



DOVER
CHILDREN'S
HOME

"It takes a community to raise a child."

"We are hardwired to connect with others – it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering."

–Brené Brown

YEAR IN REVIEW | 2023



Friends of Dover Children's Home,

I am thrilled to share with you the incredible journey and milestones we've achieved over the past year. As we continue to work tirelessly to fulfill our mission of providing a safe and nurturing environment for the youth in our care, we find ourselves at the threshold of even greater possibilities. I would like to take this moment to reflect on our accomplishments, share our vision for the future, and extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you.

One of our most joyous achievements this past year has been celebrating the academic accomplishments of our youth. We proudly witnessed two of our high school students reach the milestone of high school graduation, a testament to their hard work and dedication. Additionally, we celebrated the graduation of our eighth-grade student, marking another step in their educational journey. These achievements highlight the resilience and determination of our youth, and we are immensely proud of their growth and accomplishments.

Advocacy has been at the heart of our work, and we have made significant strides in this area. Our team presented at the ACRC conference and the NASW conference, sharing our expertise and experiences in youth care. We've also been actively involved in training other programs in Trust Based Relational Interventions, promoting the well-being of children in care not only in our community but beyond. Furthermore, I am honored to have been appointed to the New Hampshire Juvenile Justice Reform Commission, where I will work towards ensuring a brighter future for youth in our state's justice system.

Engaging the community has always been a core part of our mission, and we are thrilled to report that our skilled volunteer and mentorship program has seen incredible growth. This program has resulted in an increased number of supportive adults who play a vital role in the lives of the youth in our care. The impact of these relationships is immeasurable, and we are grateful for the generosity and dedication of our volunteers and mentors.

Our commitment to expanding our capacity to serve more youth remains steadfast. Construction on the addition of the PILOT House and the new studio apartment has been completed, enabling us to accommodate more youth in both our level 2 and level 1 programs. This expansion ensures that even more young people will have access to the support and care they need to thrive.

Supporting our dedicated and hardworking staff has been a top priority. We have conducted a thorough review of our workforce development practices, resulting in increased benefits, a commitment to providing a livable wage, and more opportunities for both internal and external training. We are also focusing on succession planning and professional development to ensure that our team continues to provide the highest level of care and support to our youth.

In line with our mission to grow and expand our services, we have updated our strategic framework. This framework will guide our program growth and allow us to offer more comprehensive services to youth in need. Our dedication to innovation and improvement remains unwavering.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to Carolyn Mebert for her 20 years of dedicated service on the Dover Children's Home Board of Directors. Her unwavering commitment to our organization has made a profound impact on the lives of countless young people. I also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Paul Chamberlin for his 7 years of service on the Board, and to Doug Glennon for his outstanding leadership as Board Chair over the past year. Your contributions have been invaluable.

Finally, I want to thank our incredible community of donors and supporters. Your continued support of our organization, our mission, and the youth we serve is the foundation of all our achievements. We could not do this without you!

As we look ahead to the unpredictable financial landscape for fiscal year 2024, I want to make a heartfelt appeal for your continued financial support. Your contributions are crucial in helping us provide a stable and nurturing environment for the youth who rely on us for care and support. Your generosity truly changes lives.

In closing, I am deeply inspired by the progress and achievements of the past year. Our commitment to the youth we serve remains steadfast, and together, we can make an even greater impact in the years to come. Thank you for being an essential part of the Dover Children's Home family.

With gratitude and warmest regards,

Renée Touhey-Childress, LIC
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT We provide tools and support for youth to heal from emotional trauma through community-based treatment programs that foster relationships and enable youth to create hope for the future.

Honoring Sarah Gordon

This year, DCH's very own Director of Treatment Services, Sarah Gordon, was awarded the New Hampshire's Department of Child, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Youth Summit award which was given to her as a caregiver in residential care who has provided exemplary leadership over the course of the year. Sarah was unable to attend but DCH youth were glad to accept this award on her behalf.



Appreciating and Recognizing our Staff

This year, Dover Children's Home leadership intentionally worked to increase staff retention and protect staff from secondary trauma. As part of this initiative, recognition of the amazing employees that go above and beyond for the program and the youth has been at the forefront. This year, the agency implemented Employee of the Month, recognizing employees for their dedication to the mission and overall efforts in their work.

In addition to this, Dover Children's Home's Leadership supported the first-ever Summer Staff Appreciation Series which focused on staff wellness and building a positive culture. The series included prize pots, coffee and treat giveaways, a summer barbeque, and wellness sessions donated by the following:

- Qigong Practice led and donated by Marielle Ceresa from Upright Acupuncture
- Yoga session donated by Heather Lelu O'Neill from Maha Yoga Shala Support
- Reiki sessions and Chair Massages donated by Jill & Jessica from Flote in Portsmouth



◀ Having a zen moment doing yoga with Heather. Thank you so much to Yoga Maha Shala for bringing this relaxing practice to our staff!

