Community Care
Celebrating 20 years of service and support to our communities

Community Care, a non-profit human services agency serving children, families, and individuals living with the effects of trauma, mental/behavioral issues, abuse/neglect, and poverty is celebrating our 20th year of providing support and services across Maine.

Based in Bangor, but serving most of the state, Community Care offers a comprehensive array of services.

“We are excited to be celebrating this milestone of service to the people who need us in our communities,” said Kate Davis, Executive Director of Community Care since 2000. “We are proud of the quality of our services and the values we believe in while delivering these services.”

Community Care (the organization has had a couple of name changes over the years) began in 1995 as a small agency that served foster children in Penobscot and Piscataquis counties. The agency now also focuses on family reunification and family preservation programs through clinical supports, as well as case management programs for children, families, and adults. Treatment for mental and behavioral health is also offered, as are programs that teach families to parent in safe and nurturing ways. A new Independent Living Pilot project that will support homeless teens and young adults is also started in September.

“We do not judge our clients — we are honored that they have asked for our help and we want to provide the highest quality services and supports that we can in the most respectful way,” Davis said. “We join with our clients and it is our job to help them make the changes they want to make.”

Community Care is nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation and also has been selected as One of the Best Places to Work in Maine.

“We have designated October 2016 as our celebration month and are choosing to join with some community partners to help our neighbors who are experiencing housing or food insecurity in the Greater Bangor, Skowhegan, and York County areas,” said Davis.

Community Care DAY
11am-1pm Friday, Oct. 28th, at the Brick Church Bangor

In honor of our 20th Anniversary, Community Care has chosen to celebrate by giving back to our community and assisting those who are experiencing insecurity in the areas of food, housing, and other resources. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Oct. 28, at the Brick Church in Bangor, Community Care staff will partner with other businesses and agencies to provide a lunch and resource fair for people who are in need of a good meal and connections to community services.

A bag lunch will be provided thanks to donations from R&K Variety, Bagel Central, High Tide, Hilton Garden Inn, Woodman’s Grill, Hollywood Casino, Labree’s Bakery, Conant’s Orchards, Bell’s IGA, and Blaze. Food and other items also will be available for those in need of items to take home. Community Care Case Management staff will be available to help with applications and to talk with attendees about resources.

If you or your business is interested in donating food, clean/gently used winter coats, gloves/mittens, or hats that people can take home, contact Jessica at jgeorge@comcareme.org.
Community Care
One of the Best Places to Work
in Maine three years in a row

We understand and strongly believe that the greatest asset that Community Care has is our amazing employees.

To provide the high-quality support we offer our clients, we need an outstanding group of staff and we are lucky to have just that. We strive to make Community Care a place that our staff are proud to work, and a place where they feel valued and respected. Being selected as one of the Best Places to Work in Maine for the past three years, and in the Top 10 for the last two years (we are still waiting to hear on our ranking for 2016) is proof we are succeeding!

There are very few non-profit human service agencies that make this distinguished list so we are proud to be one of the select few. One of the most valuable benefits of the Best Places to Work in Maine process is that we are able to review the results of confidential employee surveys that are administered by the Best Places Organization.

At 79 percent, the response rate to the survey is significantly higher than average. Quotes from employees reassure us that we are on the right track, with individuals voicing how supported they feel by their supervisor, their high level of satisfaction with the agency’s focus on client and consumer care, and, most importantly, that they feel cared about.

We know that our staff are the key to providing services to our clients, so we will continue to do everything we can to be one of the Best Places to Work in Maine!

Community Care
One of the Best Places to Work in Maine three years in a row

“I choose to work at Community Care because I feel appreciated for the work I do.”

We are excited to announce a new program that began in September as a Pilot Project between Maine State Housing, Department of Health & Human Services, and Community Care. The Shaw House also involved.

The Independent Living Program serves young adults ages 18-24 who are homeless. To be eligible for this service, youth must have formerly lived as a youth in the foster care system, and left the system after age 18. Homeless young adults who are former foster children have significant barriers to obtaining and successfully maintaining safe and stable housing, employment, and life satisfaction. Most of these individuals have not had consistent, stable, and healthy families; housing; safe relationships; mentoring; or the opportunity to learn independent or life skills.

The Independent Living Program will offer a small number of young adults in the Bangor area the opportunity to obtain a housing voucher, and assistance finding safe housing, employment, health care, transportation, and other necessary supports for successful living, including support to develop positive peer relationships and friendships.

“[Community] Care’s priority is to their clients and their staff and as an employee, I have never felt in any job, social work or otherwise, the amount of support and compassion that Care exudes everyday.”

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELSEA CYR

EMPLOYMENT/CAREERS AT COMMUNITY CARE

Are you interested in Working at One of the Best Places to Work in Maine? Community Care wants great people to do great work at our great organization! To learn more about employment opportunities, please contact us through:

Our website: www.comcareme.org
Email: HR@comcareme.org
Call: 1-888-236-2273

Community Care is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability, or the applicant’s prior assertion of rights under the Worker’s Compensation Act of the Whistleblower’s Protection Act.

Thank you Community Care for 20 years of supporting kids, families, and individuals in Maine.

Your friends at Caron Signs

We are honored to help Community Care, and can help you with vehicle lettering, interior and exterior signs, carved signs, and custom projects.

Contact us at 207-848-7889 or info@caronsigns.com. Find us at 41 Dave’s Way in Hermon (off the Coldbrook Road)
**A Tribute to the Veteran Foster Parents**

Community Care is proud to honor 15 foster homes that have been with the agency for the past eight to 20 years. Their combined years of service to youth in foster care total an amazing 213 years! Their longevity and resilience are remarkable. Many of these parents have adopted the youth in their care or have raised foster youth into early adulthood, seeing them through high school and into college, or on to independent living. Some are now happily serving as grandparents to the children of the youth they raised. They welcome their former foster children and the grandchildren back into their hearts and homes, providing practical and moral support.

They are the ones these former foster youth are now adults call in the middle of the night when they are experiencing a crisis or just need advice. These foster parents have been the mavericks in terms of working with birth parents and reunification efforts long before the Family Share Program was implemented by the Department of Health and Human Services. They welcomed birth parents into their homes on holidays so that the children could be with their biological families. They modeled how to show the children that adults were working together on their behalf. They actively supported reunification by supervising contact and mentoring birth parents.

Many of the youth were successfully reunified with their birth families. When children were not able to be reunified, many of these foster parents adopted the children in their homes. Many of the youth they raised have gone onto the working world or higher education, and now have adopted the youth in their care or have raised foster youth into early adulthood, seeing them through high school and into college, or on to independent living. Some are now happily serving as grandparents to the children of the youth they raised. They welcome their former foster children and the grandchildren back into their hearts and homes, providing practical and moral support.

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The clinicians at Community Care want to help you make the changes that you want to make. We are here for you, no matter who you are, or where you are on your journey in life. We have chosen to dedicate our careers to reaching out to others who are trying to find their way through life’s complexities.

The terms “therapy” and “mental health clinic” can be off-putting to many people, because they often come with outdated ideas about therapy. At Community Care, “therapy” is a word that means that two people have come together to share ideas, to build on things that are working well, and to shore up defenses against things that are not. We hope that anyone who comes to Community Care will find an open door to self-discovery.

**It Takes a Village – or a committed Foster Family and Community Care support!**

Think of a time in your own life as a child when you were scared and needed to turn to an adult for reassurance and comfort. That person was likely someone you trusted. Now imagine that at that time, you had nobody to go to. It’s hard to believe that some Maine children are in this very situation — unable to live with their birth parents. Maybe they were removed due to child abuse and neglect, or perhaps their parent(s) are deceased. There are many reasons why children end up without a family – and all of those reasons are highly traumatic and typically result in children entering the foster care system.

Children in foster care have experienced significant trauma on multiple levels. Furthermore, coming into foster care in and of itself is traumatic.

Can you imagine yourself or your own child being uprooted from their home, from their family, and being placed into a completely strange place with people they don’t know? Children are vulnerable, their minds are still developing, and they aren’t able to comprehend everything that is happening to them. They are young. They are vulnerable. They are scared.

When a child enters the foster care system, they are taken into Department of Health and Human Services custody and assigned a caseworker to serve on their behalf as the guardian. That caseworker works diligently to find a potential “kinship” family who will care for them. If no kinship home is available, a temporary “substitute” family is sought — a foster family. Maine is fortunate to have a network of foster parents who have opened their hearts and homes to these vulnerable children.

