



FEBRUARY GOLDEN HAMMER AWARD

Sharon Cowen & Karen Hagy

This month, we're thrilled to present our first joint Golden Hammer Award to two recipients who always go above and beyond for MATE, our previous two Board President's and Builder's Team Program Managers, Sharon Cowen and Karen Hagy!

SHARON COWEN



Sharon served as President of the MATE Board during a crucial and intense period of change for MATE. Working closely with Karen Hagy as Karen transitioned through the final year of her tenure, Sharon took the reins in 2023 and continued through 2024. Sharon provided strong leadership and steady diligence while the organization adapted to a new executive director, major changes to management practices, marketing, fund raising, resourcing, and operations.

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KAREN HAGY



Volunteers make MATE work. We depend on all of them to keep the organization running. MATE volunteers don't just come to Maine to build decks and repair roofs.

Some offer talents remotely from places across the US. We are especially blessed with volunteers who get involved and do more than we ask.

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SHARON COWEN

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In addition to her leadership as Board President, Sharon always goes above and beyond in the work she does, including marketing, Mate Matters, Holiday Appeal, and events like the NHUCC Prepared to Serve Conference.

MATE needs people with a wide variety of gifts to succeed, and the Board greatly benefited from Sharon's work and leadership in a time of a tremendous change. Change is not easy, and Sharon always focused on the best long-term outcome for MATE.

Sharon's presence and impact with MATE will continue as a member of the board, including leadership for the Recurring Gifts program. We are grateful for everything she did to grow and strengthen the organization for the challenges and opportunities facing MATE in 2025 and beyond.

Thank you and congratulations, Sharon!

KAREN HAGY

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Karen exemplifies and personifies the Golden Hammer Award. Karen's first "boots-on-the-ground" volunteer connection with MATE was in 2010 as pastor of Bedford Presbyterian Church. She brought the teens in BPC's confirmation class to MATE to paint and repair, starting a tradition at the church. Karen retired in 2019, but that first team of youth and their advisors expanded to a larger intergenerational team which still comes to MATE every summer. Teens on that first work team learned about serving others and leadership, and some return as adults to volunteer, to this day.

Karen expanded her work with MATE as President of the Board, working with Executive Director Thea Kornelius to change from a church-led organization to a non-profit 501(c)3 with new requirements, a new governance structure and funding challenges. Then COVID hit, and MATE had volunteer challenges to meet. Karen and Thea wrote extensively, gaining funding through new grants, and championing new ideas for serving those in need of better housing. New marketing and outreach efforts launched and new board members and volunteer groups joined. Karen stepped in to provide leadership and support through it all.

Karen is no longer on the MATE Board of Directors but still involved, still volunteering, still a MATE champion. Most recently, Karen has led formation of the Builders' Team program, connecting with donors and encouraging recurring monthly donations to ensure MATE's future sustainability and predictable cash flow. Through her long-time and committed work, Karen focuses on the needs of the housing insecure and underserved. MATE is grateful for all Karen has done and is doing!

Thank you and congratulations, Karen!