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## Good Company

### Easter Seals New Hampshire, Inc. Extends Its Reach to Six States Helping Thousands of People

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Among the many educational, religious and charitable not-for-profit clients served by Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green from its various offices is Easter Seals New Hampshire and its family of affiliated entities.

The relationship between the firm and Easter Seals New Hampshire (ESNH) started in the late 1970s when Attorney Bradford Cook became a member of its Board of Directors at the urging of Manchester insurance advisor Raymond Truncellito, a long time Easter Seals supporter. That relationship continued as Brad went through the chairs at Easter Seals, helping with his family to co-chair the Easter Seals Telethon (a traditional fundraising event for Easter Seals that lasted into the 1990s) and then became Chairman of the Board.

Initially led by Robert Chollette, well-known not-for-profit executive who later went on to Catholic Medical Center and Optima Health and now heads the board of the New Hampshire Society for the Blind, the presidency of Easter Seals was assumed by Larry Gammon in the spring of 1988. Mr. Gammon assembled a team of executives who have overseen the building of the organization into a stable, active provider of services to people with disabilities, physical and emotional, from birth to old age. Current members of the senior management team are Cristine McMahon, the Chief Operating Officer who heads up programs and is known for her creative thinking in devising new ways to help others; Elin Treanor, the Chief Financial Officer; Karen VanDerBeken, Senior Vice President for Development; and Tina Sharby, Senior Vice President for Human Resources. These talented individuals preside over an organization with close to two thousand employees in all of its entities and locations.

Under the leadership of this team, Easter Seals New Hampshire has become the largest Easter Seals' affiliate in the country. Easter Seals, Inc., the national organization, licenses affiliates to perform under the Easter Seals name in various territories, usually one state for each affiliate.

At the invitation of Easter Seals, Inc., Easter Seals New Hampshire assumed responsibility for the state of New York when that organization was faltering, about ten years ago. Starting with a small budget and programs in Rochester and the Albany area, Easter Seals New York has been built into a \$20 million affiliate with seemingly unlimited potential. While a separate not-for-profit corporation, Easter Seals New York's sole "member," the not-for-profit equivalent of a shareholder, is Easter Seals New Hampshire, which has to approve certain of its actions. Easter Seals New York now has four group homes in Rochester, New York, two schools

in the Bronx serving young students, camps outside of Albany, a clinic in Rochester, and new programs in Buffalo. It is exploring programs on Long Island. Notably, a project in Port Jervis, New York, one of New York's most challenged cities, is about to involve fundraising for the renovation of a former school building the local school board is donating to Easter Seals where services can be provided to that needy community. This project will have help from those in the Westchester County area who comprise the "Hudson Valley Regional Board" of New York Easter Seals. New York is such a large and diverse state, that there are regional or "operational" boards in Rochester, Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island, that evaluate programs and conduct fundraising in their areas. Representatives of these boards comprise the state board that meets quarterly in New York City's Chrysler Building at the office of one of the board members.

Using the New York subsidiary model, Easter Seals New Hampshire (which also covers Vermont as part of its territory), acquired the franchise for Easter Seals Maine and has been building programs and a board structure in Maine. Last year, the opportunity to acquire Rhode Island came up when that territory was surrendered by Easter Seals Connecticut and a new board has been created there to supervise the development of programs.

Also in 2007, Easter Seals New Hampshire was approached by a substantial organization in northeastern Massachusetts, Harbor Schools of Massachusetts. This \$12 million operation runs schools for physically and emotionally challenged youth in several locations including Newbury, Merrimac and Amesbury. After extensive investigation, Easter Seals New Hampshire became the sole member of the Harbor Schools of Massachusetts, bringing it into the fold. In that case, however, since there already is Easter Seals Massachusetts, the activities are not conducted under the Easter Seals name and with the familiar Easter Seals "lily" logo.

Taken all together, the various Easter Seals New Hampshire entities cover a territory starting at the Canadian-Maine border and extending to the western border of New York and go as far south as the New York-New Jersey border.

