

June 2024



Volunteer of the Month

It was back in 1984 when Mary Ann Lock and her family, including husband, 2 children and a mother-in-law, moved to live permanently in Maine. They had been coming up from Patterson, New York for vacations before purchasing land and building a home. Mary Ann has been a part of Friends in Action for longer than most of us can remember, as a volunteer then as a member of the Board Directors



nearly 45 years as a physical therapist working with both pediatrics and geriatrics. Most recently she worked in rehab at Eastern Maine Medical Center. Today she is one of our most active volunteers as driver, fitness coach as well as performing the duties of Secretary. She puts her heart and soul into helping others to be strong, independent and confident.

Mary Ann first heard about the transportation program in Ellsworth from a neighbor and she soon became a driver. At that time, nearly 15 years ago, Friends in Action was functioning at its grassroots level, housed in a small office space with the challenging mission of supplying rides and meals for needy senior citizens and handicapped individuals. When Jo Cooper, founder, and other organization members were planning a big move into the Moore Community Center, Mary Ann was called in to help set up new programming for health and fitness opportunities. Fast forward to today and we see the results of her hard work and vision.

Today, Mary Ann acts as an assistant coach/instructor for the "Strength and Balance for Parkinson's Disease and Other Neuro Degenerative Disease" classes. She says there is something special about being able to help the participants. Never-ending kindness and patience make Mary Ann an amazing volunteer.

and an Officer of the Board. She has been sharing her knowledge and capabilities in a dedicated effort to give back to her community. Many of her skills were acquired during

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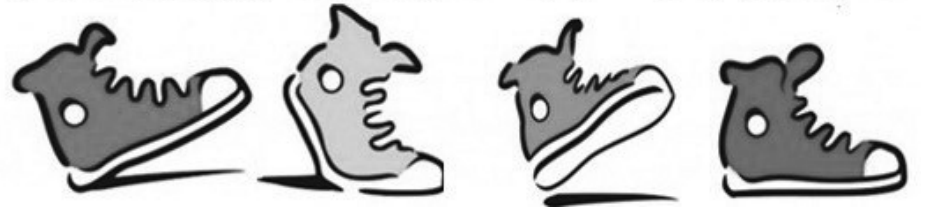
Kathleen S. Hughes

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Maureen Giunta

Join Us For The Third Annual

Walk/Run-A-Thon



Saturday, June 8, 2024

at Knowlton Park

**Registration starts at 8 a.m. and
the walk/run begins at 9 a.m.**

**Have fun, get moving, and sup-
port Friends in Action!**

**\$25 per person | Raffle and Door
Prizes included First 50
registrants receive a free t-shirt**



Participant of the Month

Linda Sweeny grew up in Massachusetts, south of Boston and has been moving north ever since. She and her husband bought land in Mariaville years ago and soon built a cabin. When they still owned a condo in Lowell, they were able to travel back and forth and work from either location. Linda was an internet consultant and graphic designer while working on websites with her husband. She is an avid crafter who likes to try different skills: crocheting, knitting, jewelry making, sewing, and more. We're talking about a very creative lady here!

Linda heard about Zumba from some friends several years ago and has enjoyed the music and dancing rhythms ever since. She is also a dedicated participant in another fitness program - "Strength and Balance". Linda appreciates the way the classes are designed with various ability levels in mind. The instructor is great at individualizing the exercises and will gladly suggest modifications. Changing to a different hand weight or doing more or less repetitions is no problem. The classes are fun and there's time to

get to know other participants as most attend regularly and find time to chat before or after class.

Linda is happy with the steady improvement in her own fitness. Kayaking is easier as she has gained the strength and balance that helps when getting in and out of the boat. There are so many offerings on the weekly Friends in Action calendar, and Linda predicts she will try other activities. Maybe she will be featured as Participant of the Month sometime in the future.



From the Director

We have engaged in a little introspection lately and have concluded that we have emphasized the positive impact engaging in the Senior Center activities can have on older citizens who otherwise might suffer the ill effects of isolation but have left out the Senior Center's role as a total community resource. It is unique in Hancock County in that it is the only facility dedicated to providing a welcoming place where seniors get together just to enjoy each other's company while participating in hobbies or instructor led activities or just visiting over a cup of coffee or a meal.

