

**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



**Thank you, thank you...and thank you again!**

*By Darryl Wood*

2014 was a very successful year here at LEAP, and so many people played a role in that success that it would be impossible to acknowledge them all. The ultimate barometer (in my mind), was the quality of the supports rendered by our direct support professionals (DSPs) who logged almost 240,000 hours of positive supports to the people LEAP provides services to. We are fortunate for the quality of the people in our organization and in our community, without whom none of this would be possible. I thought I would take a moment to point out some groups who really shine through for us this past year.

To our DSPs who give people a reason to get up and *live, really live* every day, thank you.

To our donors, who so generously provide additional resources for recreation, education and FUN, thank you.

To our supporters in the community (you know who you are), who understand what it takes to run our organization and support us in words and actions. Thank you.

To our volunteer board of directors, who provide insight, direction and governance to our management team. Thank you.

To our frontline supervisors, who lead by example and keep the people supporting the people engaged and energized to our mission, thank you.

To our Senior Leadership team, who make

the tough decisions in the best interest of the organization, thank you.

To our front and back office leaders, who keep a lot of visitors and applicants smiling, plates spinning, data and details humming along behind the scenes, thank you!

To anyone reading this message who takes the time to make a supportive comment, or take a helpful action to improve the life of an individual in need, thank you.

Happy New Year to people of all abilities!



**LEAP's Board of Directors 2014-15**

- Sherry Walrath, President, Strong, ME*
- Robert Lockwood, Vice-President, Industry, ME*
- Roger Condit, Secretary, Farmington, ME*
- Celeste Turner, Treasurer, Farmington, ME*

- Doug Walrath, Strong, ME*
- Frank Hosea, Wilton, ME*
- Darryl Wood, New Sharon, ME*



# Welcome to our newest staff members!

Taresa Millett, Kim White, Tara Seamans, Suzanne Buzzell, Sharon Doiron, Sandra Campbell, Jason Chartier, Jacob Linkletter, Kimberley Jennings, Michelle Monroe, Lukas Bubar, Melissa Therrien, Jesika Smith, Danelle Pinkham, Mikayla Luce, Eliza Smith, Chantal Abbott, James Caron, Cassandra Clements, and Nicole Harris

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



## LEAP Awards Cordes-Taylor Scholarships to Student-Employees

*by Sarah Judd*

Pictured here are Kelly Bean (on the left) and Rebecca Carter (on the right) receive their scholarship awards from Sarah Judd, LEAP's Human Resources Director. The Cordes-Taylor scholarships are awarded to LEAP Direct Support Professionals who are pursuing higher education degrees in a field related to human services, health, or disabilities studies.

Congratulations to these exceptional DSPs, who we are sure will be successful in their future endeavors!

## Holiday Staff Celebration...another year of excellent supports provided!

*by Megan Goodine*

LEAP hosted a holiday gathering for all staff at our Central Office on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> to celebrate another successful year of providing supports to local people with developmental disabilities. Light refreshments of cookies, cocoa and coffee were provided by the administrative and central office staff. In addition to a personal holiday greeting from their perspective supervisors, all staff members were given an appreciation check or gift certificate in recognition of their dedication, advocacy and commitment to our organization over the last year. Over one hundred staffers and several people supported by LEAP came to socialize and share in some holiday cheer during the event. Due to the incredible and enthusiastic turnout, parking became creative in order to squeeze in more party-goers in a safe manner. We may need to consider a bigger venue for future gatherings!

## 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."***



## WOW! Working On Wellness

One of our first group activities for 2015 was the Wellness Walk at the Whistle Stop Trail...say that fast three times!

Here, Sarah Judd, Carrie Gilbert, Katie Field, Kristi Iverson, Hillary Denton, and Megan Hiltz pause on the trail to share a smile. Maybe next time, you can come too?

