IVF in New England: How Far We’ve Come
by Selwyn Oskowitz, MD
Boston IVF

On July 24, 1984, the first baby conceived with IVF in Massachusetts was delivered on the 12th floor of the Riesman building at the then Beth Israel Hospital. To say that the mother and father of Katie were overjoyed would be an understatement. After many years of infertility treatments and surgeries all of which were by large incision laparotomies, they now had a term healthy baby girl, 37.5 weeks after I had done the minor procedure of placing 3 embryos into the uterus. IVF had successfully come to Massachusetts – representing a 10 year research effort and legal approval battle by the team led by Dr. Mel Taymor, then Chief of Reproductive Endocrinology at Beth Israel hospital, Harvard Medical School.

But Katie was not the first IVF success in New England: two years earlier Dr. Alan de Cherney and his team at Yale had successfully launched their IVF program. At that time our team at Beth Israel was struggling with the Massachusetts Attorney General over laws against fetal research. When the tacit approval for IVF finally came from the Attorney General’s office we had already researched and practiced multiple steps of the procedure – yet we were still (very pleasantly) surprised at our immediate success. Today IVF is freely practiced throughout New England, regulations largely limited to

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SPRING/SUMMER 2014 ISSUE
They who sing through the summer must dance through the winter. -Italian proverb

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SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2014

www.resolvenewengland.org/connect-and-learn
FOR DETAILS, SEE PAGE 8
ADVERTISING POLICY

This newsletter accepts paid advertisements. Advertisements submitted must be emailed as PDFs and must be approved by the Editor. Please email us at admin@resolvenewengland.org for rate and size information. We limit our paid advertisements and will accept them on a first-come, first-served basis. We also accept announcements of upcoming events and ads from those conducting research studies.

The service providers advertising in this newsletter have not been screened or required to meet any specific criteria and have paid a fee to be included. Therefore advertisements for services/persons/providers should not in any way be considered endorsements or recommendations, either express or implied, by RESOLVE New England.

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- Business card - 3.625” wide x 2.125” high*

*Please do not include borders on business card ads.

We reserve the right to resize ads to fit our specifications.

This newsletter is published triannually (winter, spring, autumn) with a circulation of approximately 1,200.

EDITORIAL POLICY

This newsletter is primarily a vehicle for regional news, events, and articles of interest. Our readers, including professionals, are encouraged to submit comments and articles. The Editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Spring/Summer 2014 March 1, 2014
Autumn 2014 August 1, 2014

We welcome newsletter article submissions, especially personal experience articles, via email. Articles should be no longer than 750 words and must be approved by the Editor. Please submit to: admin@resolvenewengland.org

We reach 1,200 members and professionals triannually.

Please call or visit us online for more information about becoming a RESOLVE New England member, or to request information about advertising in upcoming issues.

781-890-2250 www.resolvenewengland.org @RESOLVENewEng
New Year, New Beginnings...

The start of the New Year is a time to look forward to what lies ahead. It can be an exciting time with endless possibilities as well as a time of anticipation. It can also be a time of quiet reflection. What did the past year bring and what do you want to change for the next year? Look at the past as a stepping stone to get to the next level.

As we close out 2013 and look forward to 2014, I would like to share my thanks to each of you for the role you play at RESOLVE New England (RNE). You may think that you don’t play a role, but you do – all of you do. Whether you are a member, volunteer, professional, sponsor or legislator, you all play a valuable role in RNE’s existence and continued success. We are here for you, and I thank you for helping us to succeed as we look forward to the year ahead.

The year 2014 marks our 40th year as an organization helping those during their infertility journey. We value some of the same philosophies that were imparted 40 years ago and continue to use them today, including being an unbiased source of support and education, advocating for infertility insurance coverage and legislation, and most importantly (especially during this age of internet chat rooms, blogs, etc) – the value of in-person contact! If you haven’t attended one of our support groups or educational programs, I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and join us. You never know what will happen; you may make a wonderful new friend or feel supported in a way you didn’t before! I have met very few people that attend our in-person support and education programs that come away and say, I would have rather been home in front of my computer. People connecting face-to-face, dealing with a similar struggle, is inspiring, encouraging and most importantly meaningful. I just attended a conference where a speaker challenged us to step out of our comfort zone – because while it may be scary, it is also a very brave thing to do.

