



Monadnock
UNITED WAY

**COMMUNITY IMPACT
REPORT 2024**

COMMUNITY IMPACT

No matter the challenge, United Way's comprehensive approach and community roots mean we can find a way forward. We are here to strengthen communities, advance financial stability, and create opportunities for individuals and families to flourish. Together, with our community, we're building a future where everyone in the Monadnock region can thrive.

Our Vision

A United community where all are cared for and thriving.

Our Mission

Monadnock United Way is dedicated to improving lives by mobilizing diverse partners and investing in programs and people to create long-lasting, measurable change.

Impact Areas

Together we are creating opportunities for individuals and families in the Monadnock Region by focusing on three key areas:

- Children
- Education
- Financial Stability

Each of us can make a difference for a neighbor. When we come together, we create change for all. That's why Monadnock United Way is always there whenever there is a need in our community. Supporting MUW means supporting hope for a stronger, more vibrant region.

Your Community Impact in 2024

- \$1.4 million invested locally
- 5,000+ people helped through MUW-supported programs and initiatives
- 33 partner agencies supported
- 35 towns served in the Monadnock Region

Total Funds Raised in - \$1,626,598

- \$1,323,942 through the Campaign – the heart of our fundraising efforts
- \$214,856 through Grants – expanding our ability to respond to community needs
- \$87,800 through the Tanglewood Relief Fund – providing urgent relief where it was needed most



For more information, see our Annual Report
<https://www.muw.org/annual-report-2024>

LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends of MUW,

This past year reminded us, once again, what's possible when people come together with purpose. Whether it was responding to a sudden crisis or investing in long-term community needs, your support and belief in our neighbors have made all the difference.

At Monadnock United Way, we continue to focus on children, education, and financial stability, cornerstones of a thriving community. And they come to life through stories, like the young woman who found a new career path through an internship with the Monadnock Region Afterschool Partnership Project. Or the volunteer-driven Monadnock Housing Collaborative that created a first-of-its-kind series of roundtables, giving local planning boards a way to connect and learn from one another.

Some of our proudest moments came from work that wasn't even in the original plan. When families in the Tanglewood community faced a devastating storm and struggled to find support, MUW, the NH Charitable Foundation, and the NH Community Loan Fund teamed up to raise critical funds for tree removal.

This effort was a testament to what our community and state can do when we band together, each taking a piece of what we do best and using it to respond quickly to an urgent local need. This wasn't just about clearing debris but about restoring safety and peace of mind. And it showed us the power of social capital and how we can tap into it when we need it most.

We also saw what happens when young children and their caregivers are given the tools to thrive. The Pyramid Model, a nationally recognized framework for promoting social-emotional development in young children, is continuing to help early childhood educators and families in our area teach emotional skills, starting as early as infancy. From visual cues posted in hallways to routines that translate from classroom to kitchen table, the ripple effects of this work are real and impactful.

None of these stories happen in isolation. They are only possible because of the partnerships, generosity, and shared commitment of our community. Donors, volunteers, local businesses, board members (old and new!), and longtime champions—you've all stepped forward. And your engagement in strengthening the Monadnock Region as a whole is not taken for granted.

As we look ahead and stay responsive to emerging needs, we're filled with hope. More young leaders are stepping into service, and organizations are working together across sectors to move our region forward. Thank you for showing up and continuing to make the Monadnock Region a place where individuals and families can thrive.

With deep gratitude,



Liz LaRose, MUW President



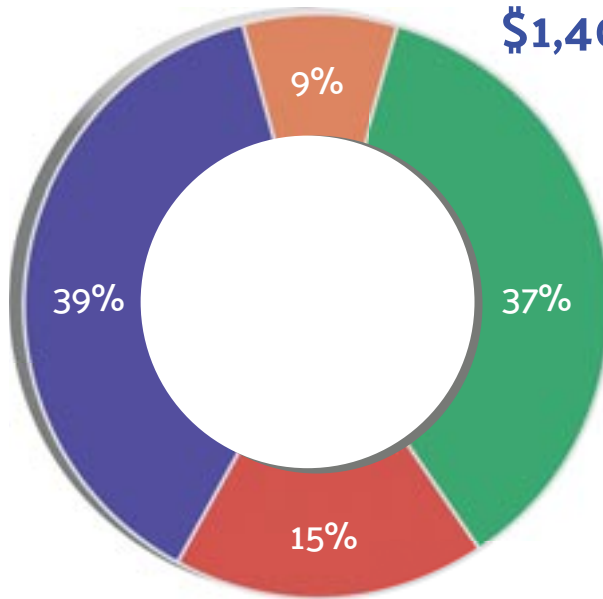
Michelle DellaVita, MUW Board Chair



Liz LaRose and Michelle DellaVita

MUW INVESTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY 2024

\$1,400,000



- Children \$642,000
- Education \$153,000
- Financial Stability \$605,000
- Total \$1,400,000**
- Fundraising and Management \$251,000

