At Crotched Mountain, we care for people with complex conditions that can make regular, everyday activities extremely challenging. Our job is to advance the range of activities and quality of life of the people we serve through a variety of therapeutic approaches. Often these interventions rely on technology—both hi-tech and low-tech. But whatever the tool, we recognize that interpersonal relationships are primary to learning and healing.

At the June meeting of the Crotched Mountain Foundation Board, we invited professionals from the programs and disciplines at Crotched Mountain School, Specialty Hospital and in the community to display their latest technology and demonstrate the new freedoms these innovations make possible for people with disabilities.

Our community assistive technology program, ATECH Services, displayed everything from augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices to help people without speech express themselves, to adaptive keyboards to improve computer access, to eye-gaze technology that enables users to operate electronic devices with eye movements. Board members were invited to test the devices to experience first-hand the ease of access these innovations make possible.

School and hospital occupational therapist and technology expert Dave Kontak brought along a robot he is testing in his role as a principal investigator with UMASS Lowell to better understand how robots can help children with autism learn to communicate. Also featured was a switch-equipped wheelchair that activates a camera shutter with just a head movement. Our speech and language therapists featured a variety of computer apps to help students read, write and communicate more effectively.

Crotched Mountain Accessible Recreation and Sports demonstrated the latest adaptive sports equipment for every season—bi-ski, recumbent bikes and kayaks—all adapted to remove barriers to participation. Students from Cedar's Point, which serves adolescents with psychological and behavioral challenges, proudly showed off drums they made in a workshop that also helped them improve communication and interpersonal skills.

Even Crotched Mountain Equine Collaborative got in on the action with information about the broad applications of equine therapy to improve strength and balance, teach academics and develop empathy and responsibility toward others.

Most striking to me was the realization that, as technology evolves, so do the relationships that drive learning and healing. The UMASS-Lowell robot appeals to children on the autism spectrum. A better understanding of this affinity will lead to new therapeutic approaches. And, we’ve learned that all kinds of interventions are possible with horses which, it turns out, are very effective teachers.

In the end, whether an adaptive tool enables access with a microchip or a nuzzle from a gentle horse, it is the courage of our clients to take on new challenges that drives the evolution of accessible technology and, ultimately, the course of their lives.

Lastly, you may have received a donor survey. If you haven’t yet, please take the time to complete it—here or online. We want to know how to best respond to your interest in our work.
WHEN YOU ASK Crotched Mountain volunteer Gail Landy why she volunteers, she gets a puzzled look on her face. She admits to being puzzled because the time she spends at Crotched Mountain is not about volunteering at all. It’s about being with and helping people.

“It’s a way of life for me. It’s something I’ve always done,” says Gail, who has volunteered at Crotched Mountain for the past five years. She first became involved with Crotched Mountain through a long-standing relationship with a one-time residential student and current employee at CM, Justin Whitten.

“I knew Justin through another volunteer role long before he came to Crotched Mountain to live. It was clear that Crotched Mountain made such a difference for him. They literally saved his life,” recalls Gail, who has since watched Justin become a responsible young adult who enjoys a full life with a job, independence and many warm, nurturing relationships.

Gail, who once worked professionally with children, started out volunteering in the home economics class at Crotched Mountain School. An accomplished weaver, she says the class suited her skills and interest. She especially enjoyed working with teacher Laura Berry. “With her skill and experience, Laura was able to provide the equipment and projects that fit the student’s abilities. She had high standards, and the end results reflected her deep caring,” says Gail.

She has similar feelings about the medical staff in the Specialty Hospital where she currently volunteers in the day program that offers engaging group activities for patients recovering from brain injuries. “The staff is very competent, and I’m so impressed with their consistently positive interactions with patients,” Gail observes. “And Martha Collins, who coordinates the day program, has the knowledge and imagination to find the right activities to interest and stimulate patients at all levels of recovery.”

Martha could say the same about Gail. According to Martha, Gail is devoted and reliable, and a great help when the group tackles the weekly sports trivia quiz. “She’s a huge Red Sox fan, so she’s a big help to the other contestants.” Martha says that one patient in particular “perks right up when I tell her that Gail will arrive shortly to escort her to the day program where they spend much of the day together.”

Gail says before joining the day program, she’d never worked with disabled adults before and feels a particular compassion for those whose lives have been significantly changed by brain injury. “I recognize they had a different life before their injuries, and they and their families are working very hard to adapt to a new reality.”

