



New Beginnings News

NEWBEGINMAINE.ORG 134 COLLEGE ST. LEWISTON, ME 04240 207-795-4077

Winter 2018

SAVE THE DATE:

New Beginnings 2018 Annual Dinner

Wednesday
May 2, 2018

Martindale - Auburn, ME

Contact Amber Kruk for
sponsorship information:
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“It’s Not Supposed to be Easy”

Since 1989, New Beginnings’ staff has been challenging residents of the Transitional Living Program to dig deep and explore their limits through its Adventure Challenge (AC) Program. Youth have participated in 187 AC trips each rooted in the belief that youth learn by experience with a hands-on approach.

Juan* has participated in three AC trips, including skiing and snowboarding at Sugarloaf, exploring big-city life in New York City, and climbing and camping in Baxter State Park.

AC trips have given Juan a chance to experience adversity in a safe environment – a striking difference from the challenges he faced before he came to New Beginnings. Growing up, Juan’s life was full of constant family conflict. He left home at age 15 when it became clear that he was not welcome and things couldn’t be resolved. Juan came to New Beginnings’ shelter and then the Transitional Living Program (TLP).

“Sometimes you don’t know what you are capable of until you are dropped on the side

of a mountain, or in the middle of Times Square,” reflects Juan. “It’s not supposed to be easy. So when you complete the challenge it’s like, ‘Wow! I did that.’”

Now 18, Juan will complete his time as a resident at the TLP this spring.

Commenting on what he found most challenging about his time in New York City, Juan says, “I really enjoy how you can sort of disappear in the city. At the same time, the city forces you to be

social. You can’t meet anyone unless you talk to them. I’m thinking, ‘How do these people make friends?’ It’s something I don’t really have to consider living in Lewiston.”

The AC outings are designed to help youth develop teamwork skills, self-esteem, and an opportunity to “see what’s out there”, and our youth assist in planning and implementing all of our trips.

TLP Coordinator Michael

Suter says, “Some of the most powerful lessons result from experiences which are both physically and mentally challenging.”

Juan agrees. About an upcoming winter camping trip he shares, “Staff keep telling us ‘We are preparing on two levels; for our comfort and for our survival.’ I trust the people I am with, the staff. I’m not worried.”



He continues, “The trip gives me something to look forward to—all the scenery. I mean, it’s mentally challenging being away from your daily routine, but it’s also good to get away from the drama. I appreciate that I don’t have to stress when I’m on the trips... it’s a relief to be unavailable. To unplug.”

Over the last 20 years, Ethan May, New Begin-

*Youth’s name changed to protect confidentiality

“It’s Not Supposed to be Easy”, *continued from page 1*

nings’ Youth Development Coordinator has participated in or led more than 160 of the 187 trips.

Ethan shares: “Proximity doesn’t necessarily bring people together. The youth may all be in the same program but that doesn’t mean they always see each other. These trips help bring the youth together in a way that living in the same apartment building can’t.”

Juan agrees. “I notice when I go on AC trips, people are alone with their feelings of being excited or anxious when we’re heading out. When we’re getting back, everyone is coming home together.”

Juan, who recently graduated from a trade program, is looking forward to continuing his vocational training.

These trips have been a highlight of Juan’s time at New Beginnings. He’s had an opportunity to participate in experiences that have helped shape the future he wants for himself. “I’ll miss these trips. I would really like to come back to participate in these challenges. I for sure will continue to find ways to get out in the outdoors. I really love it. I didn’t know that before.”



To learn more about how you can support AC trips please visit newbeginmaine.org/yac

Thank You to our 2017 In-Kind and Holiday Drive Donors:

Your donations of holiday gifts, household goods, food, hygiene items, socks, gift cards, services, & more have made a huge difference for New Beginnings youth over the past year. **Thank you**— we couldn’t do all we do without you!

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Agency News Briefs

Annual Campaign Success: New Beginnings' dedicated donors and new supporters gave generously to exceed our \$35,000 goal for the 2017 Annual Fund. Thank you to Clark Insurance, the Donato J. Tramuto Foundation, Head to Toe Physical Therapy, Mechanics Savings Bank, Carolyn Burke, Dr. Kurt M. Oswald, Owen Larabee & Melissa Albertson, Nicholas Racich, Sheldon & Denise Tepler, 4 anonymous major donors, and the more than 230 individuals and businesses who contributed. Thank you for letting the youth we serve know that they are not alone.

Staff Updates: New Beginnings is pleased to announce the promotion of Topher Balderas to Outreach Program Director and Lis Janes to the role of Outreach Worker. Other new hires include Tara Humphries for the Outreach program, and Shawn Gallant and Melissa Dunn for the TLP.

