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# Parent Connection

*Since 1984 .... because every family matters*

**Fall 2011**

**Published Quarterly**

## OPPORTUNITY

*"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity."* Albert Einstein

What exactly was Albert Einstein thinking when he said this? In addition, how do you do this? When you are in the middle of a difficulty or struggling through a difficult time, it is hard to think about, let alone shift your thinking to, "OPPORTUNITY"! This past year, many organizations, from small enterprises to large conglomerates, located in Maine towns and cities, across the United States, and around our world, have been facing challenges brought about, in large part, by a changing economy, tight funding for programs, and a slow-to-recover economy.

Maine Parent Federation (MPF) hasn't been exempt from the impact of these changes. The US Department of Education's decision to eliminate the funding for Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) means that one of MPF's oldest and most successful projects is drawing to a close. MPF was awarded PIRC funding over fifteen years ago, and staff have worked with schools to help implement successful and effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities. A portion of the PIRC funding has been used by MPF to support families in the Kennebec and Somerset county area with the highly successful Parents as Teachers (PAT) program a nationally recognized home visiting program.

*"An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success."* Stephen R. Covey

MPF has decided to use this time of change as an opportunity to look at our other programs and explore how we can be more effective as an organization. In other words, how do we continue to serve our families in the best way possible, using the best tools and resources at our disposal, while recognizing and utilizing the strengths and abilities of our talented staff? Our first step was to write a successful proposal for funding for a two-day strategic planning retreat. A unique funding opportunity presented itself this summer when the Statewide Family Network Technical Assistance Center funded by SAMHSA announced the availability of funding for intensive technical assistance. We submitted a proposal for an agency planning retreat and were pleased to hear that our proposal was funded. Our retreat, planned for early September, provides us with the opportunity to bring the staff from our Family Support Programs, Parent Training and Information Programs, Administrative support personnel, and AmeriCorps staff together for a day-and-a-half of planning. With the talented help and expertise of the facilitators from Common Good Ventures ([www.commongoodventures.org](http://www.commongoodventures.org)), we have taken the first step towards meeting our goal: serving Maine families to the best of our combined abilities, in a way that meets their needs, because, as the MPF tagline states, *'Every family matters'*.



## New & Updated Information Packets

Maine Parent Federation has informational packets available on more than 200 topics. These packets contain researched information, tips, local and national resources, and a list of related lending library material available here at MPF. The following information packets have recently been updated:

### Disability / Disorder Related Topics:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Learning Disabilities: Life Success a Parents Guide
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

### Education Related Topics:

- Understanding the Special Education Process

### General Topics:

- Early Childhood

.... and many more!!!!

If you would like to receive any of our information packets or would like information on another topic, please contact MPF by:

- Phone: **1-800-870-7746**  
(Ask to speak with a Parent Information Specialist)
- Email: **parentconnect@mpf.org**  
(Please provide mailing information)

**These materials are offered *free of charge!***



## Check it out!

We have some of the most requested Information Packets available on our NEW online community at **www.startingpointsforme.org**  
(Information packets are located under publications!)



*Are you looking for material on a specific disability, parenting issue, behavioral problem, or another topic?*

MPF offers a **free** mailbag lending library service with books, videos, and DVDs available on a wide variety of topics. The complete list of materials is available on our website, [www.mpf.org](http://www.mpf.org).

If you would like to borrow materials, need help in locating items on a specific topic, or would like a printed copy of the library list, call the MPF library at 1-800-870-7746 or email [dnewcombe@mpf.org](mailto:dnewcombe@mpf.org).

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*The Down East Communities of Practice Planning Committee is pleased to announce the following:*

### **“Literacy and Learning Disabilities: The Essential Cognitive Processing Deficits and Related Evidence-Based Strategies”**

Presented by Christopher Kaufman, Ph.D.

University of Maine at Machias

October 11, 2011

Registration 8:00 - 8:30 AM

Conference 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

### **“Building Effective School and Family Partnerships”**

Presented by John Nite, Ed.S., NCSP

University of Maine, Hutchinson Center, Belfast

October 26, 2011

Registration 8:00 - 8:30 AM

Conference 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

### **“Mind Over Math: The Neuropsychology of Mathematics and Practical Implications for Instruction”**

Presented by Christopher Kaufman, Ph.D.

