

**MPTC**



**YEARS**

**1998-2018**



### *Our Mission*

My Place Teen Center's mission is to provide a safe haven for youth, ages 10-18, sustaining them with comfort, meals, resources, and hope.

### *Board of Directors*

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 Lori Whitlock **VICE CHAIR** Desmond and Rand, PA  
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 Suzanne Joyce **Norton Insurance Agency**  
 Melody Stickney **Unum**  
 Maureen Van Uden **TD Bank**

Donna Dwyer **PRESIDENT & CEO** My Place Teen Center  
 C. Alan Beagle, Esq. **CLERK** Beagle & Ridge LLC

### *Our Vision*

All youth will have the academic, job readiness, and life skills necessary to lead independent adult lives filled with stewardship, courage, passion, and joy.

### *Advisory Council*

Wes Bonney **John T. Gorman Foundation**  
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 Doug McKeown **Woodard & Curran**  
 Peter Richard **TD Bank**  
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 Jeannie Verrando **WEX**  
 Colette Wold **Community Member**  
 Mark Woodbury **Woodbury Creative**

### **YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Lexi Dearborn **Former Intern and MPTC Staff**

### *MPTC Staff*

Donna Dwyer **President & CEO**  
 Tina Burns **Director of Operations**  
 Joe Jimino **Facility Director**  
 Timissa Dearborn **Program Coordinator**  
 Cher Traweek **Volunteer Coordinator & Youth Worker**  
 Lexi Dearborn **Youth Worker**  
 Spencer Fecteau **Youth Worker**

# a letter from our board chair



*Optimism is an inexorable force in our institution.*

Over the past year, we have seen some incredible changes in our country. Regardless of your political affiliations and loyalties, I think we can all agree that increased polarity and discord are themes that have been spreading like wildfire. On the heels of such sentiments are wariness and, often, fear. To help you get some semblance of what many of our kids are going through, these feelings and emotions are sometimes commonplace with them. We hear their stories expressing uncertainty about their futures, their current realities, and that many of them are in a form of survival mode. It's unsettling, but should steel our resolve to contribute to such a cause as ours. Indeed, is there a worthier cause than helping steer the lives of next year's adults? And our greatest tool in this war we wage is optimism.

Our organization has faced several hurdles this year. We were offered an opportunity to expand to a new community, but had to decline because of the cost of a full-scale renovation to the church we were to be given. It would have sunk the ship, as it were. We were crestfallen, but we are nothing if not undaunted as we continue to work with the community to find us another viable option for expansion. We finally completed the final phases of construction and rehabilitation of our gorgeous physical plant, only to find out there is some cause for alarm with new rot that was discovered. We consistently chase funding sources, are presented with opportunities, and continue to be pleasantly persistent. We are optimistic and resilient. We must be since so many youths depend on us for warmth, shelter, food, and hope.

Optimism, however, requires replenishment from time to time. We see it in the eyes of our kids, in the discourse with community members, and we hear it in the stories from our benefactors. But, work like this is sustained and enhanced by those like you. Thank you, first and foremost, to those that contribute to our cause by donating your time and/or resources. If you haven't had a chance to contribute to our cause, I implore you to consider it by reaching out to our business office and joining something like our **The500CLUB**. We are poised for some great things in our future, but we need your assistance. Every one of you that helps us, gives us renewed optimism.

I wish you well as we look forward to a bright and optimistic 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew H. Brown".

Matthew H Brown  
Board Chairman



**"I felt welcomed here. The staff was inviting, and the teens that came here were different from the ones at the high school. They made me feel like I belonged."**

*- Lexi Dearborn*

# an inspiring past

As My Place Teen Center approaches its twentieth year, it is remarkable to consider how far we have come as an organization. My Place Teen Center, which now provides thousands of warm meals per year and hundreds of hours of tutoring, leadership training, and mentorship, started with one simple goal — to provide a safe place for teens to hang out after school.



My Place Teen Center was founded in 1998, after a survey in the public schools indicated teens were drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana at alarming rates. Leaders from schools, churches, and the city government took a multifaceted approach to the problem, focusing on community education and awareness programs, and creating My Place Teen Center — then Mission Possible Teen Center.



Dana Warp Mill housed the original Teen Center, an inviting space that featured a “cafe” for snacks, some computers and TVs for video games and TV shows, and space for teens to just hang out in a safe, supervised environment. Bruce Dyer, a substance abuse counselor at Westbrook High School, helped found the Teen Center. “The idea was to create a place where all kids could come together, have fun and engage in activities where they could learn and grow,” he said. The Teen Center was an instantaneous success, but over time it became apparent that the long term viability of the program required a skilled director.



