

HORIZONS

WINTER 2024

A beautiful day.



Dear Friends,

On September 14 we honored Jim Piet. Surrounded by friends and colleagues, Jim Piet was honored with a special ceremony at the top of the Crotched Mountain accessible trails. There we unveiled the permanent plaque naming the legendary Crotched Mountain view, The Jim Piet Overlook. You could not have asked for a better opportunity to honor a great man.

I would like to tell you who Jim is, and a little about why he is so important to our mission.

Jim was born in Berlin, NH with cerebral palsy, before very much was known much about this neurological disorder, and before there was professional special education within the public schools. With little support, Jim's mother and family advocated for him to go to the Crotched Mountain School in Greenfield, NH. This was in the late 1960s.

Jim successfully graduated high school and went on to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees, and then to work for the NH Department of Education for more than 20 years. He married Pat and had a daughter. During all of this time Jim continued to access Crotched Mountain's services and housing, and was so committed to the mission that he eventually joined the Board of Directors. Jim is currently our Chairman of the Board; the first Chair in our history who, himself, lives with a disability.

For over 50 years, Jim has been a leading example and advocate for how people with a disability can live a dignified life, while making a difference in the lives of others.

The Crotched Mountain Foundation mission is powerful: "Helping people with disabilities and chronic conditions live, learn, and thrive in their communities." However, it is even more powerful with the real-life example of Jim, and how he lives this mission for others.

This is why we recognize and celebrate Jim Piet, and all that he has done to make the world a better place for people living with a disability.

Best,



Ned Olney
President and CEO



THE FACE OF PHILANTHROPY

Jill Collier: Big Heart, Bigger Legacy



Tuesday, June 17, 2014: an ordinary day that featured an extraordinary phone call.

“Hi! This is Jill Collier. Almost 40 years ago, Crotched Mountain helped train me as a young special education teacher.”

Jill called to share how that training had inspired her 38-year career teaching hundreds, if not thousands, of children with disabilities. At the time of the call, as she was setting off on her retirement, Jill was already thinking of how Crotched Mountain could help provide special education training for generations to come.

Less than 15 months later, Jill lost her life in a tragic accident.

But Jill had already sown the seeds of her enduring legacy. A distribution from Jill’s estate created an endowment fund, the Jill Collier Memorial Fund. Since then, Jill’s partner, Andy Card, has helped perpetuate Jill’s passion for special education by stewarding additional contributions from friends, family and others.

Andy says: “As an endowed charitable fund, it generates income and growth, and supports essential training to providers of special education for generations.”

While schools were closed during the pandemic and remote learning was the new normal, students with special needs were struggling at an alarming rate. Crotched Mountain Foundation used proceeds from Jill’s fund to provide life-changing tutoring to students with disabilities.

Now, through CMF Kids, Jill’s legacy is there to help special education teachers and paraprofessionals in our poorest communities—providing training that inspires teachers for their own decades of service, each improving the lives of thousands of children with disabilities. ■

To support special education teachers with a gift by check or online now, you can write ‘Jill Collier Memorial Fund’ in the memo section of the check or the online form at cmf.org/donate.

THE FACE OF PHILANTHROPY

Some of the Ways You Can Create Your Legacy Now!

Your will or trust can create a gift to Crotched Mountain Foundation. A donation through your estate helps you pursue your financial goals while also benefiting Crotched Mountain's Peoples and Programs.

As a beneficiary in other financial assets like your retirement plan, life insurance policy, or annuity is another way to create your perpetual legacy.

Life income gifts such as Charitable Gift Annuities are tax-smart ways to create income for you and your family for life while leaving a future gift supporting people with disabilities.

A Charitable Lead Trust begins with your gift of fixed annual payments to Crotched Mountain Foundation while leaving assets to your family or other heirs and reduces applicable taxes.

Don Kent Legacy Society

Our legacy society honors renowned WBZ weatherman, Don Kent, who supported Crotched Mountain throughout his life. Become a member by letting us know that you're including Crotched Mountain in your estate planning, through a Charitable Gift Annuity, a gift of stock, an IRA, life insurance or real estate, or as a specific amount or a percentage of your residual estate. Your name will be included on the Don Kent Legacy Society plaque, and you will be honored in perpetuity for a gift that lasts for generations. Join hundreds who've included Crotched Mountain in their estate plans with gifts ranging from \$5,000 to more than \$2 million.

