

# The Cedarcrest Center GAZETTE

Cedarcrest Center for Children with Disabilities: Exceptional Medical Care and Education

SPRING 2019



Cedarcrest Champions  
Recognized! See page 5.

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Tel: 603-358-3384 / Fax: 603-358-6485  
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## Demand for Short Term Stays on the Rise

Children come to Cedarcrest for short-term stays for many reasons. Post-operative or recuperative, during a time when their home care nurses are not available or when their family needs 24 hour care for an extended period. Children may be with us for a few days, a week—or even longer, depending on the need and availability.

In 2018, Cedarcrest Center saw an increase in the overall number of children served for short-term respite stays: 18 children—5 more than in 2017. There was also a greater number of short-term care days, a total of 480 compared to 351 in 2017.

Kristin Targett, Director of Social Services, credits this increase in both numbers of children and days served to positive family experiences and word-of-mouth. Families report feeling that their child is safe and well cared for while they are away. Having staff 24 hours to address all of their child's care needs is a great relief. Typically, if a child comes for a short stay they will return for additional stays utilizing our services for their piece of mind and their child's socialization with similar peers.

A great deal of planning goes into each admission, whether it is for a few days or longer. Kristin and nursing staff review all current medical history of each child to ensure updates are made to medical charts and care plans. Recreation and nursing staff incorporate all children in evening and weekend activities.

Director of Nursing Services, Thomas Connelly recently noted the level of knowledge and adaptability of the nurses as they care for children with us short term. "Not only do we provide the complex care and clinical oversight, but staff members get to know each child, their favorite toy, music and things that make our home-away-from-home as comfortable as possible for them."

Anyone interested in learning more about our short-term stay program is encouraged to contact Kristin Targett at [ktargett@cedarcrest4kids.org](mailto:ktargett@cedarcrest4kids.org) for more information. ♥



Robbie, seen above with staff member Katie during a recent visit in February.

"We love being able to bring our son Robbie to Cedarcrest for short respite stays when we go out of town. We know Robbie is very well cared for by a fantastic group of people who work for the kids. Robbie knows everyone and enjoys himself."

—Rob and Lori Harris

# BOARD NEWS

Cindi Coughlin, New President of Trustee Board

In October, Cedarcrest Board of Trustees voted Cindi Coughlin of Walpole to succeed Glenn Galloway of Keene as the organization's Chair of the Board of Trustees. Coughlin, a recently retired Senior Vice President Patient Care/Chief Nursing Officer at Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Hitchcock-Keene has served as a board member of the organization since 2013. "We are so grateful to Glenn for his leadership and the transition to Cindi has been seamless. Cindi continues to bring a wealth of knowledge to the organization both from her perspective as a nurse and nursing administrator." states Cathy Gray, President/CEO.

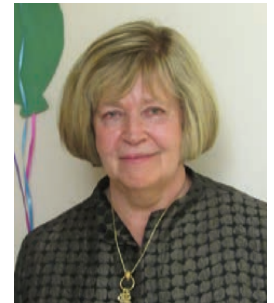
Cindi was honored in October by the NH Hospital Association with the Leslie A. Smith President's Award for her dedication to enhancing the quality of patient care in her organization and community according to a recent release by the NHHA.

The Cedarcrest Board of Trustees also elected Keene resident Matthew Goodwin to a three-year term. Goodwin is a Web Strategist Project Manager with Paragon Marketing also located in Keene. Matt and his wife Heather are parents to a daughter, Hannah who stayed at Cedarcrest during a recuperation after a hospital procedure last winter. His personal perspective as a parent of a child with complex medical needs, professional acumen and his desire to make a difference make him uniquely qualified for service on the Trustee Board. Renewing terms at that time were Glenn Galloway, Ed McCaul and Nancy Vincent.

Retiring from the Board were John Snowdon and Cole



Mills (seen in photo insert with Cathy Gray) and Carmelina Stella. Each served two terms (6 years). Also stepping down were Annie DiSilva and Emily Hartshorne (one term) and Dan Donovan and Tim Ruehr (first-term).



Advisory Council members elected included Thomas Bennett, Annie DiSilva, Dan Donovan, Tiffany French, Rob Harris, Emily Hartshorne, Cole Mills, Tim Ruehr and John Snowdon.

