



neighbor to neighbor

News from
 Freeport
 Community
 Services

FALL 2018

FCS BackPack Committee recognized as the 2018 Kaplan Award winner at the Annual Meeting.



On October 22nd, the FCS BackPack Committee was presented with the 2018 Carol Kaplan Award for their efforts in creating our newest program. This award is given annually as an opportunity to acknowledge a group or individual whose tireless efforts contribute to the FCS mission.

Over two years ago, conversations about a BackPack program began as local parents and school staff found that too often, Monday morning comes, and they are forced to compete against hunger for the attention of their students. The Freeport Community BackPack Program provides children in need of food assistance with nutritious, easy-to-prepare food during weekends, throughout the school year. It is estimated that approximately 65 children in RSU5 needed weekend food support during the 2017-18 school year.

Through their efforts, the BackPack committee positively impacts the health and well-being of children in our community. The BackPack Program is a significant investment in the future of our community because children with adequate access to food can learn and grow into healthier, happier, and more engaged citizens.



This program could not have happened without the dedication of Katie Spaulding and Liz Prescott who worked tirelessly with FCS, Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program, Good Shepherd Food Bank and the RSU5. Since its first year of operation, the BackPack Program has been supported by a

committee of concerned members who joined forces with Katie and Liz to ensure both the initial success of the program, as well as, setting it up for longevity within the community. Jen Pope, Stacy Lodato, Board member Cindy Doolan, and FCS staff member Sarah Lundin worked with Katie and Liz to raise awareness of this resource within our community, and for securing the funds necessary for the program in its first year.

Year one of the BackPack Program was full of many successes as well as many opportunities for growth and learning. From developing alternative menus, to making accommodations in the amount and size of the food going into the packs to make sure that younger children

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Mission Statement

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

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Dear Friends,

As the holiday season approaches, we have many reasons to be happy and thankful here at FCS. This is a busy and exciting time for us. This time of year, we review our program statistics to help us plan and prepare for the upcoming holiday season and the next year. They help us predict how many families we may need to help with Thanksgiving food boxes or our Holiday Helpline, anticipate the number of households that may need fuel or utility assistance in the upcoming winter and plan our fundraising to sustain our many other programs throughout the year.

Last year we saw over 187,000 pounds of food pass through our doors. By any measurement, that is a tremendous number. Most of that food came in the way of donations from our extremely supportive community, MidCoast Hunger Prevention Program, Good Shepherd Foodbank and federal commodities. Locally, our food pantry receives generous weekly donations from Bow St. Market, Royal River Natural Foods, Shaw's, Hannaford, When Pigs Fly Bakery, Frosty's Donuts as well as local farms such as Wealden Farms. The remainder of our food supply came from food drives, gardens, individuals and churches. We are thankful for this outpouring of support which helps our local neighbors in need.

Through our sources, 93.5 tons of food helped an average of 430 households monthly last year or an average of 1,058 mouths fed monthly. These are families residing within the Freeport and Pownal school districts. Some may be people you know, or your children may know.

We also aided over 300 households with emergency assistance last year. This assistance helped to keep families in their homes or utilities turned on. Through our Thrift Shop, we also were able to distribute a mountain of clothing and household items that was donated to those in need.

We are happy that we were able to meet so many needs last year with our modest program budget, but the numbers are only the cold facts. It's the interaction with the people we are serving that really makes us smile. We know we are making a difference thanks to your support. We look at our accomplishments with satisfaction, knowing that FCS. is backed by an army of dedicated volunteers and a community that really cares. Those are the statistics that mean the most to us.

As always, we are thankful to each one of you. You are welcome to visit us anytime.

Wishing you and your family a joyous holiday season,



Paula
Executive Director



Transition from summer to fall and winter programs



The expanded FCS Community Garden.

expanded. Twenty garden plots were used this year and we hope to increase that number for next season.

This summer was a busy one with kids' programs. We served 1,520 kids at 3 locations with our Free Summer Lunch program and we sent 76 kids to a variety of summer camps and they had wonderful experiences. Read some of their delightful comments as they remind us what summer camp truly means for children.

A 3rd grader at Camp Jordan liked camp **"because you get to stay up until 10 pm."** And though she said **"I got bit by a fish"** she also really liked **"catching fish"** too!

A 4th grader attending Walden **"got an award for the best hiker and me and my friends did a talent show and there was a magician that came and did magic."**

Another 4th grader loved art camp because **"I love doing art"** and she learned to **"hand print with paint,"** something she had never done before.

