

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### 45th Anniversary Celebration

June 7, 2012, 5-7 pm  
at the Children's Center  
For more information,  
Contact Elizabeth Barron  
207-626-3497

#### Family Day in Capitol Park

June 30, 2012  
For more information,  
Contact Kennebec Valley  
Chamber of Commerce  
207-623-4559



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## Great FUN(d)raiser!

The Augusta Armory proved to be "The Place to Be" on Saturday, March 24th, at the Children's Center's 11th Annual Chili Chowder Challenge.

An enthusiastic crowd, estimated at over 1,000, filled the armory with buzz and bustle. With the folksy, fun musical entertainment of Terrie Kee and Jeff Noel setting the background, people moved from display to display, sampling the chili and chowder offerings of 16 local restaurants, and casting votes for their favorites.

And with all the fun and yum, the Children's Center grossed over \$37,000 from this popular annual fundraiser.

Several surprise moments highlighted the 11th Annual Chili Chowder Challenge. Children's Center Executive Director, Jonathan Leach, presented long-

time Children's Center supporter Terrie Kee with a "Friend of the Center" Award, in recognition of her years of support, not just at the Chili Chowder Challenge events, but all year 'round.

Jonathan then called up David and Kaye Flanagan, major long-time supporters of the Children's Center, to present recognitions to the Sponsors of this year's event. Much to the surprise of Chili Chowder Chairman Judy Griffin, who is stepping down from her role on the Committee this year, the Flanagans lauded Ms. Griffin, presenting her an award marking her years with the Children's Center Board of Directors, and her deft guidance as the Chair of the Chili Chowder Challenge for the past ten years.

The always-entertaining event



outdid itself when Children's Center Staff broke into a "flashmob" to a current children's song, "Ain't that Funky Now?"

The family-friendly event had lots to offer everyone. The craft tables were surrounded by children of all ages throughout the event – decorating donuts, getting faces painted, fashioning paper-hat creations, making edible necklaces and more.

The Lithgow Library's Story Corner was a quiet respite in all the hub-bub that is the Chili Chowder Challenge (except when it transformed for a while into the Parachute Play corner!!) Thanks to EVERYONE who made this event the success it was!

## BRADY

Perhaps the word to describe Brady is surprises. He stops what he's doing, looks up at a visitor with a fairly serious expression on his face,



and suddenly bursts into a great big smile. The visitor can't help but smile back, at the huge ray of sunshine that has just lit up the room. What a surprise, such a huge smile from such a slight-framed little boy.

It was certainly a surprise – shock, at the time – when Brady's parents realized at his birth that he had Down Syndrome. And then, shortly after his birth, came the news that he had a hole in his heart, and that their tiny little baby boy would need surgery to repair it.

With the many complications typically associated with Down Syndrome, Brady's didn't gain the

weight necessary in order to qualify for the surgery until he was six months old.

Mom recalls that when Brady was an infant, there were so many specialists they had to take Brady to see, with doctors' appointments at least once per week. At 1 ½ years, he was diagnosed with a seizure disorder – luckily, the medications he was placed on have been effective, and he's had no seizures, since.

With low muscle tone and a propensity to tire easily, he was 3 years old before he started walking. He's also been identified as having some hearing loss – explaining some of the challenges he

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## Brady

(continued from front page)

Thank you to all who have contributed to our current Annual Appeal!



If you have not yet sent in your donation, please do - by mail, or on our website via Paypal...

(Make checks out to "Children's Center"- send to 1 Alden Ave., Augusta, ME 04330)

*Your contributions support miracles!*

has been facing all along. Brady came to the Children's Center when he was about three years old - he had just started walking, and had a few basic, infant-type communication skills. He was very introverted, and barely made eye contact.

In his time here, the people working with him have seen his personality blossom, along with his physical and social skills. He now waves, smiles, makes eye contact, and has begun verbalizing. He will seek people out (including peers, sometimes), responds when people say hello.

While Brady is here during the

week for child care, he also receives occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech & language therapy, individual specially designed instruction (ISDI), and spends periods of time with his peers in a classroom setting. All without needing to leave the building: no need to disrupt his day to go to another site for any of those services.

And the people who have the pleasure of working with Brady all echo the same sentiment - Brady inspires the people around him to focus on what CAN be done - and to not be discouraged by what seems to be an insurmountable problem. "Working with Brady has taught me: have a goal, but don't be so focused on the road ahead - just

pay attention to how important each step is," says Developmental Generalist Megan Bowman, who has been working with Brady since he came to the Center. "In his time here, he has really just opened up - we've seen his potential, and realized how setting high goals, having a strong structure and sheer consistency keeps him growing."

There is so much to be learned from this energetic, surprising child. Brady has something to teach us all!