Meet the STAFF



Executive Director – Renée Touhey-Childress
Director of Operations – Melissa LaRocque
Director of Programs – Tara Paladino
Director of Treatment Services – Sarah Gordon
Director of Development – Lauren Petraitis
Director of Business & Finance – Mary Thurber
Executive Assistant – Joanne Riley
Clinician – Savannah Fay
Family Support Worker – Daniel Wydola
Independent Living Coordinator – Jessica Graff
Educational Coordinator – Ian McAlister
Health Coordinator – Jaimie Belanger
Facilities Manager – Gary Berchulski
Facilities Assistant – Rob Macneil
Kitchen Manager – Brittany Schneider
Residential Coordinators – Max Harris and Daley Buckwell
PILOT House Coordinator – Deirdre Siede
Awake Overnight Counselors – Tom Lepore, Ava Bailey, Abigail Buttner
Youth Support Specialists – Rebecca Laurion, Carlos Pedraza, Lily Harris, Kate Sislane



◀ Started our day learning the practice of Qigong from Marielle from Upright Acupuncture – we all felt amazing after! Thank you Marielle!

Community Collaboration

With support from our amazing facilities team (Gary Berchulski and Rob Macneil) and the wonderful donations from Briana Feola and Jason Snyder at BRAINSTORM, the Oyster River Women's Basketball Team, and the Lions Club, Dover Children's Home was able to revamp a storage space into a beautiful area for our residents to play. The recreation room was designed as a trauma-informed space that allows our youth opportunities to work on supporting their whole self. The space is filled with a foosball table, pool table, and Pac Man games to encourage play. In addition, the space allows for our youth to independently exercise using the provided equipment of yoga mats, weights, and a punching bag. This space was designed by youth voices with the intention of meeting their physical health needs.

"We had known from the beginning that we wanted to give our earnings to kids, as we have all had a close connection to working with kids over the basketball season when we had done a middle school day camp. We had heard many great things about Dover Children's Home from other people. So we had decided as a team to give back to this organization. Not only did we have fun raising the money, but we also had a blast redecorating, painting, and contributing to their rec room. As a team we visited the rec room to get a fresh new coat of paint. While doing so we had a fun team bonding experience knowing we were giving back to our community. Later on we were able to visit Dover Children's Home to gift some last minute decorations and see the rec room as it was fully redone. Presenting the check to Lauren Petraitis, the Director of Development, made us incredibly happy. Collectively as a team we would love to give back to our community again and hope to have an opportunity to help Dover Children's Home."

Oyster River Girls Basketball Team



▲ Thank you to the ORHS Women's Basketball Team for raising \$6,000 from their shoot-a-thon to benefit DCH!



▲ Thank you to our friends Briana Feola and Jason Snyder from BRAINSTORM -the mural is perfect.



▲ The ORHS Basketball Team also helped decorate the space.

Closing the Door on our Renovations

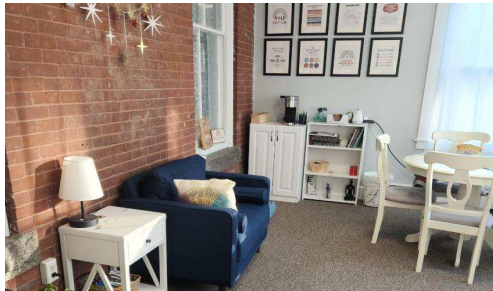
Over the past year, Dover Children's Home has undertaken significant construction projects aimed at enhancing its facilities and expanding its services to better support youth as they transition into young adulthood. One of the key accomplishments was the completion of a 1,200 square foot, 2-story addition to the PILOT House, which currently accommodates three offices. This addition was thoughtfully designed with the future in mind, as it can be seamlessly converted into an additional apartment when DCH is ready to expand its independent living program. This forward-thinking approach demonstrates DCH's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the youth it serves.

Furthermore, DCH's commitment to expanding services is exemplified by the renovation of an underutilized space into a fully functional studio apartment. This transformation has not only increased the capacity of the independent living program but has also provided a safe and supportive environment for young adults to develop critical life skills. Alongside the physical improvements, DCH has renovated the 'sun-room' in the main house, transforming it into the 'zen-den.' This tranquil space is now dedicated to therapy, quiet reflection, and meditation, offering an atmosphere of calm and comfort to support the emotional well-being of the residents. With a holistic approach that combines case management and life skills training, Dover Children's Home is playing a vital role in helping young people navigate the challenges of young adulthood, providing them with the tools and support they need to achieve independence and success.

Office space for our PILOT staff. ▶



▲ Completed kitchen in PILOT studio apartment.

