

New Beginnings News

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Autumn 2016

From Homelessness to Independence



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Marcel* became homeless at 18, when conflicts at home got so bad that he left with only the clothes on his back. "I had nothing. I might as well have been naked," said Marcel. That was 3 years ago. Through hard work and the support of several local agencies, Marcel's life is completely different today.

Things were not easy for Marcel growing up and dealing with the effects of war trauma on his family. Marcel's French-speaking family came to the U.S. as war refugees from Africa, eventually settling in Lewiston. Marcel was learning English at Lewiston High School when he became homeless and was referred to New Beginnings by Lewiston Schools' homeless liaison Mary Seaman.

* Name changed for confidentiality

Since he was over 18, Marcel was able to move into his own Transitional Living Program (TLP) apartment in Lewiston. The purpose of the TLP is to help homeless youth gain the skills they need to live independently – which was exactly what he needed. When he came to the TLP, Marcel was a quiet young man who knew what he wanted, but he

didn't necessarily have the skills, support, or self-esteem to do it on his own. Marcel's New Beginnings case manager helped him to make an ambitious plan: get his diploma, green card, a car, and maintain a job. Marcel says that what he valued the most at New Beginnings were the positive relationships he formed with TLP staff.

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Marcel distributes produce at his job helping coordinate a local Food Pantry. Starting as a summer intern, he was promoted and has now maintained a job there for 3 years.

Executive Director Chris Bicknell: Looking Ahead Together

As the new Executive Director of New Beginnings I would like to introduce myself to the community of volunteers, supporters, and community partners that make up the coalition we depend on to improve the lives of runaway and homeless youth. I have the privilege of joining an agency with a nearly four-decade history of providing outstanding supports and services to thousands of Maine's most vulnerable youth. Throughout my career I have focused on positive youth development and a commitment to building strong and lasting relationships between caring professionals and youth to help guide them into successful adulthood.



Chris greets visitors at the 9/7/16 Open House

My experiences over the past few months here have proven to me that New Beginnings has been doing the same thing throughout its history.

Since I arrived at New Beginnings, I have met countless people who have supported our agency. Several times, I have been talking with supporters when someone in the group has pulled me aside and said "I am so grateful to New Beginnings because..." They go on to tell me how they were once at our shelter, or their child or child's friend had found support in one of our programs after a crisis. Almost everyone who has shared a story like this with me has named a specific staff person they remembered who changed

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Supporter Spotlight: Melissa McLeod

Melissa McLeod is the Team Leader at the Franklin School in Auburn, and has served on New Beginnings' Board of Directors since 2014. Below is an excerpt of comments Melissa made at our 2016 annual dinner about why she volunteers with and donates to New Beginnings.

My colleagues and I work hard every day to meet the needs of a sometimes fragile population of youth. Teachers can have a lot of worry and fear when we close our doors at the end of the day, and are unsure about the safety of some of our students.

New Beginnings often steps in where the school day leaves off, and provides necessary structure and safety for youth who might be at risk for homelessness.

“I’d tell other kids to not give up. Sometimes you have to shift your goal when things don’t work out ... maybe today is just not your day. Be patient, it takes time to be who you want to be. You never know, tomorrow might be your day and *your time.*” - Marcel

Recently, a student asked to speak with me in private. He looked me in the eyes and said that he needed help because he didn’t have any place to go that night.

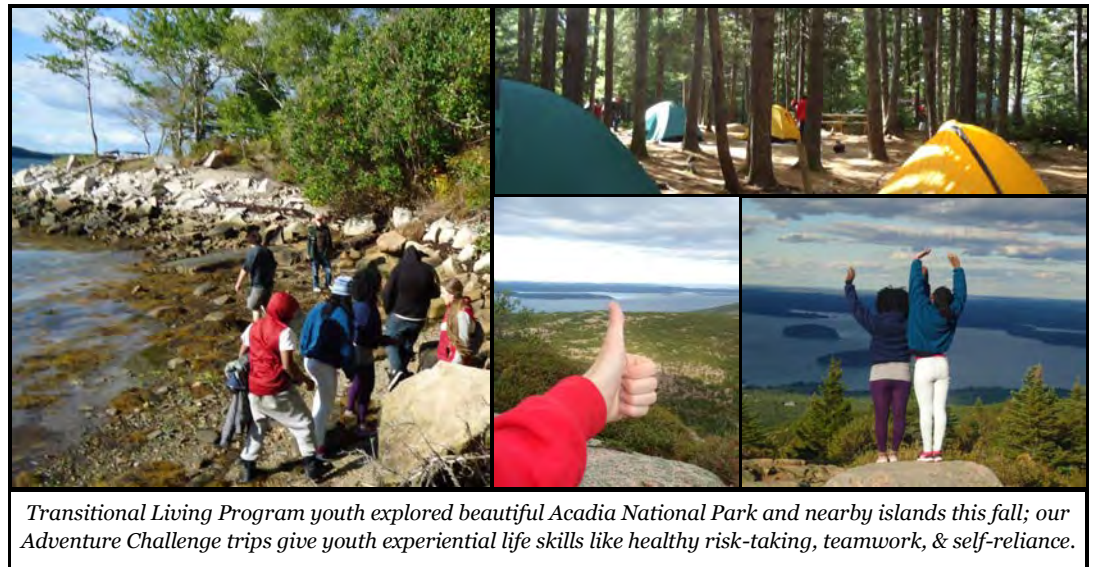
This talented student was at serious risk of losing everything due to conflict at home. I was able to make one phone call and immediately alleviate his panic by helping him to make arrangements to go to the shelter. Because of the help he got from New Beginnings, this student didn’t miss school and was able to

