



Midcoast  
Youth  
Center

Serving youth ages 5-24 in Sagadahoc County, Brunswick & Harpswell



4 Old Brunswick Road  
Bath, Maine 04530



(207) 443-8750 phone  
(207) 512-1996 fax



info@midcoastyouth.org  
www.midcoastyouth.org



## Building Hope. Saving Lives.

Just after returning to school during the pandemic, Maine's middle & high schoolers took the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, which measures health behaviors and attitudes regarding tobacco, alcohol, substance use, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and protective factors.

The local mental health results were sobering. 42% of Morse high schoolers and 42% of Bath middle schoolers felt so sad or hopeless in the past 12 months, that they stopped doing normal activities – a key indicator of depression.

Equally concerning, 24% of Morse high schoolers, 30% Bath middle schoolers and 31% of Woolwich middle schoolers indicated they have seriously considered suicide.

At the same time, the housing crisis that continues to make it harder for working families to find an affordable place to live, has had a disproportionate effect on youth experiencing homelessness.

On Oct. 1, 2022, at least 2,186 Maine students were homeless, according to the Maine Department of Education. Half were living doubled-up in a home or apartment that was not their own, 33% were in hotels or motels, 11% were in shelters and 4% were in cars, in abandoned buildings or outside.<sup>1</sup>

These statistics indicate staggering needs among our youth, and are a call to action for schools, municipalities, youth-serving organizations, parents, and every member of our community. It will require all of us working together, and pooling our resources, to make a difference.

While the root causes of these issues are often complex, the solutions don't need to be.

From simple acts showing youth that they matter like giving a ride to school or eating dinner together, to increasing access to critical supports that meet basic needs, to developing new opportunities - MYC is committed to building hope and saving lives.

We welcome you to join us - whether as a volunteer, an advocate, a partner, or a financial supporter, you can build a hopeful future for local youth.

As you read through this newsletter, I'd love to hear from you. Drop me a line or join me for a tour and a cup of coffee!

Best,

*Jamie Dorr*

**Jamie Dorr**  
Executive Director/Founder

<sup>1</sup> Paoella, V. (2023, Mar 5). Housing crisis drives rise in youth homelessness. Sun Journal <https://www.sunjournal.com/2023/03/05/housing-crisis-drives-rise-in-youth-homelessness/>

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## Parenting Resources We



[Findhelp.org](#)

[211maine.org](#)

[GoZen.com](#)

[ChildMind.org](#)

[CommonSense.org](#)

[GearParentNetwork.org](#)

[MidcoastMaineCommunityAction.org](#)





**MEAL TRAIN**  
Filling bellies & hearts



**871** & counting  
dinners served in 2023!

Many of our young people come to MYC directly after school and stay with us until closing.

To ensure every kid gets a hearty and nutritious dinner meal each night, MYC relies on the generosity of the local community to donate meals.

Local community members, church groups, businesses, and organizations ensure no one goes hungry.

Our “Meal Train” program allows volunteers to sign up and donate a meal on a specific day. Alternatively, financial contributions or gift cards to local restaurants and grocery stores are greatly appreciated!

Learn More!  
[midcoastyouth.org/meals](http://midcoastyouth.org/meals)

Contact Lisa St. Pierre  
Call 207-443-8750  
[lisa@midcoastyouth.org](mailto:lisa@midcoastyouth.org)



**We are very grateful  
for our Meal Train  
volunteers :**

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Kathy Alexander | Susan Gallant         |
| Anne Armstrong  | Bath Food Bank        |
| Betsy Fear      | Kathleen Homan        |
| Laurie Bisson   | Cathy Leonard         |
| Emily Bollman   | Gwenda Metzler-Pryor  |
| Deb Bruce       | Cheryl Peaslee        |
| Judi Commeau    | Sarah Savard          |
| Sue Fitzgerald  | Patti Sigurdson       |
| Pamela Cox      | Winship Green         |
| Aggie Demers    | Carolyn Lockwood      |
| Kathy Duncan    | Melissa Malmquist     |
| Elmhurst        | Bath United Methodist |

## COAST Workforce Development for Teens & Young Adults

Career Opportunities & Advancing Skills Together or “COAST” is a workforce development program at MYC for 16-24-year-olds living in Sagadahoc County, Brunswick, or Harpswell.

