



MONADNOCK
DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES

HELPING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
LIVE AND WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

THE CLIPBOARD



Fall 2025

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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

Inclusion
Participation
Mutual Relationships



Message from the Executive Director

Honoring Direct Support Professionals and Service Coordinators

Each September, we proudly celebrate direct support professional (DSP) recognition month. It is a time to honor the compassionate people who provide essential care and support to people with disabilities. DSPs are the heart of daily care, empowering those they serve to live full, independent, and meaningful lives in their community.



Mary-Anne Wisell
MDS Executive Director

Their dedication, patience, and empathy are unmatched. Whether assisting with personal needs, teaching life skills, or making connections with friends and family, DSPs create safe, supportive environments where people can thrive. We thank each Direct Support Professional for the difference they make every day. You are heroes in every sense of the word.

Disability Employment Awareness Month: Building Inclusive Workplaces

Every October, we observe national disability employment awareness month (NDEAM) to honor the contributions of workers with disabilities and highlight the importance of creating inclusive workplaces. First established in 1945, this observance recognizes the skills and talents people with disabilities bring to the workforce and the value of accessibility for all.

The theme for NDEAM changes each year, but its core message remains constant: employment should be inclusive, equitable, and accessible. Employers are encouraged not only to recognize the achievements of workers with disabilities but also to examine their own policies, practices, and workplace cultures to ensure they foster an inclusive environment.

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THE CLIPBOARD



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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:

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Message from the Executive Director

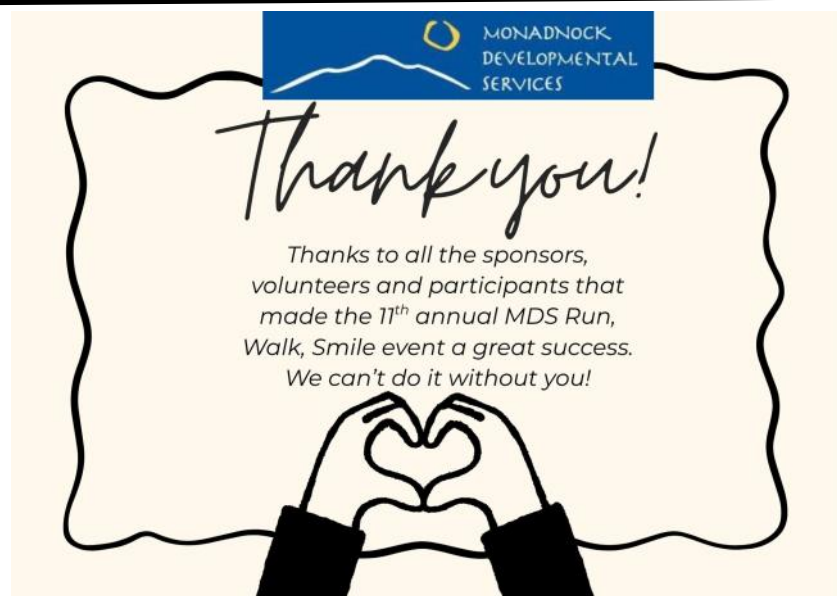
(Continued from Page 1)

Companies that embrace accessibility benefit from broader perspectives, stronger employee engagement, and improved performance. From accessible hiring practices to workplace accommodations, each step helps break down barriers and create opportunities.

As we celebrate, it's important to reflect on how we can all contribute—whether by increasing awareness, advocating for accessibility, or supporting organizations that empower individuals with disabilities.

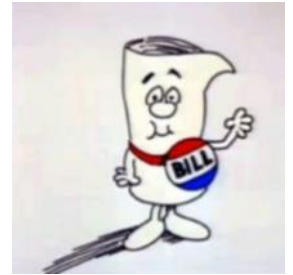
Also in October, we recognized another group of unsung heroes during National Case Management Week. Case Managers, or Service Coordinators, are the bridge between resources and those in need. Service Coordinators work tirelessly to coordinate care, advocate for clients, and navigate complex systems with compassion and professionalism. Their ability to see the big picture while attending to the smallest detail makes all the difference as they guide individuals and families through life's challenges with wisdom, kindness, and strength.

