



WINTER 2010 NEWSLETTER

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MISSION

The Friends Program strengthens communities by building relationships that empower people, encourage community service, and restore faith in the human spirit.

**“Building Relationships
and Restoring Hope
Since 1975”**



SUIT UP AND MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR
THE FRIENDS PROGRAM
2010: AN AUCTION ODYSSEY
MAY 21ST
THE GRAPPONE CONFERENCE CENTER
LIFT OFF IS AT 5:00 PM

Our Annual Charity Auction is just around the corner. This year we are turning on the boosters with even more specialty items to bid on. Here is a sneak preview of just some of those items.

- Be the talk of the town by creating and naming the best gourmet burger in Concord at the Barley House.
- The rivalry continues... Red Sox versus Yankees - Amazing box seats generously donated by NH Distributors.

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249 Pleasant Street, Concord, New Hampshire 03301
603-228-1193 • 800-536-1193

Visit us online @ friendsprogram.org

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JERRY MADDEN

The Friends Program has been very fortunate to have recently received a number of generous gifts from foundations and area businesses. These do not include those who generously donated to our Annual appeal or to the local businesses that have agreed to be sponsors for the 2010 Charity Auction.

The Alexander Eastman Foundation donated \$5,000 to the RSVP Bone Builders Program. The Rotary Club of Concord donated \$4,800 to the Emergency Housing Program to be used to replace carpet and purchase diapers and baby formula. The TD Bank Charitable Foundation donated \$5,000 to the Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring Program. Bead It!, a Main Street Concord business, donated more than \$1,000 to the Emergency Housing Program that had been derived from a percentage of business proceeds. Citizens Bank provided the Emergency Housing Program with \$3,000 in fuel reimbursement funds as part of their ongoing support to homeless shelters throughout New Hampshire. The First Congregational Church of Hopkinton donated \$1,000 to the Emergency Housing Program to purchase bedding, linens and curtains. Associated Grocers of New England *Neighbor 2 Neighbor* Program donated \$5,000 to The Friends Program. These are just a few examples of the generosity and support that our organization continues to receive.

I hope that that you will take a few minutes and read more about our programs and our upcoming auction. Thank you for supporting The Friends Program. Your support, both financially and by volunteering, provides critical assistance to countless people and communities.



Friends Program Executive Director Jerry Madden and Board of Trustees President Matt D'Amore are presented with a \$5,000 check from the Associated Grocers of New England *Neighbor 2 Neighbor* Program.

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2010: AN AUCTION ODYSSEY

Charity Auction Lift Off - Continued from Page 1

- Enjoy two hours of fly fishing instruction with renowned guide Angus Bozeman.
- Margarita anyone? Name your very own Mexican cocktail at one of Concord's favorite restaurants. Generously donated by Hermano's Cocina Mexicana.
- The summer of 2010 is not too far away. Granite State Candy Shoppe & Ice Cream will feature an ice cream flavor created and named by you.

We expect you will meet a few space walkers from these businesses to peak your interest and encourage your bid.

Once in earth orbit we will auction off 18 Shaker Blanket Chests designed by Canterbury's own fine furniture maker, David Lamb. David is a founding member of the New Hampshire Furniture Masters and his work has been featured in "Traditional Home" and "Wall Street Journal", among others. The chest is an extremely versatile and functional piece of furniture appropriate for any room in the house. Each will be hand painted and decorated by our veteran team of artists. In addition, we will be auctioning 10 stellar artworks from artists with universal reputations.

Just so you don't become spacey during the event, we will offer a silent auction, heavy hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar, including a Galactic Martini Bar (Sorry there is no water bar available).

As you can see we are adding some twists and turns in this year's Auction Odyssey, but the proceeds will still go to what we do best - put volunteers into the community to mentor youth, provide essential community services and volunteer opportunities for younger and older adults alike, as well as temporary and transitional housing for homeless families.

In celebrating 35 years of providing mentors to youth in our community, we will be directing our Fund A Need to the Friends Junior Senior Youth Mentoring Program. Many of you know that one-on-one mentoring is the most effective way to guide, and befriend impressionable youth.

So - Save the Date and get ready for LIFT OFF.

Your friends in space,

Bob Larsen & Terri Walton
Auction Committee Chairs



WOULD YOU LIKE TO PROVIDE AN EVERLASTING GIFT TO THE FRIENDS PROGRAM?

Please join The Friends Program Legacy Society, a dedicated group of friends who have made planned gifts to the agency to strengthen its future.

There are many giving opportunities to join the Legacy Society, the most common are:

- Listing The Friends Program in your will.
- Establishing a Charitable Gift Annuity or Charitable Remainder Trust.
- Naming The Friends Program as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan.
- Establishing a named fund within The Friends Program endowment.

For more information, please contact Jerry Madden at 228-1193 or jmadden@friendsprogram.org.

Mentors Have Been Enriching Children's Lives for More Than 35 Years

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring Program and while celebrating this milestone we have been reflecting on what we have accomplished over the years.