We are working hard at RNE to plan a year that will encourage, educate and support you during your journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us – all of our staff members have their own infertility journey and we ‘get it.’ We want to support you and while we may not always have the answers, we will do our best to provide you with resources to finding your path to parenthood.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that Unisense FertiLiTech has become a Foundation Sponsor of RNE. Foundation Sponsorships represent our highest level of support and underwrite all aspects of RNE services. Their support includes the continuation of the Infertility Clinic Outreach Program which supports our active base of New England infertility treatment clinics and their staff by providing them with information, education and the tools they need to support their patients. FertiLiTech’s high level sponsorship clearly highlights their dedication to supporting prospective parents during every stage of their family building journey, and we are grateful for their dedication to our organization and the greater infertility community.

We are hopeful that you are looking forward to what lies ahead in 2014. We know it is going to be an exciting year for RESOLVE New England and we hope it is an exciting one for you personally as well!

Fondly,
Erin Lasker
Executive Director, RESOLVE New England
DEFINING SUCCESS AGAINST INFERTILITY

By Elizabeth Comeau

First IVF baby in the U.S.

Either I am getting old, or IVF is suddenly, somehow back in the spotlight.

Somebody must have seen that I was a Jeopardy answer a few months ago...

In the span of a few weeks, I’ve had four students contact me, wanting to interview me for their National History Day projects.

What has struck me about these students is not that they picked my birth as the first IVF baby in the United States as their moment in history to explore, but rather their personal connection to the event.

I am nearly 15 years older than these children, but I can hear so much of myself in their questions.

One student’s mother works at a fertility clinic, some of the others were born via sperm donation; one was an IVF baby herself.

These children seem to inherently understand something that I often have a hard time explaining to most adults: Success against infertility is not simply won once you have a child.

Of course, the goal of any infertility treatment is a healthy, happy, child at the end of the treatment cycle.

But to me, that’s just part of the battle.

The other part of the battle is answering these children’s questions in the first place.

When people find out I was the first IVF baby in the U.S., I am always met with one of two reactions:

1: I didn’t know THAT was YOU!

2: Oh, my aunt, mother, brother, father, friend, is struggling with infertility.

Nine times out of ten, that second statement seems to be uttered in a hushed tone.

My parents were very open with me about how I was conceived and born.

In a way, they didn’t have a choice really, given the media frenzy surrounding my birth, but even without all of that, my parents are the type who laid everything out in honest, simple terms as best they could with nothing to hide.

Parents of children of Assisted Reproductive Technologies do a good job explaining the procedures and medical technology behind what they went through. But the pattern I’m seeing with these students (and many other people I’ve encountered over the years) has less to do with that and more to do with wanting to continue the discussion long after the technical explanation is finished.

At the core of these children’s queries lie the same questions I grew up asking: “Am I normal? Will people dislike me simply because of the way I was born? Was I worth my parents’ efforts?”

The kicker, of course, is that simply asking these questions IS inherently normal - and human.

Three questions from a student prompted me to write this piece:

Did people treat you as a monster and/or freak of nature?

Did you have many friends throughout your childhood?

What would you say to people who said the process of IVF was going against what God wanted?

Continued, page 10
Comprehensive Infertility Evaluation & Treatment

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DO WE DESERVE ANOTHER IVF ATTEMPT?

