

175 years **WAYPOINT**
HELPING ALONG THE WAY

Along the Way

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

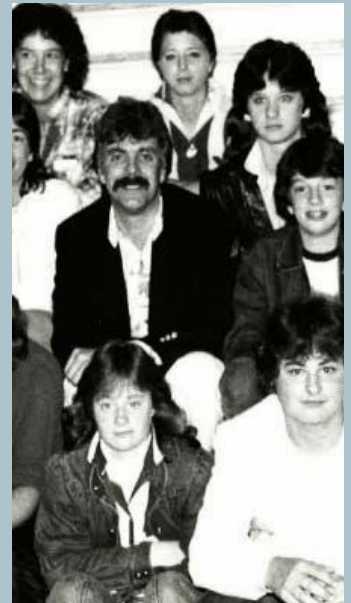


Dear Friends

As Waypoint celebrates 175 years, we are reminded of the many ways we have evolved to meet the needs of our community. From supporting mill families in the 1800s to launching the state's first homecare and family advocacy program, to today, creating Community-Based Voluntary Services, and opening New Hampshire's first low-barrier emergency shelter for youth—we have always adapted to ensure people have the help they need.

This year has brought some uncertainty, but our commitment to children, families, and individuals across New Hampshire has never wavered. In this issue, you'll read about the real impact of your generosity— a new safe outdoor space at our Family Resource Center in Stratham and how our Early Supports & Services team guided a family through the challenges of an autism diagnosis. The work we do changes lives, and it happens because of you. Thank you for standing with us and making a difference every day.

—Borja, President/CEO



Tom Rush with youth from group home

Update

New Outdoor Classroom

Waypoint at the Richie McFarland Center is excited to now provide an Outdoor Classroom for the children and families we serve. This classroom provides a safe, nurturing space to experience the outdoors. With phase one of construction complete in December, Waypoint held its inaugural event in January.

The Outdoor Classroom welcomed families on a beautiful winter Saturday for fun activities, including painting ice sculptures, playing musical instruments, and exploring different structures. Families also enjoyed a reading of *The Mitten* by Jan Brett, with a staff member even dressing up as a bear!

Waypoint will continue to expand the Outdoor Classroom, hosting additional group and drop-in opportunities for children and families. The Outdoor Classroom will provide a valuable resource, fostering growth, connection, and exploration for the community through enriching outdoor experiences.



A feature at the new outdoor classroom

175 Years

This year marks a significant milestone in Waypoint's journey - we are proud to celebrate our 175th anniversary!

Did you know that Waypoint once hosted a concert series? One of the most notable performances featured Tom Rush, an acclaimed folk musician of the 1960's who paved the way for many singer-songwriters of his generation. On May 24th, 1986, Rush performed at the Palace Theatre in Manchester to raise funds for Waypoint.

The concert was a major success, and Rush also spent time with the members at our Group Home. "I don't have to tell you what a worthy cause it is," said Rush at the time.

Thanks to the support of artists like Tom Rush, and the generosity of the community, events like these have had a positive influence on the lives of many children and families. While times have changed, our commitment to meeting the needs of children and families remains strong.

Here's to 175 years of creating an impact - and many more ahead!

Play, Progress, & Possibilities



It's time to play! Michael toddles into the playgroup, his Spider-Man shoes flashing as he checks out what the other kids are doing. He might decide to parallel play with cars alongside another child. Meanwhile, his mom, Krissy, is chatting with the other parents, and they're all cheering on Anthony, one of the children in the playgroup, who has just discovered a tambourine and is gleefully exploring the instrument.

"Before we started playgroup, we would go to the park and he didn't really understand personal space. He would just rip the toy out of another kid's hand," Krissy recalls. "Through playgroup, he now understands when another kid tells him no. Just being comfortable playing around other kids has been the biggest thing that he's gotten out of this. It's been huge."

Michael was originally diagnosed with congenital torticollis and his family was referred to Waypoint at the Richie McFarland Center for Early Supports & Services by his orthopedist. He began receiving physical therapy when he was 3 months old and continued in the program due to delays in other developmental milestones.

At Waypoint, Michael received occupational therapy from Tracey and speech therapy from Kristen and later started going to the playgroup. Michael then got an additional diagnosis of autism, which Waypoint at RMC has been instrumental in helping Krissy and her husband navigate.

"Heidi sent me different classes for autism awareness to learn more about how these children learn so you can help them on their journey." Krissy says. "Kristen gave me this amazing book on different strategies for speech -- just anything I needed."

"You just gotta keep going."

Krissy says that the camaraderie with the parents of the playgroup has been the best part for her. She has built friendships that go beyond the playgroup, with some parents meeting up outside to take the kids to the park. "...To be able to have a space where every part of him is completely accepted - he's just blossomed so much," she says. Choking up with gratitude, she continues, "I get so excited because to have people see your kid, the way you see your kid, instead of looking at him, like he's weird or different... Everybody is not only rooting for my kid, but they understand him. And they love him for it. That's been the coolest thing."

"Michael just started talking recently." Krissy shares. "He's going through his journey in his own way. There is no timeline." She believes it's important to embrace every single part of the process. "They will get it. They will figure it out. It might not be in the traditional way or what society says it should look like, but they are going to progress. It will happen. You just have to keep trying."

Through Waypoint, Krissy has learned not to fight or force Michael's development. This meant embracing alternative communication strategies. It wasn't what she envisioned, but by welcoming these opportunities and accepting Michael's own timeline, he is now vocally speaking.

"If you told me a year ago that he was going to talk, I would've said no way," she says. "But you just gotta keep going."



464 Chestnut Street
PO Box 448
Manchester, NH 03105

Impact

93% of individuals surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that Waypoint services have helped them.

92% agreed or strongly agreed that Waypoint helped them in achieving their intended goals.

“It was most helpful to have a consistent supportive empathetic person to walk through this transition phase with. Waypoint staff helped me navigate a lot of chaos, turmoil and change.”

~ a participant in Waypoint’s services