



Inside HAH

April 2026



Dear Volunteers:

HAH's work matters deeply in our community and I am proud to support and to have been a part of its mission from the beginning.

When I finished my time in the Maine Legislature, I saw an opportunity to return to a more active role in HAH as well as to join several non-profit boards and committees. Not long after, there was need for a HAH Volunteer Coordinator and because advocacy has always been an important focus of my work, helping connect community members with HAH felt like a natural fit. Here was an opportunity to reach out to those interested in volunteering. My favorite part was helping match people's interests and skills with HAH's programs. We have an amazing community of people from all walks of life here in Harpswell. What became clear in talking to potential volunteers was the desire - the need - people have for community connection. Matching up skills and interests with HAH opportunities was what it was all about.

Another passion I worked on in this role was helping to create interconnectedness among volunteers and committees by sharing information about the larger HAH organization and its work. The goal was for people to know more about HAH beyond their own committee(s) so they could jump in where they wanted and so that they could help others know about HAH.

I can't overstate how much I value working alongside the dedicated long-term HAH leaders and committee members as well as the many newcomers to this amazing organization. Through my work with other organizations and boards as well as Town committees, I have had the privilege of not only sharing the work HAH does with those entities, but of hearing their accolades for the work we do.

Because I have become involved in so many volunteer opportunities and commitments,

it felt like the right time to share the Volunteer Coordinator role with someone new. Fortunately, Robin Venditti Stoll was looking for a new challenge and has stepped up. I'm grateful for the smooth transition and for the fresh energy Robin brings.

I'm not stepping away from HAH. I'll continue to be involved in different ways and to sing HAH's praises in this community and beyond. Thank you for everything you do — for stepping in when and where needed, for sharing your skills, and for keeping our community connected.

With gratitude,
Jay McCreight

How the GALA's Came to Be

On a chilly November day in 2025, a lively group of Harpswell women—age 55 and up—gathered to explore whether there was interest in forming a women's group that could meet regularly. With nearly 30 women in the room, it quickly became clear we were on to something special.



As ideas and suggestions poured in, one thing became obvious: we needed a name. Something fun—like us—and something that reflected Harpswell women as a whole. Dozens of names were tossed into the mix, some offered in jest, others in earnest, all of them creative.

Weeks later, the suggestions were still coming in! At our February meeting, the entries were put to a vote, and the GALA's were officially born. The name couldn't be more fitting, because we truly are ***Girls Active and Laughing Altogether***.

If you haven't joined us yet, be sure to check our monthly flyer or the *Harpswell Anchor* community calendar for upcoming dates, locations, and events.

Come see for yourself what all the fun and laughter are about!

By - Christine Roy

Photo - Christine Roy and Dr. Nirav Shah at GALA's January gathering.

Help Shape the Future of Health & Wellness in Harpswell

Harpswell Aging at Home's Health & Wellness Committee has always been rooted in one simple belief: older adults thrive when they feel connected, supported, and valued. Since its founding in 2016, the committee has grown from three core programs — Neighbors



Calling, Adaptive Table, and Durable Medical Equipment — into a vibrant network of social and educational offerings that touch the lives of dozens of Harpswell residents.

Much of that growth has happened under the steady leadership of Gayle Hays, who began volunteering with HAH after retiring from 50 years in nursing. She joined the Health & Wellness Committee even before retirement because she wanted to stay connected and contribute to her community. Gayle assumed the chairperson role in 2018.

What kept her there — and what continues to inspire her — are the stories. Gayle remembers one woman who received a handmade Valentine from a preschooler in February. By June, she still couldn't bring herself to take it off her refrigerator. Another woman kept every piece of children's artwork and every cheerful note in a folder; on difficult days, she would open it to lift her spirits. Some participants in the Neighbors Calling program even asked for more than one caller because one weekly conversation simply wasn't enough.

"These stories warm my heart," Gayle says. "They remind me that what we do truly reduces loneliness and isolation. It keeps older adults connected to their community — and that keeps me wanting to stay engaged with them."

When the COVID pandemic arrived, the committee's mission became even more urgent. Volunteers expanded Neighbors Calling from 7 participants to 25. A temporary library delivery program brought books, audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and magazines to about 10 households when local libraries were unable to serve older adults in person. Community members began writing cheerful notes, and two preschool programs contributed children's artwork.

New programs blossomed: tech help, educational programs aired on Harpswell TV, a living history project, a Bowdoin College student–older adult pen pal program, container gardens with HHLT, Tai Chi classes, Repair Café, Friends Together, and holiday mugs in partnership with the Garden Club. Most recently, GALA (a women's group) and a blood pressure clinic were added. Today, the committee includes 48 active volunteers — each one helping to weave a stronger, more connected community.

With such a wide range of offerings, HAH is now dividing Health & Wellness into two focus areas: Health Education and Health Socialization. Gayle will continue leading the Health Education segment, and she is eager to mentor a new leader who will guide the social programs that have become the heart of the committee's work. So, we have a new...

