



MONADNOCK  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
SERVICES

HELPING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
LIVE AND WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES



Fall 2024

# THE CLIPBOARD

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The mission of MDS  
is to work toward  
inclusion, participation  
and mutual relationships  
for all people who are at  
risk of isolation from  
their community.

[www.mds-nh.org](http://www.mds-nh.org)

Inclusion  
Participation  
Mutual Relationships



## Message from the Executive Director

It's the 10-year anniversary of MDS' Run~Walk~Smile road race on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and we are thrilled that this year we are collaborating with the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation's Flutie 5K for Autism. Our collaboration with the foundation will offer the opportunity to increase the amount raised! The road race will continue to be a 10K/5K/1-Mile event and raise funds specifically for dental needs for adults supported through Monadnock Developmental Services.



Mary-Anne Wisell  
MDS Executive Director

Since its inception in 2014, the funds from this race have provided almost \$215,000 of dental care for adults with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders. This inclusive event invites participants of all abilities to come together for a morning of fitness, fun, and philanthropy. The race offers a range of participation options, including a timed competitive 10K run, a 5K walk or run and a 1-mile walk that incorporates a fun run for children. The event embodies a spirit of inclusion, promoting physical activity while fostering awareness and support for people with developmental disabilities.

The atmosphere at the event is celebratory, with participants encouraged to enjoy the morning by sporting big smiles and engaging with their neighbors. Before and during the race, there are family-friendly activities such as music, games, and raffles - further contributing to the festive spirit.

We are excited to be working with such an outstanding organization as the Flutie Foundation. They have helped people and families affected by autism live life to the fullest. This collaboration will increase our sponsor reach and decrease our overall cost for Run~Walk~Smile, ultimately enabling us to continue to assist the people we support with their dental needs.

For more information and to register go to [flutie5k.com](http://flutie5k.com) or [mds-nh.org](http://mds-nh.org).

Whether you're a first time participant or have been with us since the beginning, we encourage everyone from our community to join in on the fun on November 2<sup>nd</sup> whether you are volunteering, running, or walking!

We would like to thank the many MDS staff, the Flutie 5K individuals, volunteers, runners, and walkers for their continued support. Your participation means so very much to MDS.

## THE CLIPBOARD



### Executive Director/Publisher

*Mary-Anne Wisell*

### Managing Editor

*Linda Amaral*

### Editors

*Sheila Mahon*

*Sonja Martineau*

*Lurleen Morin*

*Mari Schacht*

*Charlie Wilder*

The Clipboard is an agency-wide MDS newsletter. All departments, families, individuals, and community organizations are invited to submit items to be included in the publication. The opinions expressed in articles are those of the people who have written and submitted the material. Therefore, the information contained in these articles is not necessarily the opinion of MDS.

Send your comments or articles to:

MDS Clipboard  
121 Railroad Street  
Keene, NH 03431  
603-352-1304 Fax: 603-352-1637  
clipboard@mds-nh.org

### MDS Board of Directors

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## Redesignation

### FY 2025 is Redesignation Time Again!

Every five years, the New Hampshire Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS) conducts a redesignation review of each Area Agency. It is time for MDS, the Region 5 Area Agency, to be redesignated to continue to serve as the Area Agency for Region 5. This is required by State Law RSA 171-A and He-M 505 to be designated by the State of New Hampshire, Department of Health and Human Services. The process of redesignation is a comprehensive evaluation that reviews many aspects of service delivery quality and compliance. The review is intended to determine how well the Area Agency is meeting its responsibilities.

The process of redesignation takes place over several months and involves the following:

- BDS will facilitate forums for families, guardians and individuals who receive support from MDS in its role as Area Agency. The purpose of the forums is to gather information on services such as intake/eligibility, information on service options, community resources, employment/volunteer opportunities and transfers between Area Agencies.
- A separate forum will be held for the MDS Board of Directors.
- BDS will ask MDS to distribute surveys on their behalf to families, individuals, guardians, and other stakeholders conducted through Survey Monkey to gather information and feedback.
- All information collected through audits, review processes, forums and surveys will be compiled into a final report that will be made available on the BDS website.



