



## **Age Friendly (AF) Millinocket Committee Updates August 2023**

Purpose Statement: *The Millinocket Age-Friendly Committee advocates for services, supports and infrastructure that meets the needs of our residents in all stages of life. (Adopted 3.16.22)*

**Note:** Meetings were suspended for the summer months of June, July, and August, but work and programs to make our community more age-friendly continued. Many thanks to all whom strive to make Millinocket more livable for all ages! Enjoy reading the updates below. And please let me know if I've missed any. You will see there are many! *Jane*

- 1) Millinocket Farmers and Artisans' Market** launched Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. It is scheduled to occur each Saturday until September 16<sup>th</sup>. Market hours started as 9-12pm, but as of Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup> hours were extended to 2pm (Tom Malcolm secured the ongoing use of a Porta Potty for Veteran's Park allowing the hours of operation to be longer than the original 3 hours). Rain hampered the start, but interest and attendance has steadily grown.

Background: Having a farmers' market in Millinocket has been a goal since the 2019 Katahdin gazetteer process, which was resolidified in 2022 via the Age-Friendly Millinocket Action Plan. The yearlong planning effort for the market was led by Barbara Riddle-Dvorak a Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps Member, based out of Millinocket Memorial Library. The Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps Program is grant funded and receives support from the University of Maine Center on Aging. Millinocket was offered an opportunity to have two Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps Members because of the Town's membership in AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

- 2) Community Gardening** at Crandall Park, established in 2022, continued again this year.

Background: After initial conception and construction planning of the Millinocket Community Garden in 2021 via the Sustainability Committee intern, the Age Friendly Committee brought it to fruition by hosting an event on April 22, 2022, Earth Day.

- The 2023 season brought a shift in oversight with a transition from the AF committee to the Town's CID. A seasonal volunteer was brought on to check in on the garden weekly and perform duties such as filling the water barrel. The plots range from handicap accessible to in-ground, with some raised beds being low enough for





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children to partake as well. In June, half of the plots were reserved, with some still available. If interested, please reach out to Amber at [CID@millinocket.org](mailto:CID@millinocket.org).

- 3) Transportation for All**, a grant application submitted by Thrive Penobscot/ MRH to Maine Community Foundation (MCF) was successful. As a result of this funding, Penquis Transportation will continue to provide rides to citizens in Millinocket, East Millinocket, and Medway within Penobscot and Piscataquis counties at no cost for another year, or until the funds (\$7200) run out.

Background: Starting in Feb 2021 rides have been provided by Penquis at no charge (free) to residents in Millinocket, East Millinocket, and Medway. The first \$2500 came from MCF grant funds awarded to the Town through the AF Committee, with an additional \$3000 provided by Thrive Penobscot/MRH in November of 2022. In 2022, there were 64 clients served and 1392 trips provided using these funds. The cost of the fare that this covers for riders ranges from \$1.00 – \$7.00 one way. Penquis reported that as of the last billing cycle in May 2023, there was \$237.50 left of the grant dollars provided by Thrive. The new funds will kick- in once all the previous funds are exhausted. There will be no interruption for riders.

- Usage data for the initial \$5500 has been provided by Penquis. Thrive staff is working on a presentation to share the data with the committee. Stay tuned!
- Thrive Penobscot staff, Brittany Grutter and Jane Danforth, will work with AF Millinocket to promote and encourage the use of Penquis Transportation to locations such as Eastern Area Agency on Aging's Community Café at the Stearns Building.

- 4) MRH Cancer Support Groups-** Thrive Penobscot/MRH was recently awarded funding from Maine Health Access Foundation (MeHAF) for MRH social worker, Marie Sutherland to begin two support groups at Millinocket Regional Hospital. The first is a group for those in their cancer journey and/or survivorship started meeting Thursday, July 27, 4:00-5:30p, and will continue to meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month. The second is a meeting for caregivers which is anticipated to begin at a later date. The Meeting location for both is the Multi-Purpose room at MRH. (Flyer attached)

Background: Planning for support groups started with Sarah Jandreau, Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps member, in collaboration with the AF Committee. July 2022 a Caregiver support group for those caring for a loved one living with dementia was started in partnership with Eastern Area Agency on Aging (EAAA) and was held monthly at the library. It has transitioned to an online Zoom format and is being facilitated by EAAA. We have 2-3 Millinocket residents who utilize this option. Meetings on Zoom are the 3rd



Thursday of the month from 2:00-3:30. Meghan Milliard is Facilitator with EAAA. (Contact Meghan at: [mmilliard@eaaa.org](mailto:mmilliard@eaaa.org) if you would like to be added to the Zoom invitation list).

- In 2023, Sarah and Robin Stevens worked together to shift the focus to start an in-person Cancer Support group in partnership with MRH.