University of Maine, Presque Isle

March 23, 2012

Registration 8:00 - 8:30 AM

Conference 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

**\$10 fee for all workshops in all locations.**

**Remote sites to be announced.**

For more information and remote site locations, contact Nancy Drake at 207-255-3625 or [nancy.drake@maine.gov](mailto:nancy.drake@maine.gov).

# **NEWS** from the Family Support Regional Coordinators . . . .

## **Region 1: Cumberland, York, Androscoggin, and Oxford Counties**

**Theresa D'Andrea, 207-423-8190 – [tdandrea@mpf.org](mailto:tdandrea@mpf.org)**

**Parent-to-Parent Support:** Parents are needed to support other caregivers of children with special health care needs. Your experience can help support families through the maze of complex issues that can arise when raising a child with special health care needs. Please call Theresa for more information.

**Family Support Partner Program:** MPF is delighted to announce a new program, which will provide Family Support Partners (FSP's) who will work in partnership with High Fidelity – Wraparound Maine. FSP's are parents who have experience with their child in the mental health system and are ready to take a more active role in helping other families navigate the systems. FSP's are trained parents who are integrated into powerful teams that are family centered and success orientated. FSP's provide support, skill development, resources, and encouragement to families receiving this service. Please call Theresa to learn more.

### ***Host Homes Needed - Who Can Be a Host Home?***

*Single people. Married people. Older people. Younger people. Current and past foster families.*

People like you who care enough to help a teenager overcome unfortunate situations and brighten their prospects for the future. We are looking for people willing to share their homes with a teen in Cumberland and York Counties. Call Jada at New Beginnings 207-795-4070 to learn more about Host Homes.

## **Region 2: Waldo, Lincoln, Knox and Sagadahoc Counties and the Brunswick Area**

**Beth Jones, 207-623-8523 (*new phone number for Beth*) – [bjones@mpf.org](mailto:bjones@mpf.org)**

**Belfast Area Transition Meeting** will be held on Thursday, September 29 from 6 to 8 PM at Broadreach in Belfast. This meeting will introduce families who are raising junior high and high school students to transition planning around work, housing, financial planning, guardianship, case management, transition age and adult services. Please contact Beth for more information.

**Mark Your Calendars!** Beginning on Tuesday, October 4, Beth, along with David Cowing of Mt. Ararat High School and Paul Barron of Brunswick High School, will hold monthly meetings on transition issues at Brunswick High School from 6 to 8 PM. Topics include information on housing from Maine Housing and Quality Services Coalition, interviews with young adults in transition or who live independently, health maintenance, technical and human support information from Dr. Chip Teel, finances, SSI, and employment. Please contact Beth for more information.

**Damariscotta Parent Support Group** will meet Thursday, September 1 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at Mobius in Damariscotta. The workshop topic for September's meeting is "Guiding Our Kids in Goal Setting." Contact Norm LeBlanc, G.E.A.R. Parent Network, 721-0161 or 1-800-264-9224 for more information.

**Support Parent Training** will be held on Saturday, October 1 from 10 AM to 2 PM at Camden Hills Regional High School. Beth is facilitating this training for parents who are raising a child with special health care needs and are interested in mentoring and "giving back" as parent volunteers. Travel reimbursement and lunch provided. For more information, please contact Beth.

**Maine Housing and Quality Services Coalition** meets on the second Monday of each month from Noon to 2 PM. This coalition of veteran parents, providers, DHHS staff, attorneys, and state representatives meets in Portland for pizza, great information from invited speakers, meaningful, working dialogue about long-term, comprehensive planning for adults and transitioning youth with special needs. Please contact Beth or Cullen Ryan at [cullen@chomhousing.org](mailto:cullen@chomhousing.org) for more information.

### **Region 3: Kennebec, Somerset, Piscataquis, and Franklin Counties**

**Veronica Boucher, 1-800-870-7746 – vboucher@mpf.org**

**Support Parent Training** will be held on Tuesday, September 27 from 5 to 8 PM at Franklin County Children's Task Force in Farmington. Please contact Veronica for more information or to register.

### **Region 4: Penobscot and Southern Aroostook Counties**

**Robin Levesque, 207-538-0866 – rlevesque@mpf.org**

A series of workshops will be held throughout Aroostook County in 2011. Workshops will be located in Houlton, Presque Isle, and Fort Kent. The monthly workshop topics are listed below under **Region 6 News**. Please call Robin for more information on dates and times of workshops in *Southern Aroostook*.

