



APRIL GOLDEN HAMMER AWARD

Site Assessment Volunteers



Each month, Mission at the Eastward (MATE) recognizes a group or individual whose spirit of service uplifts our mission of repairing homes—and restoring hope. For April, we are proud to present the **Golden Hammer Award** to the incredible volunteers who powered this year's **Site Assessment process**, laying the groundwork for our summer home repair season.

A COMMUNITY-WIDE EFFORT



In just two weeks, MATE staff and dedicated volunteers completed **85 home site assessments**—a record-breaking achievement. What once took more than a month to accomplish at half the scale utilizing only one team or a single individual was made possible thanks to the **coordinated efforts of dedicated teams**, each consisting of a **Construction Specialist** and a **Homeowner Liaison**.



Together, they visited homes throughout the greater Farmington area, collecting measurements, photos, and repair needs—all while building **genuine relationships** with the homeowners who invited them into their lives. These weren't just site visits—they were moments of trust, connection, and humanity.

SUNSHINE, SHARED STORIES, AND BELOVED PETS



The weather smiled upon us with unseasonably beautiful spring days, providing the perfect backdrop for a labor of love. As teams crossed neighborhoods and knocked on doors, they were welcomed with heartfelt conversations, shared memories, and, in many cases, the **joyful company of beloved family pets**—furry greeters who reminded us all that home is more than walls and roofs.

These visits revealed not only the **physical needs of our neighbors** but also the emotional and financial burdens they quietly carry. Staff and volunteers witnessed first-hand the hardships faced by elderly residents, single parents, and families simply trying to stay warm, dry, and safe. It was an **eye-opening experience** that reaffirmed why we do what we do: to serve those whose struggles too often go unseen and unheard.



RECOGNIZING THE HANDS THAT MAKE IT HAPPEN

Our Executive Director, Chris DeLisle, Operations Manager, Lucas Fitch, and our former Assistant Operations Manager, Peter Clark, who aided in the site assessment process as an independent contractor, were joined by impassioned volunteers who made this all possible. We are deeply grateful to the following volunteers whose time, skills, and compassion fueled this year's assessment process: Matt Bader, Cindy Kemble, Millard Rackliffe, Margaret Wescott, Dennis O'Neil, MaryEllen Royce, Daniel Allen, Dee Robsinon, Patricia DeLisle, and Emily Rackliffe. Some came from local congregations, some from across the region, and others from MATE's own backyard—but all gave of themselves fully. With their help, we are ahead of schedule and better prepared to serve more homeowners than ever before. To view a bio on each of these fantastic volunteers, please scroll to the end of the article.

LOOKING AHEAD WITH HOPE

Because of this team's tireless work, we're already crafting material estimates and coordinating with building suppliers—bringing us one step closer to making these needed

repairs a reality. More than just numbers and plans, this season begins with **the stories, faces, and needs** of our neighbors at the heart of it all.

To each volunteer: **thank you** for your humility, your empathy, and your belief in our mission. You remind us that home repair is not just about fixing houses—it's about building **community, dignity, and hope**.

To learn more about the Golden Hammer Award and how you can volunteer, visit missionattheeastward.org.

APRIL GOLDEN HAMMER AWARD RECIPIENTS

Matt Bader



The inaugural Golden Hammer Award recipient, Matt, a long-time volunteer from our close partner, Bedford Presbyterian Church in New Hampshire, goes above and beyond for MATE. From acting as the lead construction manager during his church's annual mission trip to Maine, to serving on the MATE Housing Repair advisory committee, Matt is always willing to go the extra mile, and this year he joined us for a whole week of assessments!

Cindy Kemble



Cindy is a member of Fairbanks Union Church, an original church partner of MATE. Cindy retired from the University of Maine at Farmington where she served as the Assistant Director of the Center for Human Development. She has served on numerous committees at her church and in the community and she's a phenomenal and dedicated MATE volunteer willing to help in any way she can!

Millard Rackliffe



If you've been on a service trip to MATE in the last couple of years, you've almost certainly run into Millard. In fact, when you travel to Central Western Maine, it's hard not to cross paths with Millard, who may very well be the busiest man in Farmington. Millard is also a member of Fairbanks Union Church. In the past, Millard has served as a Site Supervisor and numerous other roles. This past January, Millard joined the Board of Directors at MATE.

Margaret Gould Wescott



Margaret is a member of Old South Congregational Church in Farmington. She is retired from a career in the education system. For years, Margaret has enjoyed teaching dance classes. She is the proud mother of Seth Wescott, a two-time Olympic Gold Medalist in Snowboarding who grew up in the Farmington area and attended Carrabassett Valley Academy at nearby Sugarloaf Mountain.

Dennis O'Neil



Dennis is a member of St. Joseph's Parish in Farmington. During his time serving as the President of the Rotary Club of Farmington, Dennis organized numerous MATE workgroups consisting of club members and continues this effort even though his term has ended. When Dennis isn't serving as the Lector during Sunday masses at St. Joe's, he can be sure to be found cracking a joke and sharing a smile with anyone he crosses paths with.

MaryEllen Royce



MaryEllen is a member of a small group of pastors that helps to lead services at local churches and original MATE partners, Fairbanks Union Church and the New Portland Community Church. When she isn't working, MaryEllen enjoys spending time with her husband at their camp in beautiful Cutler, a small coastal town located in the far downeast of Maine.

Daniel Allen



Daniel retired from a career in education where, among other roles, he worked for the Teachers Union. Currently, Daniel is serving as the Social Parish Ministry Coordinator for St. Joseph's Parish in Farmington and the St. Rose of Lima's Parish in Jay. During his time as the Social Parish Ministry Coordinator, the parishes he serves and MATE have drawn closer together to battle housing insecurity in a collective manner for our neighbors in-need.

Dee Robinson



Dee is a resident of nearby Chesterville and joined the MATE Board of Directors this past January where she brought valuable knowledge in IT, of which she has a Master's Degree in, along with experience in grant writing and research. She is always willing to help-out in any way she can. Dee also brings an invaluable perspective to the organization as a former homeowner partner.

Patricia DeLisle



Patricia lives in the nearby Belgrade Lakes region and has served as a Special Education Technician in the Messalonskee School District for almost 20 years. She is also the mother of the MATE Executive Director, Chris DeLisle, and she was thrilled at the opportunity to meet the homeowners that our organization partners with. When she isn't working, she loves to spend time with her grandson, Dawson, or relaxing on the lake.

Emily Rackliffe



Emily is a Parent Engagement Specialist and Visitation Supervisor at the Franklin County Children's Task Force. She is an original board member of MATE, when the organization became a nonprofit in 2019. She recently finished her second term serving on the board, but is still actively involved in the organization, notably as the head of the Transitional Housing Committee. Emily volunteered her time to train all the volunteers in Mandated Reporting.