To both Direct Support Professionals and Service Coordinators: **thank you!** Your work often happens behind the scenes, but its impact is front and center in the lives of those you serve. You bring hope, dignity, and opportunity to people who need it most. During your respective recognition times — and every day of the year — we honor you. Your service matters deeply, and we are truly grateful for all that you do.



Legislative Update

By Angela Fletcher



As we head into fall, we are preparing for what could be a busy legislative season. Currently, we are tracking many different Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) that could potentially impact our community. At this moment, it is hard to say if these proposals are good or bad, but we will continue to monitor them over the next few months. The next legislative session starts in January 2026. Given that we have limited information and are merely tracking potential bills, I would like to take this opportunity to explain what a Legislative Service Request (LSR) is and how the process works to make a bill become law.

Before diving into the process of how a bill becomes law, there are a few important things to know and understand:

- Our Legislature in New Hampshire is made up of 400 State Representatives and 24 State Senators.
- The yearly legislative session typically runs from January to June, but all Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) are submitted in the fall.
- A proposed bill can be an idea from a state resident or a legislator, but it must be drafted and sponsored by a legislator.
- A Legislative Service Request (LSR) is the initial request, sponsored and submitted to the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) by a State Representative or Senator.
- The Legislative Service Request (LSR) contains only the title and basic idea of the proposed law, with no additional details.
- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) attorneys then draft the full bill text to ensure the appropriate language is used.
- Once completed, OLS obtains approval of the language from the sponsor. Usually, by late December or early January, the bill is introduced in its entirety and assigned a number as a House Bill (HB) or Senate Bill (SB).
- If the bill starts with HB, then it begins in the House because the primary sponsor is a State Representative. If the bill starts with SB, then it begins in the Senate because the primary sponsor is a State Senator.

Now that we have a foundation of what a Legislative Service Request (LSR) is and how it is implemented; we can discuss how a bill becomes law.

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Legislative Update

(Continued from page 3)

Once the legislative chamber is determined, a number is assigned to the bill. From that point on, the bill will be referred to as HB or SB, with its number. Based on its topic it will be assigned to a committee where they will review it and hold public hearings, where anyone may provide in-person or written testimony in support of or opposition to the bill as written.

After the hearing, the committee holds a discussion (called an executive session), where members may propose changes and vote on a recommendation, such as Ought to Pass (OTP) or Inexpedient to Legislate (ITL).

Next, the full House or Senate votes on the bill. If it passes, the bill goes to the other chamber, where the same process repeats: committee hearing, deliberation, and vote.

If both chambers pass the same version, the bill goes to the Governor's desk. If the two chambers disagree on changes, a Committee of Conference may be formed to find a compromise. If no agreement is reached, the bill dies. Once a bill reaches the Governor, the Governor has three options: sign the bill into law; leave it unsigned, in which case it becomes law in five days; or veto it. If vetoed, the bill can still become law if overturned by a two-thirds majority vote in both chambers.

Announcements

The World According To Us!

By Mandy Carter

Are you a young adult (18+) in the Monadnock Region, navigating life with a "neurospicy" brain? Let's talk about the highs, the lows, and everything in between--from awkward doctor visits to celebrating our wins (like doing the laundry before it piles up).

Whether you've been diagnosed with ADHD, Autism, or an Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD), this space is for you!

Meetings are facilitated by Mandy Carter from The River Center on Zoom on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. Mandy also facilitates the virtual support group, See the ABLE not the LABEL, for parents of kids with special needs.

