Making Freeport and Pownal age-friendly

This spring, a group of diverse people representing the towns of Freeport and Pownal began meeting to identify resources, needs and gaps to make our community more age-friendly, comfortable, safe and supportive for those who want to age in place. This group evolved into a Steering Committee working toward making our community more livable by supporting the health and well-being of citizens of all ages.

“The ultimate goal is to ensure that older adults have the resources they need to age in place, at home in their communities, with dignity, safety and independence” states Paula Paladino, FCS Executive Director.

During the Spring, the Steering Committee began an asset mapping process to identify age-friendly resources and priorities in our community. The priorities that emerged included transportation, home repairs, access to health services, fall prevention classes, hunger and nutrition, and decreased isolation. Additional areas of interest include connecting people to existing services and in others, identifying additional programs or services that enhance people’s quality of life.

Some existing resources in our community identified by the committee include a very active food pantry, community service work by volunteers for lawn and yard clean-up, a bird-feeder program to promote inclusion, medical loan closet, the Freeport Elders Association, and a free community meal the third Friday of the month open to the public at FCS.

Going into Fall/Winter, the Steering Committee will be working on an action plan for Freeport and Pownal. The goals of the action plan will support the health and well-

FCS volunteer Eric Geredien assists a senior community member with transportation.

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Greetings,

I used to work at an organization where there was always a puzzle being worked on in the lunchroom. Everyone contributed to helping to solve the puzzle, some more frequently than others. At the end, we would all admire the collective work of so many and then we would start on the next puzzle. Recently I’ve been thinking about how FCS reminds me of a puzzle. All the pieces are about the same size. They don’t look like much in a box with 999 other pieces all in a heap. However, with time and perseverance, they eventually begin to form into a beautiful picture.

If FCS was to be turned into a puzzle, what would the picture look like? I think the pieces would number into the thousands. That picture would include the building, the board members, and the public who come to FCS daily but that is only one small corner. It would include our dedicated staff who make our mission of “neighbor helping neighbor” come alive daily.

There would be the volunteers who pick up food, stock shelves, fold and sort clothes, run the register in the thrift shop, pack bags and boxes, offer rides, make schedules, and countless other jobs. Another part of the puzzle is the face of someone who cares very much. Can you see the people in the lunchroom forming a beautiful picture unfolding?

As I think about this puzzle picture, I begin to see a beautiful picture unfolding. Almost all of those pieces are the face of someone who cares very much. Can you picture it? Hundreds and even thousands of smiling faces. These faces are smiling, because they want to give of their time and support to help others, give back or are grateful for the help they receive.

We want to thank you if you are a piece of our puzzle. I hope you agree it is a beautiful picture. It takes all of us. To become a piece of our puzzle, check out our website at fcsmaine.org or call us at 865-3985 x 206.

Paula Executive Director

Another upcoming, caring holiday season at FCS

What a lovely fall this has been! This is always such an exciting time full of much anticipation for the upcoming holiday season. Our sweet volunteers are hustling and bustling, stocking shelves with beautiful squash and other end of season produce that helps so many of our neighbors in need. Generous offers to purchase turkeys and pack Thanksgiving boxes poured in and we are so grateful! Kind folks are signing up in need through our Holiday Helpline program, generously shopping for items on their family’s wish-list. “This is my most favorite time of year here at FCS and I am completely in awe of how much our communities can truly care about one another” said Sarah Lundin, Community Programs Coordinator.

We hosted a scrumptious community Thanksgiving Day meal here at FCS thanks to the kind hearts and talents of Azure Café. It was a lovely day! Additionally, we provided families within our communities with food boxes, complete with a turkey, to prepare at home. For these boxes, we had holiday food donations to fill the boxes and volunteers to help prepare and hand them out.

Our Holiday Helpline program is bringing so many smiles to the faces of those in need this holiday season. People can help by shopping for families, organizing gifts as they come in, and playing Santal! There will be opportunities to wrap gifts, sort items, and spend time with wonderful folks!

If you are reading this and wondering how you can help, please reach out to Sarah at 865-3985 x 205 or slundin@fcsmaine.org.

The Holiday Helpline program provides smiles as well as gifts!

The LL Bean crew with their amazing fall food donation.
Annual Community Day and Tent Sale becoming more popular every year

We held our 3rd Annual Community Day and Tent Sale on August 16th and this year’s weather was shall we say, a perfect day!

We moved the “Tent Sale” into the Community Center and it was well received and allowed our groups to be together on the lawn which provided a fun atmosphere for everyone to visit. Kudos to the Thrift Shop on a successful day. They also liked being inside and could display all the wonderful bargains in a unique way.

The following groups participated with us this year: YMCA, Freepport Fire & Police Departments, Freepport Elders, Freepport Community Library, Midcoast FCU, Arts & Cultural Alliance of Freepport, Midnight Prism Collective, who did great face painting, and RSU 5 Community Programs. It was a great opportunity for everyone on to meet and learn about a variety of programs.

Meeting so many area mascots was a highlight of the day and included: Whaley, the pink whale from Vineyard Vines, Sneakers the Cat from Bath Savings, L. L. Bear, Wilbur Moose from Wilbur’s Chocolates. A new feature was a visit from Darlings Ice Cream for a Cause truck. Since 2012, Darlings has supported nonprofits by providing free ice cream at events and organizations receive a check from the donations which has totaled over $350,000 statewide. Who doesn’t love ice cream on a summer day?

