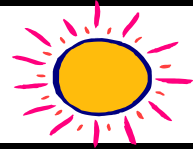




# MWDA Newsletter



Volume 4 Issue 1

May 10, 2002

## Spring Seminar

MWDA held its annual spring seminar at the Black Bear Inn in Orono on April 29 and 30. Antoinette Mancusi from MMA started the first day with a game of basic General Assistance questions and answers. A mock fair hearing was also presented. Election of officers were held at lunch on the 29th. Brenda Harrington from Rockland was elected as President, Judy Hardy-Goddard from Lisbon as Vice-President and Dot Meagher from Auburn as 2nd Vice-President. Also elected were Diane Mende from Belfast as secretary, Linda Fossa from Waterville as Treasurer, and for the Board of Directors; Mary Reindl from Brunswick, Donna Staples from Winthrop and Mary Frances Bartlett from Augusta. Speakers for the event included Carrie Horne from NAMI; Antoinette Mancusi, MMA; Geoff Herman, MMA; Cindy Boyd, DHS; Bill Mitchell, Good Will; Kyle Slayback, Women Unlimited; Jennifer Brooks, Penquist CAP; Howard Mitchell, Bangor Employment Center; Susan Russell, Women, Work and Communities; and Bill Maxwell USM/Muskie School.



Bill Maxwell and Brenda Harrington

## NAMI

Carrie Horne, LCPC, Program Services Manager, presented "I'm not sick, I don't want your help" to MWDA members on the first day of the seminar. A large percentage of the mentally ill are unaware that they are mentally ill. She outlined four steps on how to help the mentally ill accept help.

### LEAP

1. Listen
2. Empathize
3. Agree
4. Partnership

The first step is effective **listening**, try and understand their experience. A few listening guidelines would be to set aside time, don't react, echo

what you heard and to agree on the agenda. Secondly, **empathize** with their frustrations, fears and desires. Third, **agree**, find a common ground and identify with the facts on which you agree. And last, **partnership**. Reach a treatment agreement and work together on accomplishing goals.

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## Good Wheels



The State of Maine Department of Human Services Aspire program has funded a program to provide ASPIRE participants with low interest auto loans. Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, Key Bank and the Maine Automobile Dealer's Association have partnered to achieve this goal. The first loan was given in December 1999. 359 loans have been given to

date. An average of 14 to 15 loans are written each month. The maximum loan is for \$5000.00 with an interest rate of 5% over a three year period. Clients must be able to purchase liability insurance. The Good Wheels program also does limited credit counseling and assists with budgets. They also provide a brief automobile maintenance course. All loans are made

through Key Bank of Maine. To qualify, a client must be receiving TANF and be employed with an income. All clients should contact their ASPIRE case worker.



## Women Unlimited



Dale McCormick, the first woman to complete the union carpenter's apprenticeship in the United States, founded Women Unlimited. A statewide non-profit organization, it's purpose is to train, place and promote women in trade and technical jobs and apprenticeships throughout the state. Recognized as a national model in non-traditional occupations (NTO) training and job-creation for low-income women, Women Unlimited has been very successful in assisting women discover new skills and fulfill their dreams. They offer over 50 courses throughout the state, often on-site at various technical colleges, though other sites have included Bath

Iron Works, Unity College, vocational high schools, and community centers. The courses cover various hands-on skills, technical math and English. Since their founding, almost 600 women (and a few men) have graduated from our 8-14 week hands-on training programs. The average age of a participant is 33, though ages range from 18 to 62. Virtually all participants have been low-income, most are mothers and sole providers for their children, and half entered the program receiving public assistance. Five percent of participants are people of color; Maine's corresponding statewide population percentage is 1.7. Graduates have traveled from all over the state, and

even from New Hampshire, to take advantage of our training. More than 75% of their graduates move on to employment, apprenticeships, further technical training, and even small business ownership. Our JobBank is utilized by over 80 employers, who regularly alert us to job openings. Graduates and other tradeswomen are notified of these openings as we learn about them. For more information call 1-800-281-5259



## Women, Work and Community

### MAINE CENTERS FOR Women, Work, and Community

The Maine Centers for WOMEN, WORK and COMMUNITY (WWC) is committed to improving the economic lives of Maine women and their families. They start where women are and step by step, provide them with the support, guidance, and tools they need to secure a more promising future. They offer the following training and assistance programs

#### Employability Training

Helps future workers to understand and practice the personal management skills employers value in their employees. These include: interpersonal communication, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, teamwork, conflict resolution, time and stress management, personal self esteem and motivation.

#### Career/Life Planning

Helps future workers and job changers to explore career options. Includes self-assessment of interests, values, and skills; tools to assist in matching career options to personal needs; training and education opportunities; job shadowing; introduction to computers, and completing a lifework portfolio.