Here is the registration link: <https://www.rivercenternh.org/register.html>



Workforce Development Grant

MDS Launches Major Recruitment Effort for Direct Support Professionals

You may have noticed colorful ads and videos on TV, social media, and your smartphone promoting careers as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) with Monadnock Developmental Services. This special recruitment initiative is made possible by a one-year Workforce Development Grant from the State of New Hampshire and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The multi-pronged campaign showcases DSPs and the individuals they support—at work, at home, and out in the community—emphasizing flexible schedules, paid training, and the meaningful impact of the work. Fifteen and thirty second video spots are airing on WMUR-TV, Z-TV, and at Keene Cinemas throughout 2025. Targeted print and digital ads are appearing in local newspapers and on computers and smartphones, ensuring that the message reaches broadly and deeply into our region for potential applicants.

The initiative goes beyond advertising. MDS has also invested in new recruitment materials, streamlined its application process, and introduced a paid internship program for college students interested in working as DSPs.

These efforts are already paying off, with an increase in applications and more DSPs joining the team. The recruitment campaign will continue through December 2025.

We are so grateful to Alex Smith, Bryanna Allison, Camden Meritt, Deanna Donadio, Dustin Franco, Elise Broussard, Jacqueline Vespy, Jason Smith, Michelle Connor, Roland Veaudry, and Taylor Douzanis for their participation in the video and photo shoots.

We also greatly appreciate the support of Kohl's, Market Basket-Swanzey, the Marlborough Post Office, the Federated Church of Marlborough, Yankee Lanes, Shadow Soul Emporium/Brandie Wells, the Keene Family YMCA, and the professionals at WMUR, the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript, Keene Cinemas, and Annie Card Creative Services.

The Workforce Development Grant is funded by a contract with the State of NH, DHHS, with funds provided in part by the State of NH and/or such other funding sources as were available or required, e.g., the US-DHHS.



Sean Tease Memorial Award

Two MDS DSPs Honored with the 2025 Sean Tease Memorial Award

The Sean Tease Memorial Award was created to recognize the work that MDS Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) do to enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders. The award is only for MDS DSPs, and was created by the family of Sean Tease to honor the DSPs who worked with Sean over many years. The award is sustained through a fund with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. This summer, **Linda Rabel** of Gilsum and **Brian Pelczarski** of Spofford were selected from over a dozen nominees to receive the 2025 Sean Tease Memorial Award.

Linda Rabel was recognized for her enthusiasm, compassion, creativity, and dedication. She has excelled in connecting the people she supports with meaningful volunteer opportunities and community activities that enrich their lives. Her infectious energy inspires both colleagues and those she serves.

Brian Pelczarski was honored for his unwavering commitment to going above and beyond for the individual he supports as well as his coworkers. He has provided stability and care during challenging times, making a profound difference in quality of life. His strong communication and teamwork skills, paired with a genuine approach, set him apart as an outstanding caregiver.

The awards were presented on August 28 by Cameron Tease; Sheila Mahon, Sean's Service Coordinator at that time; and Jennifer Paone, who was one of Sean's caregivers for many years. Cameron praised this year's recipients' exceptional service:

"It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank you for the invaluable work you do through Monadnock Developmental Services. This award serves to formally recognize the exceptional care, dedication, and unwavering commitment you demonstrate to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others."

Sean Tease sustained a severe brain injury at age 17 in a car accident. After five years in a Boston head trauma center, Sean was able to return home to Keene thanks to a specialized residence and the dedicated support of MDS caregivers. With their help, Sean lived for twelve years with dignity, comfort, and quality of life that would not have been possible in an institutional setting.

For more information about the Sean Tease Memorial Award, please contact Sheila Mahon, sheila@mds-nh.org, 603-352-1304.



**Sean &
support staff**



Sean Tease



Linda Rabel and Brian Pelczarski

Community

Community Gardens

By Deb Franco

Antioch University in Keene has a program through the Environmental Studies Department called Community Garden Connections (CGC), which focuses on promoting food access, sustainability, and community resilience through gardening initiatives. This year, Antioch and the Community Support Services (MDS/CSS Department) partnered to revitalize the raised garden beds located in the lower parking lot at MDS.

