



Mano en Mano

Hand in Hand

Spring 2011 Newsletter

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Donate online at manomaine.org.

NOTES



An Update from our Board of Directors

BY SASHA ALSOP, *Board President*

Mano en Mano has had a busy spring with two successful and fun events. The Spring Fling brought together the entire community for a delicious potluck and an energetic dance party. The Mother's Day Celebration was a wonderful event for all the mothers and families in the area and included a diverse and entertaining program by the children. Both events were extremely well-attended and reinforced the important link Mano

en Mano offers between the latino and wider communities. After lots of hard work, we are also excited about the opening of our apartment building here in Milbridge. As the first off-farm farmworker housing, Mano en Mano is once again breaking ground in the State of Maine. As President of the Board, I am continually amazed by the dedication of our staff and Executive Director. We are lucky to have such talented people working for us!

Thank You for Making This Possible!

If you're reading this newsletter then you deserve some of the credit for making Mano en Mano's work possible. Our organization exists thanks to the generous support of individuals like yourself. From attending the Spring Fling or Mother's Day event to participating in a cooking or Spanish class, there are many ways to sustain the important work that we do to strengthen our community.

As the economy flounders and social programs get cut, Mano en Mano's services are even more critical. So far in 2011 we have responded to 205 requests for assistance, an increase of 12% compared to this time last year. Next month, Maine's first-ever affordable farmworker housing will be

open to six local families. Our English educational opportunities allow students to work towards a brighter future.

In order to continue serving the community in this capacity and to meet growing needs of the future, we depend upon contributions from our generous donors. This year we need to raise \$21,000 in donations to meet our Annual Fund goal. Whether you can offer \$10 or \$1000, your gift will help us continue to build a stronger Downeast Maine.

For more information, please contact members of our Board fundraising committee: Chloe Dowley, Charlie Harrington, Kathy Howell, and Laura Thomas.

SPRING 2011 In Review...



ABOVE: Radiant floor piping is installed on the 1st floor. This system reduces energy costs by making cooler thermostat settings more comfortable. **TOP RIGHT:** A fresh coat of paint is finished on the walls of a 2nd floor living room. **BESIDE:** Crews begin framing of the exterior walls on January 20, 2011. To date, over 4,500 man-hours have been logged on this project by Maine construction workers.



Building on Dreams and Tradition

It's a typical day in our office: the phone rings and a farmworker is calling to say that his family has been kicked out of his rental housing and he can't afford anything that's being advertised in the paper because he's in between seasons. Until this year, we could only offer our empathy and disappointment as he was forced to leave a town he's called home in search of somewhere he can afford to live. But now, we can set up an appointment with him to fill out an application to live in a building that's decent, affordable, and right here in Milbridge.

Hand in Hand Apartments is Maine's first affordable housing project designed and operated exclusively for the people who define the state's character and tradition: farmworkers. Offering affordable housing to these families will help keep them here year-round as they support our resource-based economy and build the savings and experience necessary to move into their own house someday. In just a few short weeks, we will gather to formally commission a building that has been our dream since 2006. A ribbon cutting ceremony and luncheon will be held on the site at 173 Wyman Road on Monday, June 27 at 11:00 a.m. We hope you can make it!

This project is financed by a \$1,005,722 USDA Rural Development Farm Labor Housing Grant and \$176,778 Farm Labor Housing Loan, as well as a \$220,000 loan from Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) of Wiscasset.



From the Helm

IAN YAFFE, Executive Director

Those of you who know me know that the place I feel most at ease is on the water. It's fitting then, that my position here is like that of a ship's captain. With vision from the Board, I help chart our course through the ebbs and flows of regulations and funding along a sea of rapidly changing community needs. Our crew responds to these needs with innovative programming and too often, a potential-limiting budget.

As I get to know the other agencies that are on this same journey, I am constantly amazed and impressed by

what we accomplish here. I have yet to see another organization that offers such a wide variety of programs as Mano en Mano or a staff that operates them with such talent and grace. We're here to do the right thing in a world that takes advantage of farmworkers and turns them away when they need a helping hand. Your support is *literally* helping us build a stronger Downeast Maine and fulfil the dreams of an untold number of people. The next time you're in Milbridge, stop by our office and say hello. I guarantee you'll be inspired by what you see! If you can't visit in-person, please give me a call at (207) 619-2822 to learn more.

The road to a GED

Syntiro of Readfield (formerly Maine Support Network) was recently awarded a federal grant to start a High School Equivalency Program (HEP). Recognizing the benefit this program would provide to our clients, Mano en Mano joined hands with Syntiro to provide support services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families as they work towards earning their GED.

The object of the program is to enroll participants in adult education courses and, once they have passed the GED exam, help them find a better job, enter higher education, or join the military. Some of the services Maine HEP provides are: transportation and childcare reimbursement; links to health and social services, as necessary; stipends to cover personal expenses while attending GED classes; and, books and school supplies.

Maine HEP is currently enrolling participants in Portland, Kennebec/Somerset, Aroostook, Piscataquis, and Washington/Hancock Counties and we are eager to identify eligible candidates!

Find out more online at www.mainehep.org.



Bethany Woods on her way to deliver textbooks to HEP students.

A Successful Mother's Day Event

Nearly 200 people attended our 5th Annual Mother's Day Cultural Celebration at the Milbridge Town Hall on May 7. This year's program contained nine acts, with a variety of poems, plays, and dances that commemorated mothers, many of which were typical sketches from Mother's Day celebrations in Mexico plus a few of our own. Crowd favorites included the children's dance "Chu Chu Wa" and the play "Los Papeles Importantes del Rey" (The King's Important Papers).

Like last year, "El Moreliano," closed out the show. This traditional dance (with a giant bull called The Moreliano) involved the entire audience in a festival-style dance that many remembered from their childhoods in Mexico. We extend many thanks and appreciation to community volunteers, College of the Atlantic students, Board members, and others for their help and dedication. Special thanks goes to the Maine Humanities Council for the grant that made this event possible.



THERE'S ONLY ONE: The entire audience laughs as Sylvia acts the part of a "typical" mother.



INNOVATION IN PRACTICE: A migrant education student learns English using an interactive iPad app.

Migrant Education Program: "I returned to grab a book"

As we approach the end of the school year, Educational Programs Director Ana Blagojevic continues to be impressed by the hard work students have put in and the progress they've made. One student wrote: "Today what I liked from class was that after many years, I returned to grab a book. For me this is really good."

For older students who are working, class is a tiny oasis from work that provides them with a rare opportunity to practice English and advance their education. For in-school youth, it's an opportunity to get more individualized support and stay on track to graduate High School. Next year we hope to expand our services and find community volunteers interested in language exchange, being a literacy partner, or providing a job shadowing experience, so stay posted!

Donate Online, Sign up for E-Updates, and Learn More at www.manomaine.org!

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SPRING

FLING:

This year's event was on April 2. We raised \$1,250 for scholarships that evening!



You're invited!

JUNE 27, 2011

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY: You are invited to the ribbon cutting of Maine's first affordable housing project for farmworkers: Hand in Hand Apartments. See details inside.