



Keene Housing Kids COLLABORATIVE

March 2018 Newsletter | Vol I

Christine's Story

By Maury Bohan

Meet Christine Allen. Christine lives with her two children in Swanzey. She first heard about Keene Housing Kids Collaborative partnerships for children through a friend who shared that her daughter was participating in horseback riding. Being a single mom, with no child support, Christine was thrilled. Normally, she struggles to pay for everything, and would have to choose her children's activities based on their cost. But because she is a resident of Keene Housing, her children can participate at no cost in activities at more than 20 organizations in the community that partner with the Kids Collaborative.

Since then, Christine's children have been taking advantage of KHKC out-of-school and summer activities. Eric, who is eleven years old, attended Swanzey Lake's summer day camp. His sister, Ari, who is nine, has done horseback riding, ice skating, and jump-rope club. Often, she is involved with two of these activities at a time! Eric and Ari say that these programs are fun, and an opportunity to meet new friends. Rather than sitting at home doing nothing and being bored, they're happily engaged.

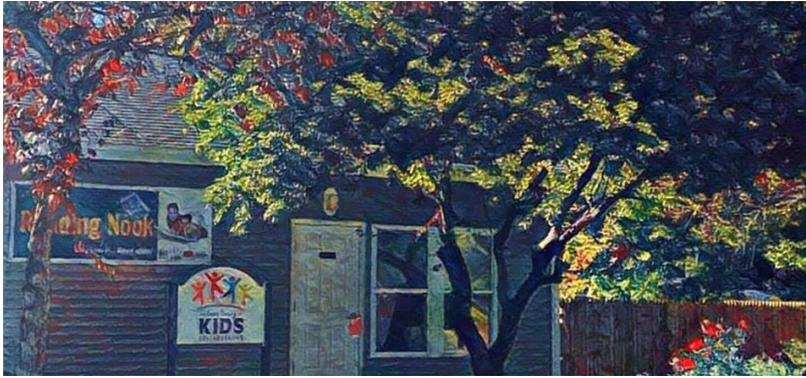
The benefits of out-of-school and summer programs are so much more than fun and friendship. Through quality extracurricular activities, children often discover what they are passionate about, and the more they participate, the greater their self-esteem. Good self-esteem translates into better school grades, positive relationships, and reduced risk of drug use. These benefits in turn lead to improved career outcomes and better quality of life. The whole family benefits from programs for children; when young people have a safe place to go, parents are more productive at work and take fewer days off.



Active kids are happy kids!

Christine agrees with the research. She recognizes that if her kids are well occupied and productive, they are not looking for negative activities. "They have less chance to screw up," says Christine with a laugh. The activities are often physical, and Ari and Eric look forward to them. Through horseback riding, Ari has participated in grooming, which Christine says teaches her daughter responsibility, and how to work for what she wants. Ari realizes that these programs are a reward, or an incentive to get her work done and to do it well.

Christine would prefer to not be in the position of having to ask for support for her children's activities. But when she sees the smiles on their faces, and their pride at their new accomplishments, she knows it's well worth it. In fact, she's joined KHKC's Parent Advisory Committee to help spread the word!



In 2017...

31 kids participated in the Arts

132 kids participated in Athletics

117 kids participated in Academic activities

Our Program

Keene Housing Kids Collaborative is a non-profit organization serving kids that live in housing owned or managed by Keene Housing, including Housing Choice voucher holders.

We believe kids, wherever they live, should be part of the community, not apart from the community. That's why we don't have centralized programming on site at Keene Housing properties. Instead, we partner with community organizations that are already providing excellent programming for kids. Last year, 221 children participated in activities through the Kids Collaborative, including programs at Keene Family YMCA, MoCo Arts, Keene Ice, Keene State College, and Stonewall Farm. These and other youth serving organizations in the community partner with the Kids Collaborative because they, too, see the value in investing in the children of our community.



Our Mission is building the foundation for successful adulthood. We give kids access to opportunities and experiences in the community that will help them gain confidence, have fun, learn, get ready for kindergarten, do well in elementary school, and exit high school with the tools that will help them become economically independent adults.

After School Programs are more than just fun!

