



**Empowering Discovery**  
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## Seacoast Community Diversion Program

Thanks to the launch of the Seacoast Community Diversion Program (SCDP) this past May, area youth who commit minor, nonviolent offenses will have options beyond traditional punitive measures.

“Juvenile diversion programs are evidence-based and have been met with great success,” said Meme Wheeler, executive director at Chase Home, which helped spearhead the program. “When the diversion program in Greenland shut down in 2010, the Seacoast was left with a gap in services. Our youth suffered because of it.”

According to data provided by the NH Juvenile Court Diversion Network, 78 percent of all youth served in diversion programs in 2012 were free from court involvement one year after program completion and 58 percent remained out of the criminal justice system after three years.

For Sergeant Rebecca Hester of the Portsmouth Police Department, that kind of tangible success reaffirms how important diversion measures are for today’s troubled youth.

“When you hear about the recidivism rates, it’s fantastic that diversion is making that kind of impact,” she said. “I think diversion as a whole is the right approach for kids—and because these programs are tailored to the individual youth, we’re better able to make recommendations designed to support better choices while also honoring the restorative justice piece within the community.”

In New Hampshire, a diversion protocol typically calls for school staff or law enforcement to refer a subject into the program at which point the youth must sign a contract.

“We hold each youth accountable for their actions and hone in on what we feel they would most benefit from,” said SCDP coordinator Cory Towne-Kerr. “It could be family therapy, group therapy with Al-Anon, community service, or apology papers.”

In each case, a family component is required with Families First Health and Support tasked with leading a bi-monthly parents’ group designed to keep the family intimately involved in the diversion process.


Wheeler said they are currently working to become an accredited program within the NH Juvenile Court Diversion Network by the end of the year. Currently, there are 17 accredited diversion programs in the state with SCDP accreditation expected by the end of 2017.

In addition to Chase Home, other program collaborators include the Portsmouth Police Department, New Heights, Portsmouth School System, Exeter School System, Rockingham

Juvenile Court, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Portsmouth School System, Exeter School System, Rockingham Juvenile Court, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).



# Tickets Available for 4th Annual Wine, Appetizer & Chocolate Tasting to Benefit Seacoast Youth



Following three years of steadily increasing attendance, Chase Home's 4th Annual Wine, Appetizer & Chocolate Tasting promises to be the best—and tastiest—yet.

The annual fundraising event, date TBD in November, was launched in 2014 as a way to engage area donors at a time of year when both giving and good food are foremost on people's minds.

"Holding the event in November, right as everyone is kicking off the Holidays, is a wonderful way to get people engaged in our mission," said Chase Home Board Member Mike LaLime, owner of Tre Cleaning & Restoration. "It's a great event for a great cause."

Last year, \$10,000 was raised to support services for youth.

"This event represents a fun, direct way for community members to support a really important nonprofit that is saving lives every day," added LaLime.

According to LaLime, event specifics—date and venue-- will be announced shortly.



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## Chase Home Awarded Additional \$5,000 Grant from CDGB

In an effort to further bolster its community diversion initiative, Chase Home has applied for and received a \$5,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG).

Mike LaLime, Chase Home's Board Member, said the grant will go a long way toward making sure the organization's commitment to diversion continues unabated. "There's a big need for this kind of programming," LaLime said. "Without strategic and targeted funding like this grant from CDBG, we would not be able to meet needs in the community. We are very grateful for this support."

Elise Annunziata, Community Development Coordinator for the city of Portsmouth, said this block grant has existed in Portsmouth since the late 1970's.

"It has helped thousands of people in our community who meet eligibility requirements," she said. "Because of this program, the City of Portsmouth is able to assist public services like The Chase Home in undertaking important building code and life safety improvements to the facility."

To learn more about Chase Home, visit [www.chasehome.org](http://www.chasehome.org).

