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*Healthy Aging Coordinator*

Anna Wind  
*Healthy Eating Coordinator*

Vanessa Hatch  
*Healthy Families Coordinator*

Joanna Bentley  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

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**COMMUNITIES SERVED**

Blue Hill • Brooklin

Brooksville • Castine

Deer Isle • Penobscot

Sedgwick • Stonington

Surry

**~ UPCOMING EVENTS ~**

**Walk-In Café**

Wednesdays, 10am - 11:30am

**Teatime at**

**Blue Hill Public Library**

Dates to be announced

**Everybody Loves Pirates!**

**Puppet Show**

March 1st, 10:30 am & 1 pm

Snow Date March 2nd



Healthy Peninsula

# Fall 2024

## NEWS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Anne Schroth



Anne and Lori accept Healthy Peninsula's AARP's 2024 Champion in Aging Award.

Welcome to our Fall Newsletter! We have a lot to celebrate this season, as you'll see from all the successful programs described here.

One exciting piece of news is that Healthy Peninsula has been awarded the inaugural Champion in Aging award by AARP Maine. This award was established to recognize a non-profit each year that does exemplary work for older adults in Maine. What an honor for us to receive this statewide recognition for our work on the Blue Hill Peninsula and Deer Isle/Stonington!

Aside from our pride in being recognized, however, is an even more gratifying point: Healthy Peninsula's deeply grassroots commitment to community collaboration is effective. At a time when healthcare and community-based resources are becoming harder to navigate, especially for those facing particular challenges of financial stability, housing security, digital literacy, transportation, and more, Healthy Peninsula and our community partners continue to come together to identify, prioritize, and address these barriers with creative, collaborative ideas and projects. In a rural, isolated area like ours, we cannot give in to the tendency to put our heads down and work in silos on our own difficult issues. Instead, working together, we can often find solutions that will support our community in ways we did not see alone.

AARP Maine's wonderful recognition of our Healthy Aging work, particularly our community leadership of Thriving in Place Downeast and, more recently, Age-Friendly Coastal Communities, demonstrates that, even while we face unprecedented challenges in the systems that should be supporting our communities, if we develop trusting, collaborative partnerships among all community members and organizations, we can strengthen community health for all.

*~Anne Schroth*

**This year's Annual Appreciation Celebration was held in September at Strong's Public House & Patio. Thank you to everyone who could attend to celebrate with us and, for those of you who couldn't be there, we hope you can join us next time!**



## HEALTHY AGING - Lori Johnson, Coordinator

As you likely know, there is an affordable housing crisis in Maine. Predictions indicate that by 2030, Maine will fall short by 10% in much needed available housing. If you were to guess how many spare bedrooms are in the state of Maine, would your guess be: a) 75,000 b) 150,000 or c) 500,000? If you selected c) 500,000, you are correct. In addition to there being 500,000 spare bedrooms in Maine, there are approximately 120,000 cost-burdened lower income older adults struggling to make ends meet. Home sharing is one way to address Maine's severe shortage of affordable housing, while also benefiting older homeowners wanting to remain in their homes. Please see the last page of our newsletter for more information about ongoing efforts to find solutions to address these problems.

In additional news, the Bridging Neighbors Program, a partnership between Healthy Peninsula and Healthy Island Project, is now in its second year and has received over 50 referrals to date. Bridging Neighbors is a community health outreach project that assigns trained volunteers to help older adults understand and access healthcare and wellness resources by providing ongoing community health support and advocacy, with a particular focus on those experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Our focus is on adults aged 60+ who reside in the 9-town region of the Blue Hill Peninsula and Deer Isle/Stonington. The benefits to many of our Bridging Neighbors clients have been life-altering. One Bridging Neighbors client we worked with recently shared with me that her matched volunteer, Sonya Bates, "changed her life" by introducing her to many social activities in the community where she has met new friends; she no longer feels socially isolated and has a much better quality of life.

We want to take this opportunity to publicly lift up our current dedicated volunteers: Tom Adamo, Sonya Bates, and LeCain Smith who are working with clients around the Peninsula. Without you, Bridging Neighbors would not be possible. Thank you!

The  
Walk-In  
Cafe



Join us for this **FREE**  
Community Event!

**Coffee • Snacks • Conversation**  
Wednesdays 10:00 am - 11:30 am  
Downstairs, Fisher Hall  
Blue Hill Congregational Church  
Call 207.374.3257 for more info.