#### Job Search Skills

Tools and methods for conducting a job search. Includes resume preparation and interviewing skills.

#### Asset Development

Offers a matched savings program, training in money management, donated cars or computers.

#### Self Esteem

Helps participants to increase their self esteem. Explores attitudes, beliefs, and actions that will nourish positive thoughts and feelings about self.

#### Assertiveness

Helps to further build self esteem by learning how to express one's ideas, feelings, and needs clearly, honestly, and directly while respecting the needs and feelings of others.

#### Self-Employment

Focuses on learning about what is involved in starting and operating a business. Participants develop a business plan for a specific business they intend to start up.

#### Personal Resource

Tools and Methods for managing time, stress, money.

**Services are free and confidential.**

**For more information call 1-800-442-2092 or 207-621-3430**



"Friends are the  
pillars on your  
porch. Sometime  
they hold you up,  
sometimes they lean  
on you, and  
sometimes it's just  
enough to know that  
they are standing

## Sue Charron

It has been a privilege and an honor serving as President of the Maine Welfare Director's Association. Being involved with the MWDA has been an incredible learning experience and I have definitely reaped the rewards. I have had the opportunity to meet some remarkable people and with that has come relationships that will last a life time. I truly have received more than I have given and I urge all of you to become active members of the Maine Welfare Director's Association.

Much has been accomplished during my term, largely due to the dedication and hard work of the MWDA Executive Board and committee members. As I reflect back, some of those achievements are as follows: we continue to be successful in recruiting new members; the MWDA Newsletter contains a wealth of useful information and gets better each year; we have a new, professional working set of Bylaws; a new Certification Program that has merit and offers training so that all can become certified; we have a new calendar and have scheduled more training that will assist our members in becoming certified as well as bring in revenue; our own website ([www.mainewelfaredirectors.org](http://www.mainewelfaredirectors.org)) and with that comes a huge attempt to correspond via e-mail in order to save money; we also now have an Administrative Guide still a work in progress, but Nancy Sargent, Brenda Harrington and I will put the finishing touches on it soon.

Acknowledgments for the many achievements are in order. To my staff, thank you for picking up the slack and the pieces. To all of the veteran welfare directors, thank you for your guidance and wisdom. Mary-Anne Chalila, thank you for sharing your wealth of knowledge. Vicky Edgerly, thank you for sharing your wonderful ideas and assisting with putting them into practice. A special thank you to Antoinette Mancusi for being my sounding board and for assisting the MWDA with training, yet encouraging us to train ourselves. Cindy Boyd and staff, thank you for your willingness to collaborate on MWDA projects. Joan Kiszely, thank you for motivating me, for pointing me in the right direction and keeping me on track. Nancy Sargent, thank you for always going above and beyond, you are the wind beneath my wing.

I thank the Executive Board and committee members for their support and commitment. Mary Reindl, thank you for offering me the opportunity to become involved with the association. Mary Frances Bartlett, thank you for your willingness to assist in any way possible and for guiding me, especially through the Legislative process. Earl Edgerly, thank you for being a team player. A special thanks to Judy Hardy-Goddard for sharing her technical expertise and for setting up MWDA's website. Linda Fossa, thank you for stepping in on such short notice and for crunching the numbers ( with a sense of humor). Donna Staples, thank you for your dedication and input. Diane Mende, thank you for the laughter. Cheryl Durgan, we are indebted to you for all of your work on the Certification Training Program. Mary Reindl, Jackie Carignan and Antoinette Mancusi, thank you for making the first Certification Training Workshop a rousing success. Last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to Brenda Harrington for giving 110 percent and for making my job that much easier. Thank you for finding the humor in even the difficult situations.

Maine Welfare Directors, we should all be very proud of our association and all that we have accomplished. I leave you in good hands, your incoming President, Brenda Harrington, will work diligently to ensure the continued success of the MWDA.





## Women's Project

### MAINE WELFARE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP MEETING

June 13, 2002

1:00 p.m.

Maine Municipal Association  
60 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine (Exit 31)



#### AGENDA

*1. Call to order/ Introductions*

*2. Approval of Minutes- March 7, 2002 ( please bring the minutes and financials)*

*3. Treasurer\*s Report- Period ending April 30, 2002- Linda Fossa*

*4. Committee Reports*

*Legislative Update- Sue Charron*

*Professional Development- Brenda Harrington*

*Nominating/Membership- Judy Hardy-Goddard*

*5. MMA Update-Antoinette Mancusi*

*6. DHS Update- Cindy Boyd*

*7. Other Business- MMA Contract*

*8. Adjourn*

**1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.- Funerals revisited, presented by Antoinette Mancusi**

**\*\*\* Executive Board will meet at 11:00 am. Please make every effort to attend. \*\*\***

"Only a life lived  
for others is a life  
worthwhile."

