




Moving forward

Monarch School 
of New England



As the Executive Director, I am honored to serve in this role, having come from the ranks as Physical Therapist and then as Program Director. This has given me a unique perspective on the school as I have been involved in both direct care and administration.

My vision is for the Monarch School to be the entity public schools come to when they are faced with issues they cannot handle—whether it be for a particular student, or an entire program to be developed. We can plan for any individual of any ability in any setting. We have assembled an amazing group of very talented individuals with multiple years of service working collaboratively in a loving and nurturing environment. We work to promote independence across all areas: academics, life skills and community integration.

This is an exciting time at the Monarch School of New England. It is a time of transition—a time of moving forward. We are changing how we do business. We are leaner and more efficient; our philosophy of inclusion is clearly reflected in all aspects of our programming.

We are actively committed to returning students to public schools in their home communities as soon as the student, the school, and the community are ready to successfully support them. This philosophy is made clear the moment a parent, student or district representative visits our program. Our students graduate with skills and a resume of the jobs they have held; they contribute meaningfully to their own lives as well as to the community around them.

Academics: Teachers ensure access to the general curriculum so that students actively participate in the New Hampshire Frameworks as opposed to just being exposed to it. Staff modify and adapt the curriculum for each individual student. We look at the “whole child,” unlocking student potential by identifying strengths and preferences, capitalizing on

what they *can* do—their abilities, as well as what motivates the child. We believe motivation leads to active participation which results in true learning.

Life Skills: In addition to academics, we offer a comprehensive life skills curriculum that focuses on self care tasks such as grooming, meal preparation and housekeeping. It also includes daily exercise through various lifelong leisure skills such as kayaking, hippotherapy, adaptive skiing, horticulture and Special Olympics. New Hampshire offers great opportunities for our kiddos to be outdoors, active and happy.

We understand that for a student to live a full life, he or she must learn to be a functional member of a family and community. As such, our students participate in daily jobs that are meaningful and real, including meal preparation and clean-up, laundry, nurturing our many plants and gardens, and participating in the school’s “Dog Bone” enterprise. Older students attend our Vocational Center, eventually being placed in the community with a job coach.

Our students excel in the jobs in which they are placed because we work with parents and schools to identify goals and develop skills unique to each student, matching them with jobs they might continue as they transition to adulthood. Ongoing dialogue with families to discover their hopes and dreams for their child’s future is paramount to all programming.

My vision is to continue to build upon our partnerships with public schools, offering them “unlimited opportunities for students with special needs.” As we move forward in this new decade, we want to be THE SCHOOL students with significant disabilities attend to realize their full potential.

Diane Gagnon
Executive Director

The Monarch School of New England

Rooted in the belief that each child deserves an environment in which they can flourish, the Monarch School of New England designs programs based on the individual needs and capabilities of each student. Students here are seen for their *abilities*, not for their disabilities—for their capacity to learn and to grow.

Teachers, Program Assistants, Education Technicians, Behaviorists, School Psychologist, Occupational Therapists, Nurses, Physical Therapists and Speech & Language Pathologists are all involved in supporting a child's learning. It's a team approach in which the needs of the whole person are addressed.

Vision

The Monarch School of New England brings individuals with intellectual, physical, medical and behavioral disabilities into the mainstream of everyday life.

Mission

The Monarch School of New England supports individuals with special needs so they can realize their greatest potential. In this nurturing environment, a comprehensively trained staff works one-on-one with each individual, uniquely integrating both education and therapy, to ensure successful transitions to school and the community.

Approach

Our success is predicated on the belief that services can be more effectively provided through an integrated team approach and with a vast array of traditional and innovative programs. Education is the basis for working with each child; lessons are aligned with the Frameworks and Standards of the New Hampshire Department of Education and the Maine Learning Results.

This approach requires cooperation, collaboration and team work with parents, teachers, therapists, nurses, program assistants, educational technicians, district personnel, community and other stakeholders. Our programs are flexible, adaptable and portable—the Monarch School can develop and carry out programs to fit the needs of any person with special needs in any environment.