Sound financial management has resulted in the Easter Seals organization being able to provide services and still produce a modest surplus each year. The financial contributions of people in all of the territories served are critical in the ability to provide free and subsidized services and each of the Easter Seals affiliates conducts fundraising efforts under the talented direction of Karen Van Der Beken, the Vice President for Development. There are various activities including walks that attract a lot of popular support, annual meetings and dinners that highlight the work and golf tournaments and other events. The annual VIP fundraising provides a lot of funding and is conducted at the same time of year as the Telethon used to be held. The amount of contributed income actually going to services is very impressive, with Easter Seals continually ranking among the top charities in the nation in that regard.

The corporate structure in growth, size and administration is interesting, but what is most rewarding is the good work done by Easter Seals in all of its regions. There are more than sixty programs in New Hampshire, for example, that go from early intervention programs for children from birth to age three, to the Madeline A. Galeucia Child Development Center in Manchester which has six classrooms for children of all abilities from six weeks to six years, the Easter Seals New Hampshire Autism Network that is a leader in helping with the struggle Autism presents to families affected, the Robert B. Jolicoeur School that is a certified education school serving ages nine to twenty-one, similar to the Harbor Schools in Massachusetts and efforts in other states. Also, Easter Seals runs a camp for people with disabilities at the Hidden Valley Boy Scout Reservation in Gilmanton Iron Works, known as Camp Sno-Mo, a long-time project of the New Hampshire Snowmobilers Association that raises funds for it in the annual Snowmobile Ride-In that has produced over two million dollars over its history. This partnership with the Boy Scouts is a perfect opportunity for able-bodied youth to attend camp with those with disabilities, to the benefit of both.

The Jolicoeur School is housed at two locations on Mammoth Road in Manchester and at the former Lake Shore Hospital off East Industrial Drive where students from several states attend the school. Going to a graduation and seeing challenged people achieve and celebrate the awarding of their high school diplomas is a thrill for anyone.

A recent activity of Easter Seals is the Veterans Count effort in which Easter Seals New Hampshire established a program to raise funds to provide much needed support to veterans and their families. Through collaboration with the New Hampshire Joint Force Headquarters, New Hampshire Health and Human Services and other organizations, Easter Seals has developed and implemented an innovative program insuring military members and their families have the support they need to thrive. This program has received the attention of the Pentagon and presentations have been made to the national military to use this as a model for providing services to those returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. An annual golf tournament supports this work and there is a board of interested people who advise the program. Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green partner, retired Brigadier General Robert Dastin, serves on the board of this effort.

In the transportation area, Easter Seals has traditionally run a subsidiary known as "STS," Special Transit Services. Its yellow buses provide transportation to special needs students in Manchester and the surrounding area. Recently, Easter Seals has developed a brokerage service allowing for the provision of transportation to people in various areas through various providers, assuring people with special needs the ability to get where they are going. Easter Seals TRAC (Transportation Resource and Access Coordination) has been developed to bring transportation providers together to ensure a sufficient supply of safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transportation services. It has created a new shuttle service that takes seniors to a senior center for recreation and transport veterans.

At the Easter Seals headquarters building at 555 Auburn Street in Manchester, there is a Day Care Center for Adults suffering from disabilities, dementia and Alzheimers. This Senior Services Division, ably directed by Arlene Kershaw, is the heart and soul of the "Seniors Count" Program.

The services and stories go on and on. The reach and contribution of Easter Seals New Hampshire and its related companies cannot be described adequately in an article. Talking to the families who have received service is the best way to understand the contributions made.

Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green and its attorneys are proud to have contributed to the growth of Easter Seals and to represent it throughout its operations in all six states, as it helps people, one at a time, one day at a time.

Anyone wanting to know more about Easter Seals New Hampshire should look up its website: .

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*Photo above, clockwise from bottom: President and CEO Larry Gammon; Tina Sharby, Senior Vice President of Human Resources; Betty Burke, Assistant to the President; Karen Van Der Beken, Senior Vice President of Development and Communications; Christine McMahon, COO; Elin Treanor, CFO.*