Albert Einstein





## Spring Seminar Evaluations

|   | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|-----|----------|----|
| 1. Did the conference meet expectations?  | 31  | 7        |    |
| 2. Was subject matter adequately covered? | 31  | 5        |    |
| 3. Was info presented in effective way?   | 30  | 3        |    |
| 4. Was format effective?                  | 29  | 3        |    |
| 5. Was location suitable?                 | 27  | 10       |    |
| 6. Are you better informed?               | 31  | 5        |    |

### Coverage of Subject

|                 | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent |
|-----------------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Basic GA        |      | 2    | 20   | 7         |
| Fair Hearing    |      | 5    | 20   | 10        |
| NAMI            |      | 2    | 15   | 15        |
| Welfare to Work |      | 1    | 17   | 15        |
| End of Stress   |      |      | 7    | 23        |
|                 |      |      |      |           |

### Presentation/Format

|                 | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent |
|-----------------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Basic GA        |      | 20   | 20   | 9         |
| Fair Hearing    | 1    | 3    | 17   | 11        |
| NAMI            | 2    | 2    | 15   | 13        |
| Welfare to Work |      | 3    | 14   | 11        |
| End of Stress   |      |      | 6    | 21        |

### Overall Reaction

| Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent |
|------|------|------|-----------|
|      | 4    | 18   | 8         |

8 with no responses





## Spring Seminar Evaluations, cont.

### Suggestions for Future Conferences/Comments

- Referrals to other resources
- How to get info out of clients
- How to say sorry, can't help
- More time for questions and answers
- GA audit
- How child abuse, sex abuse, safety, negativity affect our performance as GA Director
- Housing and the expanding issues
- Don't sit for long periods of time
- More breaks
- Have Legislative Committee speak
- Why is attendance down each year
- Group setting for problem solving - questions and answers
- No more NAMI
- How to deal with repeat alcoholics and drug dealers that can't hold a job
- Aspire orientation
- HEAP, etc. application process

If you were unable to attend the Spring Seminar or did not complete an evaluation form, you can still submit suggestions. Please send suggestions to:

Brenda Harrington, Welfare Director  
City of Rockland  
270 Pleasant Street  
Rockland, Maine 04841  
Phone: 594-0302  
Fax: 594-9481  
Bharrington@ci.rocklnad.me.us

Judy Hardy-Goddard, General Assistance Administrator  
Town of Lisbon  
300 Lisbon Street  
Lisbon, Maine 04250  
Tel: 353-3000 ext. 124  
Fax: 353-3007  
Jhardygoddard@lisbonme.org

## Benefits Planning Assistance

The Social Security Administration (SSA), as authorized by the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, awarded 116 cooperative agreements to a variety of community organizations called Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach (BPAO) projects. These BPAO projects provide all SSA beneficiaries with disabilities (including transition-to-work aged youth) access to benefits planning and assistance services. Cooperative agreements were awarded throughout every State. For more information, contact Maine Medical Center, Department of Vocational Services, 22 Bramhall Street, Portland, ME 04102, 207-871-2088 or 888-208-8700

*Submitted by Patti Littlefield, DHS*

## From the Desk of Cindy Boyd

### SHELTER COSTS

The Department receives a large number of calls every week on the Hotline. We try very hard to provide the caller with accurate information but sometimes we fail to ask all the questions we should and then we give the wrong information out. This happened just recently and the client asked the Department for the Fair Hearing. He requested the Hearing from the Department not the municipality because the municipality had done what the Department advised the municipality to do.

The applicant paid \$325 for his rent. The \$325 included his heat and electricity. The applicant had stated to the municipality and the person on the Hotline that his rent was heated and he paid \$325. He wanted help with the rent, some personal supplies, and the co-pays for his prescriptions. He had zero income and he had filed for SSI. He was a repeat applicant and the municipality had paid the \$325 for his rent before.

The first call received on this applicant was from the municipality. The Welfare Director had helped him with his co-pays before and was questioning should he continue to do that. The person on the Hotline asked if the co-pays were because the man was receiving Medicaid (now called Maine Care) or were the co-pays because he had private insurance. The man had Maine Care and so the Department told the Welfare Director not to pay for the co-pays (DHS General Assistance Policy, page 11). While on the phone they discussed the case more and the person on the Hotline told the Welfare Director that he should only be assisting with \$291 toward the rent because the application was for a household of one.

