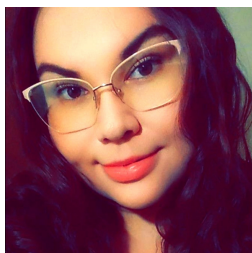


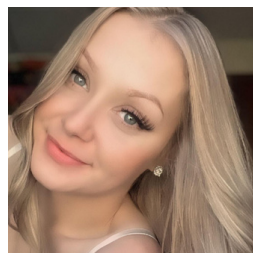
PASSAGES PRESS

A WAYFINDER SCHOOLS STUDENT PUBLICATION

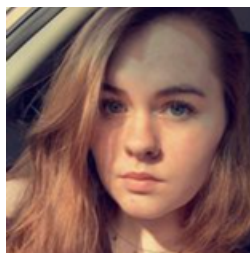
CLASS OF 2022



**Lila
Acheson**
Motahkomikuk



**Lindsey
Berube**
Calais



**Kaslyne
Campbell**
Lisbon Falls



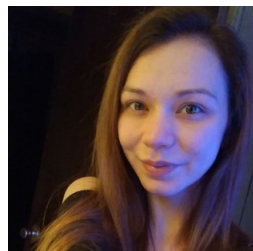
**Mikayla
Desruisseaux**
Sanford



**Madison
Dorais**
Buxton



**Isaiah
Ellis**
Waldoboro



**Autumn
Francis-Stevens**
Eastport



**Lily
Harvey**
Washington



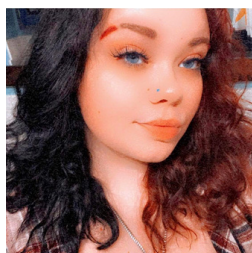
**Daisy
Ingraham**
Hope



**Wade
Lane**
New Harbor



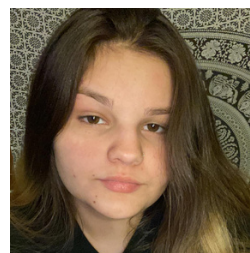
**Brady
Lombardo**
Hollis Center



**Lexus
Moody**
Lewiston



**Jayden
Munroe**
Lewiston



**Norma
Richards**
Hollis Center



**Bri
Robinson**
Auburn

Graduation Speech

by Daisy Ingraham

My little brother once told me at a time that I wasn't feeling confident, that I should be myself, be brave and not care what other people think. Those words have stuck with me to this day. Because of them, I have conquered fears, pushed through things I thought were impossible and quit letting others thoughts stop me. I start off by saying this, because my little brother is the main reason I am standing here today. Why? You may ask. In 2018, I lost him due to an accident. After that, I lost myself in every way a person can be lost. I dropped out of school for a chunk of time, left my job and lived in my bed. I tried multiple alternatives for schooling, but it just didn't feel right. My heart wasn't ready. I couldn't fathom the fact he wouldn't ever physically be in my presence again, but he began to make it VERY well known that he is still here in spirit. He and I used to make up silly songs about chicken nuggets because it was his favorite food. Ever since he passed, we have used that as our communication. It's hard to explain, but using that communication he told me he would be here today. And that's why I'm standing here. To prove to him that those words he told me, really meant something.

As time passed, my ambition to push through slowly came back and I started to work for this couple in the summer. Judith & Bill Jones. They are such kindhearted people and they knew I was struggling. They led me to Wayfinder and I cannot thank them enough for it.

The moment I started at Wayfinder, I knew it was where I belonged. I not only learned the things I needed to, but learned life skills that have helped me greatly. I have never been one to enjoy school, in fact I hated it. But, I can say that ever since I have been at Wayfinder, I LOVE school. They take learning and make it into something fun. In fact, I feel like I've learned more here than I have anywhere else. Standing here today, I'm proud to say I have an overwhelming amount of ambition, have gained confidence, and honestly without Wayfinder, I probably wouldn't have the confidence to be making a speech right now. I am beyond grateful to have been a part of this school. It will always be an important part of me.