MUW's fundraising and management is 15% this year. We strive to maintain a rate of no higher than 18%. Industry standard ranges from 13–20%.

CHILDREN

Funded Partners

Monadnock Alliance for Families*
 Monadnock Region Afterschool Collective
 Headstart Dental Screening Program*

Grant Funded Initiatives

Pyramid Model*
 Pyramid Model Goes to the Library**
 Jaffrey Rindge Full Service Community Schools**
 Monadnock Region Afterschool Partnership Project****

Community Building

IMBA*
 StartSmart*
 Community Collaboration*
 Advocacy for Investment in Early Childhood #

EDUCATION

Grant Funded Initiatives

Early Childhood Education Certification ***
 Child Development Associate Certification Program (CDA)***
 Early Childhood Programming in Rural Libraries**
 HOPE Framework and Pyramid Model Training**

Community Building

Community Awareness Building*
 Advocacy**

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Funded Partners

Cheshire County Emergency Housing Collective
 Monadnock Food Pantries Collective
 Keene Day Care Center*
 Hillsboro Child Development Center*
 Monadnock Community Early Learning Center*
 Walpole Village School*
 Winchester Learning Center*

Grant Funded Initiatives

Emergency Food and Shelter Program

Community Building

211NH
 My Free Taxes
 SingleCare
 Monadnock Housing Collaborative
 Tanglewood Relief Fund
 Advocacy

Key:

*Impact Monadnock (IM)

**NH Early Childhood Region 1 (ECR1)

***Childcare Expansion Grant (CCE)

This program is funded through the U.S. Department of Education Congressionally Funded Community Projects with Keene State College and MUW.

****Northern Borders Regional Commission Catalyst Program

IM, ECR1, CCE

MONADNOCK UNITED WAY, INC. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2024 (WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023)

ASSETS	2024	2023
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,335,882	\$1,263,937
Investments	819,290	779,088
Grants receivable	36,866	38,722
Pledges receivable, less allowance for uncollectible pledges of \$75,000 as of December 31, 2024 and 2023	467,405	539,135
Other current assets	2,384	2,940
Total current assets	2,661,827	2,623,822
Property, Plant and Equipment, at cost		
Building and improvements	109,500	109,500
Office furniture and equipment	110,823	102,849
Land	4,430	4,430
	224,753	216,779
Less - Accumulated depreciation	194,500	187,182
Net property, plant and equipment	30,253	29,597
Other Assets		
Restricted cash	45,778	—
Beneficial interest in foundation assets	332,322	318,299
Total other assets	378,100	318,299
Total assets	\$ 3,070,180	\$ 2,971,718
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Designations payable	\$ 35,655	\$ 35,255
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	97,122	42,126
Total current liabilities	132,777	77,381
Total liabilities	132,777	77,381
Net Assets		
Without donor restriction		
Board designated	281,999	281,999
Undesignated	1,085,665	1,058,539
	1,367,664	1,340,538
With donor restriction	1,569,739	1,553,799
Total net assets	2,937,403	2,894,337
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 3,070,180	\$ 2,971,718

CHILDREN

We envision that children in the Monadnock Region live in safe, nurturing, healthy homes and communities.

