# Annual Report 2014



Finding solutions to poverty and improving the lives of people with low income in Maine

### Maine Equal Justice Partners Names New Executive Director



Robyn Merrill

From the press release, December 4, 2014

After a national search, Maine Equal Justice Partners has chosen Robyn Merrill as its new executive director.

"Robyn has a real passion and energy for MEJP's mission of protecting the rights of Mainers with low income and providing pathways of opportunity to help people overcome poverty", said Charles Dingman, president of MEJP's board of directors. "With her experience both as a lawyer and a social worker, and deep knowledge of our organization, she brings a unique combination of skills to this important position."

... Merrill follows Sara Gagné-Holmes, who has joined the John T. Gorman Foundation as a senior program associate.

# A Message from MEJP's New Executive Director

I am honored to become Maine Equal Justice Partners' next executive director. Maine Equal Justice has made a significant difference in the lives of thousands of Maine people as a result of its advocacy in the courts, legislature and administrative agencies, and I'm excited to be part of continuing that important work.

Recently, MEJP had conversations with hundreds of people across the state, old and young, in small towns and big cities, and from all political persuasions. The common message was resounding — we need to build routes to opportunities that are open to everyone and an economy where every person and every family has the chance to succeed. The economy has been slow to recover from the recession and too many people are struggling to make ends meet. Not everyone who wants a job can find a job, and many jobs that are available simply don't pay enough to get by. These systemic problems demand systemic solutions.

I look forward to working with MEJP's dedicated and skilled staff and board as well as policymakers and all of you to increase opportunity in our state. Together we can craft reforms so that people who work hard are able to support their families and our safety net adequately supports those who truly need it.

Robyn Merrill, Esq.

# Thank you

### November 2013 - October 2014

Maine Equal Justice is deeply grateful to our many supporters who make it possible for us to do the work we do. We thank the Maine Bar Foundation, the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission and the Campaign for Justice, which provide core support to MEJP, as well as the foundations, businesses, nonprofit organizations and individuals that have made a commitment to justice through their generosity to our organization.

### **Legal Services Funders**

Maine Bar Foundation Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Muskie Fund for Legal Services Campaign for Justice

### Foundations/Funders

AARP
Center on Budget and Policy
Priorities
Community Catalyst
Elias Foundation
Frances Hollis Brain Foundation
Helen and George Ladd Charitable
Corporation
John T Gorman Foundation
Maine Health Access Foundation
MaineShare
Maine Community Foundation/
Broad Reach Fund
St. Paul Foundation

# **Businesses and Nonprofit Organizations**

The Bingham Program

**APS Healthcare** Assurant Foundation - Matching Gifts Program **Bangor Savings Bank** CEI, Inc. **Every Child Matters Education** Fund JD'A Consulting, Inc. Kennebec Behavioral Health Kennebec Valley Community Action **Program** Law Offices Of Joe Bornstein Le Garage Restaurant Legal Services for the Elderly Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging Maine Association of Nonprofits Maine Center for Economic Policy Maine Community Health Options Maine Medical Association Maine Primary Care Association Maine Initiatives Maine Street Solutions

Nardi Appraisal Service
Opportunity Alliance
Penquis
Pew –Matching Gifts Program
Preble Street Resource Center
Roki Associates, Inc.
Resources for Organizing Social
Change
Schramm Health Partners/Optumas
Unum –Matching Gifts Program
Verrill Dana
Western Maine Community Action
York County Community Action
Corporation

### **Faith-Based Organizations**

Lewiston Friends Meeting MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

#### **Individuals**

Nancy Audet Pat Averill Leigh Baker E Jeff Barnes Sharon Barker and John Hoyt T. Christopher and Katherine Beach Pamela and Bruce Bell Ed and Ruth Benedikt Bernard Berube Stephen Bien Nancy Birkhimer **Emily and Jerry Bley** Laura Blutstein and Charles Duncan Daniel and Sue Bonior Jen Bonnet and Ben McAlexander Laura Boyett Sue Bradford **Emily and Norman Breitner** Margrethe and William Brown Suzanne Brunner and Janet May Chris and Diane Bryan **Robert Burgess** Sandra Butler Kathy and Steve Carey **Kevin and Catherine Carey** Judith Chamberlain Dennis Chinoy and Katherine Kates

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Gregory

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Lisa Pohlmann Kandyce Powell Anne and Dale Rand Lori and William Real

Ala Reid

Judy Reidt-Parker

Priscilla and Michael Rice

Patricia Riley Debra Rothenberg

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Deborah and Syd Sewall

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Petrucelli Patricia Riley Susan Roche Linda Sanborn Jill and Ed Saxby Nancy Schiff-Slater Ellen Schneiter Diana Scully

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Eliza Townsend Sharon Treat Donna Yellen

## What people are saying about MEJP

I received valuable information, support and guidance from MEJP. The process was daunting at times, at least it seemed that way to me. However, with the support of Mr. Comart and his team, the case has since been resolved and things have been working out well. No words can possibly represent my gratitude!

'Pleased in Penobscot'

Thank you again for taking the time to present about MaineCare to our staff last week. The information you shared was incredibly helpful and you were so patient in how you explained such a complicated system to all of us.

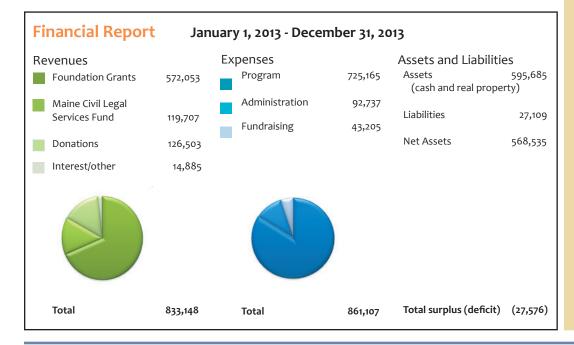
Rochelle, Portland

We are grateful that we can turn to MEJP for reliable publications and up-to-date information regarding changes to the MaineCare program as well as the implementation of the ACA.

Sally M. Wagley, Esq., Winthrop

Crystal was super helpful, very knowledgeable, and cares about the work she does. She is such a gift to case managers.

Dawn, Case Manager who works with at-risk teens



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