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Healthy Aging Coordinator

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Healthy Eating Coordinator

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# Fall 2023

## NEWS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been a busy spring and summer season here at Healthy Peninsula! We've squeezed as much news as possible into this little Newsletter but there's always more to tell.

I am endlessly impressed by what our small staff can accomplish, with determination, inspiration, dedication, and grace. As demonstrated by our wonderful Annual Appreciation Celebration (see below), we couldn't do what we do without YOU - our volunteers, donors, and friends. Together we have had an amazing few months of improving the health and well-being of our communities. Thank you for your participation. Please reach out with ideas, questions, or suggestions: [aschroth@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:aschroth@healthypeninsula.org).

~Anne Schroth



Anne enjoying our Appreciation Celebration with Claire Connor and Sandy Phoenix

## Healthy Peninsula Hosts Annual Appreciation Celebration!



On September 9th, Healthy Peninsula staff, volunteers, donors and friends gathered at the Halcyon Grange in Blue Hill to celebrate another year of service to the community. Attendees were treated to delicious Mediterranean themed finger foods, good cheer and a video highlighting volunteer involvement over the past year.

**Thank you to everyone for making this an evening to remember!**

### Communities Served

- Blue Hill • Brooklin
- Brooksville • Castine
- Deer Isle • Sedgwick
- Penobscot • Surry
- Stonington

### ~ Upcoming Events ~

#### Walk-In Café

Wednesdays, 10am - 11:30am

#### Matter of Balance Trainings

Ongoing

#### Teatime at Blue Hill Public Library

Dates to be announced



## HEALTHY EATING - Anna Wind, Program Coordinator

As fall arrives, we enjoy sharing the abundance of the season to all through Magic Food Bus deliveries and volunteer-prepared meals via our partnership with the Simmering Pot. Kids who learned with us this summer at Garden Camp are back at school and we're working together with partner organizations to plan a Healthy Hibernation Fair at the Lawrence Center.

As our team schemed how to promote healthy eating in our community, we came up with the idea of visiting childcare locations with taste test opportunities and fresh produce. After an awesomely successful experiment last summer, Vanessa Hatch, our Healthy Families Coordinator, has been taking a rainbow of fresh fruits and veggies to 6 different daycares and preschools on the peninsula and Deer Isle/Stonington. Below is an interview with Vanessa reflecting on the mini Magic Food Bus project:



*Our mini Magic Food Bus Project is a tasty success!*

**Q: Thank you so much for taking this on! Why did you bring Magic Food Bus produce to these childcare centers?**

A: It's a great way to bring local, fresh produce to the kids to try with their friends. It's a great way to stay connected and share resources!

**Q: Did anybody try anything they hadn't had before?**

A: Yes, purple cabbage, fennel, all sorts of things! Kids noticed the fennel frond stem looked like a heart and they thought it tasted like black licorice. The kids did a taste test between yellow and green beans and were surprised that they tasted the same. Garlic scapes were super funny because they were spicy, but the kids were brave! For any kid who wasn't comfortable with tasting foods, I encouraged them to just hold, then maybe smell, and then perhaps taste. It was so impactful, those kids are super funny, and they really did a great job. We had a good time talking about gardening and what's growing. One time, I had 3 different types of lettuce, so we talked about the different varieties, did taste tests, and got to talk about bitter, sweet, crunchy, textures and flavors and did a general thumbs up, side ways and down to check in on the experience.

**Q: Did anything get an all thumbs up or thumbs down?**

A: I don't think I've ever gotten a unanimous response, not even on the spicy garlic scapes! As expected, carrots were a big hit! Garlic, lettuce, carrots, parsley, rainbow chard were really popular because of the colors, so were tomatoes. And beets were super fun because we all got to look at our red juicy teeth and tongues.

**Q: Why do you think it is important to do these visits?**

A: First of all, just giving the kids an opportunity in a relaxed, silly way to try all these vegetables and fruit, to get their hands on them, no pressure, just an invitation to try. It's also so pretty, it's meaningful to appreciate it aesthetically. We talked about the orange under the ground, for example, and how you can recognize the carrots by their green tops. Also, the childcare workers get a good sense of what the MFB is so they can share the resource with parents, which is also important.

**Q: Would you do this again?**

A: Yes, I'll definitely do it again, and I would encourage anyone who is able to bring veggies to little ones to do it! It can be really playful – bright red beet tongues, carrot top tickles under their chins – this all makes it fun!



*Anna and our wonderful 2023 Magic Food Bus team!*

# Magic Food Bus 2023



**by the numbers**

**13** YEARS rolling, 12 years of coordination by Healthy Peninsula.

**PATRON VISITS** providing an average of a pound and a half of food per visit.

**3,327**

**15+** **MADE IT POSSIBLE** Our sponsors and funders include many generous private donors and...Quimby Family Foundation, St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church, Stanley Family Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Sewall Foundation, Heart of Maine United Way, Hancock County Food Drive, First National Bank, Blue Hill Hannaford and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital.

