



FALL 🍎 2020

Community Inspired • Partner Driven  
Improving Health and Well-Being

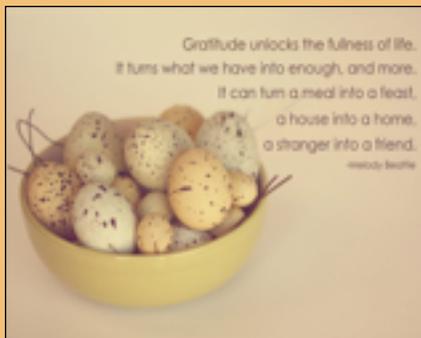
## Celebrating 20 Years of Service!

Reflections by Sandy Phoenix, Healthy Peninsula Board member extraordinaire

In 2001, Healthy Peninsula was created as one of the original Healthy Maine Partnerships, a critical boost to public health in our state. I was a part of the original HP team and have worked as a supporter and Board member for most of the past two decades. My continued involvement with Healthy Peninsula, deep and satisfying, comes down to two vital elements.

In the past twenty years, HP has evolved from a public health agency to an independent, community health organization. While public health promotes healthy lifestyles, injury prevention, and responds to infectious diseases, community health focuses on community members as determinants of their own health. In our work, we listen to community “voices,” engage in community conversations, and work together, with local partners to help find answers to challenges and needs. Although my personal passion is our work in support of young families, I also delight in the Magic Food Bus projects, and am amazed at HP’s success in empowering connections and services for older adults. I like it all!

In addition, I have always loved working with HP staff, each one knowledgeable, experienced, dedicated, and creative. Because of their insight and resourcefulness, this organization is flexible and nimble, able to respond to changing community challenges, including urgent needs. Our office “family” works together across initiatives and programs to offer each other support, find natural links, and develop inventive solutions. It’s all about people I work with and the people we serve. It’s been a great 20 years so far, and we’re looking forward to 20 more!



**We are truly grateful for all of the wonderful volunteers** who enthusiastically offer their time, their creativity and their listening ear to their fellow community members. Whether assisting with advance directives, making a friendly phone call, delivering beautiful veggies and delicious soup, or serving on a board or committee, **each of you makes this world a better place where fewer of us are strangers and more of us are friends.**

P.O. Box 945 • 10 Parker Point Rd., Blue Hill, ME 04614  
207-374-3257 • [info@healthypeninsula.org](mailto:info@healthypeninsula.org) • [www.healthypeninsula.org](http://www.healthypeninsula.org)



# Healthy Aging . . . . .

When COVID-19 hit, we had to quickly retool our Healthy Aging priorities. Not only were most of our activities abruptly shuttered (from our large, complex Community Paramedicine partnership with Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital to our small handy household tool display at local libraries), but new community needs quickly became apparent. We adapted our Age-Friendly Coastal Communities bi-monthly partner meetings into a weekly Zoom gathering for partners to grapple together with COVID-related disruptions, sharing challenges, resources, gaps, and strategies. We organized the ad hoc offers of volunteer help into a pop-up volunteer project, pairing volunteers with new referrals from the hospital, local primary care clinics, Tree of Life Food Pantry, and other partners, to make sure that community members who were sheltering at home got the food, medicine, and other support they needed.



Partnering with Sarah Pebworth, our local state representative, and Surry Neighbors Helping Neighbors, we created a friendly caller project that reached over 1,200 registered voters aged 65+ on the peninsula. Through needs identified on these calls, we were able to provide critical resource support to several families. As the winter months set in, we will be sending a resource-filled postcard to those over age 70, reminding them of what is available to help them get through what may be a tough winter season.



# Healthy Eating . . . . .

During COVID-19, the Magic Food Bus has been celebrating its 10th season of serving our community, not with the party and fun community activities we were planning, but by doubling up on our efforts to share healthful food, coordinate volunteers, and host peninsula-wide conversations about food security.

**MARCH** –We began working with volunteers to deliver boxes of food from the Tree of Life to people sheltering at home, many of whom had lost their ride shares during this time of necessary isolation.

**APRIL** – Healthy Peninsula took on temporary leadership of The Simmering Pot free community meal to develop a COVID response, including a new cooking team and to-go delivery system.

**MAY** – The fourth Garden Camp at Brooksville Elementary School was redesigned into a virtual format and the Magic Food Bus got a new logo.

**Many thanks to Annie Poole, who created the beautiful new logo for the Magic Food Bus!**



# . . . . . Responds to Community Needs

Thanks to AARP Maine, we obtained a small grocery fund that allowed us to create a contactless grocery shopping project to keep volunteers and recipients safe, as well as to support people who couldn't immediately pay for needed groceries. And, thanks to a partnership with Eastern Area Agency on Aging, we were able to get background checks for all our volunteers.

As the months have passed, it has become clear that these volunteers are not only doing the job they signed up for but another important job as well. Each activity is a human touch, a reassuring conversation, a friendly voice during a time when all of us – but especially older people – were being warned to stay in and self-isolate to keep ourselves safe.



