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STRIVE Newsletter

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Mission Statement:

To assist tweens, teens and young adults with intellectual and emotional disabilities in utilizing resources within their community so they can participate as viable members of the community.

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Expansion and Renovation Nears Completion!

Capital Campaign Also Nearing Final Goal!

What an exciting year 2015 has been for STRIVE! In addition to adding new clients, new programs (TOPS, Home Support, and Career Planning) we have undertaken our largest project– a total renovation and 3300 square foot expansion of the STRIVE Center, funded by a \$1.64 Million Capital Campaign. We are thrilled to report that both the construction and the fundraising are nearing completion!

The existing STRIVE Building has been renovated to include full handicap accessibility, a new sprinkler and fire alarm system, new LED Lighting, along with new paint, insulation, and exterior siding, and new teen center roof. We have also remodeled our teaching kitchen, and made improvements, including windows and flooring to the STRIVE night space. Our new addition consists of program specific spaces for Next STEP, TOPS, our day programs, WAVES & ACTIVE, as well as an art room, additional meeting and program space, and a large dedicated training and conference room. Outside, final work is being done to complete and pave and stripe the parking lot. We are planning for the work to be completed by the end of 2015!

Our fundraising efforts are going equally well! To date, we have raised over \$1.4 Million, and have a remaining goal of \$226,000 left to raise. Once we reach this goal– we will own the building outright with no mortgage, and also not have any debt on the construction and renovation. This will greatly assist in securing STRIVE’s financial future! Thanks to all the individuals, foundations, and corporations who have contributed to this effort. And– it’s not too late to get involved in helping us reach our goal. **We have recently received a \$50,000 matching grant– and donations received right now will be matched up to \$50,000!** To contribute– please simply return a check in the enclosed envelope (all gifts in December will go towards the Capital Campaign) or contact Peter Brown at pbrown@pslservices.org or (207) 879-0847. Multi-year pledges are also accepted, and some naming rights remain.

We are planning a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house for early 2016. Stay tuned– we can’t wait to show you the new and improved STRIVE! Thanks again and Happy Holidays!



Left: A look at the new addition!

To get involved with the Capital Campaign, please contact Pete Brown at pbrown@pslservices.org or (207) 879-0847 ext. 227

STRIVE NEWS

An Exciting November at STRIVE U

Although it's getting colder outside, things are starting to heat up around campus! Students (and staff) enjoyed the Thanksgiving Break and some students took that time to go home to visit family, and many simply enjoyed the break from the rigor of college courses.

Students are finishing up another successful semester at Kaplan, and many are taking the completion exam and gaining their college credits. What this means is that they are able to apply the credits toward a college degree of their choosing once they complete their time at STRIVE U. Currently, all students gain credits toward their STRIVE U Degree, and Kaplan Certificate, but this is an additional, and exciting, achievement for each student who chooses to take the classes. Students have been studying business professionalism, on-line presence, and working with SMART goals. They attend the Kaplan campus twice a week, and take classes with Kaplan professors, and our own Education and Training Coordinator Kelly Taylor.

In November, we also held our Annual Progressive Dinner. This is a chance for students, staff, and alumni to gather, reconnect, and share a festive holiday meal prepared by the students and staff. This year there were more than 50 participants in total. To see staff, students, and alumni all enjoying tons of great food, fun conversation, and renewing old and new relationships was a wonderful thing to see. Some students hosted all the guests for light appetizers, the meal was hosted by STRIVE U Staff, and the evening ended with desserts in another student's apartment. A fun and festive time was had by all. Sometimes a nice stress-free and relaxing evening really brings the true meaning of the holidays to light!

It has been an exciting fall here at STRIVE U with new staff additions, and the students really getting up to speed and comfortable with campus life. Student goals and staff goals have been expanded and the continued progress of the students is noticeable.



STRIVE U Applications for the Class of 2018 are available! Deadline to apply is 2/1/16. To learn more about the program, schedule a tour, or get your application, please contact Bill Hughes, STRIVE U Admissions Coordinator, at bhughes@psslservices.org or call (207)774-

Navigating Portland at Bayside

STRIVE Bayside is located in downtown Portland. As many people know, downtown Portland can be pretty hard to navigate through! With all the different streets and buildings there is always more than one route to any destination. That is why learning about all the skills required to successfully navigate the community is important! In the past month we have been putting in extra effort to point out various landmarks, to help us determine where we are. For example, the Time and Temperature building is just 2 blocks away from STRIVE Bayside and can be seen from almost anywhere in Downtown Portland. If we're unsure of what direction to walk, we can simply look for that building and know the direction we should be heading! We also use landmarks to describe how to get to new places, instead of saying "it's on Exchange Street" we can say "it's on the street past Bangor Savings Bank". In order to immerse ourselves in the community, we must be able to navigate our community, and at STRIVE Bayside we have been practicing just that!