**5) Municipal Data Across Sectors for Healthy Aging Project (M-DASH)** – Consultants with the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) have been meeting with the Age-Friendly Committee since March 2022 and have provided us with local data to use in decision making and program planning. The full data dashboard will be available soon on the town website under the Age-Friendly Committee Tab. The data is being used to inform projects and programs such as the resource card that was recently developed and shared community-wide and the in-person office hours offered by Penquis for LIHEAP sign up at the Millinocket Memorial Library.

**6) An Age-Friendly Millinocket Community Resources rack card** went out in a town wide mailing (wastewater billing / July 28, 2023). Over 2,000 residents received the card. An additional 600 cards were printed for distribution in key locations such as senior housing complexes, food pantries, town office, the library, etc. The cost associated with having the card printed - including the additional copies-and inserted into the wastewater mailing was covered by Thrive Penobscot. Thank you to Brittany Grutter for designing the card and for the information and feedback provided by committee members. Also, to Diana Lakeman, Town Clerk for her assistance with the printing company to make this happen (Rack card attached).

**7) Updated Signage** for the Michaud Trail has been installed, 11 in total. Signs have been updated with the addition of the two icons highlight the trail's accessibility for wheelchairs and strollers. Many thanks to Amy Collingsworth, EMDC Economic Development Director, who recreated the signs in a digital format that could be used by the sign company and public works for swapping out the signs along the Michaud Trail.

Background: Barbara Riddle-Dvorak and Louis Pelletier did a walking audit of the Michaud trail last fall as part of a program offered by the Maine Walking College. Barbara applied for and received grant funds (\$550) from the Maine Walking College to update the signage on behalf of the AF Committee. Much appreciated!







- 8) **AGE FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES** with several other partners have been established. Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps member, Sarah Jandreau was instrumental in planning the following activities at Millinocket Memorial Library and provided the following summary:
- **Learn & Grow Garden at MML-Model Garden/Community produce sharing:** Due to the very cold, rainy start to the summer the boxes at the rear of the Children's Room have had mixed progress. The string bean plants that Sarah and volunteer hubby, Dale Jandreau are growing well, with having to tie the plants up for support. Looking forward to another summer harvest in the month ahead to share at the Circulation Desk - which was very well received last season. Some of the other plants/boxes are struggling, but Dale is tending and prodding...Wabanaki Public Health (WPH) also planted strawberry and other indigenous plants.
  - **Food Preservation series in partnership with WPH/UMaine Cooperative Extension:** We had a great turnout for Quick Pickles and Freezer jams program - thanks in part to St. Andrews Episcopal Church sharing their beautiful, spacious kitchen for the product preparation! Wabanaki Public Health hosted the 2nd program on Garden Pests at their Rice Farm Hoop House location. We have Preserving Meats, Fermenting vegetables, and a Class on Pressure Cooking still to come - dates are being finalized due to some recent scheduling changes. Please be on the lookout for new ads/flyers in your email, and MML Bulletin Board, and our FB, Lincoln News, and WSYY.
  - **Audiology Screening/Adaptive Equipment Resources for Hearing Impairment:** Unfortunately, this exciting and important program scheduled originally for Fri., Aug. 4th was postponed by the presenter, Debra Bare-Rogers, Disability Rights of Maine, due to a major family emergency in California. We are anticipating an early Fall (Late Sept/Oct) date pending scheduling. Stay tuned, please.
- 9) **LIVING WELL WITH DEMENTIA-** As part of their work with Age-Friendly and the Living Well with Dementia project; Sarah and Barbara have planned an awareness event on September 7, from 1-2pm, which will cover the latest info on "The Aging Brain," and feature an expert speaker, a question & answer portion, and door prizes for attendees. (Flyer attached)
- 8 new aging-friendly puzzles have also been purchased for library patrons to use. The library is hoping to make them available to check out as well.
- 10) **COMMUNITY CENTER-** The Town received a grant from Sewall Foundation to fund the facilitation of community conversations involving residents in planning a Community Center in Millinocket. These conversations will inform the development of concept designs which then may be used to seek additional funding for completion of the project. The



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Community Center is being planned in partnership with Our Katahdin – as the proposed location is on the Innovation Campus on the One North Site- known as the location of the E & R building near Millinocket Stream. This location was chosen due to the proximity to downtown, accessibility to public spaces such as the Michaud Trail, and aims to provide the region with direct access to this historical site. Stay tuned and plan to be involved in public meetings to share your ideas.

- 11) CELEBRATION** - Library staff will be hosting a potluck to celebrate the work of Barbara and Sarah over the past 2 years on Tuesday, August 29th at 6pm at the library. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Nicole at [nicole@millinocketmemoriallibrary.org](mailto:nicole@millinocketmemoriallibrary.org).

Summary of Age-Friendly Committee updates respectfully submitted by Jane Danforth, Chair.