



Healthy
Peninsula

FALL 2021

Hello from Anne

We have had a lot of changes at Healthy Peninsula since our last newsletter. For one, Janet Lewis has moved on to new adventures, and I have stepped into the Executive Director role. We all miss Janet's thoughtful and supportive leadership but know she has left the organization in great shape to face the new community-health landscape in which we now find ourselves. While the pandemic has stretched on despite impressive vaccine numbers locally and statewide, we have continued to work hard to maintain our COVID-response activities and foster resilience in the community. We've had many bright spots—such as Anna Wind and our master gardener board members transforming our demonstration gardens into spectacular “lasagna” beds that have been producing wildly all summer and Erica Garvey sustaining a vibrant and unique community of practice for private childcare providers during a period of incredible stress for them, their staff, and parents in need of childcare. In Healthy Aging, we were selected as a host site for the UMaine Center on Aging's inaugural year of the Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps Program. (See inside for an update about our first Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps member.) We are all eager for booster shots and vaccines for the younger community members and—eventually—a return to more in-person activities. In the meantime, we are pushing ahead to continue to support all members of our communities so they can thrive now and into the future.

Anne Schroth, Executive Director



Good Bye to Janet

The lexicon at Healthy Peninsula changed the day Janet Lewis came on board as Executive Director in 2014. Words like “incredible,” “amazing,” “nimble,” and “small-but-mighty” found their way into conversations, presentations, and grant applications—not the usual community-health speak. The wonderful thing was that Janet believed that these words accurately portrayed our staff, board, volunteers, and our work. If we didn't believe it before, we absolutely believe it now. Janet leaves Healthy Peninsula foundationally stronger, widely respected, and, most importantly, able to respond quickly and effectively to community “voices” and challenges. We were lucky to have her warm and unique brand of leadership for seven years. I miss her already.

Sandy Phoenix, Board of Directors



HEALTHY EATING

Congratulations!

To **Anna Wind**, our **Healthy Eating coordinator**, for receiving the Halcyon Grange Community Citizen Award for her work with the Magic Food Bus, her efforts to educate area students about food and farming through school programs and summer garden camps, and her dedicated partnership with the Simmering Pot to keep nourishing soup available to those who need it.



The eleventh season of Magic Food Bus delivery has kept us busy! It feels more involved than ever before now that we are coordinating more than ten dedicated volunteer drivers, who deliver fresh produce to twelve official locations plus many additional home deliveries across nine towns from June through September, and serving up over 7,400 pounds of vegetable. Our little program has grown and changed every year since Anna has been a part of it. Even throughout the ongoing pandemic, we've found ways to safely deliver food and books and continue to be a meeting place for neighbors to connect during isolating times. These coming months, you will find us delivering soup, collaborating with schools, and coordinating local food security efforts. Many thanks to those who contribute to these programs!



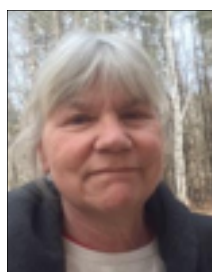
The first year Anna worked with Healthy Peninsula to deliver free fresh vegetables and books, a coworker built a teaching garden on the front lawn to show how much food could be grown in a small space and supply passers by and Magic Food Bus visitors with free fresh produce. Fast forward six seasons and the wooden frames were rotting and the soil was tired. This spring, we gathered together to dismantle the raised-bed garden boxes and layer on piles of gathered materials to turn lawn into productive growing space. We knew we still wanted to show how food could come from a small lawn space and use the land in front of our office to share nutrients and inspiration, but we needed a new format that would be less water intensive and have a better chance of standing the test of time—a lasagna garden was born! Showcasing perennial herbs and edible flowers, this community garden space now provides flavorful ingredients all season long. Through our investment in service and growth, we have learned from our experiences and adapted our practices to better serve our goal of sharing and supporting healthy foods and activities to uplift our community.





HEALTHY AGING

Patricia Saunders, a longtime resident of Surry, will soon be joining Healthy Peninsula as a Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps member! With direct, lived experience as a caregiver, she has personally navigated the confusing array of medical, legal, and social-service questions that many of us will face as we age. In addition, Pat brings previous experience working with nonprofits, including two years as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow, where she developed the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Hancock and Washington Counties and later served as the director. Pat will be supporting both our Healthy Eating and Healthy Aging initiatives, and we are thrilled to have her join the team!



