

# New Beginnings News

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Winter 2016

## Mindfulness Improves Youth Mental Health



SAVE THE DATE:

### New Beginnings 2016 Annual Dinner

Wednesday  
April 27, 2016

Martindale - Auburn, ME

Contact Rachel Spencer-Reed for sponsorship info: (207) 795-4077

### Find Out About:

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As youth file in to the New Beginnings youth shelter meeting room past “safe space” posters on the walls, Prevention Educator Jody Pierce Glover greets them with a smile. Some teens are laughing and talking and others don’t look at anyone as they drop onto the couches and chairs set up facing each other in a semi-circle.

Jody asks one of the youth who has been to the group before if he wants to ring the chime to begin. He strikes the chime, and the group sits in silence listening to the clear vibrating sound of the bell. When it fades to quiet, there is a noticeable shift in the youths’ body language and energy in the room.

Jody begins the group with a short breathing exercise and meditation, which helps the youth focus for the hour-long group activity teaching them how to notice, understand, and respond to their emotions.

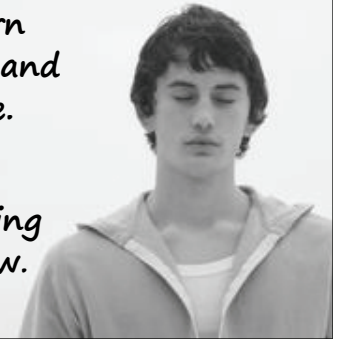
For many of the teens, this group is their first experience practicing mindfulness. Learning to maintain a non-judgmental state of awareness of one’s thoughts and emotions in the present—even for a few moments—can be quite challenging.

“I have really enjoyed watching the youth go from giggling or getting antsy at first, to learning to quiet their bodies and really do the breathing meditation,” says Pierce Glover. She goes on to

adopted agency-wide because trauma has been shown to negatively impact teens’ ability to develop a clear sense of self, establish personal safety, exercise self-control, and maintain the

*It helped me learn to recognize stress and my tone of voice.*

*My mom and I are better at talking to each other now.*



describe how “becoming mindful of what their body feels like when they are upset is a skill that can help them avoid having a blow-up with their families or friends. We also model that in group by encouraging youth to take a break if something is too much for them. Now they know they can ask for that and come back when they have had a chance to calm down.”

For the past 2 years, New Beginnings has been incorporating the *Power Source* emotional literacy and mindfulness groups to address traumatic stress and improve youths’ psychological development. Trauma-informed approaches have been

healthy relationships needed to successfully transition to adulthood.

With support from the John T. Gorman Foundation, New Beginnings hired Chuck Rhoades, PhD, of CERES Associates to refine the 12-week curriculum developed by Lionheart Foundation, and test its effectiveness with homeless youth.

With input from staff and youth, Rhoades created *Power Source Plus* which maintained the original’s emphasis on mindfulness, impulse control, conflict resolution, motivation, empathy, and social skills and enhanced it with more strategies that New Beginnings’ youth need to cope with the difficult and often emotionally charged situations in their lives.

*continued on page 2*

## Mindfulness, *continued from page 1*

Over the 18-month pilot, 232 unduplicated youth attended a total of 283 groups at the emergency shelter and transitional living programs. Even before the research was complete, staff and youth were finding the groups to be beneficial.

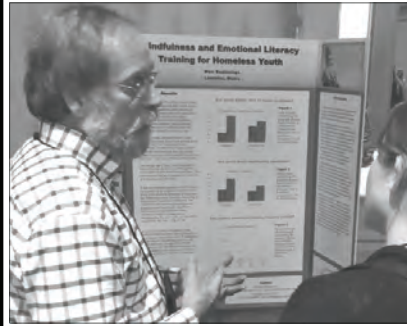
“Right off the bat, we saw decreases in difficult behaviors at the shelter,” said Rick Smith, New Beginnings’ Shelter Coordinator who co-facilitated the groups with Jody. “Youth were managing their feelings better with each other and not letting things escalate as much.”

The evaluation found that youth participating in at

least 5 sessions of *PowerSource Plus* showed improvements in important mental health outcomes, such as intrapersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and overall emotional intelligence. Youth who attended nine or more sessions showed the strongest gains.

