To The Opportunity Alliance Family,

As I reflect back on the past year, I am always amazed at the challenges that face our children, families, and adults who come to us for support and treatment as well as the resiliency, resolve, and determination they display to overcome those barriers.

In this report we have tried to show you, the reader, those characteristics showcased in the following four areas: An Integrated Path to Resiliency; Building Relationships at the Speed of Trust; Head Start: A Whole Family Approach and; Survival to Stability. Each of these stories along with their data represent the four pillars of The Opportunity Alliance’s foundation, which are: **Health & Wellness, Community Building, Early Childhood Education, and Economic Supports.** It is upon these pillars that our 46 programs sit, driven by our desire to provide opportunities for individuals to change their lives.

As you spend time with this report you will come to learn: the Resiliency that Rebecca has, as she seeks to remain sober and manage her mental illness; the importance of community and how through the eyes of Jim you will see the way a neighborhood in Westbrook has come together; the value of a whole family approach to early education, and the perseverance that Jessica has to advocate for not only her son’s needs but hers as well; and, you will see firsthand the value of community partnership through the eyes of Val, a Community Resource Coordinator for the past twenty-four years.

Lastly, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support, time, and resources as we could not achieve the outcomes we desire, without you being a part of The Opportunity Alliance’s family.

Mike Tarpinian, President & CEO
The Opportunity Alliance works to achieve our mission by focusing on **four key sectors of service**. These sectors provide context for the programs we operate and the services we provide. Illustrated below are the major strategies guiding the work we do to improve peoples lives.

### Health & Wellness

- Provide **The Maine Crisis Line** offering 24/7, statewide access to crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and mental health counseling.

- Apply an **Integrated Health Strategy** for people who have multiple health care needs by coordinating behavioral health, substance misuse, and primary care services.

### Community Building

- Partner with residents through **Place-Based Initiatives** to strengthen community by providing opportunities for connection, access to services, and empowering resident-led change.

- Wield **Community Partnerships for Protecting Children**, a locally driven, national initiative with the aim of enhancing the lives of children and their families by engaging neighbors and communities to support families before there is a need for more disruptive and costly interventions.

### Early Childhood Education

- Utilize **Head Start** programming to provide children with a safe, nurturing environment and support parents while they identify and meet their own goals and foster the development needs of their children.

- Address family poverty by offering a **Two Generation** approach to meet the needs of vulnerable children and their parents together.

### Economic Supports

- Collaboratively assist families through the **Cumberland County Homelessness Prevention Program** by maintaining stable housing.

- Facilitate **Access to Basic Needs and Services** in a coordinated approach to meet the needs of individuals and families.
Rebecca connected with The Opportunity Alliance at a time when she needed help finding mental health services to manage her severe depression, anxiety, and PTSD symptoms. The victim of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, Rebecca struggled with relationship choices, drug use, and at one point, homelessness.

When Rebecca was referred to Aaron, a care coordinator within an integrated model of health care called a “behavioral health home,” she was introduced to a care team that included a nurse care manager, peer health navigators, and wellness programming. Rebecca was enrolled in this community-based approach integrating physical and mental health services with a focus on her wellness and recovery needs. Rebecca says that “having access to a care coordinator has really helped me personally as I know I have someone I can turn to whenever I need help and he will assist me through whatever I am going through. Aaron is one of the biggest supports in my life.”

Aaron helped and encouraged Rebecca through many ups and downs on her recovery journey. “He helped me in my independence by connecting me to free bus passes so I could get to my mental health and health care appointments on my own. While homeless, Aaron helped me access community resources that provided ways to do my laundry at a discounted rate, find housing programs to apply for, and connect with different voucher programs to secure a stable apartment. He helped advocate for me with DHHS to stay connected to my daughter and supported me with accessing the Safe Families program that continues to support me to this day.”

Aaron shares that the experience he’s had working with Rebecca and her family has taught him so much about resiliency. “Her story inspires me to never lose hope, never give up on someone’s ability to do a 180-degree turnaround in their life. It’s true that I’ve helped her out in a lot of practical ways (with housing, mental health, health, family, vocational, and financial support) but I believe it is my genuine heartfelt engagement with her that has been truly healing.”

Now sober for over five years and supported by several positive and healthy relationships, Rebecca has become someone whom others turn to for support. “I am interested in helping others on their recovery journey. The advice I tell others is this: “Focus on changing the things you can and let go of the things you can’t – the Serenity Prayer. This gives me the confidence that no matter what, things will be okay.”

Rebecca’s care team remains a valuable resource as she continues to strengthen the quality of her life. Always available to support Rebecca when necessary, Aaron says that he always points to her successes and the ways that she has and is showing grit and resilience. “At the end of the day, it is her recovery, her life, and her effort that has made all the difference. It is powerful beyond words.”
An Integrated Path to Resiliency

HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Rebecca turned her life around with the help of her integrated care team.

“As a result of this support, I now have a better relationship with my daughter and Mother which is a very positive change.” Rebecca

We provide a range of mental health services for children, youth, and adults with the goal of improving their chances to be productive and healthy members of their communities.

