



150 State Street, PO Box 50, Augusta, Maine 04332 | Telephone: (207) 622-5801 FAX: (207) 626-2858

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Contact: Amanda Cooley, Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing and Communications Officer  
207-622-5801 | ACooley@KennebecSavings.Bank

## **Kennebec Savings Bank Announces 2025 Catalyst Grant Recipients**

*Kennebec Savings Bank awards a total of \$90,000 to local nonprofits for innovative programming*

Augusta, ME – Kennebec Savings Bank is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 Catalyst Grant. After a competitive application and review process, the Catalyst Grant Committee has selected three impactful organizations—Ember’s Paws of Hope, YMCA Camp of Maine, and the South End Teen Center—to receive funding for community-strengthening initiatives. Each organization will receive \$30,000 over three years.

### **Ember’s Paws of Hope (Southern Maine)**

Ember’s Paws of Hope, an organization dedicated to supporting the mental wellness of first responders and veterans, will use the Catalyst Grant to create a dedicated outreach trailer. This mobile unit will expand the organization’s ability to attend community events, increase visibility, and reach individuals who may be hesitant to seek help. Entering its second year, Ember’s Paws of Hope is already seeing a growing need for peer support and mental health advocacy among those they serve. The outreach trailer will allow staff, led by Founder Tim Nickels, to deepen relationships, share essential resources, and help break down the stigma surrounding mental health. Ember's Paws of Hope team member Kim Nickels shared: “Ember’s Paws of Hope is honored to be selected as a recipient of this grant. As we move into our second year, the growing need among first responders and veterans is already greater than we anticipated. This grant will help us expand our outreach through a dedicated mobile unit, allowing us to connect more effectively, attend community events, and show our community that no one has to face their struggles alone.”



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## **YMCA Camp of Maine (Winthrop)**

YMCA Camp of Maine of Winthrop will use its Catalyst Grant to support the development of a High Ropes Course designed to foster resilience, collaboration, and personal growth among teen campers. This new space will help teens build confidence, practice empathy, and strengthen perseverance — skills that stay with them long after summer ends. Founded in 1915, YMCA Camp of Maine is guided by the core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility, creating a

foundation for meaningful experiences and personal growth. Through programs ranging from Aquatics and Creative Arts to Sports and Outdoor Living Skills, the camp is dedicated to holistic youth development. Its beautiful natural setting and community-centered approach create memorable experiences that encourage growth, connection, and self-discovery. Jeff Gleason, Director and CEO, shared: “This grant is the spark in our planning to create a dedicated space for teen campers to experience profound personal growth and build vital character strengths like empathy and persistence. Supported by friends who are cheering them on and literally holding the ropes, campers will gain the unshakable confidence that comes from overcoming big challenges.”

## **South End Teen Center (Waterville)**

The South End Teen Center of Waterville will use its Catalyst Grant to expand and strengthen its Adventure Therapy program, delivered in partnership with Four Peaks Counseling. This experiential, relationship-centered initiative helps teens build coping skills, emotional resilience, and meaningful connections within their community, offering support that grows with them. A satellite location of the Waterville Area Boys and Girls Club and a proud partner of the Alford



Youth Center, the South End Teen Center provides a safe, inclusive space for teens in the Greater Waterville area. The Center focuses on academic success, personal development, and community engagement, offering mentorship, programs, and opportunities that help teens build confidence, explore their interests, and thrive. Aimee Morris, Program Coordinator shared: “This grant will allow us to strengthen the Adventure Therapy framework in ways that support long-term sustainability and firmly establish it as a core program of the South End Teen Center. Our collaboration with Four Peaks Counseling has evolved into a true partnership, one where we learn from each other in real time. We



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look forward to seeing the meaningful impact this grant will have on the youth we serve for years to come.”

The mission of the Catalyst Grant program is to spark creativity and add capacity within local nonprofit organizations, leading to the betterment of the programs and services offered in Kennebec Savings Bank’s service area. Grant recipients are chosen through a competitive application process by an internal selection committee comprised of employees representing different areas of the Bank. Since its inception in 2016, the Catalyst Grant program has awarded close to \$500,000 to more than a dozen projects.

For more information, please contact Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Amanda Cooley at 207-622-5801 or [ACooley@KennebecSavings.Bank](mailto:ACooley@KennebecSavings.Bank).

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**Kennebec Savings Bank** is a \$1.8 billion state-chartered community bank, part of a mutual organization, with a team of over 200 employees and offices in Augusta, Farmingdale, Freeport, Portland, Waterville, and Winthrop. The Bank is proud that its involvement in the community as an employer, a business and as a contributor has led to many other successes besides its own. Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender.