

**March 2023**

## The Office on Aging and Disabilities Services Identifies Needs

The Maine Office of Aging and Disability Services partnered with the Muskie school of Public Service to conduct a statewide assessment of community needs of older adults and care givers. The purpose of the assessment is to inform the State and its community partners about the most pressing needs of older residents around Maine and to shed light on how best to prioritize existing services – or develop new ones – to meet those needs.

Below is a synopsis of the major findings of that study.

### Transportation

- the lack of affordable transportation in communities was a principal barrier to accessing essential services such as food, medications, health care, and social activity
- for many older people, particularly the very old and those with physical and cognitive limitations
- the lack of affordable and flexible transportation options often means the difference between accessing basic needs or not
- the availability of transportation is one of the “gateways” to better health and quality of life

### Housing and Home Repair

- the need for affordable housing options



- the need for home repair and maintenance
- The need for home modifications to create a safer environment
- **Food and Nutrition**
- older Mainers identified difficulties in preparing their own meals
- there is an interwoven, complex, relationship between food security, nutrition, transportation, and caregiver workforce
- food and good nutrition are other “gateway” needs, the absence of which can cause rapid decline in physical and cognitive health

- **Social Engagement**
- if these older people had accessible, affordable, and appropriate transportation to places and events they wish to attend, they would be more socially engaged
- **Trust**
- older Mainers acknowledge the value of being a “hand-shake state”, full of communities where most people know everyone
- a lack of trust can lead to withdrawal and social disconnection
- older people need ready access to trusted individuals for care and service needs, or

information about where to find them

### Safety

- older Mainers expressed concerns about safety in the context of physical safety, psychological safety, and feelings of security
- populations that have been historically marginalized and discriminated against worry that this behavior will be perpetrated by the larger community
- they may not feel safe accessing community benefits and services unless those services are delivered by trusted individuals.

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## From the Director

In October, I announced that Friends in Action was kicking off our annual appeal which actually began in December. Thus far Friends in Action has benefitted greatly from the generosity of a large group of donors. On behalf of Friends in Action, I thank you very much. We are halfway to our goal and I hope those of you who have yet to make a donation will open your hearts and your wallets. This issue of Connections is devoted to providing insights into the needs and challenges facing Hancock County’s older residents and how Friends in Action helps fulfill those needs.

Friends in Action’s mission is to empower older adults and peo-



ple living with disabilities to thrive and to live independently, with dignity and a strong quality of life. We are accomplishing that mission by providing services in transportation, food security, socialization and non-medical volunteer services including friendly call, light home

maintenance, and in and outdoor chores. All our volunteer services, including transportation, are free.

The degree to which older residents have used are services is a testament to the need. In 2022 Friends in Action had 1,200 residents registered clients, 3 paid staff and 116 volunteers. The staff focus is on receiving requests for service and coordinating fulfillment. The volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization because they actually provide the services. The highlights of our accomplishments are listed below.

- Made over 6,000 trips covering more than 60,000 mile
- Provided over 4,000 pre-

pared meals, 3,500 in our café in the Senior Center and 500 delivered to house bound clients

- Delivered over 350 boxes of food
- Hosted 3 Covid Vaccine Clinics
- Provided senior exercise classes 5 days a week
- Provided free tax assistance in partnership with AARP
- Hosted community service organization meetings and events including Rotary Club, Ellsworth Historical Society, AARP, Red Cross

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# Director's Letter Cont. In Memoriam

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and more.

The high utilization of our services is clear and convincing evidence that the needs identified by the Maine Office on Aging and Disability Services in the 2020 needs assessment are very real and Friends in Action's activities have a positive effect on those needs. Without Friends in Action's services, many of our clients will have far significant difficulty accessing medical and other professional services and for many it would cause greater food insecurity.

Except for the exercise classes and meals, the Friends in Action

provides services at no cost to the client. The charge for meals and classes is nominal and generate less than 1% of the funds required for operations. We rely on support from the community to make ends meet. We receive some funding from the towns within Hancock County and some grants from charitable foundations. For the rest, we rely on donations from individuals and businesses.

Once again, if you are yet to donate, please pull the trigger now. Any amount, large or small will be greatly appreciated.

-John

On January 15, 2022, Susan Joy Butler died peacefully at her home in Germantown, Maryland.

Susan was a dedicated agriculturalist and accomplished business person. Although Susan was dedicated to Butler's Orchard and eventually Waters Orchard, she traveled extensively. One other

favorite destinations was Branch Lake in Ellsworth where she spent many summers engaging in the great outdoors.

Susan is greatly missed by all of those whose lives she has touched. Friends In Action greatly appreciates the donation made by family and friends in Susan's memory.

