

January 2026

Remembering Mrs. G



People remember Maureen Giunta through moments. Small ones. Ordinary ones. The kind that stay with you.

They remember her classroom at Ellsworth High School, where she taught for more than three

decades and was fondly known as “Mrs. G.” Students remember being pushed to do their very best and knowing she would not accept anything less, not because she was harsh, but because she cared deeply. “She would take the extra time to help us reach that goal,” one former student shared. “She had the patience of a saint.”

They remember how she listened. How she noticed. How she made people feel safe enough to speak, to ask questions, to imagine more for themselves. One former student recalled running into Maureen years after graduating, after marriage and becoming a parent, and being met with happiness and acceptance. She encouraged her to keep learning and dream-

ing, reminding her that motherhood did not mean the end of her own story. When she returned to college years later, she thought of Maureen’s words often.

Colleagues remember how completely she showed up. Proms. Graduations. Class nights. Gym meets. Choir performances. “She was there for me at junior proms, senior dances, graduations, and class nights,” one colleague shared. “Supporting the students always, but support for me too.” Another remembered stormy winter mornings on Bridge Hill, when Maureen would watch for her car and flash the porch lights to let her know it was time to stop for coffee. “What a friend.”

They remember her love of

teaching and how fully she gave herself to it. She co created the Humanitas Program, helped publish Voices on Vietnam, now preserved in the Library of Congress, organized Young Writers events, and sponsored National Honor Society. “She loved what she did,” a colleague wrote, “and it showed in her total immersion.”

Friends remember summers on the blueberry field overlooking Patten Pond. Kayaking. Reading on the beach. Entertaining in a home built with care. Sharing a glass of Chardonnay in the gazebo as the light softened over the water. If you needed anything, Maureen was already there. “Oh, I’ve got one of those at the house,” she

Continued on Page 2

From the Director

As we welcome a brand-new

Friends in Action Board of Directors

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year, it’s the perfect time to embrace new opportunities, new friendships, and new routines that bring joy and support into our lives. At Friends in Action, we believe that staying active, connected, and engaged is one of the best gifts we can give ourselves, at any age. Our Senior Center is here to help make that possible.

The coming year is full of ways for you to strengthen your health, expand your creativity, meet new people, and simply enjoy each day a little more. Whether you’re hoping to increase your mobility, try a new hobby, share a meal with friends, or step into a warm, wel-

coming community, you’ll find a place for yourself here.

Our fitness classes are designed with all ability levels in mind. From gentle stretching and balance work to movement classes that boost energy and mobility, these sessions support your physical health and overall well-being. Staying active helps improve strength, confidence, and independence and doing it alongside others makes it fun.

Whether you’re just beginning or continuing your wellness journey, we are here to encourage you every step of the way.

Creativity has no age limit. Our art and leisure classes offer a wonderful outlet for self-expression, learning, and connection. Join us for painting, writing, music, and other hands-on activities that spark imagination and bring joy.

You don’t need experience, just curiosity and a willingness to try something new. Many new friendships begin right around the art table.

There’s something special about gathering for a good meal. Our lunches and community meals

offer nourishment, conversation, and a sense of belonging. No one should experience isolation, especially during the colder months, and our dining room is a warm, welcoming place to feel connected.

Come enjoy a delicious meal, meet familiar faces—and perhaps make a few new friends along the way. Please check out our January Menu featured in this edition and feel free to call the office the day prior to sign up for a meal. We would be so happy for you to join us!

Ultimately, remember that you are WELCOME here!

Whether you’ve been visiting the Senior Center for years or you have never stepped through our doors, this new year is a wonderful time to get involved. Our programs are designed to support your independence, health, happiness, and sense of community.

We hope you will join us, try a class, enjoy a meal, come in for a visit, or simply see what’s happening. You belong here, and we can’t wait to spend the year ahead with you.

Warm Regards – McKayla Peers



Remembering Cont.

Continued from Page 1

would say. And she always did.

Even in her passing, Maureen continued to care for others. She donated all of her clothing, and through those gifts, she has already helped twenty two people. It was one final, quiet act of generosity, so very much in keeping with who she was.

