



MWDA Newsletter

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From the Desk of Cindy Boyd

Information from DHS

We have received word from the Social Security office that as of January 1, 2004, the monthly SSI payment for a household of one will be \$574.00 and for a household of two it will be \$861.00. The State Supplement for a household of one will continue to be \$10.00 and for a household of two when both receive SSI will be \$7.50 each or \$15.00 for the household. Anyone who is receiving Medicare because they are receiving either SSA or SSDI, the premium for part B is going up to \$66.60. If you have clients who are paying that premium you should require them to apply with the Department for MaineCare. There are parts of the MaineCare program that will pay the premium and this will help the person have more money on hand each month to meet their basic needs.

As technology has grown and more and more people have access to computer, the Federal Government and the Department have received requests to put different applications on the WEB. The Federal Government has now mandated that Food Stamp applications be available on the WEB. Both the Food Stamp application and the Elderly Med/Food Stamp application are now on our website. The site is www.state.me.us/dhs/bfi/Food_Stamps.htm. The applicant can download the application, fill it out, sign it, and mail it into the nearest office.

Since the Department started granting MaineCare to people between the ages of 21 and 65 who are not disabled or part of a TANF household in October of 2002, the money that the municipalities have spent on prescriptions has dropped from an average of \$22,000 a month to \$4,030.42 in October of 2003. This is good news for General Assistance. The cost in other categories is increasing. In July of 2002, the total spent on housing was \$240,441. In July 2003, the amount spent on housing was \$352,406. In July 2002, \$23,876 was spent on electric. In July 2004 the amount spent on electric was \$28,964.

There was an LD that was carried over from last year that you should all be watching. It is LD 1066. The intent is to raise the overall maximums in GA from 110% of the HUD fair market rents to 120% of the HUD fair market rents with the State covering any increase due to the change 100%.

Maine Home Repair



To be capable of steady friendship or lasting love, are the two greatest proofs, not only of goodness of heart, but of strength of mind.

William Hazlitt



The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) has a Home Rehabilitation Program serving all 16 counties in the State of Maine. The purpose of the program is to provide low interest loans to income eligible households to perform necessary repairs.

The program is part of a coordinated effort among MSHA, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Maine's Community Action Agencies. This group of agencies, known as the Home Repair Network, offers a menu of home rehab programs for which one can apply by completing one application.

Budget: \$3 million in 2003.

Goals: Provide funds to help Maine residents repair or replace roofs, flooring, windows, heating systems, siding, etc. Funding is also provided for failing septic systems.

Overview

The Maine Home Repair Network provides loans to low income homeowners to help renovate or replace failing building components within their home. Funds will be distributed through the above Community Action Agencies (see above).

Financing

Loan amounts and terms vary by program. Loan terms are no higher than 1% over 20 years.

Requirements

Household must meet HUD income guidelines, at or below 80% of area median income.

Entire home must be inspected and brought up to HUD Housing Quality Standards.

If home was built prior to 1978 Lead Paint Hazards must be treated by a trained contractor

All requested repairs must be deemed necessary.

Application and Selection

Maine homeowners interested in applying for assistance should apply at the nearest Community Action Agency office.



Maine Rx Plus to Begin!

Good news for those without MaineCare or other drug coverage! The United States Supreme Court gave Maine the "go-ahead" to implement the Maine Rx program to help bring down the price of drugs and help uninsured Maine people with their drug costs. As a result, Maine RX Plus will be implemented on January 1, 2004. Here's how it will work:

- Households with income at 350% of the federal poverty level or lower will be eligible (\$31,430 for an individual; \$64,400 for a family of four). People over 350% of poverty level will be eligible if they have out of pocket prescription drug expenses exceeding 5% of the family's income or out of pocket medical costs exceeding 15% of the family's income.
- Covers all drugs listed as "preferred" on the MaineCare preferred drug list.
- Savings will be between 15% and 60% off the retail prices, with the largest savings for generics.

It is a good thing to be rich, it is a good thing to be strong, but it is a better thing to be beloved of many friends.

-- Euripides

Homeless Management Information System

MSHA is working hard to put together an HMIS that will allow its different state agencies to share homeless client data. Sharing data saves both time and money.

We expect to have a working version of HMIS completed by February 2004. Can't wait until then? Then visit our HMIS General Public Web portal at As-One (www.as-one.net). There you learn much more about Maine's HMIS – and why we're so excited about it.

Log on to As-One every week for HMIS updates. (Help logging on is available at the 'HMIS Help' link below.) We look forward to seeing you soon!

If you have questions about the HMIS General Public Web portal, please e-mail Matt Donnelly at mdonnelly@mainehousing.org.

