



The Center for Grieving Children

Project Title & Description:

Intercultural Peer Support Program

This project will respond to the recent influx of children who are refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers, and others already living in Portland, by providing specialized intercultural peer support that has been designed for children who are grieving the collective losses that necessitated their transition to life in Portland. Intercultural peer support for New Mainer children supports the mental health of this extremely vulnerable population by creating healing communities. The Intercultural Peer Support Program (IPSP) has been uniquely positioned to respond to the children of this community from the program's inception, when an Advisory Council of community members assisted in creating the IPSP, and in the program's evolution over more than two decades. The Intercultural Program has grown and changed to respond to participant needs by giving voice to, and inviting input from, the community regularly. The children in the program each bring an important perspective that is highly valued; they are encouraged by volunteer facilitators and staff members to voice their needs and their feelings. Intercultural Program staff interact with children's parents, educators/school counselors, interpreters, and other members of the Immigrant/Refugee/Asylum Seeker community at various times of the academic year, eager for input and perspective.

Area(s) Served: Primarily the Greater Portland area, in collaboration with Portland Public Schools

Community(ies) Served: Youth, Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

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The Commons at Central Hall

Project Title & Description:

Safety and Support At-Home Piscataquis Plus (SSAPP): Advancing Efforts to Improve Regional Health

This project will partner The Commons at Central Hall, First Baptist Church of Dexter, and Penquis, with the support of a team of local volunteers and community health workers, to perform minor in-home repair projects and health needs assessments for older people, people with lower income, and people with disabilities and their families in the Maine Highlands region to improve health outcomes and quality of life. The project will build on the experience of a work camp that occurred this past summer in Piscataquis County led by The First Baptist Church of Dexter and the local Age-Friendly Network to perform minor repairs on sixty homes, and the expressed need for additional work. Post work camp, the community has self-reported satisfaction with the renovations, an overall increase in community morale, and a request for more projects like this throughout the region. This support will allow for adding an additional team member with community health worker training to the in-home volunteer teams to perform ongoing health-related assessments and education throughout the home-repair project life.

Area(s) Served: The “Maine Highlands Region,” which is comprised of 33 communities including all of Piscataquis County and portions of Penobscot and Somerset Counties, and represents the boundaries of five contiguous school districts

Community(ies) Served: Older Adults, People with Lower Incomes, Rural

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Healthy Acadia

Project Title & Description:

Building a Recovery Residence in Washington County for Women and Children

This project will launch, support, and evaluate a Recovery Residence in Washington County that provides a safe, supportive living environment for Women and Children based on community needs and best practices. Working in a powerful partnership, the Washington County Substance Use Response Collaborative (WC SURC), a group of over 25 Washington County nonprofit partners and individuals in recovery, has been meeting for nearly three years to address the broad impacts of addiction and substance misuse. Earlier this year, a housing subcommittee was formed by the WC SURC, in response to community need and demand (as identified through informal conversations, input at WC SURC meetings, and a formal gaps assessment), with people in recovery as a leading voice. The subcommittee members, including individuals in recovery, individuals with loved ones facing SUD and in recovery, and other community partners, have been working hard toward addressing this need. The planning process for the recovery residence, which is well underway, will involve focus groups of individuals in recovery in addition to those serving on the steering committee. Groups will have the opportunity to offer their insight on the policies of the residence and the approach and specifics of the program. Once the residence is operating, decisions that affect residents will be made democratically by residents whenever possible. In these ways, the voices of affected people will remain central to creating, implementing, and operating the recovery residence for women.

Area(s) Served: Primarily Washington County. Secondarily, rooms will also be available for women coming from Hancock County, particularly those who have received treatment at the Downeast Treatment Center. Depending on space, women in recovery and their children from anywhere in Maine and beyond will be welcomed.

Community(ies) Served: Women in recovery and their children, Rural

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Healthy Northern Kennebec

Project Title & Description:

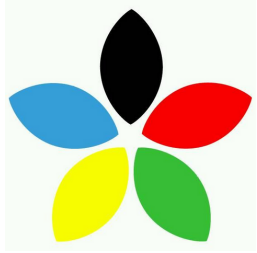
Healthy Northern Kennebec: Food to the People, People to the Food

This project, with co-leadership and input from individuals with lived experience in poverty, will design community solutions to improve access to healthy food with and for people living in poverty in the Northern Kennebec County area. Building on work done by the Healthy Waterville Action Team established under the MeHAF-supported Healthy Communities project, the Action Team's Food Recovery group has identified food waste as a problem to solve and gleaning and food recovery as solutions. This group is co-led by two community members who have reached out to engage groups including Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition, FoodCorps, UMaine Cooperative Extension, and the Central Maine Gleaners Group, which was just starting in Waterville. These and other members of the community will be engaged in identifying barriers, proposing actions, and testing solutions to improve access to healthy food and community connectedness. Gleaners and Food Recovery team members will develop and coordinate a sustainable process to transfer good, healthy food from farm or cafeteria to the volunteer-led programs that provide free food in the Greater Waterville area.