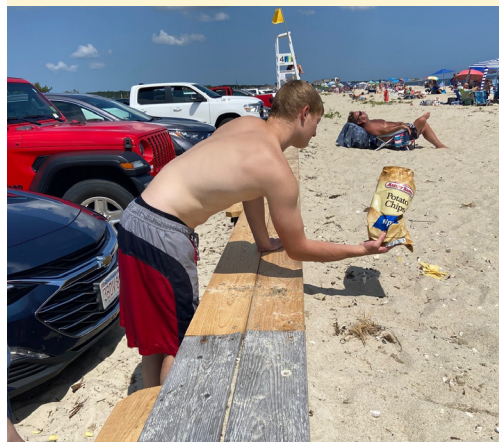


▲ The Zen Den - A beautiful space!

An Unforgettable Summer

Summer in New England is something special, filled with beach trips, ice cream, outdoor activities, and enjoying all that the seacoast has to offer. Summer at DCH is no different; later bedtimes, summer activities, and plenty of time to relax and recoup from the busy school year. This summer, our DCH residents went on two out of state, overnight trips, including Cape Cod for five days in July, and Acadia National Park for 3 days in August. These trips allowed for lifelong memories to be made, including parasailing, fishing, and watching the sunrise from the summit of Cadillac Mountain! They also allowed our residents to just be kids, and to experience things that may not have otherwise been accessible to them. Summer can be a relaxing time at DCH, but it can also be a busy one. This summer, we welcomed three new youth into the program, celebrated several birthdays, and spent quality time both at DCH and out in the community. Summer's end is always bittersweet, but back to school season at DCH has its own sort of magic; it brings routine, cooler weather, and all sorts of seasonal activities. We currently have 7 residents in our main house program and 2 residents in our independent living program, and are hoping to welcome new residents to both programs soon. Several youth are playing on sports teams, exploring opportunities to volunteer and work in the community, and are also connecting with mentors to increase their natural supports. We are excited to welcome our new Educational Coordinator, Ian McAlister, who will take over academic coordination for the school year, along with school vacation and summer activity planning moving forward. I'm sure it will be another great school year for our residents, even if we are all feeling the loss of such a memorable summer.

Tara Paladino
Director of Programs



Thank you to our friends at St. John's United Methodist Church for raising \$700 from your Father's Day Fundraiser for DCH to provide summer activities for our youth!



Building on our Trust-Based Training

Trust-Based Relational Intervention Training

In August 2023, Dover Children's Home sent the Director of Treatment Services, Sarah Gordon to Grand Rapids, Michigan for a weeklong training to become a Trust-based Relational Intervention Practitioner. Trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. Sarah participated in 40+ hours of pre-work, an intensive adult attachment assessment, and a week-long in-person training. By finishing this training course, Dover Children's Home builds their TBRI® practitioner training pool to two. Dover Children's Home has plans to increase training of TBRI® to the community working with our youth.



▲ Sarah Gordon, Director of Treatment Services, (2nd to the right of the sign) with her TBRI practitioner cohort in Michigan.

◀ Melissa LaRocque, Director of Operations with the Austin 17 House staff.



▲ Executive Director, Renée Touhey-Childress and Director of Operations, Melissa LaRocque meet Gaelin Elmore

ACRC Conference

This year Renée and I had the privilege to be able to present at the 'Association of Children's Residential Centers' on how to implement trauma informed care in a group home that fosters youth voice and supports better outcomes. The theme throughout the conference was 'belonging and connection'. This presentation emphasized genuine connection and relationship-based work we promote at DCH. The presentation demonstrated how DCH has improved these practices to remain restraint free, reducing property damage, reducing staff turnover, improving youth resilience, and saving costs. The conference was incredibly valuable to have made other meaningful connections that will hopefully come to benefit DCH in the year ahead.

Melissa LaRocque
Director of Operations

Redefining Workplace Culture in Social Work

Renée Touhey-Childress, the dedicated Executive Director, and Sarah Gordon, the insightful Director of Treatment Services, took center stage at the NASW Maine Conference in October 2023. Their presentation, titled "Redefining Workplace Culture in Social Work," is a thought-provoking exploration of crucial aspects of fostering a healthy and supportive work environment in the field of social work. Renée and Sarah delved into the pressing need to review benefits and wages, ensuring that social workers receive livable wages and comprehensive benefits that enable them to practice self-care and maintain a harmonious work-life balance. Moreover, they underscored the importance of fostering a culture that encourages open and caring feedback from all levels within an organization, emphasizing the value of transparency and collaboration. Furthermore, the duo shed light on succession planning that prioritizes individual employees' passions and talents, showing how these can be harnessed to benefit both the organization and the employee. DCH's commitment to helping other organizations build a strong and healthy workforce for social services shines through in their dedication to sharing these invaluable insights at the conference. Their presentation is a beacon of inspiration for social work professionals striving to enhance workplace culture and ultimately deliver better services to their communities.



