



## Age-Friendly Maine News

*From your friends at AARP Maine*

**December**

**2016**



Dear Age-Friendly Maine Friends,

As we wrap up 2016, I want to thank each of you for all you have done over the last year to improve your communities and support your family, friends, and neighbors who live in these communities. I am continually inspired by your energy, tenacity, and compassion. We thought December would be a good time to highlight the efforts in many communities to combat senior hunger. While a year-round issue, it can seem even more difficult to tackle around the holidays; a time often meant to be about sharing a meal with loved ones.

We are also excited to highlight the community of Blue Hill and their work on hunger as well as many other issues. It is encouraging that so many TIP communities see a natural connection between Thriving in Place and the AARP Network.

It's also very exciting to welcome two new communities to the Network. We continue to grow at a fast pace. Stay tuned for news on upcoming regional get-togethers for communities as well as our next annual meeting. We will have lots to share as we move into the new year.

Finally, I would like to thank Peter Morelli, who will be finishing his work with AARP Maine at the end of 2016, for all of his efforts and support over the last two years. Peter was the first person to reach out to me regarding AARP's Age-Friendly approach while still with the City of Saco. The timing of his retirement with Saco was perfect- as our work was just getting started. Peter has travelled the state over the last two years to engage communities in becoming more age-friendly. He has pushed for more support of rural states and towns as well as the tools to help them. Peter will be greatly missed but has promised to stay connected. We wouldn't have grown to the Network we have today without him. Thank you, Peter!

We are looking forward to collaboration with you in 2017. Until then, I hope you have a wonderful holiday season. Warmest Wishes, Lori

## Addressing Food Security in Age-Friendly Communities



An important aspect of increasing community livability is addressing food security. Residents of all ages need consistent access to enough affordable, nutritious food to live a healthy and active life. An estimated 15.8 percent of households in Maine are food insecure, making Maine 1<sup>st</sup> in New England and 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation for food insecurity. This includes one in four children and 14 percent of seniors who are experiencing limited access to nutritionally adequate food in Maine.

Based on the need statewide, particularly in the rural areas where food insecurity rates are even higher, we want to highlight some of the nutrition programs that are in place in our age-friendly communities. All programs are aimed at meeting the nutrition needs of our most vulnerable populations, including children and older adults, and each has unique aspects that can be shared across communities.

### Ellsworth

There are some great food security efforts happening in Ellsworth. Their Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, which began in the basement of a local church over 30 years ago, has grown into an effort of nearly 500 volunteers serving 9,000 area residents per year. With direct support from a number of local churches, service organizations, community groups and local businesses, the pantry is able to offer year-round nutrition assistance to those experiencing food insecurity in the community.

As a member of the Hancock County Food Security Network, Loaves and Fishes increase their ability to serve their community by collaborating with food security agencies who share resources and information. In addition to offering a variety of no-cost food items including fresh fruits and vegetables, they are able to offer nutrition education through their work with the University of Maine's Eat Well program. Volunteers from the program demonstrate simple and inexpensive food preparation at the pantry, and offer recipes and tips on how to get the most of the foods they select.



The Loaves and Fishes food pantry is open Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 9:30-11:15am, and the third Friday of every month, 5:30-7pm. For more information about the Loaves and Fishes food pantry, or to volunteer your time, call 207-667-4363 or go to:

<http://loavesandfishesellsworthme.org/>

Ellsworth also has a senior lunch program offered through Friends in Action, a local nonprofit serving aging and disabled adults and their caregivers in Hancock County. Community members who are in need are offered a hot meal at a suggested donation. The program is offered at noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the Senior Center located at the Down East YMCA at 238 State

St. in Ellsworth. For more information contact Friends in Action at 207-664-6016 or <http://friendsinactionellsworth.org/programs/>