For more information, please visit our calendar, here:

<http://www.leapcommunity.org/calendar>

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## LEAP Builds Awareness at “The Amazing Race”

by Katrina Fay

On September 28, 2014, LEAP participated in a local fundraiser sponsored by “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” organization. This benefit event was called “The Amazing Race”, where they ask local businesses to help host a site and provide a challenge for participants.

It was up to each business to come up with their own unique challenge. Originally we wanted to incorporate our Stone Soup Garden trail but with the parking area construction going on, we took this alternate opportunity to show how even giving simple direction of left and right can be challenging with people with physical or intellectual handicaps.

LEAP’s challenge was that one person had to be blindfolded and the other one had to sit in a wheelchair. The person in the wheelchair had to give directions to the person who was blindfolded so they could be able to push them through a maze of street cones and a few pumpkins.

We called this our Disability Awareness Challenge, and boy, did they get it!

The participants came in a group of four, even though only the two doing the actual challenge were supposed to be speaking. It was still a race they wanted to finish quickly, so initially all four people were trying to communicate and help each other out. But we here at LEAP know that a lot of noises and outside stimulation can affect our achievement. After about 2 minutes with them still on the first half of the course, one by one they started to back away and let the people participating in the challenge actually do the challenge. As they stepped away and off to the side to watch, they spoke to Marsha Allison. They stated to her “I get it. This is a great awareness challenge and it was a lot of fun”. Marsha took that opportunity to tell them a little more about what we do and some of the challenges that we face as Direct Support Professionals.

With the outside noise removed, the people completing the challenge now were trying to communicate with each other. One task was to tell the person to go left, right or straight. As we often do, they tried to do this with their hands; not a great way to communicate when the person you are telling can’t see, or can’t see well. When they would tell them, it was too late and they either crashed into a cone or pumpkin, and as we know failure can cause frustration. So they regrouped, took a breath, backed up and started again.

This was a fun and educational challenge! For the folks that participated in the Amazing Race they now have a new awareness for what we at LEAP do, and the patience and communication tools that we provide to help support the people we serve, to strive toward their own personal successes.



## Celebrating 34+ years of Wellness, Hope and Joy at LEAP!



# The story of LEAP, in pictures...

January 2015



## On Being Mindful

by Darryl Wood



**Mindfulness** has been described as "the intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment". For the people supported by LEAP, a great skill we look to develop and nurture in our staff is the capacity to realize that everyone communicates their needs differently, and when we slow down and really focus on being present and listening with all our senses, people feel valued. Recognizing the value in people of all abilities is at the core of our mission, and quality is realized when the interaction between the person supported and the caregiver is respectful, honest and empowering. We want people to see the value in themselves and work towards independence while being happy, healthy and well.

The skill of mindfulness is not an easy one to master! It involves paying attention, on purpose and in the moment, to the needs of others over yourself. When you are attempting to do this with a person who is nonverbal or has other physical or cognitive challenges, it can mean you need to think in a different manner than you are accustomed to, using specially-tuned insights to help support the person in the most beneficial or therapeutic manner.

LEAP staff currently receives abundant mandatory training in professional, medical and behavioral support, and we are constantly working on improving everyone's understanding of the "intangibles" involved with positive mindful supports. As we move into 2015, I think a good "resolution" for us all would be to be more mindful of those around us, especially those that could use some help to make their lives a little bit easier. In addition to our work with the people we support, LEAP is mindful that many "people of all abilities" live work and play in our communities. To that end, we like to share our stories of success, hope and inspiration via social media, social connections, newsletters and with special events. One event we are looking forward to in 2015 is "Run, Walk and Roll a Mile in My Shoes", where people of all abilities are celebrated for what they can do, not limited by what they cannot. Here's to 2015, and what we all will choose to make of it!

### Children's Task Force - Kids Walk for Kids!

by Matt Levensalor

The day was simply beautiful! In total, 14 LEAP staffers, 3 people supported, 6 friends & family, and 4 pups joined the LEAP team for the "Kids Walk for Kids" event.

