and games.*** Families facing financial hardship are also connected with additional resources as needed. Bringing this warmth, joy, and care to each child, teen, and family is possible only because generous people like you donate essential items, give financially, and volunteer.

"By rallying for all youth, including ages 13 through 17, we as a community can address the unique needs of Maine children and teens, ensuring they receive practical items like clothing and hygiene products that are crucial for their well-being and self-worth." - MCH Executive Director Candace Marriner

* <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/Maine>



Meet MCH's Executive Director Candace Marriner (right) and our new Donor Engagement Director Anna Cooney (left).

Maine Children's Home
93 Silver Street
Waterville, ME 04901



"Soap, deodorant, and even clean underwear might not seem like a big deal to you, but they really change how I see myself."

It's about feeling like I matter."

— Jacob, 15-year-old Christmas / Winter Essentials participant

Like thousands of other teens and children across Maine, Jacob and his family struggle to afford basic hygiene items and winter clothing. **Nearly half of Maine families are facing this challenge.**

Learn more about families like Jacob's and how to help by visiting MaineChildrensHome.org/WinterSupport

Positive Psychology of Gift Giving: Everyone Benefits

Did you know the cherished tradition of gift-giving taps into the core of human connection and positive psychology?

Research shows that giving activates areas in the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust. *When we give, we feel a sense of generosity, community, and increased happiness.**

On the receiving end, a gift is more than just an item — it’s a heartfelt message that reinforces the receiver’s sense of belonging and worth. *Receiving a gift can help people feel that they truly matter.***

For children and youth, the feeling that they matter to others can support academic motivation, physical health, and decrease their chances of experiencing anxiety and depression.

Ultimately, the psychology of giving underscores a universal truth:

Acts of kindness, no matter how small, have the power to create lasting happiness and spark a sense of worthiness.

At Maine Children’s Home Christmas / Winter Essentials Program, we work alongside hundreds of generous people in our community to give brand new mittens, gloves, hats, boots, jackets, underwear, socks, warm outfits, pajamas, toys, books, hygiene items, and games to more than 1,400 children and youth in need.

Our hope is that, just as every child and family feels their sense of worth when receiving their gifts, every donor, volunteer, and community partner feels their own increased sense of connection when they help give gifts personalized to each child’s unique interests and needs.

* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32250135/>
** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihBtoVfnHds&ab_channel=YorkUAlumni

“You are making a difference in not only the children’s lives, but also the moms and dads whose burden is lifted, not knowing what they would do without programs like yours. You and your program are the change we all need to be a part of.”
- Parent who applied and received care packages for their children through Christmas / Winter Essentials Program

Your financial gift of any size directly helps a real child in Maine. Please consider giving today— everyone benefits!

Give Online
MaineChildrensHome.org/Give



Give by Mail
93 Silver Street
Waterville, ME 04901

Give from an IRA or DAF
Maine Children’s Home
Tax ID 01-0267392
93 Silver Street
Waterville, ME 04901

Give Specific Items for Maine Children and Teenagers
MaineChildrensHome.org/Needs

See the MCH Generosity Circle
MaineChildrensHome.org/GenerosityCircle

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT Helping Kids Feel Worthy

“Receiving new gifts can help kids feel worthy of having new things that are only theirs. It’s important that organizations like Maine Children’s Home recognize that important mental effect of gifts on kids. That mentality of not being worthy of new things will stick with kids for a long time, and that’s why I choose to volunteer packing boxes of gifts for children and families.” - Mel Kayali

DO YOU WANT TO BE A VOLUNTEER?
Sign up today by emailing us at:
Volunteers@MaineChildrensHome.org



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT Celebrating 20 Years of Partnering with Marden’s to Help Children and Families across Maine

Every winter, the Marden family, Marden’s staff, and store customers support Maine’s children through Marden’s Red Stocking Program. Every dollar raised through this annual fundraising drive helps make our Christmas / Winter Essentials Program possible! This year marks 20 years of this generous partnership, as well as MCH’s 125th anniversary and Marden’s 60th. Marden’s staff, the Marden family, and Marden’s customers have raised \$786,446 for Maine families so far.

Photo: Directors of MCH pose with Jake and Andrew Marden (center) during a celebration of their partnership and anniversaries.



THE WELL-BEING TOOLKIT & ZINE

Every family receiving gifts from Christmas / Winter Essentials Program is also offered a Well-Being Toolkit for kids and a Well-Being Zine for teens, both sponsored by **New Balance Foundation**.

These booklets are full of playful activities for practicing healthy habits, such as staying hydrated, eating fruits and veggies, exercising, and practicing mindfulness. (Volunteer or apply for the program to see these in person!)