



Message From the President

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope you are enjoying the curious weather we are having this winter! Today looks to be especially icy—please be safe in your travels! Spring is right around the corner, right?

Have you stopped by our office recently? We are close to completing our “extreme office makeover” after months of planning and work. We outgrew our conference room and the GEAR UP team was forced to meet off site. We are excited that our February staff meeting will be held in our new conference/classroom on the ground floor. While we still have some organizing to do, it is exciting! Kudos to the office staff for all their work over many months especially Sylvia, Jan, Kayla and Noelle!

Congratulations to ten newly certified Job Coaches from across the state who completed the College of Employment Services online modules and the face to face Fading and Natural Supports in the Workplace with David Hoff last week.

I’m pleased to welcome two new Syntiro board members! Gayla LaBreck joined the board this month. Gayla brings extensive experience as an educator, educational leader, consultant and adjunct faculty member to her new role. She served as a Regional Facilitator for us many years ago. Nick Gannon, principal at Richmond Middle/High School (RSU 2) will join the board for his first meeting in May. Nick also brings a vast array of educational experience with him. We are grateful for their commitment to Syntiro and look forward to their service; please join me in welcoming them!

Debbie

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Education & Events



[WDS Training Calendar](#)

Our statewide calendar of events provides information regarding upcoming ACRE Employment Specialist certification opportunities, advanced topical trainings

Syntiro Staff & Board



Syntiro Board Spotlight

Rick Wilson, Treasurer

Rick Wilson joined Syntiro in 2010 as Operations Coordinator after 33 years in public education as both a teacher and administrator. Rick left this position in July of 2015. Rick was Principal at Manchester Elementary School from 1992-2010. Rick was also an active member of the Maine Principals' Association and served as chair of the association's Professional Development Committee from 2005-2009. Prior to his years in administration, Rick was a K-8 music specialist in Union 42 (Manchester, Mt. Vernon, Readfield and Wayne). He holds a Mus. B from Boston University and an M.ED. from the University of Maine. Rick's interests and expertise include teacher training and development, educational leadership, team building and school climate.



Mike Muir

Dr. Mike Muir jokes that he has had one job for more than 30 years: helping schools reach more students (especially disenfranchised learners, students in poverty, and children from rural/isolated areas). He just keeps changing who pays him! GEAR UP has been paying Mike to do this work since last May. He serves as the Proficiency-Based Learning Specialist. In this role, he is identifying the PBE needs of GU-ME schools, identifying resources and providing supports, and partnering with some of the schools on "Promising Practices" such as experiential math, student micro-credentials, and better reaching rural students in poverty. Mike has been a high school and middle school mathematics teacher, a middle grades technology integrator, a university teacher educator, and an educational developer and manager. Mike has been active in MLTI since the beginning and recently



and webinars.

Upcoming Events

02/08/2018

[Webinar 6 - Hidden Resources: Launching Careers with Social Capital](#)

03/19 - 03/23/2018

[Approved Basic Employment Services Certificate Training: With an Emphasis on Customized Employment](#)

04/10/2018

[Advanced Work and Benefits Navigation for Employment Specialists - Portland](#)

04/13/2018

[Advanced Work and Benefits Navigation for Employment Specialists - Fairfield](#)

04/25 & 04/26/2018

[Discovering Personal Genius \(DPG\): The Discovery Practice That Yields Customized Employment Results](#)

Collaborations

finished 2 years as Maine's Learning Through Technology Director. He was also active in developing the country's first district-wide 1 to 1 iPads in primary grades initiative (Auburn, ME). In addition to helping schools leverage technology for learning, Mike has supported large-scale school change initiatives, customized, proficiency-based learning implementation, proficiency-based professional learning and micro-credential program development, and efforts to motivate underachieving students.

News & Events

The Journey's For Women Initiative continues to get applications. Here is a letter from a woman who was given some funding for her Journey in 2017.



Dear JFW,

I got back from London yesterday. It was amazing! I'm so inspired I don't even need the thirty days to tell about my Journey! Here are my paragraphs and pictures from my experience. Thank you!!



Sometimes you go places that change your life, sometimes you meet people that change your life...sometimes both happens simultaneously. I signed up for a yoga workshop in a different country where I knew no one. I knew it was going to be a journey, I never could've expected what a wonderful journey it was though.

From the very first day of the workshop, everyone was so kind and open. We all worked hard together. There was blood, sweat and tears. At one point we had to each give a presentation on yoga philosophy. I had to overcome my fear of public speaking and share my story and how yoga changed my life. In return, I got to hear amazing stories from everyone else. We all have a common thread, that yoga has helped us ALL deal with everyday life better. I also got to meet a blind woman who practices yoga. She was born blind and has never been able to look at a yoga pose. She listens to descriptions and feels other people in the poses. On our last day, we held an open community yoga class where we had a few blind students. We worked together in groups, letting the blind students feel the poses. We also had to do the poses with our eyes closed so we



Happening Now



JOURNEYS FOR WOMEN

Teaching is about meeting

could understand what it was like to not have sight.

The whole trip from day one was inspiring. It showed me that people are good, that at the root of it we are all the same. It opened me up to difficulties other people have faced. It inspired me to make yoga more accessible to everyone! It inspired me to be kinder and more open. It reminded me that I am good enough just as I am. It changed my life and I thank Journeys for Women in helping me with that.

It was an experience of a lifetime!

Rose



[Journeys for Women](#)



MAINECAN

MAINE COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

MaineCAN has continued to provide project management to the MaineSpark initiative. A statewide initiative to have 60% of Mainers with a credential of value by 2025. MaineCAN has been managing the Future Success track of this initiative, supporting Mainers from grade 6 to approximately 24 years old. Within this work there has been a focus on defining college AND career readiness as well as the promotion of career and technical education in Maine schools. Additionally MaineCAN is partnering with FAME to expand our Aspire Higher Maine program, a program to have seniors complete an application that will allow them to continue their education beyond high school. Because of this partnership, we are also able to promote FAFSA completion by coupling the day with a FAME hosted FAFSA lab. We are also looking forward to beginning our Summer Melt program in partnership with FAME and the MELMAC Education Foundation.

the needs of all your students. Taking care of yourself often takes a backseat. Dream about taking time to replenish yourself. Where would you go? What would you do? Create a journey for you or someone you work with and receive financial help and/or support to make it a reality from [Journeys for Women](#).



[Job Coach Training and Credential Program](#)

Syntiro continues to offer the Job Coach training and credential. Earning the Job Coach Credential consists of two parts: an 18 module online training from the College of Employment Services and a day long face to face training in Fading Supports in the Workplace. For more information [click here](#).

I ❤️ GEAR UP

#heartGEARUP #GEARUPWorks



The Beatrice Rafferty eighth grade headed to East Machias to the DownEast Salmon Federation. There they were given a tour of the hatchery which included some of the history and challenges of the both the salmon and the organization. The different approaches of growth and distribution were explained, and the students were allowed to view the salmon at the different stages in the pen. Later we traveled to a spot on the Gardener Lake outlet to release the fish into the wild.