Kandy Ferrell is one of those foster parents and has opened her home for 16 years, fostering over 45 children of all ages with the support of Community Care. “The children come in so traumatized, broken, scared and unable to trust,” said Kandi. “The best part of being a foster parent is watching children feel safe and trusting you as foster parents, and seeing how the children work as hard as I do.”

Community Care understands the difficulties of being a foster parent and has a support team in place to help.

We offer regularly-scheduled in-home support, extra on-site support as needed, 24/7 phone support and guidance, training, opportunities to meet and learn from other foster parents, activities and groups for the kids, and help with all of the day-to-day challenges foster parents encounter.

Community Care is looking for foster parents to join Kandy and our other incredible foster parents so we can offer even more safe and caring homes for children of all ages. We encourage you to consider becoming a foster parent. We understand that it’s a complicated decision, and our foster care staff are there to support you. Making that first phone call does not lock you into becoming a foster parent, but begins a process of education so you can make an informed decision on whether fostering is right for you and your family.

To any foster parent who is reading this article, Community Care thanks you for making the difference in the life of a child. Some of you have made the difference in the lives of dozens and dozens of children as Kandy has. We are able to see you support birth parents in reunification and have seen many families reunite, and have seen you play an active role in supporting that reunification. We have seen many of you adopt the child in your care. From all of us at Community Care, thank you for your never-ending dedication and support of these youth!

**Outpatient Therapy**

A process of self-discovery and making positive change

“How can I help you?” is a well-intentioned question that we encounter while browsing at the store or standing at the deli counter. It’s a question that focuses you on completing the task at hand.

When the same question is asked by a therapist in our clinic, it is intended to send an entirely different message.

The clinicians at Community Care want to help you make the changes that you want to make. We are here for you, no matter who you are, or where you are on your journey in life. We have chosen to dedicate our careers to reaching out to others who are trying to find their way through life’s complexities.

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**Please consider becoming a foster parent. Call Community Care at 1-888-236-2273**

**REFERRALS**

Are you interested in making a referral for you or someone that you know to receive support or assistance utilizing any of the following services: Adult Case Management (Behavioral Health Homes or Community Integration), Outpatient Mental Health or Substance Abuse Therapy, Children’s Case Management, Home and Community Based Services (HCT)? Please Call 207-945-4240 or 1-888-236-2273 MaineCare insurance is required for most of these services.

For more information, visit www.comcareme.org or call 207-945-4240 or Toll Free: 1-888-236-2273
Our Stories: Monica and Devin

We often hear about the challenges of homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, and intergenerational poverty. We all read stories of parents struggling to care for their children, and hear other stories of parents finding great success with the support of quality services. Rarely do we hear from the children themselves, whose lives have been disrupted by abuse, neglect, and their involvement in the child welfare system. A complex system, foreign to children, that can leave them separated from their parents, siblings, and relatives and placed in a new home environment with new rules, new values, new interests, and new schools.

With each move in foster care, children must adapt again to their new surroundings. For some, this becomes a cycle than can span months or years, and can become a stressful and challenging experience for children, some of whom may eventually learn that they will never be allowed to return to live with their families. Kids in this situation must learn to live, and cope, with a great deal of uncertainty. The stories of their lives are inspirational.

Naturally, all children have different reactions to stressors in their lives and the resiliency of children and young adults can be powerful and moving. In order to give those children a voice and better illustrate their experiences, we would like to share the unique stories of two individuals who spent years living in foster care in Maine.

Monica is a 25-year-old university student who is just entering the professional social work field, based on a desire to help children that she developed over the course of her own life experiences.

How did you end up in Foster Care?

My family has a long history of poverty, trauma, maladaptive coping, inadequate education and a lack of positive role models which goes as far back as my great grandparents.

My father began his struggle with addiction at the age of fourteen and my mother was heinously abused by her father, my grandfather, and never received support to recover. At nineteen my father, along with my last name, became well known by local law enforcement for numerous criminal offenses, including theft and drug possession, and he became imprisoned before I was born. My father would later become institutionalized, remaining out of prison for only brief periods and always returning. It appeared that my mother didn’t have sufficient time to develop into the person she wanted to be before I came along. At 18 she was still plagued with the demons left by my grandfather and she did not have the proper education, or mental health support to eradicate them.

What was your experience in foster care?