Generously funded as part of Governor Mills’ Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, this Maine Career Exploration opportunity aims to connect young people in Maine to future career opportunities by funding paid work experiences with employers across the state.

In the COAST program, teens and young adults gain confidence as they learn workability skills including resume writing, workplace etiquette, workers’ rights, conflict resolution, and financial literacy, among others.

Program participants enhance “soft skills” such as teamwork, flexibility, perseverance, willingness to learn, and using critique and failures to learn and grow. Local employers looking to connect with today’s youth workforce offer job shadowing, paid internships, and meaningful job placements.

Each person receives a \$600 stipend for completing the program plus they are entered to win a scholarship for driver’s education.

For those who left high school without a diploma, no worries! In partnership with Merrymeeting Adult Education, MYC supports youth looking to prepare for the HiSET exam. HiSET is an alternative for the US high school diploma and is offered for adults who were not able to acquire a high school diploma for any reason.

Learn more!  
Email [gina@midcoastyouth.org](mailto:gina@midcoastyouth.org)  
Call/Text 207-504-1830





# Exploring New Interests at MYC



Learning strategy at Chess Club!



Learning how to cook!



Learning how to skateboard!



Isaac & Michaela Advancing music skills!



Learning to crochet!



Building community together!

You can listen to Isaac play:  
<https://youtu.be/IOpVZnbQFGM>

## Volunteer Spotlight: Margot Ngo

Margot Ngo is a Bowdoin College senior majoring in government & legal studies and education with an anthropology minor. They are a current three-year fellow at the McKen Center. Her work there centers on anti-racism, communication and accessibility, and the history of service at Bowdoin College.



Through following her interest in rollerskating, she found MYC and now volunteers with us. She has inspired a new group of rollerskaters, expanding use of the skatepark to new riders who might not otherwise use it. Margot is always ready with a smile, a kind word, and we are very grateful!



“Volunteering at MYC has been one of the best things I have done with my time in midcoast Maine. The community means everything to me, particularly when students come rolling up to me in skates as soon as I enter. It’s a genuine pleasure watching students grow more confident in their skating ability and come out of their shells. I love getting to spend my afternoons skating with students, helping serve dinners, and doing crafts alongside them.”



## Community Navigator



Facing a challenge and not sure where to turn? MYC's Community Navigator works with teens, young adults, and families to determine what the most appropriate resources and services are to help you overcome whatever it is you may be facing.

We can help you explore opportunities in our community and see how we can get you involved with more people, groups, and activities. Reach out today!

Kirsten Latter, Community Navigator  
Call or Text (207) 504-1675 or  
email: [connect@midcoastyouth.org](mailto:connect@midcoastyouth.org)





## What is the Working Communities Challenge Initiative?

The Working Communities Challenge advances local collaborative efforts that build strong, healthy economies and communities in Maine's rural towns, regions, and smaller cities. Launched in 2020, the initiative supports local teams working together to improve economic outcomes for all people in Maine's towns, cities, and rural communities.

We are very excited and honored to be one of six Maine teams in the Maine Working Communities Challenge.

Bath is home to a rich maritime history, our downtown area is ranked one of the best in the country, and we are home to one of Maine's largest employers.

Yet, when we look to our youth and young adult community – we see a disengaged population, struggling to find success in school or in the workplace, with high rates of depression and anxiety, substance use, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Our youth are struggling with homelessness, they are losing their parents to the opioid crisis, and we are losing them to violent crimes, overdose, and suicide.

Our initiative is focused on reducing the rate of youth hopelessness by 15% over the next ten years by creating a comprehensive web of support that includes education, mentoring,

training, jobs, and healthcare. Our vision is that one call for help unlocks, and sets into motion, a wide range of support systems and removes the numerous barriers often faced – especially by families with low-to-moderate incomes, families of color, and members of our LGBTQ communities.

In ten years, our vision is for Sagadahoc County youth to be thriving, well-equipped, and eager to enter the workforce, resulting in a flourishing local economy and a healthy community.

