

News From The Bearcamp Center

Nurturing the Vitality of Central Carroll County

Late Winter/Spring 2024

1164 Bunker Hill Is Home, Now and Always!



Dear Friends,

Last fall, The Bearcamp Center for Sustainable Community Board of Trustees spent considerable time taking stock of where the organization is, where it's going, and how it's going to get there. The major outcome of this practical, intellectual work is that the building is *no longer for sale* and we are staying in place!

We have a wonderful location and a facility that will allow The Bearcamp Center to grow and adapt to the needs of our community. This decision means that services will not be interrupted for a move and that volunteers and staff can continue to devote their energies to providing meals, camps, and programs with dignity to everyone who needs or chooses to enjoy them.

In the coming months, The Bearcamp Center will develop a plan to renew and adapt our historic farmhouse in order to meet the needs of the community. As we look down the road, we see that we have both short term requirements and longer term goals that require your financial support. These are exciting times for all of those who lend their energy and talent to The Bearcamp Center and for the many, many individuals and families who benefit from our work.

On behalf of the Board, I thank you for your past support and invite you to be a part of our future. If you'd like to make a contribution, please consider sending a check or making a donation via PayPal on our website. As you read, you'll find many excellent reasons to give!

Please be in touch if you would like to join us in these joyful and important efforts: doug.hart352@gmail.com.

--Doug Hart
TBC Chair

Our Mission

We nourish and nurture citizens of all ages in central Carroll County by providing nutritious, delicious meals; affordable child care during school vacations; and elder programming for education, resiliency, and socialization, all on a sliding scale or by-donation basis, allowing each participant to maximize personal potential with dignity.

Program Expansion Next Steps

As we've created and honed our programs and systems, we've kept our outreach efforts narrowed to the Tamworth and Sandwich communities. Now that the early adopter kinks have been worked out, we're expanding our field to address broader need.

Ossipee will be our next focus community, essentially doubling our service area. We hope to build collaborative relationships that ensure our services gets to those who need it most.

Current Programs: by donation or sliding scale

Comfort Food Meals For All

available 24/7 for take out, nutritionally-balanced and delicious entrees, ready to eat, shelveshelf groceries available, at 1164 Bunker Hill

Congregate Dinners

available to dine in as a social event or take out, nutritionally-balanced and delicious, themed menu, every month but summer season, reservations required

Do Good, Feel Good Luncheons

monthly, lively conversation on timely topic, creative or arts project for hands-on engagement, giving to others aspect, nutritionally-balanced and delicious lunch, guest speakers

Holiday Feasts

multi-course, Giving Thanks/Christmas feasts, take out only, vegetarian entree available, includes pie, reservation required

Camps On The Bearcamp

summer and school vacation offerings, screen-free, snacks and meals included, school-day hours, physically and socially active, intellectual and creative outlets, affordable



The Meals Sound Delish:

Who can eat them and how much should they donate?

We believe that food is a right for all people. We eat for a variety of reasons. Food sustains us physically and emotionally. Eating gives us strength and brings us joy. We understand that not everyone has the financial ability to purchase all the food they want or need, so we've created Comfort Food, Meals By Donation.

The meals in our meals room are offered to all who need or want the food. The system works when many in our community--those with financial means and without--choose to get their dinner or lunch from The Bearcamp Center, leaving a donation in the amount they're able. This participation in a local meals project subsidizes the food for those who need it most while letting lots of folks enjoy recipes they might not make at home!

These meals cost us money to make but if many participate in the program, donations can cover costs. We pay for groceries, our cooks' time, propane, heat, electricity, packaging materials. We have to raise money to pay for whatever doesn't come in donations. **How much should you pay per meal?**

\$0-3 per meal

\$4-5 per meal

\$6-9 per meal

\$10+ per meal

Pay less on the scale if you:

- frequently stress about meeting basic needs, and are not always able to achieve meeting them
- receive public assistance (SNAP, free and reduced lunch, heating oil, medicaid, etc)
- support additional dependents (parents, extended family, anyone else relying on your money)
- don't have savings
- do not have reliable transportation
- have debt that interferes with being able to meet basic needs
- have medical expenses not covered by insurance
- have a chronic illness or disability that impacts your ability to earn money
- have unpredictable living arrangements
- are under or unemployed
- rarely buy new items because they're unaffordable