Thanks to a grant secured by Antioch, new lumber was purchased and used to construct sturdy, accessible raised beds, replacing the aging structures. Antioch staff and students volunteered their time to build and install the beds, which were then filled with nutrient-rich soil. In a generous show of local support, Cheshire Floral Farm donated a variety of seedlings—including tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants—to jumpstart the growing season.

Throughout the summer, CSS staff and individuals supported by MDS tended the garden, watering, weeding, and harvesting the produce. This initiative not only provided fresh, healthy vegetables but also offered meaningful outdoor activity, skill-building, and a chance to connect with nature. The garden served as a living classroom and a symbol of what can be accomplished when educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses work together toward a shared goal.

We are pleased to share that CSS got an award for its work from Antioch!



Community

A Special Delivery for a Special Friend

By Kris Madore

As we prepared to close up the Peterborough office, we found ourselves sorting through memories—both in our minds and on our walls. Among the photos, one in particular stood out: a striking picture of Scott, full of energy and joy. We realized it was a duplicate of the one already hanging in our Keene office.

Knowing how much Scott has always loved that photo during his visits, I asked Mary-Anne if I could deliver it to him personally. It felt only right that he should have it—something special to display in his own home, to share with family and friends who stop by.

For those who know Scott, it's no surprise that he brings life and enthusiasm wherever he goes. Whether he's rafting, swimming, skiing, kayaking, cycling, or even heading to gymnastics in Keene, Scott embodies a spirit of adventure. He certainly doesn't let his physical limitations slow him down.



Community

Special Olympics Heroes Cup 2025

By Debi Brunt

On June 24th, under the 89-degree sun at Allard Park in Goffstown, New Hampshire's Bravest met the Finest for a Special Olympics scrimmage. Athletes eagerly searched for their partners—my son Tyler among them, paired with Manchester firefighter Matt. Due to recent flooding and rescheduling, Matt and a few others couldn't make it, but the joy was undiminished. Laughter echoed as foul balls flew and kids chased after them. A cookout offered burgers, hot dogs, and cold drinks—critical on such a hot day. Tyler, for the first time since age two, devoured a hot dog and asked for more. He was in his element, reconnecting with old friends. In the lead-up to the Heroes Cup, Tyler also surpassed his \$250 fundraising goal—raising \$446.

On July 11th, at Holman Stadium in Nashua, the big game kicked off. By 2:30 p.m., the stadium buzzed with energy. Despite surprise rain, spirits stayed high. Tyler met Matt with a huge smile and sat with him outside the dugout watching warmups. Partner and team photos followed, along with trading cards—a bit overwhelming, but Matt showed incredible patience. Special thanks to Team Fire and the Special Olympics reps for making the experience so positive for Tyler.

Though Tyler later chose to sit with me and his sister Mikaila, he stood for the anthem, listened quietly to athlete stories, and watched all seven innings. The game started slow—leading me to joke that our local 10u girls' softball team could've played better. It must've helped: Team Fire loaded the bases multiple times and crushed Team Police 12–3. Rain came again but didn't stick. The stands were full, cowbells rang, kids played tug-of-war, and the smell of food filled the air. Tyler sat contentedly with a giant bag of popcorn, signaling us not to disturb him. After six and a half hours, two overpriced ice creams, and a night of pure joy, we said goodbye to Heroes Cup 2025—already looking forward to next year.



Monadnock Family Council Events

Another Successful Day at the Lake!

By Michelle Phillips

It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon on August 23rd for our 3rd annual MDS Family Council and Children Services Coordination staff sponsored Camp Spofford Lake event! We had 72 participants who attended and many mentioned that this was one of their favorite events each year!

Families spent the afternoon soaking up the sun, relaxing, socializing, swimming, playing with trucks in the sand and making sand castles. There were also some family members who used the canoes, paddle boards and kayaks that were available.