There were at least four calls from the applicant. He had accepted the fact that the municipality would no longer pay the co-pays on his medication. The pharmacy was going to continue to provide him with his medication. His concern was the rent. At no time was there discussion about the fact that the \$325 he paid for rent included heat and electricity. He finally went to Pine Tree Legal and a letter was sent to me. Pine Tree was challenging the fact that we had not sent the applicant a written response on each of the Hotline calls and the fact that we were not considering the fact that electricity was part of his rent.

The Department does not respond to Hotline calls with a written letter. If the applicant had written the Department a letter stating his concerns we would have responded in writing. I spoke to everyone who had spoken to the applicant and no one remembered exploring the electricity being included in the rent. Page 8 of the DHS General Assistance Policy explains how the utilities are backed out of the HUD fair market rent figures when the shelter maximums are calculated each fall. The second paragraph on the page reads: "When calculating allowable rent maximums for applicants whose rent includes all utilities and heat, use the appropriate size unit for heated apartments (or rooms) and then add the appropriate standard found in the ordinance for utilities"

The overall maximum used by the municipality for a household of one was \$372. The maximum allowed for a heated zero bedroom apartment was \$291 and the electricity (with a hot water heater) maximum was \$70. The total that could be allowed was \$361. Since the rent requested was only \$325 that municipality could assist the applicant with the \$325 plus \$35 for personal items.

This case really made me think about how we ask questions. Sometimes we assume that we have all the pertinent information and we don't. We need to all take the extra minute and gather all the information. Please remember when an applicant is applying for help with shelter costs and you are told that the rent includes heat to explore whether the other utilities are included or whether the applicant is responsible to pay them.

*You must be the change  
you wish to see in the world*

*"Mahatma Gandhi"*





## **From the Desk of Cindy Boyd, cont.**

### **ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM**

The Legislature passed LD 2019, An Act to Protect Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking. This new law requires that the Secretary of State establish an Address Confidentiality Program (ACP). The program will protect victims of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault by authorizing the use of designated confidential addresses for such victims. The law also requires that state and local agencies and the courts accept the designated address as the program participant's address when creating a public record. When an applicant or recipient verifies that they are a certified participant in the Address Confidentiality Program, the designated address is the only address accepted and provided when staff is required to release information.

I will be doing a mass mailing concerning this law requirement and we will need to add it to future policy. The main thing to remember is that if an applicant or recipient is part of ACP, the only address on record should be the designated address and any mailings from your office need to be mailed to that address.

### **BRAP**

#### **BRIDGING RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

As the Program Manager for General Assistance I am often invited to meet with other Departments within State Government to discuss our individual programs and to look at how the different programs can work together to assist the citizens of Maine. I recently met with some people at the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services to discuss their Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP). I know that a large number of municipalities are aware of BRAP and have been working with them to assist our mutual clients with their shelter needs. Until this meeting I was not aware that BRAP was available statewide.

BRAP is funded by the State and was created for low-income people with mental illness who cannot afford suitable housing pending acceptance for Section 8 (subsidized) housing. BRAP "bridges" that period for up to 2 years. The BRAP participant pays 51% of his/her income to BRAP and BRAP subsidizes the remainder up to Fair Market Rental values. In 2002, most recipients of SSI receive \$555 per month. This means that a person on SSI would contribute \$283 toward the rental cost. If the rent on a 1-bedroom apartment was \$439, BRAP would subsidize the remaining \$156. BRAP also links the client up to a case manager, inspects the apartment, pays the Security Deposit, and access other resources that may be needed, i.e. furniture.

The way that General Assistance and BRAP can work together is beneficial to all parties. A General Assistance client who has no income but would otherwise be eligible for BRAP is processed in the usual manner for General Assistance. However in computing the budget for housing we "presume" that the client is getting SSI of \$555 and will be able to access BRAP thereby having a housing need of only 51% of \$555 which is \$283. GA commits to paying BRAP \$283 per month as long as the client remains eligible for GA. BRAP subsidizes the remaining amount of rent.

If the client eventually is found eligible for SSI and receives any retroactive benefits, the municipality will be reimbursed for the assistance given provided all the proper forms needed for the SSI Interim Assistance Reimbursement Program were completed and submitted.