Area(s) Served: Greater Waterville area

Community(ies) Served: People with Lower Incomes, Rural





In Her Presence

Project Title & Description:

Preventing Loneliness in Maine's Elder Immigrant and Refugee Women

This project seeks to address the social and emotional isolation of Cumberland County's older, female immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Separated from their native home countries and communities, they face cultural alienation, linguistic isolation, and significant health risks. The Mamas Connect program will help to build a community for these at-risk women and provide them with basic language and life skills. The program aims to provide the tools and resources to access resources available to them within the community, government, and health care system of Cumberland County. The program's goal is to also help teach new habits and behaviors, both corrective and preventative, that can be translated to help younger participants in their 40s and 50s avoid loneliness as they age. In this way, the older, wiser women will help to teach younger participants what they have learned through a transgenerational knowledge exchange. Learning from one another helps to empower, build self-confidence, and encourage self-advocacy. Elderly immigrant women already participating in the In Her Presence Program will be selected to supervise and coordinate the Mamas Connect program. They will also oversee outreach efforts and be challenged to build partnerships within Maine's immigrant communities and pre-existing elder support programs in Cumberland County. These leadership opportunities will help make the program responsive to the self-identified needs of the participants while simultaneously empowering them through leadership positions.

Area(s) Served: Greater Portland area

Community(ies) Served: Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Older People, Women

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Maine Community Integration
Strengthening the fabric of our community

Maine Community Integration

Project Title & Description:

Ka-Bogso (Be Healed): Addressing Intergenerational Trauma in Culturally-Friendly Ways

This project is an innovative approach addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the resulting intergenerational trauma experienced by Lewiston's immigrant population. It aims to reduce the negative effects through educational opportunities and practicing methods of self-care that help individuals reconnect with their culture through creative arts. Through its programs, MCI has established itself as a strong cultural presence in Lewiston's immigrant community. Through program outcomes and the voiced and witnessed needs of both parents and children of these programs, MCI has identified the need to address the effects of trauma endured by Lewiston's immigrant community. Whether it is trauma experienced by first generation immigrants with high ACEs, or intergenerationally passed on to subsequent generations, the need to address trauma is clear and strong. Within the Lewiston school settings and other Lewiston community settings, educational opportunities will include a comprehensive approach embracing the use of culturally-appropriate music, poetry, creative arts, and nature walks to help with coping and healing, as the catalyst for both prevention and intervention of the stresses of living in a chaotic environment and disadvantages of having been born into poverty and living in constant and chronic stressful environments. MCI is the first Ethnic community-based organization in Maine using this comprehensive approach. MCI sees this new approach of leveraging the power of music, nature walks, and creative arts as a method that is culturally informed and thus will face a higher likelihood of becoming a sustainable and accepted practice of self-care.

Area(s) Served: Primarily Lewiston and Auburn, though families from elsewhere in Androscoggin County will also be welcome

Community(ies) Served: Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum-Seekers, Youth and families

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The Opportunity Alliance - WIC Program

Project Title & Description:

Renforcement de Capacites decisionnelles : Mere - Enfant (the Birth Empowerment Project)

This project will develop a series of multilingual educational videos to empower pregnant and postnatal non-English speaking WIC participants from the recently-arrived Sub-Saharan African immigrant community to utilize their voice and choice when navigating reproductive healthcare systems in Greater Portland. The goal is to improve mothers' understanding of US systems and standards and to bridge common disconnects between these woman and their health care providers so they are empowered to navigate them as they see fit, and to improve maternal and infant health outcomes among African immigrant women in Greater Portland, specifically those from Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Birth Empowerment Project will, at its core, acknowledge that Sub-Saharan African and American healthcare is fundamentally different. Newly arrived immigrant women who are pregnant or soon become pregnant are thrust into a system without any orientation, and in which language access is limited - two massive barriers. By empowering these women to feel comfortable using their voice and choice when accessing reproductive healthcare by increasing their knowledge of American healthcare systems, policies, and traditions, the project will not only improve short term maternal and infant health outcomes, it will build capacity to improve the health of whole families in the Maine African immigrant community. Already, African women in Greater Portland have developed the concept for and shaped the content of the Birth Empowerment Project, in partnership with the Opportunity Alliance WIC Director. These cultural consultants from the community will lead all aspects of planning and implementing the project, leading WIC participant educational and brainstorming groups, and serving as script writers, actors, and producers during video planning and filming.

