



Harpswell Aging at Home 2022 Annual Report

Introduction

Harpswell Aging at Home (HAH) is a volunteer-led nonprofit organization committed to helping residents thrive while aging at home. Our programs have grown out of an initial assessment of the needs of older Harpswell residents in 2015 that identified a variety of challenges.

HAH used that assessment to develop plans to provide information, mobilize volunteers, and create connections and partnerships that would meet the present and emerging needs of older residents. HAH seeks to collaborate with other agencies serving the same population, using HAH volunteers to extend their services to Harpswell clients.

By 2019, HAH had developed and implemented a range of programs. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions on social contact required major changes to protect our vulnerable volunteer and client populations. This report will summarize our activities in 2022, how they responded to the pandemic, and what we hope to do in 2023.

HAH Organization

HAH has been incorporated as a public corporation in the State of Maine since 2016 and is largely staffed and run by volunteers. Since 2019 we have also contracted with part-time consultants to help manage our growing volume of work. In a major evolution in 2022, HAH applied for and received status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and so became eligible directly for tax-deductible contributions.

Since its inception HAH has worked closely with the Harpswell Select Board and the Town Administration. The Town has provided meeting facilities, administrative help, and some financial support. A Select Board Member, the Town Administrator, and our State Representative are ex officio members of the HAH Steering Committee. HAH also works closely with local and regional partner organizations to expand their activities with older adults in Harpswell.

HAH is largely organized around committees of volunteers, many of them older adults themselves. In 2022 the service committees focused on Food, Health and Wellness, Home Repairs, Resources, and Transportation. Other Committees provide support to the organization as a whole. They include the Steering and Executive Committees and the Communications, Evaluation/Policy, Funding and Finance, and Volunteer Management Committees.

HAH Support Committees

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is HAH's governing board. In 2022 it had 16 members, including HAH's officers, Committee Chairs, and representatives of the Town and State governments (ex officio). It meets monthly to discuss HAH's activities, emerging issues, and make overall policy and strategy decisions. The Steering Committee held most of its meetings on Zoom because of the pandemic. It has been a forum for discussion of the pandemic's challenges as well as its implications for our future work. In 2022 the Committee welcomed several new members as some officers took on leadership roles in Committees and others stepped down.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has six members, including the Steering Committee Officers (co-chairs, treasurer, secretary). It meets monthly, also on Zoom, to discuss issues, agendas, governance questions, and strategy and policy issues. It advises the Steering Committee and develops agendas for Steering Committee meetings.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee builds wider awareness of HAH's activities. In 2022 the Committee created a new general flyer, an updated rack card, shirt cards, stationery, and mailing labels. It also worked closely with other committees—designing bags for the Resource team's new clients, signage promoting the Home Repairs Committee's projects for outreach purposes, and produced regular flyers for the Health and Wellness and the Food teams. The Team shifted its email marketing and contact management to Constant Contact, increasing the professional look of the newsletters and other blast emails. The website was redesigned and updated significantly. The Committee produces four community newsletters and four volunteer newsletters during each year, along with maintaining a more regular online presence on Facebook. Our relationship with the Harpswell Anchor has strengthened: a new Committee member is now writing a monthly article highlighting HAH's community connections; a double-sided insert promoting all of HAH's services went out in the August Anchor to all households in Harpswell; all HAH events are now being listed in the Anchor calendar—both online and in print—allowing us to get the word out to those who don't have an internet connection. The Anchor calendar listings appear on Harpswell Community Television as well giving us another way to reach our target audience.

In 2023 the Communications Committee is working hard to become more proactive. It now has a strategy retreat each November to prepare for the upcoming year and has developed a Communications Planning Calendar that shows all the various projects that need to be done annually so it can prepare more efficiently for them. The team is also working on more outreach to churches, real estate agencies, and other businesses.

Finance and Fundraising Committee

The Finance and Fundraising Committee assesses and meets the financial needs of HAH. It prepares the annual budget and tracks revenue and expenditures. It seeks contributions and grants to support our programs. In 2022 it had a very successful year-end fundraising campaign kicked off by a generous \$10,000 challenge grant from the Merriconeag Fund. The community response to this effort has kept us financially well-supported. We also received the proceeds from a real estate open house and from sales of the book *Harpswell Sea and Land through the Lens*.

The Committee spearheaded HAH's successful application for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization tax status in 2022. This status allows us to fundraise directly without the fiscal sponsorship of the Holbrook Community Foundation, which has provided vital support to HAH for the last seven years. We are very grateful for Holbrook's efforts and continuing interest in our work. Additionally, an Investment Committee with five initial members was organized and proceeded to set up an investment policy and opened an investment account.

In 2023 the Committee expects to resume fundraising activities such as community dinners, concerts, and restaurant fundraising benefits. We may also seek grant funds as needed.

Evaluation and Policy Committee

In 2022 the Evaluation and Policy Committee helped design and facilitate HAH's annual strategy planning process that produced amendments to our 2018-23 five-year plan as well as establish Committee goals and plans for 2022-23. It also worked with the Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Task Force in developing a ten-year update of the Town's plan, and mobilized many older residents' participation in a town-wide visioning process for its future priorities.