Promoting Health & Wellness

Maine Crisis Line

305 Calls supported each day.

Behavioral Health Home (BHH)

95% of BHH clients were connected to a Primary Care Physician.

Nutrition Education & Resources

2,800 Individuals redeemed food and infant formula vouchers each month.

Residential Treatment

92% of clients avoided psychiatric hospitalization.

74% of clients have been discharged to stable housing.

“Better Lives”

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Community Building

Building Relationships at the Speed of Trust

Situated between the old mills and the Presumpscot river is the Westbrook neighborhood known as Frenchtown. Historically, the neighborhood has struggled with a bad reputation driven by high poverty rates, criminal activity, and severe social isolation.

Jim, a long-time resident and neighborhood leader has served an integral role in what is now a better connected, well-resourced, and safer community.

In 2016, The Opportunity Alliance began implementing a Resident-Led Community Building program (RLCB) in Frenchtown, which works to create communities where individuals and families know each other, care about each other, and take care of each other. The program uses an asset-based philosophy that sets high expectations for community members and sees them as having gifts to contribute even while they are experiencing other types of challenges in their lives. The goal? Help transform the Frenchtown neighborhood into a community where individuals and families are thriving.

Integral to the success of the RLCB model is the outreach performed by Community Builders like Brittney, who hosts the Neighborhood Resource Hub in Frenchtown. Brittney's primary role is to build direct relationships with residents and facilitate neighbor to neighbor connections to create a network of support. Brittney, with the help of many community partners including the Westbrook Police Department, has spent the greater part of two years knocking on doors and holding community gatherings to break down barriers and foster a true sense of belonging. It's vital that residents both trust Brittney and recognize her as a resource.

A reality of working with individuals and families living in poverty is that, to get their needs met, they often lead with the challenges they're facing rather than the assets they possess. RLCB strives to have neighbors see themselves as more than these struggles. Community Builders like Brittney work to ensure neighbors have the things they need but aren't identified by those needs. Neighbors like Jim.

Jim lives up the street from the Neighborhood Resource Hub. He is a daily visitor who gives Brittney updates on what is going on in the neighborhood and with neighbors. Jim has multiple stressors like all of us – but always has a smile on his face and a story to share. He is famous and beloved in the neighborhood because he walks everywhere and talks to everyone. Jim says the neighborhood is “less rowdy” now that they have the hub as well as community policing. The hub gives him a place to check-in, get out of his apartment and give back. As a neighborhood leader, Jim takes great pride in ensuring everyone knows about Brittney, the Hub, community meals, events, and resources.

Positive momentum continues to build in Frenchtown as members of the community regain their sense of pride, understanding they bring value and can be of service to each other. Brittney has witnessed residents’ generosity firsthand along with how much they want to help themselves and each other have better lives.
COMMUNITY BUILDING

Building Relationships at the Speed of Trust

Jim, a neighborhood leader stands outside the Community Resource Hub located in the Frenchtown neighborhood of Westbrook. Situated between the old mills and the Presumpscot river is the Westbrook neighborhood known as Frenchtown. Historically, the neighborhood has struggled with a bad reputation driven by high poverty rates, criminal activity, and severe social isolation.

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We partner with residents and strengthen community by providing opportunities for connection, access to services, and empowering resident-led change.

**Neighborhood Resource Hubs**

Residents served by Hub related activities at our five locations in Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook.

| 2,057 |

**Resource Referrals**

of residents received a referral for supports or were connected to resources.

| 81% |

**Community Participation**

of our community building opportunities and events are led or co-led by residents.

| 100% |

Residents participated in community building opportunities and events.

| 11,821 |

“Where everyone is welcome, everyone is equal, and everyone has something to offer.”

My Neighbor’s Pledge
Head Start: A Whole Family Approach

Two years ago Jessica timidly walked into the Bridgton Head Start facility with her three-year-old son Evin. As always, Evin ran into the classroom supremely confident, yet Jessica followed along nervous for him and for her family.

This was their second attempt at nursery school after Evin’s challenging behaviors in the classroom led to dismissal from a previous program. Jessica shared, “I didn’t know where our place was. I was lost and a little bit broken, feeling the sharp rejection after our previous attempt with schooling.” Jessica was balancing work, an infant, a very active and intelligent four-year old, and a marriage. In the midst of her many challenges however, Jessica was receptive to accessing any program or partnership that furthered her goals for her family.

The Opportunity Alliance’s Head Start program is built upon a two-generation framework where children are provided with high-quality early education and guidance while parents are working alongside family services staff to identify and achieve goals that address their family’s well-being. Recently, The Opportunity Alliance accessed new research, tools, training, and funding sources to provide a stronger focus on family services work in select pilot sites. Bridgton Head Start has been one such site, allowing for a devoted Family Resiliency Advocate trained to utilize a coaching model that identifies family strengths and needs, creates community connections, and builds executive functioning skills in parents and family units.

