

# The Summit

SPRING 2022  
NEWSLETTER

## Our Next Chapter

*Opportunity and Hope:*  
The Campaign for MFS



FOOD FOR FAMILIES  
WHO COOK

MEET LIZ

ADDRESSING  
TRAUMA



# OPPORTUNITY AND HOPE: THE CAMPAIGN FOR MFS

Monadnock Family Services is embarking on an exciting journey to provide mental health services in a facility that this community needs and deserves. This exciting project sends a powerful message: Mental health services are an important, absolutely necessary part of health care services. Like nothing else before, the past two years of the pandemic have taught us how important and fragile our mental health is to us as individuals and to our community as a whole.

We are raising money to help buy and renovate a better space in which the staff of MFS can serve this community and its people, especially our children and youth. It will allow us to be more efficient and focus more of our resources in serving you, our community. The Keene-based programs and services can be placed under the roof of this one building, making it more cost effective. The funds raised will allow us to create a brighter and more welcoming environment in which to help our clients and provide a much improved working environment for the staff. The outpouring of support for this project so far from individuals, businesses, companies, organizations, and foundations has been humbling and gratifying.

We are hopeful that with Antioch University of New England (ANE) leasing back space for some time, MFS can work in close collaboration with their psychological and human service academic departments. This promises to benefit our clients as well as both MFS and ANE. The building will also allow for more creative relationships with other organizations that will benefit the community.

It has been an honor to be part of the dedicated campaign team that is raising money to purchase and renovate a new space for MFS.



JoAnn Fenton

Opportunity and Hope Campaign  
Co-Chair



# RUTH EWING FAMILY MATCH

To give today, visit [mfs.org/support](https://mfs.org/support) or send a check with the enclosed envelope to 64 Main St. Keene, NH.

For more information on MFS' capital campaign, please contact Director of Development Kathy Waters at 603-338-0052 or [kwaters@mfs.org](mailto:kwaters@mfs.org).



Dear Members of the Monadnock Community,

Along with JoAnn Fenton, it has been an honor to serve with as co-chairs of the MFS Opportunity and Hope Campaign, which is striving to provide a bright and much improved mental health facility, which you, the community deserves. This facility will allow MFS to consider expansion and improvement of services and provide a warm and supportive counseling environment, especially for our children and youth.

In 1959/60 Ruth Ewing, wife of James Ewing, the owner of the Keene Sentinel, stepped forth to become involved with Monadnock Family Services' Board of Directors and played a lead role in hiring its first paid staff member, a professional social worker, to begin the development of its future toward becoming the region's leading community mental health services organization.

Ruth Ewing chaired the MFS board of directors from 1965-67 and again in 1975. She nurtured and thoughtfully led the organization change from a volunteer charitable service to a modern mental health counseling service. Ruth's vision, values and concern for the well-being and health of the entire community continue to impact on the organization today. She remained involved and supportive of MFS until her death in 2014. I was privileged to know and work with Ruth and consider her to be a true matriarch of MFS.

Thus, I am very pleased to announce that the Ewing Family has provided a \$45,000 match to challenge the entire community to kick-off this major community appeal phase of the Opportunity and Hope Campaign. Please give and give as generously as you can to support this campaign. Every gift received through June 30th will be matched by the Ewing family. Help us meet this challenge and, even, perhaps, to exceed it!

Ken Jue

Opportunity and Hope Campaign  
Co-Chair





# Food for Families Who Cook



Chris Sprague  
Development Committee Member

## The Birth of a New Program

The topic of food insecurity has come into focus as families across the Monadnock region have reported difficulty securing food. COVID and international unrest only compound this challenge with food and gas prices rising to further reduce access to food.

That's where Monadnock Family Services (MFS) provides the "safety net" that identifies needs, rallies community and fills critical gaps. Food for Families Who Cook was no normal "food drive". To be successful, MFS called on their supporters for donations and reached out to The Community Kitchen about accepting a portion of the donations to help expand the scope of delivering meals to those in need. After releasing news of the food drive, C&S Wholesale Grocers also stepped-in to provide an incredibly generous donation of staple items and diapers.

