



neighbor to neighbor

News from
 Freeport
 Community
 Services

SPRING 2017



The FCS staff is looking to retire the the current truck for a new one.

FCS recently received a grant award from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation to replace the current truck at the Community Center. The STK Foundation promotes strengthening and supporting communities and has a special interest in organizations and people who have less recourse to usual channels of resources, focusing on community-based initiatives.

Paula Paladino, Executive Director, states "We are so pleased to receive this very important grant award for a new truck from STK Foundation, as this is a critical need. Our 13 year old truck is fully depreciated and a truck is essential for our day to day operations." Sarah Lundin, Community Services Coordinator says "Our truck is used to pick up donated food from local grocery stores and the Good Shepherd Food Bank, destined for our food pantry which serves an average of 444 individuals every month." During an average six months, FCS transports over 60,000 pounds of food from donations by local stores and the food bank to the plates of those in need.



Additionally, our thrift store utilizes the truck to pick up donated furniture as well as offer delivery of furniture to those in need, who have no other way of getting it home due to lack of personal transportation. Paladino adds "Having a safe and reliable truck means so much to our community and the services we offer to our neighbors. We are very grateful for this grant which helps us continue our vital mission here in Freeport and Pownal!"

FCS Receives Grant Award to Purchase a New Truck

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INSIDE

- Letter from the Director . . . 2
- Programs Highlights 3
- Volunteer Spotlight 3
- Thrift Shop Update 4
- Event Updates 4
- Donor Highlights 5
- Needs Assessment 6
- Getting Involved 6

Mission Statement

To enrich lives, connect neighbors and help those in need in Freeport and Pownal.

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter! I hope that as you explore this issue, you will get a feeling of pride and ownership in Freeport Community Services (FCS). After a hiatus, we heard from many of you how important it is to continue the newsletter so we are pleased to bring this back. Things seem to be happening here all the time and we want to keep you updated. We plan to publish the newsletter twice a year to keep you posted about FCS news and events.

In December, I began work as the newest Executive Director at FCS. My brief time here has been energizing and exciting! I am honored to serve along-side thoughtful and dedicated Board members and volunteers who freely give their time and resources to support FCS as well as a truly committed and enthusiastic staff of 13.

In this issue, you will read about our successful Thanksgiving and Holiday Help events, our generous donors, our grant award to replace our truck, our thrift store, and our Comprehensive Community Wide Needs assessment this spring. Indeed, we have a great deal to celebrate!

In the meantime, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you who give so selflessly to help us accomplish our mission. Thank you for your donations of money. Thank you for your volunteering. Thank you for donating food to our pantry to help your neighbors. Thank you for your good used clothing and furnishings. And thank you for speaking positively about what we do.

Our staff spend countless hours meeting the needs of individuals and families in tricky situations and our volunteers carry out many important tasks from week to week. So, be sure to thank them. And, thank you for your support and for all the good things you have made possible here to connect neighbors, enrich lives and help those in need.

Please check our website from time to time at www.fcsmaine.org and check out our calendar of events. If you want to volunteer, fill out an application and send it in. If you or someone you know needs our services, please come in. You'll be greeted with friendliness, sincerity and discretion. And if you are looking for fashion, furniture or fabulous finds, come shop at our Thrift Store!

Stay tuned for our upcoming newsletters. 2017 is going to be a wonderful year here at FCS! I can't wait to share all the latest and exciting news with you all. The next time you visit FCS, feel free to drop by and visit with me. I'm looking forward to getting to meet all of you in the months to come.

Warm wishes for a happy spring and summer!


Paula
Executive Director



Our programs and services support our community with the help of our volunteers and donors.

2016 was an exciting year for the various programs here at FCS. In the Fall we received news that Shaw's Supermarket would once again resume their donations to our food pantry, which has since been well received by all who visit the pantry. We've also established a relationship with Starbucks and are collecting pastries from the local shop each week. We are so fortunate to have many wonderful and amazing volunteers who dedicate their time to the food pantry, whether it's making sure the food is picked up every morning, stocking the shelves or helping our customers – we could not do what we do without them!



