

Midcoast

Representing midcoast Maine since 2016

**Sunrises
in Maine**

Flatbread!

**It's more than
pizza**

Plus

Opiates in Knox county

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Contents

October
2016



3 My
Maine

5 Midcoast
Sunrises

8 Pizza For
The People

10
Rotting
Inside Out

The long way home

Returning to Maine

(for the sixth time)

By Ella Fishman

I'm sitting in my room, staring out my window. Vermont. Flowers and fields spread out in front of me. Woods on either side. My siblings laugh and chase each other in the yard, hiding in the bushes, blissful and excited. I am blind to all of it. It's lost on me. My mind is somewhere else, six hours and 43 minutes away. My mind is in Maine, right with my heart. If only my body could follow. I can't believe we've moved again. Twelve times, each said to be the last. Heartbroken for the place I thought we would never leave again. I just want to go home.

Home. It's a funny word, used all the time without thought. It means something different to everyone, and for some it has no meaning at all. For me, home is easy: Maine. Maine has been home to me for a long time. No matter how many times my family leaves, we always seem to come back. I couldn't tell you exactly why. No one thing makes it special. But Maybe it's our house, surrounded by endless woods and blueberry fields, The big beautiful barns and the apple trees. Maybe it's the building itself, with that familiar smell and the warmth that wraps me in a blanket of safety.

Maybe it's the ocean, with its misty ice that melts into refreshing cold in the summer, the sunsets that you see twice; one in the sky and one reflected with warped accuracy into the water. This ocean isn't like the ones you hear about from your friends on vacation. The waves are smaller, the water is icy, but it has a serene peace that you can't find anywhere else. It's breathing in salt and diving into loud silence that leaves you gasping for air. It's calm and powerful, and you get used to the cold.

Maybe it's the seasons. Something about summer in Maine seems to draw people in from everywhere. The harbors, the parks. Camden: the basis for all postcards everywhere. Ice cream on the boardwalk and fireworks over the water. Fall is an explosion of color, brilliant reds and oranges everywhere you look, and cold, crisp air that clears your head. But it's gone if you blink, and gives way to snow crystals that shine like someone has poured glitter over them. It's a white that hurts your eyes. Winter seems endless, and warm weather is a distant, dreamy thought, but it makes the first flower all the more special. Spring is mud and thawing and flowers that fight furiously to chase away the cold. It's rainy and grey, but the rain is peaceful and it's soothing on your roof at night.

Maybe Maine is special because of the people, the ones who change you for the better. The ones you meet and feel lucky to have met. They somehow have the solutions to your problems, and know just what you like. You don't forget them when you leave or move on.

But we're not in Maine anymore. When I tell my friends here I've lived in Maine, they ask what my room was like. Was it cool and breezy? Were there shells on my windowsill? Did my window look out over the ocean? Was there sand in my yard? I have to laugh; the answer to all of that is no. And then I tell them about the small woodstove in my room in Maine, set on a small area of bricks. The wood floors and red rug. The beam where my name is carved into the wood, and the skylight that sends golden light streaming in when the sun sets.

Maine is not the stereotypical seashell cottage in the little town on the ocean (although I might add that it is in fact located in a small town on the ocean). It is not the place I look forward to visiting during the summer. It's not the pretty picture I send to my friends back home. It is my home. It's the warmth of a fire in the fireplace, the love of my family. It's the Christmas tree I sit in front of, lit up in the dark in the middle of the night. It's the town and the community that we care so much about. It's mud battles and flower arrangements and fields of brown and red that hide thousands of berries. It's the place that has changed me and changed with me, the one I missed with every part of me. It's my world, with the things that are special to me. The world that you cannot find the same way anywhere else, that you can't create anywhere else. It is special in an unexplainable, happy way.



"The skylight that sends golden light streaming in when the sun sets."

Somehow, as I sit here in my room in Vermont, I realize that we will go back. I don't know when, but I know that we will. I think if you find home, you'll end up there eventually, no matter what.

And one year later, we are back. We're back and I sit on the beach watching the last golden glow sink below the water, straining to flash its brilliant light over the waves one last time. The air cools, the people trickle away. The sky gets dark, and the stars finally show themselves after the hot summer day. The darkness cools your face and washes away the weight of the day.

