

HORIZONS

The newsletter of Crothed Mountain Foundation



CROTCHED
MOUNTAIN

SPRING 2021

A SEASON OF TRANSFORMATION



Your Support is Transforming Lives



Spring is a season of transformation. And I cannot think of a more apt description of where we are today as an organization.

You may know, throughout our history, Crotched Mountain has evolved our services to meet the biggest and most urgent needs of children in New Hampshire. From the earliest days serving patients with polio, then supporting children with blindness, physical disabilities, brain injuries, and autism, we have, for over 90 years, brought our mission to the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

Our calling card has always been adapting - transforming - to meet the most profound needs of the day.

This has been our purpose from our founding onward, and why our mission is needed now more than ever. As our focus has turned to supporting children and adults with special needs in the community, our mission - carved into the mountain in Greenfield, NH - will carry on and change even more lives on a larger scale.

There are more than 30,000 students with disabilities in New Hampshire, and many thousands of adults with severe and complex disabilities that need our support to live purposeful and independent lives.

As donors and supporters, you are key to this transformation.

Without you by our side, we wouldn't be able to see our life-changing work reach so many more people. We wouldn't be able to serve nearly 900 clients through Crotched Mountain Community Care; or offer mutually rewarding shared residential living opportunities for adults with disabilities; or support low income seniors and adults with special needs at our four HUD housing locations; and, most recently, deploy our new "quick impact" grant program, which has allowed us to leverage the generosity of our donors to support children with disabilities who are facing immense challenges with remote learning during this COVID era.

Our work to improve the quality of education for students with disabilities across the state of New Hampshire is only just beginning.

So I thank you for your committed partnership to our indispensable work. Together we are truly making a difference in so many lives. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for your compassion. Thank you for your shared belief that we are one single community, one single family, helping one another.

Please continue with us at Crotched Mountain Foundation. We know that every person has value - and is worth fighting for.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ned Olney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Ned Olney
President and CEO of Crotched Mountain Foundation

Part of the Family

For Khem Basnet, becoming a shared home provider was more than a rewarding career move - it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a generational impact.

It's a brisk early spring day in Manchester, NH. Khem Basnet sits on a bench at a city park, located a few steps from his house.

The sunshine splashes through the cloudless sky, a herald of (hopefully) a balmy season. Which would be ideal because Tommy loves to walk. And walk. And walk.

Tommy is Khem's client. Strike that – Tommy is a member of Khem's family.

As a shared home provider for Crooked Mountain Foundation, Khem and his family have opened their home to Tommy, an adult with a developmental disability who joined them in October 2020 from a group home.

Thus far it has been a perfect match, rewarding for everyone involved. A complete home run. Then again, for anyone who's known Khem, this is the least surprising news in the world.

STARTING FRESH

May 2009.

Khem and his family arrive at the United States from Nepal as refugees. As grateful as he was to set foot in New Hampshire, Khem has little time to waste; he needed a job and the family needed money to start coming in. There was a brand new life to be forged.

Khem immediately got a job working at McDonald's at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. As steady income it was fine – but there was more Khem could offer, and he knew it.

"I was happy to get work experience," Khem recounts. "But I wanted something that fit my past experience and education."

Continued on page 5



Khem Basnet, at one of his favorite walking destinations.

A Place Renovated, a Wish Fulfilled

Angie is 90. And she hasn't had a shower in years. Her tiny bathroom in her home was never equipped with a shower, so she relied on sponge-baths to keep herself clean. It's not ideal. All she wanted was a shower.

Enter Crooked Mountain Community Care. As a CMCC client, Angie receives independent case management support, which helps her remain in her own house instead of a nursing home.

This is the primary goal for Kate Lucek, Angie's Case Manager, who works closely with her to connect her with community resources services - all so Angie can maintain maximum independence.

"We oversee her Medicaid and Choices for Independence (CFI) services," Kate says. "She values living in her home. She is independent."

These services include arranging for a personal caregiver to support Angie 20 hours a week, as well as schedule weekly nursing visits to monitor Angie's health and manage her medications.

As critical as these support are, one of the most life-

changing and sought-after successes was about to happen: Angie was finally going to get her shower. Thanks to the work of CMCC staff Elena Szilagyi and Liz Griswold, \$25,000 in funding was secured to install a shower and renovate Angie's diminutive bathroom.

These specialized funds target home modifications to increase accessibility. It was a perfect fit. It took some work. A lot of work. But Angie was going to see her bathroom completely remodeled and a brand new shower installed.

"Every time I talk to her she brings it up," Kate says. "She is so very excited."

By the time you read this, the work will be done. The bathroom doorway will have been widened. The shower installed. And Angie will have taken her first shower in years; home will be that much more comfortable.

