



July 2025

Independence Isn't Just for the 4th

By someone who knows freedom sometimes means asking for a ride

Fireworks. Flags. Potato salad that's seen too much sun. Every July 4th, we celebrate the bold, brash idea of independence—the freedom to live life on our own terms! But as we grow older, that word—independence—starts to take on a new shape.

It's no longer about doing everything on your own. It's about making your own choices and living with purpose, even if that includes asking for help along

the way.

We see it all the time at Friends in Action. One client, a veteran who's now blind, still lives independently with his beloved dog. He can't drive anymore, so we help by delivering groceries and providing rides—including to the vet when his pup needs a checkup.

To some, that might look like dependence. But to us—and to him—it's something else entirely. It's self-determination. It's resilience. It's the quiet strength of someone who says, "This is still my

life. I'm just choosing to live it with a little backup."

Because real independence isn't about doing everything solo. It's about having the support, tools, and freedom to live life your way. That might mean using a walker, scheduling a ride, or asking a neighbor to grab the mail. It might mean choosing to age in place, or learning new technology to stay connected to family.

There's pride in that. There's power in that.

So this July, while the skies

light up with celebration, let's raise a sparkler to all the everyday expressions of independence—the ones that happen far from parades. Like a hot meal delivered to your door. Like a safe ride to the doctor. Like staying in your own home, with your own rhythm, surrounded by people who care.

That's freedom, too. And you don't even have to toss crates of tea into the harbor to claim it.

From the Director

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Dear Friend,

At Friends in Action, we're proud to be more than just a Senior Center—we're committed to reaching far beyond our doors to serve and empower older adults and people with disabilities throughout Hancock County. Thanks to your continued support, we're expanding our network to improve access to essential goods and services, address food insecurity, and enhance home safety, making a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

We have five ambitious goals for 2025. With your support we will:

1. Expand capacity and increase community engagement;
2. Initiate cross-generational projects;
3. Utilize the Senior Center as a social hub;
4. Address digital inequity with a computer lab; and
5. Rejuvenate friendly calls and home services

Transportation

According to the Maine Community Foundation's Needs Assessment, one of the most significant issues facing rural Maine commu-

nities is lack of reliable transportation, especially for seniors and people living with disabilities. This can lead to social isolation, reduced access to medical care, and potential decline in overall health and quality of life.

That's why Friends in Action is now working with Healthy Peninsula, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Healthy Island Project, and Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities Coalition to establish three new satellite transportation centers to serve rural and underserved communities in Bucksport, Blue Hill, and Stonington/Deer Isle.

These transportation centers serve as local hubs for volunteer recruitment, ride coordination, and community outreach. By embedding coordination directly within these communities, the project has helped remove geographic and logistical barriers for people with limited access to transportation.

In just the first five months of 2025:

- The Blue Hill Peninsula saw 200 volunteer trips, covering 4,741 miles, with nearly 188 hours of volunteer time contributed.
- The Deer Isle Region



(including Deer Isle, Stonington, and Little Deer Isle) recorded 30 trips, 1,690 miles, and 63 hours of volunteer time.

With increased community awareness, we anticipate the Satellite Transportation Centers will increase the total number of rides we provide from 7,000 in 2024 to 8,000 in 2025.

Partnering with the Hancock County Technical Center for Friendly Calls and Home Services

Many of our clients suffer with mobility restrictions, home repairs and seasonal maintenance responsibilities that often feel overwhelming or even impossible. Our

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partnership with the Hancock County Technical Center’s carpentry program helps seniors complete tasks and small repairs, such as mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, fixing a leaky faucet, or installing a new screen door. In addition, HCTC’s students are building accessibility ramps, entryway steps, and grab bars.

But our work doesn’t stop there. As we look ahead, we’re excited to invite you to be part of two new initiatives that deepen our community connections and promote wellness in fresh, meaningful ways. This summer, we launched an intergenerational raised garden bed project, bringing together seniors and local youth to grow herbs, vegetables, and friendships.

It’s a chance to get outside, get your hands in the soil, and share stories across generations—no green thumb required. At the same time, we’re focusing on improving the nutritional offerings at the Senior Center Café through a new nutrition initiative in partnership with Hannaford. We’re working to create meals that are not only delicious, but also packed with the kind of nourishment that keeps us all feeling our best.

We’d love for you to join us—whether by volunteering, visiting, or just stopping in to see what’s growing. Together, we continue to make Friends in Action more than just a Senior Center: we’re building a community where everyone can grow, connect, and thrive.

-John

Our number: 207-664-6016

How Pets Help You Age Well

Research shows that pets bring joy, purpose, and emotional support to people of all ages. For older adults, pets provide companionship, encourage physical activity, and foster a sense of connection to the community. A study by Mather Institute found that pet ownership enhances happiness, life satisfaction, and reduces loneliness by strengthening social bonds.

PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

- Heart Health Boost: Pets, especially dogs, can help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Stay Active & Fit: Walking your dog or playing with a pet keeps you moving, helping you maintain a healthy weight and reducing doctor visits.
- Brain Power: Regular activity with pets, like walking or playing, supports brain health and keeps your mind sharp.
- Daily Routine & Stability: Caring for a pet adds structure to your day, encouraging movement and engagement.

EMOTIONAL & MENTAL WELL-BEING

- A Sense of Purpose: Pets give you a reason to start your day with energy and enthusiasm.

- Mood Booster: The companionship of a pet can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, improving overall mental well-being.

EMBRACE THE JOY OF PETS

Pets aren’t just companions—they’re powerful allies in healthy aging. Whether you own a pet or simply enjoy their presence in your community, the love and connection they offer can brighten your day and enrich your life at any age.

CONNECTION

- Stress Relief: Interacting with pets releases feel-good hormones, helping you feel calmer and more relaxed.
- A More Satisfying Life: The bond with a pet can enhance your sense of fulfillment and emotional well-being.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

- Companionship That Matters: Pets provide unconditional love and can help ease loneliness.
- Stronger Social Connections: Walking a dog or visiting pet-friendly spaces can spark conversations and new friendships.
- Community Engagement: Volunteering at animal shelters or participating in pet therapy programs can create meaningful social interactions and a sense of purpose.

What’s Happening at the Senior Center

Are you curious about your family history? Whether you’re just beginning or picking up your genealogy journey after a break, you’re invited to join our Genealogy Group Workshop—a welcoming space to explore your roots and organize your research.

- 📍 Room 204
- 🕒 Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Bring your curiosity—and if you have one, a laptop! Group members are happy to help you get started with basic research techniques, using free websites to search online records and organize your findings.

Have a box of old papers or memorabilia tucked away in the attic? This is a great place to learn how to make sense of it all. The

same organizing principles used for digital records can help you bring order to your physical archives, too.

Whether you drop in occasionally or attend weekly, you’ll find a supportive group of fellow researchers. Use the space to work quietly on your own, or join the conversation to share stories, successes, and challenges. You never know what fascinating discoveries might come up!

All are welcome. No experience necessary.

- Have questions?
- 📞 Call Friends in Action at 664-6016
 - ✉ Email: info@friendsinactionellsworth.org

SAVE THE DATE



Friends in Action

FRIENDS IN ACTION 15TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH 2025

KEBO VALLEY GOLF CLUB
BAR HARBOR

MARK YOUR CALENDER





Volunteer of the Month



Participant of the Month

Candy Gammelin, Vice President of the Friends in Action Board of Directors, has been a cornerstone of the organization since around 2008, making her the longest-serving board member. Her connection to Friends in Action began through its founder, Jo Cooper, who shared news of the vital transportation services being offered in Ellsworth—a cause that immediately resonated with Candy.

Her deeper involvement began when the City of Ellsworth made the decision to renovate the General Bryant E. Moore School. The vision included operation of a Senior Center by Friends Action and a preschool and daycare facility operated by the Downeast Family YMCA with the two organizations operating as partners to create what is now the Moore Community Center. Given Candy’s background—she established the first family daycare in Bar Harbor—she

was uniquely qualified to contribute to the design and development of this intergenerational community hub. She enthusiastically lent her expertise and became a key voice in shaping the project throughout the 18-month transition.

Candy’s dedication to Friends in Action remains strong today. As a valued board member, she works alongside a team of passionate “dreamers and schemers,” all committed to helping older adults stay connected and engaged. The Board oversees a wide array of programs—from coffee hours and community meals to fitness classes, educational offerings, and transportation services. They also actively seek funding and community input to keep the vision growing.

Thanks to dedicated leaders like Candy Gammelin, Friends in Action continues to thrive and adapt, always with the goal of enriching the lives of Hancock County’s older residents.

Terry Meeham first became involved with the Senior Center by joining our fitness classes. He was looking for a way to stay active—and was glad to also find opportunities for social connection. After the COVID pandemic, Terry approached the Friends in Action staff with an idea: he wanted to start a genealogy workshop. That idea blossomed into a small but enthusiastic group, now two years running, with Terry at the helm.

The workshop’s main goal is to help people begin—or return to—the rewarding journey of tracing their family history. Terry’s own interest started as a part-time hobby. He was already the one in his family who loved collecting stories and preserving the past. In 2018, he took a DNA test through Ancestry, and two years later he joined Ancestry.com to dig deeper and build what he calls his

“public tree.”

Much of Terry’s research has focused on Ireland, Massachusetts (especially Lowell), and to a lesser extent, England and Scotland. His work spans from the mid-19th century to the present and is grounded in curiosity, persistence, and a genuine love for uncovering stories.

Terry is quick to point out that genealogy isn’t just about names and dates—it’s a fun and meaningful way to give your brain a workout and discover connections you never knew existed.

To learn more about the genealogy workshops Terry leads, check out this month’s “What’s Happening” section. We’re lucky to have people like Terry Meeham in our community—willing to share their interests and talents to create new, engaging opportunities at Friends in Action.

Why Did I Come In Here?

by a millennial who saw her boss walk into the room and accidentally enter a parallel dimension.

It starts with a plan. A solid, confident plan. You stand up, walk toward the next room, and half-way there, you already feel like a champion for remembering what you needed in the first place. Or if you’re like me, you’ve been repeating it in your head for the entire journey.

And then—nothing.

You cross the threshold and your brain pulls a hard stop. You’re in the middle of the room, absolutely blank. You open a drawer, as if that will jog your memory. You check your phone. You look around suspiciously, like the object or thought you were chasing might leap out from behind a chair yelling, “Surprise!”

What you’re experiencing has a name. It’s called the doorway effect—a term psychologists use to explain how our brains segment experiences. Essentially, when you move from one room to another, your brain marks the transition as a new scene. And with a new scene comes a mental refresh. Your brilliant idea? Your errand? It gets quietly filed under “previous room business,” and the current room becomes an empty page.

It’s not forgetfulness in the traditional sense. It’s just your brain trying to stay organized. A little too organized, sometimes.

These moments happen to everyone—they’re signs you’re a human being with a lot going on upstairs. In fact, walking into a room and forgetting why might be the most universal modern experience, second only to clicking into a browser tab and immediately forgetting what you were looking for.

Maybe you came into the kitchen for the bread knife. Maybe you came in for the truth. Maybe it’s okay to sit down and forget both. There are worse outcomes. Like forgetting to make coffee.

MENU				
July 2025				
Tuesday, July 1st Chicken Quesadilla, Chopped Salad, Spanish Rice, Peaches	Tuesday, July 8th Cheeseburger, Tater Tots, Green Beans, Watermelon	Tuesday, July 15th Fish Tacos, Cabbages Salad, Black Beans, Pineapple	Tuesday, July 22nd Meatballs and Marinara, Spaghetti, French Bistro Salad, Pears	Tuesday, July 29th Chicken Kebob, Carrots, Spanish Rice, Grapes
Thursday, July 3rd Maple Roasted Chicken, Sweet potatoes, Dinner Roll, Applesauce	Thursday, July 10th Sausage Egg & Cheese Croissant, Hash Browns, Mandarin Oranges	Thursday, July 17th Chicken Cacciatore, Zucchini, Dinner Roll, Peaches	Thursday, July 24th Chicken Pot Pie, Ranch Salad, Tropical Fruit	Thursday, July 31st Sloppy Joe, Baked Beans, Peas, Cinnamon Applesauce

