**Mission Statement:**
Life Enrichment Advancing People (LEAP), exists for the following purpose: To empower people with disabilities to lead joyful lives with dignity, independence, and autonomy by providing comprehensive and individualized supports. The fundamental operating principle followed by LEAP in providing services is to strive for each individual's fulfillment of:

- *Physical Well Being*
- *Self Expression*
- *Experiences of Joy*

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**Direct Support Professionals:**

**Maine - time to stand up**
by Darryl Wood

Here is an incomplete list of the *qualifications* of a direct support professional (DSP): College of Direct Support DSP credentialing; Certified Residential Medication Aide; CPR/FA, behavioral intervention training; infection control; safety classes; diabetes and client-specific medical training, and more.

Here is an incomplete list of the *responsibilities and attributes* of a DSP: Teacher; counselor; nursing assistant; medication assistant; chef; housekeeper; chauffeur; liaison; friend, advocate, coach; and more.

When a DSP has all the credentialing, is experienced and understands their responsibilities AND performs their duties with patience, dignity and respect - we say they have the “it” factor. Not too many people in society have the whole package. At LEAP, we are fortunate to have many such people on staff.

As you can see from the above, DSP work is skilled, valuable labor, yet DSP’s are paid poverty wages through the fixed rates providers receive from DHHS. For the past year, LEAP and other stakeholders and advocates have been working relentlessly to convince the powers that be that increasing DSP wages is not only necessary and the right thing to do, but that without it the whole system is on the verge of failure because there are not enough people willing to do the work for such low pay.

On Monday April 4th, **LD 967**


was opened to comments before the HHS committee of the Maine Legislature in a public forum. Representative Erin Hebrig sponsored, and local representative Lance Harvell cosponsored this emergency legislation, designed to increase rates to a point where providers can recruit and retain DSP’s. The public hearing was jam-packed, with 2 additional overflow rooms also packed with supporters and advocates. Approximately 20 people took the stand to speak in support of this legislation. I spoke on behalf of providers, and LEAP DSP Brandy Dustin spoke on behalf of DSP’s. Brandy is an 18-year veteran raising two boys as a single mom. Her commitment to showing her boys a good work ethic and working 2 jobs to make ends meet is exhausting, and a good example for all of us.

Most everyone would agree that a long-term hard-working DSP of 18 years should be able to make a living wage with 1 full-time job! Brandy was one of 3 DSPs who spoke to the committee, and it was their testimony that resonated the loudest throughout the room - it made this issue very real and undeniable to all who witnessed it.

We are hopeful that HHS will vote “Ought to Pass” for this legislation; it then still needs to go through appropriations and the governor’s office. Fifteen thousand plus DSPs in the state of Maine deserve a living wage commensurate with the skills and expectations of their important jobs. Let’s hope they get it.

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**Above, LEAP DSP Brandy Dustin stands ready to testify in support of LD 967.**

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**LEAP’s Board of Directors 2016-17**

- Sherry Walrath, President, Strong, ME
- Roger Condit, Secretary, Farmington, ME
- Frank Hosea, Treasurer, Wilton, ME
- Doug Walrath, Strong, ME
- Celeste Turner, Farmington, ME
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- Lance Neeper, Ph.D, Farmington, ME
- Lynne Hunter, Wilton, ME
- Roger Lambert, Strong, ME
- David Dixon, Strong, ME
- Mindy Cousineau, Farmington, ME
Important People You Know in Our Communities...

Andrea’s V’s Whole Life Program
by Andrea Mendoza

Andrea is a very smart young lady! She demonstrates it each day, particularly on her Whole Life Program days. We practice socialization skills, money exchange, and daily living skills. The purpose of the Whole Life program is to provide opportunities for Andrea to make use of community resources and skill building. Whole Life has recently included skills like making home made ice cream, and practicing arts & crafts. In this picture, Andrea helped make a painting for St. Patrick’s Day. Using American Sign Language, she signed some of the colors that were used. Upon completion, Andrea was quite excited about her portrait, and more than happy to show it off!

