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COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Traditionally, Community Day has been a way to get RSU5 students geared up for school with free backpacks and supplies. Freeport Community Services prepared to meet a greater demand this year. “We started with 150 backpacks donated by L.L. Bean,” said FCS’s Sarah Lundin, “and a mountain of supplies from Midcoast Federal Credit Union and generous community members.”

On the day of the event, under a sunny and cloudless sky, backpacks were displayed on tables, volunteers stood at the ready, and families began arriving even before the event was officially underway. Within 2 hours, every single backpack was gone. Knowing that most of our New Mainer families had yet to arrive, L.L. Bean volunteers swung into action and came up with 60 more backpacks. FCS volunteers brought out additional backpacks that had been donated by RSU5 and community members. Overall, we gave away nearly 300 backpacks. When the need still exceeded the supply, FCS turned to our community again. Almost as soon as new a backpack arrived, it went into the hands of a grateful child. Eventually, every child identified as needing a backpack got one.

Partners and community connections were central to the success of our Community Day. The past year has provided many opportunities to expand programming and collaborate with new and existing partners in innovative and meaningful ways.



MISSION STATEMENT

To enrich lives, connect neighbors and help those in need in Freeport and Pownal.

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DEAREST FRIENDS

Not a day goes by when you don't remind me just how much you care about your neighbors. Your compassion inspires me, your generosity calms me, and your kindness is contagious.

As the season changes and I pull my fleece jacket out from the back of the closet, inevitably I find myself thinking about how quickly the year has gone by, and what I was doing the last time I wore this jacket. I was visiting the rocks and tidepools at the end of the Old Town Landing Road in Yarmouth, a spot I went to frequently growing up. My husband and I watched with smiles on our faces as our two dogs explored the pockets of water and stuck their noses in deep piles of seaweed searching for tasty sea creatures. Salty air, salty dogs. Nothing refreshes the soul quite like a good, deep breath of ocean air.

The past year has been one of undeniable growth here at Freeport Community Services. We continue to see needs rise as prices for necessities have increased. We have formed strong and lasting partnerships over the past year that will strengthen existing programming and expand our capabilities. We have used a critical lens to evaluate essential programming, such as our food pantry, to ensure what we offer is inclusive of the diverse cultures served. We worked alongside you, our compassionate community, to create a safe and welcoming environment for those experiencing challenging life circumstances.

It is truly an honor to be involved in the Freeport and Pownal community doing critical work through FCS, a sweet nonprofit that you so deeply believe in and support. Without your support, we could not do what we do every day. Your commitment to FCS changes lives. Your dedication to your community facilitates the safety of your neighbors in need. Your belief in FCS allows me to go to work everyday alongside the most talented team of staff, board, and volunteers, and make a difference in our small, beautiful corner of the world.

I am so proud of what we have accomplished together.

Happy Holidays,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Lundin'.

Sarah Lundin
Executive Director

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

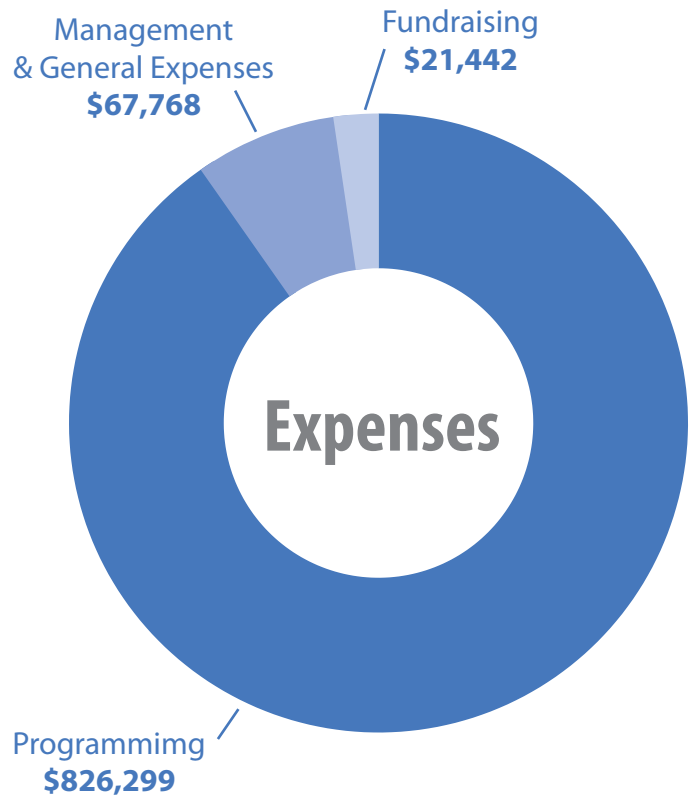
Enriching lives, connecting neighbors, & helping those in need in Freeport & Pownal

Freeport Community Services is financially strong because of the generous support of our community.

