



**Remarks of Gregory W. Powell
Harold Alfond Foundation**

**Children's Center Groundbreaking Ceremony
Augusta, Maine**

**March 29, 2022
10:30 a.m.**

Good morning. Governor Mills, Jeff, Craig, Maria, Chelsea, Stephen, Elissa, BL, Kaye. It's a pleasure to be with all of you for this groundbreaking. Another great chapter in the vital and loving work of the Children's Center.

Each of us has our own story to share as to the paths we took that brought us here and to this moment.

And I have told the story of Harold Alfond's path before, but I hope you will excuse me if I tell it again.

Nearly two decades ago, Harold Alfond and I came here for a visit.

Like so many things in life, this visit may never have occurred were it not for a twist of fate: the 2002 sale of the Boston Red Sox, and a timely invitation to visit the Center from Kaye and David Flanagan.

For many years, Harold Alfond and his family were owners of the Red Sox. In 2002, they were joining with the Yawkey Trust to sell their interest.

As part of that sale, Harold and his family proposed, and it was agreed, that donations would be made from the sale proceeds to charities chosen by the minority partners.

As a seller and minority partner, Harold came to the Children's Center, which needed funds to expand, to see for himself the wonderful work it did for children and their families. He was invited by two passionate Center supporters: Kaye and David Flanagan.

So, on a spring day in 2003 – a day not too different than today – Harold, Kaye, and David met at the Children’s Center.

While David became a valued trustee of Harold’s foundation years later after Harold’s passing, this visit would be the first and only time they met despite living much of their lives within a few miles of each other.

And on that visit, surrounded by children and their caregivers, Harold, David, and Kaye immediately understood that they shared the same love for the people of Maine, especially Maine’s children.

Together, they recognized that there is nothing in life as satisfying as caring for your community. And nothing is more important than caring for the children of your community.

And so, Red Sox sale proceeds were used to help fund the Center’s expansion.

Today, nearly 20 years later, another expansion is needed. And here we gather as supporters of the Center to break ground on that expansion.

Each of our pathways tells a different story, but each shows a common commitment to caring for Maine and caring for Maine’s children.

At the Alford Foundation, we love sports metaphors, and at the top of the list is teamwork.

So, on behalf of the Foundation, I would like to extend a huge thanks to the Children’s Center team: all of you here this morning and beyond.

At the risk of overlooking some, star members of the team include Charlie and Nancy Shuman and their family. Thank you, Stephen and Elissa. I hear your folks are down in Florida, so we won’t feel bad for them. But please send Charlie and Nancy our thanks.

And thank you, Kaye, for all you and David have done to advance the Center’s mission. Your passion for the work of the Center was an inspiration for Harold and so many others.

And thanks go also to Norm and Teresa Elvin; Peter and Sandra Prescott; the Kennebec Savings Bank; Pine State Trading Co.: Gena Canning, Keith Canning, Nick and Jessie Alberding; Ray Vallee and Krystyna Dzialo; and the Lajoie Brothers for your remarkable generosity.

And, of course, the greatest thanks of all go to the vision and leadership of Jeff Johnson and the hard work of the Center’s board and staff, its teachers, therapists, caregivers and more. Thank you! What a wonderful job you all do. What a team!

This past July, at David Flanagan's last meeting as a trustee of the Harold Alfond Foundation, we committed \$1 million in matching grant funds for this expansion, in tribute to David and Kaye.

Through this grant, we honor their dedication to improving the lives of young children and applaud the wonderful work of the Children's Center.

Like most all of the Foundation's donations, our grant is also a challenge. This means that we have committed to match new donations made to support expansion of the Children's Center, up to \$1 million. We are also matching early payment of existing, long-term pledges.

Because of your generosity and the generosity of this community, the Center is very close to meeting the Foundation's matching challenge. But it still has about \$200,000 to go.

So, here is a little pitch. To help ensure the Center can match our full \$1 million, please get the word out to friends and neighbors, contribute if you can, or pay your existing pledge early.

As we all know, the Children's Center is invaluable. It is vital, really, to the children and families who depend on its services.

And there is a waitlist of kids who need to get in here.

So, in closing, let me leave you with this. Harold Alfond loved kids and he loved teamwork. But above all else, he loved action. "Don't tell me, show me," he liked to say.

So, it's time to turn the program over to Jeff and get to breaking ground on this new facility – and to raising the last few dollars that will make this expansion a reality for our kids.