

# THE POINT

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## SOWING SEEDS FOR CHANGE

RAETHA STODDARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy Sprin-ter!

I love to listen to New Englanders talk about the weather. Even the born and bred talk with wonder about how unpredictable the seasons can be and yet every year the seasons follow one after the other unfailingly. In the North Country, we deal with way more than just four seasons. I named April Sprin-ter because one day can start with a snow storm and end in beach weather. Layering is the fashion. When spring fully arrives it is with great expectation for renewal and it comes with the hard work of un-layering the past, much like overcoming trauma...

At Starting Point we are renewing from the ground up, literally. Our shelter property has a history of farming and we are excited to announce that we will return a portion of the land to its agricultural roots again with help from Janet Wilkinson and Sasha Tracy managing the Giving Garden for a second season. Please see the 'Giving Garden' for more information.

Sowing seeds isn't just reserved for the ground. There has been a myriad of legislation work going on both on the statewide and national levels. Please visit the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence page at [www.nhcadv.org](http://www.nhcadv.org) and go to



"Spring Snow" by Peehs on Deviant Art

'News & Events' to learn more about what's going on which will help you to encourage your representatives to make a difference. You can also visit the National Coalition at <http://www.ncadv.org>. Currently there is a big push to make Marsy's Law Constitutional Law. We have held phone banks at Starting Point and informational meetings and will continue to support the grass roots effort behind this important and historical amendment to our Constitution. Please go to [www.nh.marsyslaw.us](http://www.nh.marsyslaw.us) for more information, See legislation work in this newsletter for other upcoming laws affecting victims.

We count on Sprin-ter giving way to Sprimmer in order to hold our annual, under the tent fundraiser, Boots N Bling, now in its 8th year! We are so very grateful

to our sponsors, volunteers and the over 200 participants who come out for the event. See 'Events' for more info on Boot N Bling and for a list of our sponsors.

If you are looking to contribute we have many and varied opportunities for you, from cash or in-kind donations, program development, to volunteer work. Just look for the 'NEEDS' Alerts through-out the newsletter to find an opportunity that best suits you and then grab a hoe and help us sow the seeds to change.

As a born and bred New Englander I delight in the change of seasons and the inspiration that the cycles create within us to unfailingly move forward. Please read on to learn more about the ways our staff and volunteers carry on in all kinds of weather!

# VOLUNTEER NEEDS ALERT!

We are in need of Child advocates. If you are interested please contact us at outreach@startingpointnh.org

Guests have been participating in a Planner group using the Passion Planner model to map out goals both short term and long term. Guest are learning about and using time management and organizational skills learned in the group. We welcome anyone with an interest in providing support group activities.

We are always in need of hands on support in caring for

the shelter. A regular supporter of the shelter has adopted another bedroom, giving it a face lift with fresh paint and furniture! The emotional state of many of our guests when they first arrive causes them to spend extended time in their rooms. It means a great deal to have a room that is fresh and clean. The subliminal effects are that they are cared for and that there is hope of renewal.

With the coming of spring we will be organizing our annual barn clean-out and we will

start to dig into the garden in preparation for the planting season. Many hands are welcome!

Please contact outreach@startingpointnh.org for more volunteer opportunities.



## AMERICORPS MEMBER JOINING THE TEAM

April Bona, our shelter manager extraordinaire, came to us through AVAP. The program provides us with a full-time advocate who arrives with a commitment to the cause. The cost of this additional full-time advocate is a mere \$7,000 a year, which is a great savings to our budget. This position is essential in the development of our expanded transitional

housing program.

The by-product of such an advocate can be great –April is our best by-product so far! Most AVAP's continue with social justice work. Having the opportunity to train them in the complexities of domestic and sexual violence sends forth our messaging of providing victim centered and trauma informed advo-

cacy into the greater community. We have been approved to receive an AVAP in September 2018. One challenge we face is housing. If we are able to find a person interested in the work who has local living accommodations we will be lucky. If we are able to offer free or reduced living accommodations we will be more competitive in the recruitment process.