Early in 2022, Freeport & Pownal experienced a marked uptick in need throughout our community. Gas and home heating prices soared. Inflation made a trip to the grocery store cost significantly more. Families and individuals who never before accessed services at FCS were welcomed into our pantry and helped with fuel and heating vouchers.

Your support allows us to maintain ongoing programs while creatively addressing the new and diverse needs of everyone in our community. None of this would be possible without the generosity of people like YOU.

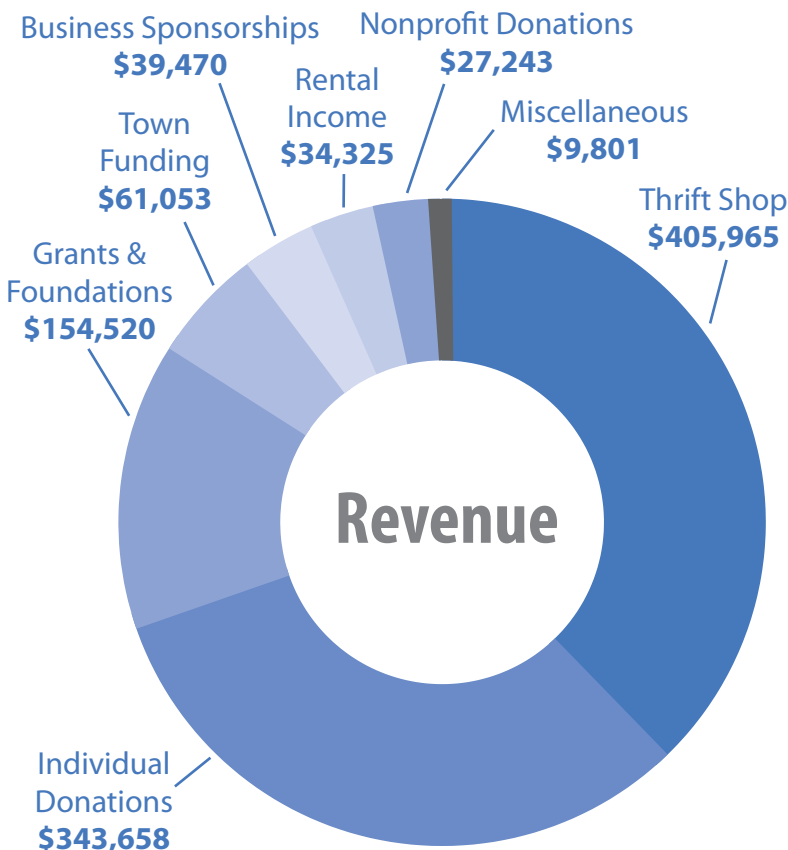
FCS believes in the importance of transparency. Because so much of what we do is possible thanks to our community, we believe it is important for you to understand where our funding comes from and how it is used.



The Thrift Shop has always been a major driver of revenue. This year, more than ever, that holds true. It now stands just shy of 40% of our revenue stream. YOUR high quality donations and loyal patronage of our shop make this possible.

The Thrift Shop's success creates space and time for FCS to seek additional sources of diversified funding. This, in turn, allows FCS to offer new and more robust programming. For example in 2022, thanks to support from the John T. Gorman Foundation, FCS was able to expand its Age-Friendly programming to include new wellness offerings and coordinated programs with local nonprofit organizations.

Donations that come in without restriction, as opposed to those allocated to specific programs, allow FCS the greatest flexibility when it comes to responding to our community's needs. Unrestricted funds allow us to meet people where they are, whether that means packing an extra bag of weekend food to keep a teen from going hungry or providing funds for adaptive medical equipment that significantly improves someone's quality of life.



FARM-TO-TABLE RECIPE



Wolfe's Neck Center has long been a valued partner of Freeport Community Services and a tremendous asset to our greater community. Notably, their innovative collaboration with local schools provided a much-needed space of respite and learning in the midst of the pandemic. We are so grateful for all that they do and all that they are.

FCS is fortunate to receive donations of high-quality, local meat and produce from our neighbors at Wolfe's Neck Center. It is food that every family feels proud to serve. Wolfe's Neck Center has graciously shared a recipe cooked up by Jacie, the amazing Farm Café manager! Jacie uses Wolfe's Neck Center pork shoulder or butt for these Pork Carnitas tacos. Wolfe's Neck Center offers online meat sales to its members during the off season starting in November.