# Monadnock Family Council

## A Day at the Lake!

By Michelle Phillips

On August 24<sup>th</sup> the MDS Family Council and Children's Service Staff sponsored an event at Camp Spofford on Spofford Lake! It was a perfect day at the lake – warm and sunny! We had 74 participants who spent the afternoon playing and relaxing in the sun! There were lots of fun activities, including swimming, canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking and making sand castles. Fruit cups, desserts and drinks were provided. The staff at Camp Spofford were fabulous and very helpful in making this event a huge success! Our families provided positive feedback, they had fun and hope to do this again next year!



It was a beautiful day!



Hanging out!



Enjoying the activities



# Monadnock Family Council



Great family time!



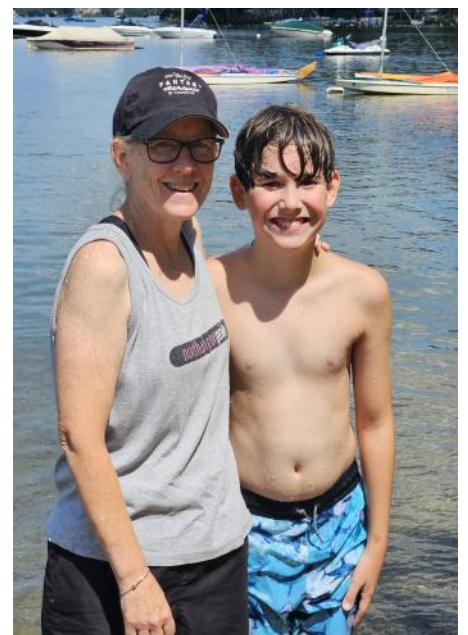
Enjoying the kayaks



Making Sand Castles



Yummy fruit



Having fun at the lake with Mom



## Family Support Conference

By Sheila Mahon

The New Hampshire Family Support Conference was held on Saturday, August 3rd at the Double Tree Convention Center in Manchester. The conference brings together families from across the state. The daylong event provides families the opportunity to connect with other families, learn about services and attend workshops. There were over 15 exhibitors for families to meet with as well as representatives from the Area Agencies. The keynote speaker at this year's event was Carrie Cariello. Carrie spoke about her experience as a mother raising a son who has autism. Carrie has written a number of articles on autism and has a weekly blog. After the Key note, there were morning and afternoon workshops with topics ranging from information on ABLE accounts to Strategies for Success to Medicaid, and Social Security. There were also workshops for kids and teens. The conference is an annual event and a wonderful opportunity to gather together and learn from one another.





## Notes & News

# You've invited to help Monadnock Developmental Services create their 2024

## HOLIDAY CARD

Members of the MDS Community are encouraged to submit their original artwork which may be used on the 2024 MDS holiday card. (No religion or specific holiday pictures please).

Please send us your artwork by October 31, 2024.

You can mail your artwork to either MDS office, drop it off in person, or email it to [linda@mds-nh.org](mailto:linda@mds-nh.org)

We look forward to seeing your  
creative works!



# Notes & News

## Winter Ready!

Submitted by Kathlyn Russell, Safety Committee Representative

As we prepare for the winter season, it is crucial to prioritize the safety of all individuals, and staff members. Here are some important suggestions to keep in mind as we encounter dropping temperatures and regular snowfall.



First and foremost, it is essential to ensure that walkways, stairs, and entryways are kept clear to prevent accidents and injuries. Regularly clearing snow and using salt will play a significant role in maintaining a safe environment for everyone entering and exiting buildings and homes.

Furthermore, addressing transportation concerns during winter weather is vital. This includes clearing driveways and establishing safe meeting points for transportation if a driveway cannot be cleared, ensuring everyone can reach their destinations without encountering hazards.

Proper clothing is also crucial during cold weather. Ensuring that everyone is dressed appropriately for the low temperatures is essential for their well-being and comfort. Given the varying temperatures in our region, it can be helpful to carry an extra layer in case it is needed.



