

News from Gloucester Hill

Shaping Lives For The Future • Spring 2004

SINCE 1910
OPPORTUNITY FARM
FOR BOYS & GIRLS

Campaign Meets Goal

A celebration was held on January 16th to announce the successful completion of Opportunity Farm's Capital Campaign. Trustees and volunteers gathered to recognize the hard work and dedication of those who made the success possible.

Campaign chairs, **Howsie Stewart** and **John Palmer**, expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the volunteers, trustees and staff who contributed to the campaign's success.

They noted that much of this campaign took place during an extremely challenging time, in terms of the economy. Shortly after the campaign began, the economy went into a recession, and the stock market plunged and remained low for two years. Despite these adverse conditions, individuals, corporations and foundations stepped forward and gave to the campaign in a very generous manner. "We are extremely proud and grateful to the many donors who made this campaign so successful," said Stewart and Palmer.

Senator Olympia Snowe delivered the keynote at this celebration. Senator Snowe and her husband, former Governor John McKernan, were honorary chairs of this campaign, along with former Olympian Julie Parisien and retired paper industry executive John Staples. Snowe spoke eloquently about the Farm's history, and the important role it has played in helping Maine youth for almost a century. She also spoke personally about having to overcome so many tragedies in her own life at a very young age and how, with the help of others, she got through those difficult times.

The purpose of this capital campaign was to build and create an endowment to construct homes for girls. The first home, which opened in December of 2002, is located on the corner of Gloucester Hill Road and Bennett Road. Since then, the girls have been immersing themselves in the community by attending the Gray-New Gloucester Middle School and High School, playing sports, working part-time jobs and volunteering. The second home is scheduled to open in the summer of 2005. Development of plans and a construction timetable are currently underway.

Everyone at Opportunity Farm is very proud of the success of the Campaign, which is the only major Capital Campaign undertaken in the ninety-three year history of the Farm. The Campaign's success is a tribute to the wonderful generosity and loyalty of the many donors and friends the Farm has made over the years, as well as its reputation throughout the area.

A celebration for the donors who supported the Capital Campaign is being planned for April. ☀️

Catharine and Phil Guiles take time to pose for a picture with Elijah.



Board Chair, Catherine Cloudman visits with Honorary Campaign Chair, John McKernan.



Mike Healy offers a small token of appreciation to Senator Snowe.



Howsie Stewart and John Staples join in the celebration.

Stepping Up to Serve

Opportunity Farm boys and girls become passionate about service learning projects

Recent studies indicate that teenagers have shown a refreshing increase in volunteering rates - 30% of the 4.7 million teenagers across the country report that they have spent time serving their community over the past 12 months. Reports show the service learning projects that start out as a requirement often turns into a passion for young people.

"Volunteering in our communities is an integral part of the Farm's program. At their best, service-learning experiences are reciprocally beneficial for both the community and students. For students, it is an opportunity to develop life skills; enhance personal



The boys & girls prepare to work at a "water stop" for the Pineland Foliage Race.

growth and self-image; and foster a concern for social problems, which leads to a sense of social responsibility and commitment to public/human service. We are glad the boys and girls are getting so much out of their experiences," says **Merrie Allen**, the Farm's Residential Program Director.

Since the new girls home opened at Opportunity Farm in December of 2002, the girls have been visiting the residents at Ledgewood Nursing Home in Windham. They have spent many hours at the Good Shepherd Food-Bank, helping to sort food, and last summer they picked organic produce for a group called **Communities for Living** and prepared it for a shelter and soup kitchen.

Each of the kids has a story to tell about volunteering and why it's important to them. During a recent interview, the girls boasted about the relationships they are forming at Ledgewood. **Gina** and **Jamie** agree, "It's like visiting our grandparents. We play
continued

In memory of
Iola "Boots" Woodworth
August 27, 1910 - February 20, 2004

This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Iola Woodworth, with greatest respect and affection. Boots served on the Farm's board of trustees for many years and was an honorary trustee at the time of her passing. As both a tireless and devoted volunteer to many community organizations and a caring, compassionate friend, Boots will be missed by all that knew her.