Pay more on the scale if you:

- go out to eat or pay for social activities
- do not experience hunger or stress due to finances
- work part time or not at all, by choice
- are able to access health care
- are managing any debt you have
- are fully employed
- have few or no additional dependents
- have savings, investments, inherited money, and/or retirement accounts
- can ask people in your life for money
- own the home you live in or have a stable rent arrangement
- own commercial or rental properties

Make an additional donation if you:

- feel financially stable
- give to charitable causes and would like to support this one
- use these meals instead of grocery shopping or dining out

Annual YARD SALE Fundraiser • Coming May 18, 9am-1pm!

All items available by donation. Lunch! Music!

Accepting Donations Now!

Cleaning your attic or barn? Have treasures you'd love to see in a new home?

Interested in supporting The Bearcamp Center? Bring your gently-used items to 1164 Bunker Hill

We accept everything EXCEPT: technology or electronics, VHS or DVD movies, corded power tools, mattresses, skis, clothing

Peas, Please!

Volunteering is a lot like your personal journey with peas. When you were a youngster they came frozen in a plastic bag, were delivered to you slightly gray, always mushy. It was natural, no, it was vital, to avoid them. The peas could go to someone else (the family dog in my case).

Later, you discovered real peas, fresh from a pod, opened one by one. You popped one in and gave it a try because your sibling or a friend was gobbling them up. So sweet, so satisfying. Your pea perspective shifted. Fresh peas were pretty great, if you could get them.

Now that you have pea wisdom and pea access, giving others the surprising and satisfying experience of fresh raw peas can be the next phase of your journey. That's what volunteering at The Bearcamp Center feels like to me, and it's why I joined The Bearcamp Center board last year.

Fresh peas are actually a big part of what makes the center so valuable to our community and we deliver them in several forms.

One strand of our mission is to prepare healthy, delicious meals from fresh, locally-sourced ingredients for people in need of an affordable source of nutrition, or a break from cooking, or a friend with whom to share a meal. Fresh peas are on the menu as often as we can get them from our local farmer friends, local purveyors, or the NH Food Bank.

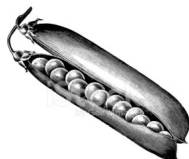
Another mission thread is to give local children and their parents a healthy and happy break from school over the summer. We introduce the campers to the arts, give them loads of space to roam and explore, and herd them in for tasty snacks, including raw peas when we can get them!

Our third mission strand has us supporting adults and elders in thriving--maintaining their full physical, social, and intellectual potential. These folks already know how spectacular peas are, and they crave them. They just need some help, now and again, in getting their hands on them.

The demand in the community for our services is increasing, and we are looking for people who support our mission and are able to help. If you have experience with board or committee work, or are willing to give it a try, we can use your skills in fundraising, property management, grant writing, community relations, sharing peas, and more. The primary criteria for joining in is enthusiasm for the cause and some time each month. We can bring you up to speed on the rest.

Our programs depend on the efforts of our exceptional professional staff and the ability of our Board to keep the lights on. Serving our neighbors with healthy meals, opportunities for gathering to share and shape knowledge, and a safe, nurturing camp experience is a lot like sharing the revelation of fresh peas with a friend for the first time: very satisfying.

--Brad Holmes
TBC Treasurer



Dopamine and Chopping Veggies

One thing that often goes unsaid about volunteering is that it's a tremendous way to cultivate new friendships. Energetic, creative, interesting people are drawn to good causes and there's plenty of time to get to know someone while chopping veggies or weeding a garden. Not only does volunteering expand your social circle, it gives your brain's reward center shots of serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins. Ready to do good and feel good? If so, we've got the recipe for your happiness:



- **Volunteer coordination:** We get lots of offers of help, and are grateful! With our tiny staff, though, it's a real challenge to find time to coordinate our project needs around volunteers' complex schedules. If you're an organizational whiz, like meeting new people, and have some time to offer, perhaps you'd like to take on coordinating The Bearcamp Center's volunteers? This work might take a few hours a month, with more here and there as big projects or events arise.
- **Meals to Go Room tidying:** The room where folks pick up meals several times each week is open 24/7. It gets lots of wear and tear and could use some dedicated love to keep it dusted and swept, the plants watered, and everything tidy and welcoming. Ideally, this work is done weekly.
- **Garden tending:** This is a two-part need. We have a perennial bed that needs to be heavily divided and weeded to bring it back to glory. You'd be welcome to share in the plants for your own gardens! We have well-established beds along the front of our building that could use monthly weeding and mulching in the warm months.
- **Monthly luncheon or dinner food prep:** One to three days before scheduled dinners or lunches, chopping, peeling, basting, braising, serving, and cleaning up.
- **Development committee:** If you have experience and expertise in fundraising, marketing, and establishing inter-agency collaborations, this committee is for you!
- **Facilities committee:** As we move into a process of rehabbing and renovating our farmhouse, this committee will assess and plan for design and construction, make recommendations to the board, schedule community work days as well as oversee all project phases.
- **Contact Lianne at director@bearcampcenter.org for more info or to join the fun!**





Doing Good. Feeling Good. Monthly Luncheons

While we're told it's better to give than receive, sometimes we need to remember that giving allows its own grace, relief, and growth--all things the world can use more of. By doing good for others, we uplift ourselves!

In the spirit of giving and receiving, we invite you to our monthly gathering for crafting, carousing and conversing during a 2-hour luncheon. Our purpose is simple: gather in our sunshine and woodstove-warmed farmhouse to create a hand-crafted treasure destined for lonely heart spaces in our communities, with this simple work reminding us that we can all take even small steps to ease sadness and suffering in a world that is often confusing and dark.

During these luncheons, our facilitators offer a meaningful quote or idea to prompt conversation, we share a hearty meal, there's a whole lot of laughter. It's a tried and true recipe for transforming handiwork into a balm for the rough soreness felt in our neighbors' lives.

Why not join in--and bring a friend! If you can provide a ride for someone unable to drive, that would be tremendous and widen our circle. Stay tuned for dates, menus, and themes--available on our website or by sending me an email. Contact me for more information at h.a.faylebearcampcenter@gmail.com.

--Heidi Fayle
TBC Staff

Welcome Back, ATTP!

We are happy to welcome Advice To The Players (back) to 1164 Bunker Hill. 25 years ago, this energetic theater company was founded at The Community School, by Caroline Nesbitt. The vision has been a wild success, bringing opportunities for student and amateur actors to explore the wonders of Shakespeare with professional equity actors on a variety of stages.

While theater and the arts are not strands of our mission, The Bearcamp Center is happy to lease space for office, rehearsals, and storage so that ATTP can meet its programmatic goals from one staging area (of course, pun intended). This also puts to good use some of our rambling farmhouse that is currently underutilized, while generating revenue toward maintenance--a win-win for both agencies and for our region!



Why Food? Why Child Care? Financial struggle is often invisible. Let the numbers shine a light on local reality.

- The overall food insecurity rate in NH is 8.8%; in Carroll County it's 14.6%
- This translates to 1:12 children facing hunger
- State average for Free and Reduced Meals eligibility, a leading indicator of poverty and hunger = 24.1%
- Ossipee 57%, Tamworth 54%, Freedom 42%, Effingham 39%, and Madison 39% for a central Carroll County average of 46%
- 2:5 food insecure residents of Carroll County are ineligible for SNAP benefits
- Reliable transportation is a barrier to food access
- 2023 NH Residential Rental Cost Survey Report shows 0% (none) of Carroll County's 2-bedroom rentals falling in the "affordable rent" category of 30% of income
- Nearly 1/3 of Carroll County residents spend **more than** 30% of income on housing
- Grocery costs have increased more than 25% in the past four years, outpacing inflation by 6%
- Families in Carroll County spend 12.5% of median income on childcare, 2.7% more than State average, the highest costs in the State

2024 Dinner Calendar: Save the Dates!

Pass The Poems, Please 4/12, RSVP by 4/9

Cinco de Mayo 5/4, RSVP by 5/1

Grillicious BBQ 9/21, RSVP by 9/18

Harvest Fest 10/19, RSVP by 10/16

Giving Thanks Feast** 11/20, RSVP by 11/15

Holiday Feast** 12/23, RSVP by 12/19

Complete menu available each month on our website. All meals except holiday feasts available for dining in or taking home. Feasts are take out only.**

**Take-Out Pick Up is at 5:30
Dining In Seating is at 6:30--byob**

**By donation: pay what or if you're able
or what you think these meals are worth in
service to our community**

Summer Camp on The Bearcamp Celebrates Four Years!