**Hermon Parent-to-Parent Support Group** meets every six weeks. FMI, call Tammy at 207-848- 0756.

**Parent-to-Parent** – Please call Robin if you are interested in learning more about becoming a trained support parent, or being matched with a support parent.

### **Region 5: Washington and Hancock Counties**

**Central Office, 1-800-870-7746**

Bahia Yackzan seeks parent support group opportunities for parents of children with special needs. Bahia is a great source of support for any parent of a child with special needs, particularly children affected by substance use in utero or born pre-term. Bahia can provide one-on-one phone support to parents and offers support at group meetings. Bahia is available to present an overview of MPF programs and facilitate parent groups for parents or parent organizations. Please call Bahia with questions or suggestions related to parent support in Washington County at 207-598-7424 or email byackzan@mpf.org.

### **Region 6: Northern and Central Aroostook Counties**

**Catherine Jandreau, 207-834-5867 – cjandreau@mpf.org**

**Parent-to-Parent Support:** Any parent of a child with special health needs or a child with disabilities, who would like to offer another parent the benefit of their knowledge, are invited to become a support parent. We offer a training to help prepare you to assist other families. It is free, easy, and very rewarding. Please contact Catherine for more information.

**Children with Special Health Needs Parent Group:** We are interested in providing an opportunity for families who are raising a child with special health needs to come together for the purpose of support and education. We would love to hear from you if you or someone you know is raising a child who spends a great deal of time in the doctor's office. The purpose of the group is to bring together families who may otherwise feel alone. We want to provide support as well as learn from each other. Most importantly, we want to be able to create social opportunities for our children. Please contact Catherine for more information.

**The following workshops will be held throughout Aroostook County in 2011.** Workshops will be located in *Fort Kent, Presque Isle, and Houlton*. Each session will be offered twice – a brown bag *Lunch and Learn* from 11 AM – 1 PM and an evening session from 6 PM – 8 PM. Please contact Catherine for dates, times, and locations.

**September**    *Relationship Development* – Learn how to set boundaries.

**October**        *Understanding Health Care Options* - Learn what is available

**November**    *Managing Stress* – Learn how to manage day-to-day stressors



## No More Morning Madness!

*Calm. Relaxed. Smiling. Words seldom heard when parents describe the morning routine on school days. No one wants to start their day in a frenzied mess of untied shoes and breakfast in hand as the school bus approaches. Follow these five short recommendations for smoothing out those rough mornings.*

### **Pack lunches the night before.**

If your child brings their lunch to school, pack it up the night before. A simple trick for keeping those PB&J's from getting soggy is to spread peanut butter on both pieces of bread. Complaints about apple slices that have browned? Dip apple slices into orange juice or Sprite before packing them up.

### **Pack the book bag.**

As you are packing lunch, ask your child to pack her bookbag. Double check for things like library books, field trip permission forms, or other special items that need to be returned to school.

### **Think breakfast menu.**

Work with your child to write a short list of acceptable healthy breakfast foods. Turn the list into a menu that can be posted on the refrigerator and ask your child to fill it out before going to bed. Or, if it's too hard to choose at night, a short list will make it easier to choose from in the morning.

### **You're wearing that?**

Many kids make fashion choices that differ from what parents may choose. Decide ahead of time what's appropriate to wear to school. Then, let your child choose from those items. That sense of individuality and choice is important for many school-age kids.

### **Go ahead, set that alarm clock.**

Now set it for 10 minutes earlier. Until a good school routine is established, recognize that everything will take extra time. Give your child (and yourself!) the cushion of a few extra minutes. Once your routine is in place, you may find you can get up a little later.

These five recommendations might not smooth out every wrinkle in your morning routine, but they may leave your family feeling a little calmer, relaxed, and who knows, maybe even smiling!

*Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are services of public television station WETA, Washington, D.C. Reading Rockets is funded by the OnLine U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Colorín Colorado, a web service to help English language learners become better readers, receives major funding from the American Federation of Teachers. Additional funding is provided by the National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. LD OnLine is the world's leading website on learning disabilities and ADHD, with major funding from Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes.*

# Lead Poisoning: Do I need to worry?

Take this quiz to find out.

Lead Tipsheet #10



If you checked any box, ask your child's doctor about a blood test for your child.