At Friends in Action, Maureen was deeply loved. She attended Strength and Balance classes for as long as she could, decorated for special lunches, and served on the board with care and intention. “Maureen was gracious, wise, embracing, and always ready to let that inner teacher out in all the right ways,” one colleague shared. “I will miss the guidance I saw her give and the guidance I received.”

Others spoke simply and honestly. “She radiated kindness,” one friend wrote. “We have lost a kind and very special person.” Another shared, “She was an inspiration to my children as a teacher, and an inspiration to me in so many different ways.”

The day I met Maureen, I walked into a conference room and said I was there for the devel-

opment meeting. She was chair of the committee. She did not know who I was yet or that I was the new development hire, so she spent several minutes calmly and kindly explaining what development meant. Not condescending. Just generous. Steady. Safe. I loved her immediately.

I did not know Maureen long enough. I wish I had. I wish I had listened more closely and learned more from her. But even in that short time, she taught me something important.

That kindness does not rush.

That leadership can be quiet.

That making people feel safe is not small work.

Maureen made people feel safe.

Next summer, her family and friends will gather by the pond she loved, raise a glass of Chardonnay, and celebrate a life that was generous, steady, and deeply human. Until then, and long after, she is remembered in classrooms and kitchens, committee rooms and winter mornings, and in the countless lives she shaped simply by showing up.

She is missed. She is loved. She is still felt.

January Volunteer of the Month

Friends in Action is delighted to recognize **Pilar Burnmeister** as our January Volunteer of the Month. One of the newest members of our transportation team, Pilar has already begun to make a meaningful impact. As she steps into new opportunities to connect with others, her compassion and dedication shine through in every interaction.

Pilar recently launched a **monthly foot care clinic** at the Senior Center, offering an important wellness service to our community. Her schedule can be found on the monthly activities calendar. She also provides similar support at the **Brick Church Homeless Center in Bangor**, extending her care to those most in need. Alongside her husband, Daryl, she helps prepare meals at the **St. Dunstan’s Church soup kitchen** in Ellsworth. It is clear that Pilar’s passion for volunteering, and for people is woven into every part of her life.

When she transports Friends in Action clients to medical appointments, grocery stores, or other essential errands, Pilar brings more than a ride—she brings friendship, kindness, and genuine connection. She takes joy in giving, and our clients feel that joy in return.

Pilar grew up in Newton, Massachusetts, but spent many childhood vacations in Maine, creating cherished family memories through camping, climbing Mt. Katahdin, and visiting Popham Beach. In 1999,

she and Daryl made their dream of living in Maine a reality, wanting their children to attend the Ellsworth school system. Their family grew, and all four children had the same opportunity.

Professionally, Pilar has led a deeply impactful career. She helped manage her husband’s veterinary practice while building a nursing career of her own—working in hospitals and clinics in Blue Hill, with Hancock County Home Care, and serving as a K–8 school nurse. In 2014, she became the **director of the nursing program at Eastern Maine Community College**, later continuing her work in education as a lecturer and nursing instructor at the University of Maine in Orono.

Now retired, Pilar enjoys hobbies and treasured time with family. She and Daryl look forward to future adventures, including RV trips and cruises. Reflecting on her meaningful and accomplished life, Pilar often says that “**friendships fill my cup.**” Yet, anyone who knows her can see that there has always been a very full plate beside that cup—one filled with service, compassion, and wholehearted commitment to others.

We are grateful for all that Pilar brings to Friends in Action and are confident that she will continue to be a treasured part of our community. Her enthusiasm for helping others is inspiring, and we are honored to celebrate her this month.

The First Snow for the Ducks

The first snow of the year always feels magical. The world turns quiet, the air smells clean, and everything looks like a postcard. It’s peaceful, calm, and beautiful... right up until the ducks notice.

This was the first snow for my younger half of the flock, and to put it politely, they did not handle it with grace. The flakes started falling and the yard instantly turned into a feathery disaster zone. Marshmallow started honking like she was reporting a national emergency. Benni froze in place, staring at the sky as if it had personally betrayed him. BubbleQuack began yelling at the weather itself, full volume, as though her sheer rage could stop the storm.