Working On Wellness Update
by Matthew Levensalor

So, another terrific WOW volleyball event put the 2017 escapades in full swing! At this event, we had 8 DSPs, 2 people supported, and 3 guests. Some played, some cheered; all had a fun time! This league is moderate intensity team-style play, with groups of 6-8 players competing. The number of teams and play time is dependent on how many arrive to take part. LEAP’s philosophy is to introduce several activities, and to encourage people supported, staff, friends and family to remain active and moving. Especially during the winter months, this approach assists with reducing injury, and building/maintaining optimum health! Here, Alfred and Ross share a moment of team celebration!

Making Merry Melodies
by Andrea Mendoza

Bill and Mandy both enjoy music. Mandy is famous for always being at her piano, and Bill is also known for his musical talent. During their last visit together, Bill decided to play “You Are My Sunshine” on Mandy’s new keyboard. He was extremely happy to play for us all. Mandy was too shy to sing for us this time, but they both love that song. A fun melody-making time was had by everyone!
Welcome to our newest staff members!

Wesley Babula, Heather Beedy, Rebecca Essman, Chase Jones, Justine Boyd, Taryn Coffin, Sarah Keith, Crystal Matuszak, Kylea Smith, and Helena Starr

*We’re glad you joined the LEAP Team!*

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**Training Center Updates**

*by Alfred Dufour*

Our training department recently attended a College of Direct Support trainers’ meeting in Augusta. Approximately twenty trainers attended, and a dozen agencies were represented. We spent the day reviewing Day 1 of the Direct Support Professional Live Session curriculum. Presenters shared videos, PowerPoint presentations, a Jeopardy-style game, and additional activities that promote more student interaction. It was very informative and some great resources were shared. Among the presentations, one video that stood out was “Lost in Laconia” (viewable on Youtube), that tells the story of New Hampshire’s Laconia State School—which sadly parallels Pineland on many levels. This trainer’s session was a huge success, and they will be holding another meeting next quarter to share materials covered in Day 2.

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Lots of fun and smiles were shared at Pat K.’s Feb. 28th Birthday celebration...
Yummy lemon cake with lemon frosting was a welcomed co-star of this bash, for sure!

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**Our Mission and Values**

At Life Enrichment Advancing People (LEAP), our mission centers on empowering people of all abilities to lead lives with dignity, independence and autonomy by providing comprehensive and individualized supports. Our foundational principle is to provide services that encourage well being, self expression and experiences of joy.

We carry out our mission by focusing on three main areas for support: maintaining optimum health, expanding communication options, and having many experiences of joy. This is done through emphasizing healthy lifestyles and autonomy, and providing opportunities for community participation.

LEAP supports people in small groups, individualized apartments, in various community supports, and through a small community respite program. We adopt an individualized and holistic approach to tailor our services to each person and family’s goals and expectations.

"*We believe in the worth and dignity of all people.*

*We promote experiences of joy, wellness, and personal growth."*
White Winter Wellness Expedition - Kingfield Sledding Fun Day
February 20, 2017

Because sometimes, letting our inner children out into the fresh air and sunshine is the only way to embrace wellness opportunities during this old-fashioned Maine winter!
LEAP’S Got Talent!
by Alfred Dufour

Our winter wellness campaign has just wound down, so that means it was time for our much-anticipated talent show finale. Several individuals performed for a packed and enthusiastic house. Some people sang and played instruments, while one person gave a demonstration of her karate knowledge.

This event was a huge success and always delivers an amazing time! At right, Mike and Luke share their unmistakable joy in music-making. Below: Roger, Ross, and Irene also give of their talents, and enjoy the diverse sharing and fellowship that these entertaining events deliver!

Stopping by woods...
by Tony Bolens

Another beautiful day in the Maine woods! It was the perfect January temperature of 33 degrees here, with no wind...birds chirping, and a red squirrel chatters to let us know we are in his territory. No wild creatures are visible, but there are signs that they have been grazing on the buds from raspberry bushes and saplings, with some tracks running deep in the snow, one following the other off into the thicket. Not another soul in sight today, and a crisp breeze cuts across your face as a lovely reminder that you’re alive. The silence at times is broken only by the sound of snowshoes crunching through the layers of beautiful, shining snow. Welcome to this glimpse of Stone Soup Garden’s wellness trail in January. The climb is worth every moment of your time when you soak in the view at end of day, or any other time. See you up there soon?
Greetings From Oliver House
by Jane Shaw

Is it spring yet? The Oliver House folks are getting anxious for sight of crocuses popping up and trees budding, as well as hoping for the sight of wildlife in the fields. It surely has been a long winter, and one of the snowiest in recent memory!

