

Sunset Hill Educational Institute

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Sunset Hill Educational Institute (SHEI) a non-profit organization whose mission is to help young people and individuals with physical disabilities discover their inner strengths so they may lead positive fulfilling lives.

WHIM, a program of Sunset Hill Educational Institute, is a free, peer-driven program that aims to increase quality of life through upper-body exercise and positive peer support in individuals living with physical disability within their own community.



“Not only does disability impact individual health and well-being, it also leads to social and economic exclusion.” - Peter Maurer

SHEI President Report By Kathy Everest

Over the past twelve years, Sunset Hill Educational Institute (SHEI) has seen steady growth in our programs and services, which has fostered positive impacts in individuals' lives.

Each year, SHEI-WHIM assists individuals with disabilities and young adults in transition, providing programs and services that promote self-determination skills to enhance one's life. Our organization has a volunteer Executive Director, two part-time paid staff members, and ten volunteer peer leaders. This year we exceeded over 2,500 participant encounters, and WHIM has: six community-based weekly exercises classes, provided ten educational opportunities, and coordinated twelve recreational/social events. WHIM is providing education, resources, and support, one person at a time.

Our programs and services are FREE, and our organization is sustained each year by private donations. Please join our journey to provide a rich human experience to the individuals we serve.

On behalf of the SHEI Board of Directors, Thank You!

2018 WHIM Activities

Come Join Us In 2019!

Current communities with WHIM groups

CONCORD

HealthSouth
Thursdays
1:30-3:30pm

DOVER

St. Joseph's Parish
Tuesdays
1:30-3:00pm

GOFFSTOWN

YMCA Allard Center
Tuesdays
1:30-3:30pm

LACONIA

Sunrise Towers
Thursdays
1:00-2:00pm

MANCHESTER

YMCA Downtown
Wednesdays
1:15-2:45pm

PORTSMOUTH

YMCA of the Seacoast
Thursdays
1:30-3:00pm

SHEI/WHIM organization provides:

Career services
Self-advocacy
Leadership training
Mentorship
Resources

WHIM





“You must accept whatever comes, and the only important thing, is that you meet it with the best you have to give.” Eleanor Roosevelt

This statement is so true for individuals that face challenges in their everyday lives. Sunset Hill Educational Institute (SHEI) is in its 12th year of assisting individuals enhance their quality of life through education, resources, programs, and services.

One person at a time, our small grass-roots organization reaches out to individuals that live with a physical disability and others experiencing transition in their lives.

The SHEI-WHIM organization is grounded in the belief that positive role modeling, peer support, and engagement in healthy behavior promotion can together change one’s sense of well-being. With each year, SHEI-WHIM provides opportunities and resources that facilitate a shift in one’s mindset. **“Ability”** is only limited by one’s thoughts – “if you can’t change it, then change the way you think about it.” This is so true for people living with a disability. **Changing the perception that hard things are put in our way... not to stop us, but to challenge our courage and strength.**

An increased sense of purpose empowers each one of us to be more self-directed. This is well demonstrated here by participants feedback:

“Being involved with WHIM in the last few years gave me the opportunity to see others breaking barriers. Now with adaptive sports I am an avid kayaker, hiker, and water skier. I’m appreciative of the SHEI-WHIM organization. It has changed my life.” – Joni

“All things are possible with open minds & extra hands. I will always make a wish because the ones I’ve had for many years (at least 30) came true this Summer!!!!” – WHIM Participant

“This organization has shared valuable knowledge with me. I learned about vocational rehab resources, and I’m now driving an adaptive van. MEAD allows me the ability to work, earn an income, and receive home care services. Connecting with SHEI/WHIM and Carol has made a difference in my life.” – Suzy

It is truly rewarding for our SHEI Board of Directors, staff, peer leaders, adaptive sports organization partners, and community exercise organizations to hear our participants speak so highly about our programs and services.

In 2006 I wrote something called The 3 Ps: Patience, Purpose, and Planning. My life after receiving a disability has been filled with greater “purpose”. This purpose has provided me the motivation to get up in the morning, to participate in life, to get out of my own disability woes, and to give of myself to others with gratitude for what others have given to me. **Together, let’s keep this journey going!**

- Carol Conforti-Adams, SHEI Executive Director

SHEI Treasurer's Report

By Pat Vaicaitis

Due to the continued support of our private Donors, Sunset Hill Educational Institute (SHEI) has been able to forge ahead in securing grants from foundations, which has allowed us to grow our programs. By providing our no-cost services, many peoples’ lives have been changed for the better. Here at SHEI, we are extremely thankful for our Donors who make services from this nonprofit organization a reality for so many people. With your continued support, our path of sustaining our state-wide growth, our programs/services, and goal of making a difference in people’s lives, will carry forward.

I ask you to support and join us in this journey by making a tax-exempt donation today! Thanks!



If you believe in our Mission YOUR tax-deductible donation will help us continue our programs and services.

Accomplishments in 2018

By Laura Clark, WHIM Program Coordinator

For WHIM, 2018 has been a year of expansion, including: the opening of two new WHIM exercise class locations, multiple new organizational collaborations, and new participant recruitment. This expansion project was funded in part by the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and private donations.

In March, WHIM held a series of educational workshops that focused on state-wide resources for individuals with physical disability. Topics included:

- wound care/prevention with Concord Hospital
- service dogs with Canine Companions for Independence
- physical therapy with Project Walk
- art therapy with WHIM
- adaptive recreation with all of WHIM's regular recreational collaborators, plus three new collaborators (NH State Parks, Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country, and UpReach Therapeutic Equestrian Center)

This past Summer, WHIM and our collaborators (listed online at www.WheelchairHealthInMotion.org) provided participants – original and new – with opportunities to enjoy exercise outdoors. Activities included: a Fisher Cats baseball game, hiking on two different adaptive trails, kayaking on two different waterways, water-skiing, and a shore-side outing. Outdoor exercise invigorated us all!

Looking ahead to 2019, WHIM will continue to strengthen classes through participant recruitment and increase variety of exercise in each of its six communities: Concord, Dover, Goffstown, Manchester, Laconia, and Portsmouth. In addition, WHIM has started plans for the development of another new exercise class location in 2019.

Keep moving with WHIM into 2019!



How has participating in WHIM events this year enriched your life? WHIM participants answered:

"It nourished my soul."

"It got me amongst my peers. Helps put my issues in perspective. Makes me feel lucky!"

"WHIM motivates me to stay active and involved with people, which helps my depression and makes me feel I have a sense of purpose, even though I'm an individual with a disability. I am very appreciative that the events are free."



WHIM Classes in New Hampshire: Weekly Wellness Motivation

By Chris Lopez, WHIM Peer Team Leader

WHIM Peer Leaders are the heart and muscle of the WHIM program. Every week, ten volunteer peers (individuals living with disability just like WHIM staff and participants!) arrive at their WHIM class site to lead their peers through adaptive exercise, encouraging positive discussion and sharing of life experiences. This unique combination allows for the blending of physical and mental wellness, offered weekly! Any person of any physical ability at any time may roll in and join a WHIM class. Currently in the communities of: Concord, Dover, Goffstown, Manchester, Laconia, and Portsmouth.

Being a WHIM Peer Leader myself, specifically for WHIM Manchester, allows me the opportunity to talk to others living with physical disability in my community on a weekly basis, and look for ways to improve our lives. I gather ideas, thoughts, and concerns from my peers and continually try to improve and update our music, routines, and events. We learn so much from each other, including things like personal care and dealing with common misconceptions about what it's like to live in a wheelchair.

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