

Stories from ALONG THE WAY

These heartwarming stories from our staff over the past year highlight the meaning behind the work being done at Waypoint every day. We hope they can help provide some greater depth to how impactful this work is on the many individuals we serve across New Hampshire.

Thanksgiving Community Care

For many elderly – like Allan from Manchester – Waypoint’s care goes far beyond services and has a profound emotional impact: community care!



Central to these acts of community kindness are individuals like you. For example, Cathi Yao of the Manchester Regional Board of Waypoint, led the charge this Thanksgiving. Making a difference is just part of being a Waypoint volunteer. The Manchester Regional Board provided individualized holiday baskets to ensure homecare clients felt remembered and cherished. Their wish lists varied from clothes and books to cat toys (they seem to all have cats!) and puzzles. Far beyond cat toys the gifts symbolize the warmth and affection of a community.

“Before COVID, one of our main projects was assembling camp kits for kids attending Camp Spaulding. Every summer, our board members would handpick supplies for local elementary school children sponsored by Waypoint to attend the camp. Seeing the joy that the kits brought to them and hearing about their camp experiences, was truly special. With all of the changes brought on by the pandemic, we had

the opportunity to reflect on the vulnerable populations served by Waypoint, such as senior citizens living on their own. That’s how our Home Care gift basket project was born. It’s a newer initiative, but the response has been incredible,” Cathi shared.

The board members find it fulfilling to know they’re making a tangible difference in the lives of community members. “It’s truly uplifting to see how engaged and excited the board is generally and with these projects in particular. Contributing in such a meaningful way just reinvigorates everyone,” remarked Cathi.

In a world often rushed with the pace of life, these acts of kindness and compassion for individuals such as Allan stand out and weave extra joy into their lives.



Story Time at The Children's Place

On one chilly, rainy day, the classroom at The Children's Place (TCP) in Concord was abuzz with excitement. Children aged two to five eagerly anticipated the arrival of Marv, a storyteller from the Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF). He brought an assortment of books, with topics ranging from the unique blob fish to beloved Dr. Seuss classics.

Marv's animated storytelling soon filled the room. He weaved tales about the changing seasons, thrilling sled adventures, captivating poems, and even delighted the children with one of his own creations.

The children were not just listeners but active participants – their hands mimicking the falling leaves, the swoosh of sleds, and the rhythm of the poems.

They filled the room with an enthusiastic volley of 'why' and 'how' questions, each one answered patiently by Marv.

Once the storytelling concluded, Marv announced that each child could pick two books to take home for free, a generous gift from CLiF. They carefully chose, also considering books for their siblings who couldn't be there that day. CLiF didn't stop there; they provided TCP with a variety of books for the classroom at no cost, ensuring stories and learning continued even after the visit.

Despite the rain outside, warmth and joy radiated within TCP. A day filled with storytelling, active learning, and the excitement of new books, it was a day to remember. TCP, a state-licensed facility, offers this vibrant environment, providing quality, affordable childcare and pre-K education for children in the greater Concord area.



Camaraderie on the Couch

A calm yet purposeful atmosphere prevails at the Youth Resource Center in Rochester. A young woman enters, encountering another youth on their way out. She playfully comments: "always somewhere to be," while the other offers up a "yup" before disappearing outside, zipping up their jacket.

In this vibrant space, young people from all walks of life connect, whether through brief interactions, or deep, lasting friendships-- as with Julia and Bryleigh (names changed to protect anonymity).

On this day, Julia breezes into the common room, sliding onto a couch near her friend who is hastily brushing her hair. Julia recounts her morning and Bryleigh listens while stowing her belongings into a locker. "How'd the job interview go," Bryleigh asks. Julia's face lights up as she shares her hopes for a call back.

As they stroll toward the exit, the focus shifts to Bryleigh's day. They exchange a quick hug before Bryleigh dashes off. Returning to the couch, Julia flashes a playful grin to the nearest staff member and holds up crossed fingers, saying, "She's on her way to the courthouse to sort some stuff out. She deserves this!"

For young people experiencing homelessness, friendships are often small, fluctuating networks. However, the desire for enduring connections remains strong.

Routine and regular contact is highly valued, with close friends providing unwavering practical and emotional support.

As research suggests, socially connected youth are more likely to thrive; they tend to feel a sense of belonging, security, and trust, have better health outcomes, require fewer resources, and actively contribute, making a positive social impact in their communities.



**Holiday Heroes
Neal and Marga**

The magic of the holiday season is often captured in the joyous laughter of children and the warm smiles of parents. Behind these precious moments, there's an untold story of generosity and dedication – a story featuring our friends, Neal and Marga.

For over two decades, through the WZID “Christmas Is For Kids” radiothon, this dynamic duo has not just been voices on the air; they’ve been beacons of hope. Their tireless efforts have brought together the community, raising awareness and funds to support Waypoint’s mission of helping families in New Hampshire.

The impact of Neal and Marga’s dedication extends far beyond festive cheer.

The funds raised support a wide range of Waypoint’s services, from in-home visits and parent education to providing positive experiences for at-risk youth. They

help subsidize essential equipment and transportation for children with developmental or chronic health concerns and deliver care packs to children in foster care.

Hosting a 12-hour radiothon is no small feat, yet Neal and Marga do it with unwavering enthusiasm. Their energy is contagious, drawing in the community and fostering a spirit of generosity and awareness.

In their words, “the radiothon is an integral part of our relationship with listeners. Community is important to us, and there are members of our community who have hardships. This is why we do this – to extend a helping hand and help them get back on track, provide a ride to work, ensure a Christmas under the tree, or provide a much-needed medical device. If something is somehow out of our reach, we want to make sure those who need that help get it.”

Neal and Marga’s commitment to families and children alike reminds us of the power of community and the impact of collective effort. We are ever grateful for friends like them. Their dedication fuels Waypoint’s work and inspires others to join our cause.

