LETTHE
GOODTIMESROLL
AwesomeAdventuresandMagicMoments
PoweredbyCrotchedMountain
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This year our Annual Report will be transitioning to a digital publication. Print copies will be available upon request at 603-547-1488. View past issues of Horizons and the Annual Report at cmf.org/horizons.
THE VIEW FROM HERE

When you drive into the Crotched Mountain visitor parking lot, approaching Carter Hall, to the right, in the distance, is a million dollar view. From our elevated perch here in Greenfield, the region opens up like a living postcard, with Mount Monadnock towering in the background. I’ve probably driven past this milieu hundreds of times and without fail my head automatically swivels to take in the sight. At this point, it’s reflex.

I’m sure you can relate, especially if you call New Hampshire home. There seems to be one stunning vista after another around these parts and no matter how many times you may have passed a particular view, I’m willing to bet your eyes are drawn to the sprawling horizon as if it were the first time you’ve seen it.

There’s just a gravitational pull to natural beauty, something I firmly believe is hardwired into our DNA. Speaking of “gravitational pull,” I heard this term used by someone I ran into in Peterborough the other day, a past employee of Crotched Mountain (folks, I’m telling you, these Crotched Mountain “alums” are everywhere).

He was talking about his time at Crotched Mountain, working with our students, and reminiscing. He noted there was just “something about” this place and you can’t help but feel drawn to it. “It has a gravitational pull,” he said.

I absolutely agree. There is something about Crotched Mountain, something that beckons, something that draws so many of us, inexorably, to its summit, to its mission. As friends, supporters, and donors, you feel that. And as I walk the campus every day, talking to staff, I know that they feel that too.

As an organization, we have wrapped up one of the most consequential years in Crotched Mountain’s history. We bid a fond farewell to our hospital, launched a bold five-year strategic plan, and began a journey towards an exciting, new future. There is plenty more coming, and I can’t wait to share it with you, our friends and family, our donors and advocates, and all of you who feel that pull towards Crotched Mountain.

This morning I gazed again at Mount Monadnock, as I always do. And I recalled that someone had once told me that “Monadnock” comes from the Abenaki and, loosely translated means “mountain that stands alone.” Its solitary peak makes for a transfixed view to be sure—but on our mountain, roughly 20 miles away from Monadnock as the crow flies, the grandeur comes from this simple truth: we’re all in this together.

Here’s to 2018!

Sincerely,

Michael Coughlin
President
Pound for pound, not many activities are as therapeutically rich—or just plain fun—than bowling a few frames with some good friends.

It’s Saturday morning at Leda Lanes and the place is hopping. The local candlepin bowling alley in Nashua, NH is currently ground zero for high-intensity, three-frame shenanigans; howls of joy echo throughout the gigantic room, intermingled with the sounds of crashing pins. And everyone is laser-focused; there are gold medals at stake!

Welcome to the annual Special Olympics State Games for Bowling, easily the most attended Special O’s competition of the year by Crotched Mountain’s cohort of athletes.

Students and adults are drawn to these games, making for a sea of dark blue Crotched Mountain t-shirts flooding the place.

The state games represent the culmination of months of practice, with frame after frame after frame bowled at the Mary and William Kiernan Lanes right on the Crotched Mountain campus. These Special Olympics run-throughs involve students and adult clients alike, making the Crotched Mountain bowling squad the largest and most diverse to go for the gold.

When all was said and done, multiple bowlers left the lanes draped in medals. But bowling actually represents a bigger benefit than the glory of victory; for nearly 60 years, the sport has been a part of the Crotched Mountain experience—and for good reason.
“First and foremost, bowling is fun,” said Sarah McAloney, Physical Education teacher at Crotched Mountain School. “The students love it and enjoy it for the sport that it is. There are plenty of added benefits as well, from social skill-building to improvement with math when they’re keeping score.”

