



SCOUTING FOR FOOD THEN AND NOW

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GIVING THANKS OVER THE YEARS

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the wonderful tradition of the Thanksgiving Day meal at Freeport Community Services, where all are welcome to come and share a hot meal with their fellow community members.

The meal itself is impressive, yet it is the culmination of a unified effort to collect and distribute food leading up to Thanksgiving Day, which involves people throughout the community coming together to make it happen.

The Community Thanksgiving Day Meal started with Jonas Werner, now an FCS board member, who began hosting the free meal at his restaurant and eventually moved the operation to the Community Center.

The first year, a few people came, and in 2022, a few hundred people came.

"It was designed for people who were in the area and might otherwise be alone, so that no one has to be alone on Thanksgiving," Jonas said. "My grandmother used to say to me that Thanksgiving is the most special holiday because it doesn't matter what your background is or your religion or your politics. People should come together."



MISSION STATEMENT

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

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO THE FREEPORT AND POWNAL COMMUNITY!

When I think of traditions, I reflect on warm holiday memories. Growing up, holidays were celebrated in a small camp on Little Madawaska Lake. We would push the living room furniture aside to create space for three or four tables to line up together and a delicious holiday meal to be served. We would joke about the year homemade pumpkin puree almost ruined pumpkin pie for all of us, fight over Grammy's homemade rolls, and finish the day off with an all-ages game of king of the mountain (because there is always snow in the County!)

With the years that have passed, an awareness has grown within me; I am grateful to have friends and family close to spend the holidays with and recognize that this is not the case for everyone.

Shortly after starting at FCS, I met a gentleman who had been coming to the center for years. Every morning he would settle into his normal spot with his laptop and his coffee, and he would spend the better part of the day talking with staff, volunteers, and visitors. This gentleman had no family in the area, no one visiting him, no one to spend time with on holidays. FCS was his third place, and staff were like family to him.

For many in Freeport and Pownal, FCS is their third place. As shared in a 2016 Brookings article, "third places... refers to places where people spend time between home ('first' place) and work ('second' place). They are locations where we exchange ideas, have a good time, and build relationships... the most effective ones for building real community seem to be physical places where people can easily and routinely connect with each other."

This holiday season, I invite you to join us at FCS. Whether you come as a volunteer, a patron, a donor, or a neighbor, we welcome you and we are happy you are here.

Warmly,

Sarah Lundin
Executive Director



THE ELDERS ASSOCIATION HAS PARTICIPATED IN THE COMMUNITY'S ACTIVITIES SINCE IT BEGAN IN THE '90S.

A WARM PLACE

The Freeport Elders Association helps make Freeport Community Center a true, welcoming community space for all.

The group's headquarters is centrally located in the building, just past the Thrift Shop and on the way to the Bradley Room and Food Pantry. The Bradley Room is utilized by many local groups for meetings and various gatherings, while Freeport Conservation Trust and the RSU5 Community Program also rent spaces at the center, making 53 Depot Street the home to an array of local services and accessible to all.

Freeport Elders Association started up in 1995 and moved to the Community Center when that space opened in 2006. The group occupies a beautiful room with a wall of windows facing the back courtyard, where a fresh cup of coffee is brewing, a puzzle is being constructed, and the conversation is flowing among several folks at a time, and up to 25, on a regular basis throughout the week.

"It's a warm place," said Germaine Blake, one of the long-time members of the organization, who remains at its heart. "We don't discuss religion or politics. Everything else is mostly game," she said, as a group sat around a large table and carried on conversation with lots of laughter and interest.

Carol Piecuch was president of the association for 12 years and is still a regular, coming to be surrounded by laughter and support. "We can get kind of wild sometimes, but

that is life. We should, because we're still here!" Carol said. Most of those who were in the room that day had lost a spouse, Germaine said. The group is there to support members through loss and life changes and maintain a place to gather for friendship and caring.

"People don't realize what it's like to be alone," Germaine said of the importance of the group to its members. "This is a very vital gathering for a lot of people. It's like a family."