The holiday season was busy and spirited! Again, we offered help with a Thanksgiving meal, either providing a food box that could be prepared at home or a warm traditional meal on Thanksgiving Day. So many people took part in the festivities this year making it one to remember. Our Holiday Helpline program reached many families and individuals this year, providing weather appropriate clothing and lots of fun surprises to those who received help. The generosity that came from our community to make so many wishes come true was heartwarming and inspirational to witness.

As we look to the warmer months we are gearing up for our Summer Camp Scholarship Program and our Free Summer Lunch Program. Soon we will be asking for volunteers to help make sandwiches and chop vegetables during the early morning hours for the Summer Lunch Program which is always a fun time to be had. We will also be working closely with parents, school counselors, and camps to make sure that all Freeport and Pownal children can go to the summer camp of their choice, they've worked so hard this school year and it is time to have fun!



STEVE COGSWELL

volunteer spotlight

Longtime transportation volunteer Steve Cogswell's name is synonymous with the medieval Sir Galahad, being our own knight in shining armor. The big difference between the two gallant gentlemen is in the horsepower: Steve's steed (his big black truck) is all metal – not animal - and even more reliable than Galahad's horse.

Retiring after 20+ years with the state's Department of Transportation, Steve wanted something meaningful to do and close to his Freeport home. Hearing that FCS is always in need of additional reliable, caring drivers, Steve decided to apply for the volunteer position - and we happily accepted! He immediately took to the road, providing safe and friendly rides to those who might have missed important medical, dental, educational, legal and other scheduled appointments, if not for the volunteer ride. Steve's transportation services do not stop there.

In between helping individuals and families, Steve picks up food pantry donations from generous donors, multiple times a day, four days a week; he's become a welcomed and trusted driver by all

(Steve Cogswell continued on pg. 7)





thrift shop update

Always wonderful treasures to find!

2016 was a banner year for our thrift shop! We exceeded our expectations - an exciting goal to beat! We are so grateful to our generous donors and of course our wonderful customers. The true testament to our success though lies with our incredibly dedicated volunteers. They are the heart and soul of our store.

We are proud to be working with several agencies to make sure that as many items as possible go to deserving hands. It is of utmost importance to us to repurpose and reuse as much as we can. We also work with antique and book dealers, jewelers, and music shops. We have established a collaborative working relationship with a local moving/downsizing company too. Needless to say, tremendous effort goes into handling what averages out to be a tractor trailer full of merchandise a week.

The core to this is due to the generosity of our community. Our thrift store has a reputation for having incredible treasures. We have patrons from all over Maine, and we are on the map so tourists don't miss us too. This is what keeps our doors open and our customers happy. Thank you.

As the weather turns, we are busy getting ready with new spring clothes, outdoor furniture, gardening supplies and more. Our inventory is forever changing.

We look forward to seeing our loyal customers soon and we are always happy to greet new faces!

White Nights - keeping the light on



FCS' Annual White Nights "Keep the Light On" gala celebration was held on January 28th. This is FCS largest event fundraiser and the 2017 event raised over \$34,000 to support the organization.



Great food donated by many area restaurants, music by Gary Wittner, a wonderful collection of live and silent auction items with auctioneer Jay Flower were all a part of the evening. Chef Andy Omo managed the kitchen

staff and food and students from the Freeport Interact Club helped serve our guests. Items included cottage and camp stays, tickets to restaurants, sporting events and shows, adventures and experiences, artwork and more!

A new addition this year was an online auction to broaden the reach about the organization and the generous donors. The online auction ran from January 25th to January 31st via the nonprofit online bidding site BiddingforGood.com. There were local online bidders as well as, bidders from as far as Kansas and California. Next year's goal will be to expand the number of items to bid online to encourage more bidding.

