

HORIZONS



CROTCHED
MOUNTAIN

The magazine of Crotched Mountain Foundation

SUMMER 2021

IT'S A BIRD!

IT'S A PLANE!

IT'S...

CIMF KIDS!

Introducing Crotched Mountain's
SUPER new community impact program!

Up, Up, and Away!



When I first stepped into my role as President of Crotched Mountain Foundation in October 2019, I was inspired by how the organization had committed to making a positive difference in the lives of people with disabilities - and for years and years that commitment had positively shaped the incredible programs, services and supports that Crotched Mountain Foundation was known for.

Today, our mission stands as strong as it has for nearly a century, “A lifelong alliance to people with disabilities” – so inspirational, so transcendent. A legacy, treasured by so many. I recognized my first day as CEO that I was part of something very special.

Crotched Mountain’s unwavering commitment to the greatest needs of people with disabilities has continued to evolve, and is ready to meet those needs, today and long into the future.

Throughout the years, we have provided state-of-the-art programs from our community-based services and from our Greenfield residential school. Over the past year, we’ve collaborated with Gersh Autism on the management and ownership transfer of our residential school. As we hand the baton to Gersh Autism to continue the good work of the school, CMF is expanding our efforts to meet children and adults with disabilities where they need the most support: in their schools, in their homes, and in their communities.

As the preeminent leader, and advocate for those we serve, we are boldly creating a new program to meet the urgent needs of today. And in this issue of *Horizons*, we’re here to celebrate a brand new initiative that will positively impact thousands of students with disabilities throughout New Hampshire: CMF Kids.

With CMF Kids, Crotched Mountain will lend its expertise, networks, and resources to empower school districts in communities with the highest poverty rates to strengthen educational outcomes for students with complex disabilities. We will be reaching some of the Granite State’s most vulnerable children. This is a true milestone in our shared history – and I do mean shared. Because, my friends, you make this happen. Your generosity and support has brought life to the Crotched Mountain mission since our inception. Our story is your story. Our impact is your impact. And the lives we change are the legacy you will leave.

My enthusiasm for what is ahead for the Foundation is even greater now than on the very first day I joined Crotched Mountain almost two years ago. We’ve experienced many changes since then, but as we continue our commitment of a lifelong alliance to people with disabilities, we, together, are poised to reach new heights, and generate lasting impact for the children and adults in need of our support.

Thank you. We couldn’t do it without you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ned Olney', written in a cursive style.

Ned Olney
President and CEO of Crotched Mountain Foundation

Face of Philanthropy

Take a Bow!

By Kevin Harte, Vice President of Advancement

In Face of Philanthropy, we feature a donor to show how, for nearly a century, charitable giving has been the superpower helping kids with disabilities. For this edition, as we showcase our life-changing CMF Kids program, the choice for featured donor was obvious.

You're our superhero. Each and every one of you.

Because you're reading this magazine, it's very likely that you support Crotched Mountain Foundation, and your cumulative giving has sustained and empowered tremendous programs and services impacts on thousands of lives.

You, are the incredible, unwavering friend of the children and adults with profound disabilities we serve throughout the region. This past year, you not only accepted the once-in-a-generation challenges they all faced, but you helped make sure they surmounted them.

Your outpouring of generosity blew away expectations and supplied the necessary fuel for our exciting CMF Kids program that you are reading about today. Allow us to give you a real number: over \$1 million.

Donated by you, together, this past fiscal year - a time that swirled with unparalleled uncertainty. Amazing! And we - and the people we serve - are forever grateful.

But perhaps we shouldn't be that surprised. Because, after all, year after year, decade after decade, the supporters of Crotched Mountain have shown themselves to be some of the most compassionate, committed, and caring that this world has ever seen.

The challenge is still great and urgent. In New Hampshire alone, there are many thousands of children with complex disabilities in need of specialized supports, assistive technologies, teacher training, adaptive modifications, and more. We count on you to help us ensure it is there for them. So once again, thank you for all that you do to change the lives of exceptional children and adults.

Please visit cmf.org to learn more or to make your gift today.

"For decades we've watched Crotched Mountain Foundation's mission evolve to meet the changing, most urgent needs of people with complex disabilities. We support CMF Kids now because these kids are in our communities and they need, and deserve, our support."

Susan and Dennis Ferrick
Manchester, NH

"I was overjoyed to hear that my gift helped raise over \$1 million for these extraordinary programs and services!"