And a 5th grader said that she got to **"shoot a bow and arrow, eat new food and meet different people."**

We are now planning our holiday programs for what is expected to be another successful season of giving. Again, this year we will be offering Thanksgiving baskets to Freeport and Pownal folks in need and our local Scouts were out on November 10th for their annual Scouting for Food Drive! Azure Café will once again be preparing a mouth-watering Thanksgiving Day meal for our community, thank you Jonas and Kate!

Additionally, we have begun to receive request both for help and to help with our Holiday Helpline Program. We are fortunate to partner with the Bruce Roberts Toy Fund to ensure that families have an extra special holiday treat.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Sarah Lundin 865-3985 ext. 205 to find out more about the programs being offered at FCS!

The transition from Summer to Fall has come quickly this year! The Spring and Summer seasons were filled with a number of activities and programs. With our AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers, our Community Garden was cleaned up and

volunteer spotlight

Our volunteers make it happen!

This spring, FCS was the proud recipient of the Governor's Award for Service and Volunteerism. This award recognizes a non-profit organization, municipality, or government program that has made significant changes and improvements in the condition of the community as a result of volunteer service. The award announcement from the Maine Commission for Community Service recognized FCS as a crucial pillar of the Freeport Community. "FCS represents the best qualities of the way life should be in Maine: caring neighbors, a strong sense of community, and a focus on the quality of life; all of which would not be possible without the dedicated team of volunteers that make the organization thrive."

Since the 1970's from our founders to today, volunteers have been the key to our success. With a small staff of 12, FCS deploys 624 volunteers that contribute over 27,000 hours annually. We appreciate and thank those people who have given their time, talents, hearts and souls to the FCS mission of neighbor helping neighbor in this outstanding community.

From the local businesses who donate products and personnel to students, civic groups, churches, the diversity of volunteers is at the core of the organization and keeps our mission and organization going. Quite simply, we couldn't do it all without our volunteers!



Volunteers stocking Thanksgiving baskets.



thrift shop update

The FCS Thrift Shop continues to be the place to gather with friends and shop for fabulous finds. It is our mission to provide affordable essentials for everyday life, while donating to other community social service organizations and providing financial support to the greater mission of FCS.

Some facts to consider:

Did you know that we work with several other non-profit agencies to assure that all donations are matched well with those in need? Each sale helps generate revenue to support the FCS mission and our programs.

Did you know our store is primarily staffed by 40-50 volunteers weekly? Many have been volunteering for 20 plus years. We would not be able to maintain a quality store without all the work they do.

We are preparing for a busy winter season. Every day, we receive amazing donations, that allow us to provide our customers with great, quality items.

On November 3rd, we held our Early Bird Sale from 6 am to 9 am as part of Visit Freeport's pre-holiday shopping event and it was a lot of fun. On November 8th, we held our annual holiday extravaganza featuring volunteer Martha's unique jewelry and great gifts to delight that special someone. We also had a special selection of designer purses and quality winter coats, and it was a great time to find festive decorations for your home for the holidays, while only spending a small amount! Stop in regularly since our regular and seasonal inventory are always changing.

"Thrift Shop" continued on pg. 7

Chowdah Challenge celebrates 25 years!



We had another successful Chowdah Challenge on October 6th on the porch of the L.L. Hunting and Fishing and celebrated 25 years of the Chowdah Challenge!

We teamed up once again with L.L. Bean and Visit Freeport as part of the 20th Annual Freeport Fall Festival which was bigger and better this year with additional location and activities.



First place Judge's Choice: 1912 Cafe

One of FCS' most fun, popular and successful fundraisers is in large part thanks to the support of the business community, our participating restaurants, friends and volunteers of FCS. We always get great support from volunteer pie makers and thanks to them our pie and ice cream nearly

sold out. 40 pies were made by 9 pie makers and ice cream was donated by Ben & Jerry's. Coffee/Tea was donated by Starbucks. Poland Spring donated bottled water.

The main focus of course, was chowder! Nine restaurants showcased their very best and there was tough competition. Participating restaurants were 1912 Café, Lobster Cooker, Buck's Naked BBQ, Freeport Café, Gritty's, Linda Bean's Perfect Maine, Hilton Garden Inn Freeport Downtown, Harraseeket Inn, and Vantage Point Chowder. Chowders ranged from the classic New England style to a gumbo-inspired lobster and shrimp chowder with sweet potato and rose wine. It was truly a great variety of tastes this year.