The lanes first opened in 1960 and then later experienced a rebirth in 2013, thanks to a $50,000 gift from Mary and William Kiernan. Today, the lanes are frequently used (and offer a premium indoor diversion during the cold winter days). The custom accessible ramps ensure that students and adults of all abilities can savor the feeling of obliterating a row of hapless candlepins.

But beyond the leisure value, bowling skills are transferable. Big ball or small ball, two frames or three, and whatever lane you choose, the knack for bowling that individuals develop at Crotched Mountain will travel.

“Bowling is something anyone can do in the community,” Sarah says. “So when our students return to their home communities, they can bowl with their friends and families.”

International Bowling Magazine Spotlights Crotched Mountain

“Candlepin bowling is a sport that does not enjoy much exposure in a magazine devoted to tenpin bowling. But this is no typical candlepin bowling story.”

So begins a special feature about Crotched Mountain’s bowling lanes in Bowlers Journal International, a monthly publication dedicated to ten-pin bowling. The story highlighted the Mary and William Kiernan Lanes. The magazine was founded in 1913 and is one of the longest-running monthly sports magazines in the country.

Despite the magazine’s focus on ten-pin bowling, Crotched Mountain’s candlepin lanes drew interest because of the unique therapeutic benefits that come from participation in the sport. And since many ten-pin bowling alleys also have adaptive equipment, the transition from candlepin to “big ball” bowling in the community can be seamless.

The feature ran in the December issue of Bowlers Journal International.

Read the story at cmf.org/bowl.
Dear students at Crestwood Mountain School,

This is Flat Stanley reporting back to you from the home of the New England Patriots - Gillette Stadium! I’m happy to be here because I love football, especially when the Patriots win.

When I first got here, I was on the field with the Patriots players. I was able to go on the field before the game and meet the players. It was a lot of fun! I even got a chance to sit in the locker room and watch the team prepare. The players were very friendly and answered all my questions.

I also got to watch the game from the sidelines. It was amazing to see the players in action. The stadium was packed with fans cheering for the Patriots. After the game, I got a picture with the winning team.

I can’t wait to come back and see the Patriots play again. Flat Stanley, reporting for duty.

Sincerely,

Flat Stanley

September 2017
Amanda Meltzer’s vocation-focused classroom at Crotched Mountain School is a bastion of activity where students learn life skills that can translate into jobs or volunteer opportunities in the community. When the students aren’t out and about, they’re typically up to something creative as a group.

An ongoing activity that’s been a staple of Amanda’s crew has been the Flat Stanley Project. Originally published in 1964, *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown tells the playfully morbid tale of a young boy named Stanley Porkchop who is inadvertently flattened by a giant bulletin board and proceeds to go on various adventures in his newly pressed two-dimensional reality. His new-found lack of girth allows him to travel the globe just by sliding himself into an envelope and having his brother drop him into the mail.

Hey, it was the ‘60s. Things were... different then.

In 1995, a school teacher from Canada named Dale Hubert started something called The Flat Stanley Project. After reading the book together, his class would create their own Flat Stanley paper cutouts and mail them away to far-flung corners of the globe or send them off with friends or family, who returned with photographic evidence of all the places Stanley had journeyed.

For her class, Amanda tweaked the Flat Stanley Project to make it unique—to make it Crotched Mountain. They read the book and students made their paper cutouts, honing fine motor skills while cutting and coloring, and dispatched their Stanleys from the Crotched Mountain summit in Greenfield. Just as so many other students have for over two decades, Amanda’s class enlists willing sojourners (friends and family of staff and students) to take Stanley with them and, more importantly, to send back pictures.

And the photos have poured in, placing Crotched Mountain Flat Stanley at places all over the globe—from One Patriot Place to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue (really) and even to the foot of Mount Everest.

As these pictures make it back to the 03047 zip code, Amanda and her paraeducators lead the class in activities and learning opportunities connected to the destinations Stanley has visited. Has Stanley checked out Maine? A blueberry muffin baking activity is in order. Or how about his trip to Mr. Mac’s restaurant in nearby Manchester? Macaroni and cheese for everyone!