Sex offender Web site launched

Maine State Police launched a new Web site that allows the public to find out where registered sex offenders live and work. By going to the state Web site, www.maine.gov, users can click on a link that takes them to the Maine Sex Offender Registry. From there, the public can choose to search by name, by city or town, or by ZIP code. The Web site provides the name, date of birth, city of residence, photo, convictions, and workplace of offenders. For more detailed information -- alias, physical description, mailing and home address, date of convictions, and sentence imposed -- users are required to fill out a form on the Web site that asks for a name and address

How do you tell the boss he's wrong?

How do you tell your boss he (or she) is wrong? The short answer: very carefully. The old adage about picking your battles to win the war still holds.

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try or that you're destined to lose. "While challenging the boss is risky business, it's got some real upside potential," says workplace coach William Treasurer, author of "Right Risk." "When you offer your boss valuable feedback, he'll come to value you as a trusted guide."

Whether you're a senior vice president disagreeing with the chief executive, or a junior associate differing with an immediate supervisor, the key to taking opposing positions from the boss is how you package and deliver your opinions. Of course, you must have something thoughtful and substantive to say. But even when you have the right case, if you present it with the wrong attitude, it will fall on deaf ears — or offended ones. You could end up banished to a career gulag.

How you challenge the boss means making choices in three arenas, says Elizabeth Gibson, a management psychologist at RHR International in Austin, Texas, and co-author of "Big Change at Best Buy":

- Heart: Channel your feelings so you're honestly constructive.
- Head: Figure out the reasons why the policy isn't working.
- Hand: Talk about how to do it differently.

Here are seven tips to telling a superior that he's headed down a misbegotten path. ("He" applies to male as well as female leaders.) Here, too, is advice about how to behave when you fail and face implementing the strategy you argued against.

1. **Don't walk in mad to a meeting.** Typically, it takes a while to discover that a new policy or initiative isn't working. Company changes won't occur without bumps and glitches. Make sure you've given the new policy a real chance before you act. Likewise, the impact of a wrong-headed policy doesn't happen overnight. It's cumulative. Effects ripple out and, little by little, everyone becomes increasingly impatient, irritable, overworked or worse. Don't carry that volatile mix of unsettled and bad feelings into the meeting and simply vent. "If you are angry or frustrated and want to just blast your boss, before your meeting, talk things through with a friend or talk into a tape recorder," Gibson says. Play back the tape and listen to yourself. No doubt you'll want to develop more constructive ways to persuade the boss to reverse course.
2. **Ask for permission.** Before launching into your arguments, ask the boss if it's OK to proceed. For one thing, most people like some warning before hearing tough criticism or feedback. Then, too, sometimes the timing isn't right. The boss might be preoccupied or dealing with other issues. If you don't get permission, back off and try another time.
3. **Be honest about your motivations.** If all you have to offer is complaints, don't bother. Instead, think through the specific objec-

Until one feels the spirit
of Christmas, there is no
Christmas. All else is
outward display--so
much tinsel and
decorations. For it isn't
the holly, it isn't the
snow. It isn't the tree
not the firelight's glow.
It's the warmth that
comes to the hearts of
men when the
Christmas spirit returns
again.
--Unknown

Boss Wrong Continued

tives you want to accomplish by the end of the meeting. Stay focused and provide the data, case histories or events that prove your points.

"Employees are often those closest to problems, so they have facts at the ready the boss may not have," says John Baldoni, a management consultant in Ann Arbor, Mich. Use hands-on experiences or the day-to-day points of view of peers to command credibility and provide perspective.

4. **Accentuate the positive.** "You can say [almost] anything to your boss as long as you say something nice first," says Deborah Brown, a career coach in Long Beach, N.Y. Avoid being confrontational and don't assign blame. Keep emphasizing positive factors whenever you can.

5. **Listen carefully.** You shouldn't do all the talking. Try to engage the boss in a dialogue about the issue that concerns you. Make an effort to listen more than you talk. There could well be reasons or motivations for initiatives that you haven't been told about. By listening, you'll not only show your concern for the company's well being, you'll build the boss' trust. You might also gain insights into future directions for the business.

6. **Treat the boss like you would a customer.** Present your case as if you're selling a client, suggests Maura Schreier-Fleming, a sales consultant based in Dallas. "Customers buy the way they want to, not the way we want them to." If the boss is analytical, bolster your argument with graphs and charts. "If the boss is a people pleaser, tell him why the idea will hurt the people he cares about," says Schreier-Fleming. Match your style to the boss to put over your case.

7. **Don't give up too soon.** You can't expect one meeting to make the boss reject his position instantly. Few leaders will abandon policy or strategy after hearing one disagreement, especially when that comes from a subordinate. Usually, the manager has deeper skills and more experience than you do. More than likely, he thought through the policy for some time before coming to a decision. Don't expect a single try to make the difference. Make sure you're respectful and understanding, but try again.

