

April 2026

Highlight on JoAnne Wood

Here is what JoAnne has to say about her Volunteer Baking for our Coffee Hour:

I have always loved baking. I attended culinary school in my home state, graduating from The California Culinary Academy in San Francisco. Culinary arts marked my second professional chapter, following an earlier career in sales and marketing communications. While I ultimately found my long-term professional home in the nonprofit sector after moving to Maine in 2000, baking has remained a constant thread throughout my life.



Since 2018, I've served as the Development Manager of Annual Programs at Friends of Acadia in Bar Harbor. Interestingly, I enjoy baking and cooking now more than I ever did when it was my full-time vocation. I'm always bringing baked treats into the office for my coworkers and volunteers. As someone who manages volunteers in my role at Friends of Acadia, I deeply understand the value of volunteer time and effort. I truly cherish our volunteers and the meaningful work they do. While my schedule doesn't leave me with a lot of spare time, baking for Friends in Action is something I can do in the quiet evenings at home, times that feel both productive and deeply fulfilling.

My "why" for volunteering with Friends in Action is simple: to me, food is love. Feeding people is in my DNA, quite literally, as my nan, my mum Marion's own mum, was a professional cook, pre- and post-war England, where both my mum and I were born. I fondly remember her cooking and baking; everything was delicious. Our mum, whom we lost a little over a year ago, absolutely loved sweet treats and especially enjoyed having a nice dessert at the end of meals at her assisted living memory care facility the last year of her life. Being social and outgoing and spending time with friends was something she cherished. FIA's café days provide such a sense of community and belonging for its patrons, which is such an important mission! Volunteering in this way and for this population

of our community makes me feel closer to our mum and allows me to honor her memory by sharing comfort, care, and a little joy through food.

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The Moore Community Center continues to be a place where neighbors help neighbors. Every day our amazing staff and volunteers provide transportation, companionship, wellness programs, and opportunities for older adults to remain active and engaged. None of this happens without the generosity of our community and the dedication of those who give their time and support.

As we move into the spring season, we are also looking ahead to several upcoming events that help sustain the work we do. Please keep an eye out for details about our **Walk/Run event** and our **annual golf tournament**. These gatherings are more than just fundraisers, they are opportunities for our community to come together, celebrate healthy living, and support programs that make a meaningful difference in the lives of many.

Like many nonprofit organizations, Friends in Action is facing a time when



THE 5TH ANNUAL Walk/Run-A-Thon




BRING YOUR FRIENDS SUPPORT THE MISSION OF FRIENDS IN ACTION!

Knowlton Park

PER PERSON REGISTRATION
\$25 PRE-REGISTRATION
\$30 DAY-OF REGISTRATION
Register at
friendsinactionellsworth.org
or scan the QR Code!
First 25 registrants receive a free t-shirt!

**SATURDAY
JUNE 6TH, 2026**
TIMED EVENT
KNOWLTON PARK
ELLSWORTH, ME
REGISTRATION: 8:00AM
GROUP STRETCH: 8:30AM
START: 9:00AM

From the Director

financial support is needed more than ever. The demand for our services continues to grow, and we are committed to ensuring that no one who needs assistance is turned away. Your donations, sponsorships, and volunteer support help us continue providing transportation, wellness programs, and social connections for those who rely on us. It continues to amaze me how many

people in our community we have been able to touch and help and serve and I am honored to be a part of their lives, they bless us as much as we bless them.

If you have supported Friends in Action in the past, we thank you sincerely. If you are considering getting involved for the first time, we warmly welcome you. Whether through volunteering, participating in our events, or making a financial contribution, every act of support strengthens our community.

Spring is a season of hope and new beginnings. Together, we can ensure that Friends in Action continues to serve as a place where compassion, connection, and community thrive.

Thank you for being part of our mission.

Sincerely,
McKayla Peers
Executive Director
Friends in Action



Newest Office Staff

The Friends in Action office is a welcoming place staffed by three full-time employees and a remote part-time staff who wear many hats on any given day. Kris Garcia is the newest member of this friendly, hardworking, and knowledgeable team.

Much of Kris's day is spent on the phone or at the computer coordinating volunteers, clients who request assistance, and the schedules that bring everything together. The transportation program he works so diligently on depends on a dedicated group of volunteers and is always looking for more drivers. Kris often serves as recruiter and trainer for new volunteers, and when the need arises, he is happy to jump behind the wheel himself to help out.

