

# THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

## ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' UPDATE

Summer 2017

### A Creative Collaboration by Kim Brawn

Charlotte  
White  
Clients

The partnership between the Charlotte White Center and the Thompson Free Library is going strong. Two days a week, the Community Meeting Room comes alive with creativity and laughter as Charlotte White clients and members of the community participate in Art Day (Wednesdays, 1:30-3 & 3-4:30) and Game Day (Thursdays, 3-5). During their regular visits they file in and swarm around the computer signup sheet and look for books and movies, but it's their downstairs visits that add a new level of enthusiasm and anticipation. A positive energy that comes from conversations, interactions, self-expression, competition, and accomplishment.

Dickon Varnum, day treatment case aide for the Charlotte White Center, says that the idea sprang from chatting with librarian Michelle Fagan after one of her Storytime sessions that Charlotte White groups used to attend, "Michelle and I talked about how we'd both like to have more community activities." So, the stage was set for the two programs. Art seemed a natural outlet, "It allows them to express things they wouldn't normally express...in their own voice," Dickon notes. "They are very proud of their work." In fact, some of their artwork is shown in Augusta at the Hall of Flags at the State House.

Inspired by his love of board games, Dickon came up with the Game Day concept. It's become a relaxed, playful environment that can ease tensions. As Dickon puts it, "Some of the guys don't get along that great, but they do when they play games." Prizes are awarded once a month. (We can usually tell it's prize day from bursts of loud applause or excited screams.)

Dickon describes the programs as "beyond feel-good, they're actually therapeutic." For example, part of the art program involves setting personal goals like being able to follow instructions and steps, listening, and working on fine motor skills.

"We encourage them to be responsible," explains Dickon. Clients help set up and take down the tables and chairs and even vacuum and take out the trash. Many in the Charlotte White groups have also participated in Michelle's Year in Giving projects. They want to be involved and will ask, "What is Michelle doing next?"

All ages of the public are welcome at any of the three sessions. Home schoolers have attended and enjoyed the experience. Dickon hopes more people will join in, believing that community members make a big difference and "can really benefit the groups." These interactions are a win-win for everyone, not to mention a fun time. And, it's time well spent that can "build up relationships with the community and friends." "The library has been so accommodating and wonderful," Dickon says as the one year anniversary of this collaboration draws near. He told me that that art day and game day have lasted longer than any other program he's tried and he hopes to continue them for the foreseeable future.

"They really look forward to it," he says with a big smile.



...and other recent TFL activities

### TFL Bake Sale to support The Ronald McDonald House



Recent front room Book Display



TFL's  
Popular  
Community  
Puzzle  
is a  
big draw

# THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

## ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' UPDATE

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### Brown Bag Lunch Series' Spotlight: The JD Foundation

by Kim Brawn

"I just want you to know you saved my life." Cheryl Morin, JD Foundation founder, spoke these powerful words at June's Brown Bag Lunch Series at the Thompson Free Library.

She was referring to the powerful effect that the Abbot non-profit's programs can have on people who are contemplating taking their own life. This vital organization grew out of Cheryl's own personal tragedy, the loss of her son J.D. (William Jody Day) to suicide in 2005 at the age of 19.

This compassionate, strong-willed woman with a background as a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) and as an advocate, wanted to put a horrible situation to good use; while she may have felt like it, she couldn't allow herself to spend day after day in bed. She had two other children and her work.

Cheryl knew she wanted to do something to help others, so she started by doing research. She learned that "it is possible to help someone so they don't kill themselves." Later, she took workshops through NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) becoming "a trainer of trainers." As she gained knowledge, she asked to speak to various organizations throughout Maine, going anywhere that would hear her. In 2008, they became a non-profit that offered suicide prevention and awareness programs for adults. Now they have eight or nine other programs at any given time.

Schools are a major focus of their efforts. Project Prevent is designed to teach middle and high school students suicide awareness, anti-bullying, and kindness. "I know it's been successful," explained Cheryl, "Students help other people because of what they've learned. Someone is still alive because of this program."