Moreover, adherence to these guidelines for winter weather is of utmost importance:

- Stay updated on weather forecasts and prepare for potential snow or ice.



- Maintain open communication regarding any schedule or work changes resulting from adverse weather conditions.

- Emphasize the importance of proper footing while walking on icy or snowy surfaces.

In addition to the above, it's important to establish clear expectations for picking up and dropping off individuals at their homes, particularly regarding walkways, stairs, and driveways. Safeguarding the paths to residences is critical in ensuring safe and seamless transportation to various activities.



By following these recommendations and embracing other winter safety measures, we can collaborate to ensure a safe and enjoyable winter season for everyone. Stay warm and stay secure!

# Community

## The Struggles You Can't See

By Mandy Carter



Every year, in July, we celebrate the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) being signed into law. For many, July 26, 1990, was a catalyst for slow change – change that is still being forged today, 34 years later. Today, there is a much higher level of respect for individuals with disabilities. That is, if you can see their disability. If you see someone walking around assisted by a cane with a red tip, you can assume some level of vision challenges.

If you see someone in a wheelchair, you can assume they have mobility challenges. What about the child with sensory processing disorder who is throwing a tantrum in the cereal aisle of the grocery store because the bright lights, busy aisles and loudspeaker ads have overwhelmed him so much that when Dad asked what cereal he wanted his brain went into “fight, flight or freeze” mode?

What about the teenager with autism spectrum disorder who is trying to communicate that they are overwhelmed, but all they can do is angrily yell at those around them? Or the pre-teen girl, who is shy in social situations, and ultimately starts to get left out of group functions because she doesn't express her thoughts and feelings in the same way her peers do?

Lastly, what about the mother who is trying to raise her children (who might even have a disability, as well) while also managing a chronic pain disorder? That mother is trying to balance her own needs and dwindling energy stores to make sure she is there for every soccer game, dance recital, and IEP meeting, all while being in constant pain, but still wearing a smile.

I read an online blog that said “one in five people currently have a disability. 100% of people will have some form of disability in their lifetime.” Those numbers are certainly concerning, but what I find more concerning is the lack of support for visible versus invisible disabilities. Can you guess which one receives more support? Which one is championed for more by those without disabilities?

Our physical world has changed a lot in the last 34 years. Our perception of disabilities and our definition of those disabilities have also changed. They aren't quite in an even race yet, but I feel like they grow closer every year.

The Americans With Disabilities Act was a catalyst to change the world so everyone could have an equal chance at accessing it. An equal workforce, an equal education, an equal right to experience the same world as their peers. Now, we celebrate every July by recognizing how far we have come and how far we still have yet to go.

So, how can you help? Whether or not you have a disability, you can always be an advocate for change. Show your support, be vocal with your support and be aware of the biases of you and those around you. Be a champion for change, and believe in the underdog.

My name is Mandy, and I am that mother, my son is that teenage boy and my niece is that pre-teen girl. In 2021, I created a support group for parents like me called See the ABLE not the LABEL, and it is a peer-led support group for parents trying to navigate the landscape of their child's disabilities. We meet virtually on the first and third Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and will always welcome a new parent for support, camaraderie, commiseration, and encouragement. If you would like to join us, go to [river-centernh.org](https://river-centernh.org) and register. While you're there, check out the FACTBook to see if there are any resources that will help improve your life. If you find yourself treading water, trying not to sink, give me a call at The River Center at 603-924-6800 and together we can make a plan to help get you back to dry land.



Mandy Carter is the kinship navigator/community resource specialist/community health worker at The River Center. She connects families and individuals with local, state and federal resources. She has a passion for the disability community and advocacy.



# Community

## Exciting News: Best Buddies Chapter Launch at Monadnock Regional Middle High School!

By Mackenzie Whittet

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the Best Buddies chapter at Monadnock Regional Middle High School! Best Buddies is a student-led organization dedicated to fostering friendships and providing social opportunities for students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

A core aspect of Best Buddies is the importance of creating one-to-one friendships for individuals with IDD, as social isolation continues to be a limiting and detrimental factor for this population. Peer friendships are crucial for building self-esteem, developing life skills, and experiencing the joy of genuine connections. By pairing students with and without IDD in one-to-one friendships and providing monthly inclusive activities, an environment is created for meaningful relationships to form that can enrich everyone's lives!