The sky is big here, in Maine. So big that it's hard to take in. It's filled with those millions of stars that shine like they do nowhere else. They are different here, and I can only begin to tell you why. They shine brighter here because I look at them from home.

"You- you alone will have the stars as no one else has them." —Antoine de Saint Exupéry



Pizza for the People

The pizza is only part of what makes Flatbread so special

By Annabelle Williams

On the side of Route 1 in Rockport, you can find a tired red barn. Large windows border the front face of the building, decorated with colorful arrangements of flowers, and the lawn is littered with hula hoops. A large sign plastered above the windows, reads, in funky letters to “flatbread co.” Flatbread is a brick oven pizza place that was much needed by the town of Rockport.

Upon entering this restaurant a homey, comforting vibe is given off. On the left is a bar, complete with its own little tin roof, covered in plants. The wooden walls are lined with booths and unique pictures of hand prints and vegetables (some painted by children who

often visit Flatbread.) Tables can be found scattered throughout the two floors, and the brick oven (made by the community) is clearly visible and open for all to watch the making of the pizza.

Throughout my many flatbread excursions, my favorite seats have remained the booths by the far wall. Being placed next to the windows, they overlook the lawn, and provide a great view of the brick oven as well exceptional lighting (which makes looking at the hand illustrated menus easier).

When the server comes, it is hard to place an order without striking up a conversation. The servers are local students or

adults who are extremely personable.

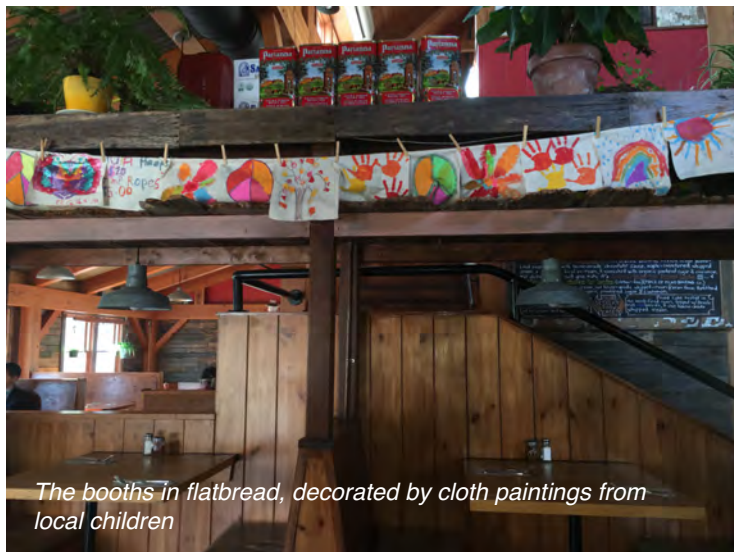
When placing your order, one of the most commonly ordered pizzas (and my favorite) is the Punctuated Equilibrium, it consists of black olives, red onions, red peppers and feta cheese. However Jimmy's free range chicken comes in a close second. Made of tomatoes, corn, chicken and black beans, topped off with a sour cream lime drizzle it is hard not to love it.

While flatbread is famous for its pizza, the other food is just as good. The salads are complete with local greens and veggies, and you will find organic desert specials daily. All of the food at Flatbread is

local and organic, distinguishing it from the other pizza places found in Rockport. One of the major priorities in flatbread is to make the food good (healthy) for the customers, while tasting just as good.

Whether you know it or not, when you pay for your meal at Flatbread, that money could be going to a local organization or foundation. Flatbread is often the host of many of the town's fundraisers; on a certain night they will donate a portion of their earnings to the institution being supported. On these nights you can count on almost the whole town showing up to support the organization. These fundraisers can bring the community together over something as simple as a slice of pizza.

