



Friends
in Action

Connections



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Friends in Action News & Programs

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December 2024

Good News about Aging

From Bill Moyers' book *Moyers on America, Looking Back*

In the 4,500 years from the Bronze Age to the year 1900 life expectancy increased twenty-seven years, and in the short period from 1900 to 2020 it increased by at least that much again. The change has been dramatic, it is currently estimated that of all the human beings who have ever lived, half are currently alive. There are as many seniors as there are

people under the age of twenty. Approximately three million of these elder boomers - according to the New England Centenarian Study - can expect to live to a hundred or more. When I was born - before penicillin - median age at death was fifty-two. Now it's seventy-six.

Researchers have looked at more than one thousand highly functioning older people to determine the factors that predict successful physical and mental aging.

The studies shattered the myths about aging that held order people hostage to caricature and stereotype. We now know that we can reduce our risk for disease and disability. We know that old age can be a time for learning, that trained elders can even do better at memory games than untrained young people. We no longer believe that our course in old age is predetermined; we know from strong scientific evidence that successful aging is not for the most part

inherited and that we are largely responsible for our own old age we have the capacity of maintaining high mental and physical ability as we grow older. We know that the basic human needs for affectionate physical contact persist throughout life, and so does the capacity for giving it. We see too often many who are still making a difference to someone, and very often to society. The most important thing we've learned about older people is that attitude and activity matter.

From the Director

With Thanksgiving behind us, we're already looking toward 2025. As we reflect on 2024, we are immensely grateful to our volunteers, sponsors, and donors. Our sponsors and donors have provided the resources to support

our mission, while our volunteers bring energy and dedication to make it all happen. Thanks to their efforts, our clients benefit from reliable, compassionate service. Although we don't yet have the final count, we're confident the following achievements highlight our impact this year:

- Over 1,200 clients registered to receive free services.
- Volunteers completed more than 7,000 trips, covering 71,000 miles in their own vehicles.
- Over 6,000 deliveries of commodity food boxes, prepared meals, and prescriptions were made.
- The Friends in Action Senior Center saw a surge in engagement, with more than 5,000 visits for enrichment programs, vaccine clinics, adult education, Medicare work-

shops, and more. Social groups—like bridge, mah-jong, painting, writing, and geology—continued to thrive.

- Our unique fitness program also saw high participation, with another 4,200 visits.

All of these accomplishments were made possible by our dedicated volunteers and through the support of 12 other nonprofits in Hancock County.

While we are proud of what we've achieved, we are aware of the continuing needs in our community and are committed to expanding our services. Looking ahead, we're excited to introduce new initiatives and partnerships in 2025:

- In collaboration with the Downeast Family YMCA, we will launch an inter-generational vegetable garden project. This will

offer a relaxing and educational activity for our older adults while giving children in the YMCA Day Care Program a hands-on learning experience. We're currently preparing the raised garden beds for a spring planting.

- We're enhancing the lunch experience to make it even more engaging and enjoyable.
- A new initiative is underway to expand our transportation services in the Deer Isle-Stonington and Blue Hill Peninsula areas, with plans to extend these services further Downeast.
- We're piloting virtual fitness classes via Zoom to increase accessibility.
- We're exploring ways to rejuvenate our minor home maintenance program through partnerships with other organizations.
- Finally, we're in discussions with the Alzheimer's Association to offer educational opportunities for those caring for family members with Alzheimer's.

We are grateful to everyone who has helped us make a difference this year, and we look forward to achieving even more together in 2025.

-John

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Staff Additions

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our newest staff additions.

McKayla Hairston, Director of Volunteer Services

McKayla joined Friends in Action on October 17th as the Director of Volunteer Services. She hit the ground running and has already met most of our volunteers and many of our clients. It is clear she has a good handle on the FIA mission and the processes and procedures necessary for mission accomplishment.

