

Newsletter of
Sibling Connections, Inc.
29 Hereford Road
Marblehead, MA. 01945

Providing year-round sibling
connection opportunities for
sisters and brothers who are
separated when placed in foster care.

Fall 2007

Our primary mission is to
create enduring relationships for
siblings who experience foster care
through innovative programs and
practices.

“What do you remember from your
childhood? Do you recall a special
memory with your siblings? Blowing
out birthday candles, giving each
other a push on the swings,
welcoming home your first puppy?

Just like you, sisters and brothers
who experience foster care cherish
their sibling relationships. Once they
enter the foster care system, 75% of
them are separated from each other.
Sibling Connections is an
organization that makes it possible
for siblings to come together all
year long.

We invite you to help us transform
the lives of thousands of children
and positively effect the next
generation!”

The Sibling Connection Team

Sibling Connections

The Gift of Belonging

This holiday season, as I think back over
a lifetime of wonderful gifts that I have
received from friends and family, I am
struck by the power of one small gift
wrapped in lavender tissue paper. That
transformative gift was given to me by my
13 year old daughter,
It was a silver paper-
weight inscribed with
the words “What
Would You Attempt
To Do If You Knew
You Would Not
Fail?”

What a fabulous
question! As a fos-
ter parent, I knew
immediately what I would do.

- I would inspire the nation to
re-envision foster care in America.
- I would help the nation turn around
and embrace the 800,000 children we
have placed in the public foster care
system.
- I would create a Menu of Engagement
Opportunities—a dozen stellar
replicable programs that would help
Americans re-think, re-envision, and
re-design the way we care for our
most vulnerable children.
- I would collaborate with A + people
to create, launch, and sustain
innovative programs that provide
enduring relationships and
community connections for children
in the public foster care system.

This one simple gift was a catalyst. I sold
my businesses, became a full time child
advocate for children in the public foster

care system, and began working with
wonderful people to design outstanding
programs that support the building of
enduring relationships for children who
experience foster care.

In 2004, we began a year-round sibling
connection initia-
tive for sisters and
brothers experienc-
ing foster care. The
first program was
Camp To Belong
MA, a summer
camp designed to
connect siblings
ages 8 – 20 years,
who have been



placed in separate foster homes. Camp To
Belong was founded by Lynn Price, a
former youth in care who knows first hand
about the power of the sibling connection.
As a result of her life experience, Lynn cre-
ated a summer camp program that truly cel-
ebrates the sibling bond.

Camp To Belong MA launched in August
2005. We just experienced our third sum-
mer Season in the Berkshires! This month
we began Season Three of our year-round
program, Sibling Sundays. Another chap-
ter of Sibling Sundays is set to open in
November. Our goal is to provide year-
round connection opportunities for every
sister and brother in the Commonwealth.
We hope you will find our work worthy of
your support!

Peace to you and yours,

Judy Cockerton,
Board Chair
Sibling Connections

CTB MA Fall Reunion

Nestled in the heart of the Pioneer Valley is Look Park, a gorgeous 150 acre green space where we gathered for our fall CTB MA Reunion.

The CTB MA Reunion, attended by counselors from as far away as Georgia, is one way that we extend the joy of camp into the school year. Campers from all across the state came by bus and car to spend the day together in family groups creating additional shared memories while being surrounded by their CTB MA family and friends.

Camp To Belong MA offers sisters and brothers time – time to be kids while supported by their counselors all day long. The CTB MA Reunion offers campers a second chance to experience the feeling of belonging that camp offers, as well as an opportunity to re-connect with each other and the CTB MA family!



Happy Campers!

Camp To Belong MA celebrated its third summer season at Camp Taconic in the Berkshires this summer. It's hard to say who had the most fun:

- The sisters and brothers who spent a week together in a beautiful camp setting...
- The wonderful volunteers who donated their time and fabulous energy to bring this stellar program to siblings who have been separated in foster care...
- Nat Saltonstall and the generous Beaver Summer Program staff and families who gifted each CTB MA camper with a Camp Care Package that brought smiles to every camper's face when they first walked into their bunks...
- The CTB MA and Taconic leadership who worked together to make sure that our week in the Berkshires was jammed packed with great events and activities that brought joy and connection into all of our lives...
- Our award-winning camp photographer, Boston Herald photo editor, Arthur Pollock, who spent his days capturing momentous occasions and his nights sharing camp slide shows to very appreciative audiences...
- Corey Manning, our outstanding Youth Director, Super Hero by Day and Comedian by Night...
- Television personality, Andrea Baptiste, who came and shared her giving spirit with us all week, and who arranged for our last night's celebrity guest...
- Legendary RunDMC rap artist, Darryl "DMC" McDaniels, who came to camp to inspire campers and counselors with his story about adoption from foster care and his magical music...