## HEALTHY FAMILIES - Vanessa Hatch, Coordinator



*Vanessa brings the mini-Magic Food Bus  
(and lots of fresh veggies!) to  
Muddee Hands Child Care in Deer Isle.*

The focus for Healthy Families this year has been on making current programming stronger and more effective. The Welcome Baby Bag project has brought me into contact with the loveliest volunteers, who donate supplies or money, or who make the most beautiful baby items. We will begin planning our next blanket, bib, and burp cloth sewing day soon. It is one of my favorite days of the year -- keep an eye on the Healthy Peninsula Facebook page for the date!

Our Healthy Families programming continues to support small business owners who run day cares in our area – a critical part of our community infrastructure. Owned and staffed primarily by women, it has been an honor to support them in their meaningful, complicated work. We also continue to collaborate with schools, libraries, non-profits, and businesses that support families with children of all ages. I am currently working with the Blue Hill Congregational Church, community members, local schools, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Maine to bring a Big Brothers Big Sisters initiative back to Hancock County. We are fortunate that our Healthy Families

initiative has the trust of the community so that resource gaps and barriers are shared with us by community members and partners and we can work together to create a stronger community for families in our region.

**Would you like to sponsor a Welcome Baby Bag collection from your workplace, club or school group? Please email Vanessa at: [vhatch@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:vhatch@healthypeninsula.org).  
If you would like to donate through our Amazon Baby Bag wish list, visit our list here:**



*"Thank you for my  
beautiful flowers  
delivered with my soup!"  
~ Brooksville Resident*

### Become a Donor!

Your gift supports healthy communities for all on the Blue Hill Peninsula, Deer Isle & Stonington!

You can donate by including a check with the enclosed remittance envelope or by going online to:

[www.healthypeninsula.org/donate](http://www.healthypeninsula.org/donate)

**Thank you!**



Donate here!

Magic Food Bus volunteer drivers spent the summer and early fall sharing thousands of pounds of free fresh produce and books across our community. We popped up a new location to serve folks in Castine and initiated additional afterschool fresh veggie distributions in collaboration with the Brooklin Food Corps to help more kiddos connect with healthy snacks.

Week after week we continue to work with our friends at the Simmering Pot to deliver a nutritious meal to over 150 people at home while others gather to dine in the downstairs of the Congregational Church from 2:30-6pm every Monday. We're looking for more volunteers to get involved in preparing and delivering this community meal, please be in touch if you might like to do so!

We continue to update and print the Peninsula Food Resource Guide, a concise document listing meals, pantries, and other local, regional, and national food supports and opportunities to help people easily navigate the options available in our area.

This fall, we carried out our annual tradition of cooking up a big pot and telling the story of Stone Soup on the library lawn, it's always a joy and culinary adventure. We love working with the wonderful community collaborators like the Blue Hill Public Library and Gleaning Initiative that exist here on the peninsula.

If you enjoy growing a garden, consider planning your planting next season to include a little extra to share with neighbors through the Magic Food Bus. This year community growers shared nearly 1,000 lbs of produce, leaf by leaf, root by root, from their gardens. We'd love to increase this volume next season as the need for food support rises. These community contributions combined with 1,468 lbs of gleaning donations and 2,236 lbs of produce bought directly from peninsula farmers went out into neighborhoods all across our beloved peninsula to help improve the health and wellness of our neighbors. Thank you for your part in it!



*Our fantastic 2024 Magic Food Bus team delivered fresh veggies and fruit peninsula-wide late June through September.*

**Healthy Peninsula Welcomes Joanna Bentley**

Please help us welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator, Joanna Bentley! Joanna joins us after a long career as a physical therapist, including in-home PT care for the last 28 years.



In her role as Volunteer Coordinator, Joanna will be focusing on volunteer recruitment, placement, and training for our Bridging Neighbors program in particular. She is especially interested in being a part of the movement to make sure older community members have what they need for support and services.

Joanna lives in Brooksville with her husband Rob Dillard where she also operates the Medical Equipment Loaner Closet at 40 Wharf Road (you should check out her medical equipment Facebook page!). In her spare time, you might find Joanna enjoying a run or hike on a local trail, swimming, or working on her beautiful stone walls that line her driveway at home. If you happen to see Joanna out and about, please take a minute to introduce yourself to her!

# Magic Food Bus

## 2024

FREE FRESH VEGGIES AND GOOD BOOKS

### by the numbers

**14** YEARS rolling,  
13 years of coordination by Healthy Peninsula.

**PATRON VISITS** providing an average of a pound and a half of food per visit.

**3,116**

**15+** MADE IT POSSIBLE  
Our sponsors and funders include many generous private donors and...Quimby Family Foundation, St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church, Stanley Family Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Council on Aging CHEF Program, Heart of Maine United Way, Hancock County Food Drive, Point32Health Foundation, First National Bank, Blue Hill Hanford and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital.

