



# THE MAINE CHILDREN'S HOME for Little Wanderers

*Building and strengthening families and their children,  
instilling hope for the future and a better quality of life.*

Winter 2015

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



## 2015 Annual Dinner



*Sharon Abrams, Executive Director, and Alaina Wolman, Employee of the Year.*

In January, The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers held their annual dinner at the Elks Lodge in Waterville to bring together employees, community members, and businesses that have supported them. The night included a dinner, an awards ceremony and silent auction.

The dinner featured a panel discussion with four former Teen Parent School students and kicked off a year long celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Teen Parent School Program.

As part of the evening, Destiny Demo, Board President; Sharon Abrams, Executive Director; Steve Mayberry, Development Director; and Cristen Sawyer, Development Associate and Christmas Program Director, all spoke and presented recognition and awards to employees and community partners that helped us in 2014.

Those individuals and businesses who were recognized include: Alaina Wolman, Employee of The Year; and The Herrick Family, Volunteers of the Year.

Eric Haley was recognized for his continued support of the Teen Parent School Program, as was Board Member Jean Sawyer for her outstanding service to MCH. Also recognized was Jill Huard, for her service to the Board.

The evening closed with 2014 Board President passing the gavel to new Board President, John Stanley. The dinner also kicked off the Annual Campaign for 2015.



*Executive Director, Sharon Abrams with the panel of former Teen Parent School Program Students.*



*Volunteers of the Year The Herrick Family, Angie, Bella, Cole and Jason, from Skowhegan, have volunteered since Cole was 2.*

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Forty-one years ago, I was doing a long term sub stint (January to June) at Waterville High School, for a teacher who was pregnant with twins. It was there I met Dr. George Eizenberg who had been talking with staff at MCH, about the need of a program for pregnant and parenting teens. My interest was certainly peaked when Dr. Eizenberg shared with me that he thought I would be a good fit as the tutor in that program, if in fact, it got final approval from both the MCH's Board of Directors and the Waterville School Board. How fortunate for me and the subsequent teen parents that both Boards did so and the Teen Parent School Program started in the fall of 1974. As it turned out, I was pregnant with my daughter, Tammy, when school started that first year. I think it is fair to say that my life, as well as my teenage students' lives, were impacted forever.

The program has certainly changed over the 40 years, but there are three things that have been a constant: the dedication and commitment from the Board of the MCH; the support of all subsequent Superintendants of the Waterville Public School Dept.; and the commitment of teachers and social workers of MCH. I for one consider myself very fortunate to have been in the right place, at just the right time, to become part of this important program. Although it started small and actually part-time, it filled a big need in our Greater Waterville Community. Now, more than ever, that mutual respect between the MCH and the Waterville Public Schools has evolved into a genuine partnership and collaboration that I believe enhances both the TPSP and Waterville Alternative Education. All students receive the required academic classes, as well as much support and counseling. Targeted case management services

are also now offered. Never is our collaboration more apparent than in staff meetings where WTVL Alt Ed staff and teachers, as well as MCH staff, put their heads together, to make sure that the individual needs of the students are met. Nurturing as well as educating is always part of the plan to have successful students in life, as well as high school graduates.

Although a large part of my message is to celebrate the 40 years of the TPSP, I would be remiss if I didn't mention our other programs, that all strive for excellence, with the lives of children and families as their focus. Program staff are cognizant of our mission to build and strengthen children and their families to give hope for the future and a better quality of life.

The Children's Place, our early care and education program for infants to school children, has completed and submitted its application for NAEYC Accreditation. They are waiting word about when the site visit will happen. They have also entered into a partnership with KVCAP and Educare who recently received funding through a grant for Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership which is based on the \$4.8 million National grant awarded to KVCAP to partner with public providers to expand the number of high-quality slots for infants and toddlers.

Our Adoption program has once again received Hague Accreditation and Renewal for four more years and is experiencing higher volumes in inquiries for all types of adoptions. We are the only full service adoption agency in Maine that is Hague Accredited.