But most striking, comments Gail, is the compassion many patients show toward each other. “They are often kind and patient and never critical.” Of real value to us is Gail’s kindness and devotion to the patients and students at Crotched Mountain. We look forward to her reliable presence here for many years to come.
Is it hot enough for you?

This is not a rhetorical question for students in teacher Penny Crandall’s science classes because they can accurately answer that question, and many others, with the aid of a weather station at Crotched Mountain School (CMS).

Donated to CMS by longtime friends Bruce and Marilyn Soper, the sophisticated scientific instrument installed on the roof of the school transports some of a certain age back to the 1960s when CMS students reported the weather live on WBZ TV with meteorologist Don Kent.

Back then, students used an outdoor thermometer and visual observation to report the weather to New England viewers. Today, an electronic readout located in the science classroom tells a detailed and complex story of what’s happening locally, with the potential for students to interact with similar weather stations across the country.

Bruce, a lifelong weather buff and current trustee at the Mt. Washington Observatory, has kept detailed weather records for years and wanted to share his fascination with CMS students.

“The study of weather is an easily accessible way to explore the world and open doors to other subjects and disciplines. We’re delighted the students at CMS are using this station to better understand the natural processes that affect their daily lives,” said Bruce.

“We love it when friends share their passions with our students and clients. It’s a great way to support the people we serve. We thank the Sopers for making this exciting learning opportunity possible,” said Don Shumway, CEO and president of CM.

One of the more challenging projects undertaken by middle school students last year had them build their own instruments to measure wind speed, barometric pressure and rain amounts and compare the findings to those recorded by the weather station, explained Penny.

“It was a great opportunity for students to troubleshoot and make observations when the readouts didn’t match. The readings for the anemometer, which...
measures wind speed, were markedly different. We discussed possible reasons why, concluding that the wind on the roof of the school is different than the wind at ground level.”

Similar questions were posed for barometric pressure. Students used a non-latex glove instead of a balloon on their classroom-made barometer, which affected the accuracy of the readings. Students learned about how different materials respond differently to pressure. “The students’ rain gauge was spot-on though,” Penny reports, “leading them to conclude that it rains the same amount on both the roof and ground.”

The weather station was recently linked to Weather Underground (wunderground.com) so that students, parents and others can check the weather on campus from anywhere. In addition, students can connect with other stations around the country to talk about how and why weather varies from place to place. Students will study latitude, terrain and ocean effects, as well as daily weather, seasons and climate.

Before the web link was added, middle school student Steven collected and recorded the data twice a day so Penny could send an email to all classrooms with information about wind chill and other data useful to everyone’s comfort and safety.

And recently, student Makayla used the station for a science fair project to determine the optimal environmental conditions for soap bubble longevity. Bubbles made from different solutions were subjected to a variety of weather conditions proving that bubbles thrive in cool temperatures with high humidity. “I considered a bunch of different ideas for the science fair and the bubble project looked like the most fun to me,” comments Makayla with a big grin. Next year, high school students will create weather blogs and learn to use the station’s graphing feature and other reporting applications to track trends such as how weather affects CMS Farm School maple syrup production over time.

Penny is enthused about the potential of the weather station to teach not only the weather, but a host of other topics as varied as reading, writing, math and geography. “The station creates many teachable moments. It’s a complex instrument, and I’m still learning all it can do,” says Penny, who is taking classes at Mt. Washington Observatory to prepare for a whole new world of weather next year.
OVER SIXTY YEARS AGO, Harry Gregg needed huge support to realize his vision of a world-class center for rehabilitative services for children with disabilities. Many thousands of individuals, businesses and civic groups answered his call for help and many have sustained their commitment to Crotched Mountain since then.

One group’s consistent support is a stellar example of charitable giving. Since their first gift on May 1, 1961, the Masonic Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Massachusetts has been one of our most ardent supporters with total giving exceeding $250,000 and counting! They promote Crotched Mountain at Chapters throughout Massachusetts and beyond and visit our Greenfield campus annually for tours and events. About 40 years ago, their friendship and commitment to those we serve was commemorated with a large bronze plaque.

In June, the order’s Grand High Priest, Alexander J. Marusa, brought a distinguished gathering of senior Chapter officers and families to Crotched Mountain. The group included past Grand High Priests as well as senior representatives from regional Masonic Chapters and the International Chapter.

After a campus tour, the group gathered in Charity Park for the unveiling of the newly-installed original plaque that reflects how lasting charitable relationships form the core of Crotched Mountain. Later, Mr. Marusa presented Kathleen Brittan, VP of Development, with a check for $10,000 stating, “As Masons, we are committed to help each other and seek ways to improve our communities. We thank Crotched Mountain for this opportunity to practice charity.”