Our team made a good donation to the Children's Task Force, and the walk, for some, was completed in record time.

A wonderful day, a wonderful cause, and lots of fun!



## Columbus Day Paint Spinning at TFR2!

by Kelly Bean, DSP

At Town Farm Road 2, for our Columbus Day holiday, we decided to express our artistic abilities with some paint! We borrowed a paint spinner from the Kalikow Curriculum Materials Center at UMF. They lend out Assistive Technology there for community educators, individuals with disabilities, and university students.

Abby F. picked out 4 different colored paints that she thought would be good decorating colors for the apartment; they were only 50 cents each at Walmart! She picked pink, salmon, melon, and yellow. We cut out a bunch of paper circles and put them into the center of the spinner for applying paint. We also covered up with towels to protect ourselves from the paint, but it was a really clean activity and didn't splatter any paint out of the spinner. The paint spinner was switch-operated so we could press the button to spin the art at different speeds and so each of us were able to make our art completely and totally independently. Abby and her roommate, Stacy G., took turns making the different spin art pieces. They came out so beautifully, we just had to share our beautiful spin art and pass on the word to other LEAP houses about this great decorating opportunity and super fun activity!



## Creative Joy!



## How Can I 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 already one of our monthly partners, it's hard to fully express our ongoing gratitude for your quiet and meaningful service.

As you are considering 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 information,

or contact [Darryl@leapcommunity.org](mailto:Darryl@leapcommunity.org) with any questions.

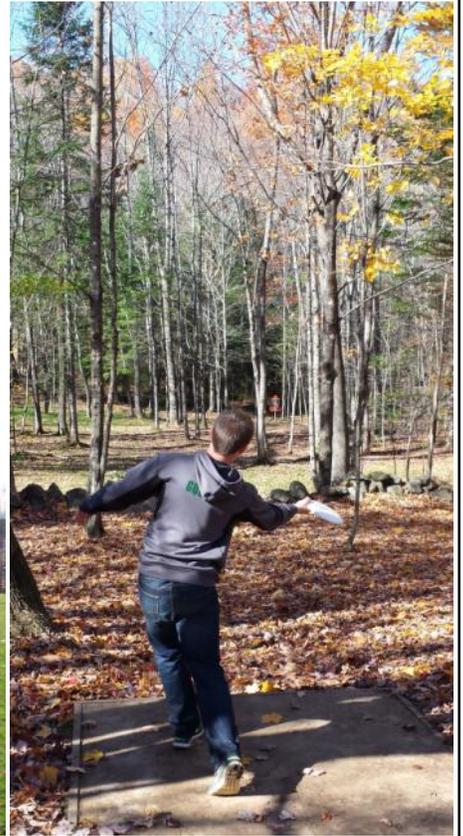
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Our pledge is to \*never\* sell, rent, or otherwise make your e-mail address available to third parties.

## Troll Valley Disc Golf Outing!

by Matt Levensalor

Our Disc Golf event began with a chill in the air, but after tossing a few discs and a brisk walk through the beautiful course and fallen leaves, we warmed right up. Our group of participants nearly doubled from last year's event, with a total head count of 17. Most participants played their first-ever round of disc golf at the local course, Troll Valley. Brightly colored discs flew through the air, and it was reported that more than one birdie occurred on this day! From the young at heart, to the young in years...this event was AWESOME!



## Historical Tidbits and Interesting Information About LEAP

LEAP was started as the Western Maine Association for Retarded Citizens in 1980 after the closure of Pineland. The name change to Life Enrichment Advancing People (LEAP) in the 1990's, symbolized a trend towards greater understanding that people of all abilities can receive positive supports in the community without labeling.

People supported by our organization were born with or acquired a disability before the age of 18 *and* have functional limitations (such as the inability to walk, speak or process information quickly) that make it difficult or impossible for them to take care of themselves independently.