The Elders' office is open daily throughout the week. Stop by to purchase a hand-woven hot pan holder or a sweatshirt for the child in your life. Proceeds support the activities and operation costs of the Freeport Elders Association. And join the conversation! New members and participants are always welcome.



TODAY, THE ELDERS GATHER FOR ACTIVITIES AND CONVERSATION IN THEIR HEADQUARTERS AT FREEPORT COMMUNITY CENTER.



WELCOMING TO ALL

Freeport Community Services is building its Age-Friendly Freeport & Pownal program with an eye to enhancing the lives of older adults in our communities while expanding health and wellness opportunities for every age and ability.

As one of our newest programs, the number and variety of AFFP offerings continue to grow, and we have seen strong and steady interest in the events from those seeking greater community connections and experiences.



AFFP OFFERED A MOSAIC WORKSHOP THIS SUMMER.

"An Age-Friendly Community is one that provides resources, services, and connection for people of all ages," AFFP Coordinator Marie O'Donnell said. "A thriving Age-Friendly community has access to essential services, transportation, walkable streets, affordable housing, and opportunities for residents to engage in regular social events. We are keeping all of these aspects in mind as we carry out AFFP's action plan to make Freeport/Pownal a livable community for all."

Nearly every day there is something going on here at the Center in the AFFP program.

AFFP's activities are free activities and open to everyone:

- Yoga on Mondays
- Strength & Stretch on Tuesdays
- Meditation on Fridays
- Socials every fourth Tuesday
- Bingo every second Tuesday.

Community Free Lunch Friday is another important, traditional event here at the Center. Every first and third Friday of the month, volunteers prepare a meal for all who come. People take seats in the Bradley Room and chat with friends and neighbors and get to know strangers.

In addition, AFFP organizes **Lunch & Learn** events on various topics of interest. On Sept. 11, we hosted a Dementia Awareness event featuring four local experts. The panelists presented their areas of expertise, and the crowd of about 45 people had an opportunity to ask questions.

Look for more of these events, and we hope to see you at the Center! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see posts about our latest events, and subscribe to our email list to receive updates to your inbox.



CORRECTION: IN OUR FALL APPEAL LETTER, WE INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THE GARAGE WHERE FCS GOT ITS START AS BEING IN SOUTH FREEPORT. THE GARAGE IS LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF FREEPORT.

FCS HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

In preparation for the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Freeport Community Services in 2024, we are taking a peek back at our roots, which have stayed strong and are still expanding. Look out for details about how we will mark our 50th anniversary in the coming year!

Where It All Began

Freeport Community Services incorporated as a non-profit agency in May 1974 with the motto, 'Neighbor Helping Neighbor,' and the goal to provide services without barriers to those who need them.



Voice of FCS

One of FCS' founding mothers, Sherry Smith, volunteering in the early days of the organization. Running the Help Line, Sherry became the 'Voice of FCS' by connecting callers to services and resources that would best meet their needs.



A New Home

FCS purchased 55 Depot Street in 1988, where the Food Pantry and Clothes Tree Thrift Shop were housed together for the first time, in FCS' first permanent home and where the organization remains today.



Neighbor Helping Neighbor

Transportation resources have been in demand in the Freeport and Pownal area for many years. Since the early days of the organization, FCS has played a key role connecting volunteer drivers with those in need of a ride.



GIVING THANKS CONTINUED FORM PG 1

Food Drives Across the Towns



The Thanksgiving Day meal is the climax of a major effort focused on getting food distributed to those in need in our area.

"It's a hoot," Andy Wyatt, food programs supervisor said. "A lot of effort goes into making the magic happen."

Each year, the Boy Scouts drop off empty bags around local neighborhoods and return a week later to pick them up, filled with donated food from neighbors. Last year, they brought in over 3,000 pounds of food, and their goal this year is 3,500 pounds.

The Spar Cove Neighborhood holds

an annual food drive that this year delivered 655 pounds of food. St. Jude's Church delivered 477 pounds, Atlantic Federal Credit Union – 152 pounds, along with several other smaller drives.

This year, Belanger Farms in Lewiston plans to donate about 1000 pounds of potatoes, 200 pounds each of onions and carrots, and around 800 pounds of winter squash.