Eventually, I found myself in my first foster home which was a healing and life changing experience. My foster parents transformed me by acknowledging that I wasn’t a bad kid in stark contrast to what I had always been made to believe. My foster mom fostered an environment where I could finally be myself and blossom, an environment filled with encouragement, acceptance, empathy and love. My first foster parents might not have known the impact they had on me at the time, but I will always look back at them with great love and appreciation for giving me hope and believing in the person I was truly meant to be. I will never forget what happened before I left their home. My foster father sat across from me with genuine tears in his eyes adamantly requesting I invite him and my foster mom to my high school. Unfortunately, I still had issues trusting adults and chose to leave the foster home but it wasn’t their fault.

What was most helpful to you when you were in foster care?

I was fortunate enough to have highly skilled and dedicated social workers who advocated and pushed for my success and best interest above all else. My initial caseworker made sure I had the accommodations necessary to do well in high school. My second caseworker helped pick me up after I fell clumsily out of custody and made a huge mess of my life, she did this without receiving a paycheck but instead for the pure desire to see me succeed and to take on the role in society that I was meant to.

Can you tell us how you ended up in foster care?

I was with my bio mom until I was 4. I am not sure what happened but I was taken from her at 4 years old. I was moved to Maine after being adopted. That didn’t work out. I think they gave up their rights because they were unable to locate the services I needed. So at 12, I was placed in a group home.

What was your experience in foster care?

I lived in 11 foster homes, four group homes, two shelters, three other places like crisis and was incarcerated. Some of my foster homes were good and others were not.

I wanted to try to live on my own so I left there (my foster home) at age 19. I stayed at one of the shelters until I got arrested a few nights after being there.

I went to jail for six months and then got out and went to another area shelter.

What was most helpful to you?

While I was still in jail, my Community Care case manager started meeting with me and making a plan for when I was released. We did paperwork in there to get things started. I was put on probation for two years and, at this time, I have less than a year left.

While I was in the shelter my case manager helped me get a housing voucher and find my own place. We worked on getting my SSI back and were able to do that. She helped me with probation. I started attending the Clubhouse daily and looking for work. I wanted to try to work so I got a part-time job in March. In the beginning, I worked about six hours a week. Since then, I am full time. I like my job and the people I work with.

There is much more to both Monica and Devin’s stories, as there is for all young adults who grew up in the foster care system. Each story is unique but also shares common themes with others who have experienced life in foster care. Both of these young people, because of their strength, courage, and desire to break the cycle of abuse and neglect in their families, are adults who work, attend school, have meaningful relationships, and are making future plans. Monica and Devin were able to get some solid help along the way that supported their own strengths to make difficult situations work. We asked them what advice that they would have for kids who are in their situation now.

• It is never going to be easy but it does get better. Whether you are a felon, have an illness, are homeless, are suffering a mental health challenge, or are working on reunifying with your children, your life can improve.

• The only way to be independent and strong is to know when and who to ask for help and guidance. I would not be where I am today if I did not reach out and receive help from case managers, foster parents, teachers, guidance counselors, therapists, mentors, professors, and friends.

• You are good at something, focus on it. Too often foster children are made to feel as though they have too few strengths, especially in academics.

• Relationships start with your relationship with yourself, focus on yourself first and the rest will fall into place.

• Embrace your weirdness. You will often be misunderstood and feel like you have trouble fitting in, in school, work, or social activities. This can be exhausting. Hold strong, eventually you’ll realize this is your biggest advantage.

• Don’t give up!!!!!! You are a vital and rare individual. We need you to educate, inspire, and improve us all.

To read more about Monica and Devin, and to find out how you can help others in need, visit comcareme.org.
Please Help Community Care Assist Those in Need

Community Care is fortunate to receive funds from Department of Health & Human Services contracts to provide services in our many programs. There are, however, multiple needs that are not covered by the funds that we receive. If you are in a position to contribute tax-deductible monetary donations, we would love to talk with you.

Community Care puts approximately 90 percent of the funds that we receive from state contracts to actual service delivery. Only approximately 10 percent of our contract funds are utilized for necessary administrative overhead. To help with those expenses and needs that are not covered by contract funds, we have established two donation funds:

The Care Fund

A restricted fund that is exclusively used to fund urgent basic needs for our clients who live in extreme poverty and do not have another resource to meet this need. Many of the Care Fund donations come directly from Community Care staff. The Care Fund has been used to provide food, infant items, emergency housing in motel rooms, fuel, car parts so a parent can keep a job, etc.