Freeze Out - warming hearts



The 13th Annual Freeport Freeze Out event took place on February 18th. Our tagline is "Warm your heart" and our donors and volunteers truly did just that throughout Freeport from 10am to 6pm, with the goal of raising awareness of the critical need for services for the most vulnerable residents of Freeport and Pownal. They collected non-perishable food and personal care items, as well as financial gifts, during this event. Donation boxes were placed at a variety of businesses and organizations. Proceeds support vital programs for community residents, such as the food pantry, fuel assistance, and emergency services.



Volunteers were on the lawn of the First Parish Church Congregational, and in locations throughout downtown Freeport including Bow Street Market. Also, from 9am-2pm, we were at Shaw's Supermarket in Freeport for our "Stuff the

Bus" event supported by Shaw's Supermarket and the Freeport Rotary Club.

FCS Freeze Out collected approximately \$9,500 in donations and sponsorships and nearly 700 pounds of food. Over 175 volunteer hours were donated this year at the various locations. Thank you for making these events successful and it's because of the generosity of our donors, volunteers and supporters that we continue to be able to provide services to our neighbors.

Amanda Peacock, Branch Manager and Adam Caron, Community Outreach and Education Specialist of Atlantic Federal Credit Union in Freeport presented a check to Freeport Community Services Board President Catherine Richards Olney and Treasurer John Donnelly last Fall. Through a variety of employee driven activities including a Jeans Day, they raised \$2,425 as part of the Maine Credit Union League's initiative: Campaign for Ending Hunger.

(L-R) Amanda Peacock, Catherine Richards Olney, John Donnelly



donor highlights

Recognizing the need in our community. Thank you!



As well, thanks to all the wonderful employees of L.L. Bean for their constant support. We are pleased that L.L. Bean is our Sustaining Business Leader sponsor. The annual contributions from the company and its employees continues to help us provide the needed services to our neighbors.



(L-R) Paula Paladino, Executive Director, FCS and Dave Nadeau, Account Executive, Clark Insurance

Dave Nadeau, Account Executive at Clark Insurance presented a check for \$1,000 to Freeport Community Services' Executive Director, Paula Paladino. Year-end contributions of more than \$40,000 by Clark Insurance were delivered in December to help community groups with food, clothing, shelter, wellness and higher education.



On April 7th, the students and teachers of the RSU 5 Community Programs and Laugh & Learn Preschool stood in front of the First Parish Church on Main St in downtown Freeport to collect non perishable food and personal care items and cleaning supplies for their 23rd Annual Hand to Hand Food Drive. Items were collected and then passed literally "hand to hand" down to the FCS Food Pantry on Depot St! They collected and donated 238 pounds of food to the Food Pantry. What a wonderful family event to learn the value of helping others. Congratulations and Thank YOU for your hard work!



The Freeport High School Interact Club donated a check for \$200 for the Fuel Assistance program. They decorated and sold cookies at school to raise the funds for FCS. Way to Go! Interact is Rotary International's service club for young people ages 12-18. They are sponsored by the Freeport Rotary Club.

How you can help

The gifts of money, time, food, clothing and many acts of kindness that come from individuals and businesses in Freeport and Pownal helps us meet our mission to provide services to our neighbors.

If you have something to offer — from time or money to your returnable bottles, extra food or produce from your garden— FCS would be happy to share it with those in need.

Monetary Donations

Make a donation online via PayPal: fcsmaine.org/how-to-help/donations

Or mail a check:

Freeport Community Services
PO Box 119, Freeport Maine, 04032

Via Amazon

Are you an online shopper? Shop via Amazon Smile and they will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to FCS. Go to: smile.amazon.com.

Thrift Shop

Drop off donations at the Loading Dock at FCS 24/7 or in the building during business hours. Contact **Susan Dyche at 865-3985 x 216**. Or go to: fcsmaine.org/what-we-do/thriftshop for a list of accepted items.