With support from L. L. Bear, we provided 40 backpacks with school supplies to students in the community. As well, there were a few outdoor lawn games like corn hole which were able to use and was a hit with kids of all ages! Our goal is to continue to provide some goodwill to the community and thank everyone for supporting us again this year.

Chowdah Challenge

We had another successful Chowdah Challenge on October 5th on the porch of the LL Home Store.

We teamed up once again with L. L. Bear and Visit Freepport as part of the 21st Annual Freeport Fall Festival which was bigger and better this year with additional location and activities.

One of FCS’ most popular and successful fundraisers is in large part thanks to the support of the business community, our participating restaurants, and FCS Board members and volunteers. We offered something different for dessert this year with homemade apple crisp from apples donated by Thompson’s Orchards of New Gloucester and an a la mode version topped with Ben & Jerry’s vanilla ice cream along with coffee and tea donated by Starbucks. Poland Spring donated bottled water.

Of course, there was chowdah! Seven restaurants showcased their very best. Participating restaurants were Lobster Cooker, Buck’s Naked BBQ, Freepport Cafe, Gritty’s, Linda Bear’s Perfect Main, Hilton Garden Inn Freepport Downtown, Hansaalekit Inn. It was truly a great variety of tastes this year, thanks to their generosity.

This year’s judges were Jim Keithley and Kathleen Jordan of WMTW News 8, Carolyn Brady, Miss Maine 2019 and Freepport Fire Chief Charles Jordan. They had a tough time making their final decision. This year’s winners in the Judges’ Category was Freepport cafe in First Place and Buck’s Naked BBQ in Second Place. They also both won the People’s Choice awards with over 400 people who bought tickets to sample and voted.

Thanks to everyone’s support, $5,000 was raised for FCS to support a variety of programs that service residents of Freepport and Pownal. It was a perfect day to sample our community’s best and support our organization.

FCS Annual Meeting focus community making a difference

Our Annual Meeting held on October 28th was a wonderful event celebrating community and how we can make a difference.

Tawni Whitney was our Kaplan Award winner for the difference she’s making to FCS and in our community and Elizabeth McLellan, Founder of Partners for World Health was our keynote speaker and inspired us to make a difference globally. Did you know that when we have an overabundance of wheelchairs, walkers and crutches, we share our surplus with them? Nothing goes to waste and someone can benefit from these additional donations.

We also recognized our outgoing board members Cindy Doolan and Pat Robbins for their years of service and welcomed new members Stafford Soule, Lynne Tindall and Emily Wesolowski.

White Nights Auction & Gala team is busy preparing for the 2020 event

Amazingly, staff and volunteers are busy gearing up for FCS’ Annual White Nights Auction & Gala celebration to be held on Thursday, February 6th at the Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Freeport. This is our largest fundraising event. This year’s theme is “The Place We Call Home” and we hope it reflects what home and community truly means to everyone.

Along with the wonderful theme and ambiance, the auction catalog is already developing with items coming in. We are working hard to develop our list and look forward to another great event. Check the mail for the invitation and other details about the 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. We’ll have details on the FCS website as we develop this year’s exciting event.
Changes in donating your returnables to FCS.

As of October 15, 2019, returnables are no longer accepted at the transfer station, behind the Public Safety Building, and the South Freeport location. FCS has always been fortunate to get such support from the community by donating returnable bottles and cans. It all adds up to support our programs to help our neighbors in need.

But there are still options if you still want to donate your bottles for FCS. Through Clynk at your local Hannaford, FCS Clynk bags are available for free at the FCS office or Thrift Shop. If you already have a Clynk account, you know that you can also donate directly to FCS via your account? Check Clynk to give or go to the donate button from your account and then you can type in your account.

Returnables for FCS can also be dropped off at Country Redemption, 155 Durham Rd. in Freeport. The team at Country Redemption has designated a location outside their building for FCS bottle donations and we will continue to receive the proceeds.

In addition to helping your neighbors in need, returning bottles has a positive environmental impact. For example, returning approximately 1,200 bottles has saved emissions equivalent to driving your car nearly 400 miles or saved energy to light 2 lightbulbs 24 hours a day for a year. You can learn more from the Environmental Protection Agency’s Waste Reduction Model (WARM) or Clynk.

We hope you’ll consider these options and we continue to thank all of you for your support with this changed process.

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being of residents of all ages, while promoting the livability for those who wish to age in place in our community. The action plan will identify goals in the key livability domains, including housing, transportation, community support and health services, social isolation and civic participation. Once the key goals have been developed, the plan is to create committees of interested residents to accomplish these goals.

“We all need to actively build the kinds of communities that will work for us throughout our lifetimes” says Brenda White, a Steering Committee member and retired school nurse. She adds “This is a volunteer driven initiative and anyone with an interest in this important work is welcome to join us.” For more information about joining the Steering Committee or a sub-committee, please contact Paula Paladino at 865-3985 x 204.
A special thank you to our generous sponsors

neighbor helping neighbor