



## Bethel Region Age-Friendly Community Initiative (AFCI) 2018 Annual Report (submitted January, 2019)

2018 has been a year of important transitions for the Bethel Region Age-Friendly Community Initiative (AFCI).

- A Mission: To explore ways to make the community more supportive of healthy aging and to make it possible for people to stay in their own homes (and communities) as they age.
- B Member towns, all of which contribute funding to the AFCI: Bethel, Gilead, Greenwood, Hanover, Newry, Woodstock.
- C Contact Information:
1. website: [www.agefriendlybethel.org](http://www.agefriendlybethel.org)
  2. mail: PO Box 833, Bethel, ME 04217
  3. email: [info.agefriendly@gmail.com](mailto:info.agefriendly@gmail.com)
- D Governance: The Advisory Council continued from last year until August, when we became a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation. The town of Bethel is no longer our fiduciary agent.
- A Board of Directors and officers were elected:
- Al Cressy Bethel rep
  - Anita Clark Newry rep
  - Bob Oickle Greenwood rep; Treasurer
  - Charlie Reiss
  - Jane Chandler Woodstock rep; Secretary
  - Lise McLain Gilead rep
  - Lucy Abbott co- Vice President
  - Nancy Davis President
  - Shirley Powell Hanover rep; co- Vice President
- E AFCI Programs
1. Transportation. Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) Volunteer Driver Program: free medical or local non-medical rides for seniors (age 60 and over) in the AFCI communities may be requested by calling our call center. Since its inception in October 2017, the N2N program has provided 355 rides to its 33 clients. In collaboration with Western Maine Transportation Services, Community Concepts and the Maine Department of Transportation, AFCI sponsored a far-reaching transportation forum in Bethel.
  2. The AFCI Home Safety Project, originally funded through an AARP Community Challenge Grant 9/17, has continued to serve the community:
    - Adaptive toolkit: tools for home use, including kitchen helpers and aids to facilitate vision and manual dexterity; for sale at Brooks Bros. Hardware and from other online retailers (see catalog); displayed throughout the communities and at local events.
    - In cooperation with the American Red Cross, free smoke alarm installation for Bethel, Greenwood, Newry and Woodstock residences.

- Home Assessments for Falls Prevention: To date, thirteen Bethel area residents have taken advantage of these free assessments. Bethel Family Health Center providers identify patients who might benefit from the program and invite them to participate. Assessments are performed by a local Occupational Therapist, and an assessment report is provided to the residents as part of a follow-up visit.
3. Communication
    - Press releases and print items (rack card, etc.).
    - Monthly electronic newsletters sent to a mailing list of 155 (and consistently growing).
    - Website: [www.agefriendlybethel.org](http://www.agefriendlybethel.org).
  4. Outreach
    - AFCI collaborated closely with the Mahoosuc Heart & Soul Program, sharing goals and action items as prioritized by local citizens.
    - AFCI became an active member of the Bethel Area Non-profit Collaborative.
    - It is hoped that the above two collaborations and others within the community will allow AFCI to expand its effectiveness.
    - Two AFCI Board members participated in a workshop with Telstar Freshman Academy students, with the hope of generating some inter-generational opportunities.
  5. Exercise for Seniors
    - Walk the Gym (Bingham Gym, Gould Academy) in the winter.
    - Tai Chi classes.
    - Group Swimming at the Greenwood Town Beach in the summer.
  6. Resource Directory: Guide to services and agencies available to seniors (and others), locally and statewide - on website and printed copies at select sites within the AFCI communities; pdf copies available upon request.
  7. Morning Greeting: Seniors living alone can receive a call each day from a “neighbor” to check in on their well-being, thereby lessening isolation, promoting safety, and encouraging new friendships. Clients (or family members/friends) register through a call number.
  8. Two Board members began plans for a Handy Neighbor committee, with the long-term intent of providing simple household tasks for those over 60 who request it.
  9. Over 50 AFCI volunteers were invited to a festive celebration of our work; additional participants were representatives from the offices of Senators Collins and King and AARP Maine.

#### F State/National

1. AFCI has collaborated with, and served as leaders for, other AFC communities in Northern New England, serving in a number of webinars and other web-based and interpersonal meetings.
2. An AFCI leader was a presenter at the AARP National Conference 11/18.
3. AFCI engaged with representatives of the offices of Senators Collins and King and State legislators.

#### G Action Plan

1. We have completed the implementation of our first Action Plan approved in December, 2016.
2. We have completed a thorough assessment of our progress; see attached.
3. We are beginning to develop our new Action Plan.