Then, too, if a boss must take the case to his own superiors or to a board of directors or investors, he might need more to go on. "Very often when a boss says 'no,' he's just asking for a stronger case to be made," Treasurer says.

To try again, marshal additional arguments and go through the steps of setting specific goals and figuring out how to calmly present your case. Gathering new evidence will help.

But be sensitive when the boss draws the line. If he remains unconvinced after a few tries, give it up. Make sure your exit is both gracious and professional. Thank him for opportunity of sharing your views, and avoid any semblance of sulking.

Most bosses prefer employees who care about improving the company. If you're clearly a team player after voicing your arguments, the next time you have something to say, you're likely to find a much more receptive boss.

Somehow, not only for
Christmas
But all the long year
through,
The joy that you give to
others
Is the joy that comes
back to you.
And the more you spend
in blessing
The poor and lonely
and sad,
The more of your heart's
possessing
Returns to you glad.
- John Greenleaf
Whittier

Towns find aid falling short as rental costs rise

A woman with children who has been kicked out of her house by her husband. A man whose wife left him and his children. A newcomer who moved to town without first securing a job.

All have come to Linda Paul over the years for the same thing - rent money. And until recently, it has taken a maze of red tape for Paul, Windham's general assistance director, to get it to them.

With rents skyrocketing in much of southern Maine, many residents are seeking help from local general assistance agencies to pay monthly housing bills. That has created problems for welfare directors throughout the region because the limits on rent assistance set by the state are often below average rent prices in a community.

"Rents are so high, what we were having to do was go into an emergency fund" to provide people with full rent assistance, Paul said.

Paul recently convinced the state, and Windham's Town Council, to raise the limits in her town. She conducted a survey that through which she found the average rents in town were in some cases more than \$100 greater than the assistance limits.

Her efforts serve to highlight yet another way the lack of affordable housing in southern Maine is affecting the everyday lives of its citizens - especially those with lower incomes.

Welfare directors in high-rent communities across the state have for years struggled to find ways to help residents needing help to pay rent.

But now that the recommended limits for rent subsidies in some areas have been outpaced by a tight housing market, directors like Paul are having to find ways to justify what they are required by law to do - provide rent assistance to those who qualify for aid. At the same time, state officials are re-evaluating the way the state Department of Human Services calculates the rent maximums.

Although DHS does not track which communities have raised their rent maximums, Windham was not the first to increase the figure, according to Barbara Van Buregel, acting director of the Bureau of Family Independence at DHS.

Most communities simply exceed the maximums when providing rent assistance and declare the additional expenditures "emergency funding," Van Buregel says. Doing so, however, increases the amount of paperwork involved because communities must provide auditors with justification for any emergency spending.

The practice has become commonplace in Portland, a city notorious for its tight housing market.

Bob Duranleau, the city's social services director, says it has become routine for those seeking rent assistance to live in housing priced higher than the suggested limits. So routine, in fact, that Portland officials have developed a computer program that cuts down on the amount of paperwork necessary to justify emergency spending on rent.

Duranleau, who serves on a statewide committee that is re-evaluating the way welfare limits are calculated, says the committee recently tested the limits and found that in about five of every seven cases, communities have to exceed rent subsidy maximums when assisting clients.

"It just shows those amounts are really not effective," Duranleau said.

Recent Maine State Housing Authority statistics show that the suggested subsidy limits fall short of the average rents in Cumberland and York counties

Towns continued

The average rent for an unheated, three-bedroom home or apartment in Cumberland County is currently \$1,030, according to authority statistics from the third quarter of this year. The maximum a family living in the same home could receive in rent assistance - without the additional expense being classified as an emergency - would be \$762, if the family did not live in a community with elevated maximums.

Market rates for one-, two- and four-bedroom units in York and Cumberland Counties also top the authority's average.

Rent limits are now calculated by multiplying the Housing and Urban Development's fair market rents by 110 percent. Legislation was introduced last year that, if passed, would bring the limits up to speed with current rent costs.

A statewide committee is in the process of evaluating the legislation, according to Cindy Boyd, the state's program manager for general assistance and chairman of the committee. The panel will present its findings to legislators in January.

Because about 75 percent of general assistance funds statewide are used for housing, it is important officials at the state level develop accurate rent maximums so the agency doesn't run over budget at the state or community level, she says. Most communities pay the cost of general assistance and are reimbursed by the state for half the total.

But Boyd says raising general assistance maximums won't solve the real problem for those seeking help with monthly rent costs.

"The problem is the cost of housing," she said. "My feeling is you raise the maximum, but it's not going to solve the underlying problem, which is the housing costs."

Three years of strong demand for housing, combined with a small supply of low-rent units in the area, have driven costs upward, says Tom Noonan, who co-owns Allied Real Estate in Windham.