## Maine Senior Living Statistics & Facts

About 580,000 people in Maine are age 50 or older. While this doesn't necessarily feel like an impressive number, in a small-population state like Maine, that means that nearly 44 percent of the state's residents are seniors. What else can demographic, health and economic data teach us about Maine's seniors and how the state stacks up to the rest of the country?

By a couple of measures, Maine is the oldest U.S. state. Not by the state's year of founding, of course, but by how aged its residents are. For example, just under 44 percent of Maine residents are 50 or older, which is the highest percentage in the country. Similarly, Maine's

median age of 45.1 is the oldest in the U.S., compared to the American median age, 38.5 years. The state also has aged rapidly over the past decade, with the median age rising in Maine by nearly 6 percent through 2018.

While the state does lead the nation, or get close to it, in a few measures, there are some areas in which Maine lags. Just under 3 percent of Maine seniors (60 and older) are people of color, which is the lowest in the country. And Maine households led by those 65 and older have a median annual income of just over \$40,000, below the U.S. median for the age group.

## Maine's Senior Living Costs

Boasting a housing index of 97.60, Maine is slightly cheaper than the national average when it comes to cost of living. The US average sits at 100. For reference, a one-bedroom apartment averages out to \$693 a month (compared to the U.S. average of \$825 a month), while a two-bedroom apartment goes for around \$865 a month (compared to the U.S. average of \$1,027 a month).

Seniors in Maine can expect to pay an average of \$4,385 a month for home health care, which enables them to live in their own homes while receiving assistance with housekeeping and completing errands.

Adult day care is a great place for seniors to stay during the day to receive supervision and socialization while caregivers are tending to their other responsibilities. The rate for adult day care averages out to \$2,340 a month in Maine.

Since adult day care doesn't include extensive care, it is most suitable for the elderly who are mostly healthy and independent.

Maine's assisted living facilities are designed to provide aging loved ones with more assistance with their everyday tasks. For an average monthly cost of \$4,890 a month, seniors are able to receive personal care and health services.

Seniors who have trouble living their lives without needing help with every little task will benefit from staying at a nursing home, where professional staff members are able to provide that assistance. Maine has plenty of nursing homes available for seniors who need 24/7 supervision and care, therapies and rehabilitation, medications, and of course, housing. The cost for a semi-private room is roughly \$9,140 a month. If you prefer more privacy, you can get a private room for approximately \$9,764 a month.

## Synopsis of Friends in Action Services

Friends in action serves Hancock County residents over 60 and residents living with disabilities.

There is no charge for services. There is a nominal charge for in house meals and classes. There is no income restriction.

### TRANSPORTATION:

Request fulfillment is dependent upon volunteer availability.

The request fulfillment rate is over 97%.

There is a need for registration as a client.

Under normal circumstances, 5 days advanced notice is required.

The destination is not restricted.

Friends In Action has a

wheelchair accessible van available.

### FOOD SUPPORT:

Rides to the grocery stores and food pantries are provided.

Assistance with grocery shopping: escorting the client in the store, picking up groceries and delivering groceries.

Deliveries of commodity food for low-income seniors and meals prepared meals from area food programs.

Prepared meals in the Senior Center cafeteria. The cost for lunch is \$5

### PHARMACY:

If permitted, prescriptions can be picked up and delivered.

Payment arrangements must be in place.

### TELEPHONE REASSURANCE:

This service can involve wellness checks or simply a regular friendly phone call.

### FRIENDLY VISITS:

This program matches trained volunteers with accepted clients who are usually referred by a social worker or physician. This service requires a more intensive training of 8 hours.

### CHORES:

This service may include seasonal yard work such as leaf raking and snow shoveling.

Minor home repairs.

### SOCIALIZATION:

The Friends in Action Senior Center located at 5 General Moore Way in Ellsworth provides many opportunities for older residents to interact socially.

Coffee House occurs once a week.

Lunch is served on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Fitness Program includes an equipped fitness room and classes for seniors at all levels of fitness.