Other Tax-Smart Ways to Make a Gift Now!

Use your IRA

Are you required to take a minimum income distribution (RMD) as taxable income? A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) directly to Crotched Mountain Foundation is not taxed as income. Crotched Mountain Foundation's ID number is 02-0222168.

Use Appreciated Stock

A stock held for more than a year and gifted directly to Crotched Mountain Foundation is a great way to avoid capital gains taxes. Call or email us to learn more about your options.

It's easier than you think! Contact Kevin Harte at **603-831-8424** or email kevin.harte@crotchedmountain.org. You can give securely online at crotchedmountain.org/donate.

Information contained herein is offered for general information purposes. Your personal circumstances, state laws, and other factors may impact results. It is always recommended you consult with your financial advisors before any important financial decisions.

The Harry Gregg Foundation, An Important Resource for People with Disabilities and Their Families

Over thirty years ago, the Harry Gregg Foundation was established to provide support grants to help the people of New Hampshire with disabilities and their families cover the cost of needed products and services.

As one of the few charitable foundations to provide funds directly to individuals, the Harry Allen Gregg Foundation has made over 8,000 grants totaling more than \$3 million.

Opportunities for grant support include home modifications, educational services, adaptive equipment, therapeutic recreation, medical bills and technology. The Harry Gregg Foundation strives to help improve a person's quality of life by providing funds that will enhance their independence. ■

Learn more at: www.harrygreggfoundation.org.

Harry Gregg
FOUNDATION



HOW NANCY CAME BACK TO LIFE

(With some help from Crotched Mountain Community Care)

On October 29, 2021, Nancy got COVID-19. She didn't feel well. Then she felt worse. And worse. That Monday nobody could reach her. Her son came to her house to check in and found her lying on her back, barely responsive, in the grips of respiratory failure.

She was in such bad shape and the outlook was so dire, that the doctors had recommended she go on a ventilator. But Nancy, an LNA by trade, refused.

"I had a sixth sense," Nancy recalls. "I knew I would not make it if I went on the ventilator. So I was told I was dying after two weeks in the hospital and I was sent home."

Thankfully, Nancy pulled through—but her healing process was just beginning. A long and arduous road lay ahead and Covid had ravaged her. She had to leave her apartment and move in permanently with her son and his family. And she was so

diminished physically, suffering from a blood clot disorder and an ongoing respiratory ailment, her LNA career was essentially over.

"I am constantly fatigued," she says. "If I get up and do something, if I make a meal, I have to rest. If I make my bed, I have to rest."

With her life completely turned upside down, Nancy found hope through Crotched Mountain Community Care (CMCC), Crotched Mountain's case management program for adults enrolled in the Choices for Independence (CFI) program through Medicaid. That is when she met CMCC Case Manager Dave Kutz, who soon made a life-changing difference for her.

CFI Case Managers arrange in-home supports, leverage grants, and marshal community resources in support of the independence of clients like Nancy. The end goal? Keep people out of nursing homes and living independently and successfully in their own communities.

"It's just been a wonderful program," she says.

These days, Nancy has been able to slowly, methodically reconfigure her life. She stays busy, focusing on her beloved crafting (she's known especially for her snowflakes!), going to physical therapy, and utilizing the resources Dave and CMCC has been able to pull together on her behalf.

"It's been a hard process," she says. "Dave has really helped me. I don't know where I'd be without his assistance. When he left one day after a visit, my daughter-in-law said 'I've never seen anybody get things for people like he does.'" ■



OLIVIA'S RESET

A CMF Kids Partnership Led to an Accessible Playground Just in Time for a Little Girl Who Needed It Most

When Olivia was six years old she had three strokes. They came on the heels of an intensive surgery, a procedure to repair a constriction of blood flow to her brain, caused by Moyamoya disease. The surgery was necessary: if left unaddressed, the issue would worsen until cataclysm struck—and that would have lethal consequences.

But the strokes were nonetheless devastating and when she emerged from the medically-induced coma she had been placed in, a new reality awaited her and her family.

“I was suddenly the mom of a child with special needs,” said Angelica, Olivia’s mother. “Olivia had to learn how to walk, talk, eat, use her hands, everything, all over again.”