“To sustain a program like the Teen Center you need someone like

Donna, who combines the business acumen of an MBA type person with the kindness and empathy of the social worker,” he said. As grants have dried up and other community initiatives have come and gone, My Place Teen Center has survived - and thrived. What was once a simple afterschool program is now a model of delivering academic, leadership, and social/emotional skills to its teens. Warm meals are served in sit-down, family-style meals. There is a safety net, a helping hand, a community for every teen.

Today, Bruce continually refers kids to the Teen Center from Westbrook High School, he says, kids who otherwise would be in unsupervised environments that are conducive to drug and alcohol use. “Some of these kids might not have somebody at home when they get home,” he said.

**“At My Place Teen Center, they are known by name. It is personal, it is a family atmosphere, and relationships are established.”**

The sense of accountability teens establish at My Place Teen Center can make a life-changing — and life-saving - difference for kids. “The kids that are going to the center are the kids that want and need to be there,” Bruce said.

One of those kids was 23-year-old Lexi Dearborn. Lexi moved to Westbrook when she was 17 and a senior in high school. The move was hard. Having left behind her friends and peer group in the move, Lexi struggled to fit in and eventually dropped out of high school. It was around that time she found My Place Teen Center.

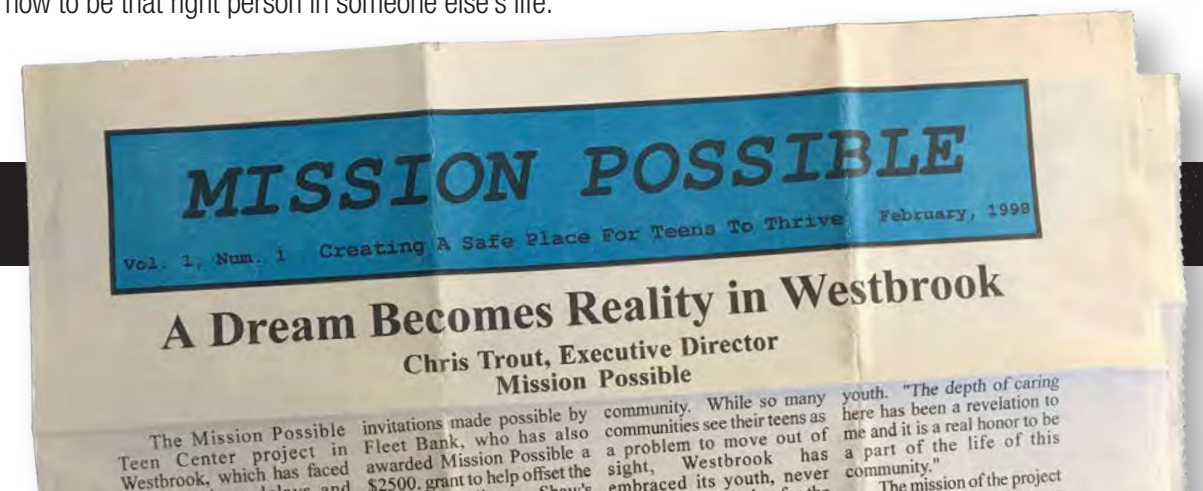


“I felt welcomed here,” Lexi said, seated at a table of the Teen Center where she is now a paid staff member. “I hadn’t felt that way since the move. The staff was inviting, and the teens that came here were different from the ones at the high school. They made me feel like I belonged.”

Lexi approached Donna about a job at the Teen Center, but Donna needed Lexi to do one thing — finish high school. “It’s good knowing that when you do fail there are always those people who are going to help you get back up and know that you can do better,” Lexi said. “Donna has helped me a lot in showing me I can grow with my life.”

Lexi has been working with the Teen Center on and off for 6 years. She took time off as she battled with her own demons, and had a baby boy. She said now, looking at everything she has experienced and with the newfound instincts of a mom, she is even more ready to help kids who remind her so much of herself.

“It’s good to know you can help out other people,” Lexi said. “You can learn from your past and learn how to be that right person in someone else’s life.”



Lexi's transformation, from troubled teen to role model, is part of the calling card of My Place Teen Center, according to Donna.

"Lexi's story could have been different," Donna said. "She had all the cards stacked against her. A history of drug use. An unplanned pregnancy. Bad relationships. But when the chips were down and she knew she needed help, she knew exactly where to get it. We do what we do because we save lives here."



