

We partner with youth to create lasting change so all youth have a safe place to live and opportunities to grow.

From Streets to Stability

It was early March 2019 when 16-year-old Sean found himself without a home, again.*

He had been homeless off and on for years, "I had no stability and haven't since I was very young ... I had no structure and bounced around a lot." He slept on couches at his friends' houses and attended school when he could. Unfortunately, as with most youth with no stability, his grades began to slip because he didn't have access to school. Sean was homeless for a time before hearing about New Beginnings from an Outreach Worker outside the local library.

"I came to New Beginnings for help because I was tired of couch surfing; I needed a place to live in order to go to school." Each time Sean went to the Drop-In Center he was greeted with a smile, warm food, a shower, and resources he needed. When a young person comes to the Drop-In Center the staff help them feel safe, welcome, important, and valued from the very first time they show up. The Outreach team follows New Beginnings' Model of Care to help all youth who have endured trauma. Positive youth development, trauma informed care, harm reduction,

SEAN Continued on Page 2 ►



ANNUAL FUND 2020 REACHES GOAL!

We are thrilled to announce that—**thanks to the support of donors like you**—our 2020–2021 Annual Fund Campaign was able to reach our ambitious \$80,000 goal!

We'd especially like to thank: Northeast Bank, Central Maine Human Resources Assoc, Norway Savings Bank, Jane Dwinell, Rainbow Bicycle, Owen Larrabee & Melissa Albertson, Central Maine Credit Union, Jim Pittman, Freya Olafson, Jeff & Sonia Gorman Family Fund, Dr. Kurt Oswald, Peter Geiger, Androscoggin

Bank, Patty Ruppert, Roopers, DIRIGO FCU, the Main Street Foundation, Clark Insurance, Ruben Cornelius, Head to Toe Physical Therapy, Dag's Bait & Sport Goods, Inc., the many members of our Changemakers Circle like Kate Carey, Carla Oswald Reed & Diane Balboni, Jane Costlow & David Das, Green/Bourgeois Family, Pamela Gates, Peggy McRae and the more than 300 other individuals and businesses who contributed.

Thank you for giving the gift of hope to the youth we serve!

WE'VE MISSED SEEING YOU!

HELP DESIGN OUR 2021 VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING EVENT!

TAKE OUR QUICK SURVEY AT:
tinyurl.com/AnMeeting

New Beginnings' Board of Directors and staff would like to find out your level of interest in a virtual Annual Meeting this spring.

Questions about this event? Contact Marketing + Development Coordinator Nicole Pollock at: nicole@newbeginmaine.org

*Name has been changed to protect privacy.

SUGARLOAF ADVENTURE CHALLENGE

30 years, still going strong

December 2020 marked 30 years of New Beginnings Transitional Living Program (TLP) members going to Sugarloaf Ski Resort for their annual Adventure Challenge. COVID-19 meant our 2020 adventure trip was much more challenging than ever before.

Thankfully, that didn't stop Youth Development Coordinator Ethan May from taking NB youth on a "trip of a lifetime." Ethan has been on 26 of the 30 trips to Sugarloaf. "We have been the fortunate recipients of the generosity of Sugarloaf for all these years -each time receiving donated lift tickets, equipment rentals, AND usually 6/7 hotel rooms! The hotel features true luxury, and our group realizes this very quickly! It invariably impresses all participants. It has never been the case yet where someone has enjoyed this level of hotel before our trip."

The trip is a great break from reality for all participants. Youth begin with dinner near Sugarloaf, then a night of cable tv or time in the hot tub, followed by a good night's sleep. The next



Staff and youth warm by the fire after a long day at the mountain.

day they hit the slopes until it's time to head back home.

When asked what one individual learned about themselves or others their response was, "I can really learn what I set out to. Understanding this boosted my self-confidence. I also saw that sometimes other people take things for granted when they are given something of value without recognizing the good fortune they have in getting such gifts."

Sean

Continued from Page 1

stages of change, and cultural competency are the framework for providing the best care to every youth.

Sean felt at ease and continued to go to Drop-In a few times a week to get what he needed and began to build a rapport with the staff. New Beginnings model of care was developed through years of applying different approaches to every component of the agency's work. The outcome became their mission:

"Partnering with youth to create lasting change so all youth have a safe place to live and opportunities to grow."

New Beginnings integrates the most current and relevant approaches to provide the best possible services to youth. These approaches are evidence-based and come from practices and theories supported by research and based on the needs of vulnerable youth.

As many as 2.5 million youth may experience homelessness this year.¹ They'll lose their homes, community, friends, and routines—their sense

of stability and safety. A countless number of homeless youth are also victims of violence or other traumatic events. Although coming from diverse backgrounds, most of these youth have already experienced early and multiple traumas. Their responses have slowly formed over time, each incident creating a new barrier for trust. This history of trauma can lead to significant mental health problems, including anxiety disorders, attachment issues, depression, PTSD, and substance abuse disorders.²

When youth suddenly experience living on the street, many are re-traumatized. Most youth will struggle to recover from earlier traumatic events at the same time that they are trying to survive. Street youth face countless dangers, including an increased likelihood of substance abuse and a vulnerability to being trafficked.