Meanwhile, the two Welsh Harlequins stood off to the side like tired parents at a playground. They’ve seen snow before. They’ve lived through this nonsense. You could almost hear them muttering, “Relax, it’s just water,” as the rest of the flock screamed at the clouds.

Of course, once the young ones realized that snow is actually frozen water, all bets were off. Absolute pandemonium. Marshmallow

tried to eat an entire snowbank. Squish did a slow-motion slip that would’ve earned a perfect ten from the Olympic judges. Tostito flapped himself in a circle until he accidentally body-checked Benni. BubbleQuack, naturally, declared herself “Snow Queen” and began attacking any snowflake that landed too close.

The Harlequins just stood there, looking like they were reconsidering all their life choices. Eventually, though, even they gave up on pretending to be dignified and joined in, sliding around with the rest of them like web-footed pinballs.

By the end of the day, the yard looked like a tiny feathered war zone. The ducks were soaked, sparkly, and delighted. Every single one of them looked completely ridiculous, and every single one of them was having the time of their lives.

Watching them discover snow for the first time was pure comedy. It was chaos, it was joy, and it was exactly what winter needed. If you ever start to lose faith in simple happiness, just watch a duck try to walk on ice. Works every time.

Dear Friend,

Please call us at Friends In Action to get started with our "Friends with Pens" program at 207-664-6016. We would love to have you as part of our senior pen pal program, as a recipient or a friendly pen pal.

In today's world of instant messages and emails, the tradition of letter writing has nearly disappeared. Through Friends With Pens, I hope to help reintroduce this timeless form of communication and bring a little joy to mailboxes across our community.

FRIENDS IN ACTION

SERVES ELLSWORTH

AND BEYOND

Happy New Year

Word Search

Y	Z	Q	S	A	P	L	M	V	C	O	B	S	S	P	E	T
N	L	R	N	F	F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K	S	K	Y	B
B	O	R	D	K	Q	U	O	V	L	Y	M	E	E	P	N	E
Q	K	P	I	Z	K	W	A	N	O	P	E	C	P	L	Y	I
K	M	J	Y	Y	D	Q	E	V	R	O	P	A	H	Z	L	D
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N	E	W	Y	O	R	K	O	W	G	I	W	P	R	K	D	S
P	B	Z	S	T	O	S	L	B	P	W	E	S	K	T	I	C
C	K	Y	S	N	I	K	P	O	H	O	Z	N	Q	R	M	H

Ball Drop

Herrera

Midnight

Party Hat

Celebrate

Hopkins

New Year

Sparklers

Fireworks

Kiss

New York

Time Square

Happy

McEvoy

Party



MENU

January 2026

Thursday, January 1st Closed For New Years	Thursday, January 8th Grilled Turkey Sandwich, Tomato Soup, Broccoli, Pears	Thursday, January 15th Flour Beef Tacos, Spanish Rice, Corn, Mandarin Oranges	Thursday, January 22nd BBQ Chicken Sandwich, Sweet Potato Fries, Salad, Pineapple	Thursday, January 29th Potato Soup, Dinner Roll, Mixed Veggies, Cinnamon Pears
Tuesday, January 6th Zuppa Toscana, Dinner Roll, Carrots, Peaches	Tuesday, January 13th Cheeseburger, Tater Tots, Salad, Apples	Tuesday, January 20th Pork Green Chili, Flour Tortillas, Refried Bean, Cauliflower, Cinnamon Applesauce	Tuesday, January 27th Teriyaki Chicken, Brown Rice, Broccoli, Peaches	2026 HAPPY NEW YEAR



Desserts To Be Announced Daily! Subject To Change

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

CALENDAR

FITNESS CLASS SCHEDULE

Europa's 2026 Fitness Schedule
Monday/Wednesday
Strength & Conditioning/Balance & Coordination Parkinson's Disease - Small Group/Personal Training 1:00-2:15 pm - Fitness Room
Focused fitness program for those managing a progressive neurological disease. We are building strength with functional movements, gaining mind body awareness, improving balance, along with conditioning to increase stamina and endurance for everyday life. Parkinson's Disease complicates the aging process. This class helps counteract the progression through exercise in creative and challenging ways. **initial assessment interview required for placement