In 2023 the Committee will help design and manage HAH's 2022 strategic planning process, drawing on the evaluation report as well as emerging information about the pandemic and its impacts on the Town. The Committee will continue to liaise with the Maine State Legislature regarding policies pertaining to older adults, particularly with respect to affordable senior housing. We hope to learn about and perhaps influence the development of those programs. We will also continue to work with the Town Comprehensive Plan Task Force with an eye to its future support for older adults as a central element of the emerging population.

Volunteer Management Committee

The Volunteer Management Committee identifies and matches potential volunteers with the needs of HAH Committees. In 2022 volunteers were placed on all the committees and on special projects, such as tech support, living histories, plant deliveries, TV programs, and drop-in center coordination. The flow of new volunteers was steady throughout the year, and we maintained a solid base of

core volunteers. The Committee worked with Communications to spotlight volunteers and new volunteer opportunities in the Volunteer Newsletter as well as advertising volunteer needs through social media, the Harpswell Anchor, and other events. It has become apparent that HAH makes important contributions to the lives and experiences of its volunteers as well as to older residents of Harpswell.

In 2023 the Committee expects to continue to recruit new volunteers of all ages and abilities and to find new opportunities for student volunteers. We will continue to publicize our needs for new volunteers and hold recognition events for volunteers and possibly for financial donors as well.

HAH Service Committees

In 2022 HAH had five streams of activity that serve older adults in Harpswell. The Home Helpers program was discontinued because of a combination of the pandemic, lack of demand, and lack of volunteers. The other five programs have made significant modifications in their activities to deal with the changing needs.

Food Team

The Food Team makes food and socializing opportunities available to Harpswell's older residents. In 2022 they provided those opportunities in spite of health concerns through collaborative working relations within the Team and with the larger community. Volunteers and recipients both report that participation has enhanced their lives and made them proud to be in Harpswell.

More than 4,000 home-cooked meals were provided in 2022. The Meals in a Pinch program provided four meals every two weeks to 45-50 individuals that had difficulty getting consistent meals, special holiday meals, and emergency meals as needed, working from the Great Island Church of the Nazarene. Five community-wide events for socializing purposes were held in cooperation with community organizations and cooking groups in spaces provided by the Town of Harpswell, the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, and the Cundy's Harbor Church of the Nazarene. Weekly sharing tables were organized from May to November to provide free produce in several locations in partnership with Midcoast Hunger Prevention Program, the Merrymeeting Gleaners, and the Harpswell Community Garden. Cooking at 43° North, a creative cooking initiative, held fourteen events

including demonstrations, discussions, and food swaps, giving volunteer cooks their own opportunities for fun and connection.

The Team enters 2023 with a solid base of volunteers, community support, popular programs, and the capacity to invent new initiatives. It hopes to continue and expand its in-person food programs as health issues recede and to find new ways to bring people together in the limited indoor spaces available in Harpswell.

Health and Wellness Team

The Health and Wellness Team supports older residents to learn about and use opportunities for socializing, education, safety, and other activities. In 2022 the Team continued its Neighbors Connecting program with 19 callers calling 21-25 individuals weekly for a total of 571 hours. The team also coordinated 431 hours of volunteer time in other programs for our neighbors that included shoveling driveways, delivering potted gardens, raking leaves, providing floral centerpieces, delivering holiday gifts, offering technical support, helping to write living histories, providing educational TV programming, delivering cheery notes and artwork from other community members, and encouraging activities with other agencies.

In 2023 the Team plans to maintain its current programs and services and also hopes to work with the Curtis and Orrs Island Libraries to begin book and puzzle home deliveries. Other programs have been proposed as well but will depend on the availability of volunteers to carry them out.

Home Repairs Team

The Home Repairs Team continued to provide Harpswell older adults with services to make their home environments safer, warmer, and drier, in cooperation with the Town of Harpswell and Habitat for Humanity/7 Rivers and with the support of a grant from the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA). These services include repairs identified in an initial home audit that identifies safety issues, home improvements, facility upgrades, energy efficiencies, and home entrance and egress adjustments. While HAH was at first elated over the news of the MSHA grant, it did require administrative process changes for the Resources Team, Home Repairs Team, and Habitat for Humanity/7 Rivers, and all responded quickly and effectively.

The Team was largely unimpacted by pandemic restrictions, often donning masks while working inside clients' homes (especially if the homeowner requested

them) but leaving masks to the volunteers' discretion for most outdoor activities. The COVID protocol for the Team was periodically reviewed with input from Midcoast Health and the Maine CDC.

From a slow start, repair applications increased over the year, ending with the Team carrying out 36 projects involving more than 2800 hours at an average cost of almost \$900. The Team also supported projects for Habitat/7Rivers and the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust. Testimonials from homeowners suggest that the Team is indeed making homes "safer, warmer, and drier" and requests for additional work suggest that clients approve the quality of work done.

