

Band

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of Bangor,” which is still housed in a museum in Waterville. Wingo has heard a story about Hall — who suffered a stroke during the last decade of his life that left him unable to walk — riding with the Band on a barge that sailed down river from Bangor to Stockton Springs, playing for crowds gathered on the riverbank. According to legend, when the Band disembarked in Stockton, they forgot to bring Hall with them. After several hours someone finally remembered to get him.

“He was an integral part of the history of this band,” said Wingo. “It’s very important for us to recognize the man. You can’t look at him, and the Bangor Band in general, and see the connection to community and tradition and service. We’ve very mindful of that.”

Wingo believes Hall would be very pleased with the current state of the Bangor Band, which has nearly doubled in size over the past few years, from a low of 35 players to 65 in 2016.

For R.B. Hall Day on June 25, the community bands from all over the state set to perform include the Brewer Hometown Band, the Brooklyn Band, the Hallowell Community Band, the Lincolnville Band, the R.B. Hall Memorial Band, the Maine Pops Concert Band, the Casco Band Wind Symphony, the Bath Municipal Band, the Westbrook City Band, the Sebasticook Valley Community Band and the Skowhegan Community Band. Also, at around 1 p.m., every player from every band is invited to get on the stage at Peakes to perform an R.B. Hall composition.

“Anyone that wants to play can jump onstage and we can all play together,” said Wingo. “It’ll be quite a show.”

R.B. Hall Day kicks off bright and early at 9 a.m. on June 25, and will go all day until the Bangor Band plays at 5:30 p.m. The event is free, though donations are welcome. The Bangor Band also plays at 7 p.m. every Tuesday in locations throughout the Bangor area, through Aug. 16. For more information, visit bangorband.org.

Brewer community garden project to produce local food for those in need



Vanessa Carini (left), Katie Hoar (center), both residents of Wellspring, and Adam Thiesen, organizer at Food AND Medicine, shovel dirt to fill the raised bed vegetable gardens on June 8 at the Bangor Area Recovery Network in Brewer.

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

A network of raised garden beds recently constructed on the grounds of the Bangor Area Recovery Network in Brewer contain a variety of vegetables. Cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, basil, tomatoes, summer squash, spinach, swiss chard, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and more have started to reach toward the sky, their green faces turned toward the sunlight.

Food AND Medicine, a nonprofit organization in Brewer, is behind the project, the idea for which was formed last summer as a collaborative effort between the organization and the Bangor Area Recovery Network, which is better known as the BARN. The Bangor Area Recovery Network serves those in recovery from drug addiction and alcoholism.

Food AND Medicine began in 2001 after layoffs in the area led to over 1,000 jobs lost. Mill closures in

the paper, shoe and sawmill industries hit the area hard, so union members teamed up with allies to reach out to the workers who had lost their livelihoods. Under the leadership of director Jack McKay, Food AND Medicine was created. Their original goal was to fight for laid-off workers, but it has since grown into a multi-issue organization that helps people access food and other basic needs.

The community garden entered its first stages with the help of volunteer Gordon Provost, who started and raised seedlings in Food AND Medicine’s on-site greenhouse until they were ready to be planted.

“He’s basically been the crux behind the seedlings. He’s done all the work,” Adam Thiesen, organizer at Food AND Medicine, said of Provost.

Together, the two organizations built six raised bed vegetable gardens at the Bangor Area Recovery Network on 142 Center St. in

Brewer and planted the seedlings, which will be used by the Bangor Area Recovery Network once they have grown.

Jerry Stauff, a recovering alcoholic in his 24th year of sobriety, and Cynthia Bain, a recovering addict and alcoholic, both who are part of the Bangor Area Recovery Network, also have been instrumental in helping the project come to life.

Stauff is Shoshone and committed to his native culture. He’s a jack-of-all-trades and a craftsman. He can carve wood, construct drums, make dreamcatchers and construct practically anything, including garden beds, which he helped work on throughout the process.

Bain is a chef by trade. She just moved into her own apartment and is starting college in the fall. She is a mother and a grandmother. She loves to cook, and she absolutely loves food, which will come in handy when the time comes for the produce to be picked and used in meals for those using the Bangor Area Recovery Network’s services.

“The main reason behind this project is the issue of food insecurity and how much it plagues our entire state. We wanted to do something that would raise awareness about that,” Thiesen said.

The Bangor Area Recovery Network provides recovery resources for people in greater Bangor. It’s not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous or any one particular group, but it does provide rental space for these meetings and other events to do with recovery.

Those addicted to substances are less likely to eat healthy and more likely to be underemployed and ineligible for food assistance, according to the Bangor Area Recovery Network. This particular effort aims to help those who use the Bangor Area Recovery Net-

work’s services to learn how to eat healthy and be self-reliant by growing their own food, cooking it and preserving it.

“Growing food here fits in well with recovery and the work they do here. It’s about putting healthy things into people’s bodies rather than poison. I think a big aspect of recovery is filling that time and space they were filling with using or drinking with something else to do. This will provide that,” Thiesen said.

Bain already has plans for the vegetables that have only just started growing outside the Bangor Area Recovery Network’s doors.

“My thought is that we’ll do a community dinner every couple weeks. We’re trying to figure out how to do it, but we’re also hoping to do cooking lessons and teach people how to budget money and how to use what you have,” Bain said. With fall crops, Bain said that soup dinners will be on the menu, supplemented by the leftover rolls Frank’s Bake Shop and Catering donates to the Bangor Area Recovery Network.

For Stauff, helping put the beds together was an enjoyable activity, and he hopes the garden will keep people at the Bangor Area Recovery Network busy.

“This here — it’s nice. It’s good for people. It gives them something to do. It gives me something to do. I mean, I’m retired, if I wasn’t doing this I would be planted myself,” Stauff said with a laugh.

Stauff helps out at the Bangor Area Recovery Network as often as he can, and he hopes that the community garden will become a long-lasting resource.

“Who knows, maybe if this gets really good we can talk them into using that section over there,” Stauff said, pointing to another available plot of land on the property.

Stauff understands that

those in recovery need to stay busy, but he believes it’s about more than just that.

“You have to give back. A lot of people just take. They don’t realize that you have to give it away in order to keep it. This is giving it away,” he said.

When formulating the plan for the garden, McKay was careful to consult others in charge of similar projects in the Bangor area, such as horticulturist Kate Garland of the Bangor Community Garden and Pat Bears, who is involved with gardening programs in the Orono community.

“Other people are doing things like this, and we don’t want to jump in and muck things up,” McKay said.

He ensured that the purpose of these gardens would be different, and that they would foster and benefit the communities they were constructed in.

“To start a project like this you need structure. You need something set up so the work can get done, it’s managed well and people don’t abandon it,” Thiesen said. “We came to the [Bangor Area Recovery Network] because there is structure. There are people here every day.”

Food AND Medicine also helped build garden beds at Crestwood Place, an assisted living facility in Bangor that also has the structure Thiesen spoke of. Thiesen hopes that these garden beds will last for many years to come — they were constructed with that in mind.

Food AND Medicine also hopes to expand the projects to churches, schools and beyond to help out anyone who might need it, and most importantly, connect with the community.

“We’re all about picking people up — giving them opportunities and places and ways to stand up and become empowered and liberated,” McKay said.

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