I encourage everyone over the age of 55 or living with a disability to visit the Friends in Action Senior Center either to take advantage of one of our activities (see the back page of this newsletter for a schedule) or just to experience the warm and welcoming environment. You will find There is nothing like the laughter that fills our halls as seniors gather to engage in activities that bring joy and vitality to **their** lives. From fitness classes to art workshops, from educational seminars to social gatherings, our center is a vibrant hub of activity, where friendships flourish and spirits soar. Seniors find a community of peers who understand and appreciate the journey they've traveled and what lies ahead.

There is nothing like the warmth of a welcoming smile, the comforting embrace of a familiar face, and the shared wisdom of years gone by. All of these and

more await our senior and disabled community members who utilize our essential Transportation Program. While giving our clients rides to appointments and stores, we strive to create an environment throughout our programs where they are valued, respected, and cherished.

To continue providing these invaluable services, we need your help. Your donation ensures that our Senior Center remains a haven of companionship, support, and enrichment for our aging population. Your gift enables us to offer essential programs and services that enhance quality of life, promote well-being and are entertaining and fun.

With your help here are some of our plans for 2024:

A More Unique Fitness Experience:

We have expanded our fitness class offerings to at least 5 classes a day, Monday through Friday. We are also introducing a personal training program, which includes one-on-one training and small group training, where our fitness staff will help you establish fitness goals and provide an individualized exercise program.

To accommodate the additional fitness programs, we have begun the planning process to expand our fitness facility to include repurposing a classroom to an exercise studio. We will install mirrors, new flooring, and exercise equipment.

Our goal is to continue to encourage our clients to maintain or improve their health and wellness. Exercise is a key to



maintaining and improving physical and mental wellness.

Increased Program Collaborations:

Friends in Action values partnering with other organizations in our community as it allows us to improve our programs and reach more individuals. So far, we have developed strong partnerships with MDI Wheelers, offering an opportunity to enjoy tricycle rides on Acadia carriage roads to those who, as a result of an infirmity, are not able to do so on their own. A six-week nutrition series has begun, in partnership with Hanaford, Healthy Acadia, and the United Way, and provides guidance on healthy eating as well as cooking demonstrations. We are getting ready to rebuild the raised garden beds and repurpose them for a cross generational program in partnership with the Downeast Family YMCA. The participating children from the YMCA will

learn how their food is grown and prepared for consumption while giving our older clients an opportunity to learn or refine gardening skills while mentoring and enjoying the company of the children. And finally, we are thrilled to be implementing partnerships with Healthy Peninsula on Blue Hill Peninsula, the Bridging Neighbors Project in Stonington, The Lamoine Committee on Aging, and Neighbors Helping Neighbors in Gouldsboro, to increase our capacity to provide essential rides to our clients in Hancock County. We hope you will consider a gift to Friends in Action to preserve the heart of our community. Your contribution, no matter the size, makes a world of difference. Together, let's ensure that there will always be 'nothing like' our beloved Senior Center.

-John

NEW IN MAY
WITH PATRICIA JONES
IN THE NEW YOGA STUDIO
VINYASA FLOW YOGA II
WEDNESDAY 11:45
PILATES CORE & BODY WORKS
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY 11:45



Save the Dates!

- **Third Annual Walk/Run June 8, 2024**
- **14th Annual Golf Tournament**
September 10, 2024

Women's Discussion Group

Women over 55, Please join us.

An opportunity for women over 55 to discuss the challenging chapters of a women's life.
Meets twice a month on the first and third Wednesdays.
A place to share thoughts and support each other without judgement or advice.

Sleep Apnea and Diet

Solo Aging

A new health study says a person’s diet can influence their risk of obstructive sleep apnea.

Those who eat a healthy plant-based diet rich in vegetables, fruit, whole grains and nuts are less likely to suffer sleep apnea.

On the other hand, people who eat more meat or indulge in unhealthy vegetarian diets high in sugar, carbs and salt are more at risk for sleep apnea.

“These findings highlight the importance of the quality of our diet in managing the risk of OSA [obstructive sleep apnea],” said lead researcher Yohannes Melaku, from Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia.