By Susan Manning
Director of Communications and Social Media
RESOLVE New England

Tink, tink, tink…
My nail taps the vial of the trigger shot before I inject it into my wife’s abdomen. The bubbles of air atop the medicine seem to mock the bubbles of anxiety in my stomach.
Or maybe they’re bubbles of guilt? Of wonder? Of selfishness?
You see, this is the first IVF cycle for our attempt at a second child and I am riddled with uncertainty.
I’m not uncertain in whether I want a second child. It’s more uncertainty about whether we deserve a second child.
The journey to our son was long and windy and at times seemed like a dead end—between the two of us we had 13 IUIs and 7 IVFs, with some miscarriages and some BFNs.
We thought a marriage of two women wanting children would be easy—twice the equipment with which to try. We never thought both sets of equipment would need repair!
After so many attempts, we were all but done, until our RE suggested she had one more protocol that might work. We went with it, watched as it produced the lowest grade and quality embryo (yes, only one), and cried every day of the two week wait.
But on Mother’s Day we drove to the office for the pregnancy test, certain it would be negative, even stopping at my mother’s grave ahead of time to “ask her” why? What did we do wrong?
Fast forward 10 months and that worst quality embryo was born a near-10-pound baby boy. A fabulous outcome to a seemingly never-ending journey. Everyone was pulling for it to be a successful pregnancy—family, friends, friends we met only because of our IF.
That is why I now harbor uncertain feelings.
Why push the envelope? We have an amazing boy.
We have friends who still suffer every day from IF and want a child, so isn’t it selfish to want another?
Shouldn’t we just continue to shower our son with the years of saved up love?
Isn’t he good enough?
These feelings originated, I believe, during the entire process when, with every cycle, every vial of donor sperm purchased, every shot we injected, every sticky bun we ate after procedures, we promised we’d do anything if we could just have one child.
We’ll be good mothers, I heard myself promising the higher powers. We’ll not ask for anything else, I added to that thought. Give us a child and we’ll be happy forever. Every. Single. Cycle.
And while I wasn’t lying when I said how much that one child meant, I realize now that I never promised to forfeit my attempts to have more children if that’s what we wanted.
The bottom line is he is good enough. He is amazing. He is getting showered with love. Nothing will change that if and when another child is born to us.
If you’re having difficulty conceiving, the fertility specialists at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital Center for Infertility and Reproductive Surgery (CIRS) can offer you expert and reassuring care. Our physicians, faculty of Harvard Medical School and certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology in reproductive endocrinology and fertility, will work with you to provide patient-centered care that is tailored to your individual needs.

CIRS offers all available procedures and services to treat infertility, including in vitro fertilization, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, IVF with donor eggs, and ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) with assisted hatching.

We also have expertise in robotic surgery to address fertility issues caused by reproductive disorders such as endometriosis or fibroids.

Brigham and Women’s Hospital is a leader in women’s health, ranked second by U.S. News and World Report. CIRS is part of this leading, comprehensive OB/GYN program. Our physicians see patients at five locations throughout the greater Boston metropolitan area.

Call 1-800-BWH-9999 for an appointment or visit us online at www.brighamandwomens.org/cirs
Adoption, Donor Conception & Surrogacy Connect & Learn Seminars

Saturday, January 25, 2014 | 8:30am - 5:00pm
9 Hope Avenue, Waltham, MA

This one-day program consists of seminars for those considering donor egg or sperm, surrogacy and/or adoption as family building options. You will be able to gather information from top professionals in one place, have the opportunity to speak with others making the same kinds of decisions to form their families, as well as speak with those who are parents through egg/sperm donation, surrogacy or adoption.

Participants are welcome to attend any session in either track. Donor Conception/Surrogacy Track includes: Preparing the Way for Egg/Sperm Donation and/or Surrogacy, Finding a Donor and Gestational Carrier, Legal Issues and Contracts, Psychosocial Issues, and a Group Discussion About the Issues: Recipient Parents Speak. The Adoption Track includes Domestic Adoption, Adoption from Foster Care, International Adoption and Adoptive Parent Panel Discussion.

SPACE IS LIMITED – PLEASE REGISTER EARLY! FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE.

Visit www.resolvenewengland.org/connect-and-learn to learn more and register today.

Can’t make this one? Stay tuned for more Seminars coming in 2014 - Email admin@resolvenewengland.org to pre-register!
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Defining Success Against Infertility

My personal answers don’t really matter in the larger context of this discussion, which is to say that sure, some people have been not so nice about how I was born, but what I’ve gone through, to me, is no different from being called fat or ugly as any other pre-teen. Is it acceptable? Absolutely not. But it is also the nature of human beings:

We are scared of things we do not understand, and hate is bred from misunderstanding and fear.