"Every time something like this happens, I do a happy dance," Kate says, laughing. "These projects can be so much work and take so much time, but when it comes together I say thank God!"



Family continued

In Nepal, Khem was trained as an educator and he brought with him an abiding love of working with students to his new home country.

Four months into his fast food tenure, he noticed a job listing for a Residential Counselor at Crotched Mountain, working with students with disabilities. Yes. *This felt right.* Khem applied, was hired, and a career was born.

A PERFECT FIT

“For me it was really easy,” Khem says. “I was just teaching and working with kids. The only difference is that they had a disability.”

Khem worked as a Residential Counselor for three years, was promoted to a Residential Manager, and, ultimately, stepping into a Human Resources role as a Recruiter.

In that position, he was able to leverage his extensive community connections – particularly with the immigrant and refugee populations – to draw more people into the disability service field.

And then in 2020, a pandemic hit and everything changed. As a result, Khem left his HR job and, in October, he became a shared home provider and Tommy joined the Basnet household.

A shared home is precisely what it sounds like: people

sharing their home – their lives – together. Crotched Mountain Foundation’s shared home program matches providers with adults with disabilities. It is less a business relationship and more a familial relationship.

“He’s happy,” Khem says. “And we’re able to give him the best care. It feels good to support him in his daily life.”

That means care, support, and recreation; and while community outings are still limited somewhat to lingering COVID concerns, Tommy is more than happy to do his favorite thing: walk. (Khem can’t even begin to count the number of steps he’s logged since he’s been with Tommy.)

Together they’ll walk around the block or explore the trails or stroll to the park (a favorite destination).

“It doesn’t feel like work,” Khem says. “Not at all. Tommy is a part of our life.”

Crotched Mountain Foundation’s shared home program represents a bright future for residential living for adults with disabilities. Our number of shared home providers - like Khem - continues to grow throughout the state. It is your generosity that is making a difference in the lives of so many special people in New Hampshire. To learn more about shared homes - or to apply to be a provider! - please visit cmf.org/sharedhome.



Giving a Lift to Kids Who Need it Most

One of the organizations supported with Crotched Mountain Foundation's community-based "quick impact" grant initiative was The Upper Room, a comprehensive educational and family resource center located in Derry, NH.

The Upper Room serves children and families in over 40 communities and provides clinical, intervention, social, and academic services to many children, the approximately two-thirds of whom would be considered "at-risk" (e.g., have been suspended from school, come from families where one or both may be incarcerated, raised by non-parents, have IEPs, may be recovering from trauma). And well over half of the children Upper Room serves would be considered lower-income.

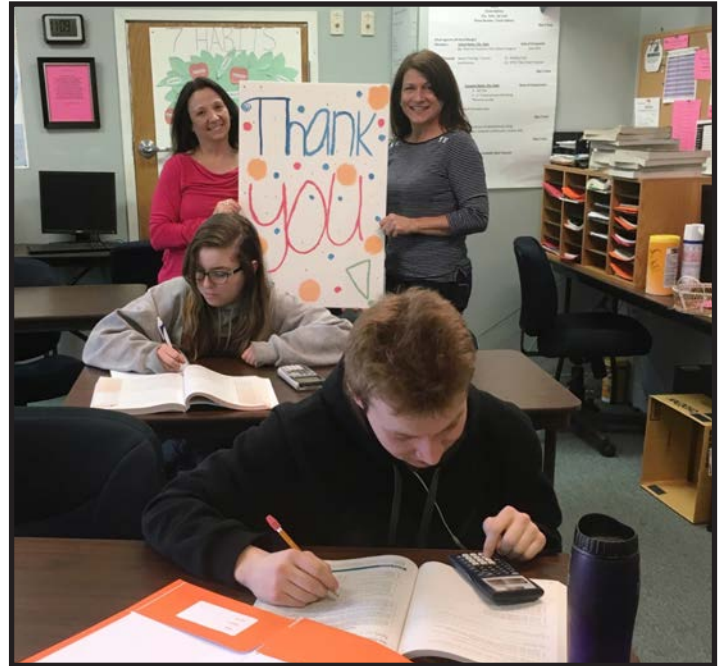
The onset of COVID-19 has added to the pressure many of these children experience - especially the students with disabilities. That's where Crotched Mountain Foundation - and you! - came in.

Utilizing Crotched Mountain's emergency grant funding has allowed The Upper Room to provide enhanced instruction for their students with special needs. These students participated in 74 tutoring sessions, 21 of which were specific to Upper Room's On Track Tutoring program. Upper Room staff extended days and times so students could have longer sessions, and more time together with the teachers.

"Each student and their parent did an intake with our staff once the inquiry about the tutoring program was made and the students committed to the program and the students committed to the program," said Brenda Guggisberg, Executive Director of The Upper Room. "These helped us identify areas of need. Each day our staff would reach out to the schools to retrieve school work and helped students get through the assignments they were struggling with."

