

## The Importance of Street Outreach for Youth

Ashley<sup>1</sup> was 17 years old when she found New Beginnings. “I had heard kids at school talking about New Beginnings. I wasn’t doing great so I decided to check out the Drop-In Center.” Due to family conflict, Ashley was living outside on her own. “I was really struggling when I found NB.” Ashley tried staying at Marian’s Place youth shelter for a bit and participating in family mediation but was unable to reunite with her family. “I like to be outside, I enjoy my freedom, so that’s where I live, free and outside.” She was equipped with a tent, sleeping bag, warm clothes, and food.

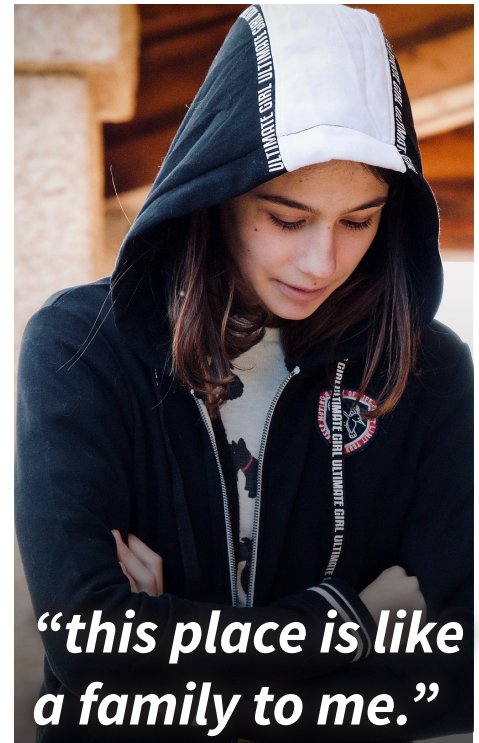
Like many street youth, Ashley moved around a lot to keep safe, but, “Jessy always somehow found me!” Jessy, part of our Street Outreach team, often found Ashley during weekday outreach in downtown Lewiston, making sure she had what she needed and stayed connected. Our Street Outreach team carries basic needs supplies such as hygiene and menstruation products, Narcan, first-aid kits, safer-sex

supplies, and resource info to give to youth on the streets.

During the COVID-19 lock-down, many programs were closed. Ashley’s interest in living outdoors began to shift as programming began to re-open. “NB Outreach was way better than most programs, and I can go to school here. Normal school did not work for me.” When the Outreach Drop-In Center reopened to in-person visits, Ashley would often be at the door ready and waiting no matter the weather. Ashley had become a regular Drop-In participant accessing food, showers, and direction. Eventually she began working with a case manager on her goals and plans to achieve them.

Although she was still living outside, Ashley and her case manager worked together to help her get food, housing, and health care. Ashley also began working on her diploma with the help of the Education and Employment Program.

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**“this place is like a family to me.”**

## WISH LIST

Batteries  
Towels  
Sunscreen  
Bug Spray  
Bicycles  
Sleeping Bags  
Tents  
Flashlights/headlamps  
Swimwear  
Adult size NEW Underwear – all sizes and styles for all genders

**DETAILS ONLINE:**  
[newbeginmaine.org/wish-list](https://newbeginmaine.org/wish-list)



**Congrats Class of '22!** This year we have had 10 New Beginnings students graduate from high school, get their HiSet, or graduate from local Adult Education programs. This number is growing because of a new partnership with Auburn Adult Ed to offer Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) and HiSet testing on-site at New Beginnings' 134 College Street Educational Support classroom in Lewiston to reduce barriers to graduation for homeless youth.

# Adventure Challenge Today



Adventure Challenge (AC) programming began as part of New Beginnings' Transitional Living Program (TLP) in 1989 with the very first trip to Sugarloaf Mountain. It has since grown to offer small groups of youth a chance to experience camping, hiking, urban exploration, fishing, whitewater rafting outings, and more during several trips throughout each year.

The first AC Trip of 2022 took youth to Acadia National Park in the Bar Harbor region. Three TLP residents participated and were able to enjoy their very first camping experience. Youth and staff hiked Cadillac Mountain where they ventured out to Jordan Pond and Otter Cliff. After an extensive hike, the group explored downtown Bar Harbor and enjoyed the sights.

New Hampshire's White Mountains offered the second adventure challenge of the year. With the highest peak in the Northeastern U.S. and record for the fastest surface wind gust in the world, the White Mountains are not for the faint of heart! Several residents opted to give the hiking, fishing, and camping a try, despite the rainy weather. One attendee was completing their sixth AC trip before exiting the TLP and remarked, "I wish I had gone sooner." Others expressed, "It's great to get out of Lewiston and try something new!" and "When's the next trip?"

Adventure Challenge is a great way for youth to learn new skills. They gain technical, hands on, interpersonal, planning, and communication skills while working as a team in the wilderness. They then bring these



important skills back with them and apply them everyday living situations, like roommate conflict, pre-planning monthly expenses, and prioritizing things that are important and need to be taken care immediately verses things that can wait.