The Harland Turner Family Counseling Center is constantly growing. To ensure retention of quality clinicians, we have created a three tier salary option which is a hybrid between



*Sharon H. Abrams*

contracting with clinicians and receiving a full salary with benefits. This is a work in progress, but speaks to an agency that is flexible and willing to meet the needs of not only our clients but our staff as well. In October, the program expanded its license to include Targeted Case Management for children. Initially, this program is housed in Lunder Hall with our students. That service is growing so quickly, we anticipate hiring another staff member and expanding the service into the community.

This Christmas we served a total of 1,721 children from across the state of Maine. Just imagine how sad Christmas would have been for those children and families if not for MCH.

Although we are still very much dealing with freezing weather, it won't be long before work starts to send children to summer camp. Let's hope that this year we will be able to increase the 120 children served last year. We know that there were many children who requested our help, but we simply did not have the resources to send all of them.

Thank you to every one who has assisted us in some way to do our work. I truly hope you know how important you are to us; we certainly could not continue to change the lives of children and their families without you.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! Our Annual Meeting provided some real-life reminders of the impact our programs have on the lives of children and their families. It provided a great kick-off for what's going to be a busy year for staff, volunteers, our Friends group and Board members.

We are now well into our multi-year plan, developed to guide us through the retirement of several key managers in a way that assures the transition will be a smooth one that considers and respects the unique culture and deep history of our Agency.

Our newest management team members, Clinical Director, Deb Levenseller, and Finance/HR Director, Diana Rafuse, are both settling into their new positions and have already begun bringing forward improvements for both their units.

Our Board of Directors has adopted the new longer-term strategic goals which will set the path for the Board and the new Executive Director when Sharon Abrams retires later this year, and the staff has identified and adopted shorter-term goals that also support the longer-range strategy.

In addition to our usual, ongoing Committee activities, the Board has expanded its own efforts to be ready to bring the new Executive Director on board. We have done an in-depth, anonymous survey of Board members to self-identify what we collectively do well and where we can improve our own efforts;

and we've begun efforts to address needed improvements.

We also will be creating two new committees: one to work with the consultant engaged to guide and advise us through the formal search and hiring process; the other to assure that outgoing Executive Director Sharon Abrams gets an appropriate send-off into retirement, while, at the same time, making sure the new Executive Director gets an appropriate introduction to our staff, clients, students, donors and the community as a whole.

In addition to our usual busy schedule of Passion for Fashion, Wine Tasting, Yard Sale and other events, this year also marks the 40th Anniversary of our Teen Parent School Program -- including a major celebration in late June. Watch for details and come join us!

Watch for our Annual Campaign financial appeal envelope which will arrive in your mailbox in the near future. And when it does, please remember that none of our programs, none of the life-changing services we provide, and none of the success stories that come from them could happen without the support of each and all of our donors. Thank you for helping us do what we do to improve the lives of children and their families.



*John Stanley*

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## Memorials and Honorariums

A memorial or honor gift is a loving and personal way to tell the honoree or the family of the deceased that you care. It can honor a life well lived, a special birthday, anniversary or other occasion, and enhances the quality of life for future generations. A gift given in memory or in honor of someone is a wonderful way to establish a link with the past and promote a vision of the future. The Maine Children's Home gratefully acknowledges the following memorial and honor gifts from June 17 to December 31, 2014.

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### *In the Name of Andria Watson*

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### *In the Name of Blanche Wrigley*

Susan Eaton

# The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers 2015 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 omission within the Level of Giving contained in this report. Please bring the errors to our attention so that future lists will be correct.

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## *\$40 for the 40th Anniversary*

This year is the 40th anniversary of the Teen Parent School Program. We are asking our donors to consider adding \$40 to their normal contribution. Each additional \$40 received will be deposited in a separate account and, towards the end of 2015, will be moved to the Teen Parent School endowment.

Currently, the endowment is almost \$800,000. When we are finally able to get the endowment to \$3,000,000, some time in the future, it will operate the TPSP in the black forever. Our Board allows us to use 4.5% of this endowment, annually.

This is a one time ask, because of the uniqueness of this anniversary year. If you are able to, please help.

## *Upcoming Events*

Annual Wine Tasting and Silent Auction,  
April, 2015

Easter Egg Hunt, April , 2015

Friends Yard Sale, June 2015

Teen Parent School Program 40th Anniversary,  
June 27, 2015

And, as always, we plan and prepare for  
Christmas all year. Your donations are needed  
and accepted at any time.