If you happen to catch Kris away from his desk, you'll find he's an interesting person to talk with. Much of his time outside the office is spent with his young daughter, who conveniently attends day care in the same building, a wonderful arrangement for both father and daughter. Kris also maintains an active, healthy lifestyle. Here, in his own words, he shares a bit more about himself:

"I started running about ten years ago, and it was the first time

in my life I had ever received real, positive encouragement in a sport. That support from the running community pushed me farther than I ever imagined—all the way to four Boston Marathons. Running taught me what it feels like to be lifted up and believed in, and I've been surrounded by people who want to see me succeed.

Working at Friends in Action feels like the same kind of mission. Every day I get to give back some of what running gave me: support, connection, and the chance to help someone move forward. Whether it's getting someone to an appointment or just making their day a little easier, it carries the same spirit of community that keeps me going."



Line Dancing at the Senior Center

Staying active isn't just about fitness, it's about joy, connection, and finding ways to move that feel good at any age. For older adults, line dancing offers a simple and engaging way to stay mobile, boost brain health, and socialize in a fun, structured setting.

Every Monday from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., Friends in Action members gather at the Senior Center for an hour of line dancing. Participants in David Lamon's classes quickly discover that he is not only a talented dancer but also a patient instructor who thoughtfully adapts lessons so his senior students feel confident and successful.

With no partner required and movements that can be modified for different ability levels, line dancing is an ideal class for anyone looking to build confidence on the dance floor while staying active.

But line dancing is more than just fun, it supports overall well-be-

ing through movement, rhythm, and meaningful social connection. Stop by one of the Monday classes at the Senior Center and you'll see people smiling, moving, and enjoying themselves. You may even find yourself wanting to get in line. The first class is free to try out, we encourage you to give it a try!



An Easter Wish for Our Community

In this season of Easter, when the earth begins to awaken again and the light of spring returns, we pause together as a community in gratitude and hope.

We know the world is facing difficult times. Many hearts are carrying worry, grief, uncertainty, and loss. Yet Easter reminds us that even after the darkest night, morning comes. Even after the longest winter, new life rises again.

Today we pour hope and love out into our community.

Bless our neighbors, our friends, and those who may be feeling alone. Bring comfort to those who are grieving, strength to those who are struggling, and peace to those who are anxious about the days ahead.

Help us to care for one another with kindness and patience.

Remind us that small acts of compassion, a smile, a helping hand, a listening ear, can bring great light into someone's life.

We send caring thoughts out especially for our elders, whose wisdom and memories hold the stories of generations. May they feel valued, supported, and surrounded by care.

As Easter celebrates renewal and resurrection, fill our hearts with hope. Help us believe that brighter days are still ahead, that healing is possible, and that love remains stronger than fear.

May our community continue to grow in generosity, friendship, and understanding. And may the promise of Easter remind us that even in uncertain times, we are never alone.

The Quest for a Summer Body (Senior Edition)

Every spring, right around the time the snow finally gives up its grip on Maine, I hear people talking about getting their "summer body" ready. Apparently, this involves exercise, healthy eating, and the mysterious ability to wear shorts without apologizing to strangers.

At my age, getting a summer body is a slightly different process.

For starters, I already have a summer body. It's the same one I had all winter, just with fewer sweaters hiding it.

Still, I decided this year I would take things seriously. I dusted off my sneakers, which had been resting comfortably in the closet since the last time I promised myself I would start jogging. I laced them up, stood up quickly, and immediately had to sit back down again because my knee made a sound like someone stepping on a bag of potato chips.

But determination is important.

So I began with a walk around the neighborhood. I used to jog, but these days my joints and I have reached a respectful compromise: I move forward slowly, and they agree not to file formal complaints.

While walking, I passed a group of young people running by in fancy athletic gear. They had watches that track their heart rate, pace, elevation, probably the number of squirrels they pass. Meanwhile, I have my own fitness tracker: if I can still hold

a conversation and complain about the weather at the same time, I'm doing fine.

After my walk, I decided to focus on diet. Everyone says you should eat more greens, so I made a salad. Then I added bacon bits, cheese, croutons, and ranch dressing. Technically, there were still greens underneath everything, which I believe counts as balanced nutrition.

Next came strength training. I started lifting small weights in the living room. By "small weights," I mean the remote control, a coffee mug, and occasionally my cat when she allows it. The cat is excellent resistance training, mostly because she resists.

Stretching is also important. I tried touching my toes, which is something I could do easily in 1972. These days I bend down, look in their general direction, and decide they seem fine where they are.