maintain the positive relationships he’d built with fellow students and staff. He didn’t have to sacrifice his education, success, and potential because of circumstances out of his control. New Beginnings was the safety net that made sure he did not slip through the cracks.

I support New Beginnings because I believe that as a society, we are responsible for providing opportunities to help all youth overcome instability and hardship and reach their potential.



That is the only way to develop a healthy community and to benefit from the immense gifts that youth have to offer. I see every day how New Beginnings is an invaluable link in the chain that supports youth in our community, and I’m proud to do my part to make a difference in youth’s lives.



Transitional Living Program youth explored beautiful Acadia National Park and nearby islands this fall; our Adventure Challenge trips give youth experiential life skills like healthy risk-taking, teamwork, & self-reliance.

Independence, *continued from page 1*

They helped him transfer to Wayfinder School, where Marcel graduated near the top of his class and then returned to Lewiston to complete his 18-month stay at the TLP. Then his case manager helped Marcel get the legal aid he needed to get his green card. All this time, Marcel was also able to maintain a stable job. He saved money to buy his own car, and enrolled in community college.

“At New Beginnings, they gave me some things but the best thing is that they don’t always do *for* you,” says Marcel, “They *taught* me, showed me how to figure things out and get what I needed on my own.” **“They helped me figure out who I wanted to be.”** Today, Marcel has achieved the goals he set for himself at the TLP, and is looking ahead to bigger dreams.

He’s living on his own, paying rent, and studying automotive technology. Marcel wants to work in an auto body shop, and next year he plans to apply to become a U.S. citizen. Marcel hasn’t let his background or homelessness stop him from pursuing his goals; as he says: “I’m not done yet – there is more work to do.”

Agency News Briefs

Board Recruiting: Have you considered serving as a member of our Board of Directors or on a committee? The Nominating Committee is seeking people who care about our mission with marketing, fundraising, insurance, human resource or philanthropy experience and a willingness to be a New Beginnings ambassador in the community. Contact Chris Bicknell: chris@newbeginmaine.org

Recent Grants: New Beginnings is grateful for support from private foundations like John T. Gorman Foundation which awarded our shelter a \$15,000 grant this June. New Beginnings also received a highly competitive Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) 3 year federal grant this fall to support expansion and operation of our Outreach Services in Franklin, Kennebec, and Androscoggin counties and Drop-In Center in Lewiston. "New Beginnings has a direct impact on young people and their families across Maine," U.S. Senators Collins and King said in a joint statement. "We are pleased that they are receiving this support to provide necessary services to some of Maine's most vulnerable young people."



Thank you to Dr. Sasseville & team at Sasseville Chiropractic and 100's of sponsors and volunteers for making the 13th annual KIDS DAY such a fun fall event to benefit New Beginnings!

Help Make the Holidays Brighter for youth



"Elves" from TD Bank donated holiday gifts and volunteered to sort hundreds of donations in 2015.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, each December New Beginnings distributes holiday gifts to over 70 youth in our programs in Lewiston, Augusta, and Farmington.

You can help give each youth a holiday "care package" with a pair of earbuds, brush or comb, toilet paper, a new hooded sweatshirt (esp. XXL and 3XL), and more!

We're also seeking hygiene kits, waterproof gloves, art supplies, new winter coats, gift cards, and other items that youth in our programs need throughout the year.

The full 2016 holiday drive wish list is online at www.newbeginmaine.org. Call (207)795-4077 or email info@newbeginmaine.org to sign up, and thank you for sharing the spirit of the season with our youth!

