



FREEPORT AND CUMBERLAND OFFICIALS TOOK QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE.

JOIN US!

TAI CHI EVERY TUESDAY, 3PM

AGE-FRIENDLY YOGA
EVERY MONDAY, 10AM

BINGO AND SENIOR SOCIALS
EVERY MONTH

STRENGTH & STRETCH
EVERY TUESDAY, 5:30PM

Check our
calendar for
the latest
events,
[fcsmaine.org/
calendar](https://fcsmaine.org/calendar)



OFFICIALS HIGHLIGHT GROWING NEED FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AT AFFP EVENT

The frequency of extreme events is increasing, with major storms and power outages occurring more often than in the past, public safety officials told attendees at Age-Friendly Freeport & Pownal's (AFFP) Stay Safe event at Freeport Community Services on Nov. 19.

Representatives from fire, EMS, and police departments emphasized that they are actively strategizing and training to prepare for various disaster scenarios. "We all have a very good working relationship, and we're here to keep you all safe," said Bob Bernard, Freeport Fire Chief. "If a storm is coming and you're just starting to hear about it, we already have a plan in place."

Freeport Police Chief Nathaniel Goodman shared that his department is working to enhance its social media presence to serve as a vital communication resource during disasters. He encouraged residents to follow

MISSION STATEMENT

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

2023-2024 BOARD MEMBERS

Christina Carter <i>President</i>	Suzi Benoit Zach DeWitt
Gary Goodrich <i>1st Vice President</i>	Evan Libby Catrina Millman Chris O'Neil
Victoria Winters <i>2nd Vice President</i>	Edrol Sandy Barton Seaver
Deborah McLean <i>Secretary</i>	Ken Sparta Jonas Werner
Bo Chesney <i>Treasurer</i>	

FCS STAFF

Sarah Lundin <i>Executive Director</i>	Kim Hudak <i>Office Manager</i>
Susan Adams <i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	Jenny Johnson <i>Communications Manager</i>
Don Buchholz <i>Facilities Assistant</i>	Amy Leichty <i>Director of Programs</i>
Christine Force <i>Director of Development & Events</i>	Molly Merrill <i>Donation Curator</i>
Lindsey Furtney <i>Donation Curator</i>	Marie O'Donnell <i>Age-Friendly Manager</i>
Michele Guillette <i>Donation Curator</i>	Miriam Tanner <i>Thrift Shop Program Manager</i>
Darius Iranpour <i>Facilities Manager</i>	Andy Wyatt <i>Food Programs Supervisor</i>
Erin Hogue <i>Thrift Shop Program Coordinator</i>	

DEAR FRIENDS,

When I think about our community, I'm filled with a sense of belonging, of connection, and of hope. There's something incredibly powerful about knowing that, here in Freeport and Pownal, we're in this together.

And that sense of hope? It's all of you. It's our supporters, our volunteers, our patrons, our board members, and our staff who are always there for one another. Every day, I get to witness the incredible ways people come together to make a difference—whether it's lending a hand to a neighbor or working to create lasting change for families in need.

Living here means being part of something truly special. I can't even tell you how many other communities ask me how they can replicate the spirit we have here. And honestly, I don't have a quick answer for them.

What we've built here in Freeport and Pownal didn't happen overnight. It's taken years—decades, really—to create the culture of inclusion and care we have today. For the past 50 years, we've come together to care for our neighbors, advocate for their needs, and make sure that the resources our community relies on are always there.

The spirit of Freeport and Pownal is something to treasure. We lead by example, showing others what it means to care for one another. And that's something we should all be proud of.

Thank you for making this such a beautiful place to be, and for being the heart of our community.

Endless appreciation,



Sarah Lundin, Executive Director



A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW BOARD PRESIDENT

At FCS, our mission is deeply personal to me. Growing up in a challenging environment, I experienced firsthand the power of community support. This is why FCS resonates with me so strongly. FCS provides essential resources like the Food Pantry, Thrift Shop, and heating assistance, which are vital for the well-being of our community. And programs, such as the free Friday lunch and community gardens, not only address needs but also foster a sense of belonging and inclusion.