Very quickly, the Head Start team welcomed Jessica and Evin making them feel at ease and “at home”. Coaching Jessica through all available resources, Serena, Bridgton’s Family Resiliency Advocate, assisted with accessing resources to address the family’s needs. Child Development Services evaluated and diagnosed Evin with ADHD which led the center to partner with the local elementary school to plan for Evin’s successful transition into kindergarten. Jessica also utilized other offerings including a financial literacy class offered in partnership with Norway Savings Bank and opened a family savings account with the help of New Ventures Maine. She attended nutrition classes offered by The Opportunity Alliance Health Promotion Coordinators and partnered with another mother in the center to coordinate classroom playgroups during vacation weeks.

Serena shares that “through Jessica’s advocacy, Evin, now in kindergarten, is beginning to get the services and supports he needs to be successful in public school.” Although Evin and Jessica continue to have their struggles, Jessica says “it helps knowing there are people who genuinely care about our welfare and are there to support us even after we’ve transitioned out of the program. I walked into Head Start a nervous first-time Mom and walked out a veteran mom of two, ready to fight for the needs of my amazing special needs child. I feel like I have the knowledge base and strengths to give back and support other families who may need it.”
Head Start: A Whole Family Approach

Jessica and son Evin consider themselves part of the Head Start family after benefiting from the program in Bridgton.

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“"To help the child we need to embrace the whole family.”
Christine
Val, Community Resource Coordinator for The Opportunity Alliance

After twenty-four years of serving as a community resource coordinator, Val has witnessed first-hand the value of strong community partnerships when serving Cumberland county’s most vulnerable.

Val’s focus is homelessness prevention and providing essential resources to individuals who need a stable and safe home base. She emotes sincerity and compassion, clearly understanding the vulnerability of her clients (Val came to this professional role having personal experience with economic hardship). Over the last few years budget cuts, higher rents, less negotiable landlords and stricter criteria for assistance qualification, has required Val to think “outside of the box” to meet the needs of her clients.

When an individual or family is referred to Val for help with basic needs she schedules a face-to-face interview with them. Each client has individual circumstances and unique needs, but housing instability is the common thread. “One of the first things I tell my clients upon meeting them is that there is power behind a network. My job is to connect all the resources I am aware of and get them working as a team to meet the needs at hand”, Val says. Over two decades, she has developed a vast knowledge base of basic needs and has built an expansive network that extends from federal and state programs down to services offered at local faith organizations and food pantries.

This past September, a young couple with three small children were referred to Val by Homeless Youth Services of The Opportunity Alliance after losing their home due to disability and loss of employment. The family had been surviving in a pop-up camper for several months, over the spring and summer, but knew they needed housing before cold weather arrived. At their one-on-one interview, Val learned that this family had some significant barriers to secure housing including poor credit, past evictions and a misdemeanor on record. In addition, the family was surviving on one income insufficient for covering the required first and last month’s rent plus security deposit.

Val started by supplying the young couple with her “Resource Packet”, a comprehensive toolkit that includes an extensive list of landlords and housing agencies, online resources, key questions to ask, and important tips for securing a potential rent. Due to their limited income, Val was able to secure the funds necessary for a security deposit through Community Development Block Grant Funding. As a result, the family was successful in securing a home in the Sebago Lakes Region within a few weeks.

The young couple were required to check-in weekly with Val to ensure proactive measures are taken to maintain their housing stability. Despite the sharp increases in need she’s witnessed over the past few years, Val is encouraged with how well communities are better networked to serve those in need. Schools, municipalities, community groups, social service agencies, private therapists, shelters and others work together as a team. This team work is making a positive difference in Cumberland County.
We facilitate access by providing a coordinated approach to meet the needs of individuals and families.

### Basic Needs & Access

#### Housing Stability
- **105** Households avoided homelessness.

#### Heating Assistance
- **3,900** Households in Cumberland County received assistance to heat their homes.

#### Work Life Advisor (WLA)
- **70%** of WLA participants secured employment.

#### Food
- **35,000** Meals served through our Summer Food Service Program supporting children who face hunger.

#### Cultural Broker
- **1,223** New Mainers were connected to services and referred for basic needs, housing, ESL, and more.

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“The value of your donation is beyond measure. Your support provides a multi-point resource for individuals and families.”

Val
Revenue | Fiscal Year 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Grants</td>
<td>$13,806,550</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicaid/Medicare</td>
<td>$10,324,635</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way &amp; Other Grant Revenue</td>
<td>$1,644,878</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising &amp; Other Private Support</td>
<td>$1,385,214</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$724,945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lease Revenue</td>
<td>$260,298</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fee for Service</td>
<td>$515,922</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$28,662,442</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Expenses | Fiscal Year 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Youth Services</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Services</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing and Energy Services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To view a more detailed accounting of our revenue and expenses for fiscal year 2018, please see the financial documents posted on our website: www.opportunityalliance.org
In early 2019, Mike Tarpinian will be retiring after a 30-year tenure at the agency. The Opportunity fund has been established to honor Mike’s contributions and provide resources to people as they seek to overcome barriers to a better life.

The Opportunity Alliance
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Find out more about the OPPORTUNITY FUND at
www.OpportunityAlliance.org