2004 Annual Fund Nearing Goal!

Each year Opportunity Farm sets a goal to raise funds through its Annual Appeal. "It is only through the generous support of our donors that the Farm is able to accomplish our mission of providing safe, stable homes to Maine's at-risk youth. "With an Annual Fund goal of \$325,000, we have our work cut out for us," notes Trustee and Development Committee Chair, Cheryl Bascomb.

Donor support provides Opportunity Farm with the financial base it needs to accomplish its goals. "We owe each donor our sincere thanks. The majority of our income is contributed from the private sector. Our program is successful because we are able to get youth into the program at a young age and keep them with us until they finish high school, and we provide full financial assistance to these children. Each gift is an important piece of helping us meet the needs of the children in our care," adds Bascomb.

In our past several newsletters, you have read about our expansion to include a girls' campus. We continue striving to improve our services as well as strengthen the success of each youth we serve. The staff at the Farm is proud of its accomplishments, but without the support of our donors, none of this would be possible.

The fiscal year ends April 30th and a donation made before year-end will be put to work immediately. We are counting on our long time donors, as well as new donors to help us reach our goal!

Please consider sending your tax-deductible contribution today. ☀️

Opportunity Farm Names New Board Chair:

Catherine H. Cloudman

Catherine recently accepted the appointment of Board Chair for Opportunity Farm for Boys and Girls. Catherine has served in many capacities since joining the board since 1995 including treasurer and vice-chair. Catherine was very active in the strategic planning which led to the decision to provide homes for girls at Opportunity Farm. Catherine is a CPA and principle of the management-consulting firm, Clouthawk, Inc. Catherine has been active in the professional, academic, and social community. She loves to ski and sail. She and her husband, Ralph Good, have two children, Sophie and Ian and reside in South Portland.



Welcoming New Trustees:

Catherine M. Martin of Cumberland Foreside and **Charles "Tim" Stewart, III** of Yarmouth recently joined the Board of Trustees at Opportunity Farm for Boys & Girls.

Cathy is presently the co-director of the Maine Montessori Institute. She owned Winfield Childrens House in Falmouth for 8 years where she was the director and a teacher. Cathy is a graduate of St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing in NYC, obtained a B.A. from Marymount Manhattan College, and earned her masters in education from the University of Maine. She is also currently on the Board of



Trustees for the Maine College of Art. In her spare time Cathy enjoys exercising, tennis, school volunteering, singing, crafts, family activities and traveling. Cathy and her husband, Joseph have five children. "I am really looking forward to getting involved with Opportunity Farm, and am grateful for the opportunity to serve this very worthwhile program," says Cathy.

Tim brings a wealth of business and civic experience to the Farm. Tim graduated from Brown University in Providence, RI. He worked for AL Stewart and Sons (which was founded in 1868) in 1958 and later became president of the company until it was sold in the early 80's. Tim owned Tennis of Maine in Falmouth for several years. He is currently on the board for Boys and Girls Club of Greater Portland where he served as co-chair for their Capital Campaign and serves on the Casco Bay YMCA Advisory Board. In addition, Tim is a corporator of Outward Bound School. Tim enjoys hiking, photography and tennis. He and his wife of 47 years, Howsie, have 3 daughters and 7 grandchildren.

We are excited to have Tim and Cathy join our board!

Finally, good bye and thank you as Trustees retire:

Brian Mullany has been committed to the Farm and its children for more than 20 years. Brian played a major role in hiring the Farm's current President, Ron Scott. Throughout his many years of service, he has served in many capacities including secretary and board chair. The longevity of board members, like Brian, shows how committed the board is to Opportunity Farm and the youth who live there. We wish Brian all the best!

Field Rider joined the Board in 1999. While serving on the board, Field served as treasurer from 2001 through 2003. Field and his wife, Susan Percy reside in New Gloucester, about one mile down the street from Opportunity Farm. We would like to thank Field for his service to the Farm.

Mary "Howsie" Stewart began serving on the board in 1997. "My interest in Opportunity Farm grew out of a strong commitment to children and helping them find success in their lives." states Howsie. Howsie has held several positions on the board and most recently was instrumental in leading the Farm's successful Capital Campaign, as one of the Co-Chairs. Over the years she has truly been committed to the Farm and our continuing success, and we are grateful to her for that. Howsie will co-lead the Farm's new leadership council, which will be launched later this year. ☀️

3rd Annual Sea Dog Golf Invitational Filling Fast!