Sam\*, a 17-year-old who attended the groups while at the shelter said, “I was shy and at first I thought it would be a waste of time. But once I tried it, I really enjoyed the meditations and activities, and learning about different ways to talk to people.” Sam is now a resident of New Beginnings’ Transi-

### Interested in learning more about *PowerSource Plus*?



The evaluation results and poster summarizing the research New Beginnings presented at the National Runaway & Homeless Youth Conference in Nov. 2015 are on our website: [www.newbeginmaine.org](http://www.newbeginmaine.org)

For more information about bringing *PowerSource Plus* groups to your youth program, or about New Beginnings’ new mental health services, please contact Tracy Allen at 207-795-6048 x210.

tional Living Program, and finds that he’s able to connect with other youth who’re also going to the groups. He says, “We can talk about the things we learned and remind each other of suggestions for ways to change what you are thinking when you’re

upset. The breathing really helps when I need to calm down or pull myself together. Even though it’s not for everyone, it helps a lot of kids with stress – don’t knock it ‘till you try it!”

*\* Youth’s name changed to protect confidentiality*

## Thank You to our 2015 In-Kind and Holiday Drive Donors:

*Your donations of household goods, food, hygiene supplies, socks for our “Socktober” drive, holiday gifts, gift cards, and more made a huge difference for New Beginnings youth! Thank you— we couldn’t do all we do without you!*

Antigoni's Pizza  
Jeremy Bennett  
Berman & Simmons  
Emily Bilodeau  
Carolyn Bloom  
Bow Street Market employees  
Bambi Brousseau  
Cassiel's Salon & Spa  
Heather Caston-Talbot  
Catholic Charities SEARCH  
Central Maine Credit Union  
L-A Metro Chamber  
Denise Chaput  
The Collester Family  
Fredericka Collins  
Ed Cormier  
Linda Cronkite  
Todd & Belinda Davis  
Lisa Day/Berman & Simmons’ staff  
DeBlois Electric employees  
Linda DeSantis & friends  
Ed and Sheila Desgrosseilliers  
Ella's Chocolates  
Elizabeth Durand  
Electricity ME & HAM Employees  
Maine Family Planning  
Farmer Kev's Organic

Mark & Sheila Ferguson  
Christopher Ferguson  
First Assembly of God Church  
Elizabeth Garcia O'Keefe  
Pat Gautier  
Geiger Elementary students & staff  
Joan Giard  
Grace Community Church  
Grace & Truth Bible Church  
Greco's Pizzeria  
Lynda Hall  
Carol Ham  
Heathco's Pizza & Variety  
Tim & Melissa Hebert  
Sara Holt & TD Bank staff  
The Italian Bakery  
Linda Jackson-Washburn  
Monique Johnson  
Nancy & Darrell Jones  
Marci & Mike Jouver  
Laura Juraska & Bates Library staff  
Lynne Kaplowitz & Jim Bean  
Knitter's Review  
Rick Lachapelle  
Landscape World  
Louise Landry  
Susan K. Lea

Lewiston House of Pizza  
Luiggi's Pizzeria  
Maine Women's Network,  
Androscoggin Chapter  
Maine Family FCU  
Susan Matthews  
Minot United Methodist Church  
Jennifer Morin  
Sandy Nichols  
Oak Hill Middle School  
Lillian O'Brien  
Gail O'Neil  
Orbit Hairstyling/Rich Stone  
Joel & David Oshansky  
Louis & Katrina Page  
Panera Bread, Topsham  
Papa John's Pizza  
Kerissa Paquete  
Tristina Peek  
Jennifer Peters  
Cynthia Peters  
Sandra Pomerantz  
Sandy Pomerleau  
Portland Sea Dogs  
Linda Prescott  
James Pross  
Darby Ray & Raymond Clothier

Barbara Ricker  
Brian & Robin Robbins  
Polly Robinson  
Gill & Bonnie Ross  
Elaine Runyon  
Sam's Italian Foods  
Pam Samay  
Scrappy Women Quilters  
Carol Seward  
Emer Smith  
Janet Stamboules  
Sharon Staszak  
St. Mary's Nutrition Center  
STEP Program, LHS  
Sara Struhs  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Summers  
Swift Water Farm  
TD, Auburn Shaw's Branch  
TD Center of Excellence  
Bonnie & Gabby Tibbetts  
Alan & Cecilia Treworgy  
Adriann Tucker  
Susan Tymoczko  
United Methodist, Auburn  
Walmart, Auburn  
Wanda Wilbur  
Jean Zimmerman

## Agency News Briefs:

### Ruchinkas named Acting E.D.:

The New Beginnings Board has named Managing Dept. Director Mary Ruchinkas as Acting Executive Director until a permanent Executive Director is hired. "As our most senior staff person, we have confidence in Mary's ability to guide New Beginnings through this period of leadership change and opportunity," said Board president Chris Ferguson. Please contact Mary ([mary@newbeginmaine.org](mailto:mary@newbeginmaine.org)) with questions about the search or correspondence that would have previously gone to Bob Rowe.