If your child is younger than 6 years, check all that are true on this list.

- The place where I live was built before 1950.
- The place where I live was built before 1978, and has been painted or renovated recently.
- My child is on MaineCare.
- Someone who lives with me may work with lead. Examples: house painters, contractors, metal recyclers.
- My child has a brother, sister or neighbor who has had lead poisoning.
- My child or I were born in another country.
- My child puts lots of things that are not food in their mouth.

## What's so bad about lead?

Lead can cause:

- Learning disabilities
- Behavior problems
- Lower intelligence
- Hearing damage
- Language or speech delays

## How do I know if my child has lead poisoning?

The only way to tell is to get a blood test. Most kids with lead poisoning don't look or act sick.

## How does lead poisoning happen?

Dust from lead paint in older homes is almost always the cause of lead poisoning.

Lead dust collects on floors and in places where kids put their hands and play with toys. Children, especially those under age 3, often put their hands and toys in their mouths. This makes it very easy for lead dust to get into and damage their growing bodies.

## How can I keep my child safe?

- ✓ Check painted windows, doors and floors for peeling or chipping paint.
- ✓ Clean floors, windowsills and tabletops with wet mops or rags once a week.
- ✓ Wash your child's hands before eating or sleeping.
- ✓ Wash toys once a week.
- ✓ Don't let your child eat food that falls on the floor.
- ✓ Wash pacifiers and bottles if they fall on the floor before giving them to your child.
- ✓ If you are fixing up your home, learn how to control lead dust before you begin. Or hire an "EPA-certified RRP contractor" to do the work.
- ✓ If you work with lead at your job, change your clothes and take a shower before touching your child. Wash your work clothes separately from family laundry.

## Protect your family.

- Check this website: [www.maine.gov/healthyhomes](http://www.maine.gov/healthyhomes)
- Call for advice: 1-866-292-3474 • TTY: 800-606-0215



Maine Center for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
An Office of the  
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner



## Get Ready for Financial Aid

Parents of high school seniors can get an early start on the college financial application process by going online to visit the FAFSA4caster ([www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov)). This website offers a practice run for the real Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). There is a financial aid estimator that you can use to get an early estimate of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Colleges use the EFC to determine what types of student aid you may receive. Using your EFC, FAFSA4caster will calculate what types of federal grants, loans, and work-study your senior will qualify for and will estimate the award amount for each type. You can use your 2010 income and asset numbers or estimate what these numbers will be in 2011.

This information will enable you and your senior to make informed decisions about which colleges or community colleges will best meet your senior's higher education goals. The FAFSA4caster can provide a lesson in responsible planning and decision-making for both you and your senior. It offers a realistic look at the price of the higher education your senior is dreaming about.

When you complete the FAFSA4caster it will provide you with information about the next steps in the financial aid process and it will automatically send you a reminder to complete the FAFSA on time.

Please call MPF at 1-800-870-7746 for more information about financial aid for higher education.

The **Maine Developmental Disabilities Council** (MDDC) is seeking a parent of a young child who resides in northern Maine and is interested and able to serve as a volunteer on the Council. A parent would need to commit to attending day and a half Council meetings in Augusta on a quarterly basis. The Council will reimburse for mileage and meals and provide hotel accommodations.

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Erin Howes at MDDC by telephone at 1-800-244-3990 or email [ehowes@maineddc.org](mailto:ehowes@maineddc.org).

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### **Final State Budget: MaineCare, TANF, General Assistance, and Benefits for Legal Immigrants**

Please visit the Maine Equal Justice Partners website at [www.mejp.org](http://www.mejp.org) to view the summary of the changes in benefits.

Contact MEJP for more information at 1-866-626-7059 or email [info@mejp.org](mailto:info@mejp.org).

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### **Family Empowerment Institute Trainings**

The G.E.A.R. Parent Network developed the training institute to help parents acquire skill sets in advocacy that are necessary for effective collaborations.

The Family Empowerment Institute is a full day of training. Participant will be compensated for childcare, mileage, and will receive a \$100 stipend for attending the entire day. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks will be provided.

**Tuesday, September 20, 2011 from 8 AM to 5 PM  
at Mid-Coast Maine Community Action, 34 Wing  
Farm Parkway in Bath**

**Friday, November 4, 2011, from 8 AM to 5 PM at  
Loring Job Corps Center, 36 Montana Road in  
Limestone.**

For more information, contact G.E.A.R. at 1-800-264-9224.