The Community Fund

This funding supports Care programs and initiatives that are not fully funded through state contracts such as: start-up funds for new programs, special recognition for staff, and flowers and/or cards when there are milestones in our staff and foster parents’ lives that we would like to acknowledge.

To learn more about making a tax deductible donation for either Fund, visit comcareme.org; email Kate Davis at kdavis@comcareme.org; or send a check or money order directly to Community Care at PO Box 936 Bangor, ME 04402.

Home and Community Based Treatment (HCT) is an intensive family-based therapy program that provides children and parents with a Licensed Clinician and a Behavioral Health Professional (BHP) in order to assist in managing mental health and behavioral needs of a child, and increasing the caregiver’s confidence and skill set. The focus of the work is multifaceted and allows any member living in the home to participate in generating progress toward goals identified by the family. For example, if your child is experiencing day-to-day difficulties with calming, following directions, staying focused, or staying safe, a Clinical Therapist and BHP can create a plan that addresses each need and then work with the child, siblings, and you to implement the plan. The HCT Clinician and BHP work intensively, providing therapy and skills building sessions each week for a defined time period. Community Care’s staff are trained in several approaches and treatment modalities. A combination of parenting curriculums and individual treatment modalities are used, depending on the identified goals and age of the child. HCT is typically a three to six month service. HCT is intensive and is often in the home for 24-10 hours a week. The Clinician will provide both individual and family therapy. The BHP will teach the child a multitude of skills, and share parenting ideas that are specific to each child. Community Care provides these services with a focus on Unconditional Positive Regard and the philosophical belief that entering a family’s home is an honor and privilege.

Community Care offers in-home family therapy and support

The story of “Tommy” is just one of many.

At 6 months old, “Tommy” was taken into state custody as a result of significant conflict between his parents, and continued concerns around potential neglect. Community Care was asked to support the family in working toward reunification with the mother, step-father, and father. Utilizing a curriculum called Nurturing Parenting, the team focused treatment on increasing attachment and parenting skills, creating routine, and increasing safety. Tommy’s mother faced many challenges in her life and didn’t have the opportunity to develop the skill set needed to protect her children. When she lost custody of Tommy, she committed herself to make the changes necessary in order to keep Tommy with her. Over the next 14 months, the mother participated in therapy and created a healthy bond with Tommy. His mom, dad and step-dad participated in shared sessions with HCT providers to be sure that co-parenting was consistent, and they developed effective and productive lines of communication that would increase Tommy’s wellbeing. In the end, Tommy was returned to his mother’s custody and Community Care’s providers witnessed Tommy learn to walk, talk, and start preschool. Tommy is now surrounded by love, consistency, and a team of parents who work together to keep him safe.

Partnership, Respect, and Caring - How We Support People

We have all needed help at some point. We may not have asked for it, but we knew that it would have been easier if we hadn’t tried to go it alone. Asking for help can be hard because we place value on our independence. Somewhere along the line in our history, reaching out for help became a sign of weakness, despite the fact that throughout history, people came together to support one another. Individuals assisted others, parents assisted other parents, families supported one another, and communities rallied to support those who would otherwise be left behind. We often hear from people who call and ask for our services that it was so hard for them to make that first call to ask for help.

However, people who have reached out have reached remarkable milestones. While they shared with their Community Care provider where they wanted to be, or what they wanted to be different, speaking those goals seemed lofty and unreachable. As they progressed through their journey, they reported that things gradually became easier and their goals seemed more attainable. They began struggling a little less each day. At Community Care, we have learned that it is not necessarily the services that we offer that are most appealing to our clients, it’s the people who provide them.

How is Community Care different? A sizeable percentage of our referrals come from those who are seeking services because a loved one, friend, neighbor, or relative have told them about their experiences with us. We hold an unconditional positive regard for those we support. A person is not defined by what their experiences have been or decisions that have been made in the past or present. We do not hold judgement. We will answer questions to the best of our ability, and work diligently to seek answers on your behalf. We will share resources with you and provide you with a menu of options that you can choose from to help you manage your situation. We do not lecture, shame, or blame. Instead, WE LEARN FROM YOU. We learn where you want to be and what your barriers are in getting there. We then help you find the solutions within yourself. Even though the view may be foggy at times and we are uncertain and faced with ambiguity on what to do or how to handle a situation, potential solutions are there. We all just need help finding them with the help of someone who knows not only how to listen but how to HEAR.