While the focus on supporting students with IDD is vital, **Best Buddies is a program for everyone!** Students without disabilities also gain immensely from their participation, as these friendships and activities increase empathy and understanding, broaden their perspectives, and emphasize the impact that their actions have on creating a more welcoming and accepting environment for themselves and others. In addition to fun and friendship, all students will be offered unique opportunities for personal growth, leadership development, and community building through state, national, and global Best Buddies events.

Monadnock Regional Middle High School is one of nearly 40 schools in New Hampshire and Vermont, spanning elementary, middle, high schools, and colleges, that have a Best Buddies chapter, with more to come! We look forward to expanding the Best Buddies community and opening more school chapters across the state and in the Monadnock region, continuing to educate, empower, and inspire students on the mission of inclusion.

For more information regarding Best Buddies please contact Mackenzie Whittet at 603-836-3473.



# Project SEARCH Graduation

## Project SEARCH Graduation

By Sheila Mahon

Alexandra Smith, Andrew Lybarger, Irina Sullivan, Madison Gleason and Wyatt Anderson graduated from the Project SEARCH program on June 21<sup>st</sup> at Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Health (CMC/DH). The graduation ceremony was attended by family, friends, service providers and CMC/DH staff.

Over the course of the program that started in September 2023 and ended at graduation, Alex, Drew, Irina, Madison and Wyatt completed internships in a variety of departments such as Environmental Services, Language Services, Mailroom, Medical Records, Medical Oncology, Nutrition, Nurse Clinic, Orthopedics, Physical Therapy, Supply Chain, Volunteer Services and Women's Health. Each internship provided the opportunity to gain new skills. Interns discover what they like to do for work and worked with a variety of people. Kathy Willbarger, Chief Operating Officer at Cheshire Medical Center thanked the interns for the work that they did and contributions to the hospital. Two of the graduates, Wyatt and Madison, also received their Certificates of Completion from Conant High School at the graduation ceremony.

Project SEARCH is a job training program that takes place at Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Health. It is a collaboration between the hospital, NH Vocational Rehabilitation and Monadnock Developmental Services. The program began at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in 1996, the monadnock region program began in 2011. To learn more visit the MDS website at <https://www.mds-nh.org/services/adult-services/>



In order: Camden Merritt, Alexandra Smith, Wyatt Anderson, Andrew Lybarger, Madison Gleason, Christina Edaual



# Project Search



## INFORMATION SESSIONS

Project SEARCH is a job training program for individuals with developmental disabilities. The program combines classroom learning and hands on training through unpaid internships to gain skills that prepare participants for employment. The training takes place at Cheshire Medical Center.

Are you:

- Between the ages of 18-34?
- Receiving services from Monadnock Developmental Services (MDS) and Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire (VRNH)?
- Receiving Medicaid and eligible for the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver?

**Check out the MDS website for information on the program and applying or attend an information session to learn more!**

## LEARN ABOUT THE PROGRAM!

Attend an information session via video conference or in person on:

- **November 14th 6:00 pm** (zoom only)
- **November 26th at 3:30 pm & 6:00 pm**  
(Zoom only)
- **December 30th at 10:00 am & 1:00 pm**
- **January 20th at 10:00 am & 1:00 pm**

To register, or if you want to speak with someone about the program, contact us at:

[ProjectSEARCH@mds-nh.org](mailto:ProjectSEARCH@mds-nh.org)

Or at 603-352-1304

Unable to attend a session?

The [MDS website](#) has information about the program and how to apply. There are videos, answers to frequently asked questions and the application for SEARCH.