"As far as entry-level housing, there are no new units being built," he said.

Construction costs are currently high, Noonan says. Those costs increase even more in communities with zoning laws that restrict development, he says.

"If you get into the more stringent planning board requirements, they add cost . . . which can be absorbed easily in \$250,000 to \$300,000 houses, but not in a situation where you're trying to keep rents inexpensive," Noonan said.

Noonan, to whom Paul sometimes refers clients seeking lower rents, says some families in search of affordable housing have to settle for units that are too small to compensate for high costs. "There's just nothing out there," he said.

Paul says many families end up leaving Windham in search of cheaper rents - heading to more distant, rural communities such as Cornish.

"It used to be they moved to Standish, because it was cheaper. Now people are moving into Cornish," she said. "That makes it harder for most, because they don't have reliable transportation."

Dirigo Health Plan News

Governor John E. Baldacci swore in the Board of Directors for Dirigo Health on November 3, 2003. Upon swearing the Board of Directors in, Governor Baldacci said, "Dirigo Health is well on its way. The Plan was the result of a collaborative effort crafted with a great deal of public input. This Board represents a breadth of experienced and talented individuals who will enable us to fulfill the promise of this landmark legislation and bring quality, affordable health coverage to all Maine's citizens."

Dirigo Health, which was enacted with overwhelming bipartisan support in the Legislature, takes a systematic approach to health reform. Under Dirigo, the fundamental issues of access, cost and quality are addressed in an integrated way. The Board of Directors for Dirigo Health will work with the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance and is charged with designing a model program of disease management, health promotion and wellness, and will arrange for an affordable, comprehensive health benefit.

Immediately following the swearing in ceremony, the Governor was taped receiving the American Public Health Association's (APHA) Distinguished Public Health Legislator of the Year Award. The award, which will be presented at the APHA's annual meeting later this month, is presented to legislators serving at the federal, state, or local levels who have made significant contributions to advancing effective legislation for public health priorities. Governor Baldacci was selected for this award for his leadership in the establishment of the Dirigo Health Plan.

Upon receiving this honor, Governor Baldacci stated, "I am proud of the work being done here in Maine to guarantee health insurance coverage and look forward to the day when all Americans have access to quality, affordable health care."

The five Board Members sworn in today were Charlene Rydell, Mary Henderson, Dana Connors, Carl Leinonen, and Dr. Robert McAfee as Chair. Also joining these Board Members are three ex-officio Members including, Commissioner Buddy Murray of Professional and Financial Regulation, Commissioner Rebecca Wyke of Administrative and Financial Services, and Director Trish Riley of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance. .

Did you know?

Turkey and chicken contain a good source of mood enhancing tryptophan, an essential amino acid which is converted into serotonin which can be low in people suffering from depression.



The merry family
gatherings-- The old, the
very young; The
strangely lovely way
they Harmonize in
carols sung. For
Christmas is tradition
time-- Traditions that
recall The precious
memories down the
years, The sameness of
them all.
--Helen Lowrie Marshall

HUD Grants Help Maine Families

HUD ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$47.6 MILLION IN GRANTS TO HELP FAMILIES ACROSS THE U.S.

Maine to receive \$352,462 in funding aimed to help families become self-sufficient

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez announced \$47,688,000 in grants today to 771 housing authorities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico that will be used for job training and placement for low-income citizens. Housing Authorities in Maine will receive \$352,462 (see attached list).

"This funding will help thousands of citizens find employment and eventually become economically independent," said Kevin Keogh, HUD's regional director. "HUD is committed to revitalizing communities through job advocacy, training programs and economic development."

HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency (HCV/FSS) Program provides funds to public housing agencies specifically for the employment of family self-sufficiency coordinators. The FSS coordinators assist adults in job training, childcare, counseling, transportation and job placement programs.

Participants in the job preparedness program, some of whom are on welfare, sign a contract that stipulates the head of the household will get a job and the family will become self-sufficient within five years. While enrolled in the program, as a family's income rises, a third of that income goes to an interest-bearing escrow account.

If a family fulfills the contract requiring employment and independence from welfare, they can use the escrow account for down payment on a home purchase, starting a business, paying back debts and paying educational expenses. If a family fails to fulfill the contract, they do not get the funds in the escrow account and may be terminated from the FSS Program.

Family Self Sufficiency Grants in Maine

Portland Housing Authority	\$ 49,300
Lewiston Housing Authority	\$ 8,695
Bangor Housing Authority	\$ 34,218
Housing Authority of the City of Westbrook, Maine	\$ 37,875
Housing Authority of the City of Old Town	\$ 38,341
Mount Desert Housing Authority	\$ 34,951
City of Caribou Housing Agency	\$ 45,450
Augusta Housing Authority	\$ 30,300
Maine State Housing Authority	\$ 73,332

The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything.