In 2023 The Team hopes to build some picnic tables for Mitchell Field and scheduling projects so that homeowners get needed services in a timely fashion. While the Team has seen some volunteers leave the group due to aging and health concerns, it has enlisted new recruits and continues to have a reliable and enthusiastic group of volunteers. Again in 2023, we may receive support from the Maine State Housing Authority.

Resources Team

The Resources Team provides information to older residents about resources and support services. In 2022 the Team conducted home visits for 45 Home Repairs applicants and for 28 residents who requested information or support unrelated to home repairs. It made 30 visits for File of Life and Home Safety checks in cooperation with the Harpswell Emergency Medical Service and 24 visits to deliver the HAH Quarterly Newsletter. It also began working with the Harpswell Fire Departments to provide reflective house numbers to homeowners. The Team developed a Phillips Call Button program to help residents get rapid EMS response in case of falls. It also distributed HAH flyers to all the Fire and Rescue Departments. In keeping with its growing workload, it also added a fourth member to the Team.

In 2023 the Team will develop more ways to assist homeowners with financial challenges such as heating, food, and medications. It hopes to strengthen its partnership with EMS to use HAH programs to improve resident safety, especially with respect to falls. It will also seek to increase the use of reflective house numbers, referrals for the File of Life, and referrals for the HAH Newsletter.

Transportation Team

The Transportation Team provides volunteer drivers and informs Harpswell residents about the availability of free rides from the Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) of People Plus in Brunswick. Activity started slowly in 2022 but increased as the year progressed, so the service statistics eventually were quite similar to last year. HAH drivers made 508 trips covering just under 8,000 miles, while spending 468 hours behind the wheel. Harpswell residents received 416 rides covering more than 6,500 miles. During the course of 2022 the Team signed on six new drivers.

In 2023, the Team has already added two more new drivers. In the seven years of its operation, the Team has provided more than 2700 rides to Harpswell residents for more than 50,000 miles. It hopes to expand drivers, riders, rides, and mileage as the pandemic recedes and Harpswell's older citizens seek more transportation.

Working Across HAH

In 2022 several activities were supported by volunteers from all across HAH, including an eight-week, drop-in center pilot program with the Town of Harpswell, called *Friends Together*. Each Thursday morning, *Friends Together* provided a variety of activities, beginning with either Tai chi or chair yoga, followed by a craft or interactive session, and ended with a presentation regarding some aspect of health, safety, and wellness. This program drew in different presenters and activity leaders from all over Harpswell, building more relationships and connections with the broader community.

This year, through a concerted effort, we have had the good fortune to engage with younger community members—the Harpswell Coastal Academy, Harpswell Girl Scout Troop 1263, Bowdoin College Public Health Club, and The Little Schoolhouse on Maine—on various projects bringing neighbors of all ages together.

HAH volunteers also represented us at various community events like Harpswell Neck Fire and Rescue's Open House and the Senior Expo hosted by People Plus giving out materials and showcasing our programs.

In February and March we recognized and thanked our first responders here in Harpswell at the three fire stations as well as those at Midcoast Hospital who took such good care of us throughout the pandemic, by delivering over 200 homemade

cupcakes and fruit baskets with notes and signs showing our appreciation to them.

In September, HAH hosted a volunteer appreciation event thanking all of our amazing volunteers. They are the lifeblood of this organization and celebrating them and all they do is critical to our success.

Looking Ahead

In 2023 HAH will continue to adapt to the changing challenges of the pandemic, as new variants and patterns of contagion emerge. We hope that it will be possible to reinstitute many past programs, such as Lunch with Friends in more locations around Harpswell and unfettered Home Repairs activities, with less concern about infecting our volunteers and clients.

We plan to expand experiments with increasing opportunities for socializing among older residents, like our *Friends Together* offering, and are considering finding and hiring a person to plan and implement it.

HAH hopes to grow our existing programs and create new ones as more volunteers join us and new potential clients become visible. We are planning to engage more elements of the Harpswell community in HAH programs, such as young people, the business community, and areas of Town that have been less involved in the past. Many of our programs will benefit from cooperation with partners like the Town Recreation Department for educational programs and the Town Health Services for health-related activities and services.

We have found our volunteer appreciation events to be sources of new connections and ideas as well as opportunities to meet people and recognize volunteer contributions. We are considering comparable events for our donors as well.

HAH will celebrate its eighth birthday in 2023. We have been surprised at how positive the reactions to its activities have been, from clients and volunteers as well as from the larger community. Participants in the recent town-wide visioning to revise its comprehensive plan have often used HAH as an example of the Harpswell community's volunteerism and neighbor-helping-neighbor traditions. We hope in the coming years to continue to merit that description.

Respectfully submitted,

2022 Steering Committee

Jerry Klepner and Lili Ott, Co-chairs

Sue Baker, Dave Brown, Dave Chipman, Jane Clavet, John Ferraro, LeAnne Grillo, Surrey
& Hugh Hardcastle, Gayle Hays, Jess Maurer, Jay McCreight, Julie Moulton, Judy Muller,
Anne Taft