Area(s) Served: Greater Portland area

Community(ies) Served: Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers, Women





OUT Maine

Project Title & Description:

Improving the Inclusivity and Equity of Maine's Health and Behavioral Health Services for LGBTQ+ Youth

This project will build a youth-directed targeted storytelling and educational campaign to improve the cultural competence, inclusivity, and equity of health and behavioral health services for LGBTQ youth throughout Maine, as well as build youth capacity to create change, both personal and systemic. This project will help to bridge the wide gap between youth needs and practitioners' provision of services. LGBTQ young people need assistance to tell their story to health care and behavioral health care provider systems in a compelling way that demands change. Under this project, OUT Maine will convene a Youth Transgender Action Team (ranging in age from 15-24) for a series of meetings to brainstorm the challenges they are facing with our provider systems and begin to distill their experiences into themes. Once the themes are honed, with staff support, the youth will work as a team to identify how their individual stories and contributions can best be utilized to bring the themes to life and to identify how data can support the initiative and to create written materials that will support the campaign.

Area(s) Served: Statewide

Community(ies) Served: LGBTQ+, Youth

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Penobscot Bay YMCA

Project Title & Description:

Voices From Knox County: Navigating Reentry Into The Community

This project will create a system within the Knox County Jail (KCJ) that provides healthcare and/or medication-assisted treatment during incarceration. The system will also provide a warm hand off of services at release, and exit planning that informs and connects individuals to existing community resources and supports such as employment, housing, and transportation to reduce the likelihood of recidivism and increase social supports. This project builds on relationships and learning from the MeHAF-supported Healthy Communities project. Community Consultants, community conversations, presentations, focus groups and key informant interviews have highlighted that for those in recovery, stigma creates a barrier to obtaining access to health care and behavioral health care, employment, and housing. This stigma is exacerbated for individuals with and without Substance Use Disorder re-entering the community following incarceration. To further understanding and provide additional guidance in project design, an informal survey was conducted to hear from community members newly released from KCJ, as well as those currently incarcerated, about the barriers they believe they will face, or are facing, that impact their successful reentry into the community. Project partners, including Sheriff Tim Carroll, will ensure that opportunities are developed for members of the community of focus to be included in strategic planning efforts by sharing their ideas and suggestions, while incarcerated as well as following release. The project year will focus on developing a system within the jail that weaves elements of a safety net of linkages to existing community services, determining gaps, and with community partners, including members of the community of focus, prioritizing and seeking to develop the resources needed for successful re-entry into Knox County.

Area(s) Served: Knox County

Community(ies) Served: People Who are Currently Incarcerated and Those Planning for Re-Entry to the Community

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Preble Street

Project Title & Description:

Preble Street Community Advocacy Collective

This project will formalize the engagement of a consumer advisory board to improve access to quality, comprehensive, and dignified healthcare services for people experiencing homelessness, hunger, and poverty in Maine. The project will use a community-engaged participatory research process and advocacy efforts to develop a formal mechanism for including consumer input in the development and improvement of local programs designed to support access to healthcare and inform municipal emergency shelter policies and legislative advocacy on state health-related policy. The creation of the Preble Street Community Advocacy Collective will confront barriers that have prevented the most vulnerable members of our community—those currently experiencing homelessness—from engaging in advocacy efforts, and support through MeHAF's Accessibility Expense Policy for transportation, childcare, and basic needs will help remove or reduce these barriers. The Preble Street Community Advocacy Collective will elevate the voices of marginalized people in our community and create formal ongoing processes in which Preble Street staff and Homeless Voices for Justice advocates receive feedback and input from people currently experiencing homelessness as part of program and policy development.