## Social Robots and Children

The Puckett Institute is conducting a study using social robots to promote *joint attention*\* in children with special needs.

They are looking for parents of children with special needs who are willing to take part in a study using social robots to help their young child improve communication skills. In this study, parents will be asked to watch a two-minute video (<http://socialrobots.org>) of a robot and child interacting and answer twelve questions about the practicality and usefulness of the robot. The entire study can be done over the Internet and takes ten minutes to complete.

Please contact Jeremy Prior at The Puckett Institute if you have any questions, 828-210-8718, or [jprior@puckett.org](mailto:jprior@puckett.org).

*\*Joint attention occurs when one child, alerts another to a stimulus by eye gazing, finger pointing, or other verbal or non-verbal signal.*

*For example, one child may look at another child, point to an object, and then return their gaze back to the other child. In this case, the pointing child is "initiating joint attention" by trying to get the other to look at the object. The child who looks to the object is "responding to joint attention."*

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## Charter Schools in Maine

The Maine Department of Education (MDOE) has launched a new web page with information about public charter schools in Maine.

Legislation allowing charter schools in Maine becomes law on September 28, 2011. There are many questions about creating new schools, converting existing public schools to charter status, and enrolling students in charter schools.

A new web page from MDOE explains Maine's new charter school law and provides answers to some of the most common questions about the statute.

[www.maine.gov/education/charterschools/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/education/charterschools/index.html)



Dear Readers,

MPF is looking for people who have expertise in fundraising to serve on our Board of Directors. We need enthusiastic, energetic individuals to take a leadership role in coordinating fundraising activities.

If you do not have time to serve on the Board but have time to help fund raise, please send me an e-mail at [jlachance@mpf.org](mailto:jlachance@mpf.org) or call 1-800-870-7746 to learn how you might be able to help.

Sincerely,

# High Fidelity Wraparound Services are Available Statewide!

## Youth and Family Perspectives

Since January 2007, through a service called High Fidelity Wraparound, Maine has served a total of 850 children and youth with emotional/behavioral health disabilities and their families. Initially this service was piloted in three regions of the state. In July 2011, due to increasingly positive results for children and their families and significant reductions in the use of other costly services, Wraparound was expanded to statewide.

*“Wraparound” is a family centered, strengths based, highly individualized planning process to help at risk children and youth achieve improvements in functional, educational, and independence related outcomes.”*

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### SUCCESS WITH WRAPAROUND FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

*April 6, 2011*

*Chelsea was involved with the Department of Corrections at the age of 12 and then with Child Protective Services at age 13. Chelsea witnessed violence and drug use within her family, which led to a lot of trauma and created instability in her life.*

*After Chelsea was unsuccessful in multiple family placements and group homes, and due to her use of illegal substances, she was committed to Long Creek Correctional Center at the age of 16 for three years. At that time, she was also dealing with other issues including an eating disorder and cutting.*

*Although Chelsea had a long history of trauma, she always stayed focused on her goals and achievements in both the classroom and sports. Chelsea realized who she was as a person while in Long Creek and although she had a few slips along the way, graduated a year and a half early and began taking college classes at age 16. Chelsea displayed her determination and willingness to make herself a better person through the Long Creek program.*

*Chelsea was referred to Wraparound in January 2010 after completing the Long Creek Correctional Program in 11 months.*

*Chelsea has learned a lot in the last year from the Wraparound program. She realizes that honesty is the best policy and opening up to people you trust can help*

*you get through the hardest times in life. Chelsea feels it is very important to identify the supports that are available and she has learned to eliminate negativity in her life.*

*Today, at the age of 18, Chelsea is living with her stepsister and her husband and their two children in a stable living environment. Chelsea has started her spring classes at Southern Maine Community College and is working part-time. Chelsea has a dream to become a success story. Chelsea believes the Wraparound program has changed her life and hopes her story will help the lives of others in similar situations as they strive to reach their goals*

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Service planning is accomplished by “wrapping” formal and informal services and supports around the youth and family based on their unique individual strengths and needs. The goal is to help youth and their parents or caregivers with the support needed to keep their child at home, in school and out of trouble. There is an emphasis on integrating the youth into the community and building the family’s support network, thus expanding supports to youth and families beyond systems and focusing on community and natural supports.