## "Spring Giving"

In the weeks leading up to the food drive, MFS staff donated over \$700 in change, which was then sorted by Monadnock Adult Care Center clients who later helped to shop for needed items. For many, the program came to life on Saturday April 2nd when over 100 individuals and families came to MFS' office on Main Street in Keene with their much needed contributions of food and supplies. Those parents and children showed incredible joy as they delivered their heartfelt grocery bags. Managed chaos ensued. As the piles grew, volunteers worked hard to keep up. They organized the food by category and delivered it to tables which were sagging by noon. Baby related donations alone filled a large portion of the break room. It was a wonderfully generous and productive day and huge thanks go to the many contributors of goods, time, and funds to purchase grocery and gas gift cards.

## Top contributions included:

- Peanut butter and jelly
- Gluten free food
- Cereal hot and cold
- Tomato sauce and pasta
- Meal bars and snack packs
- Diapers and wipes



Father and daughter duo dropping off their donation

## Delivering Food Just in Time

In the week after the food drive, staff shopped for contributions to the specific needs of families and individuals, even taking into account their specific dietary needs. Here are some vignettes that bring the program to life:

**Tears of Gratitude-** one single mother wept when she received wipes, formula and diapers of various sizes to meet the needs of her growing infant. These were simply beyond her reach.

**Targeted Food-** A diabetic client had unique dietary needs. He was able to receive curated foods that helped him to eat.

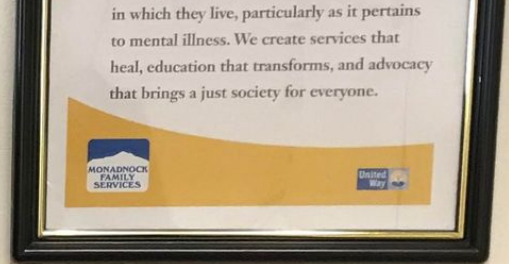
**Brain Fuel-** MFS staff took snacks to provide to clients at group sessions and activities.



Case Manager Christine Holland shopping for a client







## Meet Liz

During Children's Clinician and Interim Children's Team Leader Liz Biron's three and half years at our Eastern Region Office (ERO) in Peterborough, she has become familiar with the realities of providing mental health services in more rural areas and small towns within our service region. "It's hard when you are serving multiple towns and counties that don't have a concentration of care coordination the way that Keene does" Liz shared, "We try to partner with the community as much as we can so that people know we are here for them, and so that we know what resources are out there so that we can ensure continuing of care for the clients we see."

Liz shared that there is a need now, more than ever, to cultivate natural support for the region so that clients can address their mental health concerns. "Think of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs." Liz continued, "Families who are struggling with things like homelessness and food insecurity are not going to be able to prioritize their mental health when they don't know where they are sleeping that night."

In her work with children and adolescents, Liz has noticed a delay of social-emotional growth in clients due to isolation from the pandemic and compounding mental health issues from untreated and delayed care. "Our phone is ringing off the hook with children having a hard time coping with re-entry into school and social circles," said Liz.

The good news, however, is that the emergence of telehealth has greatly improved client access to care in ERO. Clients who were previously unable to be seen regularly due to transportation issues can now have access to care that meets their needs and schedules. Liz shared a moment of success when she had a client who was also unable to secure transportation, and did not have access to the internet to use ZOOM but was able to talk on the phone. This client completed a full course of treatment for adjustment disorder, anxiety, and depression completely via telephone. "If it wasn't for telehealth", Liz stated, "This child would not have been able to access the help they needed".

Liz and other Peterborough-based Children's Clinicians have even been able to work with local schools to see kids during the day, who otherwise would not be able to attend after-school appointments.

What is the secret to ERO's success during this especially challenging time? "Accessibility and support," Liz says, "That is our greatest strength as a team. Our relationships with each other are key and we have an all-hands-on-deck mentality. We just love to celebrate each other." When the pandemic first started, ERO began doing a 30 minute check-in with each other every day to share resources are support. Two years later, staff are still meeting once a week to continue their wrap-around care mentality for each other and the betterment of the clients served by ERO in the eastern Monadnock region.