*"Remember no one can make you feel inferior without your consent."  
—Eleanor Roosevelt*

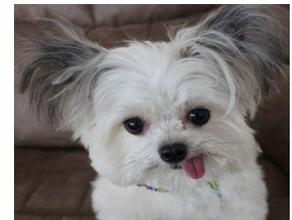
## GRACE HOUSE SHELTER NEWS

APRIL BONA, SHELTER MANAGER

The Grace House has a capacity of 13 and is always full. We often have an equal number of adults and children. Having children in the house is at once joyful and demanding of our staff. Day-care is an on-going need in order for victims to connect to needed resources and occasional respite. We have a few dedicated children's advocates but we need to expand the pool.

Our child care goes beyond

babysitting; it involves true caring and a trauma informed approach. Thanks to our children's advocates we have seen remarkable growth in our kiddos. Recently, due to the personal advocacy given to a client with children by our staff and supported by our child advocate volunteers a child who has experienced trauma and was struggling with school has received tutoring and is back on track.



Too many victims struggle with leaving their pets behind. In an attempt to address this we are creating space and policies for pets in the shelter. We will be needing crates and other pet supplies as well as foster and respite care.

FMI shelter@startingpointnh.org

# PREVENTION UPDATE

RENEE BERNIER

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all” – Aristotle

Violence prevention education starts with awareness. Conversations are being had all across Carroll County, in the classroom and community to bring this awareness forward. The mission of Starting Point’s Prevention Program is to raise awareness about interpersonal abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment and dating violence as well as giving knowledge, resources and skills necessary to cultivate healthy relationships and effectively respond to abuse.

This year’s focus has been on teen dating because our future generation deserves to have healthy relationships

from the start. Starting Point has been in all 5 middle schools and both high schools in the county. We offer a 3-5-day program that addresses the topics listed above and through discussion and activities many students come away knowing how to identify red flags, be a good friend to a person who’s experiencing violence, knowing where to go to seek help and setting and respecting boundaries.

Although education is a good start, there are many other protective factors that encourage healthy relationships, one of them is mentorship. Emily French, Kennett High Health teacher, and I

have designed a mentor program to support middle and high school girls in an after-school program called G.I.R.L.S (Guidance In Real Life Situations). This program offers leadership from high school girls as they mentor middle school girls. The framework behind the program is to express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power and expand possibilities.

There’s a lot going on in the world of prevention, find out more at:  
[www.startingpointnh.org/prevention](http://www.startingpointnh.org/prevention)

## COURT ADVOCACY

BRAD LOOMIS AND TINA SOUTHWICK

Tina works closely with the SANE nurses at both Memorial and Huggins Hospital. Brad works as our FVPS (Family Violence Prevention Specialist) and spends a portion of each week working directly with DCYF. Both Brad and Tina work closely with court officials, the CAC (Child Advocacy Center), police and other community partners helping victims through the complex detangling that victims encounter. Court advocates also provide child advocacy,

transportation, follow-up, personal advocacy and systems advocacy.

These forms of advocacy help us to get involved with clients earlier than ever before and help us to stay connected; truly cementing the stability many need to move on with independent and healthier life-styles.

Since our last newsletter our court advocates have assisted more than 60 victims in obtaining a Domestic Violence or Stalking Order. We have had some difficult situations recently but have prevailed in providing necessary protection through the courts, and with the help of personal safety plans and advocacy.



*“Be about ten times more magnanimous than you believe yourself capable of being. Your life will be a hundred times better for it.” – Cheryl Strayed*

## HOUSING SEARCH FOR AMERICORPS MEMBER

Anyone with a spare room or an in-law apartment willing to support this program please contact: outreach@startingpointnh.org ASAP as we begin recruitment right away. As an aside, isn’t it interesting that we need to find affordable housing for

our transitional housing advocate. This is a much needed conversation in our greater community and one we hope our transitional housing program will address.



## 2018 Boots 'n Bling Sponsors

Burroughs  
Healthcare  
Consulting Network

Huggins Hospital  
Memorial Hospital  
Valley Originals

AutoNorth  
Gamwell, Caputo,  
Kelsch & Co.,  
PLLC

Green Mountain  
Furniture  
Hannaford  
Memorial Hospital  
Medical Staff  
Merrill Lynch

Chalmers Insurance  
Conway Daily Sun  
Crest AutoWorld  
Federal Piping Co.  
Infinger Insurance  
M&M Assurance  
Northway Bank  
OVP Management  
Profile Subaru  
White Mountain Oil

**THANK  
YOU!**

## OVERCOMING TRAUMA

BRAD LOOMIS

The brain regulates control over emotions, how we respond to crisis, recognize and categorize events, relate to other people, organize, concentrate, and problem solve; and functions overall to make sense of the things that happen around, or to us. The brain is the creator of one's unique personality.

