

UPCOMING EVENTS:

12th Annual Chili Chowder Challenge
March 23, 2013

at the Augusta Armory

For more info, check out the chili chowder website:

www.chilichowder.com



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Reflections on 2012

Every December, the Children's Center Board of Directors hosts a gathering for Center staff during the holiday season, as a part of the Annual Meeting. The Directors acknowledge the focus, dedication and energy of the staff and hear about the highlights of the year.

Everyone who attends can participate in the holiday gift swap that wraps up the evening, sharing lots of laughter and fun.

The Board also celebrates individuals or organizations who have been especially supportive of the mission of the Center in the preceding year. This recognition is called the "Friends of the Children's Center."



2013 Friends of the Center :

Dr. Stephen Meister

Dr. Meister, a pediatrician with Edmund Ervin Pediatric Clinic, has been the medical consultant for the Children's Centers for years. He is deeply committed to the wellbeing of the young children of Maine, and improving the quality of care in the state.

George Gousse

George has been a long-time supporter of the Children's

Center, helping to fund the Center's original inclusive playground in 2003. He dropped by recently just to visit the center, and drop off another very generous donation in memory of his wife, Charlene, who held a strong fondness for the Center.

Amy Wass Goldych

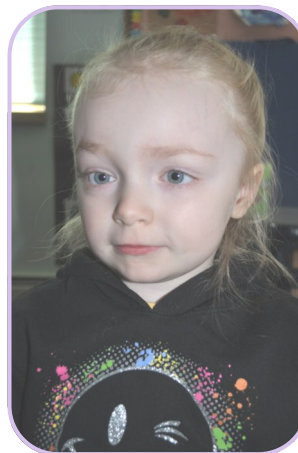
Amy supports the Children's Center by donating hundreds of items of handmade glass jewelry to the Chili Chowder Challenge every year for the silent auction, contributing substantially to the success of the event.

Thanks to **EVERY** supporter of the Children's Center—

You are creating a bright future by making a huge difference in young children's lives!

Lilly

Lilly began at the Children's Center in our special purpose classroom for children with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum in September of 2012, at the age of four. She joined a small group of classmates, and she was initially the only girl in the group. When she first arrived, Lilly had little to no language, and made very little eye contact. She had difficulty with social interactions with adults and classmates. She made little to no attempt to engage with her peers, often playing alone.



Lilly was initially only here for half a day a week. With a lot of dedication, her Children's Center Case Manager and Treatment

Services Supervisor were able to arrange the referrals and supports she needed, so she was able to transition to a full five days per week.

While at the Center, she also accesses Occupational and Speech Therapy services during her day. She has the benefit of a specialized program tailored to fit her needs by the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who oversees our Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) intervention for children with autism.

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Lilly (continued from front page)



Over the past five months, with our comprehensive service model, Lilly has blossomed. She was

oh-so-recently a child with little language who didn't initiate greetings or talk to anyone. She is now reaching out to people throughout the Center. Just over the past month she has begun to spontaneously greet people and ask them questions without prompting. In addition, she shows a wide range of emotional responses to people, and is interacting with her peers and classroom teachers on a regular basis.

Lilly now participates in circle time, singing and playing with the other children in the classroom, and is often found skipping or

twirling through the halls.

Even though Lilly has been here such a short time, there is no doubt that the services we offer here have positively impacted her.

Recently Lilly has begun the process of transitioning to an inclusive classroom.

This is what we hope for with each child that the Children's Center serves in special purpose settings: that they may grow and develop in a positive healthy way and join their peers in the inclusive classrooms.



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

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



Shirley Derosier receives the Children's Champion award from Kate Salonen (L) and Nash Callahan (R).

Each December, the staff of the Children's Center reviews the year and looks at the people who make great contributions to the Children's Center. There are so many who do so much for the children! This year, the staff awarded the Children's Champion recognition to Shirley Derosier, a volunteer who has been helping out in

the Bursting Blossoms classroom. Shirley has made and donated curtains for the classroom, as well as toys and art supplies bought with her own money. She also writes her own poetry and comes in and reads her poems to the children. The children adore her, and often ask to make cards to give to her when she isn't here.

Thank you, Shirley!!

Around the Center

Amazing things happen at the Children's Center all year round, for sure. And the holidays just ramp up the amazing-ness that much more.

This year, our Holiday Giving Tree helped 44 children have a brighter winter, thanks to employees' and supporters' donations.

Targeted Case Management helped 21 families over the holidays have healthy holiday meals, thanks to a generous donation from Trademark Federal Credit Union.