# Creating a trauma-informed community



Over the last couple of years, the need for a community-wide, public health initiative to address collective trauma has become clearer than ever.

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the tension of systemic racism, our community requires an initiative that brings people together and addresses the public health issue of trauma. As part of the Monadnock region's Community Health Improvement Plan, MFS CEO Phil Wyzik began facilitating a group, called the Monadnock Assembly on Trauma and Transformation (MATT), aimed at identifying how our region can become a trauma-informed community.

"A trauma informed community can mean many things," Phil Wyzik explained. Trauma comes from singular events (natural disasters, sexual or physical violence, for example) but can also be a consequence of systematic racism, poverty, health inequity, and other forms of discrimination. "At the core, it is a safe place where people recognize the impact of trauma, build safe, informed and healing experiences where victims can recover, and community members build knowledge about trauma into their policies and practices where ever they can. Over 400 communities in the US are trying to accomplish this."

The Assembly hopes to be a voice and catalyst for transforming the region through a deepening of community awareness and learning, and eventually implementing trauma-informed strategies into the systems community members interact with daily.

Reflecting on the growth of the Assembly, Monadnock United Way President Liz LaRose shared, "Since officially launching Monadnock Assembly for Trauma and Transformation, membership has grown significantly. This speaks to the need in our community and having so many voices at the table will ensure that we address the unique needs of people experiencing Trauma in our region." The Assembly looks forward to bringing together a cross-sector collaboration that develops and enhances the talents and resources of individuals and groups across southwestern New Hampshire. The group is open to the community and welcomes members' lived and professional experiences.

The first community event sponsored by the MATT is coming up at The Showroom in Keene on May 12th at 6:30PM. The Assembly will be screening *The Wisdom of Trauma*, a documentary following physician and bestselling author Dr. Gabor Maté who has "dedicated his life to understanding the connection between illness, addiction, trauma and society" and envisions a trauma-informed culture where people focus on collective and individual healing. The film is free and open to the public but reservations are required because seating is limited. Visit The Colonial's website to reserve your ticket.



## Other Highlights

November was staff appreciation month at MFS! Over the month, staff were treated to a coffee fund at Prime Roast, a serenade at the MACC, yummy treats and many donated raffle prizes from MFS incorporators, and supervisor organized gifts or activities thanks to funds from our Alice Circle group.



MFS CEO Phil Wyzik hosted discussions of his debut novel "Pushed Down, Then Out" at The Toadstool Bookshop in Keene and Peterborough. Profits from the novel benefit the Monadnock Assembly on Trauma and Transformation.

In March local artist Robert Seaman donated 50% of his profits for the month, including from his show at Prime Roast in Keene!



## Upcoming Events

**May 11th** - Join the NH Community Behavioral Health Association for a webinar on the four pillars of creating and sustaining a mentally healthy workplace culture with Kim Lamontagne.

**May 12th** - Free screening of *The Wisdom of Trauma*. See details below.

**June 3rd to 12th** - Visit our first floor window on 64 Main St. in Keene to see artwork by MFS clients and staff for Keene Art Walk.

**Date TBD** - Join MFS and Florentine Films for a preview and discussion of Ken Burns' upcoming film *Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness*.

Contact the MFS Development Department at [development@mfs.org](mailto:development@mfs.org) or (603) 338-0052 for more information about upcoming events.

**Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date on all of the happenings at MFS!**



## Register Today!

The Monadnock Assembly on Trauma and Transformation invites you to a viewing of *The Wisdom of Trauma*, a documentary following physician and bestselling author Dr. Gabor Maté as he explores why Western society is facing interconnected epidemics of anxiety, chronic illness and substance abuse. Join at The Showroom in Keene on May 12th at 6:30PM for this free event. Visit The Colonial's website to reserve your ticket.



THE  
**WISDOM** OF  
**TRAUMA**  
Can our deepest pain be a doorway to healing?  
FEATURING DR. GABOR MATÉ



# **May is Mental Health Awareness Month**

**About half of Americans will meet the  
criteria for a diagnosable mental health  
condition sometime in their life.**

**Thank you for  
supporting the  
children and adults  
who turn to MFS  
for help!**