That’s why the word on street is that “Community Care is different.” The services Community Care offers cover a broad spectrum. However, the same essential philosophical tenets serve as our guiding principles. From programs that range from case management for adults and children, to office-based and in-home clinical support services, to foster parent support, to responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect in our Alternative Response Program — people who receive our support feel that we are walking beside them and not ahead of them. They feel supported. They see positive change. They feel valued. They feel heard. They begin to believe in themselves. And most importantly, they see hope as their vision becomes more clear.
Children’s Targeted Case Management

Beth is a single mom who is working hard to provide for her children and is an example of the success of the CCM program. She was overwhelmed with trying to manage some of the behaviors of her daughter, Katy, and was struggling to find after school care that could manage Katy’s issues. Beth needed this service so that she could work more hours to provide more income for her family. Beth also wanted help by learning a different way of disciplining her children. But she didn’t know where to start.

When Beth first met with CCM Case Manager Matt, she shared that she was embarrassed about needing help and felt terrible that she did not know how to effectively deal with Katy’s behavioral problems. Community Care staff meet with parents “where they are at” and join with them to make a plan, so Matt and Beth began to work together to figure out what might be most helpful for everyone.

It is the goal of Community Care’s case managers to give the family the knowledge of how to be more self-sufficient, and to be better able to advocate for and access resources to meet their children’s needs. Every family has different needs and each family is treated individually, but always with respect and without judgment.

Matt began by asking Beth what caused her the most stress in caring for Katy. Beth described the after school needs and the feeling that she had when meeting with the school. Community Care staff understand that parents know best when it comes to what is necessary to make their home and family work better. Matt helped Beth obtain clinical help for her daughter, as well as help for Beth to learn how to proactively deal with discipline issues.

Together they researched after school programs and chose one that would work best for the family. Each meeting between Beth and Matt had a goal and action plan.

After a couple of months, Beth shared that she was feeling more confident as a parent than she had felt in years. She improved communication with the school, began clinical work in the home, and finally experienced consistent support after school.

For every child like Katy, there is a parent who is also struggling. In each case, Community Care partners with families to make a plan and assist families who are worried and frustrated with their situation. Community Care’s case managers take the time to listen to the families and to develop a plan with the family, not for the family.

Support Matters – Adult Services Case Management

Imagine feeling overwhelmed by the need to accomplish simple day-to-day tasks — paying bills, grocery shopping, speaking to a doctor, or even going to work. Activities that used to seem easy have become unmanageable. As a result, you begin to withdraw from activities that you once enjoyed, ignore pressing issues, and find yourself feeling unhappy and frustrated.

Community Care has developed an Adult Case Management service designed to help those in similar situations. The service offers two options for those in need.

Behavioral Health Home Model

In addition to helping individuals with serious and persistent mental illness maintain a connection to their community, this model also focuses on helping clients ensure that their medical needs are met. A team, including medical personnel, work to assist individuals in improving their emotional and physical health by attending to unmet medical needs.

Community Integration

The focus of this service is to help individuals escape from homelessness by finding stable housing and linking them with services in the community as an alternative to more expensive, short term fixes, such as visits to a crisis center or a trip to the hospital.

“At Carl” is an example. Carl did not have an easy life, but he never felt bad for himself. School was not a priority in Carl’s home. His mother thought it was important, but always seemed too tired to help.

By the time Carl entered high school, he was already regularly missing school. He always felt like he was behind the others in his class. Carl continued to struggle until the end of his junior year when finals were starting. The stress and pressure of preparing for finals was difficult for Carl to manage and he wanted to avoid it. What Carl did not realize was that he had been eligible to receive special assistance that would have helped him overcome the learning disabilities that were interfering with his education. “Why bother?” he thought. So Carl left school one afternoon, a few days before finals began, and he never went back.

Carl spent a number of years working odd jobs while still living with his mother. He liked to work, but often had difficulty with his supervisors. He had trouble getting up in the morning to get to work on time. After a while he had burned through many jobs, and his mother began to worry that he was not contributing to the family budget and buying food. Carl’s anxiety and stress level continued to build until he was in his mid-20s, when he began to feel hopeless about the direction of his life.