I have attached a list of the contact agencies for BRAP and Shelter Plus Care. Both of these programs are good resources for our clients. (page 6)

## From the Desk of Cindy Boyd, cont.

### Department of Behavioral & Developmental Services Shelter plus care (SPC) & Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP): Local Administrative Agents

| Penobscot, Washington, Hancock,<br>and Piscataquis Counties                                      | Aroostook County   | Lincoln, & Sagadahoc Counties<br>Brunswick, Harpswell & Freeport                           |
|--|--|--|
| Community Health & Counseling<br>42 Cedar St.<br>Po Box 425<br>Bangor, ME 04402<br>207-947-0366  | AMHC Facilities Inc.<br>One Vaugh Place<br>Caribou, ME 04736<br>207-498-6431 | Sweetser Mental Health<br>18 Pleasant St.<br>Brunswick, ME 04011<br>207-721-3183           |
| Franklin, Oxford, & Northern<br>Cumberland Counties  | Androscoggin County  | Somerset and Northern Kennebec<br>Counties   |
| Tri-County Mental Health<br>1155 Lisbon St.<br>Po Box 2008<br>Lewiston, ME 04142<br>207-353-4100 | Common Ties<br>140 Canal St.<br>Lewiston, ME 04240<br>207-795-6051           | Kennebec Valley Mental Health<br>67 Eustis Parkway<br>Waterville, ME 04901<br>207-873-2136 |
| Waldo, Knox & Lincoln Counties   | Southern Kennebec County   | Cumberland County  |
| Mid Coast Mental Health<br>12 Union St.<br>Po Box 526<br>Rockland, ME 04841<br>207-594-2541      | Motivational Services<br>PO Box 229<br>Augusta, ME<br>207-626-3465           | Shalom House, Inc.<br>400 Congress St.<br>Po Box 560<br>Portland, ME 04112<br>207-874-1080 |
| York County  |  |  |
| Counseling Services, Inc.<br>PO Box 1010<br>Saco, ME 04072<br>207-282-6126                       |  |  |
| Housing Coordinator<br>Region I<br>Portland<br>207-822-0127                                      | Housing Coordinator<br>Region II<br>Augusta<br>207-287-2136                  | Housing Coordinator<br>Region III<br>Bangor<br>207-941-4159                                |

STRESSED spelled backwards is DESSERTS

The Women's project is a statewide program focused on increasing access and availability of substance abuse treatment and recovery activities for women affected by substance abuse.

Support and advocacy is provided by a caring team of outreach workers and registered nurses who assist clients in overcoming barriers to

accessing services. These may include financial assistance with child care and transportation to treatment, counseling or support groups like AA, AL-ANON, domestic violence, and other recovery activities.

Staff provide interim case management if needed, plus client and community education around health issues like addictions, TB, HIV, Hepatitis,

Prenatal Care, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/ Effects.

Our program is free and women of any income level may access our services. Referrals are welcome from any source.



"The men who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and succeed."

**-Lloyd Jones**

## HUD News

This home on Schuler St. in Sanford will soon be sold to a local family earning 80% or below the area median income. The property was purchased from HUD by the Town of Sanford for \$1. In turn, the Town of Sanford sold it to the York County Community Action Agency for \$1 with the requirement that the property be used to benefit a low-income family. Under YCAP's Purchase-

Rehab-Resell Program, the two-bedroom home has been completely renovated, including new wiring, heating system, windows, bath fixtures and cabinetry. The home, fully improved, has appraised at \$85,000 - \$93,000; to make it affordable to a low-income family, YCAP has set the sale price at \$79,900. USDA-Rural Development will provide the first mortgage at an interest

rate between 1%-6.5%, depending on the income of the borrower, and for a term of 38 years. YCAP will provide a second mortgage (0% for 5 years, forgivable) to cover closings costs. The borrower will be required to provide a \$100 down payment. For more information about the Schuler St. property and other YCAP housing programs, contact Chris LaRoche at (207) 324-5762



## Melanoma Cancer Facts

### Facts and Stats

May is Melanoma Cancer Awareness Month. The Black Ribbon is worn this month in support of all victims of this deadly cancer and to bring public awareness. My daughter lost her battle with Melanoma at the age of 22 on September 23, 2000.



### Why The Black Ribbon?

Melanoma means "black tumor" Black is the color of the warrior's mood when going into battle and the melanoma patient is in the battle for life.

Half of all new cancers are skin cancers.\*

Melanoma is epidemic: rising faster than any other cancer and projected to affect one person in 50 by 2010, currently it affects 1 in 75. In 1935, only one in 1500 was struck by the disease.

Melanoma is the most common cancer in women ages 25-29 and second only to breast cancer in women 30-34..

More than 1 million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year.\*

About 80 percent of the new skin cancer cases will be basal cell carcinoma, 16 percent are squamous cell carcinoma, and 4 percent are melanoma.

Both basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma have a better than 95 percent cure rate if detected and treated early.

An estimated 9,800 people will die of skin cancer this year, 7,800 from melanoma and 2,000 from other skin cancers.\*

There will be about 51,400 new cases of melanoma in 2001 ( 29,000 men and 22,400 women.\* This is a 9 percent increase from 2000. In 2001, at current rates one in 71 Americans have a lifetime risk of developing melanoma.