One of the teens currently under Lexi's guidance is 14-year-old Eldad. In many ways, his story represents the changing face of Westbrook, which has seen an increase in first-generation immigrant families. Eldad came to the United States from Paris, but was born in Africa. He speaks French and English fluently, and plays soccer and basketball for Westbrook High School. As the demographics of Westbrook have changed, the role of My Place Teen Center has stayed constant.

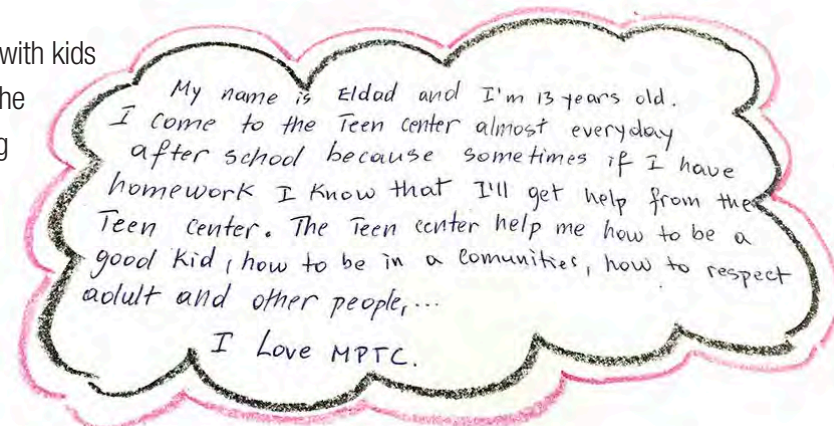
"The beauty of creating an inclusive community is that we have a very big umbrella," Donna said. "We welcome all kids here, and they learn how to be in a community with kids from other backgrounds."

Eldad said My Place Teen Center has helped him get to know his new home and make new friends. In addition to coming to the Center for help with homework, Eldad has enjoyed field trips to Sebago Lake and Sea Dogs games, and is currently enrolled in the Youth Leadership Academy. He said he enjoys the opportunities for growth and learning at the Teen Center. "I know I'll get help from the Teen Center," Eldad said. "The Teen Center teaches me to be a good kid, how to be in a community, and respect adults and other people."

## At its core, My Place Teen Center's mission helps kids. But in doing so, My Place Teen Center also helps the broader community.

Deb Shangraw, the Director of Westbrook's Downtown Coalition and an active volunteer, donor, and member of **The500CLUB**, said My Place Teen Center's vision is an important part of Westbrook's revitalization.

"My Place Teen Center is working with kids who might otherwise fall through the cracks," she said. "They are raising kids to be good, productive adults at whatever level they are at, and that is important as communities strengthen and grow."



# City of Westbrook

Mayoral Proclamation


## "My Place Teen Center Day"

Celebrating 20 years of serving Westbrook's youth

- WHEREAS,** In December of 1995, Community members in Westbrook identified a need to provide our youth with a safe environment, emotional support and positive adult role models; **AND**
- WHEREAS,** A Board of Directors was formed to work towards the creation of a space that would provide "an emotionally and physically safe multipurpose teen center which provides access to the kinds of meaningful activities, mentoring relationships and support systems which foster positive development and healthy decisions"; **AND**
- WHEREAS,** In May of 1998, with the help and support of the schools, municipal government, police and the business community, the Mission Possible Teen Center opened its doors in the Dana Warp Mill; **AND**
- WHEREAS,** Following 6 years of growth in membership and popularity, in 2004, the Mission Possible Teen Center moved to their current home at 755 Main Street where they were able to expand their membership as well as the services and programming offered to Westbrook area youth; **AND**
- WHEREAS,** Programming such as the Youth Leadership Academy create an environment where the youth can thrive by learning techniques such as critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, adaptability, and effective written and oral communications; **AND**
- WHEREAS,** In recognition of 20 years of dedicated service to the youth of Westbrook and for all the hard work of past and current directors of the teen center, the board of directors and all of the many volunteers who have helped to make this a successful organization.
- NOW,**  
**THEREFORE,** I, Michael Sanphy, Mayor of the City of Westbrook, Maine, do hereby proclaim May 18, 2018 to be My Place Teen Center Day" and encourage all the citizens of Westbrook to join me in celebration of this day.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the City of Westbrook, Maine to be affixed on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2017.