Walking into flatbread, I turn to the left and see the brick oven, surrounded by a clump of small eyes blinking up at it. To the right there is a family, with a large pizza in the middle of the table. They laugh as they talk with the server. Focusing straight ahead, a server appears, "Hi Welcome to flatbread! Where would you like to sit?" Upon hearing these cheerful words a smile spreads across my face, because at the end of the day there is nothing better than sitting down to enjoy a slice of pizza. The smell of herbs and cheese curling up in clouds of steam makes me want to grab a slice, and another, and another. Because who doesn't love pizza? Especially when you know that it is made from local ingredients, and you and enjoy it with the people you love.



The booths in flatbread, decorated by cloth paintings from local children



One of the most popular attractions when coming to flatbread is watching the pizza being made in the brick oven



All of the supplies are laid out before the cooks begin to make the pizza.

First Light

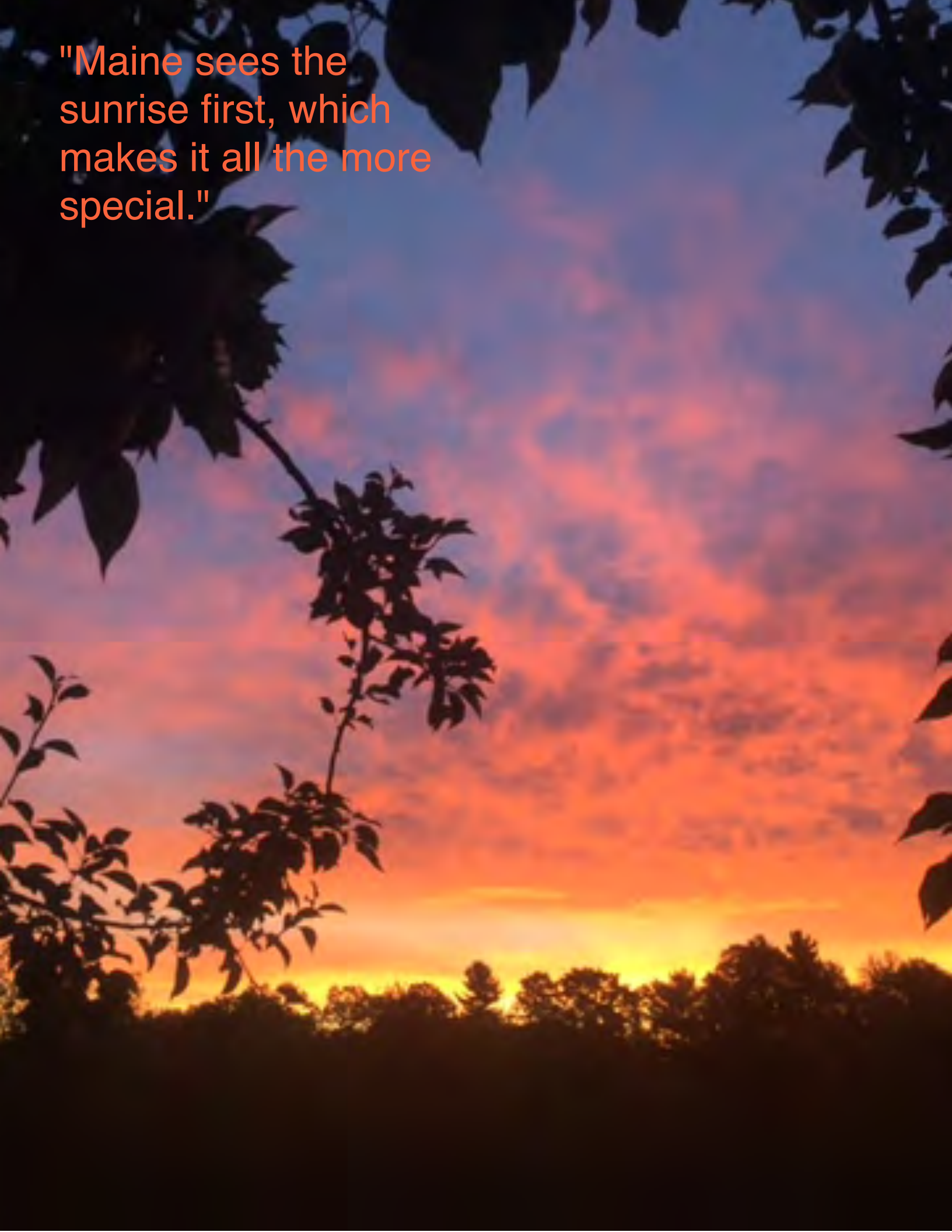
Maines beautiful sunrises
happen to be the first place
the sun rises in the United
States

Clouds often shield the full
sunrise, offering a glowing,
golden skyline.