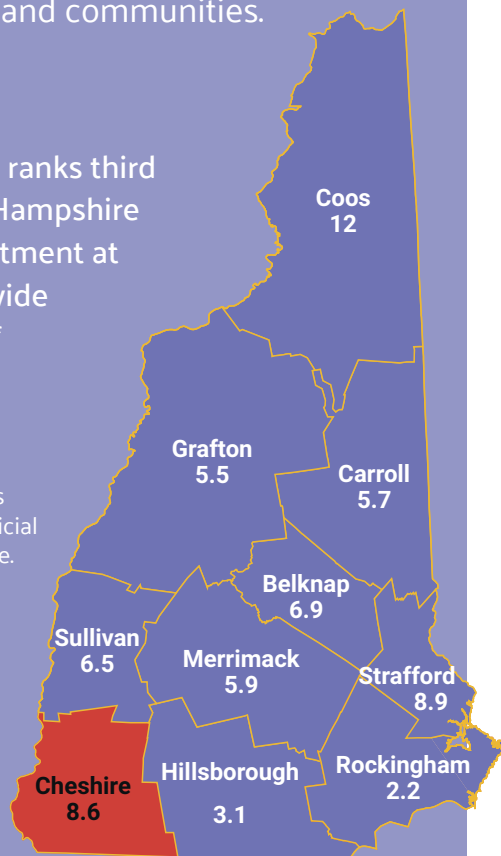
THE NEED

Cheshire County ranks third highest in New Hampshire for child maltreatment at 8.6%. The statewide average is 4.7%.*

Source:

datacenter.aecf.org

*Rates are reported through 2020, which is the latest year that official county data is available.



THE GOAL

Connect at-risk youth and families to high quality, appropriate, and coordinated supports and services.

IMPACT PARTNERS

- Monadnock Alliance for Families
- Monadnock Region Afterschool Collective
- Monadnock Region Afterschool Partnership Project
- Southwestern Community Services – Dental Screening Program
- NH Early Childhood Region 1
- Impact Monadnock

THE IMPACT

The **Monadnock Alliance for Families** saw impressive growth, serving **2,215 families** through parent education programs, home visiting, and enriched engagement opportunities, reflecting an **11% increase** from the previous year.

When One Connection Opens Many Doors

Support in Action through the Monadnock Alliance for Families

When James and Fae Panico relocated to Antrim with their three children, they were eager to put down roots and find a sense of belonging. Their youngest daughter, Joyana, was just a year old, curious, and ready to explore the world. Like many parents new to the area, they were searching for opportunities to help their children connect with others and feel at home.

Their search led them to The Grapevine Family & Community Resource Center, part of the Monadnock Alliance for Families (MAF). Soon, their children were participating in activities like Avenue A for teens and family traditions such as the Black Fly Art Celebration and Snow Families. For James and Fae, it was a chance to see their children thrive in a welcoming community.

But the most unexpected connection came around a campfire...

Read on to discover how one gathering changed everything for James.



THE IMPACT

In New Hampshire's smallest towns, where resources are scarce and child poverty is high, libraries are stepping up for families. With modest grants and hands-on coaching, librarians gained confidence and new tools, doubling program capacity in some places and transforming early childhood experiences for children who need them most.

More Than Books: How Rural Libraries Are the Heart of Our Communities

In rural communities, libraries are more than places to borrow books; they're trusted gathering spaces, learning hubs, and lifelines for families. But with tight budgets and limited staff, many small town libraries struggle to meet the growing needs of their community.

"It can feel like we're on an island sometimes," shared one librarian from Lempster.

To help bridge that gap, the New Hampshire Early Childhood Region 1 team partnered with libraries in Marlow, Gilsum, Lempster, and Charlestown to strengthen early childhood programming and community connection. This work was made possible with funding from the Center for Advancing Rural Health Equity at Dartmouth Health.

Through hands-on professional development, librarians made their spaces more inclusive, designed engaging programs, and built stronger ties with each other. One librarian shared, "Interviewing families gave me great ideas, especially about how to get the word out and increase patronage."

Each library received flexible funding to bring ideas to life. "Honestly, the money was the biggest benefit," a librarian said.

"Our annual programming budget is just \$200. Monadnock United Way provided \$400."

For families, the impact is real. On a snowy February day, Lynn brought her granddaughter Nora to a community event at the Marlow Library. They made crafts, cooked stone soup, and curled up for storytime.

"As we sat eating warm soup with new friends, it was the highlight," Lynn said. "It truly was a special day."



<https://www.muw.org/ECR1>

ROOTED TO RISING:

Sarah's Path from Survival to Significance

When Sarah joined the Monadnock Region Afterschool Partnership Project (MRAPP) internship at Project KEEP, she wasn't just seeking employment; she was searching for purpose. As a devoted mother to a three-year-old daughter, Sarah had spent years cycling through warehouse and service jobs that didn't align with her passions. She longed to work with children, but employment opportunities in child care and education were out of reach without reliable transportation.