*This program is a collaboration between Cheshire Medical Center, Monadnock Developmental Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire.*

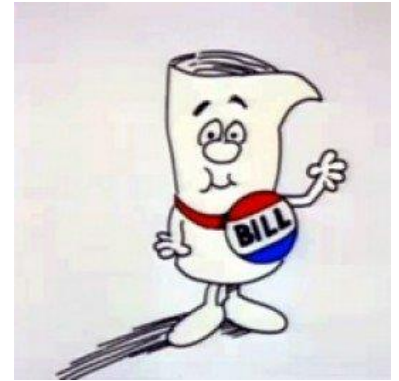
# Legislative Advocacy

## 2024 NH Legislative Session

The 2024 NH Legislative regular session is over but the work of the 2024 Legislative session is not yet complete. Bills that passed both the NH House and NH Senate are now slowly making their way to the Governor's desk.

### **What does it mean when a bill moves on to the Governor?**

When a bill passes both the NH House and NH Senate it then goes to the Governor. The Governor can either sign a bill into law, allow a bill to become law without a signature, or veto a bill. The Governor has five days from when a bill officially reaches their desk to do one of those things. If the Governor vetoes a bill it is all or nothing. Our Governor does not have the ability to veto in its entirety lines of the bill like some states.



### **What does it mean for a bill to "officially" reach the Governor's Desk?**

Once a bill passes both the NH House and NH Senate it goes through a process called Enrollment. This is the part of the legislative process where they clean up bill language and the final is signed off by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. As you can imagine at the end of the session there are so many bills it would be difficult to impossible for the Governor to review all of the bills at once. Once a bill has been Enrolled it is noted on the General Court Website.

## Legislative Update

**HB1168:** Committee to study impact on housing for people with developmental disabilities: Signed by Governor Sununu 7/12/24.

**HB 1028:** establishes a commission to study the delivery of behavioral crisis services to individuals with mental illness with an impairment primarily caused by intellectual disability. signed 7/19/24.

**SB409:** On 8/23/24, Governor Sununu signed SB409 into law. SB409 makes an appropriation of \$500,000 to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to support recreational activities for individuals with developmental disabilities. The funds will be available soon.

SB409 became necessary because the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) clarified that supports and services that are recreational in nature are not reimbursable services under the Medicaid program.

Recreational activities typically provide an opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities to participate in their community in preferred settings where they can work on skill development to aid health, wellness, socialization, and safety goals.

Under SB409, payment for recreational services shall be limited to up to \$600 per individual. In order to be eligible to receive funds, an individual shall have graduated or exited the school system and be receiving services under the Developmental Disabilities or Acquired Brain Disorder waiver.



# Self Advocacy

**MDS Region 5**  
**Self-Advocacy Connection**  
**Come get to know us!**



Day	Date	Time
Monday	October 21, 2024	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	November 18, 2024	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	December 16, 2024	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	January 20, 2025	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	February 17, 2025	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	March 17, 2025	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	April 21, 2025	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	May 19, 2025	10:30 am to 11:30 AM
Monday	June 16, 2025	10:30 am to 11:30 AM

**3<sup>rd</sup> Monday – Hosted in-person at one or both of the MDS Offices  
 OR Provider Agency Host location**

**Check the MDS Training calendar for the location for that session**

You may also attend via ZOOM! The ZOOM link will be available unless we are holding a special event where we do not have wifi access. Come help us plan one!

Zoom Link: [https://zoom.us/j/87016696979?](https://zoom.us/j/87016696979?pwd=d1JuckU3NVg0dTlyV01ubFc2cDYvZz09)  
 pwd=d1JuckU3NVg0dTlyV01ubFc2cDYvZz09

Meeting ID: 870 1669 6979

Passcode: 407639

***(If your provider agency is interested in hosting one of our meetings, please let us know)***

For more information contact Mari Schacht at MDS – [selfadvocacy@mds-nh.org](mailto:selfadvocacy@mds-nh.org)

603-352-1304 ext 212

## MDS Run~Walk~Smile, a Flutie 5K



# 11/2/24



### 10K/5K/1 Mile

Join us for the 10th annual race!