First, we are pleased to recognize the hundreds of children in the Greater Concord area that have benefited from time with a Senior Friend in the past 35 years. Although, how the children may have come to the program, how volunteers are trained



and screened, how the matches spend their time, and other things may have changed; one thing has not and that is how strong these relationships can be. For instance, with the broad reach of social media we heard from a Junior Friend that was matched in 1980 that had remained close to his Senior Friend until 2000 when they lost touch and he was seeking his contact information. The bond this pair had is not an unusual one as we often have alumni volunteers approach our staff in the community and share their Junior Friend's updates. Some day we will hear the same from Senior Friends like Mary Grohosky of Concord who will celebrate her 10th anniversary with her Junior Friend Jamie this spring!

Our second acknowledgement is the strong support from the community youth serving agencies and schools that share our belief in mentoring. These partners have not only helped us define models for volunteering but steered the children most in need of mentors to our door and introduced their families to us. We are fortunate to have such advocates for mentoring and appreciate the potential that these partnerships have for sustaining youth mentoring in our communities.

Our expansion to site based mentoring at local schools, such as Dame and Walker in Concord, and after school programs, such as; Concord Boys and Girls Club, Concord Family YMCA KYDSTOP, and Bow Youth Center are examples of our growth as a program.

Finally, over the years we have received generous financial support of individuals, businesses, government, grant sources, and foundations. This generosity has allowed the program to expand to other regions of the state, develop and evaluate programming, and increase the number of youth served. Though funding streams are ever changing, we continue to take pride in the strength of our program achievements and strive to advance our message of mentoring youth.

The Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring Program is pleased to be able to celebrate 35 years and we invite you to become involved. Contact Program Director, Brooke Noonan at 228-1193 or bnoonan@friendsprogram.org.

"The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves." – Helen Keller

Following the Child

Our Foster Grandparent, Rachel, is assigned this year to a 2nd grade classroom with 24 students. Students in typical elementary classrooms range in their academic ability from “genius” to those with significant mental or physical challenges. Emotional health ranges can be visualized as the same full spectrum. Between each end of these spectrums are hundreds of incremental points or levels. Children who have met the criteria for requiring an “Individual Education Plan” (or IEP) receive individualized assistance from specialists outside of the class, and some receive support from aides assigned to work exclusively with them inside the classroom.



There are many children who don't meet the stringent criteria to qualify for an IEP, yet still fall on the spectrum with those who would be at-risk of failing and eventually dropping out. Educators can tell when a child, as young as two years old, is at risk of not succeeding at school. Students who drop-out often spend a lifetime in poverty, on welfare, receiving social services, in and out of prison and becoming teen parents - costing exponentially more than the cost of early prevention. Their children will likely follow that pattern because kids who drop out don't typically encourage their own children to graduate high school or dream of college.

Early intervention is critical to toddlers and children to help them do well in school, develop a sense of pride in their ability and comfort in educational settings in order for them to make the choices that lead to adequate livelihoods and stakes in their communities.

Foster Grandparents are uniquely positioned to help because they are required to serve at least 15 hours per week with at-risk children (and they

average 20). Their intensive hours enable them to work with children several times each week or every day. They not only enable the children to practice and internalize their lessons, but they develop very deep, meaningful relationships with them.

Many children's primary need (before they can focus on schoolwork) is to believe that a kind adult cares about them. Unmet emotional needs are one of the most common contributing factors to student failure. Many Foster Grandparents stay with the same children for several years in a row within childcare settings, and can continue relationships through several years in elementary or middle schools. The following environmental factors were reported by teachers in children being served by

Foster Grandparents this school year:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Emotional or Behavioral Needs | 609 |
| Physical/Mental Health Issues | 115 |
| Abused/Neglected | 78 |
| Homeless | 10 |
| Adjudicated | 11 |
| Teen Pregnancy/Teen Parent | 11 |
| In Protective Intervention | 22 |
| Incarcerated Parent(s) | 34 |
| In Foster Care | 26 |

These numbers are actually low because all of the teachers who utilize Foster Grandparents are not asked to report. More importantly, it is a very small fraction of the overall picture of children in New Hampshire who need one-on-one time with a caring adult. Foster Grandparents like Rachel can't solve all these problems, but they can at least feel sure each night that their days are spent doing something fundamentally important for their world.



RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Building Bones, One Lift At A Time

During recent meetings with the members of both the Merrimack County and Rockingham County Board of Commissioners budget sub-committees, RSVP Program Director Donna Odde explained that “The RSVP Bone Builders Program has expanded more rapidly than we anticipated. This is a hopeful sign for things to come.” In less than two years, this new endeavor has grown from a single class offered in partnership with the Londonderry Senior Center to ten, twice weekly classes offered at eight locations across both counties.

The secret to this success? An enthusiastic corps of dedicated volunteer leaders who appreciate the importance of weight bearing exercise to help reduce the effects of diseases such as osteoporosis that reduce bone density and increase the risk of life altering fractures.

Participants are enjoying the class discussions, and are reporting that they are experiencing better

balance and increased strength. Some who have had a bone density scan have seen improvements!

In the photo below, volunteer leader Pat Sellars practices leading a Bone Builders group exercise.



