



The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden

Words About The Community School

Two Organizations Become One to Better Serve Maine Youth

With over 139 years of combined experience, The Community School and Opportunity Farm aim to achieve one goal: to provide Maine youth with an opportunity for growth and to achieve their full potential.

The Community School of Camden has merged with Opportunity Farm to create “The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden.” The merger has been carefully planned for over two years. Both organizations have shared the same goal of encouraging life-long learning and providing students with the skills and experiences necessary to connect with their families, practice personal responsibility, and contribute to their communities. Dr. Dorothy Foote has been named the new Head of School.

The Community School, Maine’s first alternative high school, provides two core programs: a nine-month Residential Program, and a home-based Passages program for teen parents, both of which culminate in a state of Maine approved high school diploma. “Our use of restorative justice practices, strengths-based work and Positive Youth Development provides some of the greatest support of adolescent success today,” Foote said.

Both The Community School and Opportunity Farm agree that the best way to support at-risk youth is to provide high quality access to education. Both organizations have also placed heavy emphasis on community service and community engagement. This entails everything from volunteering with the local fire department, to serving as after school mentors, to engaging with the natural world and learning how to become more environmentally conscious. As one Community School graduate stated, “Students graduating know how to hook into a community and become civically engaged. They learn to invest not only in themselves but in their world.”

The majority of the school’s funding comes from grants and fundraisers. The Community School never turns a student away due to an inability to pay, and tuition assistance and scholarships are available. The newly formed Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden will provide opportunities for more than 60 students during the first year of operation.

The Community School brings an experienced and pioneering team of educators led by Dr. Foote, as well as a strong track record of success in working with Maine youth in innovative ways. Dr. Foote has years of research experience in adolescent psychology and the development of social justice programs, and serves as an adjunct professor of adolescent psychology at The University of Maine.

The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden will give many at-risk adolescents in Maine the tools they need to reach their potential and become confident, actively involved members of their communities.

“The Community School quietly demonstrates what ‘no child left behind’ really means.”

Hope Magazine

“The day I came to The Community School was the day I turned my life around.”

Billie P, Class of 2010

Sample Areas of Study

- Art
- Budgeting
- American Sign Language
- Culinary Arts
- Environmental Science
- Life Skills Math
- Creative Writing
- Documentary Film
- English Language Arts
- Experiential Learning Expeditions
- Career Exploration Opportunities
- Social Justice and Diversity



The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden

- The Community School at Camden was founded in 1973 by Dora Liewow and Emanuel Pariser as Maine's first alternative high school
- Opportunity Farm was founded in 1910 by Lewiston resident, F. Forrest Pease
- The merger of The Community School and Opportunity Farm was effective as of July 1, 2011, creating The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden
- The Community Schools serve over 60 adolescents each year
- The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden employ 26 full and part-time staff members
- The Community Schools offer two core programs: a Residential Program for youth at risk of high school non-completion, and a home-based Passages Program for teen parents
- For the past several years, The Community School has celebrated a 100% graduation rate in both of its programs
- In 2010, 96% of students were offered employment immediately upon graduation
 - 42% applied and were accepted at their college of choice

How to Apply

- Applicants to the Residential Program must be between the ages of 16-20
- Applicants to The Passages Program must be teen parents or expectant teen parents ages 14-20, residing in Knox, Lincoln, Waldo, Sagadahoc, Androscoggin, Cumberland or Washington counties
- For more information, or to request an admissions packet, contact The Admissions Office at 207-236-3000, x 206

Dr. Dorothy Foote



Dr. Dorothy D. Foote has served as The Community School's Head of School since 2008. She holds a Master of Science in Education and Human Development, and a Ph.D. in Education and Psychology. Foote complements a passion for education and research with a deep appreciation for adolescence. She finds that creating the right culture within an academic setting is central to its success. Education must be catered individually to each student in order to create a lasting engagement. Foote does not believe in focusing on perceived weaknesses or disabilities but on strengths-based work in the framework of Positive Youth Development and student-centered learning.

Foote is honored to be named Head of The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden, and looks forward to bringing her history in business, education, and social justice together to help serve many more Maine youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood.



The Community Schools At Opportunity Farm and Camden

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