## Chili Chowder Challenge Winners

Winning the Best Chili Award was The Liberal Cup with their entry "Smokin' Pig Chili,"

and winning Best Chowder was The Red Barn with their entry "Laura's Famous Seafood Stew."

The list of winners was rounded out with:

Lisa's Restaurant won Hottest Chili with their entry "Lisa's Sweet Revenge;"

Wings Hill won Most Original Chili with their entry "Green Pork Chili;"

Maple Hill Farm Inn & Conference Center won Most Original Chowder with their entry "From the Ground Up Chowder;"

& Maple Hill Farm Inn & Conference Center also won Most Creative Name, with "From the Ground Up Chowder."



The Hi-Hat Pancake House won "Most Creative Display"

## Busy in Skowhegan

Our presence and reach in Skowhegan and Somerset County have been growing! We recently co-hosted a Business After Hours with Miss Kelly's Learning Loft to spread the word in the Skowhegan business community about the services we offer in Skowhegan. It's wonderful to have the opportunity to spotlight the collaboration the Children's Center and Miss Kelly's Learning Loft has established—and participants reported

enjoying the root beer floats! Thanks to the Skowhegan Hannaford, Kel-Mat Café and Whit's End Grill & Bar for generous contributions to help us host this event! The week before, we were at Skowpendous—a fun (free!) family event sponsored by the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP). Our Family Services department had a fun painting activity for the kiddos, and everyone attending

enjoyed all the different activities and concessions.



Skowpendous 4-20-12



Skowhegan Business After Hours





# Learnings

Springtime at the Children's Center! That part of the annual cycle where we see the snows recede, the playgrounds re-emerge, and start the yearly process of making everything beautiful again.

What does that mean for us? Well, we have to undo the damage done by snowplows...reseed the lawns and rebuild the curbs, and rake all of the stones moved by plows and snowblowers back on to the paths. Then we have to work on the flower beds: pull the weeds, re-mulch around the building, and trim all of our shrubs.

After that, there are the raised gardens to consider. Now that we have two (thanks to the support of Healthy Communities of the Capital Area), we have to freshen up the loam, decide what to plant, weed the beds, and get seeds in the ground.

Every year, kids are excited to get out and play as soon as the outdoors warms up...and while the earth is still soft. Little feet and new grass don't work well together, so soon we will be



reseeding the playground. Play chips under the swing sets, the slide, the moose, and all the other areas all need to get raked back in to place, so that when kids fall, they fall safely.

Unveiling our water feature ("The Dream Stream" is eagerly anticipated each spring, and soon the pump will go back in and little yellow ducks will start coursing down the waterfall.

This spring, we have a new addition to the checklist: our nature path under the birches needs to get freshened up.

This year, as in years past, we are very grateful to all of the hands in our community that make this all possible. We have been joined by many groups in the past, and I thank them all: Cony Day of Caring, Colby Cares, Central Maine Power, the Maine Association of Non-Profits, the Kennebec Leadership Institute, the Kennebec Valley Garden Club and many, many others keep the Center looking good, fun, and safe for all of the children who enjoy our accessible playground.

So, if you have a green thumb (or not), and some spare time, please give us a call!

*Jonathan*



*"Springtime...  
the yearly  
process of  
making  
everything  
beautiful again."*



## Thank you to the businesses who support us...

### Business Sponsors of our 2012

#### Chili Chowder Challenge:

Charlie's Family of Dealerships;  
Trademark Federal Credit Union; Darling's; KV Federal Credit Union; Kleinfelder;  
Peachey Builders; Augusta Fuel Company; Evergreen Dental;  
G&E Roofing; Kennebec Savings Bank; Key Bank; PFBF, CPAs;  
Quirion Construction; Al's Certified Auto Repair; Augusta

Computer Copy, Inc.; Blouin Performance; Combined Benefits United; Golden Pond Wealth Management;  
Kennebec Technologies; Lajoie Brothers; Le Club Calumet;  
Main Security Surveillance; Ouellette & Associates, PA;  
Pat's Pizza of Augusta; sappi Fine Paper; Sprague & Curtis Real Estate; and certainly not least, Tim Hortons.

### And to the individuals:

We have many volunteers who do a phenomenal job supporting the Center in countless ways, and we thank you all!

Thank you for your "above and beyond" contributions to:  
Judy Griffin, Wendy Tardiff, Paul Guerrette, Terrie Kee, Jeff Noel, Amy Wass Goldych, and Gary Crocker.



**Current Board Members:**

**President**  
**Dana Hamilton**

**Vice President**  
**Patsy Garside Crockett**

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**Elisa Paylor**

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**Julie Shephard**

**Children's Center**

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Colby Cares Day 2012



Chili Chowder Challenge



Around the Center