Tuesday/Thursday
Strength & Conditioning/Balance & Coordination Active Aging Adult 9:00-10:00 am - Gymnasium
This class is for the retired individual who's goal is to maintain fitness for an active lifestyle outside of the gym. We work on all aspects of fitness. Strength and power, endurance and stamina, balance and coordination. We learn how to move with proper technique, which helps prevent falls and injuries in our high demand activities that can become more difficult as we age through our 60's; 70's and beyond. **initial assessment interview required for placement

Strength & Conditioning/Balance & Coordination Low Impact - All levels Welcome 10:30-11:30 am - Gymnasium
If you're new to exercise, haven't trained for many years, or have restrictions that require lower impact types of exercises this is the class for you! We work on many foundational skills while we improve overall strength, increase body awareness, gain better balance, and build confidence in our aging bodies. We learn how to move safely and with good technique to encourage greater stability, which allows us to enjoy our independent lives for years to come!

Tuesday/Thursday
Strength & Conditioning/Balance & Coordination Parkinson's Disease - Small Group/Personal Training 1:00-2:15 pm - Fitness Room
Focused fitness program for those managing a progressive neurological disease. We are building strength with functional movements, gaining mind body awareness, improving balance, along with conditioning to increase stamina and endurance for everyday life. Parkinson's Disease complicates the aging process. This class helps counteract the progression through exercise in creative and challenging ways. **initial assessment interview required for placement

Friday
Zumba Gold 10:00-11:00 am Lower intensity, joint friendly version of the popular dance fitness program. Appropriate for active older adults needing a gentler workout, focused on easy to follow moves that build balance, coordination, and cardiovascular health through fun Latin and world rhythms combined with some hits from the past and today.

Mondays with Nina
Thai Chi at the Moore Center - times and space to be announced soon

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Monday
12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Bridge Group – F.I.A. Cafe
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Pickle Ball – Gymnasium
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Pastel Group – Art Room

Tuesday
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Coffee House – F.I.A. Cafe
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Writing Group – Room #204
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Senior Lunch – F.I.A. Cafe
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Genealogy – Room #204

Wednesday
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Wednesday Painters – Art Room
11:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Pickle Ball – Gymnasium
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Women's Group Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday Of The Month – Art Room

Thursday
9:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m. Coffee House – F.I.A. Cafe
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Medicare 101 Offered Every 2nd Thursday Of The Month – Room # 204
12:00 p.m – 1:00 p.m. Senior Lunch – F.I.A. Cafe
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Mahjong – F.I.A. Cafe

Friday
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Bridge Group – F.I.A. Cafe
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Pickle Ball – Gymnasium

Watch our Facebook and website for upcoming additional new classes for 2026!

Friends in Action Fitness Membership Fee Schedule

Effective December 15, 2024
Day pass for fitness guidance: \$8/day
1 month membership for fitness room use only: \$20/month

Fitness Room Guidance and Classes:

Membership	Individual	Family
1 month	\$60	\$80
3 months	\$165	\$215
10 class punch card*	\$70	N/A

*Punch cards expire 6 months after the date of purchase.

FIA remains committed to offering financial assistance for those who may otherwise be unable to participate. To request financial assistance, please contact the FIA office for an application.

WHY YOUR DONATION MATTERS:

Probably the best way you can help is by making a financial donation. Friends in Action is a local non-profit organization that does not receive any Federal or State government funding. We raise all of our operating funds from the community through individual donations, grants, and fundraising events. Every donation, large or small, helps. We also have a special giving society "FRIENDS FOREVER" for planned gifts and an endowment fund for our future.

For more information, contact us at 664-6016. You can also make a donation by credit card on our website: www.friendsinactionellsworth.org, or mail to us at:
P.O. Box 1446, Ellsworth, Maine 04605

MY DONATION TO FRIENDS IN ACTION:

Name

Address

City Zip Telephone

Email

Amount enclosed \$

This gift is:

In Memory of:

(or) In Honor of:

I have remembered Friends in Action in my will

Please send me information on "FRIENDS FOREVER" PLANNED GIVING