### Annual Campaign Success:

New Beginnings' dedicated donors and new supporters gave generously to exceed our \$25,000 goal for the 2015 Annual Fund. Thank you to the Larrabee Family, Dr. Kurt Oswald, Rent-It/Jim's Auto, Sandy Nesin, Candace Sanborn, William LePage, two anonymous major donors, and everyone who contributed to make a difference for homeless youth this year!

**Recent Grants:** New Beginnings couldn't accomplish our mission without support from corporate and private foundations, including a state giving grant from WalMart to expand the educational support program and support from the Lewiston-Auburn Children's Fund for food for the Drop-In Center.

**TLP Selected for Study:** New Beginnings' Transitional Living Program is one of 14 Runaway & Homeless Youth Act federal TLP grantees chosen for Successful Transitions to Adulthood Research Study (STARS) being conducted by the US Department of Health & Human Services in 2016. STARS will explore how TLP youth outcomes vary by program design and approach, and the results will be used to inform national best practices with vulnerable youth.

# New Services Begin With a Familiar Face

*Tracy Allen, LCPC-c, started at New Beginnings as a shelter relief staff in 2007, then was an Outreach Worker, and the Outreach Program Coordinator from 2010-2015. With New Beginnings' support, Tracy completed a graduate degree in community mental health while working full time. After a short break, Tracy was recently welcomed back as New Beginnings' 1st mental health program Social Worker.*

### **Why are you passionate about New Beginnings adding mental health to our mix of services?**

Working with youth in ways that recognize their strengths is so critical. New Beginnings is all about engaging and building relationships with kids who are not connecting well in other places.

Most of the youth could benefit from counseling, but we've seen that the traditional model of

keeping a weekly therapy appointment doesn't work well for our youth—especially if they are homeless and dealing with the stress of not knowing where to find their next meal or safe place to sleep. Now that we have mental health services onsite, youth can get counseling right here, in a trusted space. They can come as they are, as soon as they realize that they want or need help.

I went to meet a kid just this past week who is struggling at one of our programs—she wasn't ready to leave her room. I was able to *literally* meet her where she was at!

I know from experience working with this population that, once trust develops and they know you are not going any-



where, they'll eventually come and meet you.

Youth who are at risk of homelessness are a diverse and constantly changing population facing multiple challenges; they need flexible mental health care. I'm glad that our mix of funding and community support allows New Beginnings to think outside the box and try new strategies.

### **What are you looking forward to in this job?**

I love that no two days at New Beginnings are ever the same! I'm the kind of person who thrives on variety. I'm excited about the opportunity to come in at the ground level and help build a program. My last job was at an elementary school, and I missed working with teens where there is always a new challenge!

I'm looking forward to consulting with staff and doing counseling and groups with youth. Low-barrier services provided in ways that work for them offers real opportunities for change and growth in youth's lives.

So many make progress over the years here, and New Beginnings is investing in even more ways to help the kids we serve become stable adults.



On Jan. 28, 2016, 100+ supporters and staff came together to celebrate Bob Rowe. Sentiments from Maine's State Legislature and U.S. Congressional delegation recognized Bob's dedication and advocacy during his 28 years as New Beginnings' Executive Director. The Board announced that the 134 College Street Gym will be named in Bob's honor.



AGENCY PERMIT MAILING ADDRESS:

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436 MAIN STREET  
LEWISTON, ME 04240

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*Inside this Issue: Mindfulness and Youth Mental Health*

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Annual Celebration Dinner

**April 27, 2016**

Martindale - Auburn, ME

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sponsorship info: (207) 795-4077

## Monday Night Open Gym



New Beginnings has begun hosting FREE Open Gym Night from 6:30 to 8:30 pm Monday evenings for youth age 13-20 at the Ann Geiger Center (134 College Street, Lewiston, ME).

For more information about volunteering for Open Gym, contact Ethan May at 795-6048 x215 or [ethan@newbeginmaine.org](mailto:ethan@newbeginmaine.org).



New Beginnings

### Wish List:

- ☞ Wood podium (tabletop or standing)
- ☞ Cleaning & kitchen supplies (NEW mops, brooms, dust pans, sponges, can openers, utensils, etc.)
- ☞ Sturdy metal shelving for storage
- ☞ Flash drives and school supplies
- ☞ Art supplies and paper towels
- ☞ Sponsor a field trip for youth
- ☞ New basketballs, ping pong balls, commercial dust mops, and non-perishable snacks for Open Gym

Complete list online: [newbeginmaine.org](http://newbeginmaine.org)