Area(s) Served: Greater Portland

Community(ies) Served: People Experiencing Homelessness, People Living in Poverty, People with Substance Use Disorder, People with Complex Medical Conditions, People with Mental Health Conditions

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Restorative Justice Institute of Maine

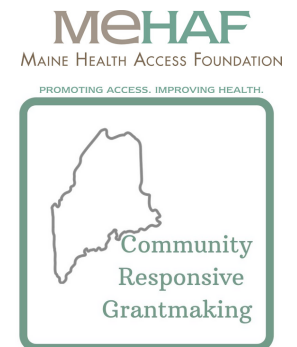
Project Title & Description:

Survivor-Built: Justice that Transforms, Justice that Heals

This project will pilot an approach to justice and healing in instances of sexual harm that was co-designed by sexual assault survivors. This pilot project will offer an alternative or an adjunct to the criminal justice process for survivors interested in a more participatory and self-determined process and will demonstrate the possibility of an accountability system that does not cause further harm for people who have experienced or been involved with sexual harm. This project approaches two public health problems - the intersection of the issues of sexual harm and mass incarceration. The populations served by this project are both people who have been harmed by non-consensual and/or violent sexual acts as well as the people who have done those acts. The work will focus on people most often impacted by sexual harm and least often helped by current justice and healing processes available: women, LGBTQ people, people of color, and people in conditions of poverty. Survivor Leaders who participated in the development of this approach continue to meet and will lead the pilot project as staff, advisors, and volunteers.

Area(s) Served: Greater Portland

Community(ies) Served: People Who are Currently Incarcerated, LGBTQ+, People with Lower Incomes, People of Color, Women





Town of Jackman /Community Health Advisory Team (CHAT)

Project Title & Description:

Development of a Community Health Advocate(s) Position

This project will develop a Community Health Advocate position to provide leadership and to work collaboratively with area towns, the Community Leadership Team, the Citizens Health Advisory Team (CHAT), and other organizations to provide and expand health programs and services for the community, particularly older citizens. This project builds on and supports needs identified through the Healthy Communities program and the AARP Age-Friendly "Lifelong Community to Grow Up and Grow Old In" action plan, both developed with extensive community engagement. The community has determined that helping older citizens to stay healthy and in their own homes as long as possible is a priority. A specific objective identified is to create a sustainable position to coordinate and advocate for the extensive program development needed for a healthier community. Citizens organized the Community Health Advisory Team, which is the lead group for this project and others, to promote initiatives that would fill some of the gaps experienced by this community due to being geographically isolated and very small.

Area(s) Served: Jackman, Moose River, Dennistown and surrounding Unorganized Territories in a 50+ mile radius

Community(ies) Served: Rural, Older Adults

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Tree Street Youth

Project Title & Description:

Deepening our Shared Wisdom

This project focuses on creating a new, more formalized approach for assessing our youth's social emotional needs to inform the creation of a framework that focuses on cultivating abilities to cope with the many challenges and life stressors faced in the Lewiston-Auburn community. The project seeks to address the layers of stress our youth are experiencing, by supporting them in developing healthy coping techniques and outlets. This project seeks to respond to these needs and recent youths' requests by supporting a new innovative framework that creates opportunities for all members of the community, but in particular our youth, to share their strategies and coping techniques with the world while also receiving ideas, inspiration, and motivation to come together as a community to support one another. Coupling the wisdom of the community with the wisdom of other providers, the intention of the project is to build a safe space where youth and community members can come together, share, and unite across their challenges vs. isolate in times of high stress. Additionally, the goal is to implement a formal assessment of youth and their social emotional needs in order to formally identify areas of focus for not just individual youth but collectively in the areas all are struggling. This data will be used to drive decisions on focus areas, adapt programming as needed, and demonstrate outcomes.

Area(s) Served: Primarily Downtown Lewiston

Community(ies) Served: Youth, Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers, People with Lower Incomes

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Wabanaki Public Health

Project Title & Description:

The Voices of our Elders

This project will build a supportive infrastructure to support and actively engage the elders for Wabanaki people. The work will focus on fully understanding the most complex public health challenges face by this community and how culture is a key strategy in addressing these challenges. Elders will be engaged throughout this project, since they are the holders of language, culture, and traditions. Indigenous communities in Maine are struggling with persistent and generational health disparities, some related to unresolved trauma and substance use disorders. This project will provide staffing and infrastructure support to offer increased access to cultural events, activities, and opportunities to build meaningful relationships. Wabanaki Public Health (WPH) recognizes the deficits and gaps in elder services in the tribal communities in Maine. To help address these gaps, the project will assess the current state of elder services within the community, increasing the number of events specifically focused on elders, increasing awareness of elder needs, and determining the necessary steps needed to make systems-wide improvement. The approach to this project is based on the guidance of Tribal Public Health Improvement Plan and aligned with the three recommendations from the American Society for Aging.

Area(s) Served: Aroostook County (Aroostook Band of Micmac & Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians), Penobscot County (Penobscot Nation), Washington County (Passamaquoddy at Pleasant Point and Indian Township)

Community(ies) Served: Tribal Communities, Rural, Older Adults

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