



Connections

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Friends in Action News & Programs

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Tel 207-664-6016 • Email: info@friendsinactionellsworth.org

October 2025

Friends in Action Welcomes New Executive Director

Friends in Action is pleased to announce that **McKayla Peers**, our current Director of Volunteer Services, has accepted the position of Executive Director following the retirement of John Lindquist.

McKayla brings deep experience in nonprofit leadership, beginning her career at the Bangor YWCA where she gained skills in grant writing, board relations, and program management. She later specialized in Alzheimer's and

dementia care as a licensed nursing home administrator, developing strong connections with government agencies and local resources to better serve seniors. Her time working in North Carolina further broadened her expertise in medical practice management, financial planning, and business administration.

Now back in Maine, McKayla is passionate about serving Hancock County's older adults

and strengthening community partnerships. She looks forward to building on the important work already happening at Friends in Action and inspiring more people to get involved.

Outside of work, McKayla enjoys exploring Maine with her 11-year-old son, spending time with her dogs, and supporting local businesses—especially when antiquing is involved.



From the Director

As many of you may have noticed—whether from the sparseness of my hair, the number of times I

walk into a room and forget why, or the steady decline of my golf game—I'm getting older. I can't do much about the first two, but I can certainly keep trying to improve my swing. And so, I've decided it's time to retire... for the third time. This round, I plan to spend more of my days on the golf course, on skis, and on the water—punctuated by a good steak and a glass of Italian wine whenever I can.

It has truly been a joy to serve as Director at Friends in Action. I've been fortunate to work alongside such a dedicated Board of Directors, talented staff, compassionate volunteers, and the wonderful clients who are the heart of our mission. Not everyone gets to work in an environment filled with people who choose to be here—that makes for a very happy place indeed.

Of course, we've faced our share

of challenges, but together we've always found a way forward. When I first arrived, we were just emerging from Covid. Since then, I've watched with pride as our programs and services have grown stronger:

- **Fitness:** With Europa, Patricia, and Ursula leading the way, our fitness program now offers 20 classes each week.
- **Activities:** Nicole and Rachel manage more than 17 recurring activities weekly, keeping our calendar vibrant and full.
- **Development:** Nicole has also elevated our fundraising and development efforts, securing grants, planning events, and leading appeals to more than 250 supporters.
- **Volunteers:** McKayla has streamlined volunteer processes, strengthened partnerships with other nonprofits,

and boosted both responsiveness to clients and overall productivity.

- **Volunteer Service:** Our volunteers have gone above and beyond—driving over 70,000 miles to transport clients and deliver food, prescriptions, and essentials; serving more than 3,500 meals; and hosting nearly 2,000 coffee hours, along with countless other acts of service.
- **Donors:** And none of this would be possible without our generous donors. Like it or not, funding is necessary for almost everything we do, and your generosity has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Together, we have stayed true to the mission of empowering older adults and people living with disabilities to thrive and live independently with dignity and a strong quality of life. That mission is ongoing work, but thanks to all of you, we continue to make meaningful progress every day.

Thank you for a wonderful three-plus years. I know you will give McKayla, your incoming Executive Director, the same support and encouragement you have so kindly given me.

With gratitude,

-John

Friends in Action Board of Directors

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Friends in Action Steps Up to Support Local Transportation Needs

The recent announcement that Downeast Community Partners will be ending its transportation program at the end of September has raised serious concerns for many older adults and people with disabilities in Hancock County. Friends in Action is ready to help fill that gap.

For more than 20 years, Friends in Action has stayed true to its mission: **to empower older adults and individuals with disabilities to thrive and live independently with dignity and a strong quality of life.** A key part of that mission has been our free transportation services—including the ability to serve clients who use wheelchairs.

- Volunteer Power:** With the dedication of our 70 active volunteer drivers, we currently fulfill over 90% of transportation requests, completing more than 6,000 trips each year.

- Community Partnerships:** By building strong collaborations with other non-profits in Hancock County, we've continued to expand our volunteer pool and strengthen our capacity.
 - Looking Ahead:** We are confident in our ability to recruit and sustain the volunteers needed to help mitigate the loss of DCP's services and ensure our neighbors can continue to get where they need to go.
- If you are **age 55+ or over 18 living with a disability**, we encourage you to reach out and learn more about how we can help.
- ☎ Call: **207-664-6016**
🌐 Visit: **FriendsInActionEllsworth.org**
✉ Email: **info@friendsinactionellsworth.org**
- Together, we'll keep Hancock County moving forward.