One person dies of melanoma every hour. In 2001, 7,800 deaths will be attributed to melanoma (5,000 men and 2,800 women.\* ) Older Caucasian males have the highest mortality rates from melanoma.

The incidence of melanoma more than tripled among Caucasians between 1980 and 2001.

More than 80 percent of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma.

Melanoma is more common than any non-skin cancer among women between 25 and 29 years old.

Melanoma is the sixth most common cancer in men and the seventh most common cancer in women.\* \*\*

*\*Source: American Cancer Society's 2001 Facts & Figures*



## House Vote on Welfare Reform Threatens Maine's Efforts for Low Income Families

*May 16, 2002 Press Release  
The Alliance for Family Success*

On May 16, 2002 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4737, a welfare reform bill that threatens Maine's own efforts to assist low income families in their work efforts while assuring a safety net for their children. "This bill ignores reality," says Laura Fortman of the Maine Women's Lobby. "In the last five years, during the booming economy, about half of Maine's families left welfare, primarily to work. Over a third of those who remain on welfare are working, but are not earning enough to get off welfare. The remainder are participating in education, training, volunteer work, or other activities 30 hours per week. The House bill doesn't address real needs. We need reform that works - reforms like access to education, that will help parents earn a wage they can live on."

To their credit, Maine's Congressmen, John Baldacci and Thomas Allen, agree. As Congressman Baldacci noted, "H. R. 4737 could make it harder for individuals to obtain the education, job training and other services necessary for securing quality employment. Progress has been made in helping people to move from public assistance to the workplace since welfare reform was enacted in 1996. We need to make certain, however, that no one is left behind." Allen also opposed H.R. 4737, stating on the floor of the House, "If this is welfare reform, our states don't need it. They will have to raise taxes or cut services to compensate for the five-year, \$11 billion state government cost of this one-size-fits-all heavy handed federal policy. Maine will need \$56 million to meet the new work requirements."

Maine data shows that requiring forty hours per week of work for 70% of the welfare population, as proposed, is unrealistic. According to Lisa Pohlmann of the Maine Center for Economic Policy, a recent survey of welfare recipients showed that over 50% of parents on welfare in Maine have a physical or mental health problem that limits their ability to work. "Maine would surely be penalized financially by the federal government for failing to meet these work requirements if the House bill became law," points out Chris Hastedt, Public Policy Specialist at the Maine Equal Justice Partners. "There is simply no way we could meet these requirements. Most parents able to work long hours have already left the welfare roles." In general, workers in private industry in the United States, only work an average of 34 hours per week, - not forty. Working mothers with school age children work an average of 35 hours per week, whether or not single or on welfare. Yet the Bill would impose a 40 hour week on families on welfare who are in some of the toughest situations of all the families in the nation. Drawing from her advocacy experience, Hastedt says, "Imagine working those hours when you are trying to cope with Spina Bifida in your three year old; or when you're in the process of escaping domestic violence, or when you are not able to hold a job because of your own health problems - like the mother with epilepsy that we know. Make no mistake, this impossible dilemma would be pushed on families if this does bill does not get fixed in the Senate."

The real goal of welfare reform, says Judy Guay of the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods, a state-wide advocacy group for low income people, "A \$6.50 per hour job for a Mom and two children is impossible to live on. We need more access to training and higher education, not less." Ellie Goldberg, of the Maine Children's Alliance, is worried about the damage that can be done to children. "The idea of sanctioning children because their parents can't work 40 hours per week is very dangerous. It is also dangerous for those children whose parents are forced to work more hours than they are realistically able. Our child care system is already strained. And children with special needs will need the special attention of their parent - we can't just throw single parents into forty hours of work without thinking about their children. Congress must not forget about the children in these families."

Fortman, Hastedt, Guay, and Goldberg are all members of the Alliance for Family Success, a broad coalition of over 20 organizations in Maine including low income groups, legal and social service providers, faith-based groups, community action agencies, labor, and women's and children's organizations, who are working together to help low income families gain economic security as the nation's welfare reform law is reauthorized.

## To Cremate or Not to Cremate That is the Question...*Antoinette Mancusi, Technical Advisor*

Through General Assistance (GA) programs municipalities in Maine are responsible for paying the direct burial or cremation expenses, up to the ordinance maximums, of anyone who dies leaving no money or assets to pay the burial expenses and who has no liable relatives who are financially able to pay the burial or cremation costs (22 MRSA § 4313). Under the GA law relatives who are liable for the burial or cremation costs are parents, grandparents, siblings, children and grandchildren. *There are a number of issues to consider when analyzing the municipal obligation to assist with the payment for a burial or cremation. Municipalities requiring more information on this subject are encouraged to review the MMA, GA Manual provisions on point and to contact the Legal Services Department with follow-up questions.*

Besides the relatives' financial responsibility, there is also the issue of familial choice concerning whether the deceased should be buried or cremated. The MMA sample or model GA ordinance provides some guidance on this subject:

"...in the absence of any objection by any family members of the deceased, or when neither the Administrator nor the funeral director can locate any family members, the Administrator may issue general assistance for cremation services."