Volunteer

The volunteer opportunities are endless here at FCS!

Contact **Debbie Daggett at 865-3985 x 206**, or at ddaggett@fcsmaine.org. Visit our volunteer page and download the application at fcsmaine.org/how-to-help/volunteer.

Bottles

Returnables donated to FCS provide UP TO \$15,000 of annual income. Drop off your returnable bottles and cans at one of three conveniently located “**Yellow Boxes**” in Freeport.



Community needs assessment is released

Freeport Community Services (FCS), in conjunction with the Freeport Housing Trust (FHT) has released the results of the “Community Needs Assessment for Low-Moderate Income Population” that was conducted in 2016 for the towns of Freeport and Pownal by Planning Decisions Inc.



The Freeport Housing Trust (FHT) is a community-based nonprofit whose mission is to provide safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for the lower and moderate-income households of Freeport. FHT owns 149 units of rental housing, including 82 rental units in four family properties and 67 units of senior housing in three housing communities. FCS provides and coordinates essential direct services such as emergency food, fuel, and utility assistance. Together, the two organizations provide services to several thousand households in Freeport and Pownal.

The primary purpose of this report is to identify the unmet needs of the low-moderate income population in Freeport and Pownal, including those currently served and unserved by Freeport Community Services and Freeport Housing Trust. A second purpose is to provide an analysis of housing needs.

The findings in this report are organized around six themes that emerged during three focus groups conducted in March 2016 as well as interviews conducted with service providers, including school administrators, General Assistance, and local churches. The report is available at www.fcsmaine.org.

We invite the public to attend our annual **Community Night on Thursday, May 17th** from 6:30-8:30 pm at FCS for a discussion and to offer input and suggestions on the report.

Freeport Community Services would like to thank our sponsors for their generous support

thank you!

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Dead River Company

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New Beginnings
Consignments

(Steve Cogswell continued from pg. 3)

the donating entities. When firewood is given, Steve is on the job, picking up the wood and delivering to local families. Steve has helped folks move to new residences, given rides back and forth to Portland for citizenship classes, driven people to the grocery store, the pharmacy and laundromat. Steve also drives people to and from FCS so they can volunteer with us. Always caring, Steve carries a step stool so no one will have a hard time getting into his truck – and he has attached sideboards to his truck to accommodate even the largest loads of donations. “Nothing bothers me, Steve says. If I can do it, I will.”

There isn't a volunteer driving challenge that Steve hasn't accepted. Steve brings a deep-rooted Maine work ethic and a lifelong history of helping people to his FCS commitment. Before retiring, Steve realized his sickly neighbor had become unable to mow his large lawn.

Every week, without fail, Steve mowed that lawn, exactly how he knew his neighbor liked it. Upon the man's death, Steve continued to mow the lawn until the property was sold. “If someone needs help, I want to help them.” “I will help anybody.” Steve said.

Another admirable quality is Steve's sense of humor and he's a great prankster. One day he walked into the office on crutches. After he had a good laugh at our reactions, we realized we'd been caught again by one of Steve's pranks. He is a friend to everyone, and a positive role model. At the age of 77, Steve has the heart of a hero and the spunk and ambition of a young man.

Steve is as humble as they come, shying away from any form of recognition and appreciation. Like each one of our FCS volunteers, Steve is a personal hero to those lives he's touched; he gives his whole heart and soul to his volunteer mission. The sheer amount of hours that he drives each week – easily 15 to 20 - qualifies him for legendary status. If you should see Steve out on the road, be sure to blink your lights and wave – for he always loves making a new friend – and we're certain you'd love to know him!



How would you like to receive your newsletter?

We want you to stay up to date with FCS. How would you like to receive future newsletters?

Kindly select one - and please print:

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You may email the information to: Kim Hudak: khudak@fcsmaine.org or call: 865-3985 x202

Or mail to: Freeport Community Services, PO Box 119, Freeport, ME 04032



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