Sweetser recently received two grants, totaling $800,000 from the Next Generation Foundation, a charitable organization located in Blue Hill, Maine supporting education, health enhancement, and basic human needs.

The awards will be used to improve safety and security systems for Sweetser employees and at The School at Sweetser in Saco, as well as for necessary updating to residential units. These grant funds will also be utilized to increase the energy efficiency of many outdated heating and insulation systems at the Saco campus facilities. Replacement boiler systems are expected by the end of the summer and architectural drawings have been completed for the front entryway of the school.

A Next Generation Foundation Trustee said, “During our visit to Sweetser’s expansive campus in Saco, the trustees of the Next Generation Foundation came to appreciate not only Sweetser’s role in the lives of some of Maine’s most vulnerable children but the ways in which facilities must change to keep up with the times. The Foundation is thrilled to be able to help Sweetser make the campus safer for both staff and students, and more energy efficient.”

Debra Taylor, Sweetser’s President and CEO said, “This incredibly generous gift allows us to make necessary upgrades to our facilities, which we have only been able to plan for in previous years and make small advances toward. We are grateful to the Next Generation Foundation for these monies, which will be used to significantly enhance our ability to serve our clients, as well as increase our safety and security for all who visit Sweetser, whether they are clients, family members or our employees.”
Mission
Sweetser’s mission is to provide quality treatment, support and hope to children, adults and families through a network of mental health, behavioral health and educational services.

Vision
Helping people create promising futures.

Dear Friends,

Over the past few months, I have come to know more of our many supporters, and learned more about the affinity they, along with employees and volunteers all share with me for Sweetser. Daily, I am excited about the work we are doing and the people we are helping!

This report shares some of the good news we have, but could never encompass all of the work we are doing, and the mission moments we epitomize each day.

There are challenges, to be certain, but we have faced them in the past and I am confident we are well-positioned to work toward - as our vision states - “a promising future.”

Sincerely,

Debra D. Taylor
President & CEO

9th Annual Cabin Fever Art Show

The Cabin Fever Art Show was once again a great success for the many clients in recovery who were able to show their artwork in various mediums, including paintings, photographs and sculpture.

This year, the traveling show added two more stops; in addition to The Opportunity Alliance and Shalom House, the York Library and the Jewish Museum in Portland joined in displaying these incredible works of art.

The show continues to grow in popularity and scope, and we look forward to the creations we will enjoy next year!

Above, “Indian Princess” by Joanne Hartford
Sweetser/KeyBank Sold on Kids Auction and Dinner Raises over $103,000

The 23rd Annual Sweetser/KeyBank Sold on Kids Auction & Dinner was held on May 8th at the South Portland Marriott and raised $103,000. Emcee and auctioneer, WCSH 6 Sports Director, Lee Goldberg, made this an evening to remember. The event also honored Carol Thorne, longtime auction Chair and Board member, who recently passed away unexpectedly.

More than 400 people joined the festivities bidding on items such as Patriots tickets, an African Safari excursion, JetBlue and Southwest Airlines travel vouchers, and concert tickets to see One Direction at Gillette Stadium. The Clark Insurance 50/50 raffle topped over $1,400. In addition, one lucky winner walked away with a 14 karat yellow gold diamond Journey pendant, courtesy of Day’s Jewelers.

We are very grateful for the generous support from our event sponsors and guests. In addition to KeyBank’s Presenting Sponsorship, other major sponsors include Anthem, CGI Business Solutions, Tyler Technologies, H.M. Payson, R.M. Davis and several other event partners. Proceeds from the auction generate critical funds to benefit Sweetser programs for children and families throughout Maine.

Sweetser Supporters included Lee and Karen Goldberg (top right), and (bottom right) Jaime Clark-Richardson, with Sweetser Board Member Melissa Richter, & Chessell McGee.

Cycle for Sweetser Bike Ride Attracts Families and Friends

The first annual Cycle for Sweetser bike ride was held last September, on the Eastern Trail in Saco, which runs through the Sweetser campus. It was a beautiful day and the perfect end to a great summer. This first year event attracted approximately 60 participants and raised $6,000 to support Sweetser programs!

This community ride offered something for everyone, with distances ranging from two to fourteen miles and refreshment stops along the way. Afterwards, participants enjoyed apple cider pressing and tasting, a bike rodeo, farm tours, and snacks!

We appreciate the generous support of our Presenting Sponsor, General Dynamics, and other major sponsors including Norway Savings Bank, ReVision Energy, Gawron Turgeon Architects, Molleur Law Office, and Saco & Biddeford Savings.