  
Michael Sanphy, Mayor  
City of Westbrook, Maine

**"I do hereby proclaim May 18, 2018 to be 'My Place Teen Center Day' and encourage all the citizens of Westbrook to join me in celebration of this day."**

*— Michael Sanphy, Mayor, City of Westbrook*

# futures full of promise

A Tale of Two Cities: Westbrook and Biddeford share striking similarities, and hold the keys to both the past and future of My Place Teen Center.

On paper, the towns of Biddeford and Westbrook look remarkably similar.

Both are small cities with scenic rivers running through their downtowns, with histories that go back centuries. The Saco and Presumpscot Rivers, with their tumbling waterfalls, created ideal locations for the commerce of our fledgling nation. For nearly all of New England's history, they were regional hubs known for their lumber, grain, and textile mills.

For generation after generation, Biddeford and Westbrook enjoyed the robust economies of mill towns — a strong middle class with plenty of jobs, vibrant downtowns, communities where babies were born, children grew up, and adults stayed to raise families of their own. Like so many mill towns throughout the country — this way of life drastically changed when mills were shuttered in the 1980s.

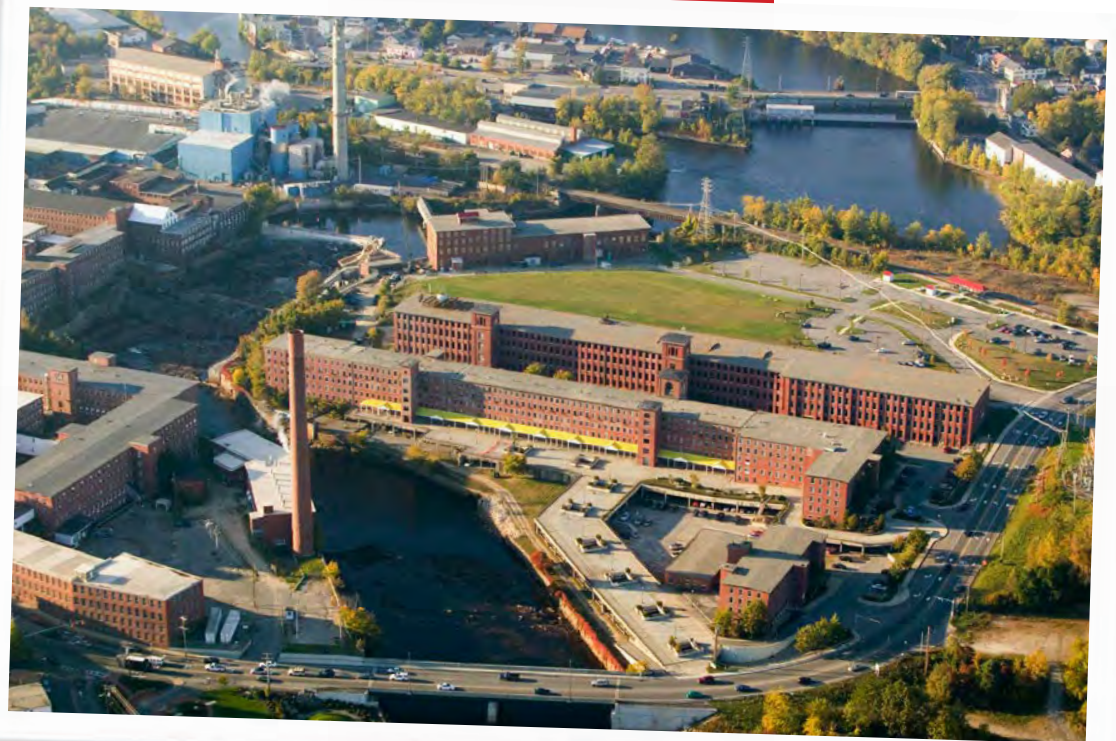
As mills closed, the middle class in towns like Biddeford disappeared. Main Street businesses boarded their windows. Unemployment rates increased, along with issues that are endemic to poverty — drug and alcohol dependence, single parent households, food insecurity, hopelessness.

But the closing of the mills did not herald the end for Westbrook or Biddeford. Both towns are going through revitalization, thanks in part to old mill buildings which can house everything from waterfront condos to craft breweries to artist cooperatives. The committed efforts of downtown redevelopment organizations, business leaders, and developers are expanding business opportunities and bringing back the vibrant Main Street of years past.