The 2018 Judges were Jim Keithley of WMTW News 8, Gregg Lagerquist of WGME 13, Danielle Waugh from NECN, Jim Bailey-The Yankee Chef, and Freeport Fire Chief Charles Jordan. They had a tough time making their final decision. This year's winners in the Judges' Category was 1912 Café in First Place and Lobster Cooker in Second Place.

Over 500 people purchased tickets and tasted the great variety of chowder and the People's Choice Category winners were the Harraseeket Inn in First Place and Lobster Cooker (again!) in Second Place.

Board Chair Sharon Foerster led the charge for this successful event and just over \$6,000 was raised for FCS to support a variety of programs that service residents of Freeport and Pownal. It was a perfect day to sample our community's best and support our organization.

Valerie and Eric Geredien serving up great chowder from the Hilton Garden Inn



Annual Community Day & Tent Sale: a new community tradition

We held our Annual Community Day and Tent Sale on August 17th. This year's weather was much better than last year- actually, it was a perfect day!

We were fortunate to expand our participating organizations this year to 9, which provided for a variety of groups for everyone to chat with and meet to learn about their programs. The following groups participated with us this year: YMCA, Greater Freeport Chamber of Commerce, Visit Freeport, Freeport Fire & Police Departments, Freeport Elders, Freeport Community Library, Freeport Rotary, Midnight Prism Collective, who did great face painting, and RSU 5 Community Programs.

We had great support from L. L. Bean who provided backpacks with school supplies to students in the community and a total of 53 backpacks were handed out. They also brought along a few outdoor lawn games like corn hole that were a hit with kids of all ages! As well, eye screenings courtesy of Maine Optometry were conducted from 11:30 am to 1 pm and a total of 15 eye screenings were done. We had snacks prepared by our friends at Old Navy, popcorn, and Starbucks provided iced coffee, iced tea and lemonade.

This year, we invited Oakie from Oakhurst Dairy and Whaley, the Pink Whale from Vineyard Vines to meet and chat with everyone and our Third Friday Free Lunch was held on the same day.

Kudos to the Thrift Shop on a successful day with sales over \$3,000! There were wonderful bargains again this year. We hope we provided some goodwill for the community and thank everyone for supporting us again this year.

"Backpack" continued from pg. 1

were able to carry it home safely, the committee did everything it could to improve upon things.

Fundraising efforts to support the program last year were truly incredible. Prior to becoming a program fully incorporated into FCS, the committee succeeded in funding the program through private donations from concerned citizens and businesses alike. The community support for this program has been overwhelming. In early 2018, the Backpack Program formally became a program at FCS entirely because of the efforts of this committee.

donor spotlight

Royal River Natural Foods



We are thrilled to be highlighting Royal River Natural Foods as our Donor Spotlight. Royal River Natural Foods has been a strong advocate of FCS for many years, annually donating to our Food Pantry high quality organic produce, dairy, meats, baked goods, groceries, spirits, and other products worth nearly \$50,000, that promote healthy living for families. Owner Tina Wilcoxson shares her thoughts here.

How and why did you initially become involved with FCS?

As a food store, we are all about good food and were looking for a place to donate food so it could get to people who need it and not end up being thrown away. FCS has great volunteers who visit us once a week to do a food pick up which makes giving so much easier. We all hear about food insecurity in Maine and this is one of the ways we can help to ease it for our community.

What interests you most about FCS and our mission?

I am so impressed with FCS and ALL they do for the greater Freeport community. I am sure they are a life line for many people and offer so much, whether it is the food pantry, clothing or assistance with heating fuel in the winter.

What are your top priorities when giving?

We focus on carrying as many local vendors as possible in our store and local is my top priority when giving as well. It is also very important to me the money, goods or services are getting to the people in need and not being over spent on administration which can happen in large, national organizations.

What do you want your gifts to accomplish and why is that important to you?

I wish for people to have access to good, healthful food and be able to feed their children with food to support their thriving. People need good food to stay healthy and feel well and I am so glad I can help achieve this for those who may otherwise go without.

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.

Monetary Donations

Make a donation online via PayPal:

fcsmaine.org/how-to-help/donations

Or by mail: **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 FCS Monday to Friday 9 am - 5 pm, and Saturday 9 am to 4 pm. Contact **Marian Desrosiers 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 returnables at one of two locations: in **South Freeport by the "silver bullets"**, or in town by the **Public Safety Building**.