We are looking forward to another successful Cycle for Sweetser event in the fall on Saturday, September 26. Please join us - visit sweetser.org/bike for more information!
Sweetser Loses a Special Friend and Ambassador

Longtime Sweetser Board member, Corporator, and Development Committee member, Carol Thorne, passed away unexpectedly on March 3. Carol’s passion was to help the children at Sweetser. She worked tirelessly on Sweetser’s Sold on Kids Benefit Auction for 22 years, serving many of those as Chair.

Carol endlessly promoted Sweetser. She and her husband, Phil, have been staples at the auction, coordinating the silent auction art gallery and recruiting family, friends and businesses. Phil has continued Carol’s legacy, volunteering to help with donations and making sure the art gallery continues to be a success. Carol and Phil were generous Humanitarian Sponsors of the auction this year as well.

This year’s auction was dedicated in honor of Carol. She will be missed by so many people, especially her Sweetser family.

In lieu of flowers, the Thorne family requested that donations be made to Sweetser. We are grateful for this gesture and the outpouring of support on behalf of Carol. Thank you.

New Sensory Room for Students in Belfast

A sensory room in The School at Sweetser in Belfast was completed earlier this year. Sensory rooms have been requested by our referral partners within school districts and hospitals, and parents alike, and offer a quiet place for children to go to if they are overstimulated and in need of calming. The use of a therapeutic space like a sensory room can help facilitate the learning and practice of stress management skills. They also offer opportunities for self-discovery and meaningful therapeutic activities.

Mainly effective for children on the autism spectrum, the room features dim lighting, comfortable seating options, noise machines, tactile machines, sand trays, yoga mats and other devices that will help meet students where they need help, versus an alternative “time-out” room.

Mary-Ann Williams, Clinical Director of Residential, Crisis Unit and Day Treatment in Belfast, says, “The room has been a big hit with our students, and our staff have also found the option to use it very helpful!”

In fact, staff and clients alike found the rooms so helpful, that they have been added to residential campuses in Winterport, Rockport and Belfast as well.

The creation of the rooms were made possible through a $4,000 grant from the Helen and George Ladd Charitable Corporation.
Mental Health First Aid® Offerings

Two Sweetser employees - Carolyn Noble and Valerie MacDonald - have become nationally certified to teach Mental Health First Aid and join the team of trainers at Sweetser who have been presenting workshops for over a year.

“Adding trainers was always part of our plan, but became apparent when we had an influx of inquiries from members in our surrounding communities as well as other businesses and organizations interested in the training. Now, we are better positioned to handle those requests for educating Mainers in the Mental Health First Aid course and working to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues,” said Sweetser Vice President, Matthew Mulligan.

Mental Health First Aid is a nationally-endorsed 8-hour certification course, designed to engage participants in activities to build an understanding and recognize the signs, symptoms, and impact of mental illness. Participants learn a five-step action plan that teaches how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it helps trainees identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Included in the training are strategies for someone experiencing mental health problems, how to approach someone in a mental health crisis, and an understanding of what to do if someone is feeling suicidal, harming themselves, or refusing help. To date, nearly 200 people have been trained through Sweetser in the course.

For more information, or to sign up for an upcoming free training (dates listed above), visit sweetser.org/mhfa; to schedule a training at your place of business or learn more, call Stephanie Hanner, MHFA Certified Trainer, at 207.294.4486 or e-mail info@sweetser.org.

Learning Arts Fair Celebrates, Showcases Student Work

The Annual Learning Arts Fair at The School at Sweetser in Saco showcased student work which, focused on an oceanic theme. About 140 students studied the chosen theme for several weeks, then shared their learning experience with others during the fair via exhibits, artwork, cultural activities and presentations. After experiencing all of the exhibits and demonstrations, the Sweetser community gathered for a barbeque lunch.

Additionally, visiting artists provide enrichment through their contributions and participation. The Learning Arts Fair was funded once again from a grant by Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution.
Successful Fundraising Campaign Benefits School Cafeteria and Kitchen

Thanks to generous support from the Carol Curland Estate and several Foundations, The School at Sweetser in Saco has a new cafeteria and major equipment upgrades to a completely refurbished kitchen. Staff are now utilizing the kitchen for daily lunch preparations and students are enjoying their meals in the new Carol Curland Cafeteria. Approximately $95,000 was raised to make this project possible. Many thanks to the following foundations for their support: Harmon Foundation, Hoehl Family Foundation, Kennebunk Savings Bank Foundation, Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust, Sam L. Cohen Foundation, Simmons Foundation, The Eunice Frye Home Foundation and the Wing-Benjamin Trust.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events!