Healthy Peninsula's Healthy Aging work has historically combined coordinating community collaborations, providing healthcare and social-service resource connections to individuals and providers, and creating targeted direct-service projects for older residents, particularly focused on those who are historically underserved, rural, and low income. With the onset of COVID-19, many of our complex collaborations were suspended, while meeting basic needs of older, at-risk community members became critical. Given the urgency of needs and thanks to our funders' flexibility, we quickly pivoted our aging work to focus on direct community support.

We are lucky to have been able to identify continuing grant funding for these COVID-response services, which include:

- Partnership with the Simmering Pot to coordinate delivery of 120-130 quarts of soup and servings of bread weekly
- Providing COVID vaccination support for community members
- Providing stop-gap food/medicine delivery for at-risk community members until community partner agencies resumed regular service
- Coordinating volunteers (in partnership with Sarah Pebworth, our local state representative) to make check-in calls to 1400+ older community members and send follow-up resource postcards
- Free sand buckets for older/disabled community members to reduce winter falls
- Partnership with Eastern Area Agency on Aging on USDA Commodity Supplemental Food Program, coordinating volunteer delivery of monthly food boxes to older, low-income residents.

HEALTHY FAMILIES



After childcare centers began closing at the start of the pandemic, Healthy Peninsula was able to provide funding to help centers reopen safely. And as they began reopening, **Erica Garvey, our Healthy Families Coordinator**, saw there were further ways to provide support to these essential workers. Thus the early childhood providers network was born and continues to meet on a regular schedule. There have been several professional development sessions, and plans are underway to provide education for people wishing to become childcare providers. It's a real need in the community, and we are excited to help!

Who knew that when we offered orange safety vests and dog bandanas with a message encouraging people to get out and and move—"A healthy inside starts by moving outside"—that they would go like hotcakes. An idea whose time had come? Keep an eye out on the streets and in the woods for this stylish protective gear.

How Are The Children?

Find the answer in the Your Health Matters columns in the Penobscot Bay Press family of newspapers..



As we look hopefully toward the future...

...we are planning to work with our community partners, volunteers, and recipients of our services to identify and design programming to address post-pandemic barriers to health and well-being. We recognize that there are significant challenges facing healthcare, social-service, and community-based organizations serving all rural Maine communities at this time. The pandemic has exacerbated barriers to health equity, involving direct healthcare resources as well as supports and services impacting the social determinants of health.

How can Healthy Peninsula help our nine-town region address these barriers to health equity, many of which have no immediate solutions? We need to re-engage our COVID-weary community members and service partners to re-envision productive community collaborations that will address the needs identified and prioritized by our community members. We invite you to join us as we turn our focus to these pressing issues and, through collaborative partnerships, creative volunteerism, and mutual support among individual participants, create new approaches that engage and support all community members.

Thank you, St. Francis!

Since 2015, St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church has quietly and consistently become a key community supporter of the Magic Food Bus Healthy Eating Initiative. The church supports the Magic Food Bus because "it aligns so closely to our mission statement. We are dedicated to fighting the hunger which exists in our peninsula communities, to supporting the education of the youngest of our community members, and to strengthening community ties with the elderly. The MFB accomplishes all of this year after year."



The generous donations by the St. Francis Outreach Committee

increase access to fresh, nutritious food by helping to fuel the Magic Food Bus with thousands of pounds of local vegetables distributed at no charge across the peninsula.

If your church or organization would like to become a key community supporter of the Magic Food Bus or any other of our initiatives, please contact Anne Schroth at aschroth@healthypeninsula.org.

You can help

by considering 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. Be assured that whatever you are able to donate will be well spent.

Thank YOU!



HEALTHY PENINSULA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April Chapman, Allan Currie, Candice Bray, Tiffany Eaton, Margot Entwisle,
Vanessa Hatch, Cathy Marshall, Kate Mrozicki, Kate O'Dell, Sandy Phoenix, Kurt Stoll

We are sorry to report that Board member Duncan Neuhauser passed away in July 2021. Professor Emeritus of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Duncan brought a unique and invaluable perspective to our work. He will be sorely missed!