The staff at Camp Spofford were fabulous and as always very helpful in making this event a huge success! Fruit cups, delicious cookies and drinks were provided. The families expressed gratitude for a fun afternoon and look forward to this event next year!



Monadnock Family Council

MONADNOCK Family Council

FAMILIES SUPPORTING FAMILIES



Family Education

Arranging education sessions and advocacy by providing a forum for families to make their concerns, needs and preferences known to MDS and to its policy makers.



Creating Connections

Funding events and activities that bring families together. For example: camp scholarships, support groups, and recreational gatherings among families



Meeting Needs

Vetting requests from MDS families for respite, home modification, and emergency family assistance

JOIN US



Second Mondays at 6pm.
Meetings are open to everyone. Anyone who would like to observe or provide input is encouraged to attend.

FIND US



121 Railroad St, Keene, NH 03431



(603) 352-1304



FamilyCouncil@MDS-NH.org



MDS-NH.org/Monadnock-Family-Council



facebook.com/MonadnockFamilyCouncil

WE ARE YOUR PEERS

MDS families: moms, dads, guardians,
AND advocates of children and adults who experience developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, and acquired brain disorders.



The mission of the Monadnock Family Council is to support, assist, and educate families, individuals, and the greater community.

Our purpose is to ensure greater access to the community, increase engagement, and strengthen families by working in partnership with MDS. We strive to empower families and to be a voice for change and inclusion through advocacy and inclusiveness throughout the lifespan.

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 in person or video conference on:

- **November 11, 2025**
 - 10:00 am (in person & zoom)
- **December 30, 2025**
 - 10:00 am & 1:00 pm (in person & zoom)
 - 6:00 pm (Zoom only)
- **January 19, 2026**
 - 10:00 am & 1:00 pm (in person & zoom)

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

Email: ProjectSEARCH@mds-nh.org

or

Call: 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.

Self Advocacy

Self-Advocacy Connection

Region 5

Tick Tock! It's time to join Self Advocacy!

We meet on the 3rd Monday of every month! 10:30AM!

Set your alarm and come on over!



Meetings are tentatively held on the **3rd Monday of the Month** unless noted otherwise. Hosted in-person at the Keene, MDS Office **OR** Provider Agency Host locations as arranged. Check the MDS Training calendar for that session for more information.

You can also attend via ZOOM! ZOOM Links will be provided unless we are hosting a special event that does not have access to wifi.

Day	Time	Location
Monday, November 17th	10:30 am - 11:30 am	MDS (Male Dyer Room) 121 Railroad St – Keene, NH or join via ZOOM
Monday, December 15th	10:30 am - 11:30 am	MDS (Male Dyer Room) 121 Railroad St – Keene, NH or join via ZOOM

*Location is subject to change.

If you can not attend in person - Join the Self-Advocacy Connection Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96861377008?pwd=8NUOm04WUzJwKdOFHWAbYKvYhA9Si.1>

Meeting ID: 968 6137 7008

Passcode: 692791

(If a 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

603-352-1304 ext 212

Resources & Opportunities

New Hampshire Resources

ABLE NH

2 1/2 Beacon Street
Concord, NH 03301
(765) 4ABLENH
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, 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

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

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

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

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

MDS is Looking for Creative, Compassionate People

Join Our Team!

MDS provides comprehensive paid training and continued support so you are well-equipped to help people with disabilities navigate life at home, in the community, or at work. All experience levels are welcomed. Must be 18 years or older.

If you're compassionate and creative, you're perfect for our team! [Visit our website to apply!](#)



The preparation of this advertisement was financed under a contract with the State of NH, DHHS, with funds provided in part by the State of NH and/or such other funding sources as were available or required, e.g., the US DHHS.

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=BbZ78QTLztQ&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.

For more information and to become a member, contact Robb Hobbs at : robb22281@gmail.com.