▲ Melissa LaRoque and Renée Touhey-Childress presenting about Dover Children's Home at National ACRC Conference.

DCH Designated as Recovery Friendly Workplace

We are proud to announce that Dover Children's Home has been designated as a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) as part of the State of New Hampshire and Governor Christopher T. Sununu. New Hampshire Governor's Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor, Amy Donle, announced the designation at DCH on Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

Dover Children's Home is committed to creating a healthy, safe, and stigma-free environment through our participation in the NH Governor's Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative. As an RFW, we will encourage employees, residents, families, and our community to collaborate towards creating positive change in preventing substance misuse and supporting recovery. Dover Children's Home invites and encourages all employees to reach out for support and/or education to further promote the well-being of our employees, residents, families, and community. We are proud to collaborate with RFW and Dover S.O.S. Recovery Community Organization to provide assistance and education to anyone in need in our community.

Since being announced as a designee, DCH has established a Workplace Recovery Friendly Taskforce. Taskforce participants include Executive Director, Renée Touhey-Childress, Director of Operations, Melissa LaRocque, Director of Treatment Services, Sarah Gordon, Director of Programs, Tara Paladino, Residential Coordinator, Max Harris, Family Support Worker, Daniel Wydola, and Facilities Manager Assistant, Rob Macneil.



▲ DCH's Director of Programs, Tara Paladino, DCH's Residential Coordinator, Max Harris, DCH's Director of Treatment Services, Sarah Gordon, and NH Governor's Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor, Amy Donle.

Community Working Together

Many people know Tom O'Dowd as the owner of Cara Irish Pub; a man who is here, there, and everywhere around our city. What you may not know about Tom is that he is an integral part of Dover Children's Home as he serves on both the Board of Directors, as well as the Development Committee. Since getting involved, Cara Irish Pub has been a significant recurring sponsor for our fundraising events, offered job opportunities to our youth, hosted Mark Moccia's comedy show to benefit DCH, created a float to celebrate DCH in last year's holiday parade, and more recently, raised money through sales of their rare German wet hop brew beer. Tom is always looking for ways to highlight our mission in ways that reach everyone. We are so proud, and grateful, to have Tom as part of the DCH Family.



▲ Cara Irish Pub Family



▲ 2023 Comedy Night for DCH

Alison and her son Colin, who co-own Ryder Street Co., were first introduced to DCH last December when they gifted two of our youth with incredible swag from the shop, and two custom-designed skateboards for Christmas gifts. We knew right away that this place, and these people, were special. They went out of their way to get to know the youth we serve, so that if any of them came by the shop, they would see a friendly, familiar face. This fall, they held a skate event at the new, beautifully completed skate park in Dover, and all proceeds from the event went to Dover Children's Home. Thank you so much to Harlan Electric who sponsored this event, and made it happen! We are so grateful for this connection with such kind, generous people, who also create a safe space in Ryder Street Co. for youth in the city.



▲ Colin and Alison, Ryder Street Co.

Investing in the Culture of our Workplace



Melissa LaRocque has been serving as a board member since March 2022 for 'Brigid's House of Hope' which provides safe housing for survivors of human trafficking. With her work on the board, this has become a resource for learning and understanding some of the risks our youth may face when leaving care, and how to best access resources and support should they ever encounter this reality. Cross over of training topics and content has been mutually shared along with how to support running a trauma informed living environment.

Lauren Petraitis was just recently voted in as a board member for The Aplomb Project, an organization that uses the transformative power of art to uplift trauma survivors, promote creative healing, and present inclusive artistic opportunities. This crossover has been incredibly helpful for understanding what some of our youth in care have been through, and alternative forms of therapy, such as art therapy, that could serve as healing modalities for young adults in care.



Renée appointed to Commission

It is with great pride and honor that Executive Director Renée Touhey-Childress has been appointed by the Governor for a transformative five-year term on the New Hampshire Juvenile Justice Reform Commission. This appointment serves as a testament to Renée's unwavering dedication to advocating for vulnerable youth and fostering a more compassionate and effective approach within the juvenile justice system. With her profound expertise and commitment, Renée aims to initiate impactful changes that prioritize trauma-informed treatment for the youth in the state, fostering a more nurturing and supportive environment for their growth and rehabilitation. This prestigious appointment not only highlights Renée's exceptional leadership but also amplifies the influence of Dover Children's Home, bringing forth its innovative, trauma-informed care philosophy to other institutions working with youth across New Hampshire. Through this collaborative effort, Dover Children's Home continues to advocate for the well-being and holistic development of all young individuals in need.