With your support, we believe we can begin to unravel these complex issues for sustainable systems change throughout the Midcoast region.

Interested in learning more or want to get involved? Reach out to Liz Kovarsky by email [liz@midcoastyouth.org](mailto:liz@midcoastyouth.org) or by calling (207) 504-2908.

During our last planning session, three major focus areas emerged:

**Culture:** Surrounding youth with support, encouragement, confidence and belief in them - everywhere they go.

**Pathways:** Developing clear pathways for success for youth from school to work and life.

**Supports:** Enabling youth to succeed on their chosen pathway.

**The golden thread that runs through all of these focus areas is a desire for intergenerational connection, peer connection, and placed-based connectedness to Bath/Sagadahoc County.**

Learn more: <https://www.bostonfed.org/workingplaces/communities-challenge/maine.aspx>



## NEW! Youth Action Board

As part of the Sagadahoc County Working Communities' Challenge Initiative commitment to making changes at the systems level and involving those it seeks to serve, a Sagadahoc County Youth Action Board has been developed to serve not only as voices, but as decision-makers around our table as we seek to build hope within the greater Sagadahoc community.

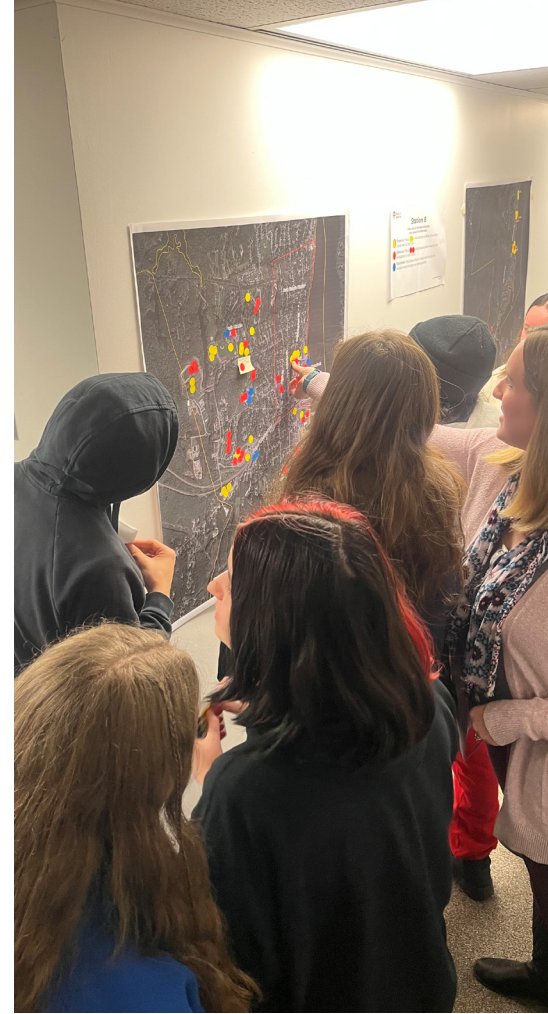
The Youth Action Board or "YAB" is a group of local young folks (age 16-24) who are interested in developing their leadership, communication, and advocacy skills to create lasting change.

The YAB has identified topics including a need for more equitable access to having their basic needs met, the need for high school curriculum to include a for-credit "Adulting 101" course, the need for

healthy and accessible recreational activities, and most importantly: A stronger sense of community belonging for their age group.

A central aspect of the YAB, is the relationship building between young people and caring adults in the community. Board members have been guiding the ongoing planning and piloting process of the Sagadahoc WCC Initiative, as well as working with local city officials in Bath's Comprehensive Planning process, participating in community building projects, participating in state level advocacy and more.

The YAB has been meeting every other week since December, and this spring we will dive into a Leadership & Advocacy training with YLAT, a Youth Leadership Advisory Team, a joint project between Maine's Youth in Foster Care, The Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the Muskie School at University of Southern Maine.



Youth Action Board shares their vision for the future of Bath

Our Merrymeeting Support Collaborative for Youth Experiencing Homelessness provides stability to youth experiencing homelessness through a regional network of support, increasing student attendance, and academic success while supporting social-emotional health. Our partnership includes MSAD 75 & RSU 1.