This year, we departed from our traditional gifts of appreciation for Trustees and incorporated the wonderful talents of quilter Nancy Robinson. Quilts can be found all throughout Cedarcrest and help to add warmth and a home-like environment for the children, families, staff and visitors. Nancy created one of a kind, Monadnock Region inspired textile art squares for each retiring board member. Visually attractive and truly a gift from the heart for all of the time and effort each Trustee commits to Cedarcrest. ♥



## Diamond Paw Awarded!

For many years, Cedarcrest has recognized Licensed Nurse Assistants each quarter as they gain experience and reach new proficiencies of skills. The achievements coincide with color coded "Paws" which stands for Professionals at Work. The PAWs are considered bling an LNA could wear on their nametag lanyards. To date only one LNA, 15 year veteran Amy Prentice had earned all of the PAWS and coveted "Diamond" PAW. That is until Matt Governor received his in January. Matt was recognized not only for his high level of excellence of care but for his leadership among the staff. You can often hear Matt along the halls before you see him. Belting out a cheerful tune, imitating Elmo in his funny way, he goes the extra mile to amuse the children and staff.



# CEDARCREST SCHOOL NEWS

From the Desk of Mike O'Hara, Director of Special Education



## Stellar Staff Go All In for the Children

It may sound crazy but it's true. Nearly every day at Cedarcrest, there's a celebration. A child's moment of achievement no matter how small, a birthday party, holiday party, Dr. Seuss, Prom, you name it, we celebrate it.

One event that stands out each year is our staff recognition. The party has taken many shapes over the years. Typically held in the winter, it has been an indoor affair but we have had picnics and even once held a murder mystery dinner themed event at the Elk's club.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge all the support that the Cedarcrest School gets from our surrounding schools and programs.

Each year children from area schools give their time to our students. The latest group of students to visit were from St. Joseph Regional School (SJRS) located here in Keene. In December, just in time to get us all into the holiday spirit, the chorus from SJRS

came and regaled us with some of their favorite Christmas songs. Anyone who know our children know that they love music. This was a wonderful event and included some very talented soloists.

Children from Surry Village Charter School recently came to volunteer to read to the children. This was the first visit from the students at SVCS and they were all wonderful.

I believe that when children who have not experienced the challenges faced each day by the students at Cedarcrest School visit and interact with our students, all children benefit. Our students benefit from all the wonderful attention they get from their peers and the visiting children benefit by gaining a deeper understanding of and appreciation for children with special needs. This is how our children can give back to those who are so generous with their time.

Whether its children from the Andy's Summer Playhouse conducting theatrical performances, as they have for three straight summers, or children from places like the Trinity Christian School, Keene Middle School or the YMCA day camp, all our visitors enrich the lives of our children. It truly is wonderful to see all the love and support our children receive from their peers in the Monadnock region. ♥



If on site, the events include interactive activities with the children. This year, our theme revolved around games and named "Viva Cedarcrest." We incorporated lots of faux games of chance and staff and children participated in picking winners with our famous Keene-tucky Derby horseracing (yes, we still have all of the gear for it), black and red, adapted roulette all accompanied by our own Mike O'Hara crooning Elvis Presley hits.

Aside from all of the fun, the real purpose is to honor and share appreciation for our tenured staff.

This year's honorees included: JoEllen Kelly—25 years; Tom Ainsworth and Amy Prentice—15 years; Amanda Babcock, Ashley Bertolami, Sonia Burke, Lynn Little, Angela Mooney, Lisa St. Peter, Bridget Toepfer and Diane Weick—10 years; April Baltzer, Teressa Buker, Katey Davenport, Bill Gurnee, Meghan John and Skyler Main—5 years.

We are fortunate to have these dedicated professionals caring and supporting the children's needs each day, 24-7.

Congratulations to all! ♥

# GREAT NEWS TO SHARE!



## Massachusetts Teen Gives from the Heart ▼

Noelle Gregoire is a very special teenager. After experiencing many medical hospital visits due to a spinal condition, she founded the nonprofit organization Laps 4 Backs when she was 9 years old. She raises funds all year round to purchase toys for children in hospitals. Toys have been given to children at Tufts Floating Hospital, Boston Children's Hospital and now Cedarcrest! She raises funds by annually swimming across Province Lake in East Wakefield, NH and through silent auctions and a GoFundMe page. She and her family came to visit the children and contributed wonderful educational related toys for each classroom, toddler toys and recreation activity supplies. Thank you Noelle and all of your supporters! ♥