### Augusta

The Augusta Food Bank (AFB), maintained by more than 80 volunteers from the community, is serving an average of 350 households in Augusta and Manchester each month. Partnering with the Good Shepard Food Bank of Auburn, AFB is able to provide supplemental food to residents in need with support from generous donations and fund raising for the following programs:



- *Food pantry* – open Monday-Thursday, 12:30-2pm, and Monday evenings, 5:30-7pm
- *Kids Packs* – to supplement for school reduced meal programs during summer vacation
- *Home Delivery* – boxes of food are delivered to home bound residents once a month
- *Weekend Pack* – with support from the Gorman Foundation, provides 72 bags of nutritional food each weekend to families who benefit from the school reduced lunch program

For more information about AFB, call 207-622-5225 or go to: <http://www.augustafoodbank.org/>

### Bowdoinham

In Bowdoinham, two programs co-sponsored by the Bowdoinham Food Pantry and the Bowdoinham Advisory Committee on Aging are geared toward senior hunger:



- *Healthy Eating on a Budget* – this is a four week class attended by 21 area residents who learned how to access food that is healthy, inexpensive and readily available.
- *Pop up Grocery Store* – a nutrition program that allows participants to take a tour of a mock grocery store with a local nutrition expert who helps them improve their shopping skills, including how to read labels and choose healthy options. This event has been offered at various locations including the town fire station and the Bowdoinham Wellness Fair.

Another effort that presents a low-barrier way of getting food to older Bowdoinham residents is known as the *Neighbor to Neighbor* program, and involves community members letting the food pantry know of people in their area who might benefit from some additional food. In addition to programs that serve older adults, the food pantry also has a Back Pack Program that collaborates with the community school to support families.

The Bowdoinham Food Pantry is open every Wednesday from 3-6pm, and can be contacted at: 207-751-7779 or <http://bowdoinhamfoodpantry.org/>

### Mid Coast Maine

In Mid Coast Maine, an organization known as the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program (MCHPP) has been serving the food insecure in the greater Brunswick area since 1983. Operating out of their Brunswick facility, they now offer 9 programs thanks to a broad volunteer base and generous funding contributions from individuals, area businesses, and other community groups.



In addition to a well-stocked food pantry and soup kitchen, MCHPP offers some unique services to area residents who find themselves in need of a little extra help:

- *Pantry to Pantry program* - delivers groceries twice a month to the medically homebound
- *Common Good Garden* - run by volunteers who plant, tend, and harvest two to three thousand pounds of organic produce each year that is used to supply both the soup kitchen and food pantry.
- *Summer Food Service program* - in addition to their Backpack program that supports families in need during the school year, this service provides snacks and lunches for children during summer vacation; available at a variety of sites in the Mid Coast area.

Support for MCHPP is bolstered by an annual food drive, which generates the donation of thousands of pounds of goods for MCHPP each year. The drive is led by the United States Postal Service, whose ambitious efforts have helped to support the programs at MCHPP for over 20 years.

In an effort to increase access to healthy foods in the Mid Coast region, the MCHPP Food Security Coalition was formed in 2010. Sponsored by MCHPP and the United Way of Mid Coast Maine, the coalition involves collaboration and sharing of resources among 17 area food pantries and soup kitchens that is helping to expand the reach of meeting community needs in this region.

For more information on MCHPP, including hours of operation and volunteer opportunities, call 207-725-2716 or go to: <http://www.mchpp.org/>

### **Maine Area Agencies on Aging**

The Area Agencies on Aging in Maine have been addressing food security for over 40 years. Their programs provide nutrition services to some of Maine's poorest, most isolated, and frailest older adults, whose ability to prepare healthy meals at home has become a challenge. Each area agency offers home delivery programs like Meals on Wheels, as well as community dining options available at sites throughout its region.