We are shaped by genetics, environment, and experience. As children we have very little or no control over these factors. Everyone experiences some amount of trauma over a life time but children who grow up with parents who have substance abuse issues or experience domestic violence in their home experience trauma as an on-going event which continues to influence who they are throughout their life. Even causing seemingly unrelated health risks such as heart disease,

eating disorders and more.

Trauma occurs when senses are overwhelmed by external factors that are too great for the brain to process. Trauma is processed differently by people based on age, experience, level of resiliency, frequency, severity, and length of exposure. It can disrupt the ability to separate important or dangerous information from information that does not require a fight or flight response. A war veteran may interpret fireworks as a dangerous situation reacting to them as if under fire. Women and children of domestic violence can react to a screen door slamming with undue alarm.

Childhood trauma affects the developmental stages of children. If you think of each stage as the foundation for the next stage than a stage

that is interrupted by trauma creates huge gaps and a shaky foundation for future development.

Although trauma can never be fully erased, there are ways to facilitate healing.

Before any recovery can take place one must have a sense of safety. Stable housing and ongoing supports for those who have experienced domestic violence is essential in overcoming trauma. With these supports and more one can regain a sense of control. Once these things are in place then the process of creating resilience and mastering emotions can be obtained including essential and constructive problem solving and self-regulating abilities that will create resilience, self-esteem, and confidence allowing one to rebuild their foundation and live a healthier and happier life.

## FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS UPDATE

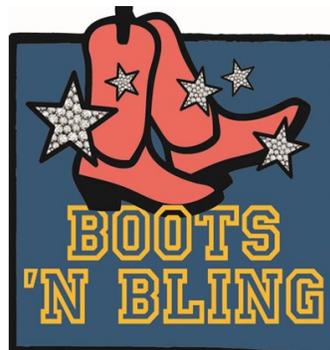
LIZ STILLMAN

Starting Point's annual fundraiser, Boots 'n Bling, is just around the corner!

Boots 'n Bling will be held at the White Mountain Hotel on June 2, 2018. The Jon Sarty Band will be joining us again and we're pleased to have Lucas Hunt as our auctioneer again this year. The event is shaping up to be another great night out!

We have very few tickets left, so don't wait if you haven't already grabbed yours!

For more information and to get your tickets, please visit:  
<http://www.startingpointnh.org/boots-n-bling/>



### Event Schedule

**April 24** Sip 'n Paint in Jack-son to benefit Starting Point.

**April 25** Showing of the Hunting Ground at Conway Library

**June 2** 8th Annual Boots 'n Bling. Always a sell out event!!

**Aug 29** 3rd Annual Golf Tour-ney at Indian Mound GC

**Sept** Volunteer training. Call for details.

For more Information about any of the above events or more to come go to [www.startingpointnh.org/whats-happening/](http://www.startingpointnh.org/whats-happening/)

## VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Starting Point direct service volunteers make a huge commitment by engaging in an initial 30 hour training and continued yearly recertification. After which they dedicated time to the hotline, hospital or court accompaniment, child advocacy, transportation support, office support and so much more. Our staff is incredibly grateful for all that our direct service volunteers do. But direct services is not

for everyone so we have created a tier of volunteerism that includes fundraising, event help, staff support and program development.

As we create better awareness through our prevention and outreach programs we will have more disclosure and as such will need more volunteers to help us provide services and engage in outreach.

Our next training begins in September. Please contact us at [outreach@startingpointnh.org](mailto:outreach@startingpointnh.org) to learn more about how you can help.

Huge thank you to our current and very active direct service volunteers: Gerrie, Fran, Janet, Louise, Carol, Caryn, Joan, Pat, Lori, Lynn, and Christa who have contributed over 5,000 hours collectively!

## GIVING GARDEN

We are excited to be gearing up for our second season with the Giving Garden. The Grace House sits on richly historic farming land. Last year, we returned a portion of the property to farming and harvested over 600 pounds of organic produce! The produce went to our shelter guests and clients and several community food pantries.