We cannot battle the stigma infertility still carries in silence. We need to answer these children’s questions; they will be the voices who fight the whispers. We need to show them how to speak loud enough to be heard.

That is when I will declare success.

Lisa Fenn Gordenstein Grant Renewed

RESOLVE New England (RNE) is very pleased to announce that we have received a $10,000 grant renewal from the TJX Foundation. This grant funds our Lisa Fenn Gordenstein Access Scholarships and allows us to assist anyone in financial need who wishes to attend our full- or half-day educational programs and/or to become a member of RESOLVE New England.

We are committed to ensuring that your financial circumstances are not an obstacle to accessing the comprehensive programs and services offered by RNE.

Applying for a Scholarship

Financial assistance from our Lisa Fenn Gordenstein scholarship program is available to cover the costs of household membership AND/OR the cost to attend our full-day programs (Donor Conception, Surrogacy & Adoption Connect & Learn Seminars or our Annual Conference) or our half-day programs.

To find out more about applying for the scholarship for our upcoming May 31, 2014, Connect & Learn Seminars or our Annual Conference on Saturday, November 7, 2014, please visit our website at www.resolvenewengland.org/scholarship.

Email us at admin@resolvenewengland.org or call 781-890-2250 with any questions.
THE FERTILITY ROLLERCOASTER

By Anonymous

My partner and I decided we wanted to have a family a long time ago. By the time we made the decision to get started, we had already been together for over ten years.

I think after you have been together with someone for at least ten years, some of the basic questions of life are pretty much settled.

You know each other's rhythms, moods and energy and, thankfully, we knew we had a pretty strong foundation to the house we built – our relationship.

We figured we really needed to start a family because we had way too much love to give.

After a while it became hard to walk by a baby, any baby, and not feel our ovaries quiver with longing!

Like many other people, we had several twists and turns. My partner was evaluated initially but ultimately did not try to get pregnant because uterine fibroids would have prevented her from carrying a pregnancy to full term. After several months of agonizing the loss of biological motherhood as a possibility, she had an elective hysterectomy because the fibroids were causing excessive bleeding and anemia.

At that time, I was seven years her younger; I was in my early thirties and definitely NOT ready to carry a child. We were admonished by our doctor who basically told us we were past our prime and that the best age biologically to carry a child was 22! My lord, I thought—that's babies having babies! At 22 I was out partying, certainly not thinking of having babies.

It wasn’t until my mid-thirties that I decided to start the process. I could no longer deny this longing inside of me. I suppressed it thinking that I didn’t deserve such a thing; having come from a very devout and (disapproving) Muslim background- my family had not accepted or acknowledged my sexual identity or my relationship with my partner even though I had come out to them 14 years earlier. Finally something broke inside me, and I realized I deserved happiness. I figured it was Divine Intervention that had allowed me to meet my partner of 14 years so why not? Maybe the universe would allow us a family of our own.

Riding the ‘fertility roller coaster,’ as we called it, was one of the hardest things we have ever done in our relationship.

We spent about three years trying before we actually got pregnant—we had natural cycles, clomid cycles, medicated IUI cycles and finally IVF cycles before we got pregnant. We went through 11 rounds altogether and 4 IVF cycles before success.

Like many others, we took much joy and imbued such hope out of the little successes within each cycle: the number of follicles grown, the grade of the eggs, the number of embryos fertilized… The list goes on and on. And with each failed cycle, our hope and disappointment would come crashing down on us. Not getting pregnant at the end of a cycle, or nearly getting pregnant (a chemical pregnancy) or getting preg...
No matter where you are in your journey toward parenthood, RESOLVE New England can help.

Since 1974, we have prided ourselves on our face-to-face support outlets for every stage on the journey to parenthood. We offer General Infertility Peer Support Groups as well as focused Topic Discussion Peer Support Groups.

**General Infertility Peer Support Groups**

Open to women and men, individuals and couples dealing with primary infertility (those with no children). Discussion may include treatment, dealing with friends & family, and coping strategies.

