



2008

# Reach Out!



*News from Youth and Family Outreach of Portland*

## Greetings from the Executive Director

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*Executive Director*

The snow is gone, the sun is shining, and the long cold winter is finally behind us. The season was not very kind to our building either, but there is still great news to report.

Youth and Family Outreach received a second Community Development Block Grant through the City of Portland which will allow us to completely renovate the exterior of the building over the spring and summer. The building will be insulated, wrapped in new stucco, and windows will be replaced along the ground level. All of this activity will bring the

building to its historic state as it stood in 1924.

In addition, renovations to our third floor through a grant from the JTG Foundation are almost complete. This area will serve as a new Parent Resource Center for families with children in our child development center. A social work intern from USM and a new AmeriCorps VISTA member will oversee the activities and development of this new resource center. An open house will be scheduled for some time later this year to showcase this

new resource.

In these challenging financial times, Youth and Family Outreach continues to grow and strengthen its impact on early childhood and youth services within the Bayside community. We look forward to the many collaborative efforts with other agencies that are taking place in the near future to expand and improve services in this area. We thank you all for your continued support of our mission and look forward to sharing news of the many exciting developments yet to come.

## Portland's Youth Services Join Forces for Common Good

The Teen Adventure Program of Youth and Family Outreach has been invited to participate in a formal inter-agency dialogue between Portland's youth development organizations. This dia-

logue is the vision of Rippleffect, but will include organization's such as Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN), Youth Alternatives/Ingraham (YA), and Portland Youth Advisory Council (PYAC).

Through this yearlong exploration of partnership opportunities, we hope to build a model of youth services that avoids duplica-

tion of program offerings and that leverages the assets of each organization in order to attain our common purpose of positive youth development.

This exciting community collaboration project is made possible by the Maine Community Foundation's Community Building Grant Program.

**We're on the web!**

**[www.yfoutreach.org](http://www.yfoutreach.org)**





## Our Mission

Youth and Family Outreach creates opportunities that enhance independence and learning to support the quality of life for children, youth, and families in Greater Portland.

## Teen Adventure Saddles up for Spring

Our Teen Adventure youth have been attending horseback riding lessons this Spring at Camp Ketcha in Scarborough. Camp Ketcha is a nonprofit organization that serves youth and adults through camp programs that focus on self discovery, experiential education, physical activity, and environmental education. On their 133 acres of preservation land, Camp Ketcha hosts a variety of activities, including a ropes course and extensive trail system. The horses that they board are used to enhance their experiential education component.

Our teens have not only been learning to ride the horses in the

rink and on the trails, but have also been learning the art of horse caretaking. Every lesson begins with



*Teen Adventure youth enjoying time with horses.*

mucking out the stalls, doing barn chores, and grooming the horses. After riding, the teens help to feed the horses and tuck them into their

stalls for the evening. Performing these chores may be hard work, but ultimately serves to give them a sense of appreciation and reverence for the animals.

One Teen Adventure youth exclaimed that she loves riding horses because she feels “free and on top of the world”. Another said that she loves horses so much after these lessons that she is inspired to get her own horses when she grows up and become a professional horse

trainer. All in all, the youth of Teen Adventure have not only enjoyed this unique opportunity to ride horses, but have learned a lot about themselves in the process.

## Preble Learning Center Goes Green

Preble Learning Center is happy to see the return of spring and sunny days spent on the playground. The children have gleefully shed their snow pants in exchange for sunscreen.

In order to prepare for the upcoming NAEYC re-accreditation process, the teaching staff are diligently working on their classroom portfolios and a very intensive self-study process to determine areas in need of growth. Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ), which is our local professional development system for Early Childhood professionals, has been assisting us in this process. Through their accreditation

facilitation program, we have determined a strong need for playground renovation.

In early April we formed a playground renovation committee comprised of teaching staff, administrative staff and a community volunteer with landscaping experience. We have embarked on an endeavor to create a “natural” playground. On the Preble Street side playground we will create an environment where children can actively engage with the process of growing things, learning about nature and how much there is in nature that makes our outdoor world so much fun. Stop by now and then to

watch the transformation. It is sure to be a welcome change when completed.



*Tots playing on the playground.*