STRIVE Bayside is a unique community supports program that is dedicated to exploring and increasing independence. We run five days a week, Monday through Friday and have two daily sessions, 9:00am-1:00pm and 1:00-5:00pm. We operate out of an apartment in down town Portland to simulate actual apartment living. If you are interested in joining STRIVE Bayside, or would simply like more information please contact: Caroline Cole at 899-1725 or ccole@psslservices.org.

Navigating, Working, and Cooking in TOPS



TOPS was out and about more than ever this month! The students got to see some of Portland's beautiful parks, utilize public transportation and navigate the grocery store. Our participants recently applied for a new TOPS job which has allowed them to learn a new job skill whether it be as the Technology Assistant, Window Coordinator or even the Sanitation Engineer. These jobs are put together by Kelly, then each student goes through an application process to secure their job. Each position helps to keep the classroom organized and create a team-centered atmosphere for all participants. While keeping to a tight budget, TOPS has been cooking up a storm! The morning session cooks a meal every Wednesday that hits all of the food groups needed for a balanced meal. The afternoon session has been practicing moderation with the occasional sweet treat.

TOPS is STRIVE's newest program, serving students in their 13th and 14th year of school from area school districts. TOPS is designed to help students generalize learned skills to new settings as well as acquire additional independent living skills, provide opportunities to increase their independence in the community, prepare the student to transition to adult services, and will offer experiences that will promote social skills with other students from the greater Portland area. If you have questions or would like more information about TOPS, please contact Kelly Shufelt, TOPS Transition Specialist, at 207-774-6278 or kshufelt@pssl-services.org. If you are a high school student looking to join TOPS, please contact your school's Special Education Director.

Important Lessons Learned in Next STEP

In the month of November, Next STEP had an awesome time learning about our personal rights and Civil Rights in our country. During the first week of the month, we focused on citizenship and voting rights in the United States. We learned about the different types of elections that are held in our country and discussed the voting results for the recent local elections. Another aspect of this that we discussed was how and when citizens of the United States register to vote, and what rights we have at the polling places. While we learned about these topics we took a fabulous tour of Portland's City Hall where we experienced the many different departments that help the city run and got a surprise viewing of the Kotzchmar Organ being played.

Next, we explored self-advocacy and the American Disability Act, learning about specific rights for people with disabilities. While learning about self-advocacy we discovered different people and groups that exist to help support us in advocating for ourselves.

To end the month we looked into the history of Civil Rights in our country and around the world. Some important figures that we discussed were Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Aung San Suu Kyi. We read about what they did for their nations and how it has impacted the entire world, including our own lives.



Next STEP is a unique day program providing community supports for young adults with developmental disabilities. It is perfect for someone on the waiting list to receive services, in combination with other services, or for someone who may not otherwise qualify for services. For more information, please contact Betsy Morrison at bmorrison@pssl-services.org or call (207)774-6278.

STRIVE Night December Theme Night: Holiday Party



Ages:
15 to 24 years old

Cost: \$10
with scholarships
available

Celebrate the holidays with us at STRIVE Night on **Friday, December 18th!** Our night will be full of holiday-themed activities, games, prizes, and snacks. Perhaps we will even get a visit from our favorite man in a red suit! Bring a friend! Their first time to STRIVE Night is FREE!

FMI: Contact Katelynn at kdavis@psslservices.org or call 207.774.6278

Advisory Board

In January, we will be selecting a new Advisory Board for 2016! Elections will be held on Friday, January 29th.

Who can be elected?

Any STRIVE Member that doesn't age out within the year of their term. Anyone who is interested must put in a nomination request with STRIVE Staff and give a speech on Friday, January 29th.

What does Advisory Board do?

Advisory Board provides STRIVE Staff with ideas on Theme Nights and what we can do to make STRIVE Night better! They also run various fundraisers.

Want to be a part of STRIVE's Advisory Board? Put in your request to be nominated by January 15th!

FMI—talk to Katelynn!

kdavis@psslservices.org or call (207)774-6278.

Wednesday Night Educational Classes

Money Management

December 2nd-16th
6:00-8:00pm



This informative series will discuss budgeting, smart decision making, checking and savings accounts, writing and endorsing a check, reading a bank statement, balancing a checkbook, and so much more!

STRIVE's Wednesday Night Educational Classes are held every Wednesday at the STRIVE Center with a different series each month.