Pat joins Linda Bliss and Lisa Cassell in leading our first group in the Concord area. The group is meeting on Wednesday and Friday mornings at the West Street Ward House in Concord. Feel free to stop by to see the good that is happening.

Our goal for 2010 is to open at least six new class sites in the Portsmouth, Kingston, the Greater Derry and Concord areas. What does it take to bring Bone Builders to your community? Individuals willing to participate in a one day leader training session, a partner site and \$500 to \$750 to purchase the necessary weights.

Our next training session will be held later in the Spring. For more information contact the Friends RSVP at 224-3452 or rsvp@friendsprogram.org.

EMERGENCY HOUSING PROGRAM

Transitional Housing Update

Since last November The Friends Program Transitional Housing Project has brought new hope to two families who would not have otherwise been able to obtain their own apartment. This was accomplished through the support and assistance provided by the staff of the Emergency Housing Program and the generosity of Keystone Management.

The Transitional Housing Project is an extension of the Emergency Housing Program. It is designed to provide qualified families with an opportunity to move from the shelter to an apartment of their own. Families participating in the project remain part of our program and continue to receive weekly case management support. Before they are selected for the project and are still residing at the Emergency Housing Program, they are assisted in gaining knowledge on how to prioritize their income, live within their means and better prepare themselves for situations that may arise that otherwise might jeopardize their ability to sustain their housing.

The two families that are currently participating in the project are continuing to do well. They are working hard to meet the goals and expectations of The Friends Program and those that they have set for themselves. One family has even begun “paying it forward” by returning to the Emergency

Continued on Page 7

EMERGENCY HOUSING PROGRAM

Emergency Housing Update - Continued from Page 7

Housing Program to offer encouragement to those still residing at the shelter. This project has been running for five months and to date the Transitional Housing model has proven effective. We remain confident that there will be many more Transitional Housing families to come. The following is the personal account of a Transitional Housing client's experiences in this program.

My Transitional Housing Experience

When I first arrived with my son at the Emergency Housing Program on July 10, 2009, I had no idea what to expect. My life as I knew it had recently become a nightmare. I had nowhere to go. I had lost guardianship of my five year old son to my stepfather because of some poor choices that I had made. I had no income and was waiting to be approved for Social Security Disability due to my mental illnesses.

After meeting the staff of Emergency Housing Program, I quickly learned that there are still people out there who genuinely care and are willing to help you as long as you are willing to help yourself. I knew that I had the desire to improve my situation and life in general not only for myself, but also for my son. As it turned out I just needed someone to help me untangle the massive ball of yarn that had become my life. The staff at the Friends Emergency Program were happy to help me get my life back on track and including assisting me to regain full custody of my son.

Once the staff saw I was on the right path and moving forward in a genuine effort to put the past behind me, I was offered the opportunity to participate in their Transitional Housing Project. Truthfully, I was initially terrified because the failure of my past continued to remind me of where we really were living. I was told by the staff they would never set me up to fail. I knew that because everything they had told me thus far had come true. As much as I appreciated what the staff did for me and my son I knew I really needed to take the next step into Transitional Housing Project for us. The Transitional Housing Project afforded me the ability to pay off some debt, save money, maintain my own apartment while continuing to receive support from the Emergency Housing Case Manager ensuring that I would continue on the path I had established.

Now, as our time participating in the Transitional Housing Project draws to a close, my son and I are doing well in our own apartment, our bills are paid, he is excelling in school and I am planning on continuing my education in Criminal Psychology in the early summer. Since I have moved into the Transitional Housing Project I have even conducted meetings for the current clients at the Emergency Housing Program and I hope that by giving them my perspective and experience as a former homeless person they will be encouraged. I will never forget what The Friends Program did for my son and I.

— *Chris M., 38 year old mother of one*



Your Help Is Important!

Individual donations have helped to support the mission of The Friends Program for over 35 years by allowing us to provide services to people in need for no fee.

Please donate online at www.friendsprogram.org or mail to:

***The Friends Program
249 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301***

Your thoughtful gift is tax-deductible. For more information, call 228-1193.



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What's Offered at The Friends Program

"Building Relationships... Restoring Hope"



Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring

Is a youth mentoring program matching volunteers (Senior Friends) with youth (Junior Friends) in a one-to-one relationship that creates positive opportunities for youth.

Friends Emergency Housing Program

Provides short-term housing, intensive community-based case management, financial literacy and other essential services, aftercare/ outreach, and transitional services to homeless families enabling them to gain Self-sufficiency and permanent housing.

Friends Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Provides opportunities for individuals 55 and older to use their experiences and skills in meaningful service to strengthen the lives of people in Rockingham, Merrimack and Strafford Counties.

RSVP-Interfaith Caregiver Program

Interfaith Caregiver volunteers provide older adults and people living with disabilities companionship and caring assistance with transportation, grocery shopping, errands, and household tasks.

Friends Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

Moderate income seniors earn a tax-free stipend to work with children in schools and day cares to improve their cognitive, behavioral and academic potential.



TELEPHONE: (800) 536-1193 Fax: (603) 226-3884

Take a moment to visit us online at friendsprogram.org