Currently, LEAP employs 190 people who provide approximately **4,500 hours weekly** of direct support to adult individuals in 31 homes/programs from Phillips to Turner to Rumford, with Farmington as our epicenter.

LEAP values include making our best efforts to:

- 1) protect citizens rights and advocate for people who cannot do so for themselves
- 2) be a valuable asset to people in our community who may need information or our service
- 3) promote transparency and leadership at every level to enable quality to occur throughout, but especially at the point of interaction between a DSP and an individual supported by our agency
- 4) be an employer of choice through reputation, fairness, consistency and provide opportunity for staff to build careers in our field.

LEAP is governed by a volunteer "citizens' board" in accordance with nonprofit law and IRS responsibilities. In addition to specific committee assignments, this board currently meets six times a year with an annual meeting each September.

LEAP is a private not-for-profit corporation and we take our mission-centered stewardship role seriously. The majority of our revenue goes directly towards salaries and benefits of our Direct Support Professionals, which in turn supports their families and our communities.



## *The HR Corner*

By Sarah Judd

LEAP currently has 190 employees who are categorized into one of the following statuses:

Full-time: 116 employees

PT >20 hours a week: 23 employees

PT <20 hours a week: 21 employees

Relief: 30 employees

LEAP, like many other employers, just completed our annual open enrollment period. We offer a competitive benefit package and help people understand their options to make informed choices to their best advantage.

Out of our FT employees, almost all of them take advantage of one or more of the benefits we have to offer.

Whether it is the partially-funded medical insurance or the employer-paid life insurance, we have a very comparable and generous benefit package. In addition to our traditional benefit package which includes: Health, Dental, Life insurance, Short Term Disability, Flexible Spending, Retirement Funds, Worker's compensation, Employee Assistance Program and paid time off (sick, vacation and personal time), we also offer some non-traditional benefits.

Qualifications for these benefits are dependent upon the employee's classification: Voluntary Health and Fitness programs, mileage reimbursement, discounted movie tickets, cash-out vacation time, computer purchases, pay in advance loans for emergency situations, EE purchase program, wellness incentives, and extensive ongoing training programs. Our employees play a vital role in the success of the organization, and our benefits package and incentives is one way we give back to them for their hard work and dedication. We want employees to know just how much we appreciate them! LEAP has the perception of being one big family, and we want our employees to feel as though they are a part of that family. We are very passionate about the care that our Direct Support Staff provide each day for the individuals we support, and as an employer we want to show our employees the same respect.



### **Wellness is AWESOME!**

A hardy band of autumn explorers gathered at our central office back in October, and they conveyed up to the trailhead at Flagstaff. As seen in the background, foliage was at its glorious peak! The well-hikers enjoyed the 3.4 mile trek, along with the food, fellowship, and laughter. If you haven't yet made room in your calendar to join us at various local wellness events, there's no time like the present... we'd love to have your company! FMI on upcoming events for people of all abilities, visit us here: [www.leapcommunity.org/calendar](http://www.leapcommunity.org/calendar)

**To learn more about LEAP, please visit us at [www.leapcommunity.org](http://www.leapcommunity.org).  
Don't forget to also look for us on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest!**

# Please Help Support LEAP's Non-Medicaid Funded Needs:

## *A Will to Seed Wellness, Hope and Joy into Our Communities*

*By including LEAP in your will, 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 bequest, 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](http://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.*

\_\_\_ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us save trees and printing costs by subscribing to our e-newsletter at [www.leapcommunity.org](http://www.leapcommunity.org).  
Our pledge is to *\*never\** sell, rent, or otherwise make your e-mail address available to third parties.

**Mark Your Calendars!**  
January marks the beginning of our next round of Working on Wellness activities  
For more info, visit <http://www.leapcommunity.org/calendar>, thanks!



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LEAP  
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