*Loading up for a delivery.*

For the volunteers, as well as the recipients, the importance of this socialization has been illustrated by the stories we continue to hear.

- A Simmering Pot volunteer picks up her delivery load for 9 households in Blue Hill at 2:30pm every Monday and doesn't get home until 7:30pm because each person wants to visit (albeit outside and physically distanced) when they get their soup.
- A shopping volunteer has become such friends with the person for whom he shops that he regularly called her to check in while she was recently in the hospital and helped her advocate for better community resource connections upon her release.
- A new Simmering Pot recipient, upon learning that the soup would be delivered weekly at no charge, was speechless with surprise and blurted out "I love you" to the volunteer delivering the meal.

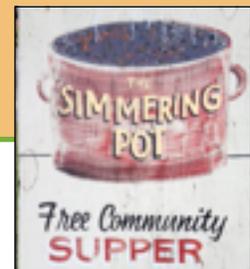


# . . . . . Takes On the Challenge

**JUNE, JULY & SEPTEMBER** – Anna and her team of 9 dedicated volunteers ran the tenth (!) season of our Magic Food Bus produce delivery program, sharing over 7,000 pounds of free fresh vegetables. Food was purchased from local farmers and donated by community growers and The Gleaning Initiative, Healthy Island Project, and Community Compass all participated to help us get more food out into the community while so many people were staying home. What stands out brightly is the incredible work we were able to accomplish this season thanks to the awe-inspiring efforts of our volunteers.

Thank you!

When the pandemic shut down the community meals at The Simmering Pot, Healthy Peninsula and an amazing group of volunteers made sure that there would still be meals on Mondays. See more about this in the enclosed newspaper article. It took the coordinated efforts of 7 certified kitchens and 11 volunteers to provide what has amounted to over 3,000 meals of soup and fresh bread to anyone who asked for it. Our team at Healthy Peninsula, headed by Anna Wind, couldn't have done this without the help of Barb at Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, Max at The Blue Hill Co-op Café, Tim at Arborvine Restaurant, Alex at Parker Ridge Retirement Community, Anna at St. Brendan's Episcopal Church, Tim and Lydia at Tinder Hearth Bakery, and Paula and Mary and the original Simmering Pot team.



# Healthy Families Supports Childcare. . . . .

In March, when COVID-19 became part of our community health reality, we quickly realized that we needed to understand its impact on our local childcare network. In a series of Zoom calls, providers described the changes they would need to make in order to re-open their childcare centers safely. They talked honestly about an increase in cleaning time, the need for cleaning supplies, adaptive equipment, and the loss of income due to closure and lower enrollments. In response and due to the generous flexibility of the Maine Community Foundation, we developed an emergency pass-through grant funding opportunity to help local, licensed childcare providers cover additional costs and balance the lost income related to the pandemic. Six childcare providers benefited from the opportunity, with a total of \$5,550 funds distributed. Recipients were encouraged to use those funds in ways that would best serve them and the families enrolled in their programs. Their ideas were creative and will have long-lasting impact for years to come.



*Cameron in her rest nest.*

Jennifer McCall of Hearthstone Forest Preschool in Sedgwick shared, “The COVID response funding from Healthy Peninsula helped me prepare my school space to be as safe as possible for our school community. I purchased washable rest mattresses for each child with separate bedding sets and pillows for each as well. I stocked up on hand washing cloths and purchased 4 UV towers for disinfecting all school areas after the children go home for the day. The help is so appreciated and came at a perfect time in the life of our school.”

“With the funds I received through Healthy Peninsula, I was able to build the structure I needed to move both my summer and my fall program outdoors. I now have a screened in cozy space where the children enjoy nap time outdoors. Although it is deep into the fall, the children love to nestle into their sleeping bags, and are toasty warm. I am ever grateful to have the means to nap the children outdoors for many years to come” says WendiLou Salnan, owner of Skip to My Lou in Penobscot.

## Friends Dig Deep . . . . . What about You?

All across our nine-town service area and beyond, people see the value of the work we are doing in response to the pandemic. Folks donated twice as much as last year in our register drive at Tradewinds, and the Lawrences kindly added to the total. The generous donations from our Change for Good month at the Blue Hill Co-op caught us by surprise. Equally surprising were the donations from new friends. We discovered that some had read about our efforts in the local papers, some had heard about what we were doing from friends, and some were volunteers helping in our programs. The First and Bar Harbor Bank and Trust were very generous, and our grantors—AARP, Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation, Maine Community Foundation (and their Yoakum Fund), AARP, Quimby Family Foundation, United Way of Eastern Maine—gave us the flexibility to meet emerging community needs. Thank you all!!

If you'd like to join the celebration of our 20 years of work on the Blue Hill Peninsula and Deer Isle, and help us serve for 20 more, please consider a donation to our annual appeal. You can donate by including a check with the enclosed remittance envelope or going online to make a one-time or monthly donation. You might even consider a special 20th anniversary gift. Be assured that whatever you are able to donate will be well spent.

**Thank you!**