Tiny Wins, Big Smiles

At Friends in Action, we know it's not always the grand gestures that make the biggest difference. It's the little things. A shared laugh in a fitness class. A new skill learned on a tablet. A perfectly executed chair-side yoga stretch. These small victories add up, creating days full of joy, connection, and independence for our older adults and people with disabilities.

This month, we've been noticing the little wins that make our community so special. In our fitness classes, participants are hitting personal milestones, whether it's standing a little taller in yoga, balancing a few extra seconds in Pilates, or finally mastering that tricky stretch that had everyone wincing a week ago. The smiles say it all.

In our transportation program, small moments of independence mean the world. A volunteer might help someone get to a doctor's appointment or pick up groceries, tiny actions that allow participants to maintain their routines, stay social, and continue living independently.

Even in our social programs, little victories shine. Someone joins a Zoom call for the first time, a puzzle gets completed, or a conversation sparks a new friendship.

And sometimes, those wins come in unexpected forms. A participant stops mid-walk to gently help a tiny bird untangle from a stray string, or volunteers leave a bowl of water for a stray cat who watches the Senior Center from the fence every afternoon. Small acts, big hearts.

In all of these moments, we're reminded of a simple truth. Kindness matters. Taking the time to be kind to each other, to the world around us, and to the animals and nature we share it with turns ordinary days into extraordinary ones. A smile, a helping hand, a gentle word, or even a pause to watch the leaves dance in the breeze can ripple out in ways we'll never fully see.

At Friends in Action, we celebrate every win, large or tiny, because these are the moments that build confidence, independence, and happiness. Seeing someone leave class with a grin on their face, wave joyfully out the car window, or share a kind gesture with a fellow participant or even a passing squirrel is the ultimate reward.

Tiny wins, big smiles, and the power of kindness, because every day at Friends in Action is full of all three.

JOIN US FOR A COMMUNITY FAIR

Healthy
ibernation

Fun for All
Ages!

SATURDAY NOV. 1ST
10AM-1PM BLUE HILL YMCA

-DEMOS - SCREENINGS -
RESOURCES - GIVEAWAYS

Come learn about local organizations and opportunities for staying healthy through the colder months including:

- Health & wellness
- Physical & community activities
- Volunteer opportunities, and more!

For more information please contact: Healthy Peninsula at
ljohnson@healthypeninsula.org (207) 374-3257

the
YMCA

Healthy
Peninsula



9 TIPS

FOR MINDFUL
EATING

These research-based tips build on the principles of mindfulness to help you become more attuned to your appetite and your body, enjoy food more, and improve your overall well-being.

1

GO SLOW
Savoring food slowly allows your brain to catch up with your stomach and recognize fullness.

2

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS
Eating while distracted, such as while using your phone, leads to overeating and less satisfaction. Turn your attention solely to your meal.

3

ENGAGE YOUR SENSES
Before eating, take time to appreciate the food's colors and aromas to strengthen your awareness and satisfaction.

4

RECOGNIZE HUNGER CUES
Heighten your awareness of satiety cues and try *hara hachi bu*—the practice of eating until you are 80% full.

5

SHOW GRATITUDE
Expressing gratitude before meals can shift your mindset to one of appreciation, which is linked to emotional well-being.

6

NOTE TEXTURE AND TASTE
Focusing closely on food's texture and flavors makes eating more enjoyable and promotes satisfaction.

7

USE SMALLER PLATES
Using larger plates can lead to overeating, while smaller plates encourage you to eat according to your hunger rather than the size of the plate.

8

MANAGE EMOTIONAL EATING
Emotional eating often stems from stress, sadness, or boredom. Mindfulness techniques like deep breathing can help manage these triggers and increase awareness of your eating motives.

9

TAKE A BEAT BETWEEN BITES
Pausing between bites allows time for your body to process food, and for safety signals to reach your brain.



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Mather
institute

What's Happening?

If you hear someone call out “B-24” in the Friends in Action Café, you’ve walked in on Bingo. The game starts at 1:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month, right after lunch. Hollis Geel is often the caller, and about 14 or more players gather with their cards, enjoying both the game and the camaraderie.

The equipment was tucked away for years until someone suggested re-viving it. Now it’s back, and anyone

age 55 or older is welcome to play. Cards are provided and reused—no daubers required. There’s no buy-in and no cash prizes, but small fun prizes go to the winners.

If you’re new to Bingo, you’ll quickly learn the lingo: “coverall,” “full house,” even “two little duckies.” It’s easy to see why the room fills with laughter and energy each month. Join us on October 7 and find out for yourself.

Keeping Your Mind Healthy Through Leisure Activities

Did you know that the things you do for fun can help keep your brain sharp as you age? It’s not so much about doing one special activity, like crossword puzzles or brain-training games. Instead, what really makes a difference is how you spend your time and whether the activities feel new, meaningful, and engaging.

What Helps the Most?

- **Do things often and with focus.** The more regularly you participate in enjoyable activities—especially ones that make you think or learn—the more your brain benefits.
- **Mix it up.** Trying a variety of activities is even better than doing the same thing all the time. A wide range of hobbies helps protect your mind.
- **Stick with it.** Spending steady time on your favorite pursuits over the long run

supports healthy aging.

- **Choose activities that feel right for you.** The best activities share a few qualities:
 - They’re **new** or different from your usual routine
 - They get you **actively involved** rather than just watching
 - They bring **enjoyment** and maybe even fun
 - They feel **meaningful** to you
 - You choose them yourself, with a sense of **independence**

The Bottom Line

You don’t need to master brain games to stay sharp. Instead, keep your mind active by exploring new hobbies, learning new skills, or simply finding new ways to enjoy the things you already love. The key is to stay curious, stay involved, and most of all—keep it fun!



Participant of the Month

Friends in Action is proud to recognize **Diana Haskell** as our Participant of the Month!

Diana, a true Mainer, grew up in Augusta and earned her B.S. in Education at the University of Maine at Farmington, later completing a Master’s in Speech Pathology. She went on to devote 39 years to Maine public schools—most of that time right here in Hancock County.

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She remembers when the General Moore Building served as the school for grades 3, 4, and 5, and later watched as students and staff moved into the current Ellsworth Elementary and Middle School. Today, that same Moore Building is home to the Ellsworth Community and Senior Center—where Diana is now a familiar face in Friends in Action’s fitness classes.

Since retiring in 2017, Diana has fully embraced staying active. A friend first introduced her to Zumba at the Senior Center, and she quickly discovered how much she enjoyed the fun cardio workout that comes with dancing to music. During COVID, she kept up with Europa’s virtual Zumba classes and has since expanded her fitness routine to include Strength and Balance classes twice a week. She especially appreciates how the instructors tailor workouts for every participant—offering options to adjust weights, repetitions, or resistance bands, and suggesting modifications for those recovering from injuries.

Outside of class, Diana is an accomplished crafter. Many of you may know her for the beautiful wool mittens she makes from repurposed sweaters, as well as her quilts and other creative projects. She also values the early morning class schedule, which leaves her plenty of time for her many other interests throughout the day.

Diana’s dedication to her health, her creativity, and her positive energy make her a wonderful part of our community. We’re delighted to celebrate her this month—and if you’re lucky, you may meet her in one of our classes. Come join us and see why Friends in Action’s programs are such a great way to stay active, healthy, and connected.



MENU

October 2025

Thursday, October 2nd Homemade Mac N Cheese, Carrots, Salad and Peaches	Thursday, October 9th Shepards Pie (Beef, Carrots, Peas, Mashed Potatoes), Dinner Roll, Grapes	Thursday, October 16th Grilled Chicken Breast, Wild Rice, Broccoli, Mandarin Oranges	Thursday, October 23rd Chicken Fajitas(Bell Peppers, Onion), Spanish Rice, Flour Tortillas, Pineapple	Thursday, October 30th Spooky Spaghetti W / Eyeballs, EEEEEK! Veggies, Bats Nest, Vampire Deterrent, Mini Pumpkins
Tuesday, October 7th Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup, Chef Salad and Pears	Tuesday, October 14th Creamy Vegetable Soup, Turkey Sandwich, Cinnamon Applesauce	Tuesday, October 21st Beef and Bean Chili, Corn Bread, Green Beans, Apple Slices	Tuesday, October 28th Pub Battered Cod, Tater Tots, Coleslaw, Peaches	



Desserts To Be Announced Daily! Subject To Change

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