Brent Darling
Nashua, NH

"Well done to all at Crotched Mountain Foundation and to the families served for weathering a very difficult time."

Bobby Henneberry
Provincetown, MA

"I proudly support CMF Kids and its partnerships with amazing teachers and administrators who are serving thousands of children with complex disabilities, and need our help."

Andy Card
Otto, NY



For the Kids

Over 30,000 New Hampshire school-age children are identified as having a disability. Nearly one-third are from low-income families. With you by our side, Crotoned Mountain Foundation is poised to make a difference in the lives of thousands of disadvantaged children with disabilities in their own communities.

Introducing: CMF Kids!

As we have, together, throughout our shared history, Crotoned Mountain Foundation is stepping up to address a pressing need of the day: which is why we're thrilled to announce the launch of CMF Kids, Crotoned Mountain's newest initiative.

"We are ready to help these kids where they need it most," said Ned Olney, President and CEO of Crotoned Mountain Foundation. "And that is in their own communities and in their own schools. Together, our role continues as champions for people with disabilities, and the Foundation remains invigorated and excited by the opportunities that exist to help more children through CMF Kids."

The purpose of the CMF Kids program is simple: partnering with New Hampshire school districts to improve special education outcomes for students with complex disabilities, and to build special education capacity of our local public schools.

Crotoned Mountain has always responded to the most pressing and urgent needs for people with disabilities, and we have been joined by committed donors, advocates, and supporters – like you! – who have been with us every step of the way.

"Since our founding, we have always answered the call to support and serve people with disabilities," Ned says. "CMF Kids furthers that legacy by





leveraging our expertise to assist with systemic special education change for children with disabilities so that they can remain in their homes, communities and schools.”

CMF Kids seeks to accomplish three goals: 1) help schools strengthen their special education services, to lead to improved outcomes, 2) foster professional development, and 3) strengthen community-based services and supports.

It’s all about partnership and collaboration, as Crotched Mountain Foundation, powered by your generosity, works closely with school districts - pursuing the common goal of helping ensure the most vulnerable children in our state can discover a path to success.

THE GENESIS OF A NEW PROGRAM

To bring the CMF Kids program to life, Crotched Mountain Foundation leadership held extensive conversations with key stakeholders in the education, health, and human services communities, which revealed opportunities to make a difference in the special education field.

“Gaps in special education outcomes are greatest in areas with the highest poverty rates,” said Melissa White, Director of CMF Kids for Crotched Mountain Foundation. “We also learned that in

order to help improve educational outcomes for children with complex disabilities, school districts need support in critical areas including workforce development, vocational and transition services, and improving the capacity of community-based disability supports.”

In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, the Foundation, powered by your incredible generosity, piloted this concept with its “quick impact grants,” funding that was provided to local organizations offering academic and social services to children with disabilities.

These organizations included the Granite YMCA and The Upper Room. With these resource grants, the agencies were able to augment their in-person educational services to students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) during a tenuous time for families of children with special needs.

“We saw this donor-supported program transform the lives of these kids, and realized the potential of a larger initiative,” said Kevin Harte, Vice President of Advancement for Crotched Mountain. “Our donors told us they want these kids to continue thriving by providing them with educational materials and technologies, training and tech support, room modifications and much more.”

“As we look to the future of Crotched Mountain

Foundation, we are excited about the opportunity and promise that CMF Kids holds,” Ned says. “Together, with our staff, our school partners, and, most importantly, you, our amazing donors, I believe that we have the ability to touch the lives of literally thousands of children with disabilities.”

WHAT’S NEXT

CMF Kids partnerships are by invitation only. In early July, Crotched Mountain Foundation distributed invitations to apply to the program to 13 school districts in Coos, Grafton, and Cheshire counties. The review of application

proposals will begin in September, and five districts will be selected for partnership with CMF Kids for fiscal year 2022.

Examples of activities of CMF Kids will consider supporting include: educational materials, training programs for teachers and paraprofessionals, infrastructure improvements, before and after school programs, recreation equipment and programs, technologies and technical assistance.

We look forward to sharing the stories of how your generosity and CMF Kids is driving impact and helping to build capacity in special education. ■

The Heart of Special Education

Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu, Executive Director of New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators, is the newest Board member for Crotched Mountain Foundation. She brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise in the realm of special education - perfectly timed with the launch of CMF Kids. Jane offered some insight on community-based special education and how Crotched Mountain Foundation and donors like you can make a difference.



What does a program like CMF Kids mean for the special education community in New Hampshire?