Donna Verhoeven, Youth Outreach Coordinator, works with children and youth up to age 24 experiencing homelessness throughout Sagadahoc County, Brunswick & Harpswell, with office hours at Midcoast Youth Center, and at schools within RSU 1 and MSAD 75.

Last school year in Sagadahoc County, we had identified 77 youth experiencing homelessness, just in the middle and high school grades.

When offered services by MYC, 84% of those teenagers raised their hand for help. Finding a safe place to stay, accessing food and clothing, as well as everything else they needed – from haircuts to help filling out college applications to transportation to the doctor's office, our Merrymeeting Support Collaborative is the only program of its kind in Sagadahoc County.





# FINDING HOPE

## at Group

with **Andrea Di Benedetto & Flower Noble**



Life can be tough at times. Come talk with us about what's on your mind: coping with the loss of a loved one, navigating stress at school, or scary stuff in the news. Let's develop new coping strategies and find hope, together.

### Sobriety Support Group

For anyone who wants to live a sober lifestyle or cope with a loved one's substance use. Ages 13-19

### Young Adults Life Group

For young adults navigating life and wondering what's next. Ages 18-24

### Finding Hope After Loss Group

For anyone who has experienced loss of any kind. Ages 13-19



### Don't see the one you want?

Send us your ideas!

All programs offered free of charge!

**JOIN US AT GROUP, CONNECT WITH FRIENDS,  
& FIND HOPE TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE.**

Call or Text to sign up **207-370-8111**

Date & Time to be determined by group members - food provided.

Let us know if you need help with transportation!

 [adibenedetto@me.com](mailto:adibenedetto@me.com)

 207-370-8111

 [www.midcoastyouth.org/group](http://www.midcoastyouth.org/group)

 All groups will be held in Bath

Funded by Sagadahoc County Working Communities & American Academy of Pediatrics





# COAST

*into a Future of Possibilities*

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES & ADVANCING SKILLS TOGETHER



SCAN ME

Workforce Development Program for 16-24 year olds



### *Work Readiness Training*

Gain confidence in practical skills including workplace etiquette, interviewing skills, workers' rights, completing forms, resume writing, conflict resolution and financial literacy.

### *Teamwork*

Discover and enhance "soft skills" such as teamwork, flexibility, perseverance, willingness to learn, and using critique and failures to learn and grow!

### *Job Shadowing*

Participate in job shadowing, paid internships and meaningful job placements.

### *Get Paid*

Receive a \$600 stipend for completing the program plus enter to win a scholarship for driver's education!



Spring 2023

MYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Doran Wright, President
- David Ouellette, Vice President
- Jeff Labbe, Treasurer
- Karen Curley, Secretary
- Laurie Bisson
- Andrew Booth
- Andrea Babbin-Wood
- Larry Bartlett
- Aura Doak
- Deb Young
- Deb Hagler, MD
- Joel Merry
- Whitney Taggart
- Michael Licamele
- Ed Mangini
- Hopper McDonough
- Margie Geiger

Join us for an  
Easter Egg Hunt  
at Maritime Apartments  
Sunday, April 9 @ 10am



Can't make it, but want to help? We are accepting donations of candy and plastic eggs for this fun, free, family event! Donations may be dropped off at the center between 10am-7pm Monday - Saturday  
THANK YOU!!

- 4 Old Brunswick Road
- (207) 443-8750 phone
- info@midcoastyouth.org

We are a 501(c)(3) organization  
Midcoast Community Alliance dba  
Midcoast Youth Center  
Tax id#: 83-1115140

# REDDAY



renew



energize



donate

RED Day is Keller Williams' annual day of service.

THURSDAY, MAY 11th 2023

### A FOOD DRIVE TO SUPPORT:



Midcoast Youth Center (MYC)

Midcoast Youth Center's mission is to empower Midcoast youth to be healthy, engaged, and resilient, by offering recreation, education & enrichment, leadership & life skills, referrals to mental health support & substance use treatment, and support to youth experiencing housing insecurity.



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**SELLING OUR NECK OF THE WOODS**

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Youth  
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[midcoastyouth.org/support](https://midcoastyouth.org/support)