



November 2023

Dear Community Partner,

Autumn brings delight to our senses: the spectacular colors, the apple harvest bringing us cider and donuts, can you smell them? The crisp leaves under our feet on a cool stroll through the woods. For many, we are grateful to be able to think only of harvest and bounty. But not everyone shares in this abundance.

For some, summer meant skyrocketing electric bills from air conditioning, while others endured sleepless nights without such luxuries. Many faced reduced work hours due to workforce shortages, compounding financial stress. Childcare costs now rival mortgage payments, with lengthy waitlists, exacerbating challenges for families.

Fall brings not joy but added stress for those less fortunate. Winter's hardships loom. This cycle is not new to us here at Lakes Region Community Services (LRCS), and it highlights the constant phrase that echoes within our organization: "unmet needs."

Requests for assistance pour in from families in crisis. We are acutely aware that no matter what service we provide for social, developmental, or mental health well-being, our impact is limited when families lack basic necessities like food, housing, heat, and transportation. Even our own dedicated employees sometimes find themselves in similar circumstances, and as an organization, we face gaps in funding for staff training, education, and fair wages.

Crowdfunding has gained popularity for addressing one-time financial needs through community support. For LRCS, you are our "crowd." Your continuous generosity enables us to serve your community daily.

This holiday season, help us continue making a difference. Your contributions directly meet unmet needs here in the Lakes Region. Enjoy the holiday season that is upon us, while helping others do the same!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca L. Bryant".

Rebecca L. Bryant,
President and CEO

See the back page for highlights on how your contributions for unmet needs are making a difference for LRCS families and individuals in the Lakes Region.

On March 8, 2023, the McPhail family faced their most challenging chapter when Elizabeth was admitted to Massachusetts General Hospital, battling total respiratory failure. Her survival seemed uncertain, with a mere 6% chance of making it through. For Elizabeth and her mother, Josephine, this period became a daunting rollercoaster ride of resilience.



Josephine, facing the emotional burden of her daughter's critical condition, found comfort in the assistance of LRCS. As a single parent with limited resources, the financial strain was immense, with hotel expenses, parking fees, and daily meals threatening to overwhelm her.

In their darkest hours, LRCS became the beacon of hope this family needed. LRCS provided essential funds to cover these unforeseen costs, ensuring that Josephine could be by Elizabeth's side throughout her hospital stay.

As Elizabeth slowly regained her strength through weeks of therapy, her unwavering determination and tireless support from her mother became the driving force behind her remarkable recovery. Finally, on a warm mid-June day, Elizabeth returned home.

Their journey through Elizabeth's illness and recovery was incredibly challenging, but the financial support from LRCS for their unmet needs acted as a lifeline that kept Josephine and Elizabeth together during their most critical moments.

In late September, Chelsea received a dire notice from the electric company, threatening to disconnect power to her shared home with Kayle's father if a looming \$1,000 bill went unpaid. The financial strain was overwhelming, especially with a 1-year-old to care for.

Thankfully, Chelsea had an anchor in LRCS, where she had been receiving support since high school. She had recently started working with LRCS's Family Resource Center Step Ahead Program. This program was her guiding light, offering assistance in achieving life goals, solving problems, accessing community resources, and empowering her to become independent.

Step Ahead secured the funds to cover Chelsea's entire electric bill, alleviating her stress and worries. With a one-year-old daughter, she couldn't afford to have her power shut off.

With the crisis resolved, Chelsea and Kayle have brighter days ahead. Chelsea was recently approved for a two-bedroom apartment under the Housing Choice Voucher program, allowing her and Kayle to move out of their unstable living situation and into a home within walking distance of her job. The support from LRCS transformed Chelsea's life from chaos and uncertainty to one filled with hope and ambition.



She now looks forward to decorating Kayle's new room in their apartment and saving for her first car. Chelsea's life is on track, and with the support from LRCS, she's never felt better or more optimistic about her and Kayle's future.