



Time to Celebrate - On February 7 folks gathered in the library of Waterford Street School to celebrate HOPE's first off-site mentoring program. (l. to r.) In the front row Ryleigh Ackles and Jacob Gentile, *Pals* program participants; (second row) HOPE volunteers Bobbie-Jo Stankaitis, *Pals* Coordinator Laura Beauregard, HOPE donor James Garrison, *Pals* Coordinator Naomi Charest and Waterford guidance counselor Terry Burnham.

DIRECTOR HIRED FOR HF PROGRAM

When a child becomes part of the *HOPE for Kids* program, the child's family becomes a HOPE family.

This statement is at the heart of the newly configured *HOPEful Families* (HF) parenting education and support program. It is an open invitation to mothers of all HOPE children and graduates of the job training program to participate in the revised parenting program.

GROUP SESSIONS

Last fall HOPE hired Robin Harper, an experienced clinician and educator, as director of the HF program. As she familiarized herself with the HOPE mission and listened to the stories of HOPE women she began planning parenting groups for both supportive and educational purposes.

Three groups have been meeting weekly since January. Mothers and grandmothers attend morning sessions while parent forums are held in the evening. Discussion topics range from broad areas such as Self-Esteem, Behavior Management and Motivating Your Child to more specific areas such as ADHD, Alcohol & Drugs, and Peer Pressure.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

In addition to group sessions, the program director is also available to meet with individual women who are facing parenting challenges. As Robin discussed the new parenting program she reflected: "It will be fulfilling to impart a sense of

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LOCAL SCHOOL WELCOMES PALS

GOOD NEWS!
HOPE'S FIRST OFF-SITE MENTORING PROGRAM AT WATERFORD SCHOOL ALREADY FULL.

This six-column headline in the February 8 edition of *The Gardner News* spread the word that HOPE'S third session of *Pals* was up and running. Two other sessions meet at HOPE on Saturday mornings.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALIST

Under the direction of early childhood specialists Naomi Charest and Laura Beauregard the bi-weekly *Pals* program is offered to youngsters from kindergarten through second grade. According to Executive Director Maxyne Schneider "*Pals* is a great opportunity for children to have three years of positive mentoring,

to reinforce social skills and to enjoy group recreational activities".

THREE-YEAR FUNDING PLEDGE

The current *Pals* session is unique not only because it is HOPE'S first off-site program. It is also the first to receive a three-year funding commitment. This generous support is the gift of local philanthropists Mr. and Mrs. James Garrison who share the belief that school dropouts are made in kindergarten.

HOPE staff are confident that the *Pals* program will continue to expand in response to the needs of the Gardner community. Another off-site session is under consideration for next fall. Thanks to all those people, including staff of the Gardner Public Schools, whose collaboration and generosity continue to bring the *Pals* program to new life!

SEEKING SUMMER TUTORS (2 WEEKS) AND ACTIVITY VOLUNTEERS (1 DAY OR MORE) – CALL VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR, FRAN LONGTON, AT (978) 630-4752.

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SELF-SUFFICIENCY POSES CHALLENGE

Pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps is a compelling image. Who among us does not have a forebear who is said to have done this against great odds? Many around us still survive amid enormous challenge. At HOPE we meet them daily. Between surviving and thriving, however, is a gulf that highlights the difference between personal and systemic poverty, i.e., poverty beyond the reach of even great individual effort.

ABC's recent documentary on Camden, New Jersey, gave a dramatic picture of systemic poverty. Joblessness, parents – so often mothers -- desperate to provide for their children, hunger, crime and hopelessness among youth mark not only Camden, but also our other inner cities.

Comparing the federal poverty level with self-sufficiency standards is helpful. The government issues the former annually for a given family size, while the latter are compiled regionally, representing what is required for a family of a certain configuration to live without subsidies. For a household of four in 2003 the federal poverty level was \$18,400. For Middlesex and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts in 2003 a family with one adult earner and three school-age children needed \$45,725 for self-sufficiency. This required the earner to work a full-time job paying \$21.65 hourly, a barrier virtually insurmountable for most families whom HOPE serves.

As citizens we can dispel the stereotypes that often paint those who work honorably and hard with the same brush as those who "work the system" unfairly (a marked minority). Separating myth from fact so as to act and speak justly is not only good citizenship, it is also spiritual work supported by the world's great religions. Gloria Durka in [Praying with Hildegard of Bingen](#) notes, "In Jewish theology, two activities embody spirituality: ... 'clinging to God' or contemplation, and ... 'repair of the world' or the work of justice." This holistic view requires sophistication beyond the bootstrap theory and beyond partisan politics.