Each summer since 2021, we've hosted our state-licensed Summer Camp On the Bearcamp for upwards of 100 kiddos over a six-week period in July and August. Our screen-free summer is chock full of fanciful, energetic, and interesting activities for campers going in to Kindergarten through grade 8.

Because there's a notable lack of affordable childcare (or much of any childcare) in Carroll County, and what is available can be quite expensive, working families face challenges providing for their children during the summer months away from school. To that end, we work to raise money from a variety of sources and connect to others so that all campers with financial need are able to attend, many paying fees on a sliding scale.

Starting in July 2024, we'll expand our offerings to include swimming lessons, provided for a modest fee by the Tamworth Rec and Swim Program. Tamworth children will have first dibs on these lessons but others will be included as space is available. We're also welcoming back the dynamic Posner duo with Snapdragon Theater and including several new sessions like quilting; bike repair and maintenance; pickle making and fermenting; and singing lessons. We will be sure to offer old favorites like fishing, forts, fairies, gardening, arts and crafts, swamp rats, running and hiking, and campfire cooking.

We're also changing up our scheduling a bit so that for at least part of the day we will cluster campers by age so that the sessions can meet them where they are in terms of skills and interest. Some activities will continue to run in multi-age cohorts so kids can learn from each other.

As ever, we'll be providing breakfast, lunch, and two snacks each day with a new and improved menu including: smoothies, veggie and turkey wraps, fruit and veggie freezer pops! All the favorites like tacos, broccoli mac and cheese, and blueberry pancakes will be served each week, too. We'll also make extra meals available to go for families, from our Comfort Food meals fridge-by donation!

Registration will open this April. At that time, we'll make financial information available to all families. Those with children who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) through school or who experience significant poverty will have the opportunity to support their financial

aid through the State's Rekindling Curiosity program, in addition to other aid.

Last summer's camp funding was generously provided by The Tamworth Foundation, the Town of Tamworth, and the Tamworth Conservation Commission, who gave camperships for Tamworth campers. The Sandwich Children and Youth Fund, Ossipee Children's Fund, and individual donors gave generously for individual camperships. We are so grateful for the organizations and people who make it possible for all children who want this camp experience to join in the fun, regardless of family income.

For more information on this summer's program, check out our website or reach out to Lianne at director@bearcampcenter.org to be put on our camp email list.



How Can I Give Money?

Mail a check in any amount for general support

Drop a check in our Comfort Food Meals room donation box, with "general support" on memo line

Make a donation via PayPal on our website

Set up a recurring donation

Fund a campership: \$225/child per week

Contribute to the 2024 rehabilitation of our farmhouse: new roof, putty and paint

Sponsor one of our monthly dinners or luncheons

How Can I Give Time?

Contact Board Chair Doug Hart: doug.hart352@gmail.com

Contact Executive Director Lianne Prentice:
director@bearcampcenter.org

POSTAL CUSTOMER

PRSR STD
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Comfort Food Meals for All
Camps on The Bearcamp
The Bearcamp Center for Sustainable Community
1164 Bunker Hill Road
South Tamworth, NH 03883
www.bearcampcenter.org



Macayla Madan Social Work Intern

I am a Plymouth State University student majoring in Social Work and interning at The Bearcamp Center in hopes of applying my course work training and knowledge to the real world. One of my goals while here is to lift the spirits of the people in the community in all ways possible while addressing hardship in practical ways.

I am from Dedham, Massachusetts and have always had my foot in the door up North. I love the outdoors, running, and people in general. I plan to further my social work career by getting my MSW and hope to become a Medical/Crisis Social Worker. I am honored to be here and look forward to seeing new faces in the community!

--*Macayla Madan*
Social Work Intern

TBC's Board of Trustees

Doug Hart, Chair
Brad Holmes, Treasurer
Jen Huckman, Secretary
Todd Horn
Frances Strayer
Gabrielle Watson
Lianne Prentice, ex officio

***"How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a weary
world."***

--William Shakespeare