This end product is but a small return for all that the Giving Garden offers, both at Starting Point and to our greater community. Starting Point clients have the benefit of enjoying and working in the garden. For anyone who loves gardening you will understand that this is therapeutic. Our

garden managers welcome full participation from clients, staff and supporters and offer internships to any who are interested.

They will also be processing the surplus for us and offering demonstrations. We have a local chef committed to offering a series of classes on cooking with fresh and canned produce.

This project offers sustainability, instruction and an opportunity for Starting Point to give back to a community that has always supported us, as we donate a portion of the harvest to local food pantries.

***When you plant a seed in Starting Point soil it grows with great return.***

You can also go to <https://www.gfundme.com/conway-giving-garden> to learn more about the Giving Garden initiative.



*"If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it." — Margaret Fuller*

## SARRT

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE AND RESOURCE TEAM

We are so proud to announce that Carroll County now has a SARRT! We were one of only two counties without one until recently.

This initiative brings together all the agencies involved in

sexual assault cases. Starting Point has a leading role in supporting this county wide effort.

The results across the state include better victim centered advocacy all around and

greater accountability.

If you are a program provider who is interested in attending SARRT meetings please contact Raetha at [director@startingpointnh.org](mailto:director@startingpointnh.org)

## Starting Point: Services for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence

P.O. Box 1972  
Conway, NH 03818

Phone: 603-447-2494  
Fax: 603-452-5302  
E-mail: [director@startingpointnh.org](mailto:director@startingpointnh.org)



Since 1981.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Starting Point: Services for Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence is a non-profit organization dedicated to:

- Ensuring quality services are provided to victims of relationship violence and sexual abuse;
- Preventing future relationship violence;
- Promoting social change; and
- Encouraging accountability and education for perpetrators and stalkers.

**Starting Point is dedicated to creating social change because when we restore basic human rights we open the door to joy.**

## Counseling Services

offered through Huggins Hospital's primary care offices in Alton, Ossipee, Moultonborough, Tamworth and Wolfeboro



a member of GraniteOne Health

Counseling Services

603.569.7669

We offer individual and family therapy as part of your primary care experience at Huggins Hospital. Our Licensed Clinical Social Worker will work closely your Primary Care Provider to help you better manage any emotional and/or behavioral difficulties that may be getting in the way of your overall health.

[www.hugginshospital.org](http://www.hugginshospital.org)

## SURVIVOR'S STORY: FROM VICTIMIZATION TO ACTIVISM

Raetha Stoddard

Most every victim I work with wants to give back. Some, still in their hospital gown or standing in the court house parking lot, talk about helping to change things for the next woman, in hopes of there not being a next woman someday. Disclosure is a powerful way for a victim to advocate. This is not an easy route to activism and not one that every victim can or should endure. Some will never be safe telling their story. There is a growing national trend of disclosure and with it comes opportunity for change. NH Congresswoman Annie Kuster disclosed her own victimization in the address, "We are all Emily Doe".

I had the honor to travel with Conway business woman Tiffany Marteau to Concord for a Panel discussion featuring Congresswoman Annie Kuster, Chessy Prout and members of the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Chessy's story was highlighted during the discussion. Her story speaks to the many right things that investigators, prosecutors and community members can do to



Congresswoman Kuster (left) and Chessy Prout (right) *Concord Monitor*

support a victim. Tiffany's story had none such protagonists. Tiffany was open to advocating for other's quietly and behind the scenes but unfortunately, because of a dysfunctional system, her story demanded that she tell it publicly and she does so with grace, dignity and an eye toward change in legislation. After the panel discussion, Tiffany spoke with Rep. Kuster and made an important connection with her in

hopes of doing greater work so that what happen to her as a victim of violence and a victim of the system does not happen to another woman.

### For More Information:

- Tiffany's story was recently featured in the Concord Monitor. <http://www.concordmonitor.com/Conway-woman-tries-to-heal-after-multi-year-court-battle-8405511>
- Panel Discussion with Congresswoman Annie Kuster, ChessyProut and members of the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual violence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzyi0QvnksU>
- "We are All Emily Doe" Congresswoman Annie Kuster <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-zatBzH4A>