Maxyne D. Schneider, SSJ
Executive Director

HOPE STUDENT RECOMMENDS PROGRAM

HW graduate Terry Dattolo, served a month-long internship at HOPE. The following quotes are taken from her report:

"I came to HOPE several years ago to enroll my granddaughter in the summer program. She's been coming to HOPE ever since and it has been a really positive experience for both of us."

"I began to realize I'm not done learning. I still have potential and I can't say enough about how supportive the HOPE staff is."

"Being out of the work force for more years than I care to count, I worried about finding a place where my strengths could be utilized and my shortcomings overlooked. I really did learn new computer skills almost every day."

"My time at HOPE gave me the chance to get outside my own little world. I feel more balanced now, perhaps even gaining momentum. And it feels good!"

"I wholeheartedly recommend HOPE to anyone. If you don't need HOPE, perhaps HOPE needs you. Donate something or volunteer there."



HOPE Pals – Terry and granddaughter, Natasha, enjoy learning and fun at HOPE. They exemplify the extended families with longtime relationships with HOPE.

HF DIRECTOR

(...Continued from page 1)

love, faith, hope and peace in the life of any woman who passes through HOPE." The HF program is off to a good start.



Congratulations! HOPE for Women graduation is a happy occasion for (l. to r.) guest speaker Sandra Celona, graduate Tammy Drouin and guest Pat Harmon.

HW GRADS ENJOY JOB EXPERIENCE

When a woman comes to HOPE for job skills training she expects to spend most of her time before a computer. She is often amazed by the variety of experiences which are part of the HOPE for Women (HW) program.

INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE

For example, through HOPE'S partnership with the Greater Gardner CDC, an HW grad may choose to practice her skills through an internship in a local business or agency. Her time spent in a real-life office setting provides experience to add to her résumé as well as networking contacts and current references. According to HW administrator Mary Roth over half of current grads serve as interns.

One of the most important activities of the HW program is the career exploration field trip to Mount Wachusett Community College. Here women take part of the college placement test; attend a workshop in a career preference assessment; and tour the library with emphasis on tools most helpful to job searchers. For many HW women this trip prompts them to enroll in MWCC classes.

CAREER COUNSELOR HELPFUL

The most recent addition to the HW program is the Job Club, a post graduate resource to assist HW grads with job search and professional development. The club is facilitated by Joanne Meehl, a certified career counselor who meets with HOPE grads every other Thursday at noon. She updates her audience in current trends in job search; assists them in development of résumés and cover letters; and fosters continuing professional development. All HOPE grads are invited to attend.

AWARDS HIGHLIGHT ANNUAL MEETING

On June 20 members of HOPE's Board of Directors and staff, donors and friends will gather at the Colonial Hotel for HOPE's annual meeting. The event will highlight HOPE programs and award recipients.

Sisters of St. Joseph Helen Shine and Nancy Welsh, two of HOPE's four founders, will be honored at the meeting. Their *Lucia Service Awards* will acknowledge, not only their HOPE outreach, but also several decades of ministry to the Gardner community.

The *Wings of HOPE* award, honoring an individual whose efforts helped to establish and strengthen HOPE, will be presented to David Jacques. Well known for his community involvement, David worked with HOPE founders to secure incorporation and set up financial systems.

Participants in the *HOPE for Women* job-skill training program and *HOPE for Kids* afterschool and summer program will also share briefly how these positive experiences have helped to shape their lives.

A highlight of the Annual Meeting will be the induction of HOPE's newly appointed Community Trustees. This group represents the support and moral ownership of HOPE by the Gardner community at large. The first HOPE trustees will be invited from among former members of the HOPE board.

Tickets for the event may be purchased by calling HOPE at (978) 630-4752.

HOPE CALENDAR JULY – DECEMBER 2007

HOPE for Kids

Summer – Session I Jul 9-20

Session II Jul 23-Aug 3

Session III Aug 6-17

After School – Sep 24-Dec 13

Pals – Saturdays – Oct 6-Dec 8

Waterford – Oct – Dec

HOPE for Women

Day Sessions – Sep 5-Oct 4

Oct 10-Nov 8

Nov 14-Dec 17

Evening Session – Sep 10-Nov 7

HOPEful Families

Beginning Dates:

Mothers' Morning – Sep 20

Grandmothers' Group – Sep 18

Parenting Forum – Sep 19



HOPE fundraiser – (l. to r.) Chamber of Commerce member Liz Penny views Lucinda pins with board member Eileen Goguen and volunteer Elaine Jones who coordinates the HOPE pin project.