Huge Volunteer Effort

A host of volunteers work to sort the food into boxes for families to pick up, while a portion is directed to the Thanksgiving meal.

Jonas organizes and directs the preparation of the day-of hot meal, and his wife, Kate, brings around 20 corn puddings to the meal, which she prepares at home with her kids and relatives. A prized volunteer position is delivering prepared meals to those who remain at home.

"It's an opportunity to see someone who might not see anyone else that day, and the volunteers spend time connecting to each person," Jonas said.

Volunteers are at the heart of the meal itself, preparing and serving 350 people last year, the most ever for the day. This year, the meal is back to in-person service in the Bradley Room with volunteers playing live music.

The free dinner attracts people from all walks of life, and local businesses and churches also play an important role in preparing and providing food to share.

"It's the community that's making it happen, and it's the community who is enjoying it," Jonas said.





BY LIZA MOORE

Arnie and I have been longtime supporters of FCS. Over thirty years ago, we met Vaughndella Curtis within days of moving to Freeport, and she let us know of this important community resource where we could help out by donating clothing and adopting a family (Holiday Helpline). I liked how she took it for granted that we would want to help out! And she was right.

Join Liza and Arnie in supporting FCS!



She also wanted us to know that, despite all the proverbial white picket fences, there were local folks who struggled to keep living in this community, through no fault of their own, but rather from economic development (leading to increased

property values and property taxes).

My husband and I have benefitted from this growth - the strong public schools, well supported town services, a welcoming public library, active land trust and historical society, among other agencies that make Freeport and Pownal such a desirable place to live. The lesser considered consequence is that popularity brings financial pressure to those who can least afford it, one example being the scarcity of affordable workforce housing. Vaughndella was in no way criticizing us newcomers, but she was advocating that we be part of the FCS community that takes care of our neighbors.

For the next 25 years, we participated through Thrift Shop donations and purchases and support at the holidays with food and gift baskets. But it wasn't until I joined the Board over 6 years ago that I realized the depth of FCS's impact on our community, a

strong backbone to support whatever the need. I have found a place where, as a volunteer, I feel an exhilarating sense of purpose and self-worth.

I am excited that FCS is offering more programming, like the variety of weekly Age Friendly activities. Using the Bridges Out Poverty framework for understanding poverty and the supports necessary to move to stability, FCS, partnering with other local support agencies, is working to help more clients gain great security and personal success.

Arnie and I are more committed than ever to supporting our community by supporting FCS, not just with donations of clothes and food but with financial support in response to the spring and fall appeals. I hope you will join us in ensuring that FCS will continue to be an essential community resource into the next generation.



THRIFT SHOP PROGRAM MANAGER MIRIAM TANNER AND FOOD PROGRAMS SUPERVISOR ANDY WYATT SPEAK TO FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT HOW THEIR PROGRAMS BENEFIT BOTH THE COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

We Are Now a 1% For the Planet Environmental Partner!

This key partnership acknowledges FCS' commitment to leave our community better than we found it.

In our Food Pantry, over 140,000 pounds of food is rescued from our local stores and provided to those in need within our community. What food is not consumed through the pantry is given to local farmers who feed it to their livestock, resulting in zero waste.

