

From a Physical Home to the Spirit of Home

Maine Children's Home (MCH) offers programs for building and strengthening families and their children, instilling hope for the future and a better quality of life.

Founded in 1899, the Waterville-based organization first opened its doors as a temporary refuge or "home" for children whose families faced difficult times.

While MCH's Family Adoption Program still exists, long gone are the days when MCH was a physical home for Maine's children and youth. Today, the word home at MCH means care and belonging.

Over the past 124 years, MCH has evolved to meet the changing needs of Maine's individuals, families, and the community of Maine with the following five core programs:

Journey Program

A program that provides young parents with a stable and productive community environment that empowers them with the knowledge, tools, and skills they need to be successful individuals and parents.

Christmas Program

A winter essentials program that provides brand new clothes, seasonal essentials, toys, books, and games to 1,100 Maine children whose families are facing financial hardship.

Family Adoption Program

A comprehensive adoption agency that offers professional services and support to all members of the adoption triad — adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees.

Connected Families Project

A program that offers and facilitates trainings, workshops, resources, and support groups that foster nurturing environments where children, youth, and their families can thrive.

Family Counseling Center

A state licensed outpatient mental health program and facility that provides counseling to individuals, couples, children, and families.

We even updated the way we look.

MCH recently wrapped up a thoughtful two-year-long rebranding process with the goal of strengthening the public's understanding of MCH and the variety of services that the organization provides.

This process included the creation of a new logo (shown above) that feels warm, welcoming, and is more inclusive of all MCH programs.

While MCH has grown to offer more family-focused programs and services, we still have our Family Adoption Program.



During the pandemic, MCH helped the Russels (at left) with their home study process, pre-placement and post-placement support for their son's adoption. Justin and Kate welcomed Harry home from South Korea.

Trainings to Build Self-Worth

Connected Families Project at Maine Children's Home (MCH) offers the following trainings that help foster nurturing environments where children, youth, and families can thrive.

Making Sense of Your Worth (MSoYW)

The **Making Sense of Your Past Worth** training is an eight-week program designed for youth and adults who desire the freedom that comes with living in positive self-worth and secure attachment.

W.I.S.E. Up!®

When it comes to handling questions and comments about adoption and foster care, kids need to be empowered to decide how they want to respond.

W.I.S.E. Up! helps children and teens choose what they want to share about their story if anything.

Parenting for Positive Self-Worth

Parenting for Positive Self-Worth focuses on parenting tools and strategies that we can pass on to our kids to help them develop and maintain positive self-worth. Parenting for Positive Self-Worth is built on Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)®.

MaineChildrensHome.org/connected-families-project



Every year for Halloween, Maine Children's Home (MCH) organizes a trick-or-treat event for the families in Journey Program to help promote a sense of community on the MCH campus.



New Beginnings with Candace

On August 14, Maine Children's Home (MCH) welcomed a new addition to the team — Executive Director Candace Marriner.

Candace's 25 years of leadership experience across the helping professions, 10 years of experience in foster care and adoption work, and deep passion for social work aligns perfectly with the mission of the nearly 125-year-old organization.

"Maine Children's Home has been around for nearly 125 years due to its ability to hear the changing needs of its community," says Marriner. "I'm excited to be a part of meeting this community's needs, alongside dedicated staff, volunteers, board of directors, partners, and community members."

Connect

Our website expands on the work that we do to help strengthen families in and beyond Maine. We keep our community updated on our blog and social media accounts.

MaineChildrensHome.org



[@mechildrenshome](https://www.instagram.com/mechildrenshome)



The Impact of Nurturing and Caring Adults

When families have their basic needs met and have the following five protective factors* present in their lives, they are better able to support the well-being of their children.

These five protective factors are:

Parent Resilience - a parent's ability to bounce back from hard times.

Concrete Support - knowledge of helpful resources and supportive people.

Social Connections - a network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors.

