

KVCAP Connector

Building Stronger Individuals,
Families and Communities

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Issue: Winter 2020

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First4 Americorps in 17 classrooms

According to the Maine Kids Count Data, Maine has the highest rate of children diagnosed with anxiety, the third highest rate for children diagnosed with depression, and 22.5% of children under 18 have experienced two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs is a term used to describe the various forms of abuse, neglect, and traumatic experiences that children under 18 face. When young children are confronted with such disadvantages early in life, their ability to learn and be successful in school are severely impacted. However, with resilience, children can triumph over trauma and adversity.

This is why KVCAP launched a new initiative called First4 Americorps last fall, funded through a grant from the Maine Commission for Community Service. The goal of the First4 AmeriCorps program is to boost resiliency and reduce overall toxic stress early in childhood, because we know that approximately 80% of brain development happens in the first four years of life.

The 13 Americorps members, called Classroom Support Members (CSMs), have already received over 460 hours of training, including mandated reporter, Conscious Discipline, CPR and first aid, ACEs, and poverty.

The CSMs are currently serving in 17 classrooms at Educare Central Maine, Skowhegan Early Head Start, and preschools in Albion, Solon, and North Elementary in Skowhegan. Classroom teachers serve as Site Mentors and offer CSMs additional support and guidance. To date they have provided 1,560 hours of service to the children served by KVCAP's Child & Family Services department.

CSMs are not trained educators, rather they are people who are looking to make a positive impact in children's lives, and this route is a great way to accomplish that while gaining experience in hopes of potentially pursuing a career in early childhood education or care.

CSMs are providing volunteer service by serving as AmeriCorps members, but they do receive benefits for their participation. We will begin recruiting for 2020-2021 in the spring. For more information, visit www.kvcap.org or www.educarecentralmaine.org.

"To share in the joy and wonder through a child's eyes is magical."

-Americorps member

"The fact that I can be that someone that a child can trust and positively interact with just feeds my soul. Changing the lives of children will change our future and I am proud to be a part of that. THAT is why I am an Americorps member."

-Americorps member



Census 2020 Information

The Census is a vital tool that the Federal Government uses to determine how they allocate Federal Funds. That is why a complete count is so important for both the nation *and* for our local communities.

Completing the Census is mandatory, but this year all people living in the U.S. will have the option of completing the Census online, by phone, or by paper form. Look for your invitation to respond between March 12-20. FMI visit 2020census.gov.

Additionally, the Census is **HIRING** 1,400 Mainers for part-time jobs as Census Takers. The pay is \$20 per hour and will not affect SNAP or TANF benefits or make someone over income for MaineCare. FMI visit <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs>.

Renovations on our Drapeau building!

Did you know that the Drapeau building on our Waterville campus was originally the Notre Dame Catholic Church? We bought the building when the Parish built their new church on Silver Street.

Last fall we began a major renovation to expand the front entrance in order to create a welcoming reception and waiting area for all clients and visitors. The project will also significantly enhance the safety and security within the building.

We anticipate the completion of the project by the end of February. Thank you for your patience during construction!



Maine Families' mom gets new wheels

On December 3, Alicia Sullivan was the lucky recipient of a car through the Recycled Rides program! Darling's in Augusta partnered with Geico, the National Auto Body Council, and KVCAP's Maine Families program to make this incredible dream a reality for one very lucky family.

When Danielle Goodine, a KVCAP Family Visitor, heard about the program, she knew that one of her clients would be the perfect fit for this opportunity.

"Alicia has maintained full-time employment the entire time I have been working with her, but she has constantly struggled with reliable transportation. She is a very hard worker and definitely deserving of this amazing gift," said Goodine.

Alicia's previous vehicle needed major repairs that she couldn't afford. Having a reliable new vehicle ensures she can bring her son to childcare and get to work safely and consistently.



Alicia has experienced a number of challenges in her life, including domestic violence, drug addiction, and homelessness. Today she is working hard to create a better life for both her and her young son.

"Through this whole process I was like, 'No, this doesn't happen, this isn't real.' I am so grateful. This is the Christmas present of a lifetime," said Sullivan.

We are thrilled for Alicia and wish her the very best!

Helping when no other resources exist

Imagine how frustrating it would be if you were homeless but had saved enough money to finally rent an apartment, only to discover you couldn't cover the security deposit. Or perhaps you have a steady job, but because your car needs an expensive repair, you risk not being able to get to work. What would you do?

This is where the Community Investors step in. Investors are residents in our community who want to help people become or remain financially stable, when an issue can be easily resolved through a one-time donation.

Each week we put forth a request to help an individual or family with a basic need. Examples include car repairs, security deposits, medical items, and more. All requests are vetted to ensure there are no other resources available and that the solution is a sustainable one. All donations go directly to the people in need. No portion is taken out to cover administrative costs.

In 2019, 53 Investors contributed over \$22,000, helping 123 people improve their lives. Thank you! We couldn't do it without your support!

Want to join our email list? Call Andrea Pasco at 859-1630 or email at andrap@kvcap.org.



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Thank you to all who provide funding for our services. KVCAP is funded in part by Community Services Block Grant, DHHS, United Way and NeighborWorks® America.