Having a foundation such as CMF that is a champion for children and youth with exceptionalities and their respective educational communities is certainly a great opportunity for New Hampshire. With CMF looking to provide start up grants to NH educational communities for the purpose of developing or strengthening programs/services, it will assist NH's schools in supporting children with complex needs. With the wide range of schools and educational demographics in NH, support and partnerships from a foundation such as CMF can only benefit the children, their families and our NH public schools.

Why do you feel it is important to support students with complex disabilities in the community?

At the “heart” of special education is to provide children and youth with services and programs in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Children learn best when they are productively engaged in their own community, their home school and the peers in their educational community. This also allows the family to be fully engaged with the child’s educational team, additionally it allows children to be actively involved in co-curricular activities with children and youth in their own community.

What challenges do districts that may not have an abundance of resources face when they work to provide quality special education to their students and their families?

Many districts face challenges with resources when it comes to educating children with and without disabilities. There are significant challenges with school funding in NH which creates some real inequities within our educational communities. This results in some educational communities being identified as resource rich and those that are not so fortunate. That being said, teams responsible for the design and the development of IEP's do ensure that students needs are met despite not always having the most up to date equipment, materials and supplies.

How can CMF Kids ease these challenges?

Addressing the school funding challenges in NH is probably not going to be solved by CMF, however if there are grant monies available to assist and support educational communities directed toward program development and related resources, this is a worthy endeavor. Financial support for implementing programs and services for children and youth with complex needs is always welcomed.

A Conversation with Jim Piet

Jim - Crotched Mountain School alum, current Crotched Mountain Foundation Board member, and Public Relations Specialist at New Hampshire Department Education, Vocational Rehabilitation - opines on the potential of CMF Kids, the topography of special education, and Crotched Mountain's future.



As someone who has had a deep history with Crotched Mountain, as a Crotched Mountain School student and now a Board member, what kind of impact can the Foundation have as it strengthens its focus on supporting children and adults with disabilities in the community?

As a Board member, we've been talking about being in the community much more for a long time, but we did not know how to do it. CMF Kids will allow us to help local school districts as they apply for these grants to provide services for students with complex disabilities. CMF Kids will provide huge opportunities to keep kids in their communities rather than sending them out of district which is a huge expense for the local taxpayers.

When you look at a program like CMF Kids, what potential do you see for impact it can have on special education in New Hampshire?

Not only special education, but for the entire school system itself! We will be in class like any other student. The mindset of the average student will hopefully change for the better. At first, the student without disability will look at the student with a disability and see the disability. But I think after a few months, as the student with a disability receives the proper support, they will realize that the disability doesn't matter - and that the student is no different than they are.

As an individual with a disability yourself and leading advocate in the state, what are the opportunities you see for Crotched Mountain Foundation and its community-based programming to be a leading voice in the world of human services in general and the disability field in particular?

Once we get this program up and started, there will be a few bumps, but I don't see any major obstacles. I see great opportunities to work with new partners and hopefully generate new leadership candidates for Crotched Mountain Foundation. We need leaders who understand local school districts and how they function. Once the grant funds are being used the way we envision, I see other partners joining us, especially parents. However, I can see a downside: as fewer kids with severe disabilities are sent out of their district, families will have their children seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, and that will be very stressful. As a state and country, we are very slim on the workforce that provides supports for individuals with disabilities now, and we need to improve this situation very quickly.

What are you personally most excited about with this new chapter in Crotched Mountain's history?

The community will see us much differently. They won't see a segregated setting any longer. They will see us as a partner with local school districts.

If you had to summarize why Crotched Mountain is so special in one sentence what would it be?

Without Crotched Mountain I would not be the person that I am today. ■



Crotched's Jim Piet, shown here in the ball toss, was named to a second alternate spot on the American team to compete in Holland next year.

Jim featured in the Fall 1979 issue of The Crotched Mountain Independent.



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Horizons Summer 2021



Everyone is hiring. But we're inspiring!

We know - these days job openings are everywhere. But where can you find the a job like this: spending time in the community, making memories with an extraordinary person with a disability, sharing life, going bowling, volunteering, grabbing lunch, you name it!

Crotched Mountain Foundation is looking for kind, energetic, awesome people to join our team as Direct Support Professionals. If you or someone you know is looking for a life-changing career opportunity, this is by far the most fun, rewarding, make-a-difference job out there!

Learn more and apply at
[cmf.org/careers](https://www.cmf.org/careers)