**My Place Teen Center is proud to have its history rooted in Westbrook, and looks to a future of expansion into communities like Biddeford.**



**Westbrook**



**Biddeford**

But while Westbrook and Biddeford look toward redevelopment and revitalization, the most vulnerable citizens — its youth — are in danger of slipping through the cracks. My Place Teen Center recognized this conundrum 20 years ago in Westbrook, and has been diligently working for area teens ever since. Now, My Place Teen Center hopes to do the same thing in Biddeford.

“We see Biddeford as an area that could benefit from the type of programming we provide at My Place Teen Center,” My Place Teen Center CEO Donna Dwyer said. “As the downtown becomes revitalized, it becomes more important than ever to make sure the most vulnerable residents aren’t left behind. My Place Teen Center has the programming in place to provide a safe place where teens can gather after school, learn about themselves and their role in the community, eat a warm meal, and feel safe and loved.”



My Place Teen Center would be a welcome addition to the Biddeford community, according the Biddeford Mayor Alan Casavant. A former high school teacher, he has direct experience with the needs of community youth.

“Middle school and high school kids want to be cool and want to belong,” he said.

**“If they are on the fringe and for whatever reason they feel they don’t belong, they become detached and we lose them.”**

For kids who are living at or below the poverty line, this can be compounded by issues that are pervasive — for example, single parent households with no supervision after school. Mayor Casavant said the focus on mentors at My Place Teen Center would be particularly beneficial for Biddeford teens.

“Teens needs to have to have the skill set to keep it together, and there are a lot of kids who don’t get the skill sets to deal with other people and present themselves in an appropriate way,” he said. “In a school setting the focus is discipline. But mentoring through participation and engagement gives kids something

to feel good about themselves. Kids are always looking for someone to look up to, My Place Teen Center provides that.”

After-school engagement is not just good for the teens, it is vital for the community as a whole, according to Delilah Poupore, director of Heart of Biddeford. As part of the Main Street America network, Heart of Biddeford works to bring economic and community development to the heart of the city. In a 2011 Master Plan for Biddeford, youth engagement was identified as a top priority for the community.

“Youth have needed more options, more activities,” Delilah said. “They need to feel valued and not an afterthought. How do we show kids they’re the stars of the city?”

**“We need to show youth there is nothing more important than them.”**

There have been a few successful programs for kids and teens, including a program that teaches teens to repair bicycles after school. Continuing to expand youth programming will be essential to ensure that the community redevelopment doesn’t leave its teens behind.

“It’s vital to have safe places to go and feel connected, and know that somebody cares for you,” she said. Additionally, My Place Teen Center can help by giving teens the skills to contribute to a revitalized community. “My Place Teen Center could be a place where kids can talk about career goals and make connections across the city.”

My Place Teen Center is currently looking at real estate in Biddeford and has a detailed plan in place for expansion once the right space is found.



# donors

(July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017)

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of our donors.

## CORPORATE DONORS GOVERNMENT FOUNDATIONS

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Community Development Block Grant  
Cornelia Warren Community Association  
Department of Health and Human Services

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Suzanne Rochon & the IDEXX IT Team  
donation in memory of Bea Rochon  
Verrill Dana  
Westbrook Police Association

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### MENTOR \$10,000 - \$49,999

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### ADVOCATE \$5,000 - \$9,999

Anonymous

### BUDDY \$1,000 - \$2,499

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Honor of Matt Giggey  
Dawn Huelskamp  
Deb Erickson  
Deborah & Richard Woodbury  
Debra Bethel  
Denise Dubois

Denise Houser  
Denise Tepler in honor of  
Rep. Drew Gattine and his  
good work on behalf of the  
people of Maine  
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Jessica Ferenc  
Jins Whitlock  
Joanne Hayden on behalf of  
Drew Gattine—a gentleman  
and a scholar!!  
John Bennett  
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John Woodbury  
Kaitlyn Cunningham-Morse  
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Karen Galos  
Karen Maples  
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Margaret & Terry Quinlan  
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Marie Sullivan  
Mark Mueller

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Darren Cook Class of 1990  
Mathew H. Orlando  
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Whitney Smith  
William & Penelope McVicker  
William Ervin

# operating budget 2017/2018

(July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018) Ordinary Income/Expense