For more information on the Aging agency in your area, contact the Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging at 207-592-9971 or <http://www.maine4a.org/>

## Age-Friendly Spotlight: Blue Hill

The picturesque Down East village of Blue Hill is the largest of towns of the Blue Hill peninsula, and considered the service center of its region. Its longtime lobstering, boat building, and farming industries combine with a vibrant art, music and food scene to make the area a popular summer destination. With nearly a third of its 2,580 residents 60 or older, and a median age of 52.9, we are excited to share that Blue Hill is making great gains toward increasing its livability.

Since 2001, a collaborative organization known as Healthy Peninsula has been coordinating initiatives that are geared toward improving the health and well-being of all residents of Blue Hill and its surrounding communities. Their Thriving in Place Downeast (TiPD) initiative, funded by a 3-year grant, is a collaboration involving numerous area agencies and organizations, and is aimed at supporting seniors, those with chronic illness, and caregivers to stay at home as they age. Now in year 3 of the grant, the initiative includes many age-friendly projects that are well underway toward providing services and supports to community members of all ages, including the following:



- *A health and wellness initiative to help residents of a low-income senior housing community establish healthy lifestyle goals; includes education in nutrition, getting and staying active, and healthy cooking (Coastal Care Team)*
- *Matter of Balance class, Living Well class, and caregiver trainings (Eastern Area Agency on Aging)*
- *Recruitment and education of volunteers for connection and follow-up to improve health outcomes for those with chronic disease (Friends in Action/Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County/Eastern Area on Aging)*
- *Tai Chi and nutrition education courses (Healthy Acadia)*
- *Programming and facilitation of a social and activities group for senior men and women known as the "Salt Air Seniors" in Deer Isle (Healthy Island Project)*

The majority of these programs will receive continued support with year 3 of TiPD funding, and many will be enhanced or expanded to include additional supports and services.

## Food Security in Blue Hill



Recent TiPD Sponsored Tai Chi class

The Blue Hill area has also made some very note-worthy progress in addressing food security. Healthy Peninsula is in their sixth season of providing a unique program in the Blue Hill region known as the *Magic Food Bus*. The program developed from the idea of combining a local librarian’s dream for a book mobile with Healthy Peninsula Good Food Project, and the result is a mobile service that delivers free fresh, local produce, health information, and library

books to children and adults.

Beginning in the town of Sedgwick in 2011, the program has expanded to include 12 stops in Blue Hill, Sedgwick, Deer Isle and Stonington, with 150 people served each week. Food bus deliveries are made by three volunteer drivers who add their own personal flair to their stops, such as taste tests, recipes, and gardening tips. Janet Lewis, Healthy Peninsula’s Executive Director, says program plans for 2017 are underway.

Another food security program in the Blue Hill area is a TiPD year 3 collaboration between Healthy Peninsula and Eastern Area Agency on Aging (EAAA). EAAA will partner with Healthcare practices on the Blue Hill Peninsula that are participating in Healthy Peninsula’s food security screening program. The collaboration will provide Emergency Food Boxes to consumers who are determined to be in urgent need of food relief. These consumers are then referred to EAAA’s Nutrition Improvement Program, where a care plan is developed based on their specific situations. The program is said to address longer-term food security issues, with a three-month follow-up being a standard program component.

Blue Hill also operates the *Tree of Life Food Pantry* that serves the eight towns on the Blue Hill Peninsula. What is unique about Tree of Life is their cooperative connection to the TurnStyle Thrift Shop, where the sale of donated clothing accounts for a large portion of funding for the food pantry. In an effort to promote healthy and affordable nutrition choices, the pantry has offered tasting samples and recipes as well as seeds and plants to encourage home gardening, and nutrition information resources. Tree of Life is open Thursdays, 9-3. For more information or to volunteer, call 207-374-2900 or go to: <http://treeoflifepantry.org/>

Having just joined the Network of Age-Friendly Communities (NAFC) this past September, it seems safe to say that Blue Hill has a great start on providing its residents with a community that supports healthy aging. They are getting ready to take on the planning process with enthusiasm, and plan to expand their work to include the other 8 towns of the Blue Hill Peninsula, including Deer Isle and Stonington. Anne Schroth, program coordinator and Healthy Peninsula, says their hope is “to use this (NAFC) framework to continue the great collaborative work we have begun with the Thriving in Place grant project”.