**458** BOOKS SHARED

**YOU** WITH YOUR DONATION  
Tax deductible gifts can be sent to Healthy Peninsula, P.O. Box 945, Blue Hill, ME 04614 or through our website: [www.healthypeninsula.org](http://www.healthypeninsula.org). Healthy Peninsula is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**14** LOCATIONS + DELIVERY OPTIONS in 9 towns—Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Castine, Penobscot, Sedgwick, Surry, Deer Isle and Stonington.

**357** AVERAGE POUNDS OF FOOD delivered weekly June through September. That's 5,552 meals worth of vegetables provided to individuals and families. 52% of produce harvested and donated by farm gleaning and community gardeners.

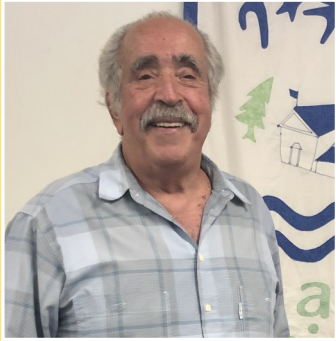
**5,552** MEAL'S WORTH OF VEGETABLES provided to 1,042 unduplicated visitors of all ages.

**50+** MADE IT HAPPEN ~ Generous home gardeners, volunteer delivery drivers, Blue-Zee Farm, Fair Mount Farm, Four Season Farm, King Hill Farm, Tith & Timber, and local food partners: The Gleaning Initiative, Healthy Island Project, Blue Hill Community Garden, and Brooklin Food Corps & School Garden.

Healthy Peninsula

**For more information:**  
Anna Wind at 207-374-3257  
info@healthypeninsula.org

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



### Meet Tom Adamo! Bridging Neighbors Volunteer since 2023

**Do you have a favorite volunteer role with us?** I volunteer with Healthy Peninsula through the excellent and valuable Bridging Neighbors Program.

**Would you share with us an especially meaningful time for you as a volunteer with Healthy Peninsula?** Each client with whom I have worked has provided me with a statement of gratitude for the assistance Bridging Neighbors and I provided them. We all have limitations and challenges in life; some easier than others. It has always been meaningful to work with an individual who is facing a difficult time and to be with them as they navigate finding solutions. To help them arrive at a solution brings meaning to them and to me.

**What have you learned about yourself and / or others through volunteering?** I've learned that at my age I can still be useful and play a role in making the world a better place. I have met other folks who volunteer for Healthy Peninsula, or who are employed there, and I have found each person to be skilled, knowledgeable, dedicated and compassionate - people who really do make a very positive difference in our community.

**What has been the biggest surprise about volunteering?** The biggest surprise is learning how many people in our community need assistance. There are just not enough helpers to help those who want to help themselves.

**If you could encourage someone else to volunteer, what would you say?** Come aboard, and work with great people who help others help themselves. There is no other experience I know where one can be a part of assisting community members to getting where they need and want to go.

**Thank you, Tom!**

**We are grateful for your thoughtful energy and commitment to our communities!**

## Learn More About Maine's Home Sharing Program

On October 9th, Healthy Peninsula, in partnership with the Blue Hill, Brooksville, and Ellsworth Libraries, and the towns of Deer Isle and Stonington, hosted an event to bring an awareness of Maine's Pilot Home Share Program to our local communities. You can watch the event recording at: <https://youtu.be/G8RO-XfwAe0>.

Maine's Home Share Program was launched in an effort to offer one solution to the problem of affordable housing, while also benefiting older homeowners wanting to remain in their homes. The Maine Housing Authority contracted with the online platform Nesterly to test the statewide home share model. Nesterly goes beyond the typical landlord-tenant relationship to facilitate mutually beneficial shared living experiences that include safety and security features, landlord/tenant matching, social work support for any issues that arise in the tenancy, and more.

Please help us help others by spreading the word about the Maine Home Share Pilot Program! For more information, visit <https://www.mainehousing.org/nesterly> or contact Lori Johnson, Healthy Aging Coordinator, at [ljohnson@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:ljohnson@healthypeninsula.org).



### Are you interested in becoming a volunteer?

We would love to talk with you! Our volunteer opportunities include:

- **Bridging Neighbors** - volunteer community outreach
- **Commodity Food Box** - monthly delivery drivers & produce sorters
- **Magic Food Bus** - June through September
- **Simmering Pot Delivery Project** - soup delivery drivers
- **Walk-In Café** - weekly hosting, set-up, clean-up on Wednesdays

For more information, contact [tpeasley@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:tpeasley@healthypeninsula.org) or register online at: [healthypeninsula.org](http://healthypeninsula.org) by clicking on the "Volunteer" tab.