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My Place Teen Center to Announce \$6.5M Capital Campaign to Expand Youth Development Programs With a Second Location in Biddeford

(Westbrook, Maine) – My Place Teen Center (MPTC), a greater Portland organization whose mission is to provide a safe haven for youth ages 10-18, sustaining them with comfort, meals, resources, and hope, plans to announce the launch of a \$6.5 million capital campaign to open a second teen center in Biddeford in July of 2020. Details of the campaign will be announced tomorrow, May 2nd, by the MPTC Board of Directors, Campaign Chairs, and the mayors of Westbrook and Biddeford at a special reception from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at 755 Main Street in Westbrook.

The campaign, which has already raised \$2.7 million, aims to convert the bottom floor of the former St. Andre's Church at 75 Bacon Street, Biddeford, into a safe haven for youth ages 10-18. The new center will be modeled directly after MPTC's highly successful first location in Westbrook, currently serving 40-70 kids per day, and over 500 children each year.

"Expansion has always been part of our strategic plan, so we are thrilled to partner with Biddeford's Mayor and Housing Authority to bring year-round, no-barrier services to a new city" says MPTC CEO and president, Donna Dwyer, "the positive relationship developed with City leaders and a similar demographic and landscape between both cities makes this an easy leap for our organization."

When completed in 2020, the new Biddeford teen center will encompass 9,800 square feet of space on the bottom floor of the church. This expansion is part of MPTC's vision to counterbalance the devastating effects of poverty, food insecurity, and the opioid epidemic with protective factors and safe environments.

"We see Biddeford as an area that could benefit from the type of programming we provide at My Place Teen Center. As the downtown becomes revitalized, it becomes more important than ever to make sure the most vulnerable residents aren't left behind," says Dwyer, "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."

Tomorrow's event will outline the details of the capital campaign, and also serve as a showcase for the work of students who benefit from MPTC's services. In addition to speeches from Westbrook and Biddeford's Mayors, the reception will feature in-house catering, with refreshments prepared by MPTC's students as part of the MPTC's restaurant job training program run by local chef, Christian Kryger.

About My Place Teen Center: MPTC is a year-round, free, after-school program for children between the ages of 10-18. Specializing in homeless, food insecure, cognitively-delayed, low-income, immigrant, and refugee teens and pre-teens, MPTC offers a multi-purpose, academically enriching, hunger-relieving youth development program that has been a focal point for greater Portland and York county kids since its inception in 1998. 567 kids were served by MPTC's diverse offerings this past fiscal year, a figure sure to be surpassed this year.

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