Then she discovered MRAPP, and everything began to change.

Assigned to the Franklin Elementary School site under Project KEEP run by the Keene School District, just a five-minute walk from her apartment, Sarah finally had the chance to do work that felt meaningful. From the start, her ability to connect with children, especially those with emotional or behavioral needs, was evident.

One child, known for frequent outbursts, found calm only in Sarah's presence. She didn't rely on strict discipline or loud commands, just quiet patience, compassion, and the kind of understanding that comes from lived experience.

"It was the first job I ever wanted. I felt like I belonged."

Sarah flourished in the afterschool setting. She grew confident giving directions, leading activities, and holding firm boundaries with kindness.



"I used to feel like I was on the sidelines.

Her growth didn't go unnoticed. Before the internship ended, the school hired her directly, offering her more hours and a long-term role supporting children. She is also working with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' SNAP Employment & Training program to access free certification courses and plans to resume driving soon, expanding her access to even more opportunities.

Now I feel

From Internships to Impact: Building Tomorrow's Workforce

Sarah now dreams of designing her own summer program that blends art, music, and emotional wellness for children. For the first time, she feels like she's not just working, she's building a future.

"MRAPP didn't just give me a job. It gave me direction. And for the first time, I know I'm creating something real, for myself, and my daughter."



The Monadnock Region Afterschool Partnership Project (MRAPP) is tackling staffing shortages in afterschool programs while creating career pathways for young people. By placing high school students, college students, and career changers in paid internships, MRAPP offers a win-win partnership: afterschool programs get critical staffing support, while interns gain skills, mentorship, and real-world experience that prepare them for future careers.

MRAPP not only fills critical staffing gaps today; it helps develop the workforce of tomorrow.

In collaboration with Keene State College and the Monadnock Region Afterschool Collective, MRAPP links higher education and afterschool sites serving over 1,000 children across the region. In its first year, **eight interns** supported **254 children** at **13 sites**—and **one was hired directly** into the youth education workforce.

Along the way, interns reported increased confidence, new leadership skills, and a clearer vision for their futures. Program directors praised the interns' enthusiasm and creativity, noting how their presence enriched the learning environment for children.

MRAPP is building a stronger pipeline to benefit both today's children and tomorrow's community.

MRAPP is funded through the Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program. It is administered by Monadnock United Way, with support from the Southwest Region Planning Commission as the Local Development District.



like a leader."

EDUCATION

We envision that Monadnock area community members receive an education that enables them to achieve their fullest potential.

THE NEED

The Monadnock Region faces a critical shortage of qualified early childhood educators, making it harder for families to access quality childcare and early learning opportunities.

THE GOALS

- **Grow Our Workforce:** Retain local graduates and attract skilled professionals and young families to live and work in our region.
- **Expand Access:** Increase the number of high-quality early learning slots available to families across our community.

IMPACT PARTNERS

- Monadnock Community Pyramid Model
- Childcare Expansion Project

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- 250 educators trained in Pyramid Model
- 25 providers advanced in the Child Development Associate (CDA) program
- 25 new childcare jobs created
- 53 new slots opened for families
- 15 Keene High School students earned the CDA credential

The Power of Everyday Moments: Monadnock Community Pyramid Model in Action

Change doesn't always happen in big, sweeping gestures. Often, it shows up in the quiet, everyday moments that shape a child's sense of belonging, confidence, and joy. That's the power of the Pyramid Model.



It's in a preschooler calming themselves with the emotional literacy tools they learned in class.

It's in children finding the courage to join circle time for the very first time.

It's in children's **problem-solving** together using visuals designed to help them navigate challenges.

It's in classrooms celebrating shared expectations during Teacher Appreciation Week—reminders that learning is built on respect, relationships, and community.

These moments may seem small, but together they create the foundation for lifelong learning, resilience, and well-being.



The I Feel/I Need board has been a valuable tool in my classroom to help students with challenging behaviors or when they are experiencing big feelings.

I created a home version and made it available for those interested in helping to navigate tricky meltdowns or big-feeling moments.

- Melissa, Lead Teacher



Alyssa, a teacher at the Winchester Learning Center, observed children using the problem solving visuals on their own!



