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In This Issue:

Page One

-Local news

-Bringing Back JOY

Page Two

-“The Book Club for Men” at Carrabec

-Thank you, Charles Schwab Foundation

- Commissioner Gendron Receives National Award

Page Three

-Student Success Story

JMG Project Reach is Heating Up

A huge thanks to everyone who donated to our annual Coats for Kids Campaign! If you still have some old winter coats around the house that you’ve no use for, bring them in to Mr. Mitchell in Room 206 and they will be professionally cleaned and distributed to those in need. The next fundraiser will be Pennies for Patients running from February 22 - March 15. Each middle school homeroom will compete to see who can raise the most money to help fight leukemia, lymphoma and other blood-related cancers. All proceeds will benefit The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Once again this year, the Unity Foundation is partnering with JMG to allocate each program \$1,000 to award to a nonprofit of the students’ choosing. The program is called JOY, Jumpstart Our Youth. The criterion to have money awarded is that the nonprofit work with youth. Last year the Litchfield and Sabattus JMG Project Reach programs combined money and awarded the full \$2,000 to the Sabattus Rec Club. They used the money to build a shed to store gear and to keep programs running. The students of RSU#4 JMG Project Reach programs will greatly benefit from their gift and learned a valuable lesson in philanthropy. The JOY program is underway in Sabattus with lessons focusing on the importance of giving and understanding that every little bit helps.

In recent weeks the students of JMG Project Reach in Sabattus have been tasked with accomplishing some standardized tests. The NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) tests will help the school determine students’ academic growth throughout their time in school.



Project Reach class during testing time is a place where students can unwind and gear up for their next test. This time is spent drawing, free reading, completing schoolwork or utilizing their laptops for educational games. Mr. Mitchell uses this time to meet with students and conference with them regarding current academic standing. Thanks to all for their continued support of the RSU#4 JMG Project Reach program in Sabattus.

At left - Kody and Anthony hard at work

A heartfelt thank you to Time Warner Cable for producing a new video for JMG. See it online at www.jmg.org – just click on the News & Events tab.

Back into the Community with JOY!

By Catherine Hartnett of the Unity Foundation

Unity Foundation, Maine Community Foundation and UniTel Inc. are proud to partner with JMG for the 2nd year of Jumpstart Our Youth (JOY) helping JMG students continue to make a difference in their communities by making grants to nonprofits that assist youth and families. Students solicit grant applications from local organizations through a request for proposal (RFP) process; review the applications, budgets and goals of the organizations requesting money; meet with representatives from those organizations and then decide how to award the \$1,000 grants. See how JMG students chose to make grants last year.

“Unity Foundation and our partners at UniTel Inc and Maine Community Foundation were overwhelmed by the effort that JMG students and Specialists put into the first year of the JOY program. Local nonprofits were not only thrilled to receive grants through the JOY program, they were appreciative of the interest that the students showed in learning more about their work and missions. We know many students have also contributed “sweat equity” hours in addition to the grant money and we’re eager to build on those relationships this year,” said Unity Foundation CEO Larry Sters.

JMG students across the state are busy launching the second year of JOY: getting the RFP process underway and looking closely at how to support hard-working nonprofit organizations across Maine. And this year, Unity Foundation would like to offer a new tool to share ideas, challenges, successes – and yes, things that didn’t work – join the Jumpstart Our Youth Facebook Group <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=157410989991> and tell your peers how it’s going.

Carrabec High School Starts “The Book Club for Men”

In February, Carrabec High School will be host to “The Book Club for Men,” an endeavor to get male students who might not normally pick up a book on their own to get excited about reading.

Chris Poulin, former JMG Specialist at Carrabec High School, who is currently the JMG Plus Manager, says Mike Nelson, Carrabec’s Athletic Director, applied for and received a grant of \$1,000 from the Oak Grove-Coburn Classical Institute to start the book club. “He just thought I could get boys to join, so he asked me to be his assistant and, of course, I jumped at the chance to get kids reading,” says Chris, who is himself an avid reader.

“The project is called ‘The Book Club for Men,’” he continues. “Our idea is to read books that have important ‘men messages.’ Mike has picked the 1st book, *Seasons of Life* by Jeffery Marx. We are looking at books by coaches or famous men that the students will recognize as positive role models. We want the topics to be about how to be a good person, especially a good man. “

Chris says the reading group will consist of 20+ students and will be open to any Carrabec High School male. But, he says, “Mike and I are going to pick the group to get a good mix of all ages and levels. We don’t want this to be a ‘jock book club,’ but we also don’t want to just hit kids that are already readers. A good mix will ripple through the school more effectively.”

The Book Club for Men will meet several times – once while the students are midway through *Seasons of Life* and then again when the group has completed the book for discussion. “We are also planning on having a pizza gathering on the final discussion group after school in the café or library,” Chris says.

“We are hoping that this doesn’t end,” says Chris, “but will continue from now on as part of CHS. The time between books will be determined by the group and the book we are reading. The students will get to keep their books as a trophy of their accomplishment.”

Thank you, Charles Schwab Foundation!

On behalf of JMG and the students we serve, we would like to extend our gratitude to the Charles Schwab Foundation for supporting our Financial Literacy Program for the second year in a row! The Charles Schwab Foundation is committed to empowering youth and adults through financial literacy education. Their financial support and vote of confidence in our organization is sincerely appreciated!