## GoBabyGo NH Donation "Drives" Home Happiness ▲

It was only a matter of time that the right child would be the right fit for this opportunity, Lisa Henry, Director of Rehabilitation thought to herself. This was back in the summer of 2017 when she researched information about a program called GoBabyGo NH that helps adapt small-motorized cars for children with special needs. The organization pairs up groups of teens with engineers to modify each vehicle. With an adaptive switch, a child can propel the car forward as an adult uses a remote to control the direction of the car. In the summer of 2018, Lisa knew she had a prospective recipient. Lisa contacted GoBabyGo NH after talking with Madeline's mom. Once the excitement died down from being chosen, Madeline accompanied by her mom, Erin, Lisa and nurse Laurie Madden all went to St. Paul's School for a day where the teens and engineers were assembled to work together and adapt the little cars. The rest as they say is history! What a treat to watch Madeline's face brighten as she "drives" along our walking paths and down our hallways. A video can be found on our Facebook page. ♥





<https://youtu.be/PUXar7W3KGY>



## Our “One Foot” Music Video is a Toe-Tapping, World-Wide Hit! ▲

Released just in time for Walk & Roll, our “One-Take Wonders” have been viewed over 11,000 times on YouTube! This fun, upbeat video involved nearly all our staff and children and has been viewed by people in countries all over the world! Haven’t seen it yet? Here’s the link <https://youtu.be/PUXar7W3KGY> ♥



## 2018 Cedarcrest ▲► Champions Recognized!

Going “above and beyond” that is what best describes the efforts of our honorees this year. We are grateful for their commitment, compassion and impact they have on the children’s lives! Rehabilitation Equipment Associates (above). Musicians, Leif Moore (above, right), and Ellen Corinda (right) ♥



## Three Margaret “Peg” Knox Scholarships Awarded ▲

Congratulations to Melissa Antin, Amanda Babcock and Natasha McCarthy for being named the 2018 Margaret “Peg” Knox Scholarship Recipients! The Peg Knox Endowed Scholarship was established upon Peg’s retirement to honor her legacy and her work as a nurse and advocate for children and families. The scholarship assists eligible Cedarcrest Center staff pursuing health care careers who exemplify the values that Peg Knox, as Director of Nursing Services, aspired to instill in all staff members. ♥

## Strategic Efforts Provide Key to the Future

Over the years, those who are familiar with the operations of Cedarcrest will recognize the importance of strategic planning in all that we do. From the early years as we recognized the constraints of the “Flying Pig Farm” farmhouse and executed the capital campaign and building project that became our 91 Maple Avenue home and school, volunteers and staff have used planning concepts and business management precepts to guide our non-profit organization’s evolution. For the past 10 years, we have used a “Strategic Positioning” model to evaluate where we need to be as an organization and what we have to do operationally to get there.

The primary questions regardless of the epoch has been “what do the children need to thrive? How can we best serve them and their families? How does Cedarcrest (and can the Center realistically) respond to the emerging need at hand?” Our vision has always incorporated a broad horizon. Certainly, we need to be sure to address current needs and try to anticipate future demands of children with complex medical and developmental needs.

Three years ago, we embarked on our current strategic plan. Our findings concentrated on major themes of Collaboration and Care Continuum, Labor Force and Sustainability. Volunteer and leadership staff have been developing and executing action plans aimed to address current

and emerging needs in these three areas. We have strong partnerships along the continuum of care, are innovative in our care delivery and are more than ever, nimble as we address more complex care needs.

This year as we reach the 10-year anniversary of our last rate increase from Medicaid, we have conducted time studies and reformatted our cost report data to as we advocate for more appropriate levels of funding. Clinical staff have been engaged in streamlining our medical supply process, resulting in more cost effective operations. Recognizing the need for greater outreach to our philanthropic partners, we are developing ways to ensure the organization is able to provide care to children 20, 30 or more years from now. The Labor Force initiative has been a tremendous challenge. We are so fortunate that we are a unique organization focused on the care of children and as such have an organizational culture that is both positive and nurturing of our staff as well as the children.

