

Nurturing a community where children with chronic medical conditions and their families feel supported, safe to explore and thrive.

Zebra  Crossings

• Empower • Connect • Care •



Case for Support



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A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY



## A unique opportunity to impact a child

When a child is diagnosed with a chronic illness like asthma, a heart condition, diabetes or epilepsy, life changes. Parents and caregivers are forced to pause and pivot. It's terrifying but also presents a unique opportunity.

Managing a child's unique health needs can be a demanding daily task. Family members, particularly parents, may worry more about their child's basic safety and feel adrift in their roles as a medical caretakers. One of Zebra Crossings' primary goals is to reduce the stress that accompanies managing a medical condition. Programming that eliminates judgment and medical barriers allows children to play and socialize freely and allows parents and caregivers to relax and feel supported by a community of others who understand their challenges.

In New Hampshire, approximately 1 in 8 children live with a chronic health condition. In 2009 Zebra Crossings set out to change the lives of children with chronic medical conditions by becoming the first organization in the region to provide supportive programming. Fifteen years later, we continue to expand our programs and increase the number of children and families we serve. We invite you to help us impact the future lives of children living with a chronic medical condition.





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OUR MISSION

## Our Mission

***The mission of Zebra Crossings is to enrich the lives of children with chronic medical conditions. Zebra Crossings helps children develop greater self-confidence, a sense of independence, and a desire to realize their full potential through fun and engaging enrichment programs that build a strong and caring community support network for families.***

Zebra Crossings programs are intentionally designed to further develop each child's skills, boost their independence, and reduce anxiety based on their condition. Programs are **intimate in size** with an average of 8-20 participants, which gives us incredible flexibility in tailoring the activities to each child's needs.

Parents and guardians of children with chronic medical conditions benefit from **respite and community building opportunities** that our programs provide.

We **welcome siblings** to attend our programs, as it helps some children adapt and feel safe. We recognize that the entire family is impacted by a child's chronic illness, and everyone can benefit from the supportive, judgment-free environment.

*"Zebra Crossings is an amazing program! We started attending events last year and it's been a real blessing and an amazing opportunity not only for my youngest daughter with chronic condition to experience new things with kids who are going through the same things in life, but for her sibling that has an opportunity to connect with other siblings. [The programs offered are] very engaging, inclusive and just all-around fun activities. We are very grateful and supportive of this program, and all the hard work that goes into organizing all the events. "*





## Empower. Connect. Care.

At Zebra Crossings, children with chronic medical conditions have a chance to experience new adventures in their communities. They are encouraged to try new experiences and are empowered to approach life with greater confidence. In a supportive and safe peer environment, they build lasting friendships, and they feel included, connected and understood.

Our core values of play, independence, achievement, wellness, and community are incorporated in every program. Activities are conducted at various camps, facilities, and state parks in Southern New Hampshire and Maine.

**Current Programs** inclusive of different medical diagnosis groups such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, JRA, Hemophilia, severe allergies, skin conditions, and autoimmune disorders include:

**Monthly day programs** are offered to keep kids and families connected throughout the year.

**Specialty overnight camp retreats, including:**

**Camp Spinnaker** – Asthma family overnight camp

**Camp Blue Sky** – Down syndrome family overnight camp

**Betsy's Camp** – CLOVES syndrome family overnight camp

**Heart Camp** – Overnight family camp for children with congenital heart defects



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EMPOWER. CONNECT. CARE.



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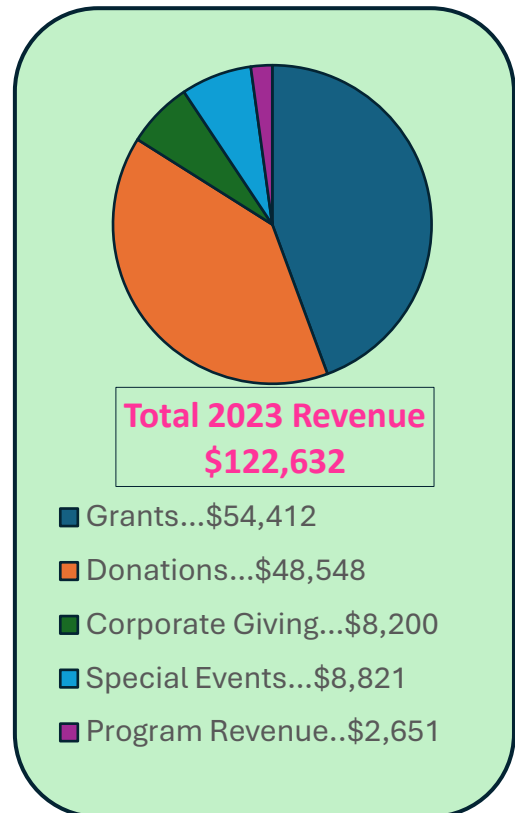
OUR SUCCESS

## Our Success

**Reach and Impact:** Since our first programs in 2010, we have grown from 16 participants to more than 200 children and family members.