With warmer weather just around the corner, preparation for the Sea Dog Golf Invitational Tournament is in full "swing". The planning committee has been working hard to create a day of fun, and the eager golf enthusiasts are sending in their team information, hoping that June will soon be here.

This year the tournament will be held on June 13th at Spring Meadows Golf Club. The price per player is \$75 (includes food, beverages, gift bag, greens fee, cart and prizes). In addition, there are several opportunities to become a sponsor. Sponsorships include: HOLE SPONSOR (\$500) -includes 25% discount on team registration, and signage at the tee block; FOOD SPONSOR (\$750) - includes registration for 2 golfers and signage at Barbecue Grill Area; PROGRAM SPONSOR (\$1,000) - includes registration for a team (4 players), and logo/mention on Program cover; and CART SPONSOR (\$2,500) - includes registration for a team, and company name on every cart! All sponsors will receive recognition in all publicity for the event, and listing in the events program.

Fred Forsley, President of Shipyard Brewing Co., and his staff, along with Opportunity Farm, are enthusiastically working to make this year's event bigger and better than ever. For those who like a little extra competition, there will be \$10,000 putting contest, several hole in one, and longest drive contests, as well as prizes for first, second and third place gross and net

teams. In addition, we are hoping for some great prizes, including a car, John Deere tractor and a vacation to Scotland.

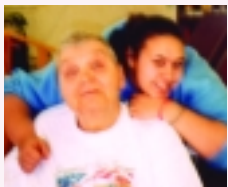
Fred Forsley grew up in Gray and went to school with the boys of Opportunity Farm. In fact, former resident **Bill Marshall** (founder and owner of OurTickets.com) is one of Fred's best friends. Fred's mother, who ran the Gray Manor Boarding House for many years, had strong feelings about the Farm. As Fred recalls, "She always said that Opportunity Farm was a huge asset to our community."

Now that the Fred has his own successful business, he feels it's important to give back to an organization that helped shape the lives of so many of his childhood friends. That's why the Sea Dog Invitational Golf Tournament came into being, why it's played in Gray, and why its proceeds benefit Opportunity Farm for Boys and Girls. "It is a real team effort and results in a great day for everyone involved. Giving back to the community has been a big part of this company since we founded it ten years ago. We bring our energy to a lot of different organizations - everybody on my staff has a voice in determining where we help out - but this tournament for Opportunity Farm is very special to me," comments Forsley.

If you would like more information regarding the tournament, please contact the Opportunity Farm Development Office at 688-4655 or email eward@opportunityfarm.org. 🌞

Stepping Up to Serve *continued*

bingo, go bowling, and help them decorate their doors for the holidays. Some don't have anyone that visits and it feels good to see them happy." **Kayla** smiles, when she recalls her visits during Christmas break. "I had a chance to meet Clark's daughter. That was really special." "Some of their families are far away, and we are the only visitors they see from week to week," comments **Michelle**. "We really look forward to our visits. We have developed special relationships, and it makes me happy to visit every week," adds **Nina**. "I truly enjoyed watching the girls - it was as if they were hosting a party. The girls made sure every resident was involved in the activities. It was obvious they really care about each and every one of the residents. Some of the residents are hard people to engage - but the girls are really compassionate and listen to them as they tell stories or reminisce about their lives," affirms **Jen Malcolm**, one of the family teachers at the Welch House.



Kayla visits with Clark during Christmas break.

The girls at Opportunity Farm are also forming a youth Red Cross Club - the first ever in Maine! Through the Red Cross, they are learning about other cultures, international humanitarian law, and its implications worldwide through the American Red Cross. **Jamie** adds, "We learned that everyday children are dying in Africa from disease. It makes me realize how lucky I am." Christine O'Leary, Director of Community Involvement for the local American Red Cross is working with the girls. "What seemed to get the girls attention is that they can be leaders of all kinds of initiatives and that they have the power to make a difference in someone else's life - even if that person is halfway around the world."

On the boys' campus, the service-learning program continues to thrive. The boys have served as assistant coaches for a youth team (grades 1- 4) for the local Y, and they have cleaned up the local baseball fields, painted dugouts, and worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to spruce up local gymnasiums.

Mark and **Matt Brookes**, who have lived at the Farm for 5 years, talk about the different projects in which they have been involved. "Some are better than others," says **Matt**. "I really enjoy going to the Food Pantry at the Congregational Church. I meet a lot of different people and it makes me feel good to know I am helping someone else." **Mark** adds, "At first I didn't know what to expect but now I look forward to helping people, especially the kids at youth basketball. I know these kids are learning from me and I actually look forward to going down to the school on Saturday mornings."

With the increase in service learning programs across the country, studies suggest that effective service-learning programs improve academic grades, increase attendance in school, and develop personal and social responsibility. Whether the goal is academic improvement, personal development, or both - the Farm's staff works with the kids to develop a program that will enhance a sense of belonging in the community; offer invaluable opportunities to help the students learn critical thinking, communication, and teamwork. All the kids at the Farm agree that they will stay active and involved in the community even after specific projects are complete. 🌞



Michelle sits with her favorite Ledgewood resident, Viola "Munchkin" Schellingger

A Promising Future...Comes True

As an adult, **David Trafford** represents one of hundreds of kids who have lived at Opportunity Farm and have gone on to lead successful lives. David embodies the values that are taught at the Farm and those values have helped him succeed throughout his life.

Today, David and his wife, Cheryl live down the street from the Farm. They have three daughters, Mikayla (7), Megan (11) and Ashley (17). David is a Deputy Sheriff for Androscoggin County. It is obvious when you talk to David that he is passionate about his work, "If I can save one kid - I know I've done my job. Many times people come and thank me for arresting them. It sounds strange, but they know it's a wake up call and a chance to turn their life around." Russ Goddard (who was a Cumberland County Sheriff and long time friend of Opportunity Farm) became a mentor to David and was instrumental in helping him enter the field of law enforcement. "He was a great role model and he helped me get my first part time job at the jail. Then I just worked my way up the ladder." In his spare time, David still helps around the Farm - mowing the lawns and snow plowing.

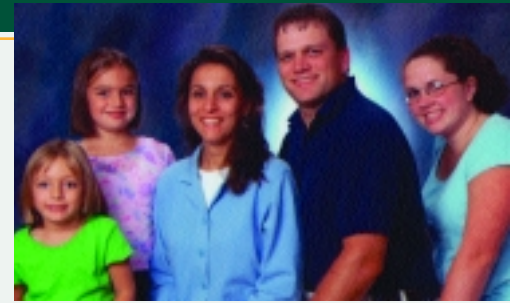
David speaks fondly of the Farm as he recalls what life was like for him. During his years at Opportunity Farm, he spent a lot of time with **Arnie Morrison**, the Farm manager. "He really became like a father to me," says David, "I still see him once a week or so. Arnie taught me how to work hard and be honest. Looking back, I realize sending me to the Farm was the best thing my mother could have done. I didn't like it at the time, but I know now there wasn't anyone else to show me how to do the right thing."

David remembers that he was a kid who was getting into trouble at home and there was no supervision. "I didn't have anybody to tell me what was right. I

was starting to have run ins with the police. If it hadn't been for the Farm, I would have ended up on the wrong side of the law." During an emotional moment, David talks about his time at the Farm and recalls going down behind the barn to sit on the fence to find some solitude. "It was, (and still is) a great place to go and think. Today, whenever my girls aren't getting along, I take them up to the Farm's barn and tell them to take a moment to look at the amazing view - it has a great calming effect on them. And it brings back some good memories for me."

David graduated from Gray/New Gloucester High School in 1985, and though he refers to himself as a loner, David developed some lifelong friendships at school and the Farm. He keeps in touch with some, like **Mike "Twig" Francis**, who is a former resident of the Farm, resident of New Gloucester and founder of Francis Construction. "We're great friends and still go hunting and fishing on a regular basis," adds David.

For more than 90 years, Opportunity Farm has provided the tools children need to get on the path to success. David adds, "If I could give any advice to the kids who live at the Farm now, I'd say listen to what the adults tell you - as much as you may hate to admit it - chances are they know what they are talking about. Being young is a challenge, and trying to succeed in life can be a constant fight, but don't ever give up. It's all worth it." 🌞



Shaping Lives For The Future

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