Thumbs up to Seacoast Family Promise

Saturday
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Thumbs up to Seacoast Family Promise for persevering and succeeding in its mission to open a new homeless day center location in Exeter.

After outgrowing its location at the Stratham Community Church, it took Seacoast Family Promise a couple years to come out on the winning side of a legal battle that went to the state Supreme Court before it could recently open the new center on Hampton Road.

The nonprofit organization was challenged by residents in neighborhoods around the home who expressed concern about safety and property values.

Pati Frew-Waters, executive director at Seacoast Family Promise, is hopeful the neighbors will now see there is no reason for alarm.

Certainly people like Aleighsha Welch, her boyfriend and children appreciate having Seacoast Family Promise to help them. SFP offers day services to about 25 families a year, and it’s part of an interfaith church network that provides residences.

Welch and her family were living in a campground in 2014 when her boyfriend was forced out of work by a back injury. After getting help from SFP, now she and her family live in a three-bedroom unit at the Portsmouth Housing Authority’s Gosling Meadows. Her son attends Portsmouth Middle School and her daughter goes to New Franklin School.

SFP’s new center has a napping room for kids, storage space for families, office space, a conference room and private meeting spaces. There is a computer area for families to write resumes, submit job applications and more.

Good luck and best wishes to SFP and all families who need its help.
Thumbs up to Winnacunnet High School senior Connor Murray and everyone supporting this driven student as he gets a huge jump start in his career.

Murray last month became a licensed Realtor and helped upgrade and sell a home for almost $200,000, giving him great experience as he gets ready to go to the University of Miami to study architecture. He has received a lot of help from Dominique Fehr, his mentor at RE/MAX, the real estate firm where he's working. Praise goes, too, to the WHS Extended Learning Opportunity program, which helped set up the internship.

“I just love real estate,” said Murray, who started out by building with Legos as a young child and has recently worked on renovating rooms in his own house. “I get the feeling of it, just makes me excited like waking up to Christmas morning. If something comes on the market, I get an instant excitement.”

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Thumbs up to Joanna Kelley of Portsmouth, who was named 2017 Big Sister of the Year by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire.

Anyone who has taken part in this program knows how much it can mean to a young person to have someone to look up to, to mentor them, to confide in and to just have a fun being around. Kelley is one of those people, having been a Little Sister as a child.

“I knew I had to reciprocate,” she said. “Being lucky enough to be introduced to the good in life, there was nothing I wanted more than to show the youth their worth as well.”

Kelley called her 11-year-old Little Sister, calling her “one of the most remarkable individuals I have ever met.”