Volunteer Leadership Opportunity

Harpswell Aging at Home is seeking an energetic, community-minded volunteer to either:

**Co-lead the overall Health & Wellness Committee,
or**

Lead the new Health Socialization Committee, focusing on programs that reduce isolation and build meaningful connections among older adults.

This is a chance to step into a role where the impact is immediate, personal, and deeply rewarding. You'll be supported by Gayle, by a dedicated team of volunteers, and by a community that values the work more than words can express.

If you're interested in learning more, Gayle would love to talk with you. She can be reached at ghays1949@gmail.com or **207-522-8841** (call or text).



Bowdoin College Supports HAH's Social Programs Through Common Good Grants

Bowdoin College's long-standing commitment to the common good continues to shape how its students learn and engage with the community. Through the McKean Center for the Common Good, students explore local needs, learn about philanthropy, and partner with organizations across the region — including Harpswell Aging at Home (HAH).



This year, that partnership brought wonderful news for HAH's two adult socialization programs. ROMEOs (Retired Older Men Eating Out) and GALAs (Girls Active Laughing Altogether) each received a \$2,000 grant from Bowdoin's Common Good Program.

Social programs like ROMEOs and GALAs play an important role in supporting healthy aging. Even simple, consistent opportunities to gather — sharing a meal, laughing together, or trying something new — help reduce isolation and strengthen community connections for older adults.

Last fall, HAH was one of 59 nonprofits to submit a letter of intent for funding. From there, Bowdoin invited 24 organizations to submit full applications. As part of the review process, Bowdoin students visited Harpswell to learn more about the goals and impact of both programs.

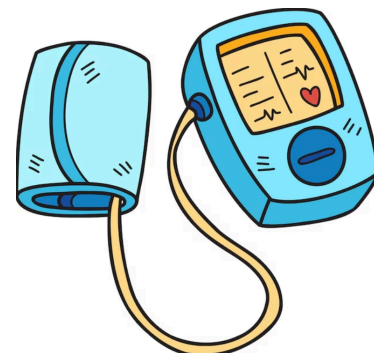
In March, representatives from HAH attended Bowdoin's awards dinner, joining other nonprofits, donors, and students to celebrate the projects selected for support.

HAH is grateful for Bowdoin's investment in programs that bring people together and for the opportunity to partner with students who are learning firsthand what it means to contribute to the common good. These grants will help ROMEOs and GALAs continue offering meaningful social connections for Harpswell's older adults.

Photo - Christine Roy & Gayle Hays of HAH attend awards dinner.

HAH to Pilot Blood Pressure Monitoring Program

We're excited to share that HAH is in the early testing phase of a new blood pressure monitoring program. The effort is being organized and led by nurse Beverly Gerberich, who first connected with HAH through cooking for Meals In a Pinch--joining the long tradition of how volunteers find their way to HAH.



With blood pressure monitoring equipment now purchased, Beverly has begun offering small "pop-up" blood pressure checks to test the waters. Her next stop will be the Town Hall, so keep an eye out. As the

program grows, we'll share more details, but for now we're delighted to introduce this valuable new way to support our neighbors' health and wellness.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



Repair Cafe

April 18th
10:00 - 12:00 pm

Harpswell Town Office
263 Mountain Rd.

At HAH's Repair Café, you can bring in beloved or useful everyday items and get help repairing them—rather than tossing them out. The service is free and open to everyone, no matter your age or income.

Our handy Harpswell neighbors are ready to help with all kinds of fixes, including:

- small electronics and appliances
- lamps and lighting
- wooden chairs & small furniture
- jewelry cleaning and repair
- sewing and mending
- knife sharpening
- and plenty more

If it's broken, wobbly, dull, or puzzling, chances are someone at the Repair Café can help you give it new life. It's practical, friendly, and a great way to

Cooking for Crowds Safety Training

April 27th
1:00 - 4:00 pm

Orr's Island Schoolhouse
1594 Harpswell Island Rd.

Cooking for Crowds is designed for those who are cooking for non-profit events. Learn up-to-date methods for safely preparing, handling and serving food for large group functions such as soup kitchens, church events, food pantries and community fundraisers. Participants will receive a certificate of attendance from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. RSVP to juliemoulton28@gmail.com

or
207-330-5416.

Training is free for those who have cooked for any of the HAH food programs within the last year. Cooks from other organizations are welcome by paying the \$15 fee to attend.

Meals In a Pinch

April 21st
May 5th & 19th

A big-hearted crew of HAH cooks from every corner of Harpswell brings their

keep useful items out of the landfill while connecting with your community.

If you have questions about an item you'd like to bring, contact Martha Israel at marthaisraelhah@gmail.com or (207) 841-0949.

GALA Welcome Spring

**April 23rd
1:00 pm**

**Orr's Island Schoolhouse
1594 Harpswell Island Rd.**

The HAH Women's Social Group now known as GALA (Girls Active & Laughing Altogether), will host the owners of Skolfield Farm, John Dietlin and Linda Barton, who will discuss the farm's history, backyard gardening tips and pre-orders for Mother's Day tulips and seedlings.