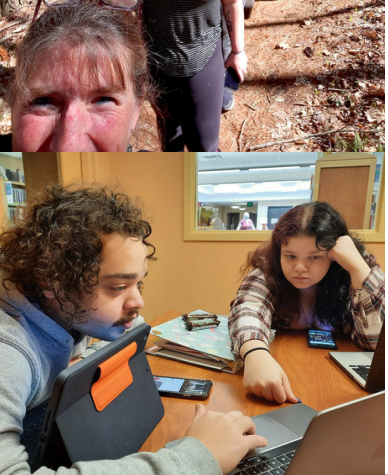
And as for my teacher, Cindy, I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for her. I not only gained the best teacher, but a good friend as well. Every week I always looked forward to telling her all my crazy stories and updates on life while we did schoolwork. She's supported me not only with my schooling, but in my personal life as well. She's proven that she genuinely cares and I'm beyond grateful for her. One thing I've cherished and noticed about her is her sense of humor matches with mine. There hasn't been a single time I'm not laughing around her about something silly. I'm going to utterly miss her.


Lastly I just want to take a moment to thank every other single person that has helped me get here today.

I've waited for this moment for a long time and I'm proud to say I finally made it. Thanks to Wayfinder, I can happily move on to my next chapter in life. As I look back, I'll remember what gave me the strength to achieve. Thanks to everyone who made it possible.



Daisy Ingraham, 2022 Wayfinder Graduate




Wayfinder
 SCHOOLS™
Class of 2022



Lila Acheson Motahkomikuk



My experience with the Passages Program was awesome and unlike any other school I have attended. The program was originally only for students who are pregnant or have kids and had to drop out of high school, but a few years back they opened it up to people who aren't parents and I'm so fortunate to be able to have this chance.

My teacher, Fern, has helped me in so many ways that I've lost count. She not only helped me with my schoolwork and achieving my goals, but also helped me mentally. When I started to get overwhelmed or other life problems got

in the way, she always reminded me of the bigger picture and that the bad feelings never last forever. At this point I definitely consider her family and trust her with things that I probably wouldn't even trust my own family with and that honestly says a lot.

The curriculum is also so much better to me than traditional high school. I got to apply real life experiences with my schoolwork; things like learning to do taxes and understanding abuse, calculating interest, or helping you to get your driver's permit. Basically it is an all-around amazing program where you can actually apply schoolwork to real life.

*“Keep your face always toward the sunshine
- and shadows will fall behind you.”
- Walt Whitman*

Lindsey Berube

Calais



My experience in Passages has been a roller coaster with many ups and downs. I have wanted to give up many times. If it wasn't for my teacher, Fern, being my biggest supporter and always pushing me to be my best I wouldn't be where I am right now, about to graduate. I'm so very thankful for all the opportunities Passages has given me to help better my life for me and my girls.

Kaslynnne Campbell

Lisbon Falls



I have struggled with depression and anxiety since I was 13. It was difficult waking up early to go to school with hundreds of kids everyday. My anxiety couldn't handle it. I appreciate being able to do one-on-one learning and being able to have hard days. Life's tough sometimes but I'm happy that I didn't give up on school completely. I am very lucky Wayfinder accepted me into this school program and couldn't be more thankful for my teacher, Ida, who helped me believe and prove to myself that I could do it.

Mikayla Desruisseaux

Sanford



My experience with the Passages Program has been interesting, in such a great way. This is my 4th and final year in this program and let me just say I have had nothing but such support and encouragement from not only my teacher Dana but also the other staff members and students. I won't lie and say it has been easy though, honestly it's been tough. My 1st year in this program gave me so much hope that I was finally going to graduate and be successful. When the 2nd year came around I was sure that it was becoming too much. I didn't think I would ever complete it, I dragged it out and lost hope. Not because it was too hard or impossible, I was just overwhelmed with my newborn daughter at the time. Each year I continued though. I never gave up even when I wanted to. The thing that kept me going was my wonderful teacher, Dana. She never gave

up on me or thought that I couldn't do it. In my hardest times she stuck by me and supported me, she helped me in any way she could. I didn't think I could do it sometimes, but she knew I could. She kept me on my feet and I thank her most for everything she has done. Being in this program has taught me so much. No obstacle is too big. If you put your mind to it you can do anything. I took challenges and had to complete projects that brought up very painful memories but I also did some that brought up wonderful memories. Living through it all and talking about it all has not only made me stronger but it has made me the person I am today. I am almost done with my final year. This has been the hardest year yet, knowing that I want to graduate and only have a certain amount of time to complete so many core skills and having my son in and out of daycare, it's been very overwhelming. Today I stood here and realized I almost made it to graduation and I even have been working part-time through Goodwill Workforce, a wonderful paid training program that has opened doors for me and showed me all the work opportunities out there. Shortly after graduation I will be doing the job I'm destined to do, that is all thanks to Wayfinder, Passages, and my amazing teacher! I am very thankful for getting the opportunity to work with such amazing people and for being a part of the Wayfinder Passages family.