Bishop W.C. Magee

December Meeting 12/11/03 at MMA



Be of good cheer. Do not think of today's failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task, but you will succeed if you persevere; and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles.

-- Helen Keller



AGENDA

9:00am to 10:00am

HEAP

Mike Bozagni, Housing and Energy Services Specialist for CCAP

10:00am to 10:15am

Break

10:15am to 11:00am

DHS/BDS Merger

Cindy Boyd, Program Manager, DHS Update

11:00am to 12:00noon

MaineCare

Cindy Boyd, Program Manager, DHS

12:00 noon to 12:30

Business Meeting

1. Call to order/Introduction
2. Approval of minutes
3. Treasurer's Report—Linda Fossa
4. Committee Reports
Legislative Update—Judy Hardy-Goddard
Professional Development—Jodi Hanson
Nominating/Membership—Stacey Parra
5. MMA Update—Antoinette Mancusi
6. DHS Update—Cindy Boyd
7. Audience Participation
8. Adjourn

12:30pm to 1:00pm

Lunch

1:00pm to 3:00pm

Christmas Party

Gift Exchange—Bring in a \$10.00 gift to exchange

Santa Sweet Swap—Bring in a Christmas Treat to Swap with other members.

Fun and Games—Door prizes, raffle, & lots of laughter!!!

Yes, Virginia there is a Santa Claus

From the Editorial Page of The New York Sun, written by Francis P. Church, September 21, 1897

"Dear Editor--I am 8 years old.
 "Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.
 "Papa says, 'If you see it in The Sun, it's so.'
 "Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West Ninety-fifth Street

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



Christmas is not a
 time nor a season,
 but a state of mind.
 To cherish peace and
 goodwill, to be
 plenteous in mercy,
 is to have the real
 spirit of Christmas.
 --Calvin Coolidge



Spring Seminar

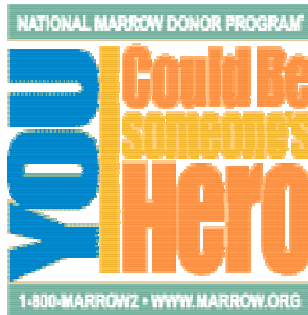


The Professional Development Committee has chosen the Meadowmere Resort in Ogunquit for this year's Spring Seminar which will be held on May 17 and 18, 2004. Save those dates!!!! The Meadowmere is a destination with distinction. With swimming pools (indoor and outdoor), hot tubs (indoor and outdoor), a 6,200 square-foot Fitness Center, Day Spa, wide-screen TV Room and Game Room, we offer you limitless opportunities to relax and recharge. The Meadowmere has 145 tastefully appointed guest rooms that feature private balconies or patios, individual air-conditioning and heat, color cable television and direct-dial telephones. Deluxe guest rooms and suites offer the added amenities of refrigerators, fireplaces and private Jacuzzis. All guest rooms are non-smoking. *(but you may smoke on the balconies or patios)* Downtown Ogunquit, Perkins Cove, the Marginal Way and Ogunquit Beach are within easy walking distance or a short trolley ride.

Life is easier than you think;
 All that is necessary is to accept the impossible, do without the indispensable, and bear the intolerable.
 Kathleen Norris



National Marrow Awareness Month



Celebrating Everyday Heroes

November is National Marrow Awareness Month. The National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP) will celebrate the heroism of transplant physicians and the spirit of the patients who received lifesaving therapy through a marrow or blood stem cell transplant. They'll also celebrate the everyday heroes who, by their stem cell donation, have selflessly given second chances at life to their recipients. During National Marrow Awareness Month, the NMDP's nationwide network of transplant and donor centers will spread the news that marrow and blood stem cell transplants save lives and issue the call for everyday heroes to become vol-

unteer marrow or blood stem cell donors.

Donating Bone Marrow

Each year, thousands of people develop diseases treatable with marrow or blood stem cell transplants. The National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) has been a leader in unrelated bone marrow transplantation for more than 10 years. Now, the role of peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) donation as an alternative to bone marrow donation for unrelated transplants is being evaluated under a research protocol accepted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The following is what you can expect if you volunteer to donate stem cells through the NMDP.

