

The Roundtable

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A Real Head Start

It began with a knock on the door. Renae Muscatell, her mother and her siblings were living in Capehart in the 1970's. Life was difficult. The visit from the Penquis Head Start representative enabled her brother to enroll in the Head Start program, and this began the family's relationship with the agency.

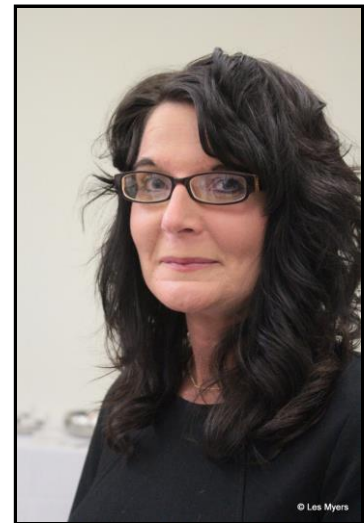
Ms. Muscatell, who described her life before and now with Penquis in this morning's meeting, said her mother worked part-time as a kitchen aid. She returned to school, got a degree, and became a teacher. She worked for Penquis for 20 years. Ms. Muscatell, who has been with Penquis for five years and serves as Community Relations Manager, highlighted the many services of the agency that is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Penquis's services include Child Care & Head Start, Heating & Utilities, Housing, Legal - Family Law, Lending & Financial Services, Parenting & Family Services for Seniors, Sexual Assault Prevention, Starting a Business and Transportation (the familiar Lynx vans travel around the region). They have locations in Penobscot, Piscataquis and Knox counties.

Ms. Muscatell's background includes working for Job Corps and an interesting detour from Maine to the Hopi Indian Reservation in Keams Canyon, Arizona where she taught youth programming and 4th grade.

She spoke of the Penquis backpack program that is a significant benefit for kids in school. The agency gave 1,500 donated backpacks, 200 from LL Bean, to kids last year. The program is funded locally. Penquis gets much of its budget from state and federal grants, as well as from donors.

"We have a job educating the face of poverty," she said. "I would not be here had it not been for Penquis."



Braving the ice

The vacillations in the weather did not deter members and Interact Club visitors from breakfast or hearing Renae Muscatell. **President Kristy Kimball** reported on the Board of Directors meeting held yesterday. We will hear more about the “Rule of 85” and “E-club makeups.” She distributed the December membership report citing 46 active members, one Leave of Absence and one Honorary. Average attendance for the month was 78 percent.

All That Jazz committee members will meet Monday at 5:15 pm at Links Web Design. The Raffle/Auction committee meets January 17 at 7:10 am at Dysarts on Broadway. You are welcome to attend either – or both – meetings. They will serve as “make-ups.”

Joe Pratt circulated another of his colorful charts entitled “The Composite Economic Indicators- Leading, Coincidence and Lagging.” He guided us through graphics resembling EKG readings and what each of the colors meant. “We are somewhat in the middle,” he concluded.

Joe did bell ringing in December for the Salvation Army. His head was saved from the icy blasts by a loan of a hat from **Greg Jamison**. “I’ll bring it to the next meeting,” said a grateful Joe. Today was his “Next meeting.” Greg said he hoped he wouldn’t need it when he travels to Florida on Monday. He will have some extra travel cash- he won \$7 in the weekly drawing. The Joker’s Wild cache has climbed to \$231. **Paul Miragliuolo** just returned from Florida where he said the temperature ranged from 85 to “in the 30s.”

The Happy/Sad Dollar Department took a Happy\$ from **Stacy White**. She earned her real estate license last October and was happy to report that she closed on her first sale on Friday.

John Quinn reported on his Camp Jordan trail work. He said they have opened 6.5 miles of snowmobile and cross-country ski trails. **June Kontio’s** son, aiming for Tucson, Arizona, has made it safely, so far, to Texas.

Les Myers – January 12, 2017



Clear Vision- I



Clear Vision- II