Programs

LONG-STAY: Provides integrated services to students who require interventions over an indeterminate period of time with annual reviews.

SHORT-STAY: Provides integrated services to students who require interventions over a period of 6 to 24 months, based on individual needs with periodic reviews (monthly to quarterly). MSNE will collaborate with the district to provide a smooth transition back to the sending district. Collaboration for a common purpose.

COLLABORATIVE: Provides school-based support, technical assistance, program development and transition services for students with special needs. We work with schools through a team-based, integrative approach, reflecting the method in which our services are delivered to students.





Ilana is 18 years old and lives in Maine with her mom and dad. Her brother Robbie is away at college but comes home every other weekend to be with his family. They are a close bunch.

Ilana is a high school student at the Monarch School of New England.

Sharon, Ilana's mom, talks about her daughter—

People are so lucky to know her. She loves people...she lets me love people and because of her, I have so much empathy for others. I love her more than anything in the world.



Ilana

As a student at the Monarch School of New England's Williams' site, Ilana spends much of her time learning functional skills—skills she needs to have when she graduates from school into the community. She knows how to exchange money at a store and how to order from a menu. She also recognizes and understands the meaning of “sight words”—words that have an everyday use and are found on signs, in jobs, at grocery stores, and in restaurants.

The goal is for Ilana to find a paid position with a job coach; because she is so social, she needs to be in the community working with others. She is very proud of her time at the school—it is evident in the way she interacts with others and in the respect she has gained for herself.

This carries over to home and to the life she shares with her family, where her brother Robbie is one of her biggest fans.

She can always make me laugh; she's just really funny. She has taught me about patience and about letting go of things. I want her to do as much as she can in life, to be involved and to have as normal a life as anyone else. There's no other way about it.

It is clear that Ilana is a happy young woman—her spirit, her interest in other people and her sense of play all come together to make one, great package. One of her favorite parts of the school week is 1:00 Thursday afternoons: “girls group.” This is a time when the older girls get together to learn more about themselves as individuals, their likes and dislikes. Sometimes they use art to make gifts, including collages. Other times they paint their fingernails, put on makeup and do all those “girly-girl” things teenagers do. This is serious business and the girls have no trouble enjoying themselves.

By the time Ilana graduates, she will be ready to take on her part of the world.



The first thing you notice about Sarah is her smile. The second thing you notice about Sarah is her smile—and that she smiles a lot. She is a happy girl.

Sarah is 12 years old and in the 6th grade at the Monarch School of New England.

Outside of going to school, she and her family do everything together. Her brothers Zachary and Michael play sports all year long; Sarah is part of the crowd that cheers them on. With her family, she goes to Shaws, Wal-Mart, the movies, apple picking, the mall, and every summer, to Storyland or sometimes Disneyworld.

Her parents, Kristine and Jason, believe it's important that she be treated like a "normal kid" as there will be times in her life when that won't happen. Says Kristine:

It's important at a younger age for her to feel strong and confident about herself so that she will be ok if someone has an attitude and her big brother isn't around to help.

Treating her like a 'normal kid' is one of the things that helped Kristine and Jason decide on the Monarch School:

.....we heard about the hippotherapy and the pool therapy, kayaking and all these things she'd be doing — they were going to treat her like a normal kid. Everyone is treated the same at the school, it doesn't matter whether they are in a wheelchair or they can walk.

Sarah's parents are happy with her progress at the Monarch School. They appreciate staff's "willingness to listen and to hear things that we (as parents) have to say. Staff doesn't say we're the experts and we know what we're doing so we'll do it this way—they are always willing to change. If they set a course and then see it's not working, they're quick to adjust until they find the one thing that will accomplish what they want to do."

Sarah has made great progress at the school but the time has come when she will transition back to school in the community in which she lives.