Scan to learn more



This shift transformed her approach. She became more patient, more present, and more attuned to small moments of growth. “Before, I might’ve stepped in and done it for them,” she reflected. “Now, I guide. I encourage. I celebrate.”

One memory stands out vividly. A quiet child, usually watching from the sidelines, wanted to join a game but didn’t know how. Lena offered a simple suggestion and watched with pride as the child bravely stepped forward.

“That moment of bravery meant everything.”

But Lena’s journey isn’t only about what changed in her classroom. It’s about what changed in her. “I’m 44,” she said. “And for the first time, I feel confident. I know how to support kids. I use the right language. I offer ideas. My co-teacher and I work as a team.”

Her personal story makes her professional growth even more inspiring. Lena is five-and-a-half years sober, a milestone she proudly claims. Addiction once took everything, but through strength and support, she rebuilt her life. Today, she is working full-time, married, and thriving in a career that fills her with purpose.

Her advice to others considering the CDA or Pyramid Model training is simple:

“Do it. It gives you confidence you didn’t know you were missing. Being a lead teacher feels amazing.”

Lena’s Leap: Leading With Confidence

A story of growth, confidence, and connection in the classroom

“Do it. It gives you confidence you didn’t know you were missing.”

For years, Lena dreamed of becoming a lead teacher. She had the heart, the experience, and a deep love for her students. But without the required certification, the role felt out of reach. That changed when she decided to pursue her Childhood Development Associate (CDA) certification and participate in Pyramid Model training.

At first, she was nervous. Juggling work, life, and coursework felt overwhelming. With encouragement from her lead teacher, Steffanie Conlan, and her CDA mentor, Roberta Royce, she gradually found her rhythm. Online tools like ProSolutions made the portfolio process manageable—and, to her surprise, enjoyable.

One of Lena’s biggest takeaways came through the Pyramid Model. She began to see children’s behavior in a new light:

“Kids aren’t naughty. They just need tools to regulate.”

Lena’s journey shows that the best educators are shaped not only by training, but by resilience, lived experience, and heart. For Lena, this isn’t just a new chapter—it’s a new beginning.



Marisa's Moment: Embracing Her Strength

A story of resilience, growth, and finding her voice as a teacher

Marisa, a mother of four with a food service background, loved working with children but doubted her ability to succeed as a teacher.

That changed when she enrolled in the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification program and began participating in Pyramid Model training.

"I loved it," she said. "Once I sent my kids to school, I decided to go back too."

One of the biggest takeaways from her Pyramid Model training? How to connect with kids on their level, literally and emotionally. "I learned better ways to communicate, to calm, to show respect," Marisa explained.



"Now, instead of reacting, I get down to their level and ask, 'What's going on?'"

She applied this method with a student struggling to express frustration. "He was hitting," she recounted, "so I knelt, spoke with him, and redirected his attention to something else. That moment remained with me."

The CDA program provided Marisa with structure and support, especially through her cohort members and her mentor, Roberta Royce. "I'm a hands-on learner," she said. "Roberta was always there when I needed help. I wouldn't have made it through without that accountability."

Marisa can now lead her own classroom, something she once never thought possible. "At first, I was nervous to talk to families. Now I love it. I share strategies, I listen. I know how to support growth."

Her advice to others thinking about the CDA? "Go for it. Children depend on us, not just to teach ABCs, but to help them grow and get ready for life. They watch everything we do."

Since passing her CDA in June, Marisa continues to bring her whole self to her classroom every day. She's a team player, a leader, and a powerful example of what happens when you believe in your own potential.



Maddyson Rae Dingman-Ellis:

Discovering Her Voice—and Her Calling

From giving back to stepping forward with purpose

Maddyson Rae Dingman-Ellis always knew she wanted to be a teacher. Surrounded by cousins and inspired by the way her grandmother lovingly cared for 10 grandchildren, she discovered early on just how much she loved working with children. Following in the footsteps of her mother and aunt, she began volunteering at Winchester Learning Center and soon stepped into an assistant teacher role. “I always loved being around kids,” she says. “Teaching was always the dream, I just needed the chance to prove I could do it.”

The Child Development Associate (CDA) certification program changed that.

“What surprised me most was the confidence it gave me,” Maddy reflects. “There was a time when I felt unsure of myself, like I didn’t quite belong in the classroom. But the program gave me the tools to commit, and the courage to speak up.” Today, she sees herself not just as a teacher, but as an important part of a team.