Be Part of the Effort

National Marrow Awareness Month is also a time to encourage more people to be part of the effort. For patients with life-threatening diseases like leukemia, their heroes are doctors and regular people who gave the gift of life -- an unrelated donor marrow or blood stem cell transplant. You could be someone's hero, too:

- Join the NMDP Donor Registry
- Make a financial contribution through the NMDP's partner, The Marrow Foundation®: www.themarrowfoundation.org
- Contribute through one of the many other ways to help
 - Join the Registry as a potential volunteer donor.
 - Donate your baby's umbilical cord blood at birth.
 - Make a financial contribution through The Marrow Foundation.
 - Tell friends and family about the need for stem cell donors.
 - Donate frequent flyer miles to help patients to travel to receive treatment.
 - Volunteer your time at your local donor center or recruitment group.
 - Donate other blood products, such as whole blood or platelets. (All transplant patients will need other blood products during their treatment.)
- Learn about the ABCs of Stem Cell Donation and Transplantation
 - The NMDP works exclusively with blood stem cells that can develop into red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets, replacing a transplant patient's diseased or damaged blood stem cells. The three sources of blood stem cells are bone marrow, peripheral (circulating) blood and blood collected from the umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born.

Mental Health System Focus

Public to have chance to voice opinions on services

Mental health clients, providers and advocates will have an opportunity to strengthen the state's community mental health system in a series of public hearings. The hearings are co-sponsored by the state Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services, which oversees the system. Daniel Wathen is the court master appointed to guide the department into compliance with the terms of a 1989 class-action suit brought against the state by patients of the Augusta Mental Health Institute and their families.

A recent Superior Court ruling found the department in violation of the AMHI consent decree, which specified improvements to the quality and delivery of mental health services, both within the hospital and in community-based programs.

In September, Chief Justice Nancy Mills said the state had failed to make the necessary improvements at AMHI and placed the hospital in administrative receivership. The state Attorney General's Office has appealed the decision.

Mills also authorized the appointment of a receiver for Maine's community-based mental health system, but left a six-month opportunity to make improvements.

According to Sabra Burdick, the department's acting commissioner, the most pressing concern identified by the court was the alleged development of a two-tiered system that delivers a higher level of services to members of the group that brought the original charges, which includes about 3,000 former AMHI patients.

The court also found mental health services deficient in: defining the specific needs of clients; monitoring and reporting the quality of services; providing housing; integrating with hospitals and other facilities; and providing grievance procedures.

Burdick said her department is committed to satisfying the court and is working on a plan to bring the system into compliance. A draft of that plan will be presented at the coming meetings.

"What an opportunity," said Kay Carter, director of the adult mental health service department at Community Health and Counseling Services in Bangor. "This is one of the best opportunities for community members and families to have a voice [in establishing mental health policy]."

Carter said the state's plan should support clients' progress toward independence and reflect a view of people with mental illness as valued members of the community.

Got no check books,
got no banks. Still I'd
like to express my
thanks - I got the sun
in the mornin' and the
moon at night.

Irving Berlin

Mental Health Focus Continued

Court master Wathen said the state has "a very short time frame" for making measurable changes to the community health system. The hearing process, he said, will facilitate workable solutions to the failings of the system. "We want wide agreement on what's needed," he said, before the court rules on the adequacy of the plan.

Meetings will be held in Presque Isle, Bangor and Portland with interactive television conferencing to other sites.

Monday, Nov. 17

Presque Isle BDS office - 624 Maine St., 1:30-3:30 p.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m.

By video conferencing from Presque Isle to the following sites:

- Presque Isle BDS office, 624 Maine St.
- Lewiston BDS office - 15 Mollison Way.
- Thomaston BDS office - 212B New County Road.
- Saco, Sweetser office - 43 Industrial Park Road.

Tuesday, Nov. 18

- Bangor BDS office - 176 Hogan Road, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov 19

- Augusta BDS office - Marquart Building, AMHI campus 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- Portland BDS office - 175 Lancaster St., 2-4 p.m. For information, call 287-4243.

Did You Know?

The biggest selling Christmas single of all time is Bing Crosby's White Christmas

Kissing under the mistletoe, our favorite sprig of green leaves and white berries, dates back to a 17th century English custom. At that time, a berry was removed every time a kiss was made, which meant there were no kisses when there no berries

An optimist is a person who starts a new diet on Thanksgiving Day.

--Irv Kupcinet

Recipe Corner



Swedish Apple Pie



Filling:

Fill a 10" pie plate 2/3 full of thinly sliced apples (about 6), mound the apples in the middle. Sprinkle with one tablespoon of sugar and cinnamon (or a little more if you like).

Crust – Mix Together:

1 cup flour
1 cup sugar

1/2 cup margarine, melted (**not** butter)
1 egg
pinch of salt



Sprinkle the mixture over the apples. The mixture will sift down through the apples and makes a top and bottom crust. Bake at 350° until top is light brown (30-35 minutes).

Submitted by Vicky Edgerly

Christmas Breakfast

Combine in greased 9 X13 pan:
1 lb ham bite size pieces
½ lb cheddar cheese bite size pieces
10-12 slices of bread bite size

Mix together:

½ cup melted butter
2 cups warm milk
½ teaspoon dry mustard
8-10 beaten eggs

Pour over mixture in pan.