People with sleep apnea often snore loudly and their breathing starts and stops during the night, causing regular brief wakefulness, researchers explained in background notes.

Sleep apnea can increase a person’s risk of high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and type 2 diabetes, researchers said.

For this study, the team analyzed responses from more than 14,000 participants in a regular U.S. survey on health and nutrition.

This is the first large-scale analysis investigating the link between diet and sleep apnea, Melaku said.

“There’s a gap in our knowledge of how overall dietary patterns affect OSA risk,” Melaku said in a journal news release. “With this study, we wanted to address that gap and explore the association between different types of plant-based diets and the risk of OSA.”

People with diets highest in plant-based foods were 19% less likely to have sleep apnea compared to those with the lowest amounts of plant-based foods in their diet.

However, people who ate a diet high in unhealthy plant-based foods had a 22% elevated risk than those not indulging in refined grains, potatoes, sugary drinks, sweets, desserts and salty foods, results showed.

A plant-based diet worked more powerfully to lower sleep apnea risk in men, the researchers noted. At the same time, an unhealthy plant-based diet caused a bigger increase in women’s risk for sleep apnea.

“It’s important to note these sex differences because they underscore the need for personalized dietary interventions for people with OSA,” Melaku said.

The study could not say exactly why a plant-based diet reduces risk of sleep apnea, Melaku said.

“It could be that a healthy plant-based diet reduces inflammation and obesity. These are key factors in OSA risk,” Melaku speculated. “Diets rich in anti-inflammatory components and antioxidants, and low in harmful dietary elements, can influence fat mass, inflammation and even muscle tone, all of which are relevant to OSA risk.”

With declining birth rates, increasing divorce rates, and more people living alone, another demographic is increasing: solo agers, or older adults who are not married, live alone, and do not have adult children whom they can rely on as they age. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2021 there were approximately 22.1 million solo agers in America; an estimated 28% of older adults in the US live alone and are childless.

The following strategies may support solo agers’ ability to Age Well:

- Focus on maintaining and improving one’s physical health to help delay the need for higher levels of care in the future. Physical activities, such as walking, yoga, and swimming, can boost energy and support mobility and independence.
- Engage in self-care activities to increase and maintain one’s psychological well-being. These activities may include spending time in nature; enjoying music, art, and other forms of creative expression; meditating; and pursuing hobbies and interests.
- Establish a plan for one’s future, including financial and legal considerations, housing needs, and support networks. It is important to document and communicate these plans with others who can act as advocates if needed.
- Cultivate a strong social support network of friends, neighbors, and community members. Joining special interest clubs and volunteering within the community is one way of building those connections. Additionally, social connections can be maintained by engaging with contacts using video sharing and social media.

It is particularly important for solo agers to establish a plan in case long-term care is needed, because they do not have the option of informal caregiving support that is traditionally provided by adult children. The Department of Health and Human Services (2023) estimates that half of adults over age 65 will need some form of paid long-term services and support.

For the most part, there were few differences in how solo and supported agers are preparing for the future, except for plans related to identifying caregivers. Surprisingly, fewer solo agers have identified future caregivers or plan to make these arrangements in the future. It’s possible that solo agers are delaying those decisions because they plan to age in place and do not anticipate needing care.

Our number: 207-664-6016

MEDICARE 101

Offered every second Thursday

from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the FIA Senior Center

Registration Required

Call Eastern Area Agency on Aging (EAAA)

1-800-432-7812 | 207-941-2865

MENU			
June 2024			
Tuesday, June 4th Goulash, Roll, Veggies and Fruit	Tuesday, June 11th Shake and Bake Chicken, Roll, Veggies and Fruit	Tuesday, June 18th Cheeseburgers, Tater Tots, Fruit and Veggies	Tuesday, June 25th Spaghetti, Mozzarella Stuffed Breadstick, Fruit and Veggies
Thursday, June 6th Hot Dogs, Tater Tots, Veggies and Fruit	Thursday, June 13th Enchilada Casserole, Fruit and Veggies	Thursday, June 20th Meatloaf, Rolls, Fruit and Veggies	Thursday, June 27th Meatball Subs, Veggies and Fruit