At age 30, Carl became homeless. He was occasionally invited to stay with his mother, but even those short stays ended in fights. “Carl” was sometimes an option but often they were not far from being homeless themselves and didn’t have a bed to offer. He knew all of the schedules of the soup kitchens in the area. He learned that sleeping outside is sometimes preferable to standing in line for hours to try to get a bed at the homeless shelter. He tried various drugs, but did not use them every day, because he knew that they are not good for him. He also realized that using them helps little with getting through the long days and nights on the street.

Carl recognized that he wanted to live differently and he decided to ask for help, in the form of a Case Manager who could help him find safe place to live. His first visit was to meet with a therapist at Community Care. Within a few days, Carl began meeting with a Case Manager named Jim at the Community Care office. Jim explained that they could meet wherever Carl felt comfortable: the homeless shelter, Dunkin Donuts, or the office. Jim began to talk about finding an apartment, which to Carl seemed like an impossible task. Calling landlords and finding money to pay for a place seemed overwhelming to Carl, but he felt comfortable with Jim’s obvious knowledge of local resources. They spent a good part of an afternoon making phone calls and completing applications. Carl did some and Jim helped with filling out some sections of each application. For the first time in a long time, Carl began to feel like there was hope. Carl had previously been on a medication that he remembered helped a little, so he shared that with Jim. Jim and Carl reached out to some Medication Management providers, and about a month later, Carl was able to attend an appointment with a doctor, while Jim sat alongside to offer his support.

Little by little, Carl began to feel better about himself and more hopeful about the future. He discovered, however, that keeping an apartment is hard, and so was getting to various appointments. Carl would call Jim during the week to ask about a certain situation, or ask for his help with solving a particular problem. After about five months, Carl reported feeling like he was beginning to get his feet back under him. As months passed, Carl began to feel what he described as “more and more normal” and his need for Jim’s direct support began to diminish.

He knew that Jim would visit with him once a month in person and call him a couple of times a month.

Last month, as Jim was heading out of the office, a light blue car pulled in behind him. Jim realized this was anything but an ordinary car — his was Carl’s car! One of the very big parts of Carl’s plan for his future was to get to a point where he could buy a car.

PHOTO CREDIT: GARY SUND
Thank you to our wonderful volunteer Community Care Board of Directors

- Janice Fleming • Lisa Phillips • Marsha Connors • Scott Welch • Connie Sandstrom • Jim Artesani
- Robin Russel • Norm Worgull • Sherrie Winton

Thank you!

Donors to Our Care Fund

We are pleased to acknowledge the following people who have made donations to our Care Fund in the past year:

- Katherine Cady
- Bill Davis
- Hollywood Casino
- Kim Meherg
- National Media Services
- Scott Welch

We are so appreciative of your generosity!

We would also like to acknowledge our many staff who generously and selflessly donate funds from their paychecks each pay period. We know you know first hand how important this fund is and how it helps so many people. You are fabulous!!!

Thank you for your generosity!

Donors to Community Care Day

We are pleased to acknowledge the following businesses who have made donations to our Community Care Day Celebration taking place Friday, October 28th at the Brick Church Bangor.

- R&K Variety
- Bagel Central
- High Tide
- Hilton Garden Inn
- Woodman’s Grill
- Hollywood Casino
- Labree’s Bakery
- Conant’s Orchards
- Bell’s IGA
- Blaze
- Gary Sund
- Bernice MacDonald
- Paul Oxman
- Surviving Mainiacs
- ...and Many Others.

Thank you

Thank you to the following people and businesses who made in-kind donations throughout the past year:

- Beth Davis
- Bill Davis
- Cake Concoctions
- Dan Wellington
- Dawn Freeman
- Dawn Grover
- Gary Sund
- Hannaford
- Jeff’s Catering
- Jessica George
- Jen Hopkins
- Kaplan University
- Kathy Kaelin
- Machias Savings Bank
- Shelby Raposa-Fike
- Webber Group
- Employees of Hollywood Casino

Community Care receives funding for services from the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

Community Care is celebrating its 20th year of supporting kids, families, and individuals to reach their fullest potential.

As Rudman Winchell prepares to celebrate our own historic milestone, we salute Community Care for all the invaluable things they’ve done and continue to do for the community.

With our comprehensive legal resources and more than thirty attorneys located at our Bangor offices, we are true strategic partners with the businesses we serve.

For more information, visit www.comcareme.org or call 207-945-4240 or Toll Free: 1-888-236-2273