Register here:

<https://raceroster.com/events/2024/90281/10th-annual-mds-runwalksmile>



**All proceeds benefit the unmet dental needs of adults with developmental disabilities**

**Hello! I would love to hear from you!**

Our Region 5 Area Agency serves about 1,000 individuals and families in the Monadnock Region. You are the reason we are here and we want to be sure your voice is heard.

**As your Executive Director, I want to hear from you.**

- *Do you have feedback you'd like to share?*
- *Do you have unresolved concerns?*
- *Do you have questions about your current services or the BDS system redesign?*
- *Do you want to find out more about our MDS mission of inclusion, participation and mutual relationships?*



Please reach out — 603-352-1304 or [MaryAnneW@mds-nh.org](mailto:MaryAnneW@mds-nh.org).

### Email Address for Self-Directed Services Department

Just a reminder we now have the [sdsadmin@mds-nh.org](mailto:sdsadmin@mds-nh.org) email address for Self-Directed Services (PDMS and IHS) families to submit their monthly paperwork to MDS. The administrative assistant for the department will then ensure that all paperwork is distributed to the appropriate person.



## Resources & Opportunities

### New Hampshire Resources

#### ABLE NH

2 1/2 Beacon Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
(765) 4ABLENH  
[www.ablenh.org](http://www.ablenh.org)

Advocates for the civil and human rights of all children and adults with disabilities. Promotes full participation by improving systems of supports, connecting families, inspiring communities, and influencing public policy.

#### Disabilities Rights Center

64 N. Main Street, Suite 2  
Concord, NH 03302  
(800) 834-1721 (603) 228-0432  
[www.drcnh.org](http://www.drcnh.org)

Provides advocacy assistance, information and referral services to families and individuals with disabilities.

#### Governor's Commission on Disability

54 Regional Drive, Suite 5  
Concord, NH 03301  
(800) 852-3405 (603) 271-2773  
[www.nh.gov/disability](http://www.nh.gov/disability)

Information and referral service, Client Assistance Program for vocational rehab clients, Barrier Free Committee, and newsletter.

#### NH Council on Developmental Disabilities

2 1/2 Beacon Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 271-3236  
[www.nhddc.nh.gov](http://www.nhddc.nh.gov)

Recommends policy and advocates for legislative change on issues affecting people with developmental disabilities. Not a direct service agency, but likes to hear your thoughts.

#### NH Family Voices

129 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 271-4525  
[www.nhfv.org](http://www.nhfv.org)

Family organization that provides services to families and professionals caring for children with special health care needs and/or disabilities. network of families speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs.

**MDS is hiring! Email [employment@mds-nh.org](mailto:employment@mds-nh.org)**

**Respite Providers Needed**  
*Part time hours with flexibility!*



***Looking for rewarding part-time work?***  
***Are you dedicated, creative, committed, team-oriented, with a good sense of humor?***

***MDS is hiring part-time Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) for children and adults in Keene and Peterborough.***

**You could make a huge difference in someone's life!**



**Call 603-352-1304 or send an email to us at [employment@mds-nh.org](mailto:employment@mds-nh.org) for more information.**

**Inclusion • Participation • Mutual Relationships**

#### Medicaid False Claims Act

These are not claims with innocent billing mistakes. False claims include services that are:

- ♦ Not rendered
- ♦ Not supported by billing for service
- ♦ Part of a previously submitted claim
- ♦ Upcoded

Watch a brief video on the False Claims Act to help you understand and comply with this law:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbZ78QTLtQ&feature=youtu.be>

#### Rights & Responsibilities Concern?

To file a complaint with the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS), call 1-855-450-3593. After you file a complaint, an investigator will contact you directly.  
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-11/dltss-individual-rights-brochure.pdf>

#### Mack's Lunch Stop

Mack's Lunch Stop meets at UCC in Keene.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays from 11am to 2pm.

It's time to renew your membership cards which will be good through October 2025.

Annual membership fee is \$30.

For more information and to become a member, contact Robb Hobbs at :  
[robb22281@gmail.com](mailto:robb22281@gmail.com).