As varied as these pursuits may be, they are all linked by a common approach: to help the students—most of whom possess some of the more significant disabilities at Crotched Mountain School—achieve and hone their daily living skills, with an ultimate goal of preparing everyone to be as independent as possible.

“We want to give our students these practical life skills,” Amanda says. “And the Flat Stanley Project allows us to do that while they learn about world geography and have a lot of fun at the same time.”
Alzheimer’s can drain a person of the vibrancy of their memories. But with support, love, and compassion, some colors can return.

In a modest home in Rye, just a few miles from the New Hampshire shoreline, a couple sits together on the couch. The TV is on and a cooling meal is perched on the coffee table. Framed watercolors line the walls. The salt air from the coast sneaks in through the open window; an evergreen reminder that the ocean is close and it always beckons.

For nearly all of her adult life, Judy Sponaugle heeded that call. Shin-deep in tide pools, she and her children would comb through the washed-up flotsam and jetsam, looking for shells and other ocean-borne oddities. Back at home she would paint these moments, preserving these memories with the hues of her watercolors.
In June 2016, Woody and Judy began to receive case management support through Crotched Mountain Community Care (CMCC). Billed through the Choices for Independence (CFI) Medicaid waiver, CMCC’s services bring direct care professionals into the home to serve Judy’s needs, help improve her quality of life, and give Woody respite.

Those pictures still hang in the living room. But for Judy, who has Stage 3 Alzheimer’s, they are relics of a past life—snapshots in a timeline that has grown further and further detached from her reality. Today, her supper remains half-eaten as her husband Woody sits beside her, leafing through a book of art that she had published many years ago. He gently prods her memories, trying to elicit recognition of the art she had created. She smiles, but nothing registers.

In 2010, Judy received her Alzheimer’s diagnosis, following two years of increasing memory issues. As her neural pathways gradually eroded, so, too, did her interest in the activity that she had loved so much throughout her life—her watercolors.

Five years ago was the last time she picked up a paintbrush.

**ON POTATO DONUTS**

When Woody Sponaugle heard his wife’s diagnosis, the very foundation of his life was immediately turned upside down. A retired attorney, Woody now had to re-orient himself to the foreign concept of becoming a full-time caregiver.

“You ask yourself so many questions,” he said. “Am I doing this right? Do I need to get more information? Is tonight’s meal good enough?”

Realizing he couldn’t be the only person thinking like this, Woody started a men’s support group for husbands of spouses with Alzheimer’s (the only one in New Hampshire).

His purpose: to reach men who were going through the same emotional trek that he had endured (and continues to endure), a journey marked with grief and guilt and the constant, ever-present shadow of doubt.

“With your wife you used to be a team, an organization, and now you’re not,” Woody says. “Now you don’t have that person to bounce ideas off to get feedback and, as a result, your relationship declines.”

Woody describes Alzheimer’s as “a glide path,” a steady, downward trajectory where the best you can do is manage an inexorable decline and maximize the time you have with the person with whom you had spent decades forging a life.

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A nurse comes in once every other week to monitor Judy’s vitals, check medication, and answer Woody’s questions and home health aides deliver personal care services to Judy such as bathing help, cleaning around the house, and exercise.

“Having this support has made all the difference in the world,” Woody says. “You just get so tired sometimes. And where we used to be isolated, now we have people who are stopping by to check on us regularly.”

And, as Woody tells the men in his support group, you need to carve out time for yourself so you don’t get burned out; with CMCC alongside, he’s been able to sneak away for a few hours here or there to recharge. Like the time he heard about the stand down the road that served homemade potato donuts. When the aides came that next time, he took a quick trip to investigate. Because sometimes all you need is a potato donut.

**THE MIRACLE**

When Pam, one of the aides, began working with Judy, the two struck up an immediate connection. Pam kept her active and engaged and Judy was responding. Then, a few weeks later, a spark fired up deep in the recesses of Judy’s labyrinthine mind, a neural pathway or two that had been dormant for the past five years suddenly began to re-awaken.