Looking for ways to Help?

DONATE

Amazon Wish List – Donate needed items for the Home

- Specific items such as towel and sheet sets, hygiene supplies, alarm clocks, etc. that are put together as “intake packages” for any new youth that come into our care. These items are added with intention so that we can create a personalized, thoughtful space for them that makes them feel welcome.
- Basic needs for the Home itself such as paper products, snacks, cleaning supplies, etc. It’s amazing how quickly you go through all these items in a house full of teens!
- Therapeutic items such as fidgets, mindfulness journals, anxiety rings, and essential oil roll-ons.

Holiday Giving – Make the season special for the youth we serve!

- Sponsor a holiday wish list for one of our youth
- Purchase stocking stuffers
- Sponsor a “house gift” for all the kids to enjoy
- Sponsor a special holiday outing experience!

Reach out to Lauren with any questions or interest –
lpetratis@doverchildrenshome.org

VOLUNTEER

Level One – Help out “behind the scenes” in various ways

- Become a monthly meal donor
- Help out at one of our fundraising events
- Assist with any outdoor projects – landscaping, fall/spring cleanup, shoveling, etc.

Level Two – Participate in one or more of our regularly scheduled weekly volunteer days

Level Three – Become a potential mentor for one of our youth

Fill out a volunteer form to get connected:

<https://doverchildrenshome.org/how-to-help/>

Follow us on social media to see what we’re up to!



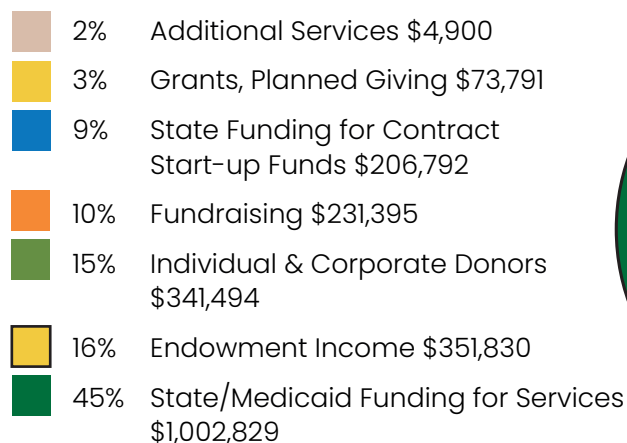
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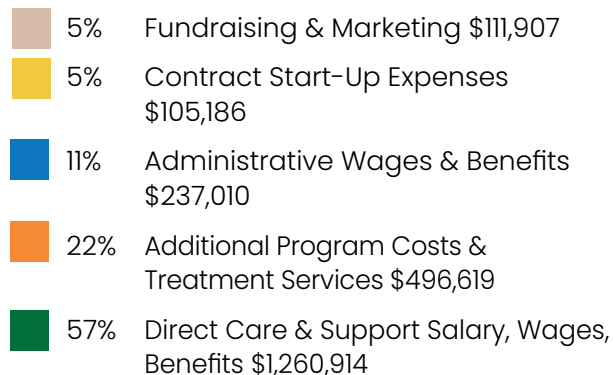
Dover Children’s Home

Financial Year-in-Review

Operating Revenue – \$2,211,636



Operating Expenses – \$2,211,636



Making a Difference Through Fundraising Events

15th Annual Bowl-A-Thon

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this year's Bowl-a-Thon fundraiser a resounding success! Thanks to your unwavering support, we've raised **\$44,478** – a record amount! Whether you were a participant, donor, volunteer, or cheerleader, your contribution has bowled us over with appreciation.

We want to give a special thank you to our two highest fundraising teams – Great Island Realty, and Adrenaline – who raised HALF of the total funds with all the pledges they collected! In addition to this, we want to thank Summit Land Development for underwriting this event each year.

Together, we've knocked down barriers and rolled into a brighter future for our youth! We are absolutely blown away by the success of this event, and can't wait to beat this record next year!



▲ Team Adrenaline absolutely crushed their fundraising goals!



▲ Great Island Realty – Fundraising Rockstars!



▲ Dover Public Library does it again! "The Bowl Murrys" – the many roles of Bill Murray.



▲ Altrusa of the Seacoast gave us a laugh as the "Altrusa Angels" – including the fallen angel.



Apple Harvest Day

We kick off each new fiscal year by selling tickets for the Kid Zone at Apple Harvest Day in Lower Henry Law Park! Thanks to our group of 50+ volunteers from Kennebunk Savings Bank, UNH Rowing team, and DCH, we were set up for a day of fun festivities. Kids enjoyed face painting, bounce houses, and other games/activities. By the end of the day, we had collected **\$8,639** from ticket sales! A special thanks to Kennebunk Savings Bank for underwriting the event, as well as Blast Party Rentals for providing the inflatable activities and bounce houses. What a day!