"These youth have been through a lot before they get here. We aren't going to push them to change or make them do things they don't want to because like all young adults they want to do it their way. We are here for youth no matter

what. They need to be able to look to us for support and resources," says Kris Pitts, Community Services Director.

Within a week of Sean enrolling in Outreach case management he was able to begin transitioning into an apartment at the Transitional Living Program and meet with the NB Education Specialist so he could get back to school. "When I was homeless my life was bad. Now I can actually get things done—my life is much more stable, and I get so much support from the staff."

Now Sean is living in his own apartment, has finished his Hi-Set diploma, and works full time in the town he grew up in. He has reconnected with his mother and continues to work on that relationship today.

The Street Outreach team can be reached M-F at 207-295-6831. The Drop-In Center at 134 College St Lewiston is open 1p-6p M,W,F with more hours coming soon.

Referenced:

¹U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

²Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

NB staff participate in racial equity training

This coming May will be one year since the 2020 murder of George Floyd by a white police officer and the subsequent protests around our country and the world for racial justice. While New Beginnings' primary focus in 2020 has been to maintain the essential services youth experiencing housing instability and food insecurity need during the pandemic, we have also recommitted our agency to examining racism and white supremacy, and working toward greater racial equity in ourselves and our organization.

New Beginnings has worked for decades in a very intentional and thoughtful way to welcome and serve LGBTQ+ (lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning) youth and to train other Maine providers to do the same. We did this not only because it was the right thing to do, but also because LGBTQ+ youth make up a disproportionately high percentage of youth experiencing homelessness—and the same is true for youth of color.

About 5% of Maine's population are people of color, yet over 15% of youth using New Beginnings' services are youth of color (percent varies by program and year). New Beginnings recognized that to be true to our agency values and our history, we must make the same sustained and intentional effort to improve our capacity to serve BIPOC youth (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) as we have with LGBTQ+ youth. We believe that when we center the experiences of the most vulnerable or marginalized young people, then our services and outcomes will improve not only for those youth but for all the youth we serve.

In July 2020, New Beginnings began to plan for how to best begin this process as an organization, and Executive Director Chris Bicknell emailed the staff and Board with a commitment to instituting a process of learning and change toward racial equity. The agency invited outside facilitators, Hilary North-Ellasante and Randy Levinson Clancy, to co-lead an assessment and learning process with the entire staff over several months to strengthen capacity for self-reflection and conversation grounded in racial equity and justice.

This work has been taking place in three phases, each consisting of multiple sessions with smaller working groups and the entire staff. Phase 1 focused on building relationships needed to hold challenging topics that require risk-taking and vulnerability. We recently completed Phase 2, which included sessions exploring BIPOC liberation as a foundation for antiracist work, the history of race and white supremacy in the U.S., and expanding and deepening individual self-awareness of race, racism, and our own racial identities. The third phase will focus on examination and assessment of organizational culture and will include work with our Board of Directors. We hope to translate this collective increase in antiracist awareness and knowledge into the creation of practices, policies, and structures that will support racial equity across New Beginnings.

AVANGRID FOUNDATION

NB receives \$10K grant

Avangrid Foundation—in partnership with Central Maine Power, the local affiliate of AVANGRID in Maine—has gifted \$10,000 in grant funding to New Beginnings.

Avangrid Foundation funding will help New Beginnings continue to promote the safety, connections, and growth that runaway and homeless youth need to thrive in 2021, especially in the face of challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Avangrid Foundation has identified youth homelessness as a top priority for their philanthropy and is partnering with multiple organizations working to end youth homelessness in Maine.

"New Beginnings, Inc. is the organization leading change with partners statewide in combating youth homelessness," said Nicole Licata Grant, Avangrid Foundation Director. "This investment is a great opportunity for us to align our giving with a mission we believe in and that will have an impact on vulnerable youth all across Maine."

FROM THE DESK OF OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This has been a challenging year for everyone on the planet! At New Beginnings we have spent a huge amount of time and energy responding to the realities of COVID-19 and the threat it poses to our staff and the youth we serve.



We received a significant PPP loan and were able to pay all direct care employees hazard pay during the initial stay at home order. We have implemented hygiene and masking protocols at all our locations. Marian's Place is an official BinaxNOW rapid testing site. Because of these and many other strategies we have been able to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within New Beginnings! I am truly grateful to our dedicated staff who have made this possible, and to our supporters and funders who continue to make sure New Beginnings is here for youth.

—Chris Bicknell

THANK YOU!

...to our 2020 in-kind and Holiday Drive Donors. Your donations of food, household goods, socks, hygiene items, gift cards, holiday gifts, and more have made a difference for New Beginnings youth over the past year.

Thank you—we couldn't do all we do without you.