Madison Dorais

Buxton



When I first started in the Passages Program I was in a really bad spot, it ranged from bad relationships to family and friends to me just not wanting to be a person. I met my teacher Dana. We had a good teacher-student relationship. I missed some meetings and we had to find a good schedule that fit both of us. Despite missing meetings or not always having a ton of work done all the time, Dana encouraged me and pushed me along, with the help of family too, of course. Dana helped me grow and pushed me to get it done. The most successful part that really helped me throughout the Passages Program was having a stable schedule to meet or even just chat. My amazing teacher Dana was always open and available.

My experience with Passages program has been the best thing to ever have helped my life grow. I've struggled so many times the past three years in this program. I fell straight on my face and got back up even more and I don't think that would've ever happened if the Passages Program didn't have such amazing, caring, sympathetic, understanding, and open teachers! I left public high school for Passages and it is 100% better. Yes! 100% better is correct. From core skills to workshops to learning community services to learning how to save someone with CPR even if it's not needed for your job, it's amazing and my experience has been LIFE CHANGING. I AM BLESSED!!!! Thank you Passages, for being the most amazing and life changing schooling program for me, I cannot wait to see what opportunities come next!

“Move forward without second-guessing, no guilt trips, no hesitation. Your purpose is to recreate yourself anew in each moment.”

- Neale Donald Walsch

Isaiah Ellis

Waldoboro



I applied to Passages mainly because of my brother Nicki. I was thinking of dropping out of public school at the time. He told me all about this program and I was very interested in it. Fortunately, after discussing with my mom she said I could join if I didn't fail. She just wanted to make sure I would follow through and do the work.

The biggest plus about the Passages Program over traditional school was that I could work at my own pace. I failed many classes in public school because of the small time limit. My anxiety would increase when asking for help in a large classroom. Having my teacher help me by working one-on-one made a huge difference in my success in school.

Wayfinder has given me a second chance for a proper high school education and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity. I have learned so much that I never thought I'd be interested in, such as science, history, critical thinking, culture and language. My favorite part about Passages has to be the workshops we had. My favorite workshop was going to the Center For Maine Contemporary Art in Rockland.

Passages means so much to me. The senior project I am working on gave me an idea on what I want my career to be, which I never would have figured out if I never joined. My senior project is about understanding how to repair computers and how to turn it into a business. I met with my expert, Gary, who owns Salt Bay Computer in Damariscotta. My original topic was going to be about how to build computers and making a business out of it, but after interviewing Gary about his job, I became more interested in repairs.



I'd like to thank everyone who let me have a second chance for an education, and I'd like to thank Cindy for being so helpful over the past few years, and for being one of the nicest people I've known.

Colby Estes-Poisson Freeport



The Wayfinder program has helped me get the education I wanted and needed that I wouldn't have gotten at the school I was at. This program has given me everything I would have asked for.

Colby chose not to have a photo submitted.

Autumn Francis-Stevens Eastport



I seriously don't know where I would be without the Passages Program. I joined the program in 2019 not long after having my daughter. I wasn't thrilled at the idea of school while raising a newborn, but it really is the perfect program for parents! It wasn't easy getting back into the school routine after not being in school for five years and just becoming a new mother, but Passages has been a big help with how flexible they can be.

I am finally graduating after a long four years. I'm proud of myself for sticking with it and finishing it because there were times when I wanted to quit because I felt like I couldn't do it, but my teacher Fern helped me gain the confidence in myself to get the strength I needed to finish the program and get the high school diploma I never thought I would get. In the past, my biggest issue with high school was having to deal with too many people; I couldn't focus, But the Passages Program is one-on-one, that's what I love about it the most. It is convenient because they come to your house so you don't have to go anywhere.

Throughout the four years of being in the program, my teacher Fern has been a big supporter of mine not only in school but outside of school too. I have had some really hard times throughout my time in school and Fern never gave up on me. I'll forever be thankful because I couldn't have done it without her. I have always been the shy quiet one in the back who doesn't ask for help even though I need it, but Fern always made sure I understood what she was teaching me and was open to me if I needed help with anything, so I never had to worry about not understanding something. When I first started, I would talk down to myself and doubt myself a lot, but Fern helped me change some of those negative behaviors towards myself. I actually looked forward to meeting once a week. It was always a good thing for me because I used to dread school. I have learned so much about myself and I've stepped out of my comfort zone and met so many amazing new people. I am really excited to see what the future holds for me after I graduate.