15th Annual Golf Tournament

We swung into the 15th Annual Golf Tournament with gorgeous weather and a smooth registration and breakfast for our 33 teams! Thanks to our volunteers, the day went swimmingly all the way from the raffle to the afternoon luncheon. A special thank you to Dave and Jeff at The Links for helping set up yet another great event. After expenses, we took in **\$26,995!** We would not have been able to do this without the generosity of our silent auction donors, raffle donors, volunteers, and of course – golfers! Thank you to everyone for helping to make the day a success!

Thank you to our 2023 Sponsors

Kennebunk Savings Bank - \$5,000
Cara Irish Pub - \$4,000
First Seacoast Bank - \$4,000
Blue Dolphin - \$4,000
Shaheen & Gordon - \$3,250
Wentworth-Douglass Hospital - \$3,000
Summit Land Development - \$3,000
Formax - \$2,500
Leone, McDonnell, and Roberts - \$2,500
Dover Honda/Dover Chevrolet - \$1,750
CJ Architects - \$1,750
Back Bay Networks - \$1,500
Cambridge Trust
Wealth Management - \$1,250
Relyco - \$1,000
Aland Realty - \$500
The Storage Barn - \$500

SAVE THESE 2024 DATES:

16th Annual Bowl-A-Thon
Sunday, April 7

NH Gives
June

16th Annual Golf Tournament
Monday, August 12

Apple Harvest Day
Saturday, October 5



▲ Team First Seacoast Bank out on the green

NEW FUNDRAISING EVENT
COMING JUNE 2024! Stay Tuned!

15th Annual Tasting Tour

Our 15th Annual Tasting Tour was one of the best yet! As always, Blue Latitudes did an amazing job setting the ambiance both inside their beautiful establishment, as well as outside on the patio which was perfect for the springtime weather. Our friends who attended enjoyed some delicious appetizers like crab cakes and lamb lollipops, along with pairings of wine to complement the savory treats. This year, we had a special cocktail tasting from Flag Hill Winery as well. Folks enjoyed sampling the local unique flavors and learning about the crafting process. Together, we raised **\$11,768** from this event! A special thank you to Blue Latitudes for hosting, as well as to our sponsors: Leone, McDonnell, and Roberts, Formax, and Relyco.



Without You, Our Fundraising Events
Would Not Be Possible!

Heartfelt Holiday Giving

Thank you to the Village of Hope folks who have donated Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers, Easter basket goodies for the kids at DCH for the past few years.

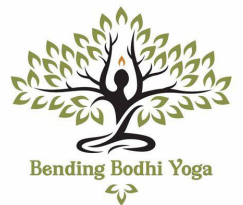


▲ Ted Decker, annual holiday donor, 2015

▼ Ted Decker, annual holiday donor, 2022

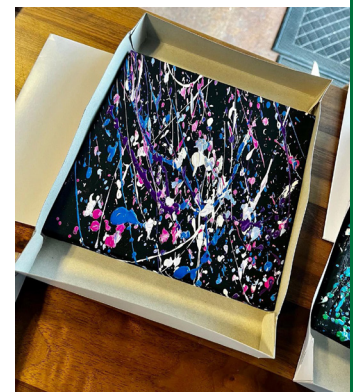


- Thank you to Bethany Walker at Bending Bodhi/ Sol Yoga Studio for providing discounted yoga drop-in classes, as well as memberships for our staff to relieve stress and take care of themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- Thank you to BeFree Church of Dover, whose members have donated holiday goodies and gifts since 2020!



Thank you to Ted Decker who has done his own annual holiday fundraising for DCH for eight consecutive years. Despite an early application (and acceptance!) to Northeastern University during his senior year, he still knocked on our door and greeted us with that wonderful smile to hand us a check of all he collected for us from his family and friends. We are so proud of you and hope college is incredible!

Special holiday onesies are purchased for our kiddos each Christmas!



A Thank You from the Director of Development

Dear Supporters,

At DCH, we provide a safe Home-like environment and therapeutic services for youth who have experienced significant emotional trauma. Kids who have been exposed to violence, abuse, neglect, mental health problems, abandonment, and many other issues. These adolescents come to us with a history of mistrust and skepticism of any adult who is supposed to care for them. It's our job to earn their trust, and assure them that they are, in fact, safe and cared for. Every day, our staff works tirelessly to ensure our youth's needs are being met, and provides the support to help them heal and become the best versions of themselves. And every day, we see the kids in our care grow more resilient, confident, and strong through feeling held, and finally, feeling safe. Together, you all help to create safety and comfort for our youth.