Olivia is in therapy almost every day after school, receiving Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and more.

Thankfully, she was able to walk, but the stroke still played havoc with her mobility; she is currently in a wheelchair so she can have casting done on her legs to stabilize and repair her Achilles tendons, which had their connection to the brain disrupted during the stroke.

“Her tendons were tightening up to the point that she couldn’t walk effectively,” Angelica says. “It was creating hip problems, so we are fixing that.”

That is far too much for a little girl to go through—and to continue to endure.

“It’s a very, very, very long road,” Angelica says. “Stroke recovery is different for everybody.”

For now, the most important thing Angelica is hoping to return to her daughter is normalcy. The physical and language skills are painstakingly returning, but, in the meantime, mom wants her daughter to rediscover what it means to be a child again.

This is where a small taste of serendipity enters the story. Before Olivia had her surgery, Angelica was on a committee to improve the Whitefield Elementary School playground. Partnering with CMF Kids opened the door to a vastly improved, updated, and most importantly, accessible play area. Through a CMF Kids partnership project, Whitefield Elementary was able to make that playground a reality, offering adaptive equipment and even unique braille features to meet the needs of a student who is blind.

“At CMF Kids, we believe all children should have the opportunity to learn, play, and thrive together,” says Melissa White, Executive Director of CMF Kids.

“Along with this playground, we are also working on adaptive improvements to Gossler Park and Bakersville Schools in Manchester and Berlin Preschool Playground.”

“This means a lot for her because she gets to play with her friends and it kind of gives her a sense of normalcy,” Angelica says. “We try to keep everything as normal as we can for her and give her the same opportunities that any other kid her age would have. Even though she can’t get out of her chair, there’s an adaptive swing on the swing set so she’s able to use the swings like her friends do.”

The road to healing is a winding and strenuous one, but waypoints like the CMF Kids-powered accessible playground offer significant respites.

“It’s just been really integral to her recovery,” Angelica says. “I feel like having the ability to access the things that everybody else can is really important for her. She didn’t feel like she was left behind.” ■





A VIEW FOR THE AGES

When it comes to early fall days, they don't get more perfect than September 14, 2024. And when it comes to noteworthy events in the history of Crotoned Mountain Foundation, it doesn't get sweeter than the James C. Piet Overlook dedication ceremony. There, at the top of Crotoned Mountain, with a scenic view sprawled out before the attendees, the official plaque naming this perch to the amazing vista was unveiled.

Truly, there is no more deserving person than Jim, a man who embodies everything that the Crotoned Mountain Foundation mission is all about. From his time as a student to an adult resident to Board leader, Jim has helped steer Crotoned Mountain through all manner of tides—and throughout he has been a stalwart ambassador for people with disabilities in New Hampshire.

We took a few moments to talk with Jim, to see what the dedication meant to him and to get his perspective on Crotoned Mountain's history, and its future.

What did it mean to you personally to see that dedication and be honored in that way along with other Crotoned Mountain volunteers?

I was proud and a little embarrassed! The Foundation always relied on its volunteers for different programs and activities where funding did not exist. A prime example is our Board of Directors and Trustees. We always had the ability to change the direction of the foundation to match the community's needs. This is why we lasted so long. Hopefully we will continue this into the future.

What has Crotoned Mountain Foundation meant to you over the years? How has it impacted your life?

Crotoned Mountain Foundation and its staff gave me confidence by providing the right supports to help me achieve anything I set my mind to. It's not easy, but it's possible. CMF taught me the importance of forging my own path and cultivating appropriate support.

What is it about the Crotoned Mountain mission that has kept you engaged for all these years?

CMF's commitment to listening to and amplifying the voices of those personally impacted by disability, and its ability to pivot to inclusive community-based solutions after it was clear institutionalization was not meeting the needs of those we supported.

Speaking of that, why is it important for Crotoned Mountain to focus on community-based supports for adults and children?

All people deserve to be fully integrated into their communities. Without community-based services my life with my wife and daughter would not exist.

What excites you most about the future of Crotoned Mountain Foundation?