Knowledge of Parenting Skills and Child Development - understanding of the importance of positive parenting on a developing child's mind.

Social-Emotional Competency of Children - opportunities to learn self-worth, healthy habits, and behaviors from nurturing role models.

All of these factors rely on one element — nurturing and caring adults.

Nurturing and caring adults make these five protective factors possible. They provide much needed emotional support, resources, assistance during tough times, parenting knowledge, and caregiver skills that help build and strengthen the families around us.

This fact is at the heart of why Maine Children's Home (MCH) exists.

Every gift offered to MCH directly supports protective-factor efforts such as:

- **Journey Program** providing education on child development, positive parenting, as well as skills to help young people be the best possible parents and successful independent adults.
- **Christmas Program** offering winter essentials and gifts that help to relieve stress and nurture connection in families who are facing financial hardship in the winter months.
- **Family Adoption Program** connecting adoptive families with the research-based support they need for guiding adoptive children toward overcoming traumatic backgrounds.
- **Connected Families Project** providing educational and resilience-building resources for parents, caregivers, and educators that help to create safer environments for kids.
- **Family Counseling Center** providing the best possible clinical counseling to children and teens, guiding clients toward positive self-worth and mental health.

And every volunteer hour offered in an MCH program helps build a supportive network that builds and strengthens families.

*<https://preventchildabusenc.org/resource-hub/protective-factors/>



Photo of Alaina Wolman after the birth of her son 22 years ago. Alaina is a 2002 graduate from Maine Children's Home's (MCH) Journey Program, which supports young parents on their path to self-worth and positive parenting. Alaina is now the director of the program, giving back to the program that supported her.

“They really helped me believe in myself.”

When Alaina Wolman recalls the birth of her first son, she says meeting him “was bliss.”

“He was perfect. He was this little bundle of joy and, at that moment, I felt like I had found my purpose,” says Alaina.

That moment was 22 years ago when Alaina was a junior in high school and a participant in Journey Program — Maine Children's Home's (MCH) program designed to empower teens and adults in their early 20s who are pregnant or parenting.

“From the moment I entered MCH as a teen I felt a sense of calm and belonging,” says Alaina. “When I was in the program, the program director and program teacher were two of the most supportive mentors I've ever had in my life. ... They really helped me believe in myself.”

With the help of the program, Alaina was able to maintain honor roll in her junior and senior years, and graduate high school on time.

After she graduated from the program, Alaina moved on to work various jobs for MCH, ultimately leading her to become the current Program Director of Journey Program.

“I'm able to bring a level of understanding to my work that others, who haven't walked this journey, don't have,” says Alaina. “For a lot of people, the idea of someone having a baby as a teen represents a tough road and they view it as sort of a sad moment. There is a lot of shame around having a baby 'before you're supposed to.' I try to take away some of that shame by simply offering a 'congratulations' to new participants. While it may be a tough road, it's also one that can be very rewarding and joyful, as anyone who is a parent knows.”

When asked what she thinks the most important aspect of Journey Program is, Alaina says, “a sense of belonging and the skills and support to become the best a young person can be, as parents and as people.”

Journey Program at MCH provides young parents in their teens or early 20s with a stable and productive community environment that empowers them with parenting class, prenatal education, group support, academic support and assistance with resources.

MaineChildrensHome.org/journey-program

“I am capable of more than I thought. . . .”

Journey Program really helped me understand that I do have people around me who really care and appreciate me.

My hope for my future is to be a present mom and to give my girls the life I never had and to make sure they never have to worry about anything.”

~ Brandy

Brandy is a current participant in Journey Program at MCH, shown below with her two daughters.



Ways to Give

Donate Online

MaineChildrensHome.org/donate



Donate by Mail

93 Silver Street
Waterville, Maine
04901

Volunteer

MaineChildrensHome.org/volunteer



The staff of Maine Children's Home (MCH) at their annual retreat for brainstorming ways to make MCH an even better place for the children and families we serve and for our hardworking staff.