

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 childcare 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," Sarah says. "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.
Now I feel
like a leader."

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.

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.”



From Internships to Impact: Building Tomorrow’s Workforce

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.

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