The ordinance language allows the GA administrator (if the administrator so chooses) to "issue" general assistance for cremations even when there are no known family members. However, there is no absolute obligation on the part of the municipality to order cremations in such cases. It is important to note that the ordinance does not provide (and neither does any statute) the GA administrator or any other municipal official with authority to "order" cremations. The authority appears to be financial i.e., to authorize paying the costs of a cremation up to the ordinance maximum.

Despite this seeming lack of specific legal authority, the historical practice in municipalities across the state has been to have the GA administrator authorize cremations when no next of kin can be located. Given the complexities of GA funeral determinations, it is the opinion of this author that municipal officials ordering cremations under such circumstances, may be taking on potential liability. (*Caveat: The Tort Claims Act might limit liability if the municipality were sued*).

Because the statute governing the custody of deceased persons (22 MRSA § 2843-A) provides no conclusive guidance as to who has custodial decision-making authority regarding the disposition of the remains when no next-of-kin exist and the deceased leaves no instructions, there is an argument to be made that municipal officials authorizing cremations do so at their own volition and as a result without legal authority.

The statute actually states that "the court of probate for the residence of the deceased may award custody and control to the person determined by the court most fit and appropriate to carry out the responsibilities of custody and control..." As a result, perhaps it is the probate court that should determine who makes such disposition determinations. It may very well be that in the case of an indigent person with no next of kin the GA Administrator in the municipality (or perhaps the County Administrator) should be the person making the disposition determination. However, it would be best in such cases to proceed with an order from the court.

As a result of the law's uncomfortable silence, GA Administrators ordering cremations without court orders should use common sense and vigilance. Unless a municipality is certain that there is no next of kin (i.e., thorough verification has been conducted), and the deceased has left no instructions, municipalities should err on the side of caution, and have the deceased person buried. Although to date there has been no lawsuit against a municipality in Maine regarding the improper disposition of human remains, funeral directors report that they have been sued on similar grounds.

As a side note, The Legal Services Department cautions GA administrators not to sign documents containing "assumption of risk" clauses for cremations. It was brought to the attention of Legal Services that certain "orders for cremation" contained language whereby the municipality assumes the risk of damage to the crematorium in the event the deceased had a pacemaker or prosthetic devise. In such cases, *the funeral director should bare the burden of making such a determination prior to the cremation*. In the event a cremation authorization document contains such language, the GA administrator should negotiate that section out of the document prior to signing any authorization.





## Cremations and General Assistance

SIDEBAR: Avoid Antitrust Liability In Negotiating Indigent Burials With Local Officials  
by T. Scott Gilligan, OFDA General Counsel  
(Reprinted with permission of the author)

Whenever two or more competitors meet among themselves or meet with a potential customer to discuss prices, there is a huge risk of antitrust liability. And the fact the potential consumer is a member of the government does not insulate the competitors from antitrust liability. For example, assume a municipality invited two of the three local funeral homes to meet with officials and decide on a low cost cremation package for indigents. The funeral homes propose a set price and the municipality agrees to use the two funeral homes on a rotating basis. The third funeral home would have a possible antitrust claim against the other two funeral homes on the basis they unlawfully set prices with a consumer and agreed with the consumer to exclude the third funeral home from competition.

It is important to note antitrust liability primarily derives from joint or concerted action. Many things that competitors cannot do jointly, they are free to do by themselves. For instance, if in the above example the municipality dealt with only one funeral home and awarded that funeral home an exclusive contract to do all indigent dispositions based on the funeral home's package bid, there would be no antitrust liability. Therefore, funeral homes are free on their own to meet with local government officials on indigent burial funding; it is the joint meetings that raise antitrust red flags.

If local government officials seek to speak to a group of funeral homes on indigent funding, we would suggest the funeral homes alert the officials that such meetings carry antitrust risks. Rather, the local government officials should either meet at different times with individual funeral homes or request each funeral home to separately submit written proposals. This would avoid much of the potential antitrust liability while still allowing the local officials to obtain needed pricing information on indigent burials and cremations.

## \$1.4 Million USDA Loan for Low-income Child Care in Brunswick

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins today announced that Family Focus in Brunswick has been approved for a \$1.4 million low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. Funding will help expand access to child care for low-income residents.