Maine’s Commissioner of Education Receives National Award

Susan Gendron, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Education and an ex officio member of the JMG Board of Directors, was recently awarded the National Education Leadership Award by Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG).

JMG nominated Commissioner Gendron in recognition of her work to ensure that all Maine students succeed. In nominating Gendron, JMG wrote, “As an early advocate of providing all students with the skills they need to graduate prepared for continued education, careers, and citizenship, she has been a leader in embracing strategies that support a student-centered culture.”

Commissioner Gendron received the award on November 18 at the annual JAG Leadership Awards in Washington, D.C. Since taking her position as Commissioner in 2003, Gendron has been a strong supporter of JMG. She has incorporated JMG and the JAG model into her efforts to transform public education in Maine and beyond.

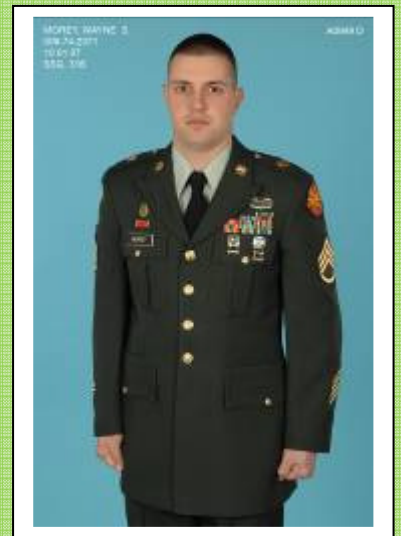
Gendron says, “In Maine, we are redesigning the education system to be centered around high standards for all students. JMG plays a significant role in meeting those standards as JMG students continue to graduate at a high rate, enroll in postsecondary education, and succeed in the workplace.”

As the new President of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Commissioner Gendron is promoting JAG’s work to her peers on a national level. Craig Larrabee, JMG President and CEO, says, “Commissioner Gendron’s support has helped us to grow over the last several years from helping 2,600 students to serving 4,000. She understands the value of a program that reengages students in school, motivates them to work hard for what they want, and prepares them to meet the demands of an ever-changing workforce.”

JMG Success Story



Wayne Morey then (second from right), and now, in uniform in a January 8 photo.



Wayne Morey - 1997 JMG Graduate, Machias Memorial High School

“Just like every other teen, I thought I knew everything,” says Wayne Morey, a 1997 graduate of Machias Memorial High School. That was, of course, until he joined Mr. Chick’s JMG class his sophomore year.

Morey says he “was a shy person” in high school. But then “Mr. Chick made me talk in front of people and made me get out of my comfort zone. That was not a bad thing now that I look back on it,” he says. “It goes back to that old saying ‘what does not kill you only makes you stronger.’”

Morey says that his years in the JMG classroom gave him confidence, enough so that he successfully ran for Vice President of his Career Association his senior year. He enjoyed the JMG activities and events, including Field Day, which was his favorite. Of his JMG Specialist, Jeff Chick, Morey says, “He was a motivator, a psychologist, and a mentor all rolled into one.”

After graduation, Morey joined the Army and became a military police officer. “I do not regret my decision at all,” he says. “I have a great job that I have held for 12 years. The Army has sent me to numerous police-related trainings like K9 handler, Protective Services, and a few evasive driving schools. The Army has also paid for my college, and I am currently three classes away from a bachelor’s degree [in criminal justice]. The only thing that I had to pay for was a few books.”

Morey is currently a Staff Sergeant stationed at Chievres Garrison in Belgium with his wife of nearly 13 years, Chasity. “Here in Belgium,” he says, “I am a desk sergeant, which would be the equivalent of a dispatcher and a patrol supervisor rolled into one. I have been a K9 handler and part of a protective team.”

This is Morey’s second stint at Chievres. He has also been stationed in Giessen, Germany, and Fort Drum, NY. “My family and I just like [Chievres and Ft. Drum] so we keep going back and forth,” he says. “The Army does have a lot of standards, but when it comes to requesting a duty station, they like to work with the soldier and the family.”

“It is a great experience living overseas,” he continues. “This is actually my second tour over here. I have been able to see battlefields like Normandy Beach, Point Du Hoc, and in and around Bastogne. There is a lot of history over here, and my wife, who is a history buff, loves to visit all the places. I have actually been able to sit in the bunkers that Easy Company from the Band of Brothers made in the town of Foy, Belgium.”

Morey said he is thankful for the chance to share his success story with current students. He says he wants to reach out to students “who are sitting in the back row of the class, or those who are debating on taking the class and think that JMG is just a filler class,” because JMG was worthwhile for him and so might be the same for others.

“Looking back at what I have learned about myself and what I am capable of doing now because of JMG,” he says, “I believe in this program and I am sure there is more out there. What I am going to say about JMG and school is: you get out what you put into it.”

Morey put in the effort, and what he got out of JMG was a rewarding career, the opportunity to experience the world, and the chance to succeed in life. He hopes to someday return to Maine, and says he would like to volunteer for JMG. “I loved the years I spent in Mr. Chick’s JMG class,” he says, “and I would like to be part of its continued success.”