**480** **BOOKS SHARED**

**YOU WITH YOUR DONATION**

Tax deductible gifts can be sent to Healthy Peninsula, P.O. Box 945, Blue Hill, ME 04614 or through our website: [www.healthypeninsula.org](http://www.healthypeninsula.org). Healthy Peninsula is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**12** **LOCATIONS + DELIVERY OPTIONS** in 9 towns—Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Castine, Penobscot, Sedgwick, Surry, Deer Isle and Stonington.

**360** **AVERAGE POUNDS OF FOOD** delivered weekly June through September. That's 6,049 meals worth of vegetables provided to individuals and families. 66% of produce harvested and donated by farm gleaning and community gardeners.

**MEAL'S WORTH OF VEGETABLES** provided to 996 unduplicated visitors of all ages.

**6,049**

**50+** **MADE IT HAPPEN** ~ Generous home gardeners, volunteer delivery drivers, Backstage Farm, Blue-Zee Farm, Four Season Farm, King Hill Farm, and local food partners: The Gleaning Initiative, Healthy Island Project, Blue Hill Community Garden, and Brooklin Food Corps & School Garden.



For more information:  
Anna Wind at 207-374-3257  
[info@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:info@healthypeninsula.org)


Since our spring newsletter, I am settling in as the Healthy Aging Coordinator for Healthy Peninsula. I coordinate and facilitate Age Friendly Coastal Communities, our community-wide collaboration that includes bi-monthly meetings for organizations, town officials, and community members to gather, share ideas and resource information, and develop collective approaches to support healthy aging in our communities. To say the pandemic interrupted our goals and plans is an understatement and we are working together to implement pandemic-informed strategies to make all of our nine-town communities places where we can live healthy and engaged lives as we age.

In May, I completed a Matter of Balance course offered by Master Trainer Pat Saunders and Healthy Peninsula volunteer Karen Milliken. This helped me understand what the course entails to better promote the program to those wanting to reduce their risk of falling. Additionally, I participated in the 14-hour Leadership Exchange on Ageism Program offered by the Maine Council on Aging. This program was developed to challenge community leaders to see their role in ending ageism and providing tools to be successful.


The recently launched pilot Bridging Neighbors Program is a collaborative effort with local partners to connect residents with volunteers, to help them find resources and overcome barriers accessing resources. The planning and implementation of this program currently occupies much of my time as the Healthy Aging Coordinator. Please see the last page of this newsletter for more information about the program.

We also continue to partner with community organizations on several direct service projects such as the Commodity Supplemental Food & Furry Friends Programs. These programs help older, low-income residents on the Blue Hill Peninsula and Deer Isle with food insecurity and also helps with the expense of pet food. Additionally, we are working to promote the Tele-Friend Program which matches Northeastern University students (by phone) with older adults living in rural Maine who are experiencing isolation or loneliness and would benefit from companionship on a weekly basis.

Lastly, I'm working with volunteers on a Skills & Services Directory that was implemented last year. The Skills & Services Directory was created for community members of the Blue Hill Peninsula and Deer Isle to advertise skills and services they can provide, as well as a hub for people to find those providing the services they need. So far, the towns of Brooksville and Surry have begun to promote this database and I hope to meet with the remaining towns within the next several months.



**Come join us!**



**Join us for this  
FREE community cafe!  
Wednesdays 10:00 - 11:30am  
Blue Hill Congregational Church  
Snacks • Coffee • Tea • Fellowship**

## HEALTHY FAMILIES - Vanessa Hatch, Program Coordinator

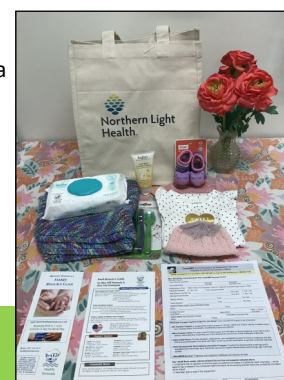
Healthy Families has had a great time this summer with our mini Magic Food Bus project! Please take a moment to read the highlighted Healthy Eating article in this newsletter. We also had a great time collaborating with the Friend Memorial Library (Brooklin) for a Family Beach Walk. Youth librarian Jen brought buckets, books, and songs to enhance our beach day down at Naskeag Point in Brooklin. Families with young kids are encouraged to check out the Friend Memorial Library's website to see what activities Jen has planned for the coming months.

Island Heritage Trust also joined us for a Family Beach Walk this summer, this one on Deer Isle at Scott's Landing Preserve. We were joined by both local families and families visiting Maine on vacation. I feel confident that adults and kids had a very nice time exploring the shore and making connections with each other.