- **Andover, MA – New!**
  Thursdays, 6:30pm – June 26, Jul 31, Aug 28
- **Beverly, MA**
  Fridays, 7:00pm – May 2, June 6, Jul 11, Aug 1
- **Concord, NH – New!**
  Tuesdays, 6pm – Aug 12, Sep 9, Oct 14
- **Farmington, CT**
  Thursdays, 7pm – May 15, June 19, Jul 17, Aug 21
- **Longmeadow, MA**
  Mondays, 7pm – May 5, June 2, Jul 7, Aug 4
- **New Britian, CT - New!**
  Wednesdays, 6pm – May 21, June 18, Jul 23, Aug 20
- **Plymouth, MA**
  Tuesdays, 6:30pm - May 6, Aug 5
- **Portland, ME**
  Tuesdays, 6pm – May 27 and June 24
- **Portsmouth, NH - New!**
  Tuesdays, 6:30pm – June 24, Jul 29, Aug 26
- **Waltham, MA**
  Tuesdays, 7pm – May 6, June 3, Jul 1, Aug 5

*Please check our website to confirm meeting dates and times.*

**Topic Discussion Peer Support Groups**

Focused on a specific topic, these groups are led by a volunteer leader with personal experience regarding that topic. **All Topic Groups meet in our Waltham, MA office (except where noted).**

- **Adoption Decision-Making**
  Thursdays, 7pm – May 8, June 12, Jul 10, Aug 14
- **Donor Egg Decision-Making**
  Mondays, 7pm - May 5, June 2, Jul 7, Aug 4
- **Donor Egg Parents & Children**
  “Please email for locations and dates.”
- **Pregnancy & Parenting After Infertility New**
  Tuesdays, 6:30pm – June 17, Jul 15, Aug 19
  11 Depot St., 3rd Flr, Concord, NH
- **Pregnancy Loss**
  Wednesdays, 7pm - May 21, Jun 25, Aug 6
- **Secondary Infertility**
  Wednesdays, 7pm - May 21, Jun 18, Jul 16, Aug 20

*All groups meet on a monthly basis. Free to all RESOLVE New England members; $5 per person for non-members paid via cash or check. Pre-registration for all groups is strongly encouraged, although walk-ins are welcome.*

www.resolvenewengland.org/support
RESOLVE NEW ENGLAND INSURANCE HELP

Having trouble getting insurance coverage for your doctor’s recommended infertility treatment plan? Want to understand what the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island infertility mandates cover? Need advice on framing an appeal letter?

If so, you are not alone. To assist people with their often complicated insurance issues, RESOLVE New England offers an Insurance Advocate service.

To get Insurance help, call or email RNE:
781-890-2225; admin@resolvenewengland.org
Our Insurance Advocate, Marymichele Delaney, will help answer your insurance questions one-on-one.

Fees: FREE to RESOLVE New England members, or join over the phone with your credit card: 781-890-2225

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nant then losing it very early — so many variations, so many ways to feel disappointed! The pain of losing something we never had to begin with was an entirely new and unique feeling while riding the fertility roller coaster. Yet, after each cycle, we would nurse our loss, lick our wounds, muster up hope and gather up the **strength to try again.**

I came across this quote by Alice Domar that helped me frame my grief after each failed cycle. My heart was **so invested in success every time and my mind couldn’t process the failure after I had worked so hard.**

“How do we accept that our intentionality, wholeheartedness and hard work matter even when they can’t be counted on to bring our dreams to fruition? ” —Alice Domar in “Self-nurture: learning to care for yourself as effectively as you care for everyone else”

I think this quote by Ms. Domar helped me understand what HOPE on the fertility roller coaster truly meant. It was no guarantee, no definite reality, but a possibility — and, in that possibility of imagining a family of my own, I learned it was ok to try again, and again, and again!

With our fourth IVF cycle, we became pregnant with boy/girl twins. It truly was a Divine journey for us. So many ups and downs, and ultimately — two healthy babies. Today, they are nearly 15 months old and sometimes we still look at them and marvel that they are here with us. We hold them tight and thank them for choosing us as their parents.
STATE ADVOCACY DAY
Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Please plan to join RESOLVE New England for a state advocacy day in each New England state on Wednesday, June 11, 2014.