As the sun rises in Rockport, it
illuminates the fog that blankets the
fields and surrounding forests



"Maine sees the
sunrise first, which
makes it all the more
special."



"There are very few things as brilliant as a sunrise on the coast of Maine."



Rotting Inside Out

We've all heard varying stories of addiction. How are opiates tearing apart Knox county's beautiful villages.



Opiate addiction is a cycle as parents often pass this disease to their children chemically (through birth) or just through the exposure to the drugs.

In the television show *The Walking Dead* a zombie virus ravages the world

and crushes nearly all of humanity. Everyday, more and more people fall victim to the

Zombie horror. The United States has a similar problem in the real world. A strange disease with very few working cures has descended upon our country. This disease, similarly to the



zombie virus in *The Walking Dead*, kills without remorse and changes people for the worse.

Physically, addicts eyes are sunken, the lose teeth, and they lose color in their skin. Mentally, they become more aggressive and less understanding. Fortunately, we have a chance to cure this problem. However, we must act quickly. This disease is known as opiate addiction, and it is one of the worst epidemics to attack the world. As it plunders its way through Maine, it claims the lives of hundreds every year. Life for an addict becomes incredibly difficult with money problems and inevitable family issues causing even more of a need for opiates.

Dr. Ira Mandel is the executive director of the Knox County Recovery Coalition (KCRC). Dr. Mandel is a family doctor since 1982 and was trained in Rochester, New York. He worked in Massachusetts for a decade before moving to Tampa, Florida where he worked for fifteen years and was trained as a hospice physician. In 2006, Dr. Mandel was hired to be the Pen Bay Hospice Medical Director. Shortly after arriving in Knox County, a psychiatrist notified him that the Opiate

"As it plunders its way through Maine, it claims the lives of hundreds every year."

epidemic was destroying the community. He became certified to treat patients with

Suboxone which helps former addicts lose their craving for drugs. After leaving Pen Bay Hospice two years ago, Mandel continued to treat up to one hundred patients. After turning away thousands of people looking for a cure to their addiction due to the DEA limit on patients, Mandel expressed his frustration with the lack of

support for addicts in the community. He and a few others formed the KCRC to help combat the issues with Opiate Addiction. They have made it their mission to help spread awareness and give help to those in need of it.

Knox County has been one of the hotspots of opiate addiction in Maine. Areas of Knox County that have been hit hardest are places where behavioral health issues and poverty make childhood trauma incredibly common. Drugs have become part of the culture for many regions in Knox County. "Children as young as eight years old may be exposed to, and offered, drugs by their friends and family as a 'normal' part of life." Mandel states gravely. The mistrust in authority in these communities has broken the system of healthcare giving these people no real access to medical care. This leaves addicts in the wilderness with no place to go if in fact they wanted to stop using.

"Often these damages are done during childhood, some examples are neglect, abuse from adults, poverty, and deprivation."

How are people coming to use opiates? For many years it was thought that the use of opiates while being medically attended to caused a lasting "hunger" for painkillers. However, the real answer is a much deeper and broader question. People turn to opiates for many reasons, and it is no different than any other addiction. Addiction is usually caused by severe anxiety, depression, as well as difficulty concentrating and thinking. These problems in turn are usually caused by emotional, psychological, physical, or spiritual trauma. Often these damages are done during childhood, some examples are neglect, abuse from adults, poverty, and deprivation. Mandel says, "Families and our communities have become more dysfunctional leading to more traumas, less healing and less support causes more consequences such as drug addiction." People find drug addiction an easy fix to their solution, however, other

addictions like eating or the overuse of electronics have become very common as well. It is not only things like abuse that cause the turn to drug addiction. People can simply be born with a chemical imbalance or a behavioral health disorder. These issues are getting treated far too late and far too poorly causing affected people to turn to opiates to help ease their minds.

