

MEDIA RELEASE

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1+1=3; Math that creates no wrong door for Mainers: Penquis and Charlotte White Center to Unite

October 9, 2018--The Charlotte White Center and Penquis, two prominent nonprofit service providers, announced the merger of the two organizations, effective January 1, 2019.

Founded 39 years ago, the Charlotte White Center provides residential, outreach, and counseling services to people affected by cognitive or developmental disabilities, behavioral or mental health challenges, domestic violence, or acquired brain injuries. Penquis, celebrating its 51st anniversary this year, provides a broad range of services that increase financial security, reliable transportation, stable housing, school readiness, and healthy, nurturing environments for youth and families.

The merger is the culmination of more than two years of discussions between the two boards. After working together to identify ways in which the two agencies could strengthen and expand resources for individuals and the community, there was unanimous agreement that unifying the two organizations under the Penquis name offered the greatest benefit. The combined organization will retain existing Piscataquis County operations, including the Penquis office on North Street and the Richard Brown Administrative Building on Bangor Road, as well as a number of residential sites woven into the fabric of Piscataquis County communities.

Penquis CEO Kara Hay has been serving as the CEO of the Charlotte White Center under a management agreement signed in November 2017. “As the CEO of both agencies,” says Hay, “I feel that this is a fantastic decision for each of our agencies, that holds the promise of growth, while maintaining the excellence expected by both agencies.”

The benefits stated by Hay include greater diversification of funding and services, economies of scale and skills in services and systems, decreased administrative costs, and a continuum of services that support a wraparound approach or “no wrong door” to service delivery, all of which are good news for individuals and communities served. In addition to having a more integrated system of care that will immediately enhance access to services, the merger will provide future opportunities for the organization to add stability, be creative in creating solutions, and expand services throughout Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties.

According to Hay, there will be no negative impact to services or employees as a result of the merger. “Services will continue to be delivered by the same staff and with the same care and quality that clients have come to expect from the Charlotte White Center. However, the merger only makes sense if I believe there is potential for greater, more comprehensive service to our clients”.

“This really is the best possible outcome,” said Cynthia Freeman Cyr, president of the Charlotte White Center Board of Directors. “The comprehensive suite of services to be offered under the Penquis name will have a much greater impact than what either organization could accomplish on its own. The merge allows the Charlotte White Center’s name to stay intact and grow within Penquis. We are proud to join the Penquis family and draw on our nearly four decades of experience to bring the best services possible to our clients and communities.”

Together, the two organizations serve approximately 18,000 individuals annually and employ close to 700 people in Knox, Penobscot, and Piscataquis counties, making the unified agency one of the largest employers in both Piscataquis and Penobscot counties. Bringing close to \$65 million in grant and philanthropic income to the region, the combined organization will offer a wider array of services to assist clients.

“The Charlotte White Center and Penquis are both well-respected, mission-driven organizations,” said Ann Matlack, chair of the Penquis Board of Directors. “Individually, we have been very successful providing quality programs, but, together, we can do even more for the people and communities we serve. We welcome the Charlotte White Center’s wealth of talent and expertise as we move forward together to improve health and combat poverty in our region.”

Hay sees a bright future. “The two organizations have a common vision, shared values, and a commitment to the health and well-being of Maine residents. By working together as one, we will have more opportunities than ever to help families and communities thrive.”

The organizations will combine operations over the coming months and officially conduct business under the Penquis name beginning January 1, 2019. For more information about the two organizations, visit their websites at www.charlottewhitecenter.org and www.penquis.org.

About Charlotte White Center

The Charlotte White Center has nearly four decades of experience providing quality community health and social services for adults, children and families affected by intellectual or developmental disabilities, behavioral or mental health challenges, domestic violence, or acquired brain injuries. It serves more than 500 individuals each year and employs more than 300 Maine residents, contributing more than \$9 million in payroll into the local economy. For more information, please visit www.charlottewhitecenter.org or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

About Penquis

Penquis is a leading nonprofit service provider in Penobscot, Piscataquis and Knox counties, and the largest community action agency in the state of Maine. With more than 50 years of experience, 400



employees and an annual budget (including subsidiaries and affiliates) of nearly \$50 million, Penquis helps, on average, more than 17,000 individuals annually to be safe, stable, connected, and financially secure. Penquis focuses its efforts on increasing financial security, stable housing, reliable transportation, school readiness, and safe, nurturing environments for youth and families. It has been recognized for program quality and innovation, most recently receiving the 2018 Nonprofit of the Year Award from the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce and the 2018 Rural Community Transportation System of the Year from the Community Transportation Association of America. For more information, please visit www.penquis.org or connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).