Additional donations from the community made it possible for us to assist families in need to get clothes, personal items and a meal for the holi-

days, and link them to other important community resources.

Caring hearts work here at the Center, and caring hearts support the young children in central Maine - throughout the holidays, and every other day of the year.

Your support matters!





Learnings

There are many little events at the Center that bring a smile to my face.

Throughout the year, parades of carolers, trick or treaters, dancers and percussionists all make their way through the administration wing of the Center, helping those of us working in these offices keep a strong sense of connection to the REAL work of the Center.

If I had been here back in 2003, when our local community rose up in support of the Children's Center through the Capital Campaign that resulted in our expansion as the Kaye and David Flanagan Building, I might have questioned the idea of locating the administrative offices separate from services. True, the quieter environment is sometimes appreciated, and we can always walk through the lobby to reconnect with the true reasons why we are here, but the division (even if only physical space) between "administration" and "service" is not always helpful.

In 2003, we had 35 employees... now we have over 80. We had 41 children coming to the Center...now we are licensed for 75. We were not yet offering child care, community and center-based rehabilitative support services, or mental health services.

All of this growth - which reflects the growing need for what we offer and new approaches that have developed to meet existing needs - has some real-life practical implications. As anyone who drops by the Center during the day knows, parking is at a premium. When the building was designed, it had an indoor play area for bad weather days; that space has been repurposed to provide more services. We have added a second parking lot, and added one small wing, but we are once again feeling the space pinch.

In response to all of the changing needs, we are continually planning. Our Board of Directors and the leadership of the Center is constantly thinking, planning, and working toward

the future. We are currently in the process of assessing all available options to accommodate our growth, and would appreciate your ideas and suggestions.

I would like to again thank the people who built a building far larger than what was needed a decade ago.

As our communities have grown, and as the needs of our children change, we find ourselves reaching out again to our supporters, to help us continue to meet the needs of our parade of dancers, singers, tricker or treaters, and elves.

Jonathan



"Throughout the year, parades of carolers, trick or treaters, dancers and percussionists all make their way through the administration wing..."

Support from the Business Community

The Children's Center began with community support, and has grown to offer all the services and programs we do, with the on-going support of the community.

The business communities in the greater Augusta and Waterville areas, as well as in the greater Skowhegan area, step up and support the children and families we serve, in so many ways.

Each year, our Chili Chowder Challenge is so successful because of the generosity of local businesses: sponsorships, items for live and silent auction, donations of hotdogs, soda and ice cream, and the enthusiastic support of the local restaurants who participate.

We also have businesses and organizations that offer us support throughout the year, like

our friends at Longfellow's Greenhouses, whose donations have gone to help support our Grandest Parents program this year.

For all of your support, we extend our appreciation - and encourage everyone in our community to support the businesses that support the children of Central Maine!



Receiving a generous donation from Longfellow's Greenhouses

Current Board Members:

**President
Dana Hamilton**

**Vice President
Patsy Garside Crockett**

**Treasurer
Elisa Paylor**

**Secretary
Don Lemieux**

Betsy Pohl

Fern LaRochelle

Randy Liberty

Maria Hays

Diane Smith Howard

Lori Fowle

Julie Shephard

Danny Burgess

Dr. Lara Walsh



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In their own words...



The people who work at the Children's Center share their stories...

The Children's Center is an inclusive learning environment. This means that children of all abilities are given the chance to play together in a nurturing environment. This wouldn't be possible without the kiddos who come to us for childcare. There are some occasions in which the classroom setting is just too busy for some children to be successful. In order to provide those children with the inclusive experience, we often ask one of their peers to come into a smaller space and play. Most children are thrilled with the idea of being a "helper" and getting to play in a different room is like a special treat. Two of the kiddos that are called on quite often to be a "helper" are Alice and Madison. They have both been at the Children's Center for a couple years now and have embraced the inclusiveness of the center. They are always willing to help out their peers. At such a young age, they seem to have a great understanding of the role they are playing as a helper and yet they only see it as helping out their friend. ~ Bethany

My niece Emma attended the Children's Center a few years back. When she started she made no eye contact, said absolutely nothing, and ate about four things. Today she is in a typical third grade classroom with a 1:1 aide. She talks circles around me, and if I'm not paying enough attention to her she will tell me "Auntie I need your eyes, you need to hear me" (something we say to the children here if they're having trouble focusing). I believe that she runs a computer better than I do. I love when she wants to help me cook. Watching her play with her cousins and friends instead of parallel playing next to them melts my heart. To see firsthand what kind of amazing things can happen to children who once came here is why I get up and come to work every day. ~Morgan