New Beginnings' Board would like to say **THANK YOU** to our **2016 Annual Dinner Sponsors** for their generous support of our celebration

EVENT SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS

Androscoggin Bank

Hebert Construction

Varney Agency

Water Cat Productions

Chris Bicknell, *continued from page 1*

their life or the life of someone they loved. Just this week a colleague from another agency approached me in the parking lot after a meeting in Portland, and shared a story about how our free Family Mediation service had kept their family together. Hearing these stories reinforces my feeling that I have joined an exceptional team and have the opportunity and obligation to build on New Beginnings' incredible legacy of service.

I have committed my life to improving the lives of young people and I strive to lead with compassion and empathy. I aspire to help others gain the skills, respect, and compassion

necessary to do the difficult work of supporting youth and families in crisis. At New Beginnings, I have found an agency filled with people who share my passion and commitment. I look forward to getting to know more of the youth and families we have served, and building on those successes so that these stories will continue to be told in the future. New Beginnings is poised for new opportunities as it continues to move into the 21st century. My primary role in my first six months is to complete a full evaluation of the agency to lay the groundwork for our next strategic plan. I have spent my first two months

meeting people who are critical to fulfilling the agency's mission and am gaining an even deeper understanding of what New Beginnings does and how we do it. As we begin building a new strategic plan in 2017, it is critical that everyone who works for, supports, and is served by the agency has some role to play in its development and implementation. As I continue to learn about the agency and its staff, donors, funders, and community partners, I look forward to meeting and collaborating with each of you as we move New Beginnings forward together.

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SAVE THE DATE:
November 29, 2016 IS
#GIVINGTUESDAY™
Make a difference! Kick off your annual giving at NEWBEGINMAINE.ORG

November is Runaway & Homeless Youth Month

You can raise awareness!



Replace your porch light with a green light bulb or put green holiday lights in your window during November to show your support.

Share the insert page inside of this newsletter with your friends, family, and colleagues and help prevent youth homelessness.

More details inside, and at 1800runaway.org



New Beginnings

2015 Annual Report Available Online

WWW.NEWBEGINMAINE.ORG

I used to get kicked out of my house all the time.

At New Beginnings, they want me to have a good life.

Now, I feel like I can accomplish something without being judged.



November is Runaway and Homeless Youth Month

1.6 million young people in the U.S. each year will experience at least one night of homelessness and up to 2.8 million youth will run away from home.



That's more than the population of the 5th largest city in America.

5 things YOU can do to raise awareness this November:

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Turn on a green light</p> <p>Put a green bulb in your porch light, or green holiday lights in your home or business window to show your support for runaway and homeless youth!</p>	<p>Wear Green</p> <p>Wear green on Weds. November 9th (or any day this month!) and share why you support RHY and ending youth homelessness with #NRPM2016</p>	<p>Educate</p> <p>Invite New Beginnings to speak about youth homelessness at your community group, church, or school. Tell people about New Beginnings' services— you never know who may need help!</p>	<p>Advocate</p> <p>Talk to your friends, colleagues, and local politicians! Make a visual display or use social media. Post a special profile pic on Nov. 2nd and a Selfie Sign pic on Nov.23rd (details at 1800runaway.org)</p>	<p>Give</p> <p>Contribute new winter coats, waterproof gloves, holiday foods, and gifts from New Beginnings' wish list (online: newbeginmaine.org). Join #GivingTuesday and make an online donation on Nov. 29th</p>



New Beginnings

Do you know a Maine youth at risk for homelessness or a family in conflict?

New Beginnings can help.

Youth Shelter

24 hour Phone Referrals and Family Mediation

795-4070

Drop-In Center

Food, clothing, activities, housing referrals, & more

795-6831

Looking for more statistics about runaway and homeless youth?
Check out National Network for Youth and National Runaway Safeline.

In 2016, youth who run away...



Image source: National Network for Youth, 2016, www.nn4youth.org

National Runaway Safeline
Here to listen. Here to help.

24 hours a day:
1-800-RUNAWAY
online
1800runaway.org



**NATIONAL HOMELESS PERSONS'
MEMORIAL DAY**

December 21, 2016

The First Day of Winter. The Longest Night of the Year.

**Lewiston-Auburn
Candlelight Vigil**

4:30 to 5:30 pm

Wednesday, December 21st

Please meet at **Trinity Church**
at Spruce and Bates Streets in downtown Lewiston.

We will walk together to **Calvary United Methodist**,
the church in the triangle at Sabattus and College Street.

Please bring a donation of non-perishable or canned food for
Trinity Jubilee Center at the beginning of the vigil.

We will walk up Bates to Main, right onto Sabattus, and end
in front of Calvary; join at any point along the route.

We will conclude outside in front of Calvary to raise
awareness; soup and refreshments will be available inside.

New Beginnings will provide rides back to Trinity or the
Park Street garage upon request.



CALL 207-795-4077 FOR INFORMATION OR VISIT WWW.NEWBEGINMAINE.ORG