Additionally, the Upper Room secured a math tutor, who volunteered his time weekly to assist with students who needed math assistance.

"What was an unexpected outcome was that some of our students accessed additional services once here," Brenda said. "One student began to engage in counseling, while others routinely used our food pantry or took take home meal bags to their families. While not a direct outcome of the program, we feel



Courtesy photo from The Upper Room.

that when individuals and families have basic needs met, they are healthier."

Brenda notes that at the beginning, nearly every student the Upper Room has seen has indicated they feel disorganized and behind.

"Once we meet with them and do an organization plan, they and their parents feel so much better," she says. "Teachers have reached out and are so appreciative that students are pulling ahead and making progress toward their academic success. And parents are relieved and express their appreciation for helping their children get back on track with their academics."

Moving forward, Upper Room staff have been meeting with partner high school and middle schools to continue to be a resource and to assist in planning for the eventual full return of students to school.

"We are thankful for the support of Crotched Mountain Foundation to the southern region of the state," Brenda says. "What a wonderful example of an organizational pivot during a most unusual time."

As a Crotched Mountain supporter, you can celebrate these great successes. Thank you for your generosity, which has made such a positive impact in the lives of children with disabilities in the community.

Face of Philanthropy

C&S Wholesale Grocers

By Kevin Harte, Vice President of Advancement

A few months ago, our good friends at C&S Wholesale Grocers in Keene, NH agreed to help Crotched Mountain Foundation address the disruptive impact that COVID-19 and, by extension, remote learning was having on children with disabilities.

C&S was one of the first corporate donors to step up and help us fund one-to-one tutorial services for kids in various communities who were falling behind.

Because of generous support from C&S (and from many of our donors!), we were able to partner with Granite YMCA and the Upper Room, two highly-regarded community-based organizations that work directly with remote learning children to help them avoid devastating learning loss.

Tutors were hired, special training was provided, technologies and other supplies were purchased, and dozens of the most challenged children in our communities were able to attend in-person, one-to-one tutorial services in several locations, throughout each week, and even on weekends.

The result, as expressed by one student: "I was failing my classes and had trouble focusing on school work with remote learning. Thank you for being here".

A parent shared: "I have cashed in all of my PTO just to be able to afford sending her to the remote program so that I can still be able to work. This is so nice of you"

"It is no surprise to us that C&S was ready when we asked for help with this urgent need," said Ned Olney, President and CEO of Crotched Mountain Foundation. "For the past fourteen years, C&S has constantly been there for those we serve and ready to support Crotched Mountain's most pressing initiatives."

Thank you C&S Wholesale Grocers!

Because many of these kids were so impacted, and they needed so much more help, Crotched Mountain Foundation has committed to ongoing one-to-one tutorial services in some locations through to the end of this school year.

If you'd like to support Crotched Mountain's community-based initiative for children with disabilities, please use the enclosed envelope to make your gift or go online at cmf.org/donate.

Every dollar you contribute will go directly to helping a child thrive in their own community.

Because of generous people like you, Crotched Mountain Foundation is helping over a 1,000 people with disabilities and their families continue to live as independently as possible. Now more than ever, your support has had incredibly far-reaching impact, especially in the lives of the most vulnerable children among us - children who have faced significant challenges during the pandemic.

A "Brush" with Impact (and that's the "Tooth")

Our great friends at Northeast Delta Dental Foundation recently awarded \$5,000 to provide much-needed dental services to low-income older adults and individuals with disabilities served by Crotched Mountain Community Care (CMCC).

The majority of CMCC's roughly 830 clients require some kind of dental care, and many lack the funds or the insurance coverage to pay for this. Thanks to Northeast Delta Dental Foundation's previous awards, CMCC was able to provide much needed financial support to clients who required preventative dental services.

"CMCC is proud to be able to assist clients with life-changing dental services," said Ned Olney, President and CEO of Crotched Mountain Foundation. "The need is great as we are constantly receiving requests from clients who require funding support for their dental care."



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Accessible Trail Season Around the Corner

As the warmer weather breaks, hiking and trail-walking season is within sight. Crotched Mountain Foundation's accessible trails, located at Crotched Mountain in Greenfield, NH, will be open to the public soon.

As the winter thaws, mud season has kept the trails temporarily offline (using the trails while the ground is so soft can risk substantial damage to the trail system).

However, the trails will be back open shortly and our long-time trail advisor and world renowned master trail builder, Peter Jensen, will be doing maintenance on the property to ensure that these wonderful, accessible trails that you have helped make happen remain a destination for outdoors enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. Stay up to date with all trail news at cmf.org/trails.

