

making every penny count

PHILANTHROPY REPORT | JUNE-JULY 2022

Seeing Brighter Days

As another school year comes to a close, we're shining a light on the remarkable work of our Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children (ESBVIC) team.

Imagine being a young parent and learning that your infant has a visual impairment. Where do you turn, and what happens next? In Maine, parents can count on ESBVIC. For nearly 50 years, this small but mighty team has been the sole provider of certified Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVIs) throughout the state, assessing, instructing, and consulting children with visually impairment, their parents, and school personnel.

For one Bangor-area mom whose son suffered a brain injury at nine months old and was told he would never see again, meeting CCM's ESBVIC's Gayle Flegel was like a ray of light.

"I had a million questions," said this boy's mother. "I wanted to know as much as possible about how to parent a blind child, how visually impaired children learn to walk and move, what his school options would be – everything."

Flegel, who has 41 years of TVI experience with CCM, has become an expert in working with very young children with visual impairment. Her work with this child meant, day by day, things looked brighter for him.

Gayle reassured this young mom that in her son's case of Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI), the child often does gain vision with the correct adaptations. "Gayle worked with my son, and she taught me how to use the color red – red lights, red toys, a huge red ball, and even games and noises on an iPad – to create an environment that stimulated his brain," said the mother, who describes how, within months, she noticed that her son moved his head in response to light. "He's three and a half now, and he has exceeded all the parameters doctors initially put on him. While his line of vision is still narrow, he can identify objects in photos, and we are working on letters. He is always saying "Look at that!"

"We were always hopeful that after his injury, his vision would get better, but not to the extent that it has! I knew this child was one-of-a-kind, and I have no doubt he will keep improving," said Gayle. "He loves to run, talk, make new friends. It's a joy to work with him."



Help Us Put Children First!

Our 20th Anniversary *Put Children First* Golf Classic will be held Monday, September 19th at The Woodlands Club in Falmouth. More than just a fun day on the golf course, this event raises critical funds for low-income working families at our nationally-accredited Child Development Centers. If you'd like to help ensure children learn and grow in a safe, nurturing environment, please support the event as a player, sponsor, or with an in-kind donation for our live auction.

Learn more at www.ccmaine.org/Golf or email Denise Picard, Donor Relations Manager, at dpicard@ccmaine.org



Children's Clothes that do Doubly Good

Peace House Studio is a children's clothing company started in Bath, Maine, by the husband-and-wife team Nick and Kate Bergmann. As parents of three young girls, the Bergmann's mission is to reduce waste in children's clothing. Their first step was to create a line of sustainable, high-quality clothes that maintain their value after wear and repair. A second step in their mission was to develop an innovative buy-back program to entice customers to return their clothes so they can be repaired and donated directly to families in need.

We were so appreciative when the Bergmann's proposed a partnership with Catholic Charities Maine's Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) to help newly resettled Mainers. When customers send their clothes back to the Peace House Studio's

Patches Project, they will have the option to donate in-store credit to the "New Mainers' Fund." Each time the fund reaches \$50, Peace House will donate a gift card to RIS, which will be used to clothe a child from a newly resettled family.

"At Peace House Studio, we believe the immigrant experience is a quintessential American experience, and we want to welcome these families the best way we can," said Nick Bergmann.

Modeling an adorable and durable outfit from Peace House's *Patches Project* is five-year-old DiDi, who was born in Maine after her family fled Burundi six years ago.



An Eagle Scout Soars

On June 19, Joseph Angelo III earned his Eagle Scout status, in part for his work with our Parish Social Ministry (PSM) program helping homeless people in the Bridgton area of Maine. Joseph was just 15 when he and his fellow scouts collected over 6,000 hygiene items, plus \$2,700 in cash. The total value of the collection, distributed to the Maine Prisoner Re-entry Network, the Trinity Jubilee Center in Lewiston, and Bridging the Gap in Augusta, was more than \$11,000.

We're so proud of Joseph's achievement and his work helping to break down stereotypes of what homelessness looks like to the scouts and how it can affect working families in our communities.



Pictured L to R, are Joseph Angelo II, III and I.

Honoring Volunteers

Six of our many exceptional volunteers have been recognized by Governor Janet T. Mills and Volunteer Maine's 2021 *Roll of Honor* celebrating volunteers who devoted 500 hours or more in service to Maine communities.

Congratulations to Barbara Hughes of Lewiston (1,440 hours), Betty Bates of Auburn (1,107 hours) and Susan English of Wales (527 hours), who knit for our SEARCH program. Anne Skelton of Auburn served 635 hours providing companionship to older neighbors in the Androscoggin area through the SEARCH program. June Gagnon of Westbrook served 526.5 hours with our Refugee & Immigration Services program. And Carol Hart of Presque Isle served 520 hours at our *Threads of Hope* Mall Boutique Store.

"Our work of providing help and creating hope for Maine's most vulnerable depends on a robust volunteer network. We congratulate all our faithful volunteers and thank them for their invaluable service," said Kelly Day, Director of Volunteer Services at CCM.



June Gagnon (R) who served 526.5 hours with our Refugee & Immigration Services' Donations Room and Car Seat Volunteer efforts, is pictured here with her Volunteer Team Leader, Karen Brewer (L).

Community Partner SPOTLIGHT

We are grateful for the year-long sponsorship our Community Partners have made to support our mission, day in and day out. In this edition, we feature our Crystal Sponsors: Cross Benefit Solutions, and BGA Financial – remember to support local businesses that so generously give back to our communities.



Help us go green and make your donation dollars go further by emailing development@ccmaine.org with "subscribe" in the subject line to receive future newsletters via email.