Pork Carnitas

INGREDIENTS

3 lbs Wolfe's Neck Farms pork shoulder or butt	1 teaspoon Mexican oregano (or regular oregano)
1 teaspoon salt	3 Bay Leaves
4 cloves garlic minced	1 Large Orange
1 teaspoon onion powder	1 Lime
1 teaspoon cumin	2-12oz Bottles Maine Root Mexican Cola (or regular Coca-Cola will do!)
1 teaspoon chili powder	
1 teaspoon paprika	

COOKING METHOD

Place pork roast into medium size roasting pan or crock pot. Add dry ingredients, pour in the Maine Root Mexican Cola until three quarters of the roast is submerged. Cut the orange in half and squeeze the juice and pulp over the roast. Place the entire orange into the pan. Then, squeeze the lime juice into the pan. Do not add the rest of the lime to the pan! If baking in the oven, place a lid on the pan or tightly wrap it in foil. Pop it into the oven for eight hours, or overnight, at 200-225 degrees. For Crock pots, set to low heat and let it cook for 6-8 hours.

The meat should fall apart when you remove it from the oven or open up the crock pot. For the best results let it cool entirely and pull it apart by hand or with tongs. Then, sear the meat on high heat with Olive Oil in a frying pan until the sugars from the Cola and Orange caramelize.

Best served traditional style with corn tortillas, cilantro, onion, and a lime wedge.



AN OASIS OF CARE

For decades, Oasis Free Clinics has provided no-cost primary medical and dental care to community members in Freeport and Durham. Despite often working multiple jobs, Oasis patients have no health insurance—either because they don't qualify for it, or they can't afford it. "We recognize that most of the systems in our patients' lives may not have treated them well—educational, social service, and even healthcare. We're the place that tries to reverse that for them," said Anita Ruff, Oasis Free Clinics' executive director. "You lay so much bare when you ask for help—especially when you lay out your finances and your personal medical information before you even know if you can be our patient. It's just enough to ask for help. If you get to our door, that's enough."

When the City of Portland made plans to house asylum-seeking families experiencing homelessness at the Casco Bay Inn in Freeport, they called Anita Ruff. They asked,

would Oasis be willing to provide healthcare for these New Mainers?

"It was a no-brainer for us," said Anita. Oasis provided adult health care for an earlier group of asylum seekers who had come to The Landing from the Expo Center in Portland a few years back. Anita and her team took what they learned from that experience and made sure they were ready to respond the moment the families began to arrive in Freeport. Anita made the decision to provide services on site at the hotel, essentially creating a mobile clinic while removing the hurdle of transportation. Anita engaged Gateway Community Services to provide interpretation and healthcare navigation for patients, addressing language and cultural barriers to care.

That Oasis so seamlessly brought thoughtful, comprehensive care to our newest neighbors will come as no surprise to those who know



them. Since the start, Oasis has worked hard to remove barriers to primary care, as well as dental and mental health care, for those in need. They also help anyone, not just Oasis patients, in need of prescription assistance, finding up to one-million dollars of savings annually.

To find out more about Oasis Free Clinics visit their website at oasisfreeclinics.org.

A NOTE FROM JEN

As we head into the holiday season, we pause to reflect and express gratitude for our community. At FCS, we are thankful to live in Freeport and Pownal where neighbors support each other in so many ways, whether that be volunteering their time, making donations, or simply being present with care and support for those facing difficult times. Our amazing staff, volunteers and donors make it possible for FCS to provide some relief in today's challenging economic environment. We are forever grateful for your support and for our community.



Jen Panciocco

Jen Panciocco, FCS Board President

Get Involved!

Your time is a gift that you can give all year long. Here are some ways you can help!

- Transportation program driver
- Thrift Shop cashier
- Read-to-Succeed reader
- Food donation collector
- AFFP events volunteer



AGING FRIENDLY

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This summer, Maine Public Broadcasting reported on transportation programs around the state. Many are in dire straits, struggling to find drivers. In Freeport and Pownal, a dedicated cadre of drivers is proudly bucking that statewide trend by tripling its volunteer drivers over the course of the year. Ridership has tripled in tandem. While other programs are shutting their doors, Age-Friendly Freeport & Pownal transportation is meeting and exceeding expectations.

“Transportation is so important for quality of life,” said Cathy Cryvoff, AFFP coordinator. “For older adults, it means life doesn’t stop just because they can’t drive anymore. It means they aren’t home bound. Our program gets people to doctor’s appointments and the grocery store. Just as importantly, it connects them to activities they love like getting their hair done or visiting the library.”