You should attend RESOLVE New England’s State Advocacy Day if...

- You want to educate your elected officials about the disease of infertility.
- You are dealing with infertility and want to feel a sense of control.
- You have a loved one touched by infertility and want to show your support.
- You want more public understanding about the disease of infertility.

Join RESOLVE New England’s email list to keep up-to-date on the latest advocacy news.

For those in other New England states, watch our website for information about advocacy days in your state in 2014!
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RESOLVE NEW ENGLAND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Visit www.resolvenewengland.org/membership to join!

Household Member Benefits

Household Membership: $55/year

RESOLVE New England provides compassionate and informed support, education, and advocacy to people in New England who are experiencing infertility and seeking to build a family. Join those who know what it’s like to wish for a baby. You are not alone.

Telephone — Call us at 781-890-2250 for information and support from our Member Services Coordinator.

Triannual Newsletter — This publication includes information about our programs and services plus articles of interest.

Insurance Call-in Hours — Call us at 781-890-2225 for one-on-one assistance by phone with your insurance problems. Check our website or this newsletter for scheduled hours.

Educational Programs — Members enjoy reduced fees for various presentations by experts in the fields of infertility, donor conception, or adoption. Day-long seminars providing an in-depth look at one topic are also offered.

Monthly Peer Discussion Groups — Open forums providing information and support to people interested in learning more about infertility and RESOLVE New England. Groups focusing on specific topics are held in our Waltham office.

Discounts — Members can attend all Peer Discussion Groups free of charge and receive substantial discounts on all of our programs and literature.

Annual Conference — Members receive a discounted fee for this day-long educational event with over 40 workshops focusing on infertility treatment, donor conception, and adoption.


Advocacy — RESOLVE New England advocates for protection of the Massachusetts infertility insurance mandate, implementation of mandates in New England states without a mandate, and continued legislative and insurance reform.

Member-to-Member Connection — Members are matched with member volunteers who share similar experiences or who have a specific area of expertise.

Website & Blog — www.RESOLVENewEngland.org is the premier source of information for the New England Infertility Community on the internet. Our extremely popular blog, directory and calendar of events attract hundreds of visitors each day. It also offers information on our insurance and advocacy efforts and our online Directory of Professional Services.

Social Media — RNE provides up-to-the-minute information on all our services. We also offer a safe space for you and the greater community to communicate with each other and the national infertility community. Our Facebook page (Resolve New England), Twitter (@RESOLVENewEng), YouTube (RESOLVENewEngland) and Blog (resolvenewengland.org/blog) community is active and engaged on a daily basis.

Professional Member Benefits

Professional Membership: $150/year

We welcome professionals working in infertility, adoption, donor conception, and related fields to become professional members of RESOLVE New England, the only organization providing direct services to people experiencing infertility in New England. RESOLVE New England offers its professional members a number of benefits in addition to those available to our household consumer members, including:

· Option to advertise/list in our annual printed directory
· Option to exhibit/advertise at our annual conference
· Option to write articles/advertise in RNE newsletters
· Discounted pricing to events
· Leadership/volunteer/presentation opportunities
· Indirect benefits: advocacy for preservation of infertility insurance mandates and introduction of new mandates; media efforts on infertility issues
· Basic alphabetical listing in our online professional directory

AS ALWAYS, by purchasing your new or renewed membership through us, all proceeds stay local and help us provide services to those experiencing infertility in the New England area.

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<td>Mass. General Hospital Fertility Center</td>
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<td>OvaScience</td>
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<td>Reproductive Science Center of New England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tufts Medical Center / Women &amp; Infants</td>
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admin@resolvenewengland.org
781-890-2250

We are always looking for new ways to provide benefits and services to our members, both household and professional. If you have any suggestions on how we can better provide for our members, or if there is a feature or benefit you’d like to see, please let us know. And as always, thank you for your support of RESOLVE NEW ENGLAND!
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