



MID-MAINE HOMELESS SHELTER & SERVICES

HOPE STARTS HERE



SEPTEMBER 2022

There is a reason people love autumn and why people from all over the country come here in September and October. Nothing is as certain as the knowledge that the beautiful canopy that shades us through the summer will soon turn into a glorious crown of red, gold, and orange, and every shade in between.

Autumn is a special time when most of us also embrace a profound sense of gratitude. The harvest comes in along with hunting season, the tourists go home and those of us who live year-round in Maine once again have access to the trails and beaches that were once too crowded (even if we are also grateful for the summer abundance of jobs and good cheer from those who come north to enjoy our remarkable state).

One of the truths I am reminded of at this time of year is that, just as the seasons change, so does the work we do. For MMHSS this means planning for Winter Warming Center. For most of our guests, we provide a stable place to sleep and assist guests in finding and securing a new lease. The “services” at MMHSS are critical and include case management, housing navigation, and diversion. As soon as guests lease up, we help them move out and fill the bed with a new guest.

Warming Center is different. Warming Center operates from November 1 to March 31 and provides a safe place for a single night. Many of the people we serve in Winter Warming Center have struggled for years with serious mental illness, addiction, and trauma and have burned through every resource and crashed out of many other programs. Our goal is simple: to keep as many people as possible safe from the harsh temperatures and unforgiving ice and snow. ~cont. on last page~



Fight Hunger Bag Program



**BELFAST
COMMUNITY
CO-OP**

*Thank
you!*

We received donations from some amazing community partners this month.



We had a GREAT Golf Tournament at the end of September. It was our 25th, and this event raised \$22,500 to support our effort of ending homelessness in mid-Maine one person, one family, one child at a time!!!

Thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, and golfers who make this event possible.

If you'd like to join us at the next one, we're already planning!

SAVE THE DATE September 21, 2023!

We hope to see you there!



Join Us!

True North offers an intimate glimpse into the lives of the creatures who make their homes in the otherworldly expanse of the Arctic. Presented by local wildlife photographer Charlie MacPherson, this presentation is sure to fascinate and inspire.



Join us October 21st, 6:30p at the Chace Forum. Light refreshments provided and photo items from presentation available for purchase. All proceeds to benefit the critical work of MMHSS. Limited number of tickets available - we hope to see you there!

Email Olivia at olivia@shelterme.org for tickets!

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This winter season we expect a surge in people experiencing homelessness. Nationally, rents are up on average by 15% and, in some areas, the rise in rent is as high at 60% from the same period last year. The rise in housing costs can mean the difference between staying housed and becoming homeless; the sad reality is that most of the folks we serve cannot absorb a \$200 a month increase in rent for a two-bedroom home.

As a result, we'll soon have more people in need of shelter. We'll also need to find more rental units for our guests by attracting willing landlords, people who still believe that people deserve a second chance and with the right supports, everyone can be a successful tenant.

Just like our shelter services, we are changing how we work with many households, especially those with children for whom emergency shelter is not ever going to be a positive experience. We hope to divert these folks from coming into shelter at all. Over the last three years we've dramatically expanded our prevention services to ensure that as many people as possible are offered a realistic and safe alternative to entering a homeless shelter. This year alone our diversion program has diverted almost 200 people from the shelter to safe, stable housing. We hope to expand this program in the months ahead.

Most importantly, like the changing of the seasons, we know people are also capable of change. We see it every day – people who have faced years of abuse, neglect, addiction, and trauma and who find it within themselves to focus on their health as they search for a new home. Over 85% are successful in their housing search.

Perhaps this is the reason most of us love autumn - it reminds us that there is beauty in letting go of what is no longer needed and embracing the promise of what will be. Autumn is the season of change, of rising darkness, and reaping what we've sown for many months. And, although the nights draw in and there are many hours of darkness, and many challenges with keeping warm, the dark and the cold will not last. It never does.

The work of keeping people in crisis fed and warm takes on new meaning during these cold dark months. While we've come through many years of pandemic, the coming winter will not be easy.

Thankfully, with your continued support, we'll be ready, whatever comes our way.



Yours in Partnership,

Katie

Dr. Katie Spencer-White

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THANK YOU




We live in an amazing community!
Because of the support of our community and donors we were able to send 17 kids back to school with new backpacks full of school supplies donated by Northeast Laboratory Services (above photo of Olivia D. and Sabrina from NEL with some of the donated backpacks), new outfits donated by individual donors and new sneakers donated by Gotta Have

Sole!



RECIPE

We have received so much extra produce from our supporters' gardens!
Here's a recipe for cucumber salad our kitchen manager, Rachel, uses when we have a surplus of cucumbers!

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- 1 pound cucumber, thinly sliced
 - 4 radishes, thinly sliced
 - 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
 - 1 tablespoon dill
 - 1 teaspoon parsley flakes
 - 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
 - 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
 - salt and ground black pepper to taste

1. Combine cucumber slices, radish slices, red onion, dill, and parsley in a large bowl.
2. Whisk olive oil, vinegar, and mustard together until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Pour dressing over the cucumber salad. Stir until evenly coated. Serve immediately.

BACK TO SCHOOL