**Volunteerism:** Our programs are supported by a strong base of more than 30 volunteers who have provided at least 750 hours of their time.

**Funding:** With the support of generous donors, we are able to offer our programs at a reduced rate, as many of our families face high out of pocket medical expenses. All day programs are free, and scholarships are always available upon request for overnight camp retreats to ensure all interested children and families can benefit from our programs. In 2024, we provided 26 camp scholarships.



**Effecting Change:** We are proud of our parent and youth survey results indicating we are reaching our program objectives. For example, Camp Spinnaker 2024 youth results showed:

- **15% learned about the medical definition of asthma**
- **29% learned how to use their inhaler correctly**
- **50% learned that it's important to take their meds even when they're feeling good and symptom-free**
- **50% learned that an asthma action plan is important**

*"Zebra Crossings' staff and programs have impacted Chloe and our whole family. Through the programs Chloe has been able to hang out with other kids and feel 'normal' rather than 'different.'"*

# Our Vision – Planning for a Better Future

We know from our experience with families and social service organizations that there is a need for our programming to expand and grow.

Our strategic plan for 2025 – 2028 includes new programs for all age groups and the entire family. Zebra Crossings will continue to expand its geographic reach beyond the Seacoast New Hampshire region to serve children and families in other parts of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, New York and beyond.

## With your help, Zebra Crossings will develop and offer:

- The reintroduction of our teen activities, including our Skyhawks counselor-in-training programming for youth ages 13– 18
- Expanded diagnosis specific overnight camp retreats
- Parent Education Programs to address the emotional impact of illness, coping with illness, and sibling concerns

Zebra Crossings is seeking funds to increase access to current programs and support new initiatives. Our staff and volunteers have the expertise and relationships with other health, community, and educational institutions to create and offer additional programs to address the needs of children with chronic health conditions.

## Did you know that from 2023 to 2024, Zebra Crossings ....

- **Quadrupled its monthly day outings offered**
- **Doubled the number of overnight family camps offered**
- **Increased camp attendance, including a 250% increase for asthma camp**

*"Our experience with Zebra Crossings is still young, but I can already tell that it is a community that will strengthen our family's support network. Being part of a group of people who have experienced medical hardship with their children is already helping me (and my son) feel less isolated and more confident to help our family live their best life. The chance to have fun, non-medical related experiences with families that I can lean on is a gift that I didn't know I needed. Thank you for all that you do!"*



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OUR VISION – PLANNING FOR A BETTER FUTURE



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YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

## You Make The Difference... Donate. Sponsor. Volunteer.

Your gift is an investment in our community and will have a direct impact on the lives of children and their families. Philanthropy transforms lives, and for Zebra Crossings kids it helps shape their identity and provides opportunities to grow into strong and active community members.

By supporting our vision for growth, you will make a difference. As a donor, you will help us sustain our tradition of quality and help us expand to fill the existing need for additional programs. Our goal is to increase the number of children and family members served from 250 in 2024 to 300 in 2025. We anticipate this service growth will require \$45,000 in additional revenue and [we need YOU to help us fill the gap!](#)

### Giving opportunities include:

- Annual fund giving that enables us to put the money where it's needed most
- Sponsorships to underwrite specific programs or fundraising events
- Camp scholarship funds to make camp accessible for all families
- Matching gifts to help us leverage NH Gives donations
- Legacy or endowment fund gifts to help us sustain our future

**Please contact Deb Taylor, Executive Director, for more information on customized giving opportunities (contact info on next page).**



*"This program continues to be a bright spot in our lives. We love connecting with other families, especially ones we watch grow every year. The kids look forward to this every year!"*



### Why the name Zebra Crossings?

A zebra crossing is a British term for a crosswalk marked with broad white stripes. It is a place where pedestrians have the right of way to safely cross.

In addition, a zebra's black and white stripes come in different patterns unique to each zebra, just like human fingerprints. A common belief is that the stripes serve as camouflage and when a herd of zebras stand close together, they appear as one and as more powerful.

Children with chronic medical condition are likewise unique, but they can connect and relate to each other because of their conditions. On their own, they might feel like they stand out in their communities because of their perceived limitations or needs. In community, they find strength in numbers and feel empowered.



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Executive Director

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