McKayla is a native Mainer having grown up in Bangor. She moved to North Carolina in 2007 and has recently moved back to Maine. She brought with her a wealth of knowledge across the range of FIA's service offerings particularly coordination of services for older adults

McKayla started her career in the not-for-profit sector. Providing support to people in need has always been in her heart and she has spent many years honing her skills. Those skills are complemented by her degree in Health In-

formation Technology, which gives her valuable insights into ways to



make our coordination and record keeping processes more efficient and effective.

In her spare time, she loves scavenging the Maine Coastline with her 10-year-old son and their dogs. She is excited about her return to Maine and expresses gratitude for the renewed chance to enjoy the beautiful change of season.

We invite volunteers and folks

thinking about volunteering to stop by to meet her.

Racheal Rediker, Office Administrator

Friends in Action is delighted to introduce Racheal Rediker who joined us as Office Administrator on September 23rd. Racheal's previous experience is in the medical field as a phlebotomist and lab technician where she worked closely with patients to coordinate and deliver the best care possible. After 2 years in a hospital setting, she went to Bucksport Regional Health, a smaller clinic more closely connected to the local community. In addition to honing her lab skills, volunteer, she helped maintain the beautiful community garden that they provide. Although this is the first non-profit that she has had the pleasure of working with, she is not new to the volunteering world. Racheal grew up volunteering in her community, helping with the Levant Old Holmes Day Breakfast, very similar to our own Senior Lunch, the Girl Scout Camps as well as

numerous other community functions and activities. She was also



a proud member of Junior ROTC throughout her high school career.

She is new to the Ellsworth area and reports she is "excited to become more involved in this wonderful community and its older residents." When you meet her, you will see right away that she enjoys meeting and helping people.

What's Happening

For the next few months, Connections will share information about some of the activities sponsored by Friends in Action. You'll soon realize how busy the Senior Center can be.

Mahjong

Every Thursday at 1:00 you will find a group of folks in the FIA Cafe setting up to play American Mahjong. This is a variant of the Chinese game mahjong. It is played with four players using mahjong tiles. Each player has a rack and gets 13 tiles. Then there is a set of required passing of tiles by all players. It is a game of chance and skill.

The goal of the game is to be the first, by picking up and discarding tile to form a specific hand listed on the Playing Card.

The mahjong group is more than happy to teach newcomers who want to learn how to play. There is no membership fee, but you'll eventually need to purchase a \$14 Playing Card from the National Mahjong League.

It's always good to learn something new and meet some friendly

people at the same time.

Come and see if mahjong is something you'll enjoy!

Playing Bridge

Every Monday and Friday from 9am until 3pm you can find a group of people playing bridge and enjoying time with friends in the FIA Café. The Monday group is comprised of experienced players, and they play Duplicate Bridge. On Fridays you will find a more informal game. This group will gladly give lessons and help newcomers start with the basics. Everyone who wants to play can find a place at the table regardless of their ability level. A few experienced players are in their 90's.

These Bridge Groups appreciate the setting at the Senior Center. The room is well lit and the tables in the cafe work well for playing cards. Coffee and simple snacks are offered. Participants pay a small fee of \$5. Sounds like a good deal! Drop in sometime soon and you will be welcomed by friendly folks.

Friends in Action Senior Center Policy on COVID 19 Isolation and Masking

Friends in Action follows the Maine CDC guidelines.

Until Recently, a positive rapid test would have meant at least five days of isolation. Not anymore. In March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its COVID isolation guidelines based on symptoms, not time since testing positive.

The guidelines shifted in part to match those of other common respiratory viral illnesses, including the flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The CDC now says if you are sick, stay home. You are cleared to resume normal activities when the following are both true for at least 24 hours:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall
- You haven't had a fever (and aren't using fever-reducing medication)

If your symptoms persist, you may end up isolating for five or more days after all, but you'll be

doing your part to protect others in your community from infection.

Those who have symptoms of a respiratory virus—cough, sneezing, body aches, nasal congestion with or without fever—should test for COVID-19 and influenza when influenza is circulating in their communities,. If the test is positive, it is recommended to call a health care professional who may prescribe antiviral medication to help lessen symptoms and the risk for severe illness."

Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir with ritonavir), the oral COVID antiviral manufactured by Pfizer, cuts your risk of hospitalization by over half and risk of death by 75%, according to the CDC. The agency considers people with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or obesity at high risk of severe infection, and therefore candidates for Paxlovid. Ask your doctor if this or another antiviral treatment is right for you.

Our number: 207-664-6016

Holiday Community Concert with the Harborside Trio

Cherie Magnello, Soprano, Carl Wrubel, Baritone, and William Merrill, Piano



Enjoy a festive holiday concert during the lunch hour at the Moore Community Center with the Harborside Trio! We will gather in the atrium from 12:00-1:00pm and the public is welcome.

December 5, 2024
12:00PM - 1:00PM
5 General Moore Way Ellsworth ME
Concert is Free to Attend

Attendees are encouraged to bring a bag lunch or sign up for lunch (\$5) through Friends in Action. **Lunch orders must be pre-registered by calling 207-664-6016 (option 2) before Noon on Tu. 12/3/24.**

This concert is Co-hosted by Ellsworth Community Music Institute and Friends in Action

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

Socialize at the Senior Center

Many of us who are older feel that we should be able to take care of things ourselves, but, regardless, being with other people is crucial to our overall health and well-being. Simple ways to connect with other people are all around us, and there is a tendency to think that technology will make it easier for us to connect. But we need to actually see and talk to other people in person. Even during Covid, this is possible. Take a walk around Knowlton Park and join others at the “Senior Playground”. You can be around other people safely in person even now. Or pick up the phone and call a neighbor. Try to connect with someone every day!

Some suggestions:

1. **VOLUNTEER:** This is a really great way to feel better and to connect with others! If you are capable of physical work or meet the criteria for volunteering, there are many organizations that need you! You meet other people and can make new friends. EVEN IF YOU ARE HOMEBOUND, there are ways to volunteer. You may have a skill from previous work experiences or knowledge to share. Or you may have a skill such as knitting, sewing or another craft that can make items for people in need. Or you might be willing to be a “phone friend” and call another homebound person. Studies have shown that

volunteering can improve overall health – especially for the volunteer!

2. **ASK FOR HELP:** This is something most of us are reluctant to do and yet it can be an important first step. You will be surprised to find that others are pleased to help you find what you need – and that you are not alone.
3. **JOIN or START A GROUP:** This might be as simple as a walking group or a group that shares a hobby you enjoy. It is an easy way to connect with others. Or attend an exercise class The Friends in Action Senior Center offers numerous opportunities, They include exercise classes, yoga classes, various enrichment classes, groups playing bridge, mahjong, cribbage and the latest rage, pickleball, art classes, a writing group, a group doing genealogy research and much more. If none of these are appealing, Friends in Action invites you to take advantage of space in the Senior Center to start your own group. The Ellsworth Public Library has a knitting group. There are groups playing cribbage and mahjong and bridge at the Friends in Action Senior Center, groups that do art together, and who work on writing together.

MENU

December 2024

Tuesday, December 3rd Chicken Noodle Soup, Veggies and Fruit	Tuesday, December 10th Grilled Ham and Cheese, Tomato Soup Veggies and Fruit	Tuesday, December 17th Cheeseburger, Cheesy Tater Tots, Veggies and Fruit	Tuesday, December 24th Closed For Holidays	Tuesday, December 31st Closed For Holidays
Thursday, December 5th Chili, Corn Bread, Roll, Veggies and Fruit	Thursday, December 12th Herb Roasted Chicken, Roll, Veggies and Roll	Thursday, December 19th Honey Ham, Roll Veggies and Fruit	Thursday, December 26th Closed For Holidays	



Desserts To Be Announced Daily! Subject To Change

Please call 664-6016 before 4:30 on Monday & Wednesday to reserve lunch for Tuesday & Thursday.