Now that we demonstrated it's possible to support local schools in their efforts to be more inclusive, the next generation will be more empowered to forge their own futures and come up with creative solutions to problems that still plague the disability community. ■



AN INTERVIEW WITH MCKENNA ALLEN, CMF KIDS FELLOW

CMF Kids and Crotched Mountain Foundation are currently in year two of a fellowship program in partnership with Littleton School District. This innovative program supports first year Special Education teachers who are part of the school district's Master's in Education, Special Education Residency Program through Plymouth State University.

The fellowship initiative is aimed at the ongoing training, cultivation, and retention of Special Educators. CMF Kids assists with scholarship support. These teaching fellows are actively engaged in the school district's CMF Kids partnership program and help us better understand the role of Special Educators in the communities we serve, as well as the needs of students identified with disabilities. McKenna Allen is a CMF Kids fellow and took a few moments to share her experience. As a donor, you are making this game-changing program a reality!

What is your role?

I am the Special Education Case Manager at Daisy Bronson Middle School in Littleton. I work with the 7th and 8th grade students, providing push-in services in the classroom and helping students with grade-level curriculum. I offer specially designed instruction based on the students' needs.

How did you get involved with Special Education?

I always knew that Special Education was what I wanted to do. Every kid is their own individual, like a Rubik's Cube. And you just have to figure out what's the right approach, what works for them, to make the things that are not clicking suddenly click. And when it clicks, it's amazing. It's wonderful.

Can you share a student success story?

I had a student in fourth grade, and she was not a strong writer or reader. But she loved stories, and especially loved graphic novels. She had this one graphic novel and told me 'I really want to be able to read this.' So I worked with her, creating a vocabulary list and spelling patterns and we got to the point where she was reading the book. And we even ended up crafting a short story inspired by the graphic novel!

What's next for you and your students?

Melissa White, Executive Director of CMF Kids, has set me up with Adaptive Sports Partners, and I'm hoping to start working with them in the spring. For some of my students that have ADHD diagnoses and are very active, they want to do something fun and this will be perfect. I will also be working with students to create paintings, pictures, drawing, and different art pieces that can be used for letters and stationery for Crotched Mountain Foundation. The kids are super excited about it!

What would you tell Crotched Mountain supporters about how their gifts make a difference?

Your support is helping students and teachers in the North Country. You are making it possible for them to have an easier time, because I feel like in the North country the world changes. It's so helpful for us who are at the "edge of the world," to access these resources that, otherwise, we would not be able to get as easily. Lives are being impacted in real time! ■

SNAPSHOTS



CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF A MAGICAL PARTNERSHIP

On October 27, the very last day of Story Land's 2024 season, a huge Crotched Mountain contingent showed up in force to celebrate 70 years of an amazing partnership between Crotched Mountain Foundation and the beloved family theme park in Glen, NH. Prior to the park's opening that morning, Crotched Mountain President and CEO

Ned Olney received a check representing two years of dollar bills and change dropped into the iconic Crotched Mountain Wishing Well by park attendees. What a wonderful way to recognize our 70 years of shared commitment to bring smiles to children of all abilities! ■

A MEETING OF THE MINDS AT THE CMF KIDS FALL PARTNERSHIP BREAKFAST

At Plymouth State College we welcomed a room filled with CMF Kids partners and guest experts to listen to compelling presentations, network with one another, and share their success stories. This breakfast is always a highlight of the year, featuring the best and brightest in the world of New Hampshire special education. The presenters shared inspiring success stories from our CMF Kids partners, who are empowering children with disabilities from the most under-resourced communities in New Hampshire. ■



VOLUNTEERS KEEP THE GREEN GROWING



We are grateful to our dedicated group of volunteers who worked throughout the year to upkeep and improve the Crotched Mountain Foundation Memorial Garden and Accessible Trails in Greenfield, NH. This year we held four volunteer work days, attended by dozens of friends from the community and organizations like the Appalachian Mountain Club, Eversource, and CarMax. ■



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THROUGH THE YEARS

Celebrating the History of Crotched Mountain Foundation

2004

Did you know? In 2004, Crotched Mountain Foundation debuted New Hampshire's first ever accessible tree house, built with funding specifically designated for its construction. This amazing feat of engineering and creativity was built on our Greenfield, NH campus and was enjoyed by students and adults with disabilities alike. The value of "all deserve to play," embodied by this unique construction, continues to this day with Crotched Mountain's and CMF Kids' focus on accessible recreation.