Lily Harvey Washington



When I look back on my time in Passages I realize that it truly has been some of the best times. The memories and experiences I got from workshops are something I will forever cherish. I specifically enjoyed the day we went apple picking and painted pumpkins.

Everyone I've met through Wayfinder has been so welcoming and kind. Traditional school was a place that I always dreaded going. No matter what I never felt like I fit in or belonged. I love learning and Wayfinder is a great non-traditional way to continue that interest in a way that is customized to you personally. I loved being able to choose what interested me most for my history project and the stuff I learned stayed with me because of that.

I'm beyond thankful for getting a second chance at getting my diploma and I plan to do big things with it. For anyone that is thinking about joining Wayfinder I say go for it and really put your own personal touch in all your work because that is what this program is here for.

Daisy Ingraham

Hope



In November 2018, I lost someone very close to me, my little brother. My life took a downward turn. I was beyond depressed. I dropped out of school for a chunk of time and left my job and basically lived in bed. I felt hopeless for my future. I tried a couple different schools, but couldn't stick with them. I wasn't ready and they didn't seem right for me.

Later on, I started working for this couple each summer. Their names are Judith & Bill Jones. I enjoyed spending time with them. They were very kind and knew how to keep my mind busy. They knew I was struggling and pointed me in the right direction, which is Wayfinder. I cannot thank them enough for it.

I decided to give it a shot and instantly fell in love with Wayfinder. Wayfinder is very special. It isn't like any other school. You learn what you need to and more. Not only that, you genuinely have fun learning. It's rare to hear someone say that going to school is one of their favorite things. Wayfinder made me one of those people.

I feel like I've learned more at Wayfinder in two years than I have in all the other years I spent in other schools. My teacher made subjects I hated fun for me, to the point I didn't hate them as much anymore. I even learned useful life skills that aren't usually taught in other schools, which have really made my everyday life easier.

Not only did I gain all of that, I also gained a true friend. My teacher, Cindy. There hasn't been one unhappy moment when I'm around her. She not only supported me to get my work done, but also supported me in my personal life as well. She always tries to come up with a solution to make me feel better or get through something. She truly cares about her students and continues to prove it every day. I will never forget her and I'm going to utterly miss her.

Overall, Wayfinder has pushed me to find and create my purpose in life. It has brought out the best qualities in me and pushed me out of my comfort zone. It has also helped me see the light in my brother's passing and be able to use it as my motivation to graduate. I can proudly say that I am now in a place in life where I'm very happy. I pushed myself to graduate, I have a steady job and am genuinely content with where I am. This school has played a large role in getting me to this point. I am overwhelmed with emotions and can not find the words to express how beyond thankful I am to have found it.

Wade Lane

New Harbor



My time here at Wayfinder has certainly been interesting. My first years were very productive, and I flew through the core skills. It has not all been great; in the recent months while working towards my Passage project I have gone through multiple crises. However, thankfully, I've been able to recover and keep working towards my goals, with great help from the staff of Wayfinder, particularly my great teacher Ida. Ultimately, I look back upon my time fondly, I wouldn't have had it any other way.

Brady Lombardo

Hollis Center



My time in the Passages Program was fun and amazing. When I first started in the program I thought it was just another way of staying in school longer. I didn't take the program seriously and slacked off not caring about the work or the lack of work I did. I slacked off so much that I was taken off the program. That finally made me realize how crazy I was acting. I realized I was throwing away my last chance of getting my diploma and I didn't want to throw away that. My next chance I got I buckled down and did my work, pushed through every bump in the road to get to this moment, the moment of accomplishment. I tried doing work for a few hours nonstop to get better at finishing work, but that didn't work. I seemed to always get distracted.

Everyday I would find time to do at least a little bit of work then take a break. That seemed to work. One of my biggest successful ways to complete work was to remind myself that I'm graduating. I'm doing this for my diploma. So overall my time in the program was amazing. It taught me real life issues and how to overcome them. Their workshops were always fun and showed how to be involved with the community. Wayfinder Schools has taught me so much but the biggest thing they taught me was to go for it, never let distractions or setbacks stop you from what you want to do. Wayfinder was the best experience and the most fun I ever had with school.

Lexus Moody

Lewiston



From a young age I've been moving all over the states. I've gone from Maine to Arizona, Texas and California. During my sophomore year in high school I ended up moving out of Maine to be with my dad. I knew that as soon as I moved I was going to have to find a new school to go to. I tried a public school and it just wasn't the fit for me. I also tried an online school that wasn't too bad. Less than a year later I was having to move right back to Maine. I knew that this would cause me to not graduate on time. I was told that to finish all the credits I needed, it would take an extra two years. I ended up dropping out.