That confidence shows up in the way she connects with children. “I used to think discipline was about saying ‘no’ or redirecting behavior. Now I understand the power of positive reinforcement and giving kids space to explore. Just the other day, I watched a little boy defend a classmate who was being picked on. He said, ‘She doesn’t like that.’ And I realized, it’s working. They’re learning how to advocate for themselves and each other.”

For Maddy, those moments are everything. “Seeing the kids grow, knowing I’m helping them find their voice, it’s the most rewarding feeling.”

The skills she gained through the CDA program also gave her the ability to pivot in real time. “We had a day in preschool when behaviors were tough, so we split the group, some kids went outside while the others did play-doh. Just that small shift made a big difference. I’ve learned to adapt, to meet kids where they are.” Now, when Maddy walks into her classroom, she doesn’t feel shy or unsure, she feels like she belongs.



“I feel equal. I feel like a real teacher. And I know this is just the beginning.”

How One Local Program is Preparing the Next Generation of Early Childhood Educators

At Keene High School's Cheshire Career Center (CCC), students are already stepping into the vital work of early childhood education, and a new partnership is helping them go even further. Through the Child Care Expansion project, CCC's "Careers in Education" program added a powerful tool to its curriculum: the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) certification.



Students enrolled in Careers in Education at the Cheshire Career Center were able to obtain their CDA.



Students proudly pose with their teachers after earning their CDA.

"This class gave me the experience and confidence to say, 'I can do this.'"

Fifteen high school students recently earned their CDA, including Cadence Longley, for whom the Careers in Education program was more than just a class. "I originally started in marketing," said Longley. "But once I began babysitting and working in a preschool setting, I realized how much I loved it. This class gave me the experience and confidence to say, 'I can do this.'"

Throughout their journey in the Careers in Education program, students completed intensive coursework in child development, behavior, and curriculum planning. They also spent time in real-world placements gaining hands-on experience and building a professional portfolio of lesson plans, teaching strategies, and photos from their time in the classroom.

"It's something we can actually show to employers," said Javier John Garcia, another program graduate. "It's proof of what we've learned and what we can do."

Through the CCC, students received CPR and First Aid training, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) certification, along with other credentials that give them a serious edge in the job market. Danielle Ulitsch, a rising senior, said, "We've already done so much work that will carry over to college or wherever we go next. I feel really prepared."

For area childcare centers, the addition of the CDA certification couldn't have come at a better time. Providers across the Monadnock Region are facing serious staffing shortages, and the need for qualified early educators continues to grow.

This enhanced curriculum, made possible through the Child Care Expansion project, aims to strengthen the pipeline from high school to careers in early childhood education. The project introduced the CDA to CCC and has already helped deepen collaboration between secondary and post-secondary education in the region.

“This is just the beginning,” said Deirdre McPartlin, Director of the Child Development Center at Keene State College. “We’ve seen these students grow, create, reflect, and now take this big step into their future. It’s inspiring, and it’s how we make a real shift in the early childhood field: by building meaningful, local connections.”

“It’s incredible to see how many of our graduates are now working in nearly every school and childcare center in our community.”

“It’s incredible to see how many of our graduates are now working in nearly every school and childcare center in our community,” said Jennifer Antosiewicz, the Careers in Education program leader and a Keene High alum herself. Now the high school students she works with have the opportunity to graduate with the qualifications to work as lead teachers, a major shift from starting in assistant roles.

“This changes what they can do,” said Alissa Tyler of Keene Day Care Center, who also went through the Career Center program in the ’90s. “In most centers, getting a CDA helps with their pay, their responsibilities, and their confidence.”

Tyler, who now trains new early educators, says the hands-on structure of the program, including a preschool located right in the high school, is what makes it so effective. “They’re definitely coming in at a different level. It’s a huge benefit to our field.”

“No matter what path you take, working with kids teaches you communication, patience, and confidence,” said Longley. “And if I ever need a summer job, I’m more qualified than most other teens.”

For Garcia, the experience also made job interviews feel less intimidating. “If you feel unsure about presenting yourself as a strong candidate, the CDA gives you a boost. It shows you’ve put in the work.”