The individuals who donate monthly home-cooked meals, holiday meals, or donate monthly take-out gift cards or snacks. You nourish and provide nutritious food for these kids – something that many of them were lacking in the past. The individuals who provide ingredients on a regular basis – you help our youth develop independent

living skills through preparing and cooking meals themselves. Because of you, our youth know they are worthy of being cared for.

Those who fulfill Christmas wish lists for our youth, provide stocking stuffers, or special treats during the season. You help the holidays come to life for our youth – and bring a sense of magic to the Home with warmth and holiday cheer. We have seen eyes light up, have dried tears of happiness, and have felt their child-like wonder return while they open their gifts. Because of you, our youth know that they matter.

Those who donate items for our program, whether it be for summer activities, back-to-school supplies, basic needs, therapeutic fidgets or art supplies, or even sponsoring an activity – you provide opportunities and resources for the youth we serve. We have witnessed kids experience the cold of the ocean for the first time, the confidence of finding clothing that makes them feel good about themselves, or the joy of playing guitar. Because of you, our youth know they deserve to feel good about themselves.

Lastly, our volunteers. You take the time out of your day to dedicate yourselves to our organization – whether it be helping at events,

wrapping endless Christmas gifts, putting together Easter baskets, tutoring our youth, or joining us on a special activity. Your time, and the space you offer, means the world to the kids in our care. Because of you, our youth feel seen.

For all the tough days we face in this work, we are met with twice the care and dedication from this village that supports us. We are lucky to do the work that we do – to see such perseverance and growth from the youth that we serve, and to see them held up by the community that surrounds them. Every day that I go to work, my faith in humanity is restored because of all of you. You are the hope our kids need, and the hope that we need. Thank you so much for all that you do.

Lauren Petraitis
Director of Development

Thank you to ALL the folks who have sponsored wish lists, wrapped holiday gifts, baked holiday meals or sweets, and brought holiday cheer to our program. We appreciate it more than we can say! ▼





▲ Hand-made notes and flowers from our garden, put together by the DCH youth themselves for our donor appreciation event.



▲ Volunteer Courtney Stillings with Director of Development Lauren Petraitis, arranging holiday gifts!

"The best part of mentoring is seeing not only how much a youth can grow, but how my relationship with them evolves as well. What started as quick trips to get coffee, or an afternoon at the movies, has progressed into helping them navigate the world around them as they approach their eighteenth birthday and all the changes that will bring. Recently, we opened a bank account, deposited their first paycheck, and have discussed everything from the process of getting a drivers license to what they want their life to look like as an adult. It's a privilege to get to go through this transition into adulthood with them, and even more so to know that when their time in care comes to an end, our friendship and relationship will continue onwards."

Elanor Kane

Volunteering & Mentorship

This year, Dover Children's Home worked to identify, train, and engage community members in becoming DCH volunteers. Throughout this program, these community members became more aware of the mission of DCH and found ways to support our program through a tiered volunteer program. The DCH team would like to thank all the volunteers who have supported the program in various ways throughout the year. Between dinner donations, support in fundraising events, youth events/activities, and so much more- we couldn't have done it without you! DCH honored Lesley Allen and Emily Demers as our very own Volunteers of the Year for 22'-23' during the annual volunteer luncheon.

As the volunteer program grew, Dover Children's Home created and implemented a brand-new mentorship program. This program has allowed volunteers to build stronger relationships with our youth and has worked to increase our youth's resiliency and overall support in the community. The goal of the program is to expand connections in the community and build permanency opportunities for our youth in care. This year, DCH had five caring community members volunteer to be mentors. These mentors dedicated extensive time building relationships and supporting our youth in their growth and experiences. DCH honored Leslie Herd and Eleanor Kane as Mentors of the Year 22'-23' – congratulations and a huge thank you to both!

"I have been a volunteer at Dover Children's Home for a bit over a year. I joined because as a former teacher, I still love working with adolescents and want to help make a positive difference in their lives. So far, I've volunteered as a monthly meal donor, tutor, and field trip chaperone. I also help whenever I can such as by wrapping presents, filling Easter baskets, and volunteering at events such as Comedy Night, the Tasting Tour, Bowling Tournament, and the Golf Tournament. I've also recently joined the Development Committee to help with community outreach and fundraising. In return, I have gained a renewed sense of purpose, feel a closer connection to the community, and it is such a positive mental boost! I love being a volunteer at the Children's Home because it is an incredible organization that does so much for the community, and I am so proud to be a part of it."

Lesley Allen



▲ The Dover Area Women's Club, loyal volunteers and donors to DCH.



▲ Bill Foley, devoted volunteer and mentor, working with one of the kiddos.

Endings... and New Beginnings

A Note from Our Outgoing Board Chair



It's been a couple of years now since COVID upended the workforce and made everyone reevaluate their lives. Dover Children's Home (DCH) is no different in this workforce struggle. During this time Renée has fought hard for her staff, working with the Board of Directors to re-align salaries to a relevant wage, working to ensure that our staff have the appropriate support structures to deal with a job that has a difficult mental toll, and working to stabilize a workforce for a mission that truly requires a stable hand.