Due to limited seating, registration is required. Please email your interest to: womensgroup@hah.community

**May 15th
2:30 pm**

**Elijah Kellogg Church Fellowship Hall
917 Harpswell Neck Rd.**

The GALAs are delighted to welcome the Curtis Memorial Library Bookmobile for a special visit. This is a wonderful chance to browse a curated selection of books, sign up for a library card, learn about home delivery, and discover all the ways the library brings resources directly into our community.

Whether you're an avid reader or simply curious, we hope you'll stop by, say hello, and explore everything the Bookmobile has to offer.

If you're interested in attending, please email:

womensgroup@hah.community.

Dementia Caregivers Support Group

HAH is offering a peer-led support group for Dementia caregivers. For more information and to register, please contact:

Darlene MacKinnon at 207-751-5516, darlenemackinnon@gmail.com,

or

Martha Simpson at 631-678-2015, marthasimpson@comcast.net.

homemade dishes to the Great Island Church of the Nazarene every other Tuesday, where volunteers transform them into nutritious meals delivered with a friendly hello to nearly 65 neighbors.

Occasional cooks are always needed. Won't you join us?

Lunch with Friends

**April 16
12:00 - 1:30 pm**

**Cundy's Harbor Community Hall
837 Cundy's Harbor Rd.**

Harpswell residents are invited to a free, feel-good community lunch presented in partnership with Cundy's Harbor Library and the Holbrook Foundation. Come enjoy delicious entrées, fresh salads, warm bread, and sweet desserts—served up with plenty of neighborly conversation.

No reservations, no fuss—just show up, grab a plate, and enjoy the company.

Everyone is welcome!

Mugs & Muffins

**May 6th
2:30 - 4:00 pm**

**Elijah Kellogg Church Fellowship Hall
917 Harpswell Neck Rd.**

Harpswell residents are invited to this community drop-in event for coffee, tea and snacks along with conversation, and maybe even a creative activity! Come get out of the house to visit with old friends and make new ones. No reservations required, just come by.

Harpswell ROMEOs

**May 13th
12:00 - 1:30 pm**

**Orr's Island Schoolhouse
1594 Harpswell Island Rd.**

Bereavement Support Group

If you are coping with the loss of a loved one, family member or friend, Call Sarah Beneke 330-414-4825 for information on the benefits of a 12-week support group.

The May meeting will feature a speaker from Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, sharing information about walking/hiking the trails in town.

These events are free and include lunch but registration is required due to limited seating. To register, contact Tom Mahoney at oldermeneatingout@gmail.com

Transportation to and from any HAH event is available by contacting **Kathe Mickunas** at **People Plus**, **207-729-0757**



What's Cookin' in the MIP Freezer?

If you cook for Meals in a Pinch, don't forget to take a peek at what's in the Town Office freezer.



Cooks can simply check the freezer to see what's available, sign up for what they'd like to make, and pick up the ingredients. There's always a mix of proteins, pantry staples, and seasonal goodies ready to go. It's an easy, low-stress way to jump in, and volunteers love having such a friendly, well-stocked starting point for their MIP creations.

If you are interested in joining our MIP efforts, you can learn more about it on our website.

[HAH's MIP Program](#)

[Sign Up to Cook for MIP](#)

[Look at what's in the freezer!](#)

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS!
Harpswell
Aging at Home

**WE'RE CELEBRATING
A DECADE OF HELPING
HANDS IN HARPSWELL**

For 10 years HAH volunteers have shown up and shown what community really looks like.

We're excited, now, to celebrate **you!**

Please join us for HAH's Volunteer Appreciation event
Sunday, April 12, 2026 | Elijah Kellogg Church | 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Please be sure to [RSVP](#) by Friday, April 10th!
if you plan to attend. Thanks!

Coffee, Crafts & Conversation: Meet Mugs & Muffins

Mugs & Muffins was created as a cozy, low-key alternative to our larger Lunch with Friends program—something warm, simple, and centered on easy conversation over a cup of coffee.

Each gathering follows a relaxed, open format that encourages people to mingle, wander, and chat at their own pace. We sprinkle in a few light activities—puzzles, conversation cards, or a small craft—to help spark connections. Themes shift with the seasons; we've made pine cone bird feeders, shared favorite winter reads, and enjoyed baked treats lovingly prepared by local volunteers.



While most gatherings happen in the morning, we're also experimenting with an afternoon "Tea," open to all, featuring tea, pastries, and light sandwiches. It's a welcoming option for those who prefer a later start.

This new format is proving to be a lovely complement to our other HAH programs—an easy, informal way for neighbors to meet new people, reconnect with familiar faces, and enjoy a little warmth in the middle of the week.



[Volunteer!!](#)

We can always use a hand!

If interested in exploring HAH Volunteer opportunities, check out our [website](#) and/or reach out to Robin Stoll at volunteer@hah.community

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