In her remarks, Mrs. Brittan talked about her own family’s long participation in Masonry and Eastern Star and added, “Your gift today can pay for an AAC device to allow a child to speak for the first time, or a power wheelchair to access the community. It’s so exciting to imagine all the possibilities your sustained giving has created over the years.”

“The generosity of the Masonic Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Massachusetts is remarkable for both its impact and consistency. Their unwavering support has been responsible for saving and changing so many lives. On behalf of those who have been touched by your gifts, we sincerely thank you,” said Crotched Mountain CEO and President Don Shumway.

The Grand Royal Arch Chapter has expressed a commitment to continued visits and support. In turn, Crotched Mountain staff will visit Masonic lodges to discuss how regular support, both from individuals and groups, is essential to improving the lives of children and adults with disabilities.
The 12th Annual Crotched Mountain Golf Classic at Crotched Mountain Golf Club on June 30 was a great success with a full field of 36 teams raising over $47,000 for the programs and services of Crotched Mountain. Great auction items included a Bruins Fan Package with a Limited Edition copy of the 1995 Boston Garden Retirement poster signed by the 2010/11 Bruins team and a signed alumni team jersey from the 2013 Bruins Alumni/Monadnock Wild Hockey Classic (don’t miss next year’s game on Feb. 8, 2015.) A perfect day of golf ended with the Don Kent Legacy Award presented to former Boston Red Sox pitcher and CM Annual Campaign Chair Bill Monbouquette for his many years of support to CM.

PARTY LIKE IT’S SUMMER!

McIntyre School Apartment tenants Doris Beaudion and Deane Rines and HUD Program Coordinator/Property Manager, Lisa Rompey model tropical garb!

The folks at CM’s McIntyre School Apartments in Whitefield, NH, a 24-unit accessible living complex renovated in 1996 for low-income seniors and disabled adults, celebrated the coming of summer by hosting a Hawaiian Luau attended by over 100 people and put on by Common Ground for clients of Northern Human Services/White Mountain Mental Health and Developmental Services. Clients, tenants, family members and people from the community all joined in the celebration with food provided by Whitefield Senior Center and music by deejays, No Request Allowed.

Bodies in motion capture the artistic energy of the dance.

The Active Ingredients Dance Troupe from Crotched Mountain and Monadnock Academy of Movement Youth Company Dancers in Peterborough performed in a joint spring dance concert. The performance featured music and various styles of dance including hip-hop, ballet and modern.

CM RESIDENT EXHIBITS PHOTOS

Crotched Mountain resident Patty Munson exhibited her photographs at the UpReach Festival in Goffstown. UpReach offers therapeutic riding to people of all ages and abilities. Patty has been a regular participant in both the CM Healing Arts Photography Program and the CM Equine Collaborative with UpReach. Her photos of animals were a big hit at the festival.

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CM EMPLOYEES HONORED

Four Crotched Mountain employees were honored with the Patriot Award from the U.S. Department of Defense Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) for supporting Crotched Mountain employee Sergeant Chuck Eldridge while deployed in Afghanistan. The ceremonies included a special Flag Day presentation of flag pins made by CMS students to employees, clients and all active and veteran service members in the audience. Congratulations to Deirdre Grimes, HR Benefit Coordinator; Benjamin Drew, Residential Supervisor; Lorrie Rudis, VP of Human Resources and Don Shumway, President and CEO. Pam Slack, special assistant for constituent services for U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Bud Fitch, representative for U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), each read and presented letters of support to all four Patriot Award recipients. Don Shumway read a congratulatory letter from Congresswoman Anne McLane Kuster (D-NH2).

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WORTH THE WAIT

Red Sox World Series Trophies Come to Crotched Mountain

ON JULY 31, Boston Red Sox Hall Of Fame pitcher and CM annual campaign chair Bill “Monbo” Monbouquette brought something special and once very rare to Crotched Mountain—Red Sox World Series trophies! Everyone knows that after a painful 95-year hiatus, the Boston Red Sox finally won the World Series in 2004 and then went on to win two more championships in 2007 and 2013! Thanks to Bill, CM clients, students, patients, staff and their families got to view the trophies up close and have their picture taken with our own champion, “Monbo.”

Bill Monbouquette regaled the crowd of 100+ fans with stories of his career as a Red Sox pitcher and was presented with a gift of appreciation signed by CM students, patients and staff. Pictured above are CMS student Krista, Bill, and PE and health teacher Don Tilton.