Antosiewicz said she was thrilled by the number of students who jumped at the opportunity to pursue

their CDA. “I hope this inspires them to continue their education and stay in the field.”

The Careers in Education program is part of a larger effort to support the early childhood workforce in our region. Centers like Keene Day Care Center and Montessori Schoolhouse are eager to encourage the next generation of educators, recently participating in a job fair held right at CCC so students could explore local career opportunities. Some local colleges, including Keene State, also accept the CDA certification for credit, giving students a head start if they choose to continue their education.

MUW and Keene State College, along with childcare centers and other nonprofits in the region, are exploring even more ways to connect young people with real opportunities in the field. As this collaboration continues to grow, so does the potential to transform how we support early childhood education.



*These stories were made possible through programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Congressionally Funded Community Projects Program, in partnership with Keene State College and Monadnock United Way. Learn more at www.muw.org/cce.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

We envision Monadnock community members having the financial resources necessary to live healthy, happy, productive lives.

THE NEED

9% of individuals in our region live at or below the federal poverty level.

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
7.60%	7.00%	7.40%	7.40%	7.30%
9.00%	8.80%	9.90%	8.70%	9.00%

State of NH Cheshire County

Source: <https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2023/demo/saipe/2023-state-and-county.html>

Poverty is defined as individuals living on or below 100% of the federal poverty level based on family income, size, and composition.

In 2023, the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four was \$30,000.

Source: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/01/19/2023-00885/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>

THE GOAL

Address basic needs that support financial stability.

IMPACT PARTNERS

- Cheshire County Emergency Housing Collaborative
- Monadnock Region Food Pantries Collective
- Keene Day Care Center
- Monadnock Community Early Learning Center
- Walpole Village School
- Winchester Learning Center
- Monadnock Housing Collaborative
- My Free Taxes
- Singlecare
- 211NH

TOGETHER FOR TANGLEWOOD

A devastating storm struck the Tanglewood community in Keene. Neighbors, local organizations, and statewide partners rallied together in an extraordinary show of support. In just a few months, more than \$87,000 was raised to help families clear dangerous debris and begin restoring safety and peace of mind in their neighborhood. That spirit of community resilience continues, as we work to raise additional funds in 2025 to help families fully recover and feel secure in their homes once again.



Scan to learn more

THE IMPACT

In 2024, **197** children gained access to quality early learning through tuition scholarships at **five** MUW-supported centers.

A Scholarship That Made All the Difference

When their family income was suddenly cut in half, Willow's parents worried they wouldn't be able to keep her enrolled at Walpole Village School. Thanks to MUW support, Willow remained in a nurturing, engaging classroom, surrounded by teachers and friends who truly care.

The scholarship eased the burden of childcare costs, gave her parents peace of mind, and allowed them to focus on work and family.

"We are incredibly grateful for the MUW scholarship. It has made a profoundly meaningful difference in our lives."

Today, Willow is thriving—and so is her family.



THE IMPACT

The Cheshire County Emergency Housing Collaborative provided shelter and basic needs to **305 individuals**, ensuring every client had access to safe housing, food, hygiene supplies, clothing, and community resources. Beyond meeting immediate needs, the collaborative focused on long-term stability—**62% of clients** engaged in housing-focused case plans that included benefits applications and housing navigation, surpassing the goal of 50%. Educational opportunities also grew significantly, with participation increasing from just 4.85% in 2023 to **19% in 2024**, reflecting a strong commitment to helping individuals build skills and pathways toward greater independence.

Isabella's Story

How Support and Kindness Helped a Family Rebuild

Isabella was about eleven when her family lost their farmhouse in rural New Hampshire. It had been a place filled with warmth and stability—a red barn, chickens in the yard, and the comfort of calling it home. But when their landlord passed away and the property was sold, everything changed.

What followed was months of uncertainty.

The family bounced from one short-term rental to another, only to see each option fall through. Their car broke down, making it harder to get to work. Soon, they found themselves moving from motel to motel, never knowing how long they would be able to stay. “It felt like the world was against us,” Isabella’s mom recalled.

Then came a turning point. In October 2024, they connected with Lore DeForest at Southwestern Community Services. Lore helped place them in a room through the Winter Warming Shelter program. It wasn’t permanent housing, but it gave the family something they hadn’t had in months—safety, stability, and the chance to catch their breath.