I wasted so much time in-between schools and everything else I felt like it was time to call it quits. This was until I was told about Wayfinder Schools. In the beginning I still had the fear in the back of my head that I was never going to graduate. Now here I am today finishing up my last bits and pieces to graduate. This school worked better for me than public school did. Wayfinder Schools is a program where you get tons of one-on-one time and that seems to be what worked best for me. I've realized in public schools I get too nervous to even ask questions but as it is now one-on-one, I feel less anxious. This school was an honest blessing in disguise and I couldn't be more grateful.

“You are braver than you think, more talented than you know, and capable of more than you can imagine.”

- Roy T Bennet

Jayden Munroe

Lewiston



My time in Wayfinder has truly been a great experience. In the beginning I was nervous because I didn't know what to expect but as I got into the groove of things it really became easier. But it wouldn't have become easier without Julia. I have never had a teacher so dedicated to her students and just wanting the best for them and out of them. My writing has changed. I used to just throw it together, now I have a whole process. My attitude towards school has changed, before I used to hate it, but Julia makes it enjoyable!

Core skills have become easier as I go through school. I think about going to college a lot. I really liked the workshop at the Good Shepherd Food Bank, that was fun. For other people entering the program I would say just stay the course and everything will work itself out. I am proud of myself, and I am proud of the people who didn't give up on me.

“Take life by the horns, conquer your fears, and live life like a daring adventure!”

- Anonymous

Norma Richards

Hollis Center



I don't know what I would be doing if it wasn't for this program. Public school was very hard for me: socially, mentally, academically. When I was in 10th grade, I lost interest in going to school. I was 16, and instead of being interested in my education, I was interested in getting attention. I stopped going to school, I got pregnant, I was getting myself in trouble, and hanging with the wrong people.

I found Wayfinder Schools in January of 2020. I applied and started in September of 2020, when my daughter was just 4 months old. At first, it was really easy. I was going through my core skills like it was out of style. I had so much fun learning about all the things that actually mattered to me. I made food that I never made before; I learned how to finance and save my money; childhood development; the importance of self-care, etc.

When school started in September of 2021, I told myself I was going to start off strong, that I was going to graduate high school in 2022. In the beginning, everything was going great—I was doing the things I needed to do. But in December, everything went downhill, from anxiety, stress, relationship issues, to depression. Dana offered me to take a month off from school, but I really didn't want to give up on myself, even while going through all of the things that were going on in my life.

I wouldn't be where I am today without my amazing teacher, Dana. She has helped me through thick and thin, pushing me to do better, telling me I could do it when I didn't think I could.

If it wasn't for Dana being able to meet with me twice a week, encouraging me, telling me that I will graduate if I put my mind to it, being there for me through everything I was going through, I don't think I would be graduating. I will forever be grateful for having such an amazing teacher by my side!

Bri Robinson

Auburn



There was a time when I had very little faith in myself, and my education. I was a woman of many hats; I could read well, write, sing, dance, paint- but I had fully convinced myself that learning was just never going to be my forte. And then one day, as I laid on a bed on my friend's floor, newly pregnant and feeling defeated, Julia walked in for her class with her.

She stepped over the toys, led herself with a smile and said “let’s see what we can get done for today!” with such a sense of enthusiasm that it was contagious. Of course, I was immediately intrigued. Why was she here, and my friend not at school instead? Do they go at their own pace? Is she okay with me being here? A million and one questions swirled around in my head.

Finally, I gained the courage to ask what the program was all about, and once informed I jumped at the opportunity and asked to be enrolled myself! Not a whole lot of thought was put behind it besides “I just want to be better for my baby,” and no other decision could have been better for me at that moment.

In my time with Wayfinder, I have discovered who I am as a person. I have attended school through three pregnancies, and through all of that I feel like I have evolved. I learned that I am incredibly good at researching, putting my words to paper and absolutely EXCELLING if I put my mind to it. I learned that I am a good mother, but that there is always room for improvement and that patience is the greatest virtue. I learned how to stand up for myself, speak up for what I believe in and be my own biggest advocate. Because of being in this program, I feel I have become a better, stronger version of myself that I can actually say I am proud of. I will forever be thankful to everyone who has contributed to helping me reach my goals, and having faith in my success even when I haven’t.

*This Passages Press features our graduating class of 2022.
Not pictured: G. Phelps of Searsport.*