Michael V. is in hopes that with the large amounts of snow, it will help with the drought so he can enjoy another canoe trip down the Sandy River. Now that’s some advance planning!

The Stone Soup Garden area and trails will be busy again soon, with many folks enjoying the use of the trails, as well as some of them picking out a section of the garden area to get some fresh vegetables started. “Think Spring”!

The Best Part of Waking Up
by Cristy Foss

One Sunday morning recipe for happiness at Davis Road calls for Dunkin Donuts coffee, the morning paper, and the company of good housemates!

I Can Be a Hero?
by Deelight Zitzelberger

Everyday heroes are all around us, and we even get to hear about them on the news once in a while. Usually, though, the people doing the greatest good in our communities are acting outside the limelight...on purpose.

Because LEAP is a nonprofit, we rely on sustaining relationships with citizens from all walks of life.

So, your planned giving makes a difference in the quality of life for the people we serve, as many of their daily living needs are not Medicaid-funded.

If you are considering becoming one of our Monthly Partners or sharing a one-time donation, please accept our ongoing gratitude for the power of your quietly meaningful gifts.

As you reflect on where your own giving budget may have the greatest impact at the local level, please do visit http://www.leapcommunity.org/about-us for more giving options, or contact Darryl@leapcommunity.org with any questions.

Our family of faithful donors will always have room for YOU!

If I look at the mass, I will never act. If I look at the one, I will.
~ Mother Teresa
LEAP’s wellness initiative started 9 years ago, and was created to support our dedication to safety through promoting wellness. The Winter/Spring wellness initiative, Working on Wellness (WOW) has always been about two key points, weight loss and participation. With an overall count of 25 events hosted by DSPs and managers, there was something for everyone. From bringing your talent to a talent show, your spirit of fun to a Paint Night, to reminding yourself how tough aerobics videos can be, there were opportunities for all skill levels.

Although winter can be unpredictable, and several events had to be cancelled, this year we found creative ways to encourage staff to go out into their own communities and experience local events like the Fire and Ice Festival in Farmington, and Maine Maple Sunday.

The WOW season came to a close this year with two victors standing above the rest. Rebecca Carter won for Weight Loss, losing 6.85% of her body weight! With LEAP centralized in the Farmington area, it’s challenging for Keep House staff in Rumford to participate in some of the WOW events. But this year, it didn’t stop them from coming to many events, or stop Rebecca from sticking to her weight loss goals.

Joy Pierce won for Most Events Attended with a whopping total of 19 events! She even came to events that weren’t her forte to try them out and learn new things. Both DSPs worked very hard this winter to get out and keep moving, and their determination shows. Amazing job, ladies!

Overall as a group we managed to lose close to 100 pounds, averaging around 12 people per event, so it looks like we’re all getting a little closer to our goals.

This year our WOW results feature an honorable mention. A member of management, Alfred Dufour III, our Training Coordinator, also made an impactful change to his diet and exercise regime and has found tremendous results with his new habits. Alfred lost over 100 pounds in the last year, and during this WOW season also trimmed down another 10% of his total body weight! Keep up the great work Alfred!

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

~ Desmond Tutu
A Will to Seed Wellness, Hope and Joy into Our Communities

By including LEAP in your planned bequests, you can sow support for the needs of developmentally disabled adults in many western and central Maine communities. This is your opportunity to advocate and provide meaningful impact at the personal level for years to come. We hope that in considering your gift, you will contact our Executive Director, Darryl Wood, at 778-4817 x104. To learn more about other giving and monthly partnering options, please click the Donate Now button at www.leapcommunity.org. Your donations can help to fill the needs not covered by MaineCare & Medicaid Funding. Your support can be targeted to an individual, a program, a specific project, or a general donation. Together, we each can make a difference today and every day! LEAP is a 501 (C)(3) Charitable Organization. Our mailing address is 313 Farmington Falls Road, Farmington, ME 04938

___ I want to support LEAP. Please have someone contact me at: ____________________

I want to provide a tax deductible donation to the agency. Enclosed please find my gift of:

___$25.00  ___$50.00  ___$100.00  Other: __________________

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A snapshot of what YOUR meaningful support can look like!

Melanie Jerman

The opportunity to serve others is an incalculable blessing.