The National Wraparound Initiative website (<http://www.nwi.pdx.edu/wraparoundbasics.shtml>) reports that “the wraparound process has been implemented widely across the United States and internationally for several reasons, including its documented success in promoting shifts from residential treatment and inpatient options to community-based care (and associated cost savings); its alignment with the value base for systems of care; and its resonance with families and family advocates. Wraparound has been included in Surgeon General’s reports on both Children’s Mental Health and Youth Violence, mandated for use in several federal grant programs, and presented by leading researchers as a mechanism for improving the uptake of evidence-based practices.” Research cited indicate that studies recently published show “...consistent and significant outcomes in favor of the wraparound group compared to control groups across a wide range of outcome domains, including residential placement, mental health outcomes, school success, and juvenile justice recidivism.”<sup>1</sup> The article goes on to report, “... there has been consistent documentation of the model’s ability to impact residential placement and other outcomes for youth with complex needs.”

1. Suter, J.C. & Bruns, E.J. (2009). Effects of wraparound from a meta-analysis of controlled studies. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 12, 336-351.

Dallas, a mom from Maine, whose family received support from Wraparound shared her experience:

*“Wraparound helped my family identify natural supports that we didn’t even know we had. Three years later the natural supports are still with us and we have developed even more”*

*“Wraparound taught me to effectively manage crisis. If needed I would be able to pull together a team meeting with my family without the help of service providers”*

Dallas describes how intense the support was and that it came into their lives at exactly the right time for her family.

*“We were at a stand still with my son. The Wraparound program does exactly that; it wraps around the family. The wraparound program left me with life time skills”*

Dallas now uses her experience and new skills to support other family’s success in the wraparound process.

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In Maine, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) manages Wraparound through contracts with six provider agencies in nine geographic areas. A study, on the DHHS website, *Wraparound Maine Summary: Mental Health Service Use and Cost Study*, reports results that indicate a “28% reduction in overall average per child mental health expenditures following the initiation of Wraparound and significant expenditure reductions in the following service areas:

- *Crisis Intervention and Resolution Services*
- *Residential Treatment Services*
- *Inpatient Hospital Services*
- *Children’s Assertive Community Treatment*

*More information on this study can be found on Maine’s DHHS website at QI data snapshot, Volume 3, Issue 3, July 2011.*

Excerpts from an article in Sweetser's report:

## Celebrating the Transformation of a Teen

Written by Amy Paradysz

*Shortly after graduating from the Wraparound program, 14 year-old Crystal Johnson was bullied at school. Rather than fighting back and violating her parole, this eighth-grader with a record of aggressive and destructive behavior, simply reported the incident to her school. Crystal's mother, Dawn Johnson, credits the Wraparound program with her daughter's remarkable transformation, "she's not kicking the crap out of me," Dawn said. "All of the behaviors, from going through the Wraparound program, they're gone. She is not aggressive. What I see now is normal 14 year-old behavior."*

*Dawn was a Sweetser resident herself when she was suicidal and a ward of the state. "Sweetser saved me at age 14, and having children of my own with behavioral issues, I knew where to turn," she said.*

*Crystal has been involved in several state programs and Sweetser programs, including Family Focus, the Crisis Unit and The School at Sweetser - all of which provided needed support and structure. But it was the Wraparound program that was really transformative.*

*In 2009, Crystal and her family were selected to take part in the Wraparound Maine initiative, an intense family-based support system. Wraparound services are provided to children ages 5-18 who are either in residential care or at high risk of placement. "We knew it was going to be intense. We knew it was going to be hard. And we were willing," Dawn said. "We are so grateful."*

*It was also life-changing for family members, including Crystal's dad, who is involved in a group called Strong Fathers, and Crystal's 12 year-old brother Dustin, who is no longer afraid of her. Dawn has become a member of the Wraparound board. "It has helped us to unite as a family instead of everyone going in different directions," Dawn said. "It's a lot easier now to hear everyone's concerns."*

*As part of the Wraparound program, one team member helped teach Crystal how to knit, sew, and do crafts to help keep her calm. Now Crystal wants to design a clothing line called Crystal Creations.*

*"She's grateful for everything she's been taught and she likes the Crystal that she is now," Dawn said. "I'd like to know where this kid has been all these years. I absolutely enjoy her and I'm so grateful."*