For more information, contact Peggy Ceresia at pcceresia@psslservices.org or call (207)774-6278.

December Birthdays



Raymond Rolls
Carmen LaPointe
Michael Gregoire
Joshua Curran
Jeremy Martin
Lissette Rodriguez
Kimberly Rosenbloom
Erica Lawton
Kris Constantine
Alex York
John Mancini
Ashley Bowers
JJ Hill
Shania Smith
Kaleb Divney



TWEENS Schedule of Events

*Are you between the ages of 11 and 14? Are you looking to make new friends?
Join us every Friday afternoon from 3:30 to 5:30pm at STRIVE!*

****Tweens is FREE to all members between the ages of 11 & 14!****

December 4th: STRIVE Idol: Holiday Edition

December 11th: UNUM

December 18th: Holiday Celebration

December 25th: STRIVE Closed—NO Tweens

January 1st: STRIVE Closed—NO Tweens

For more information, contact Peggy Ceresia at pceresia@psservices.org or call (207)774-6278.

Thank you to our November Donors!

Andrew & Mary Savo
 Carolyn Carson
 Allan McHale
 Cynthia & Lawrence Vaughan
 United Way of Eastern Maine
 Otto's Pizza
 Elaine Kahner in honor of Kay Tibbetts
 Brian & Shelly Shibles
 Demosthenes & Angela Varipatis
 Brian Scanlon & Kayla Zomlefer
 Carol & Harland Storey
 Eula Ossosky in honor of Noel Thompson
 Sandra & Dennis King
 Consigli Foundation, Inc.
 Robert & Erin Rowan
 United Way of Tri-County, Inc.



Upcoming Events

STRIVE 16th Anniversary Celebration

Friday, December 4th
 6:00 to 9:00pm
 STRIVE

Aktion Club

December 2nd and 16th
 3:15pm

Member Advisory Board Meeting

December 11th
 5:30pm

**Wednesday Night Education Classes:
 Money Management**

Wednesdays, December 2nd—16th
 6:00-8:00pm

Tweens

Every Friday
 3:30—5:30pm

STRIVE Night

Every Friday
 6:00—9:00pm

****STRIVE Closed: Dec. 24 & 25, & Jan. 1****

Eat Food, Raise Money for STRIVE!

Eat at Flatbread Pizza on Commercial Street in Portland from **5 to 9pm** on **Tuesday, December 15th!** A portion of your food bill will be donated to STRIVE.



STRIVE's Live and Silent Auction Raises \$61,500!

STRIVE's 11th Annual Live and Silent Auction was a great success raising \$61,500 for our social, educational, recreational, post-secondary, and employment programs!

We are truly thankful for everyone who donated an item, sponsored the event, volunteered, or attended. You have all made a difference in the lives of our 900+ tweens, teens, and young adults with developmental disabilities and we appreciate your support tremendously.

We have already begun planning next year's auction and are looking forward to making that event bigger and better. We welcome all suggestions and comments to help us improve the event year after year. Contact us with your ideas!

A special thank you goes to Fleur De Lis who provided all of the beautiful flowers that night, Have Chef Will Travel for cooking and serving the delicious food, Jennifer Rooks of MPBN for hosting the event, William Zafirson for being our auctioneer for the evening, and our fantastic planning committee to helped make the whole event happen!

A huge thank you to all of our event sponsors!

Presenting Sponsor:



Corporate Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsors:



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Contributing Sponsors:



Donald L. Theriault, D.M.D.
Diplomate of the
American Board of Periodontology



STRIVE Pictures



Join us at Camp STRIVE this Winter!



**Winter Break Camp—
Monday, December 28th through
Thursday, December 31st**

We'll have holiday-themed games, crafts, and snacks, as well as trips to local businesses and organizations! We are even planning a special volunteer project for the week after Christmas.

Camp STRIVE is perfect for any 11 to 24 year old looking to get something more out of their school vacation days. Camp STRIVE involves lots of socialization and exposure to the community of Greater Portland, making it a great option for everyone!

Please register at least one day prior to the beginning of any Camp STRIVE session.

For more information or to register, please contact Christine Mars, STRIVE Outreach and Program Coordinator, at cmars@pssl-services.org or call (207)774-6278.





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*Serving tweens, teens and young
adults with developmental disabilities*

www.facebook.com/strivenation

Twitter: @pslstrive

Instagram: [strive_psl](https://www.instagram.com/strive_psl)

Pinterest: STRIVEPSL

Find us online at www.pslstrive.org

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*We welcome your comments, questions, and feedback
at info@pslstrive.org.*