That’s when Judy picked up her brush and started to paint again.

They were simple drawings, abstract expressions of color and shapes, very different from the watercolors she used to produce. But there was a clear message in these creations: the creative fire that illuminated her for so many years was alive again—and that was more than enough for Woody.

Now he has support. Now he has backup. But he needs something else.

He needs more frames. 

**Below:** Two eras of artistic expression
This year, The Mountain donated T-shirts emblazoned with the newly redesigned Eagle mascot of Crotched Mountain School, which were given to staff and students.

“We are thankful for our friends at The Mountain and all they do to support our mission,” said Kevin Harte, Vice President of Advancement for Crotched Mountain. “Their gifts over the years have brought joy to countless students.”

See the students get their shirts at cmf.org/eagle.

In 1972, two friends, Michael Gallen and Michael Krinsky, founded The Mountain Corporation, an apparel company tucked away in the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire. The Mountain gained worldwide fame when their iconic “Three Wolf Moon” T-shirt rose to pop culture prominence.

Since 2006, The Mountain has supported Crotched Mountain with both monetary gifts and donations of T-shirts (most notably during Crotched Mountain School’s “March Madness” spirit week, outfitting teachers, staff, and students in custom shirts).

In 2015, Michael Gallen visited Crotched Mountain to present a check and deliver boxes of superhero and Star Wars themed shirts to the school. To celebrate, Crotched Mountain held a Star Wars themed party, complete with costumed Jedi Knights joining students on the dance floor. And though the company now has new owners, the tradition of giving continues.

Interested in organizing a fundraiser for Crotched Mountain with your friends, family, or coworkers? We can help! Contact Jeannette Nieder at 603-547-1486 or jeannette.nieder@crotchedmountain.org.
This year, Crotched Mountain received the Above and Beyond Award, presented by the New Hampshire Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee (ESGR), which recognizes local employers that show strong support for their military-enlisted staff members. Anna Annelli, a long-time Crotched Mountain employee and current member of the NH National Guard, nominated the organization for the award.

Justin and David, whom Anna has worked with for years, received the Patriot's Award from ESGR. Here, Justin is all smiles showing off his award to Brian, Casey, and Jake.

Watch Justin and David receive their awards at cmf.org/aboveandbeyond.
UPCOMING EVENTS

The Bruins Alumni Classic
January 28, 2018
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Sullivan Arena, Saint Anselm College
Manchester, NH
Visit cmf.org/bruins to buy tickets!

For more information, contact Jeannette Nieder at jeannette.nieder@crotchedmountain.org or call 603-547-1486

On Thursday, December 14, Crotched Mountain School welcomed over 30 New Hampshire fire chiefs for the annual Holiday Supper and Santa’s Stroll. A tradition for over 50 years, the event gives the Chiefs and some memorable mascots (Smokey the Bear, Sparky the Fire Dog, and Santa Claus himself) the chance to visit students in their residences and hand out presents. Here, Crystal, Smokey, and Sparky take a break from the merriment for a quick photo.

Michael (left), a Crotched Mountain student and diehard Boston Celtics fan, and Tyler, Recreation Therapist and fellow hoop-head, took in a game thanks to a generous ticket donation. Michael had never seen a basketball game in person before. “It was truly a great experience I will never forget,” he said. “The seats were so close to the court that we could see everything and it ended the best way—with the Celtics winning!”

THE GREEN TEAMERS

A SMOKEY, MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS
Autism Services for Children Are Coming to Greenfield!

Ready, Set, Connect! provides ABA therapy for young children in a group setting, offering an environment of fun and learning and a path to a bright future! The autism clinic at the Greenfield campus will be opening on January 2, 2018.

Call us today at 603-547-1430 or visit cmf.org/autism

Locations also in Manchester and Concord, NH.