26th Sweetser/Prime Motor Group Golf Classic  
Monday, June 15, 2015, 9 a.m. shotgun start, Dunegrass Country Club, Old Orchard Beach

Sweetser Family Day & Cruise-In  
Saturday, September 19, 2015, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Cooks Corner Mall, Brunswick

Cycle for Sweetser  
Saturday, September 26, 2015, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., The School at Sweetser in Saco, 50 Moody Street, Saco

24th Sweetser/KeyBank Sold on Kids Benefit Auction and Dinner  
May 2016

For more information about any of these events, please contact Victoria Hricko at vhricko@sweetser.org or 207.294.4476. Interested participants can also register online or find more information at sweetser.org in the “Support Us” section.
**Foundation Support Continues to Grow**

Sweetser recently received funding from the following foundations and organizations: Aldermere Foundation, Billy Weiss Foundation, Bowdoin College Common Good Grant, Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, Davenport Trust, Harmon Foundation, Hoehl Family Foundation, Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution, and United Way of York County. Thank you for your investment in Sweetser!

Thank you also to New Balance Shoe for generously donating 108 pairs of shoes for the children and youth in our Belfast and Saco programs. New Balance has donated more than 500 pairs of sneakers, clothing items and athletic equipment since 2010, a total amounting to over $20,000.

*Mechanics Savings Bank Challenge Grant Matched*

Pictured at left is Sweetser Development Officer, Tori Hricko (right), receiving a check from Sonia Theberge of Mechanics Savings Bank (left). Sweetser successfully matched a generous challenge grant from Mechanics Savings Bank to benefit emergency client needs in Brunswick and Lewiston.

**New Places & Faces - Adding to the Sweetser Family**

It’s been a busy few months with notable retirements of Carl Pendleton, who served as the President & CEO for 23 years, and been with the organization for a total of 36; Phil Trudeau retired from his role as Vice President of Human Resources, one he held for 16 years; Linda Danielson retired from her position as Volunteer Manager, where she served for 18 years. Each has played integral roles in the success of Sweetser and we wish them time to enjoy their much-deserved retirements!

Debra Taylor is Sweetser’s new President & CEO, officially being installed at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Board and Corporators last fall. Debra has been an integral part of the Sweetser family for 14 years, the last seven of which she has helmed the Finance Department in the role of Vice President. Ginny Gentile joined Sweetser as our new Vice President of Finance, coming from another mental health agency, The Opportunity Alliance.

Janice Nadeau joined Sweetser in December as our new Vice President of Human Resources, after roles in the private sector with companies including Kemp Goldberg, Citigroup and Forum Financial. Janice is joined in Human Resources by Kim Foglio, who was hired as the Director, and Susan Asselin Hawthorne who was recently hired as the new Volunteer Manager.

New locations have also been added in Belfast, Damariscotta and Rockland

*41 Wight Street, Belfast*  
*15 Belvedere Road, Damariscotta*  
*360 Old County Road, Rockland*
Use Feeling Words
The average five-year-old has a feeling vocabulary of 2.5 words (happy, mad, and scared). If a child can’t label how they are feeling, then they can’t manage it. Building their vocabulary helps increase their power over their emotions.

Use Daily Routines
Having morning routines, after school routines, and evening routines can help children know what to expect. Having expectations allows them to anticipate their day without worrying about what “may” happen. If a child knows what to expect then they can control their reactions and responses.

Spend “Unhurried” Time in Play
Dedicate 15 minutes a day to “special play time” - put the phone away, turn the television and all other electronics off and just play! Avoid competitive games during this time and let your child direct the play.

Get Plenty of Sleep
Children need 8-10 hours of sleep a night. This gives their brains and bodies time to rest and process the learning from the day. If they aren’t sleeping enough then their brains aren’t able to manage their emotions or behaviors. Often when children are acting out or having other behavioral issues, lack of sleep can exacerbate it.

Socialize with other Kids & Adults
Children need time with kids their age and adults - it’s the best way to learn appropriate social behaviors. Schedule play dates, go to the park, enjoy family gatherings - all of these are great opportunities for kids to learn social skills.

Let Children Know they are Awesome!
Let kids know they are unique and that you love them. Feeling loved and accepted helps build confidence and self-esteem.

Tips for Parents & Guardians to Promote Children’s Social & Emotional Health

In observance of Children’s Mental Health Week in May, we produced a PDF of the above information. You can download a copy of it here: http://bit.ly/1IyWC5P