



## **Member Spotlight: *Seeds of Hope***

**By Kevin Stolki, UNE Chamber Intern**

This month's Chamber member spotlight is on ***Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center***, a non-profit community-focused organization that helps those in need to promote personal growth. Located on South Street in Biddeford, the Seeds of Hope facility originated as a church back in 1869 to support the spiritual needs of mill workers. In 2008, Rev. Shirley Bowen began utilizing the space to support members of the community in additional ways.

Seeds of Hope provides neighbors access to a healthy meal, clothing, and during the Winter months acts as a Warming Center for folks who need respite from the cold. They also provide job services to people such as assistance with resumes, job searches, interview preparation, attire, and a host of other resources to help community members secure gainful employment.

During our visit, we caught up with Christine who is a valued volunteer heading up the Holiday Market. Christine showed us the current storage area for their clothing and the organizational effort that has gone into transforming the

upstairs of this old church to resemble a favorite local boutique. Neighbors can utilize this area to find donated clothing and accessories to help with wardrobe essentials.

Christine is always looking for more helping hands to assist in organizing the pop-up shop but if you can't help in person, there are other ways to help. Seeds of Hope is always looking for socks, underwear, toy donations for teenagers/ young adults as well as coloring books to help families.

I had such a rewarding experience meeting Christine and learning more about Seeds of Hope's mission and the everyday efforts that the staff, board and volunteers make to help our community members. For more information or more ways you can help, check out their website at:

<https://www.seedsofhope4me.org>

As a final note, recently Rev. Shirley announced that she will be retiring, and Vassie Fowler will be taking over as Executive Director. A huge thank you from all of us in the community and the Chamber for Rev. Shirley's countless time and efforts to help those less fortunate. She has made such a profoundly positive difference locally in so many people's lives over the years!