We are still holding our monthly Child Care Provider Network zoom meetings and looking for ways to support our local child care providers as they navigate state regulations, staffing shortages, long waitlists, and more. We recently coordinated a Psychological First Aid training for providers and their staff, conducted at our office by Janet Lewis, from Northern Light Blue Hill, and for which the providers were able to get important continuing education credits.

Our Welcome Baby Bag project continues to be popular with local primary care providers and families with new babies. We are pleased to have more people than ever making and buying supplies for these bags. Since January 2023, we have distributed 39 bags through various practices and community channels. I can't think of a nicer way to welcome a new member of our community!

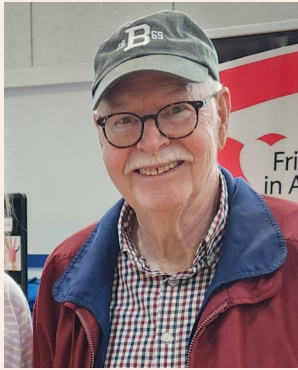
Most recently, we have been working with the leaders of the new after-school programs at Union 76 (Sedgwick, Brooklin, Deer Isle/Stonington) to connect them with community-based programming, mentors, and volunteers. Healthy Families has been given the opportunity to connect community members and organizations to the Union 76 grant funded after school program. This is an exciting opportunity to bring people of all ages together in support of education, creativity, and fun!



**Would you like to sponsor a Welcome Baby Bag collection from your club or school group?**

Please contact Vanessa Hatch: [vhatch@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:vhatch@healthypeninsula.org).

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



### MEET Allan Currie!

Allan serves on our Board of Directors, including our Development, Finance and Governance Committees. He also pitches in with our Walk-In Café.

Allan has been a Healthy Peninsula volunteer since 2016

**Do you have a favorite volunteer role with us?** I have enjoyed several aspects of volunteering for Healthy Peninsula. A variety of roles in the organization has kept me stimulated. I have been on the administrative end as board chair and head of different committees. I have also done hands on work such as delivering soup to individuals, helping in the Walk-In Café on Wednesday mornings, and helping out with various fund raising activities.

**What has been the biggest surprise about volunteering?** My biggest surprise about volunteering has been to see how many people are doing this. The number is incredible. I continue to be amazed at how much time and effort people put into this work. Healthy Peninsula has an awesome staff, but a very small staff. There is no way the organization would be able to do all it does, without the contributions of so many volunteers. This is a wonderful opportunity for people who want to do something great to help out in the community. The personal reward of volunteering is definitely worth the effort.

**If you could encourage someone else to volunteer, what would you say?** Volunteering for Healthy Peninsula has been a great way for me to transition into retirement. I have been involved with health care my entire working life, so this has been a good fit and a natural extension of my previous career.

**Thank you, Allan for being a wonderful part of the Healthy Peninsula family, and for jumping in to help out in so many amazing ways!**

## Bridging Neighbors and our Community

We are pleased to announce the launch of our volunteer-based community health outreach program — Bridging Neighbors! This project has been in the works with our community partners Healthy Island Project, Island Health & Wellness Foundation, and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, as well as the health, social service, municipal, and community-based organizations of the Age-Friendly Coastal Communities collective, for many months. We recently received a two-year grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation to carefully roll out a pilot of the project, first with patients of Northern Light's local practices and then growing as our capacity allows. Bridging Neighbors will provide trained volunteers to help older individuals access community-based resources, such as healthy food, safe housing, digital equity, transportation, and follow-up care—all of which are social determinants that impact health. It also provides a friendly visitor who can help lessen social isolation and loneliness, which were intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and can severely impair health and wellness.

In October, we held our first volunteer training in Blue Hill, with six community members attending. Our volunteers have started working with clients across our peninsula, providing support and companionship. If you would like more information or would like to volunteer, contact Lori Johnson, Healthy Aging Coordinator, at [ljohnson@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:ljohnson@healthypeninsula.org) or 374-3257.



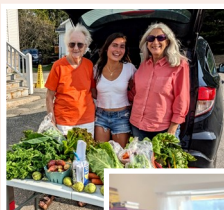
## You Can Make A World of Difference....

### Become A Volunteer!

We would love to talk with you about our volunteer opportunities, including:

- **Magic Food Bus - June through September**
- **Walk-In Café - Wednesdays, ongoing**
- **Bridging Neighbors - volunteer community outreach, ongoing**
- **Simmering Pot - substitute drivers, ongoing**
- **Commodity Food Box - substitute drivers, ongoing**

For more information, please email [tpasley@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:tpasley@healthypeninsula.org) or register online at: [healthypeninsula.org](http://healthypeninsula.org) by clicking on the "Volunteer" tab.



### Become A Donor!

Your gift helps us support healthy communities for all on the Blue Hill Peninsula, Stonington & Deer Isle!

You can donate by including a check with the enclosed remittance envelope or by going online to: [www.healthypeninsula.org/donate](http://www.healthypeninsula.org/donate).

**Thank you!**