Let stand 3 hours or overnight

Bake in oven at 350 for 1 hour.

Optional: add green peppers, onions, mushrooms
Bacon bits, or whatever.



Submitted by Claudette Charest



Starr's Whoopie Pies

2 Cups flour
1 Cup sugar
5 Tablespoons of Cocoa
6 tablespoons of Crisco
1 1/2 teaspoons of baking soda
1 teaspoon of vanilla
1 cup of Milk
1 egg



Drop by teaspoon and bake at 350 degrees

Filling

Cream together
1 stick of margarine or butter
1 cup of sugar
1/2 cup of Crisco
2 teaspoons of vanilla

Cook on stove until a paste. (cool)
Mix 1 cup of milk and 6 tablespoons of flour until smooth. Beat in mixture with paste until creamy.

Submitted by Judy Hardy-Goddard

Affordable Housing Projects in Portland

Three affordable housing projects in Portland moved ahead with City Council approval on November 3, 2003

The council granted a contract zone to allow a \$4.3 million complex of 30 single-room apartments to be built on Frederic Street, off Congress Street near Interstate 295. The council also agreed to spend \$150,000 in federal funds on a 12-unit, \$2.3 million senior housing project on Peaks Island.

And it decided to sell 1.5 acres of tax-acquired land on Demerest Street to Habitat For Humanity Greater Portland and Portland West for \$12,500. The agencies plan to build four single-family homes on the North Deering property. The \$500,000 project will be paid for largely through private fund-raising and federal housing loans and grants.

The three projects reflect the council's effort to create more affordable housing in Portland, where real estate prices have more than doubled and rents have skyrocketed in recent years.

The council agreed to waive competitive bidding on the Demerest Street land, which the city acquired in 1989 for non-payment of taxes. The lots are sloped and wooded and will require the developers to extend Demerest Street 300 feet.

Still, the site was more suitable than many considered by Habitat volunteers over the last several months. The developers said other locations would have required more road work, site preparation and extended negotiations among various property owners. Portland has little undeveloped land left.

"It's a real challenge for us to find land in Greater Portland," said Ward Graffam Jr., a member of the site selection committee.

The council required the developers to maintain a 100-foot wooded, back-yard buffer between two of the homes and the nearby Apple Ledge Condominiums. Some residents of the neighborhood off Ray Street expressed concern at recent housing committee meetings that the developers might clear-cut the lots.

"It's really not in our interest to take more trees than necessary because it's so expensive," said Stephen Bolton, executive director of Habitat's local office.

Bolton said it will cost about \$125,000 to extend Demerest Street and \$85,000 to build each house. The two agencies will spend the next year raising money and seeking Planning Board approvals. They hope to break ground by next fall and have at least one of the houses finished by spring 2005 at the earliest.

The two agencies will build the road together and then split costs for the home-construction phase. Two of the houses will be built by Habitat volunteers. The other two will be built by students in Portland West's Youth Building Alternatives, an alternative high school program that teaches carpentry skills.

The first phase of the Frederic Street project, known as Logan Place, would provide 30 one-room units to people who otherwise would be homeless. It is being developed by Avesta Housing, formerly known as York-Cumberland Housing Development Corp. The second phase, which would begin three years from now, would consist of 12 two-bedroom units and eight one-bedroom units, some of which would be rented to low- and middle-income tenants.

The Peaks project is being developed by island residents and Volunteers of America Northern New England. Even with the city's \$150,000 contribution, they still must raise \$102,000 to build the senior-citizen apartments and a new island health center. They hope to start construction next spring.

Christmas Movie Trivia

1. In the 1988 film "Scrooged," the character played by Bill Murray is:
 - a) a cold-hearted banker
 - b) a cold-hearted TV executive
 - c) a cold-hearted police officer
 - d) a cold-hearted politician
2. What's the name of George Bailey's guardian angel in "It's a Wonderful Life?"
 - a) Ariel
 - b) Henry
 - c) Clarence
 - d) Frank
3. In "It's a Wonderful Life," George Bailey as a boy suffers an injury to:
 - a) his foot
 - b) his arm
 - c) his eyes
 - d) his ear
4. "The Nightmare Before Christmas" is written by:
 - a) Tim Burton
 - b) Martin Scorsese
 - c) Jimmy Stewart
 - d) Danny DeVito
5. "White Christmas" is set in
 - a) Colorado
 - b) Montana
 - c) New Hampshire
 - d) Vermont
6. Who plays Bing Crosby's Army buddy in "White Christmas?"
 - a) Jimmy Stewart
 - b) Dean Martin
 - c) Danny Kaye
 - d) Bob Hope
7. The little girl who's skeptical about Santa Clause in "Miracle on 34th Street" is played by:
 - a) Natalie Wood
 - b) Audrey Hepburn
 - c) Anne Bancroft
 - d) Sharon Stone
8. Miracle on 34th Street revolves around which department store?
 - a) Bloomingdales
 - b) Macys
 - c) Parisian
 - d) Neiman Marcus
9. In "Home Alone," a young boy is abandoned when his parents rush to a holiday vacation in:
 - a) Vermont
 - b) London
 - c) Paris
 - d) New York
10. What happens to the character played by Tim Allen in "The Santa Clause?"
 - a) he gains weight
 - b) grows a beard
 - c) he gets fired
 - d) all of the above