Mental Health Services: Longtime Outreach Program Director Marc Madore, LCSW, is now serving as Director of Mental Health Services. Marc can be reached by phone at (207) 795-6048 ext. 210 or by email at marc@newbeginmaine.org.

Annual Meeting: The Board of Directors will hold their annual meeting and election at 4:30pm on May 2, 2018 at Martindale in Auburn, immediately prior to the Annual Celebration Dinner.

Prevention Conference: We are once again co-sponsor for the 13th Annual Maine Comprehensive Sexuality Conference on April 6, 2018 at the Augusta Civic Center. More info online at www.newbeginmaine.org.

Staff Spotlight: Topher Balderas

Chris "Topher" Balderas, joined New Beginnings as a Youth Worker in the Transitional Living Program in 2014. After a short break to obtain additional training and certifications, Topher was welcomed back as the Maine Transitional Living Collaborative (MeTLC) Program Coordinator. In early 2018 Topher was promoted to Outreach Program Director.

Topher, who holds a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master's in Human Services, has worked for 12 years in the social services field including working with homeless and veteran populations.

Topher can be reached by phone at (207) 795-6831 ext. 219 or by email at topher@newbeginmaine.org.



How did you make the transition from supporting Maine's homeless LGBTQ youth to Outreach Director?

I rejoined New Beginnings in 2016 as coordinator of the MeTLC. The MeTLC is a 24-month demonstration project providing comprehensive case management and housing specifically for LGBTQ youth in the three counties we serve. So by definition, we always knew that the project would end along with my role as coordinator.

I knew that I wanted to find a way to stay on at New Beginnings, so we began discussions early on in the project to explore how we could make that happen. Part of that exploration focused on the vacancy that would emerge as a result of Marc Madore's transition to Director of Mental Health Services. When the position opened, I applied.

What is happening with youth that were part of the MeTLC program?

We've already exceeded all of our targets for this project. 90% of the MeTLC youth have plans for permanent housing. We are actively working with the remaining 10% to find housing solutions.

Most of the youth who come to us are dealing with a range of challenges that require so many services. So beyond meeting the long-term housing needs of these youth, we are opening case management services for them here at Outreach to help address their ongoing needs.

What one thing gives you the most hope for the work that we are doing to support homeless youth?

This work by its very nature is incredibly hard. It can be emotionally trying. It can test

you in so many ways that you wouldn't expect.

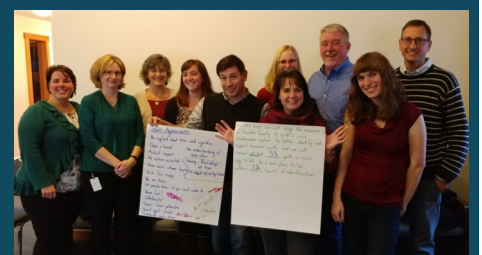
The thing that gives me hope and confidence is our staff who continue to be present and unconditionally supportive of the youth that we serve.

We are such a strong team. We really hold each other up. If there are ever going to be challenges we will address those challenges together.

Recently I've seen that strength when a youth came into drop-in and was in immediate crisis. Our team was able to respond to that youths' needs through non-verbal cues across the floor. We were able to successfully minimize any further crisis for that youth, and just as importantly, we were able to minimize the impact on other youth at drop-in at the time.

100-Day Challenge in Franklin County has passed the 50-day mark

The Franklin County Safe Places for Youth In Need (FCSPYN) is a community-wide collaboration to accelerate efforts to end youth homelessness across Franklin County as part of a 100-day challenge led by New Beginnings. FCSPYN members are actively working to connect youth in crisis, ages 14-22, to a safe place to be within 12-hours of identification. For more information search [@newbeginmainefranklincounty](https://www.facebook.com/newbeginmainefranklincounty) on Facebook.



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WWW.NEWBEGINMAINE.ORG



Supporters raise awareness at the annual Homeless Memorial in Lewiston this December.



New Beginnings' Wish List

We are currently seeking donations of goods including:

- Large Leather Couch and 55" Flat Screen TV for Outreach Drop-in Center**
- Bookshelves** (new or used)
- 25 med. plastic storage totes to organize the clothing closet**
- L-Shaped Office Desk, Small Couch, Chair, and Floor Lamps for Counseling Office**
- Projector and screen, Flat Screen TV for Shelter**
- Office and School Supplies**

If you can help, please call
207-795-4077
to arrange a donation drop-off.

Complete list online: newbeginmaine.org