"We are delighted that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is providing this important support, which will help expand affordable, quality child care options in Brunswick. At a time when Maine parents face lengthy waiting lists for child care, this loan will help meet a documented need with an outstanding new facility," said Senators Snowe and Collins in a joint statement.

Funding, awarded under USDA's Rural Development program, will allow Family Focus to purchase a new building to house a child care services agency targeting low-income families. The initiative is expected to preserve 36 jobs in the Brunswick area.

The Rural Development program supports essential public facilities and services, promotes economic development, offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started, and provides technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.



## **\$24 MILLION IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR MAINE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Representatives John Baldacci and Tom Allen announced that officials at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will be releasing Maine's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding of nearly \$17 million. More than \$6.1 million in HOME funding and \$695,000 in resources for programs that help Maine's homeless population will also be released.

These funds are awarded to states annually on a formula allocation basis. Representatives Baldacci and Allen explained that the State of Maine's Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Action Plan outlines uses for \$16,968,000 in CDBG funding. Much of this community planning and development funding will be distributed within the state on a competitive basis responding to needs identified in the state's Five Year Consolidated Plan.

"Each year, this funding provides an important boost to the state's economy. It supports a variety of significant purposes, such as housing construction and rehabilitation, job creation initiatives, infrastructure improvements and efforts that aid people who are homeless. Although much more funding is always required to address these needs, these annual allocations from Washington make a difference," Baldacci and Allen commented.

Additionally, Baldacci and Allen announced that HUD has awarded a grant of \$250,000 to the Fort Fairfield Housing Authority. These funds will be used to link people who reside in publicly supported housing with needed services, resident empowerment activities and other efforts aimed at helping them to become more economically self-sufficient.

## **MAINE 'PARENTS AS SCHOLARS' MODEL IN WELFARE REFORM LAW**

On Wed., May 22, Sen. Olympia Snowe introduced legislation to encourage post-secondary education for low-income people working their way off welfare, utilizing Maine's "Parents as Scholars" initiative as a model. Snowe said she will work to include the provision when the Senate Finance Committee, of which she is a member, begins the expected consideration of legislation to reauthorize the TANF welfare reform law in June. Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) is joining Snowe as lead co-sponsor.

"We must keep the effort to shift the focus of welfare to work as our top priority. But increasingly, education can be the key to self-sufficiency for welfare recipients," Snowe said. "In Maine, education has played a key role in breaking the cycle of welfare and giving parents the skills necessary for higher wages -- and ultimately, higher wages are the light at the end of the tunnel offering the promise of an end to public assistance. The bottom line is, if we expect parents to get off and stay off welfare, we need to give them the tools to find good jobs, whether its job training, education, or help dealing with barriers to employment like substance abuse or domestic violence," Snowe said.

Snowe has introduced the "Pathways to Self-Sufficiency Act of 2002" which will give states the option to use federal dollars under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to provide assistance to individuals participating in post-secondary or vocational education. "Ultimately, we believe this bill will give participants the tools they need to succeed into the future so they can become -- and remain -- self-sufficient," Snowe said.



## MWDA Double Puzzle

Unscramble each of the clue words then copy the letters from the numbered lines to the boxes with corresponding numbers. *(answers on back page of newsletter)*

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| SEXNEPSE        | — — — — — |    | 21        |
| PIANIATOPCL     | — — — — — | 17 | — — — — — |
| CINSETSISEE     | — — — — — |    | 18        |
| TUBGED          | — — — — — |    |           |
| NIAVARRET       | — — — — — | 11 | 15        |
| LDNIWLEG NITU   | — — — — — | 6  | — — — — — |
| ELSOUDOH        | — — — — — |    | 8         |
| RENCYEGME       | — — — — — | 1  | 20        |
| NEOCIM          | — — — — — |    | 12        |
| ENDE            | — — — — — |    | 13        |
| XAMMUIM         | — — — — — | 10 |           |
| DOFO            | — — — — — | 9  |           |
| FACTEOIDNLTYNII | — — — — — |    | 2         |
| DEEDETNPNS      | — — — — — |    | 4         |
| RIBLUSA         | — — — — — |    | 3         |
| CECLITRIETY     | — — — — — | 5  |           |
| FULE            | — — — — — |    | 7         |
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Consider carefully before  
you say a hard word to a  
man, but never let a chance  
to say a good one go by.  
Praise judiciously bestowed  
is money invested.

*George Horace Lorimer*

MWDA  
Maine Municipal Association  
60 Community Drive  
Augusta, ME 04330

Maine Welfare Directors

eligible  
expenses  
application  
necessities  
budget  
narrative  
dwelling unit  
household  
emergency  
income  
need  
maximum  
food  
confidentiality  
dependents  
burials  
electricity  
fuel  
Decision