Many Anonymous Donors
Adam Huntley & Ed Strople
Adriann Tucker
Adrien Tardif
Aimee & Chris Labbe
Airmid's Garden Microgreens
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Valerie Abradi
Walking Books Library
Women Giving Back

We would also like to thank those who donated money towards the purchase of Holiday Drive items:

Amy Simoni
Brann & Isaacson employees
David and Diane Greene
Digger and Nancy Jones
Elaine Verrill
Eric Cyr
JoAnn Clemons
Jolene Lajoie
Mechanics Savings Bank
Mr. & Mrs. Ruben Cornelius
Ms. Penny Goodwin
Rev. Susan Tierney
Susan and Fergus Lea
The Greene/Bourgeois Family
Town Fair Tire

During the COVID-19 restrictions we received numerous anonymous gifts.

If you made an in-kind donation and are not reflected here please contact Nicole Pollock at: nicole@newbeginmaine.org



YHDP UPDATE

New Beginnings has continued to take a leadership role in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) that led to the creation of Hope & Opportunity for Maine (HOME), Maine's comprehensive plan to end and prevent youth homelessness. This spring the YHDP team released a request for proposals which makes \$3.1M available to Maine agencies to implement new strategies to prevent youth homelessness across the state.

All of this was accomplished with the amazing collaboration of our Youth Action Board (YAB) members who have kept us grounded through the entire process. For more info or a copy of the draft HOME plan contact Joe Locke at jlocke@mainehousing.org.

Pitts promoted to newly created director position

In October 2020, New Beginnings was pleased to promote Prevention and Training Coordinator Kris Pitts as our new Community Services Director as part of ongoing agency restructuring.

Kris began working for New Beginnings in 2019, after having held several critical advocacy roles in youth programs. Kris brings experience in providing accessible crisis intervention, advocacy, service provision, and education to youth, families, service providers, and community members. Kris upholds a commitment to diversity inclusion and providing culturally responsive services for underserved and marginalized populations via program implementation and monitoring.

The new Community Services Director role is responsible for managing Educational Support, Prevention and Training, Street Outreach, and Youth Action Board programs. We are so fortunate to have had Kris join our agency and



Kris Pitts & Outreach youth worker Sunny A.

management team at this critical time of program restructuring and emergency response to the pandemic. Kris brings experience, work ethic, and enthusiasm to the role and has already begun to make necessary programmatic changes to ensure vulnerable youth continue to have access to New Beginnings' essential non-residential programs.

Congratulations Kris!

Kris can be reached at kris@newbeginmaine.org

AGENCY NEWS BRIEFS

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Because New Beginnings operates licensed congregate care, our staff were offered the Moderna vaccine under Maine's 1B category of essential workers in February and March 2021. As of this writing, 90% of our staff are vaccinated for COVID-19 and doing our part to increase herd immunity and safety for everyone in our programs.

STAFF UPDATES

Our team has had many new faces join since our last update, please see <https://newbeginmaine.org/welcome-to-the-team> for details. Kris Pitts has been promoted to Community Services Director and Alishia Austin to Marian's Place Program Coordinator. We're pleased to welcome Clare Dwyer as Director of Programs; correspondence that would previously have been directed to Tara Kosma should now go to Clare Dwyer at clare@newbeginmaine.org

GRANT GRATITUDE

We're thankful for 2021 COVID-19 response grants from Maine Community Foundation and United Way of Androscoggin County. Thank you to Good Shepherd Food Bank who recently awarded a capacity building grant to our outreach food programs and Avangrid Foundation for general operating support.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

We are working on plans for a spring annual meeting and a summer silent auction. To learn more or support these events, please contact Nicole Pollock at nicole@newbeginmaine.org or (207) 795-4077.

OUTRIGHT L/A CHANGES

As of January 1, 2021, Outright Lewiston-Auburn is now affiliated with Maine Trans Net and New Beginnings is no longer Outright's fiscal sponsor. We look forward to continuing our history of supportive collaboration with Outright as they begin this new chapter! Outright L/A can be reached via email at outrightlewistonauburn@gmail.com; online at [Facebook.com/OutrightLA](https://facebook.com/OutrightLA); or by mail at Outright L/A, 9 North River Road #226, Auburn, ME 04210



134 College Street
Lewiston, ME 04240

*Serving runaway
& homeless youth
since 1980*

YOU CAN HELP US REDUCE COSTS

If the person receiving this newsletter should no longer receive our mailings, please email nicole@newbeginmaine.org with a request to remove/update contact information.



United
Way



WE'VE MISSED SEEING YOU!

Help design our 2021 virtual Annual Meeting event!
Take our survey: <https://tinyurl.com/AnMeeting>

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YOUTH, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
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HOMELESS VIGIL DECEMBER 20, 2020

newbeginmaine.org/2020-homeless-vigil/



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DETAILS ONLINE:
newbeginmaine.org

PLEASE NOTE: As of March 2020, mailed donations are preferred to in-person drop offs. Drop off weekdays at 134 College Street, Lewiston.