Despite the lack of increases in reimbursement rates, in the last year, the Cedarcrest Trustees have voted to implement changes to the wage and benefits that support our staff and help create career ladders. The Margaret “Peg” Knox Scholarship continues to grow through contributions and as the fund has grown so too has the impact it has on LNAs seeking advanced degrees in nursing. As we have been noting for years, there simply are not enough health-care providers in the region and competition is intense. We are fortunate to be able to “grow our own” outstanding staff.

In February, Cedarcrest welcomed Anne Brnger as our Director of Human Resources. Anne has brought best practices in employee recruitment, compensation and benefits programs and a breadth of resources on professional development. She also brings with her a wealth of knowledge in project coordination, communications and the integration of HR and strategic planning.

Together with Cathy Gray and other Leadership Managers, Anne is working hard to ensure that the workforce component of the strategic plan advances successfully. Combined with the Medicaid income stagnancy, the workforce shortage has the potential to have the greatest constraining effect on the children and the organization. Creating momentum and implementing new programs or initiatives for the children hinges on the availability and stability of the care providers and sustainability of financial resources. ♥



*Thank You to the gentlemen of the Keene Cheshiremen Chorus who graciously come to serenade the children and families each holiday season! Thank you for your cheerfulness and compassion-filled loyalty!*

## Cedarcrest Receives NHCF Multi-Year Operational Grant

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) recently announced its 2018 Community Grant program recipients and Cedarcrest Center will receive \$60,000 of unrestricted operating support over three years as part of that program. The NHCF is New Hampshire's statewide community foundation.

The competitive grants program seeks to support New Hampshire nonprofit organizations general operations. The grant program includes a rigorous determination process that begins with a concept proposal and an invitation to organizations that emerge from that round to apply for the full funding.

The grant support is welcomed, as Cedarcrest Center has not had a New Hampshire Medicaid rate increase in 10 years. "This Charitable Foundation unrestricted grant support is so appreciated and comes at a critical time," states Cathy Gray, President and CEO. She added, "Of course, we will continue to advocate on behalf of the children and work with state agencies in hopes to help better align the funding for actual costs of providing the care but unrestricted grants such as this and annual contributed support is crucial for our organization's ability to narrow the funding gap."

The grant proposal notes that Cedarcrest Center is faced with the paradox of rising costs of medical care despite the stagnant corresponding funding rate. As is the case with many healthcare nonprofit organizations, the costs to offer competitive wages and benefits for the highly trained staff, provide the children's medical supplies, adapted equipment as well as support the facility infrastructure are increasing. While the organization continues to follow prudent budget processes and manage minor and capital expenditure plans to help guide the physical plant and equipment replacement strategies, additional funding support is needed for it to assure optimum levels of staffing, equipment and facility improvements.

"We are truly grateful for each gift and grant we receive. The support is such a reflection of the compassion and understanding of not only those in the Keene area who interact with the children but from those who support the children from all over New Hampshire and the United States" said Cathy Gray. ♥



<https://cedarcrest4kids.org/1151-2/>

## Sweet Dreams: Bed and Crib Replacement Project Support

This year we launched a multi-year effort to replace all of our specialty medical beds and cribs. The beds and cribs (20 beds and six cribs) purchased over seven to ten years ago are starting to show their wear and tear. With our census of long and short-term residents, most beds and cribs have been in constant use. As we conducted our annual safety inspections, we determined that a number of the older beds have shown compromised structural integrity.

Such costs lay outside our traditional funding model and we must seek contributed support to make the replacements a reality.

That's why, we were so grateful when we were contacted by Gina Goff last summer, and learned **C & S Wholesale Grocers** approved our grant request by contributing \$9,000 and then not long after doubled their support to \$18,000 funding a total of two beds and two cribs!

A few weeks later, we were received a grant from the **Hellen Kelly Trust of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation** for \$9,000 for one bed and one crib bringing our total gifts for the project in September to \$27,000.

In October, Mark Bodin, President of **Savings Bank of Walpole** contacted us after hearing about the multi-year effort. He and Danielle Ruffo visited the children and not long after, the SBW Board of Directors voted to donate \$20,000 to complete this fiscal year's goal of purchasing seven beds and three cribs! Amazing!

Through the generosity of these supporters, the number of beds and cribs needed over the next two years has decreased to 13 beds and three cribs. We are so grateful for this outpouring of support. More information about the bed and crib project can be found in an article on the news/events page of our website: <https://cedarcrest4kids.org/1151-2/> ♥

## *Stellar staff goes all in...*

SEE PAGE 3!