“People with addiction, who start off their lives as ‘good’ people, have their ‘brains hijacked’ by drugs... they learn to lie, cheat, steal, and do other harmful things to hide their problem,” stresses Mandel. He believes this horrible problem causes the families of the addicted to suffer severely. They not only watch their loved ones suffer and sometimes die from the addiction. They see everything from the deterioration of the body to the deterioration of their behavior. This coupled with the financial issues that come with a potential loss in income as their source of money can get potentially stripped from

"Drug addiction rates have reached ten percent for teens and young adults in Knox County itself."

them, can cause extreme suffering. Drug prices run high giving no financial possibility for the family to stay stable. Quite often these family members get discriminated against because of their relative's issues. Many people not willing to get near a person with an addiction problem.

Drug addiction rates have reached ten percent for teens and young adults in Knox County itself. Babies are born drug affected as their mothers have been using opiates. One out of three families in Knox County are directly affected by opiate addiction. As the addiction leads to emotional drainage, and financial loss, as well as potential neglect and/or a prison sentence. This leaves children isolated and alone with the cycle capable of repeating itself again as the children potentially turn to opiates. Overall, the social and economic impact leaves Knox County in an injured and dysfunctional place where the cycle can repeat itself over and over again. Just one person slipping into the dark

realm of addiction can have profound effect on the rest of the community.

Let's say "Jon" was feeling utterly horrible and lonely. "Jon" could make the mistake of using heroin as a fix to his problem. As "Jon" falls more and more heavily under the influence of heroin, the more his attitude deteriorates. He begins to lash out at people randomly. He forms abusive relationships with his two kids. This abuse creates a lasting impact on the psych of the two children. Once older, "Elizabeth", the younger child, feels a need to fix her anxiety issues. She turns to opiates to calm herself down. Elizabeth gets pregnant a year later and gives birth to a baby. This baby is unfortunately already addicted to heroin do to his mother's addiction. As you can see, this cycle keeps on turning and affected more and more people.

Many people wonder, how are we allowing these dangerous drugs out into the public? Drugs have become ever more common as doctors have made them even more accessible than before. For around twenty years doctors have been told to treat pain by

medical organizations. This forces an ability to obtain prescriptions from doctors incredibly easily. Liberal prescriptions of painkillers have given the public easy access to the drugs. While people who are correctly diagnosed and given treatment are not often likely to turn to opiates in the future, this system has given an easy way for people to get the drug if they are suffering from some sort of previous trauma.

Even when answers are supplied for the suffering, they don't always take the bait. Most addicts do not often even realize they have a problem. They believe they are in full control of the situation. Mandel states, "Likely one thousand or more people in Knox County who may want treatment but cannot find anyone to treat them." It is far too expensive for many addicts to get help for their issues. Buprenorphine, a drug that helps addicts recover, has become available for people in Knox County to buy on the "street". However, these products are not always reliable and are often not used properly resulting in no fix to the problem.

Mandel believes we still have long way to go before our community is even close to healing. However, as long as we keep on talking about the situation and attempting to help, things will get better. We need to protect children from being abused or exposed to this drug. One of the most important things we can do is help support those who are suffering from opiate addiction. The criminal justice system must become more capable of helping these people heal instead of punishing them for their misdeeds. As a community we must stand up in support of those suffering from this epidemic. The more we address the problem, the more possibility of a fix in the future.

Knox County is known for its beautiful harbors and quaint hamlets. These places have been staples of life in the mid coast with thousands upon thousands of tourists traveling to see the county's beauty. However, this could all be snatched from the grasp of society. As more and more people from the less fortunate communities in Knox County fall under the cloak of addiction, the more of a chance this lovely

place will go under. As children become infected with this poison, they spread it through schools and other institutions. There is still time, but the clock is ticking for Mid-coast Maine residents. We need to understand that addicts are not rotten but they are people who have turned to opiates for various reasons and we need to support them. Supporting these people is the only vaccine for Knox County residents, let's inject feelings of belief instead of heroin into our people.

To join the cause visit knoxrecovery.org for information.