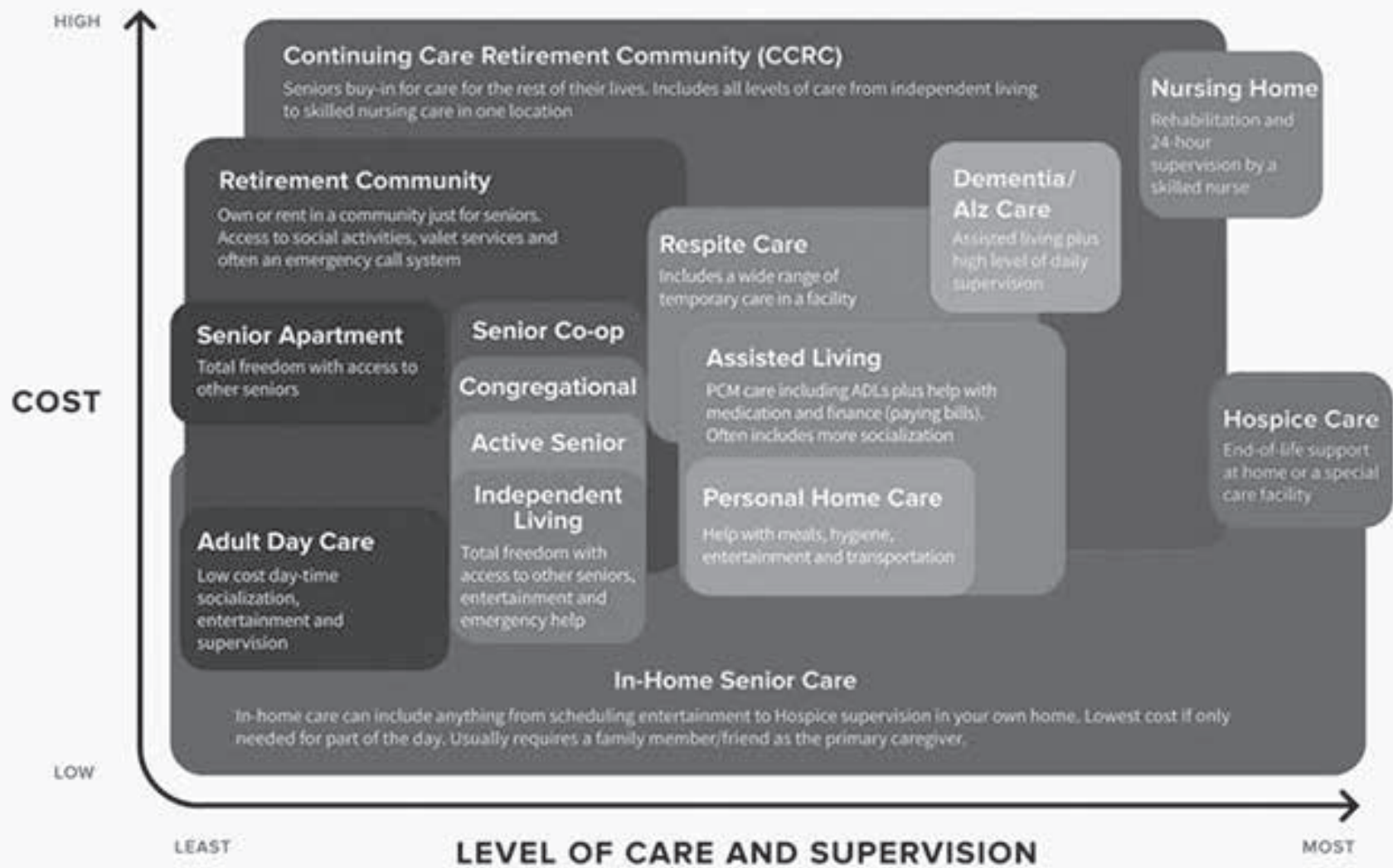
Various Bridge Mahjong and other clubs meet weekly

Entertainment events are put on from time to time

Adult Education programs are available.

# The Senior Living Spectrum


This graph shows how different types of senior care overlap and the relationship between the level of care and the cost.



seniorliving.com

## MENU

March 2023

<p><b>Thursday, March 2nd</b> Ground Beef Stroganoff Egg Noodles Green Beans Diced Peaches</p>	<p><b>Thursday, March 9th</b> Pork Roast Stuffing Carrots Applesauce</p>	<p><b>Thursday, March 16th</b> Corned Beef, Roll Boiled Dinner with Potatoes Carrots &amp; Cabbage Pineapple</p>	<p><b>Thursday, March 23rd</b> Baked Ham Scalloped Potato Roll Applesauce</p>	<p><b>Thursday, March 30th</b> Italian Chicken Pasta Bake Cauliflower Roll Diced Peas</p>
<p><b>Tuesday, March 7th</b> Red Beans and Rice Kielbasa Peas Diced Peas</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, March 14th</b> Ham &amp; Cheese Pasta Bake Mixed Vegetables Roll Mandarin Oranges</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, March 21st</b> Shephards Pie Roll Broccoli Diced Peaches</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, March 28th</b> Spaghetti &amp; Meatballs Corn Roll Mandarin Oranges</p>	<p><b>Happy St. Patrick's Day!</b> </p>



**Weekly desserts to be announced at Lunch!**

Please call 664-6016 before 5:00 on Monday & Wednesday to reserve lunch for Tuesday & Thursday.