### **Two New Towns Join the Age-Friendly Network**

We are happy to share the news that two more Maine communities have been welcomed to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. The addition of these two communities means that 18% of Maine residents are now living within 24 age-friendly towns and cities that are part of the Network.

- **Biddeford**, in Southern Maine's York County, is a city of 21,303 with 21% of its residents 60 or older. Its many age-friendly strengths include an active community center offering The 50 Plus Club, Meals on Wheels, and the AARP Tax Service. The city also has a renowned performing arts center, and outdoor recreation areas that include beaches, parks, and hiking trails. The Age-Friendly committee, which includes our own Volunteer State President Rich Livingston, has been formed and a community assessment is underway.
- **North Yarmouth** is home to 3,661 residents, nearly 17 percent of which are 60 or older. Residents benefit from community resources shared with nearby Cumberland, including a well-stocked food pantry, and fuel assistance program. The North Yarmouth Events Committee organizes community events such as summer concerts on the Village Green, and an annual community Fun Day. With strong town support and a draft of the assessment survey, the Age-Friendly committee is off to a great.

### **Ask Age-Friendly**

*Dear Age-Friendly,*

*How do people get the word out about what's happening in their Age-Friendly communities?*

*-- B. Informed*

Dear B. Informed,

We're glad you asked! There is certainly plenty of information about area resources, activities, and events to be shared among communities, and members of the Age-Friendly network are getting this news out in a variety of ways. Some communities distribute a local newsletter, while others are using an online format, such as a town Facebook page, a web page, or an electronic newsletter or resource guide. Many communities also include a community events calendar on their town website.

Staying connected is vital to healthy aging, and a key component of a livable community. Be sure to check the January newsletter, which will highlight this topic with a more detailed look at how communities are sharing resources. We hope to offer some ideas that will help to keep everyone informed!

### **Upcoming Events:**

- **2017 AARP Maine State House Deep Dive**  
**WHEN:** Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
**WHERE:** Bangor Savings Bank, 5 Senator Way, Augusta  
**DETAILS:** Join us for a deeper dive into our legislative agenda and action plan. This session we plan to fight on behalf of Mainers 50+ for a caregiving tax credit, affordable

housing, consumer protections in utilities, and protection of home and community-based services. Lunch will be provided. Send an email to [ME@aarp.org](mailto:ME@aarp.org) to RSVP

- **Free Coffee Fridays at the AARP Maine Office**

January 6, February 3, & March 3 | 8:30–10:00 a.m.

*Note the new location and date.*

- **Portland On-Tap at RiRa**

Thursday, Jan. 19, Feb. 16, & March 16 | 4:00–6:00 p.m.

- **York Coffee Klatches at the Daily Grind Café**

Monday, Jan. 30, Feb. 27, & March 27 | 8:00-9:00 a.m.

- **Full Moon Walk on the Eastern Trail in Biddeford**

Friday, February 10, 2017 | 6:00–7:30 p.m.

- **2017 Age-Friendly Community Day**

**WHEN:** Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**WHERE:** Statehouse Hall of Flags

**DETAILS:** AARP Maine is pleased to invite the members of our Age Friendly Communities Network to our annual State House day. This is an opportunity to meet and greet your legislators, engage in the legislative process, and enjoy a day at the State House.

We are proud to provide local food and refreshments at our annual State House Day. In an effort to promote and support the small businesses in our Age Friendly Communities, we would like to feature refreshments from your town! Please contact us with your favorite coffee shop, bakery, or other recommended business. Agenda details to be determined. Stay tuned!

Visit our website at [aarp.org/me](http://aarp.org/me) or follow us on Facebook at AARP Maine for more details about these events.

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