We all had an outstanding time and look forward to Season Four! ●

Sibling Sundays Expands!

There are 800,000 children who experience foster care in America. 12,000 live in Massachusetts. Children in foster care have been separated from everything familiar: their homes, their parents, their neighborhoods. More than half have also been separated from their sisters and brothers.

In September 2005, Sibling Sundays was launched to provide siblings with year-round opportunities to strengthen their sibling connection. This October we began our third year of programming.

On a beautiful fall day, kids and counselors met at the Treehouse community. They played cooperative games, participated in animal therapy, made Sibling Scarves, and had lunch together before heading over to McCray's Farm to pick pumpkins and sample homemade ice cream.

Sibling Sundays offers sisters and brothers who don't live together regularly scheduled opportunities to connect in a safe environment. Kids learn that the sibling relationship is a viable family bond. The program reduces potential isolation associated with being in foster care. It provides examples of positive life coping strategies essential to dealing with the difficulties of family separation and severed family relationships.



From the CTB MA Director

This year we are establishing a brand new non-profit organization called Sibling Connections. This enhances our ability to meet the broader needs of siblings who are separated when placed in foster care. The Sibling Connections Team will continue to bring siblings together through Camp To Belong MA. In addition, we will expand our Sibling Sunday program and begin to develop a year-round program called We Are Family! for younger sisters and brothers.

We have brought over 200 siblings together since we began our year-round work in 2005. The youth we serve are amazing young people. They have taught us so much. Many times we have heard, "Camp To Belong was the best week of my life!" and "Seeing my family and being with my sisters and brothers all day for five days means so much to me." They tell us that they are just so glad to be together.

We want to thank all of the individuals and organizations who have made our programming possible. Your donations of time, dollars, program materials, and wonderful energy are truly making a difference!

Tawni Whitney, CTB MA Director

THANKS TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!

Sandy Bakaysa	Elise Herrig	Lynn Price
Andrea Baptiste	Sheila Kane	Adam Roy
Rachel Bennett	Bianca Latessa	Jason Runnals
Nonie Bouthilette	Dorothy Lombardi	Julie Saunders
Andrew Cayward	Regina Luchini	Bridget Schirripa
Kerry Cayward	Corey Manning	Harvey Shepard
Judy Cockerton	Michael Marlow	Shaemus Shepard
Katherine Davis	Phil Mastroianni	Deborah Smith
Christopher Dial	Emily McAdam	Marie Smith
Christine Flannery	Stefanie Millette	Byron Moore Thomas
Jimmy Flannery	Krystal Moon	Kyessa Moore Thomas
Katherine Flynn	Joanna Neas	Va Thong
Kathleen Galvin	Amanda Neas	Keeley Tobler
Matt Gancz	Leah Novotny	Allison Welna
Connie Harris	LaShanta Petroski-Ackley	Tawni Whitney
Peter Harris	Jeffrey Pike	Seth Window
Eleanor Hartzell	Arthur Pollock	Leslie Young
Tyler Harlow	Jenna Pollock	

Together we are making a difference!



Holiday Shopping Have You Tied Up in Ribbons?



This holiday season, create a new gift giving tradition. Choose to give a gift that is meaningful, fulfilling, and long lasting – a gift to Sibling Connections that will enhance the lives of sisters and brothers who experience foster care.

Thank you for your generous support!

Sibling Connections Wish List:

- A summer campership to Camp To Belong MA - \$500.00 per camper
- A year of Sibling Sundays - \$1,000.00 per year
- Transportation to and from one of our programs - \$100.00 per season
- Animal Therapy sessions - \$50.00 per session
- The Summer Circus Program at CTB MA - \$100.00 per camper
- Carnival at CTB MA - \$350.00 per season
- A Sibling Garden Program - \$150.00 per camper
- Our campwide Birthday Celebration - \$350.00 per season
- The Birthday Store - \$25.00 per gift
- Design and Research of We Are Family! for little sibs, ages 0 – 7 years - \$1,000.00
- CTB MA Volunteer Training - \$500.00 per season
- We Are Family! Volunteer Training - \$100.00 per person

Give in honor of a loved one, a friend, a colleague, a coach, or a teacher.

It's easy!

Just read our Sibling Connections Wish List, then
Send a check to: Sibling Connections
29 Hereford Road Marblehead, MA.

We appreciate your gift and will work diligently to ensure that it enriches the life of a sibling group separated in foster care!

*Peace and Joy,
The Sibling Connections Team*