Quality after-school programs can do much more than keep children occupied during the afternoon! The proven benefits include:

1. Managing time and prioritizing tasks and commitments, which helps with school and adult life;
2. Finding things they are passionate about, and building confidence and self-esteem;
3. Goal setting and learning the value of working toward achieving those goals;
4. Teamwork, which is a lifetime skill that helps in later life with jobs and careers;
5. Improved grades, behavior and work habits;
6. Building a lifelong commitment to community involvement.



Kids Collaborative Staff Spotlight

By Maury Bohan

Anna Crosby, Youth Services Administrator, was born and raised in Norwich, New York. She first came to this area to attend graduate school at Keene State College, and settled here permanently after marrying a New Hampshire native. Anna was hired as the Youth Services Administrator for Keene Housing in 2011, where she worked primarily with children at the North/Gilsum and Forest View Keene Housing properties. Anna joined the team at the Kids Collaborative in 2015 when it was established as a separate organization to expand services and opportunities for kids living in Keene Housing households.

Anna brings to her position a personal understanding of the barriers that can be imposed on children due to limited family resources. Parents managing households with limited means must often choose between the things their children are interested in and day-to-day living expenses. Anna recalls declining to go downhill skiing with her best friend because she could not afford it, and she also dropped out of a local dance program because her family, although supportive of her desire, was unable to afford advanced classes. Transportation also proved to be a barrier to attending a gymnastics program in the region.

“My parents worked hard to give me things,” says Anna, “but doing free sports through the school was easier.”

Now that Anna has two sons of her own, she realizes what she missed, and how important it is for kids of all backgrounds to be listened to, encouraged, and gently pushed. “As a parent you see the importance of supporting all families,” she says.

Anna also recognizes that she and her young family are part of a larger community and that she wants to help, inspire and build this community so that every child, regardless of household income, has equal access to the opportunities and experiences that will help them reach their full potential. “When we support families, we strengthen the communities that our kids are part of,” she says.

Anna is the primary point of contact for families, when they call, email, or come into the Kids Collaborative office. As Youth Programs Administrator, Anna liaises with families and our community partners, manages paperwork and applications, and expedites enrollment of our kids in existing programs in the community. She offers a friendly smile and ready conversation for parents and kids who stop by the 5 Harmony Lane location. Chatting with folks comes naturally to Anna, and she knows that developing relationships with our families makes the enrollment process easier, and ultimately benefits the kids. “Building relationships with the families is the fun part – watching them grow is a bonus!” she says with a smile.



Up Coming Events

March -Summer Camp
Registration begins

June -NH Gives Day
June 6-7

July and August -KH
Neighborhood Cookouts at
properties

August -Back to School ice
cream truck party (date
TBD)

October -KHKC Benefit
Breakfast, Oct 23

Call our office at 352-0109
for more information!

Activities for Kids Ages 13+

Career Exploration Camp
Cheshire Career Center
(last week of June)

Keene Yoga Center
Free membership for high
school students

**Summer Strength and
Conditioning Camp**
Keene High School

MoCo Arts
Introductory tap and jazz
dance classes

Babysitting Course
Red Cross certification



Community Partners

- Keene Family YMCA
- MoCo Arts
- City of Keene Parks and Recreation
- Swanzey Recreation Department
- Project KEEP (Keene School District afterschool program)
- ACES 93 (Monadnock Regional School District afterschool program)
- Keene Ice
- White Crane Martial Arts
- Yankee Lanes Bowling
- Stonewall Farm
- Keene State College Kids on Campus
- Child Development Center at Keene State College
- Montessori School of Keene
- Cheshire Children’s Museum
- Cheshire Career Center
- Children’s Learning Center at Cheshire Medical Center
- Monadnock Conservancy
- Cheshire County Indoor Soccer
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of NH
- Children’s Stage Adventures
- Granite Gorge
- Wakadoodles Open Art Studio
- Greater Keene Youth Baseball and Softball Association
- Swanzey Cal Ripken Baseball
- Keene High School Athletic Department



Suggested Reading List

Want to read more about what children need today? Here are a few suggestions:

Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much by Sendhil Mullainathan

Our Kids by Robert Putnam

Grit by Angela Duckworth

Helping Children Succeed by Paul Tough

Giving Kids a Fair Chance by James Heckman



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Help us send a kid to camp this summer!

send one child to camp \$100 _____

send two children to camp \$200 _____

send five children to camp \$500 _____

Other amount _____

Make checks payable to KHKC, 5 Harmony Lane, Keene, NH 03431

Or donate online at www.khkc.org