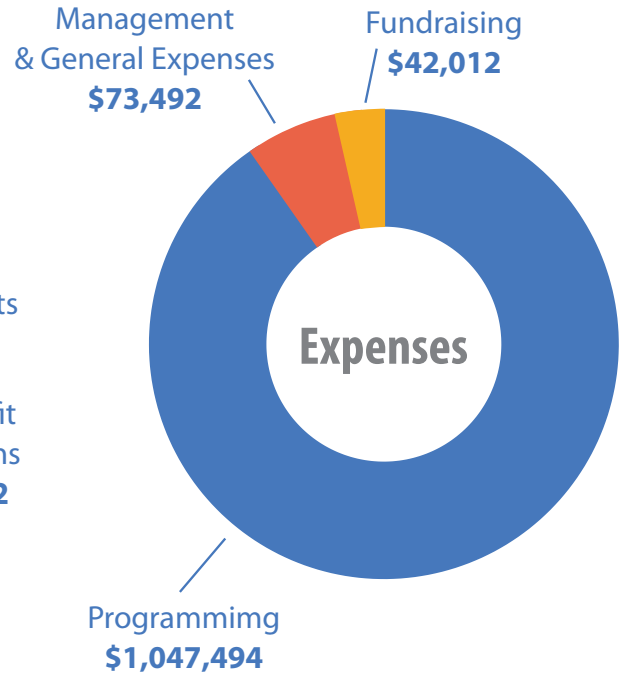
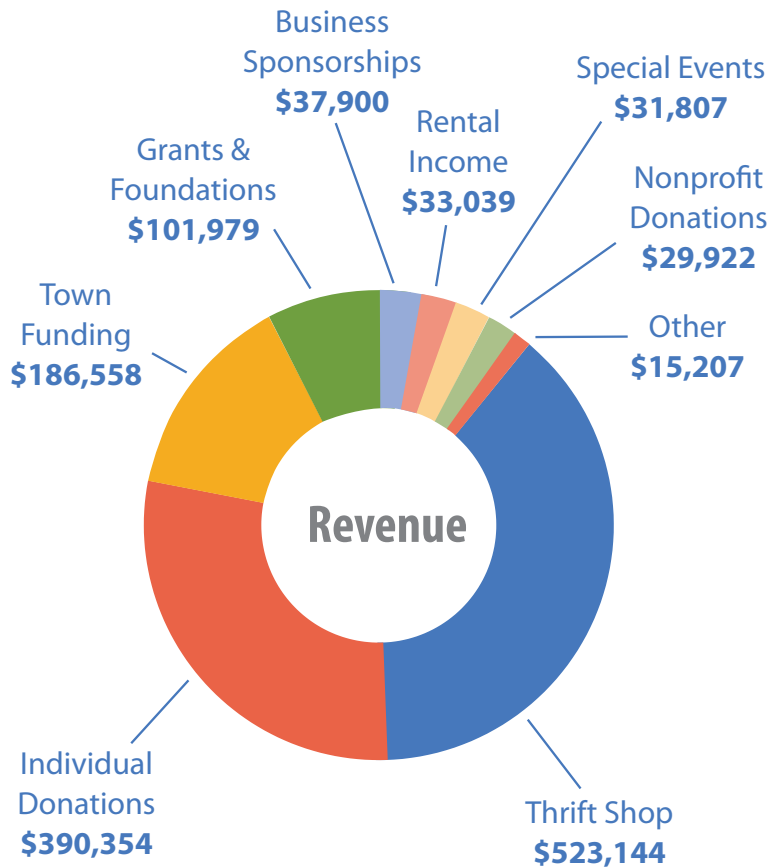
Weekly, our Thrift Shop receives on average three tons of donations! The shop sells around 2,600 items every week, which are kept from the landfill and instead go toward funding for our essential programs.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

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



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.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

L.L.Bean



THANK YOU TO OUR FOOD DONATION PARTNERS



NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

NEWS FROM FREEPORT COMMUNITY SERVICES

THRIFT SHOP HOURS

Monday-Friday 12-5
Saturday 10-3
Closed Sunday

Donations

Tuesday & Friday 10-3
Saturday 10-1

COMMUNITY CENTER HOURS

Monday-Friday 9-5

FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Monday 11-3
Tuesday 9:30-11:30
Wednesday 11-1:30

CONTACT US

207-865-3985
Main Office x202
Executive Director x204
Thrift Shop x207
Food Pantry x211
Programs x205
Volunteers x206
Age-Friendly Freeport & Pownal x222
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Development & Events x221
General Assistance x239

fcsmaine.org



**Freeport
Community
Services**

VISIT US

53 Depot Street
Freeport, Maine 04032

Freeport Community Center
Mon. - Fri. 9-5 pm

JOIN US!

EVENTS FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

- Free Lunch Friday, first and third Fridays 12-1pm
- Age-Friendly Yoga, every Monday, 10am
- Bingo and senior socials every month
- Strength & Stretch, every Tuesday, 5:30pm

STAY IN TOUCH!

Sign up for our digital and
print newsletters:

FCSMaine.org/get-updates



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