For Sarah, plans to transition began a year in advance of her return. The Monarch School of New England, Sarah's parents and the team at Candia where she will return are part of the process. Rebecca Forrestall, Director of Student Services for Candia has been sensitive to the needs of Sarah—there is a collaboration between the schools to make this transition as smooth as possible. Kate Sisneroz, Sarah's teacher, states that Becky has been "caring and compassionate, always working for Sarah's best interest."

Transitions offer new opportunities for learning and growth. Sarah is ready.

Sarah



For the Monarch School of New England's unique population, vocational education provides opportunities for individuals with a disability to participate in vocational experiences that will increase independence, self-confidence, and self-esteem to achieve personal and vocational outcomes.

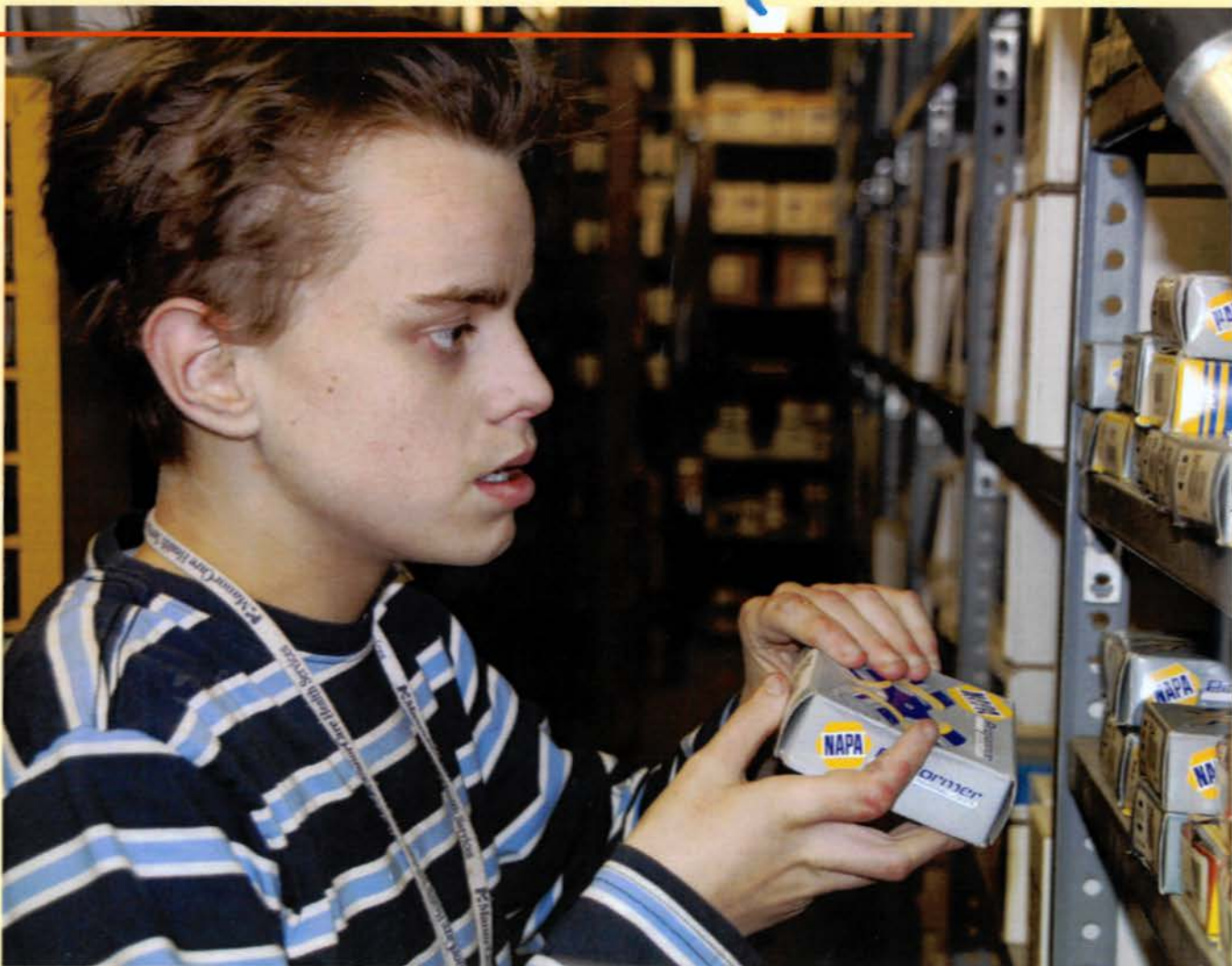
Based on their abilities, students progress through the following phases:

1. Pre-vocational
2. Vocational
3. Community-based work
4. School-to-work transition

Separately, these programs can be looked at as steps leading to real life work.

Together, students are given a learning experience that encourages the development of necessary skills and behaviors to be successful in a real work setting. An overlap in the types of activities performed during each stage is present, where the challenge increases depending on the student's development.

Matt



VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

At local work sites, students engage in a variety of jobs that promote skill development and work ethic. Examples of tasks in which our students are involved include:

- Folding brochures
- Addressing labels for mailings
- Stuffing envelopes
- Shredding documents
- Laundry
- Inventory
- Light Cleaning
- Collating/assembling packets of materials
- Recycling materials
- Restocking products
- Indoor plant maintenance

Finding the most motivating occupation that offers an optimal learning and working experience centers on the student's desires: what are their interests? What might they enjoy doing? How will it help them develop skills for work in the community?

For all of our students, it is being out in the world of work that ensures their lives after graduation will be successful.

Please call us if you are interested in our students assisting your business; we would love the chance to help.

Purposeful and meaningful tasks create a sense of accomplishment and instill self-worth and confidence in our students. A positive sense of self and motivation are attributes that most of us take for granted. Here at the Monarch School, we nurture, promote, and celebrate them with our students.

MARK BULLARD
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant



How you can help.

We work with children with special needs throughout the whole school year—from our fall/spring semesters to our summer school, we offer our students unlimited opportunities to become the best they can be. This not only includes learning in the classroom but also learning in the field: hippotherapy, aquatherapy, community work positions and other experiences that move them out into the world.

We welcome your gifts as we continue to grow and build our programs to meet the needs of our students.

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Steven Wilson
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Carol Young

Dear Friends and Family of the
Monarch School of New England,

As we welcome spring in this year, I can't help but reflect on the many changes that have taken place at the School over the last year and how proud I am personally that our leadership team and staff have come together with a dedication, strengthened team spirit, and positive vision for the future. With this restructure behind us, we are seeing solid gains and year end projections that will ensure a healthy financial position going forward. Under the direction of our new Executive Director Diane Gagnon, the management team and staff have been very busy working on streamlining operational processes, updating policies and procedures as well as tackling beautification projects for our buildings, while ensuring that we continue to provide the same level of excellence for our students.

With the challenges of the economy, there are many school districts still dealing with cutbacks which includes finding ways to provide alternative quality programs for their special needs population. As a result, this situation has presented some very exciting opportunities for our Monarch School and its Collaborative team. We are now expanding our partnerships with special education directors all over New England in assisting them with evaluating students, training staff and helping them to set individual education programs geared towards integrating their students back into the mainstream classroom. This doesn't mean we won't be seeing new students coming to our school. Just the opposite. We have actually enrolled new students beyond our normal operating area as a result of all this activity. We believe as we continue our marketing and collaborative efforts to school districts, community health care providers, civic organizations and state government, the Monarch School of New England will be at the leading edge as the special educational resource in the coming years.

In closing, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Board of Directors, the Leadership Team, Staff and especially Jim Carolan, for the countless hours they all spent in this past year during the restructure. It is because of these individuals, their dedication and caring that the Monarch School of New England stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for all those who open its doors.

Susan DeRoy
President, Board of Directors

Monarch School of New England

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possibilities
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students
with
special
needs.