Cathy is quick to point out that the AFFP transportation program is for everyone. “It’s truly age-friendly, whatever age you are,” she explained. “We help low-income folks who don’t have reliable transportation as well as young people who are unable to drive. We are here for anyone who needs help.”

While transportation is certainly a jewel in the AFFP crown, it is far from the only AFFP program that is thriving. Social inclusion is one of the pillars of the Age-Friendly initiative and it is key to mental health at every age. AFFP offers regular free weekly wellness programs including yoga and qi gong. While geared for older adults, these classes welcome adults of all ages to stretch and breathe. A collaboration with Freeport Conservation Trust introduces people to the vast trail networks in our community through guided walks. “It’s been great,”

says Jonathan Dawson, Freeport Conservation Trust’s Stewardship Coordinator. “We’ve seen new faces, some new to Freeport, some new to North America, some who are just getting used to being around people again.”

Other social opportunities are centered solely on food and fun. Folks gather in the FCS garden and Bradley Room for monthly bingo and socials. “We especially love when grandparents bring grandchildren to play bingo and Freeport High School groups attend socials,” said Cathy. “There’s such richness in those intergenerational connections.”

Being an Age-Friendly community also means actively helping people to age safely in their homes. According to AARP, nearly 90% of Americans want to stay in their homes as they age. Studies show how aging in place preserves independence and maintains social connections. “There’s a great degree of dignity and self-esteem that comes with aging in place,” Cathy said. However, most homes aren’t designed to be accessible to older adults and many people lack the resources to make modifications, even those as simple as adding grab bars to showers. AFFP partners with outside organizations on safety and home repair projects. They connect homeowners with low cost or subsidized repairs so they can safely live where they are most comfortable.

“Together we are working hard to create a community that is livable for everyone,” Cathy beamed. “Volunteers and community partnerships play critical roles in the success of these efforts.”

To find out more about AFFP programming or to sign up to help, visit fcsmaine.org/age-friendly or connect with Cathy at 207-865-3985 x 222 or ccryvoff@fcsmaine.org.

One of those partners, RSU5 Community Programs, was able to reimagine how it delivered English Language Learning (ELL) classes this summer. For years, Freeport Community Center hosted small ELL classes on the bottom floor of FCS. This February, ELL classes moved to a conference room at Casco Bay Inn in response to the number of New Mainers placed there. Then, additional families arrived at the Best Western. As the only adult ed office between Portland and Merrymeeting in Topsham, Community Programs Director Peter Wagner knew they had to expand to meet their mission. Just as Community Programs serves older teens and adults from surrounding towns in need of high school equivalency studies, they would provide ELL classes for Freeport as well as Yarmouth. They just needed a bigger space.

Peter started making cold calls. "I called down to the Muddy Rudder one day," Peter said with a smile. "It was the owner Matt Witham who answered the phone." Peter explained the situation. "The next thing Matt said was 'the place is yours,'" Peter recalled. The restaurant was closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Witham gave them a key and turned the restaurant into a classroom two days a week. When Peter realized there was a need for childcare, he picked up the phone again to see if bringing in childcare was an option. "Matt said to do whatever it takes," said Peter. "That was his mantra throughout it all."



Just like Witham, countless community members have stepped up to respond to the changing needs of Freeport and Pownal. A collaboration with the Casco Bay YMCA fueled by generous donations gave New Mainers access to these facilities, providing physical and mental enrichment. Oasis Free Clinics expanded their practice to include on-site medical care at the two inns. Teachers reached into their own pockets to make sure students have classroom supplies as well as equipment so they can participate in after school sports. Hotel employees drove high school kids to preseason

tryouts and countless students and parents shuttled them to practices and games throughout the season.

"I'm consistently impressed and proud of how much our community wants to help and how they show up to do whatever they can.," said Sarah Lundin.

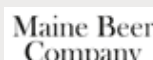
"It's important to recognize that while we have new and emergent

situations, we remain hard at work tackling long-term issues in our community, including food insecurity and homelessness."

"A part of our work is meeting each individual where they are and treating each situation very individually. Our approach for one is not going to be the approach for another," Sarah explained. "What we do, and I think we do it very well, is offer equitable resources for everyone in the community. We also give folks the autonomy and the independence to make decisions for themselves."

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

L.L.Bean



THANK YOU TO OUR FOOD DONATION PARTNERS



NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

NEWS FROM FREEPORT COMMUNITY SERVICES

FALL 2022

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**Freeport
Community
Services**

VISIT US

53 Depot Street
Freeport, Maine 04032
Freeport Community Center
Mon. - Fri. 9-5 pm

STAY IN TOUCH

Subscribe to get regular
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207-865-3985
Main Office x202
Executive Director x204
Thrift Shop x207
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