Hannaford Clynk

If you do your shopping and return your bottles to Hannaford, **pick up some Clynk bags at FCS** and your returnables can become cash for FCS.

White Nights Gala team is busy preparing for the 2019 event!

Amazingly, staff and volunteers are busy gearing up for FCS' Annual White Nights Auction & Gala celebration to be held on Thursday, February 29th at the Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Freeport. This is our largest fundraising event. This year's theme is "Cruise for a Cause" and promises to be the area's must-attend event with a wonderful cruise setting and ambiance! Cruise attire is optional!

Along with the wonderful theme and ambiance, the auction catalog going to be exciting with fresh items. We are working hard to develop our list and some highlights include 2 tickets for a Caribbean cruise, a stay at wonderful home in Key West, Florida, with more items coming soon. Along with the live auction, we will have silent and online items. Because of everyone's support and generosity, we were able to raise \$34,000 in 2018 and we're looking forward to a bigger success in 2019.



The 2018 White Nights event

We're excited about the opportunities. If you have any interest in donating an item, stay or certificate to the event, contact Nancy Trotter, Events and Communications Coordinator at 865-3985 x 220 or ntrotter@fcsmaine.org for more information. Check back on the FCS website for more details as we develop this year's exciting event.

FCS received \$9,000 from the Downeast Energy's 25th Annual Golf Classic.

While it was soggy on Monday, June 4th, we had a great time at Downeast Energy's 25th Annual Golf Classic. We were one of 2 area nonprofits benefitting from the proceeds. FCS and the Betsy Ann Ross House of Hope each received a check for \$9,000! Team FCS lead by outgoing Board president Marc Miller played despite the rains and for a great cause. We were just thrilled to receive such support.

Downeast Energy has been holding their golf classic for 25 years and has donated over \$340,000 over the years to various nonprofits through the tournament's proceeds. It's commitment to community that they value, and we thank Downeast Energy for including us in this year's event.



FCS is recognized by the town of Freeport for outstanding community service.

On November 13th, at a ceremony held by the Cumberland County Commissioners, FCS was recognized as the Town of Freeport's 2018 Spirit of America award winner. The ceremony was held in the Feeney Room at the Cumberland County Courthouse in Portland and FCS was recognized alongside other organizations in the district.

The Spirit of America Foundation was established in 1990 in Augusta to recognize volunteerism. The foundation is a 501(c)(3). The tribute is presented annually in the name of more than 100 Maine municipalities and given to individuals, organizations or projects recognizing outstanding community service.

As stated in the award letter from Stephen F. Gorden, County Commissioner "your organization exemplifies the qualities of Spirit of America and I'm honored to help induct you into this list of noteworthy winners."

"We are truly honored to be recognized for our work by the Town of Freeport" said Paula Paladino. "We see FCS as a partner with the town by working together to help our neighbors in need."

Recognition like this a result of the all the great support and hard work our volunteers and supporters do to help us succeed. The recognition belongs to all of you. Thank you!

"Thrift Shop" continued from pg. 4

Recently, we received a special donation from a local merchant. Patagonia has generously provided us with all new fixtures for our store. This generous gift has given the store a clean modern feel. The sleeker fixtures have also enabled us to increase our accessibility to those with physical limitations. We have been receiving rave reviews from customers and volunteers. Thank you, Patagonia for thinking of us!

As we move ahead to another great year, we would like to thank Susan Dyche who was our store manager for the last 3 years. Her tireless efforts and energy made the FCS Thrift Shop the wonderful place and destination that it has become! With big shoes to fill, Marian Desrosiers has been promoted to the Thrift Shop Manager! On your next visit, please stop by and say hello to her.

save the date!

Upcoming Activities

Every month 3rd Friday Free Lunch (except Nov. & Dec.)

11/22 Thanksgiving Day Community Dinner

11/29 FCS Blood Drive

12/07 Sparkle Parade

01/25 Fourth Friday Just Desserts

02/16 Freeze Out

02/22 Fourth Friday Just Desserts

02/28 White Nights Auction & Gala

03/22 Fourth Friday Just Desserts

04/26 Fourth Friday Just Desserts

04/26 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

05/15 Community Night

05/24 Fourth Friday Just Desserts

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

Kindly select one - and please print:

Email it to me at _____
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Mail it to me at: _____
Name Street or PO Box Town State Zip

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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Donations Hotline Ext. 216

Volunteer Coordinator Ext. 206

Open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm



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