Despite all this effort, I'm proud to say I now have my summer body ready. It walks a little slower, creaks a little louder, and occasionally forgets why it went into the kitchen but it still gets outside, enjoys the sunshine, and appreciates a good ice cream cone on a warm afternoon.

And honestly, at this stage of life, the best shape to be in for summer is **the shape that shows up**.

The Cat Who Adopted a Grandma

Parkinson's Strength and Balance Programs at Friends in Action

Milo was an old orange cat with three teeth and very strong opinions about tuna.

He lived in the lobby of Sunnyvale Retirement Apartments, where he spent his days supervising visitors and napping in sunbeams like it was his full-time job.

One Tuesday, a new resident moved in.

Mrs. Clara Jenkins. Age eighty-seven. Owner of bright purple glasses and exactly zero interest in cats.

"I do not need a cat," she told the receptionist firmly.

Milo disagreed.

That afternoon, he followed her to the elevator. The next day, he sat outside her door. On the third day, he slipped inside when she opened it and made himself comfortable in her favorite armchair.

"That is my seat," Clara informed him.

Milo blinked. It was now their seat.

Clara tried ignoring him. Milo tried louder purring.

Clara tried reading. Milo sat on the book.

Clara tried knitting. Milo stole the yarn and slowly walked away like a tiny orange criminal.

By the end of the week, Clara was setting out a small saucer of tuna "by accident."

By the end of the month, she was telling everyone, "I suppose I allow him to live with me."

Every afternoon, Milo curled up on her lap while she watched her shows and told him stories about her childhood, her late husband, and the time she accidentally dyed her hair pink in 1974.

Milo never interrupted.

Well. Except for tuna.

One evening, Clara sighed and said softly, "You know, I didn't think I needed anyone."

Milo responded by placing one warm paw on her hand.

Clara smiled.

"Alright," she said. "Maybe I needed a little bit of someone."

And from then on, everyone at Sunnyvale agreed:

Milo didn't live at the retirement apartments.

He worked there.

As Head of Lap Services.

And business was very good.



Friends in Action at the Moore Community Center offers specialized fitness classes designed for individuals living with Parkinson's disease. Led by a dedicated instructor, these small-group Strength and Balance classes, as well as personalized one-on-one sessions focus on improving mobility, stability, and overall well-being.

We would like to raise awareness of these supportive programs and encourage those who may benefit to learn more about the opportunities available.

Thanks to a generous contribution to Friends in Action from Thomas E. Martin, scholarships are now available to help support individuals with Parkinson's disease who may need financial assistance in order to participate in these classes.

In the words of Thomas E. Martin (May 2, 1953 – March 3, 2025), whose message draws inspiration from Winston S. Churchill:

"While we have a progressive disease, we resolve to fight it with all our will and increasing strength.

Although Parkinson's may cause our limbs to tremble, nothing will shake our resolve.

We shall fight it through our exercises. We shall fight it when walking, crossing the street, and while climbing stairs. We shall fight it in the shower with one hand firmly on the grab bar. When we fall, we shall get up and resume fighting.

Although our speech may soften and stammer, nothing will silence our fight. While our handwriting may become small and barely legible, our message will remain big, loud, and clear.

With the love and support of our Rock Steady team, our families, and our friends, we will fight on."

If you or a loved one could benefit from this type of support, please contact Friends in Action at **207-664-6016**. Our team will be happy to connect you with **Europa**, our fitness instructor who specializes in these meaningful and supportive classes.

Our number: 207-664-6016

MENU

April 2026

Thursday, April 2nd Cheeseburger, Sweet Potato Tots, Macaroni Salad, Mandarin Oranges	Thursday, April 9th White Chicken Pizza, Salad, Cinnamon Pears	Thursday, April 16th Garlic Parm Bagel Chicken Sandwich, Tater Tots, Corn, Grapes	Thursday, April 23rd Meatballs in Gravy, Biscuit, Potato Salad, Peaches	Thursday, April 30th Bourbon Maple Glaze Ham, Mashed potatoes, Peas, Pineapple
Tuesday, April 7th Chop Suey, Mixed Green Salad, Corn, Peaches	Tuesday, April 14th Beef Flour Quesadillas, Spanish Rice, Peas, Melon	Tuesday, April 21st Broccoli and Cheddar Soup, Dinner Roll, Carrots, Apple-sauce	Tuesday, April 28 BBQ Chicken Sandwich, French Fries, Salad, Mandarin Oranges	



Desserts To Be Announced Daily! Subject To Change

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