More importantly, Lore never gave up on them. She checked in regularly, offered encouragement, and reminded Isabella’s mom that they weren’t alone.

With Lore’s support behind them, the family began moving up the housing waitlist—step by step toward a new chapter...



Read more about how Isabella’s family found their way home—and how community support made the difference.



Local Roundtables Help Volunteers Shape Housing Solutions Together

Citizen Planner Roundtables are creating space to connect, share, and take action.

Did you know that planning board members in most Monadnock Region towns are volunteers? These residents play a quiet but critical role in shaping our communities by learning complex state and local regulations, listening closely to neighbors, and making decisions that directly influence how and where people live.

Their work is especially important as towns face a growing need for affordable housing options and thoughtful development. But many of these volunteers are navigating these challenges without support staff, and until recently, without a consistent way to collaborate with peers in neighboring towns.

That's where the Monadnock Housing Collaborative (MHC) – formerly the Monadnock Resource Alliance – stepped in. A collaborative effort to address the housing crisis in our region, the MHC works to reduce housing insecurity and homelessness by tackling the systemic barriers that stand in the way. One of those barriers? Isolation among rural planning board members.



In partnership with the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), MHC launched a series of Citizen Planner Roundtables, bringing volunteers together in person to share challenges, exchange solutions, and strengthen their efforts. Throughout the year, these gatherings took place in four different rural towns. Each provided something planning board members previously lacked: a space to connect and converse.

“These roundtables are for the volunteers,” said Chloe Gross, planner at SWRPC and a key coordinator of the effort. “They’re meant to support rural municipalities and give planning board members space to talk, share, and learn from each other.”

At each session, planning board members dove into big questions, from how to approach zoning changes and write effective warrant articles to the ins and outs of digitizing records. One recurring topic was accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which can offer affordable housing solutions without large-scale development. Attendees shared firsthand how their towns are approaching ADU ordinances, including what’s worked, what hasn’t, and what might be worth trying for other communities.

Planning board members are showing extraordinary commitment to these sessions—driving from the far corners of the region to attend. The very first roundtable saw members from Temple crossing the mountain to Gilsum, and that dedication continues with each gathering.

Members from Temple [crossed] the mountain to Gilsum, and that dedication continues with each gathering.



Chloe Gross, SWRPC planner

We weren't sure what the turnout or tone would be," Gross reflected, "but the conversations have been enthusiastic, energetic, and constructive."

"There's been a real focus on how the towns can help each other and explore different ways that zoning affects local needs."

The roundtables have also served as a launching point for deeper learning. Presenters from UNH Extension and the State Office of Planning and Development attended and listened to the concerns raised, eventually developing webinars in direct response.

Importantly, the roundtables are also becoming a touchpoint of encouragement for the people doing this work. "They're regular people trying to understand complex zoning laws and public notice requirements. These sessions have been a kind of support system," Gross described.

The message from volunteers is clear: when supported, connected, and heard, progress follows.

Looking ahead, MHC and SWRPC plan to continue the gatherings quarterly, each one hosted in a different rural town. "We go to them instead of them coming to us," Gross explained, noting that this allows the hosts to showcase their hometown and attendees a chance to see different parts of the region. The goal is to keep listening, keep showing up, and keep the conversations going, especially in the smallest or most distant communities that are often overlooked.

"The instant enthusiasm and collaboration happening at the Citizen Planner Roundtables highlights a major strength of the Monadnock Region: that lasting, positive change happens when we are all at the table together," said Liz LaRose, President of Monadnock United Way.



A collaboration between Monadnock United Way, Southwest Region Planning Commission and The Monadnock Interfaith Project.

What's Next

In 2025, MHC will add staff to deepen this work and update its strategic plan. Volunteers have made it clear: when supported, connected, and heard, progress follows.

How You Can Help

Want to be part of the solution?

Explore volunteer planning board openings in your town, or connect with MHC to learn more about shaping the future of housing in our region: www.muw.org/mhc

United is the Way

- We forge unlikely partnerships.
- We find new solutions to old problems.
- We mobilize our best resources.
- We inspire individuals to join us to tackle our community's most daunting social crises.

Monadnock United Way is dedicated to improving lives by mobilizing diverse partners and investing in programs and people to create long-lasting, measurable change.



Monadnock
UNITED WAY

23 Center Street
Keene, NH 03431
tel 603.352.4209

muw.org