Study Maine's Welfare Eligibility Program

Officials representing human services departments from Alabama, Delaware, Minnesota and Ohio, along with members of the Southern Institute on Children and Families, were in Maine today to learn more about improving efficiency in their state's welfare programs. They were hosted by staff from the Maine Department of Human Services who provided them with information about the state's newly implemented Automated Client Eligibility System, or ACES.

ACES is a new and sophisticated tool that can check a family's eligibility for the requirements of hundreds of different assistance programs all at the same time. DHS staff can now interview clients and enter information into a computer system, which can immediately match this information against all possible categories of eligibility. Before ACES was implemented, a great deal of manual work had to be done to gage whether a family or individuals within that family qualified for a particular benefit. Barbara VanBurgel, Acting Director of DHS's Bureau of Family Independence, which makes eligibility determinations for MaineCare, Food Stamps and other assistance programs, noted that the interest in ACES is directly related to the increasing number and complexity of assistance program. "There are more than 100 different eligibility categories for MaineCare alone and, not surprisingly, there is a tremendous amount of interest in how to perform a faster and comprehensive eligibility determination using ACES," VanBurgel stated. "We want to share this information with as many people as are interested."

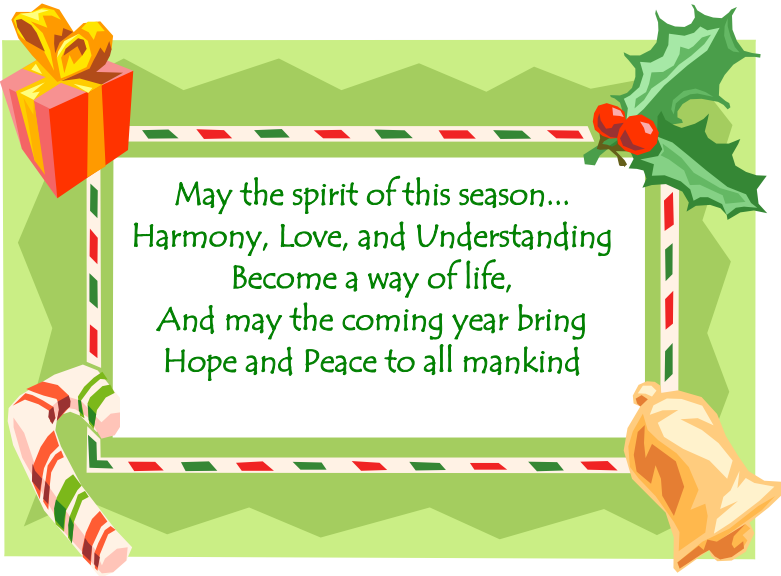
After several years of planning work by Bureau of Family Independence staff, ACES was introduced as a pilot in Aroostook County in May 2002. It was fully implemented throughout the state by September 2002.

Vicki Grant, National Program Director of Supporting Families at the Southern Institute, noted that there is growing interest across the country about what Maine is doing. The Southern Institute is the National Program Office for Supporting Families After Welfare Reform, a national initiative of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. As such, it plays an important role in helping states make informed decisions on policies that affect families. "The reason we arranged this site visit among Supporting Families grantees is to learn additional ways to make the public eligibility system family-friendly and efficient," Grant pointed out. "We want to learn as much about the new ACES system as we can."

DHS staff will provide the group with an electronic demonstration of how ACES works, including a walk through of a sample case, while they are in Portland. Several participants will be staying on Friday for a more in depth review of how ACES notifies individual clients.

Director VanBurgel took the opportunity to congratulate her staff on their work. "Implementing the ACES system has been a tremendous challenge for us, especially for our line staff," she said. "Even though we have met difficulties along the way, the fact that other states are here to learn more about what we are doing suggests that we are on the right track in solving those problems."

HAPPY  HOLIDAYS



ANSWERS: to Movie Trivia
1. - Answer - (b)
2. - Answer - (c)
3. - Answer - (d)
4. - Answer - (a)
5. - Answer - (d)
6. - Answer - (c)
7. - Answer - (a)
8. - Answer - (b)
9. - Answer - (c)
10. - Answer - (d)

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