I'm proud to say that as we have come out of this, and everyone struggles with staffing issues, DCH is thriving. Our staff is more stable than even before the pandemic. Not only is that the case for the present, but the policies and procedures that Renée and the leadership team have created during this time will ensure that stability into the future.

DCH has become a model for the state, and beyond. Renée and her team have been recognized for implementing, and fully committing to a restraint free, trauma informed, relationship building treatment program. They are recognized for their implementation excellence in this area and have been asked to speak at national conventions. They have also been asked to work with other similar organizations across the state to implement the same trauma informed care that is leading to better outcomes for the youth in our care.

All of this is possible only through the support of our community. We have an engaged, dedicated group of community members that support the DCH mission in all kinds of ways. Whether that support is with monetary donations, bringing gifts for the holidays, volunteering, cooking food, or mentoring, we are blessed to have such support.

And we can't thank you enough for that. You are helping to shape the lives of vulnerable youth that have experienced trauma in their lives that can only be helped through the difficult work, and individual support structures, that our staff provide to each of the youth that pass through our doors.

You have a substantial impact on the lives of children, and the adults that they will become. Because of you, and our dedicated staff, DCH continues to thrive and meet the obligations that our mission demands.

What I want to ask, and I know it's a big one, is that we don't let up on the gas. I ask that you continue to support DCH, and maybe even dig deeper. As has always been the case, we are a community-based organization that relies on community support to help vulnerable youth heal from trauma and live more fulfilling lives. We plan to be here for at least another 130 years, and we continue to need your support to make that happen. Please consider a monthly recurring donation, making DCH a beneficiary in your estate, or volunteering.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to close with a thank you – there are not enough to go around. Thank you to our community, thank you to Renée, thank you to the entire DCH staff, and thank you to our donors. We are, all together, making a huge difference in the lives of the youth we serve and helping them towards a brighter future. That outcome is one that we must continue to dig deep for.

Doug Glennon

Outgoing Chair, Board of Directors

A Note from Our Incoming Board Chair



As incoming board chair this November, my goals looking forward will be to maintain the focus on mission as established by my predecessors.

In order to ensure an authentic and engaged focus on mission in an environment where referrals, staffing and funding are fluid, I hope to lead the board of directors in routine dialogue about the who, what, where, when, why and how within the scope of the strategic plan. While every non-profit organization has limitations, opportunities exist. Understanding that state funding can be fickle the board of directors can actively

support proactive and creative grant writing and fundraising; recognizing the challenges of maintaining qualified staff ratios, support a campaign to recruit, train, compensate and retain staff; anticipate that qualifying referrals fluctuate by season and referring agency, support programming to achieve a higher census through transitioning residents through program levels within the house; and at all times maintain an active, open and responsive channel of communication with the Executive Director.

Through my current committees on the Board of Directors I have witnessed the extraordinary. I chair the Programs Committee and sit on the Infrastructure and Facilities Committee. I love construction and the Home has had their share of it over the past five years. Not without challenges, today the Home provides a welcoming and personal space for residents and optimal workspace for staff. I commend the facilities staff for their dedication. They own the shine found throughout the house. Chairing the Programs Committee has revealed to me the constant and diligent work required for the home to function seamlessly. The process of interviewing referrals, accepting a referral, designing a plan of service and delivering the services all within the constraints of an evolving state system is overly complex. The directors and their staff weave through the nuances providing care, support and services to youth, producing daily miracles for kids. Dover Children's Home is analogous to an intricate Swiss clock. Many unique pieces all finely tuned to keep dependable analog time in an ever next generation digital world.

Ann Lane

Chair, Board of Directors

A Special Thank You to Outgoing Board Members

We want to send a special and heartfelt thank you to Carolyn Mebert for her 20 years of service, and Paul Chamberlin for his 7 years of service on the Dover Children's Home Board of Directors. Our organization has benefited tremendously from their dedication.



▲ From Left – Back Row: Tom O'Dowd, Renée Touhey-Childress, Executive Director, Sean O'Connell, Ann Lane, John Gill, Don Cichon, Brandon Ladebush, Annie Novak, Jennifer Stauffis; Front Row: Jim Horne, Michelle Register, Doug Glennon, David Rich, Denise LaFrance; Not Pictured: Martha Munhall, Michael Murphy, Sharon Zacharias, Charlie Griffiths, Caitlyn Turgeon



DOVER
CHILDREN'S
HOME

"It takes a community to raise a child."

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doverchildrenshome.org

**"We are born looking for
someone who is
looking for us."**

– Curt Thompson