One of their biggest programs is Connecting with Nature which is led by Cheryl's husband, Victor Morin. The idea for this grew out of the drives that Victor would take Cheryl on when she was really depressed. Riding around she would see things in nature that made her smile, like how the clouds were different colors; she thought if it made her feel better, it might help others.

Ages 2 to 92 have attended this program. It's a chance for people to come together, form community bonds, move their bodies, and take advantage of nature's healing effect on the mind, body, and soul. Activities have included hiking, kayaking, nature walks, and snowshoeing. (Details can be found on the JD Foundation Facebook page.)

Another service that the foundation offers is TIR/LSR (traumatic incident reduction/life stress reduction). Cheryl, who has been trained in these techniques, offers these services for a fee, or for those who cannot afford it, for free.

Community outreach is another major component. "People call us for resources," Cheryl explained. While they are not a crisis hotline (they are NOT open 24 hours), they don't say no to talking to people. Cheryl is also passionate about helping friends and family of the military with the Suicide Training for Veterans program that address the special needs of military families and service members.

During the Brown Bag Lunch talk, she and librarian Michelle Fagan discussed possibly conducting a general training at the library. These trainings teach suicide warning signs, risk factors, protective factors, how to talk to people about suicide, and tell them about available resources. As their brochure puts it: "Think of it as CPR: if you know the basics, you could save a life."

Despite serious health issues, Cheryl continues to spend as much time as possible sharing her story and her knowledge. Information, compassion, and listening are key. "I go from one place to another to talk about what we do." She describes how students (and people in general) seem to connect with those who have had a loss. "It's not something you can learn in a book."

If someone you know has lost a family member or friend to suicide, you can call the JD Foundation and Cheryl will connect with the family who has suffered the loss. She said that families usually don't want to see her right away, so she will wait a month to six weeks and then send a handmade prayer shawl and information about their organization. She also writes them a personal letter because, she says, when you lose someone to suicide you can feel all alone, and she wants them to know that they're not alone. "I want them to know that there are people out there who understand and care."

Obviously, raising money is a necessary and ongoing focus for their organization and they hold many fundraising events throughout the year, but one of their biggest efforts is fast approaching: The JD Foundation's Live Auction on Saturday, July 29 starting at 1:00 p.m. at 107 Main Road in Abbot.

Almost all of us have been touched by suicide, whether a family member, friend, classmate, or coworker. It is incredibly important to have a local resource like this. Please support it and tell others about it. For more information, visit JD Foundation on Facebook, thejdfoundation.org, or call 207-876-2295.

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## ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' UPDATE

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### Recent /Current Art Displays at the Library

May  
2017



Peggy Clark-  
Lumpkins  
of Brownville



June  
2017



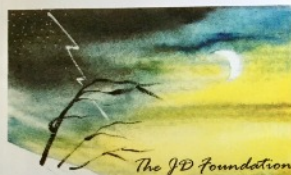
Tara McLaughlin  
of Brownville

Tom Lyford's Slightly  
Darker Poetry presentation



### The JD Foundation

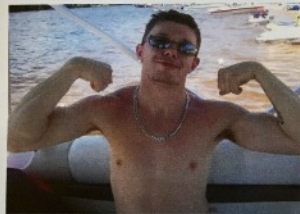
Founder Cheryl Morin spoke about the organization's suicide prevention and awareness efforts and provided resources for those who have lost a loved one to suicide or are struggling with depression.



A non-profit organization bringing suicide prevention through awareness and education.

**"Let's work together to prevent suicide"**

Always in loving memory of  
William Jody Day "Joe"  
January 20, 1986 - November 18, 2005



*"I like spending time alone, in a quiet environment, or with a few instrumentals so I can write till my hands hurt."*

### Youth Programs 2017

#### TFL SUMMER PROGRAMS 2017

- 6/28  
Chewonki Biomimicry
- 7/5  
AMC  
Animal Habitats
- 7/12  
L. C. Bates  
Birds & Watercolor
- 7/19  
Conjuring Carroll  
Magician
- 7/26  
Jennifer Armstrong  
Musician
- 8/2  
Chris Van Deusen  
Author & Illustrator