HOPE DONORS OFFER GENEROUS SUPPORT

Have you ever wondered how a small organization like HOPE balances a budget which supports multiple programs for women and children?

Like most nonprofit organizations HOPE relies on grants, appeals and fundraising events for basic financial support. But according to Executive Director Maxyne Schneider there are many other ways of gifting HOPE.

"Have we an angel at our doorstep?" she asks of the anonymous visitor who from time to time rings the doorbell and presses cash into the hands of the person who answers. He simply advises: "Keep doing the good work you do."

VARIETY OF GIFTS

Others respond to newsletter Wishlists. Over 150 people offer HOPE the gift of their time as Board members, tutors, mentors and volunteers. Some are simply on call for routine service or seasonal help. Church mission groups and confirmation classes offer work here while men from the Bridge rake an abundance of autumn leaves.

ABUNDANCE OF DONORS

Of special importance are the countless individuals, business clubs, service clubs, and organizations that provide the gift of financial support. Some donors work at companies that match employee's charitable giving, a special boon to HOPE.

HOPE also maintains an agency-advised fund with the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. The Foundation accepts gifts of stock, real estate, life insurance and other non-cash items to be converted to cash and deposited in HOPE's account. They also offer charitable annuities.

In this electronic age donors with computers may gift HOPE through PayPal, known well to many eBay users. A link with PayPal exists in the HOPE website www.hopegardner.org. Gifts through automatic electronic giving are described on the website.

For such a variety and abundance of gifts HOPE offers sincere thanks to each generous donor and benefactor.

WISHLIST

- 10 summer "scholarships" for children @\$100
- 10 job-training "scholarships" for women @\$350
- Food or gasoline gift cards for women
- Labyrinth Balance Board™
- Gift certificates for office or craft supplies, books
- Marbles, nerf balls, bean bags
- Dry erase markers, cleaner, steno pads
- 100% fruit juices
- Copy paper, paper cups, tissues, etc.

Thank you, 2006-07 DONORS! Programs at the House of Peace & Education, Inc. have been made possible through generous gifts from the following grantors: George I. Alden Trust, Jane Bath Revocable Trust, Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters, Knowlton Foundation for the Elderly, Leclerc Charity Fund, Mount Wachusett Community College/Summer UP, Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation, Sisters of St. Joseph (Springfield), Staples Foundation for Learning, TD Banknorth Foundation, United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Worcester Diocese *Campaign for Human Development*. We also received support from the Worcester County Food Bank and numerous service organizations, churches, banks, schools, businesses and individuals. **Heartfelt thanks from all at HOPE!**

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The House of Peace & Education, Inc. (HOPE) is a nonprofit interfaith organization committed to counteracting violence and promoting peace. In a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment. HOPE offers academic support, leadership development, empowering relationships, and spiritual values to people in need, especially to women and children at risk of violence, abuse or neglect.

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PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ENJOY LEARNING, FUN AT HOPE

To anyone reading a HOPE brochure it is clearly evident that HOPE is a place for learning and fun. So, you might ask, how have HOPE participants had fun in recent months?

FIELD TRIPS FOR TEENS

HOPE teens have enjoyed several field trips both at home and at a distance. They were welcomed to an afternoon of galactic bowling at the Gardner Ten Pins, Inc. They traveled to Gloucester for the Cape Ann Whale Watch where they claim they saw 39 whales.

Thanks to TD Banknorth HOPE students attended a Bruins hockey game in Boston. With a pass grant from the Gardner Cultural Council the teens also enjoyed a performance of Smokey Joe's Café at Mount Wachusett Community College. Two additional Boston trips are in the planning process – a visit to the Institute of



Fiddling fun – Storyteller and musician Norah Dooley shares the delight of playing the fiddle with *Pals* participant Sabrina Monette.

Contemporary Art and the Duck Tour of historical sites.

ON-SITE ACTIVITIES FOR PALS

Participants of the *Pals* program found both fun and learning in special events. Storyteller

and author Norah Dooley visited HOPE children for St. Patrick's Day and presented a variety of Irish stories and music.

The youngsters also delighted in another afternoon of music and creativity when Jackie Landry presented *Minizicians*, a lively combination of songs, dances, games and props.

A big hit for *Pals* children was a program provided by Animal Adventures. The youngsters handled a variety of living creatures including tortoises, lizards, snakes, alligators, hedgehogs and many others.

According to HOPE academic adviser Ava Jason, field trips and cultural events not only add a sense of adventure and confidence to HOPE participants, but they also expand horizons and provide stepping stones into new territory. While providing an important lesson in social behavior, they offer a welcome mixture of learning and fun.