## 2017/2018 Projected Income

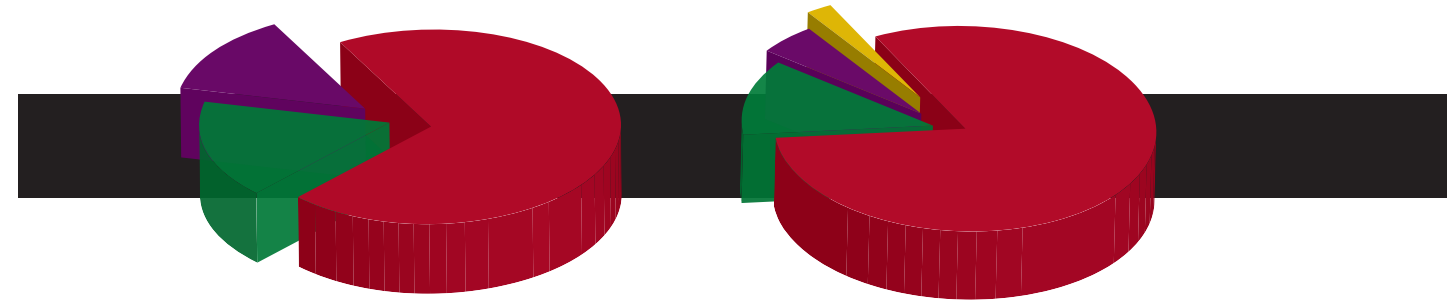
**Total Income \$707,700**

Source	Amount
● Foundations & Corporations	69%
● Individual and Major Gifts	18%
● Public Funding	13%

## 2017/2018 Projected Expenses

**Total Expense \$707,700**

Category	Amount
● Programs	81%
● Administrative	12%
● Facility	5%
● Special Events	2%



My Place Teen Center could not fulfill its mission without support from individuals, businesses, and private, federal and state grants. MPTC is grateful for this support and is committed to being a good steward of the funds received. Donors can feel confident that their support is making a difference for hundreds of teens who turn to My Place Teen Center for help.

Our philosophy is straightforward: **function with a non-profit heart and operate with a corporate mindset.** It is this approach that has helped us provide each kid access to daily, structured, supervised programming that includes character education, civic engagement, academic support, and life skills as well as healthy meals and snacks.

## THE 500CLUB DONORS

MPTC serves 500+ kids each year. Members make a recurring annual gift of \$960 to Fund-A-Kid (or kids) for one year.

Anne Vaillancourt	Giovani Twigge	Martha Gaythwaite	Saco & Biddeford Savings Bank
Anonymous gift in honor of Beth Murphy	Guy and Jane Cote	Mast Landing Brewing Company	Saco & Biddeford Savings Charitable Foundation
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Cheryl Hinckson and Mike Emery	Jen and Chris Bowring	Meg and Rich Pickering	The Original Frog & Turtle Gastro Pub
Chuck Sears	Kiwanis Club of Westbrook	New England Chiropractic	Theresa Cloutier and DMM
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Dave Sherman and Moey Burchanal	Krista Foye	Chuck Sears	Tom & Jerry's Car Wash
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<b>Group Volunteers</b> Acadia Insurance Co. First Baptist Church of Westbrook Garbage to Garden	Hannaford IDEXX cooks IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Infinity FCU	Peoples United Bank TD Bank United Way of Greater Portland Unum	Westbrook Kiwanis & Key Club Westbrook Police Department
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<b>Individual Volunteers</b> Alice Ruvane Bernie Danis Beth Cormier Chef Elliot Satin Chef John George Chef Todd Roberge	Chris Bowring Colin McCrillis Dena Wheeler Denise Dubois Don Esty Eddie Wilson Gina Duffy	Janice Merrill Jen Bowring Jesse Butler Justin Edgar Karen Hayden Kelly Hurley Kim L'Heureux	Lisa Stiffler Lori Whitlock Lynn Leavitt Mac Hayden Marie Sullivan Matt Giggey Nicol Rosen	Nils Ferm Opal Staudenmaier Rachael Burnett Rachel Reed Randall Landry Rhonda Green Samantha Day	Samantha Roberts Sandy Horne Tracy Sullivan Wendy DeCampo Wendy Newcomb
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Crestline  
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Cupcake makers  
Debbie Nelson

Disability RMS  
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Pike Industries  
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Pine Tree Rod and Gun Club  
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TD Bank  
The Erickson Family - Patty & Dave,  
Debbie and Ron, and Kathy and Holly  
Theriat Chiropractic  
Tricia and Trevor Emery  
Wayside Food Programs  
Westbrook Public Services Department



**At My Place Teen Center, we're fostering grit, resilience, and accountability in 500 kids annually; kids who are your future workforce, neighbors, and friends. We're not raising kids here; we're raising adults. And they're headed your way.**



*Check out the magic behind our red doors!*



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