

KVCAP Connector

Building Stronger Individuals,
Families and Communities

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Issue: Spring 2017

Board Member Spotlight: Heather Merrow, President

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It seems like a day never goes by without Heather doing something for someone else. That is simply the kind of person she is.

Heather was born in Aroostook County in the 60's. She spent her childhood on the farm in Monticello with her parents and three sisters. While they didn't have a lot financially, including running water, she says they had everything they needed. They had several acres of land and a barn full of chickens and other animals. There was a large garden where they grew the vegetables that fed them all year.

"We were happy. We never wanted for anything. We had all that we needed and wanted right on the farm," Heather shared. "Did we miss having a bathroom? Well since we never had one, we didn't miss it! Clothes were washed on Saturday and hung on the clothesline. It wasn't awful. It was just happy. We'd go swimming in the local river with family and friends. We traveled to Canada to see my father's family. Life was good and there was a lot of love."

Heather graduated from Houlton High School and attended Job Corps in Bangor, where she met her husband, Ralph. Together they decided to move to Central Maine and begin their adult lives. Today she has an established career as a CNA at Lakewood Continuing Care Center and Ralph is a professional painter. They have one grown son, Nicholas.

In 2006, Heather joined KVCAP's Board of Directors, and began her many years of service to our organization. Last November she was elected to serve as the Board President.

Heather and Ralph actually give their time and energy to a number of community organizations, providing hundreds of hours of volunteer service to groups that include the Mid Maine Homeless Shelter, the Boy Scouts, and the United Way. In 2001, Heather was one of the founding members of the South End Neighborhood Association (SENA), which was created to improve the quality of life of her neighbors. Through SENA, Heather continues advocating for, organizing and implementing a number of initiatives for the South End, such as neighborhood clean-up days and the annual bike swap.

"Throughout my involvement, I hope one thing shines through. That it is my goal to make a positive difference in the lives of others and do what I can to make their lives as happy and fulfilling as possible."

We are certainly grateful for her strong commitment to the mission of KVCAP, to remove the barriers to prosperity for people living in Central Maine. Thank you for your leadership, Heather. You are a strong and unwavering voice for people living in poverty!



Tee-off for Transportation!

KVCAP's 3rd Annual Golf Tournament and Silent Auction will be held on Thursday, June 29, at Lakewood Golf Course in Madison. This year all proceeds will support the Kennebec and Somerset public bus system, operated by KVCAP.

Ridership on the Kennebec and Somerset Explorer public bus system has reached capacity and we must raise private dollars to meet the ever-growing demand! Best of all, the money raised will be matched dollar for dollar by federal funding, doubling the impact and infusing much needed resources into the system.



In 2016, KVCAP provided 97,800 Explorer rides, almost triple that of five years ago! Yet funding for this crucial service has not increased.

It is essential for us to raise money so that we can maintain current

routes and explore options for possible expansion. Affordable, accessible, public transportation ensures that our community will be competitive and thriving in the years to come.

Would you like to participate? The fees are \$100.00 per player and include green fees and a golf cart; mulligans, strings, and skirts; lunch and award ceremony; gift bags and great prizes; and the option to bid on silent auction items.

If you would like to sponsor this event, donate an item for the silent auction, or register a team, please contact Andrea Pasco at andreap@kvcap.org or 859-1630.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

This month and throughout the year, KVCAP encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Central Maine a better place for children and families. By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children, we can help prevent child abuse and neglect by making meaningful connections with children, youth and families in our communities.

Research shows that protective factors are present in healthy families. Promoting these factors is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

They are:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents
- Social and emotional competence of children



April is a time to celebrate the important role that communities play in protecting children and strengthening families. Focusing on ways to connect with families is the best thing our community can do to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

KVCAP is hosting several events during the month of April. To learn more, visit www.kvcap.org or contact Deb Rich at debrar@kvcap.org. We hope you join us!

Join us for a Community Celebration!

KVCAP is hosting the 3rd Annual Community Celebration on Saturday, June 10th from 11am-2pm at Educare Central Maine in Waterville.

This family-friendly event draws more than 300 people each year and features a barbecue, a children's musician, a bounce house, a climbing wall, superheroes and storybook characters, face painting, and more.



The best part of all? All event activities are free for participants, including the barbecue. So pack up the family and head to Educare for an afternoon of fun, entertainment, and enriching opportunities for everyone!

For more information, contact Andrea Pasco, 859-1630.



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