Adventure Challenge is immensely beneficial and exposes NB youth to new experiences they'd likely never have otherwise. Staff and youth are looking forward to their next AC trip to Flagstaff Lake in Franklin County where they plan to kayak and camp in Maine's western mountains.

**To learn more about Adventure Challenge, contact Liz Sirois at [lsirois@newbeginmaine.org](mailto:lsirois@newbeginmaine.org)**

## Youth Action Board

The Maine Statewide Youth Action Board (YAB) continues to offer young people paid opportunities to consult and advocate to ensure youth/young adult expertise and voice is valued and 'at the table' where decisions are made that impact Maine youth. YAB is recruiting young adults with lived experience of being unhoused or utilizing systems of care (child welfare, corrections, etc.) – one position in Lewiston and more in other counties statewide.

**Contact YAB Specialist Matthew Wyman at [mwyman@newbeginmaine.org](mailto:mwyman@newbeginmaine.org) or call/text 207-402-9106 for more info or to apply.**



*Youth enjoying a trip to Wolfs Neck State Park with the Education & Employment Program.*



# The Importance of Street Outreach for Youth

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Over the past five years, New Beginnings' Street Outreach and Drop-In Center have offered a safe, stable place for Ashley to work towards her goals. "I would have been damned had it not been for the Outreach and Education programs. I have an apartment lined up now, and 1.5 credits left until I graduate! I wouldn't have done this without NB, this place is like a family."



Ashley plans to graduate from high school this summer and is working toward stable housing and other goals. "Everyone at NB is so supportive and helpful, even if you just need someone to talk to, they're there for you."

***Do you know a youth who is struggling? NB has a host of programs to help youth get on track to achieving their goals. Whether a young person is facing a night on the streets for the very first time or has been surviving on their own for years, we can help.***

***For more info about the Outreach Program, call (207) 795-6831 or contact Program Coordinator Gabe Smith ([gsmith@newbeginmaine.org](mailto:gsmith@newbeginmaine.org)).***



Outreach has been hosting several after hours activities this year, kicking it all off with a superbowl party. They later hosted their first movie night sponsored by the DEI committee, in honor of Black History Month on February 28th. Several youths and alumni attended, and had a short discussion about the film afterward. Going forward, we are hoping to start monthly Outreach movie nights here at the "Drop-in Theatre". Additionally, we are now serving breakfast on Tuesdays and Thursdays with plans to expand the program to five days a week.

## AGENCY NEWS B R I E F S

### WE'RE GROWING!

As a result of a new contract with the State for homeless youth service, New Beginnings is expanding our outreach service area from 3 to 9 counties in the central/southwestern part of the state. We are hiring to expand both our Rural Outreach team and our Lewiston Drop-In Center team under this contract. Please visit our website regularly to find opportunities to join our team at <https://newbeginmaine.org/jobs/>

### GRANT THANKS:

Since our last newsletter we've been awarded expanded City of Lewiston CDBG and Dept. of Education funds (Education & Employment); continued United Way of Androscoggin County program and increased Emergency Food & Shelter grants; Grants from Maine Community Foundation (Outreach breakfast program and COVID-19 response); Narragansett Number One and Reisert Foundations (Rural Outreach); The Hartford (street outreach safety kits for youth); Maine Association of REALTORS (outreach and youth rental assistance); and general operating funding from ME Health Access, Elmina B. Sewall, and John T. Gorman Foundations. We are so grateful for all the support that makes our essential services possible!

### BOARD UPDATES:

We're pleased to announce that Melissa Farinas of Androscoggin Bank has joined NB's Board. Annual Board elections were held in May 2022 and the following officers were elected: Nancy Grenier (President), Steven McDermott (Vice President), Molly Shukie (Secretary), and Bethany Belanger (Treasurer). Thank you all for your dedication to New Beginnings!



134 College Street  
Lewiston, ME 04240

*New Beginnings  
partners with youth to  
create lasting change  
so all youth have a  
safe place to live  
and opportunities  
to grow.*



**We're  
Hiring!**

*Want to make a difference in the lives of youth?*  
**Join Our Team!**  
**[newbeginmaine.org/jobs](http://newbeginmaine.org/jobs)**

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**→ HELP US REDUCE COSTS! ←**

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# 2021 Annual Report

Check out the full  
Annual Report at  
[newbeginmaine.org/  
2021-annual-report](http://newbeginmaine.org/2021-annual-report)



"Staff there are wonderful, they helped keep me off the street ... they are the only reason I graduated high school."

**12,594**

Meals served at the  
Shelter and Outreach  
Drop-In Center.

Youth and families  
served this year by  
New Beginnings.

**564**

Nights of housing  
where youth were  
safe and off the  
streets.

**10,512**

**513**

Contacts via street outreach in  
urban and rural communities.

% of youth served reunified with  
family or acquired safe housing.

**84**