As we approach the new year, I am filled with gratitude for the incredible communities we serve. The unwavering

support from our neighbors, staff, volunteers, and donors makes it possible for FCS to enrich lives, connect neighbors, and help those in need. Together, we are building a stronger, more compassionate community. I am hopeful and excited for the year ahead, knowing that with your continued support, we can continue to make a significant difference in the lives of many.

Thank you for your continued care and support of FCS and our neighbors.

– Christina Carter





FCS FOOD PANTRY PROVIDES MORE THAN JUST MEALS

At the heart of the FCS Food Pantry, there's a special tradition that reflects the dedication of our community. Every week, Richard Connelly—a volunteer with Freeport Community Services for over a decade—takes on a unique and vital role. Once a week in the early morning, he makes his way to Bow Street Market to pick up a generous donation of 30 pounds of freshly processed, high-quality Pineland Farms ground beef.

For years, Bow Street Market has been a steadfast partner, contributing not just beef but a variety of food donations that sustain our programs. "Bow Street is one of our most generous partners," says Andy Wyatt, FCS Food Programs Supervisor. "The weekly donation of fresh ground beef is a favorite with our patrons."

The weekly donation is critical in the context of FCS' Food Pantry serving more patrons than ever. Open to all residents of Freeport and Pownal, **in the past fiscal year alone, the pantry saw a 33 percent increase in households served.**

Equally vital to the pantry's success is the dedicated group of 40 volunteers who ensure everything runs smoothly, and Richard is a shining example of that commitment. Week after week, for more years than he can remember, Richard has been a reliable and friendly face at the pantry.

Once back at the center, Richard carefully weighs and portions the beef into 1-pound packages. Most of it is

distributed fresh to waiting patrons the same day, with the rest frozen for later distribution.

"Richard's dedication is extraordinary," Andy adds. "His reliability and care make him an essential part of what we do. Volunteers like him are the backbone of our operation, ensuring we can serve our community week after week."

The combined efforts of generous partners like Bow Street Market and devoted volunteers like Richard exemplify the true spirit of community. Together, they provide more than just meals—they offer hope, stability, and a sense of connection to those who need it most.

Your Donations Make an Impact

Sell for
\$75

Home Heating Assistance

the
thrift
shop
at FCS

LEARN MORE

Donations accepted
Tuesdays 10-3
Fridays 10-3
Saturdays 10-1



NEW FREEPORT WOOD BANK GETS CHOPPING

The Freeport Wood Bank is a new lifeline for residents who rely on wood heat to stay warm but struggle to afford enough cords for the winter. In partnership with Freeport Community Services (FCS), the organization is connecting with individuals and families in need of heating assistance.

Tony DiMarco, who recently retired, launched the initiative alongside his former colleague Jordanna Feely, both Freeport residents, as a way to give back. "I had a lot of firewood and wanted to do something helpful with it," DiMarco explained. "I started working with the Midcoast and Cumberland wood banks, and one thing led to another."

The Freeport Wood Bank will be a key contributor to FCS's Carol Kaplan Fuel Fund, offering a direct source of wood for those in need. "We're thrilled to have this new resource available to support our neighbors," said Amy Liechty, FCS Director of Programs.

In addition to creating the Freeport Wood Bank, DiMarco and Feely established a nonprofit 501c3 called Maine Wood Banks, designed to help other communities start wood banks. Feely, leveraging her corporate finance expertise, set up the nonprofit framework.

"It's been incredibly fulfilling," Feely shared. The network currently includes the Midcoast and Freeport wood banks, providing fiscal sponsorship, insurance, and startup guidance to new wood banks across Maine.

"We hope to use the network to make it easier for other communities to get started," DiMarco said.

Locally, the Freeport Wood Bank is partnering with the Town of Freeport to secure a parcel of land at the recycling facility for operating the wood bank. The group is seeking volunteers to help cut, split, and stack wood for future distribution. "Being at the recycling center will give us great visibility," DiMarco said. "It's a busy spot, especially on Saturday mornings."

In just its first season, the Freeport Wood Bank has already made five deliveries of wood. "Our goal is to help as many people as we can each winter," DiMarco said.

To learn more or get involved, visit freeportwoodbank.org.

**HEATING ASSISTANCE
IS AVAILABLE**

**Freeport and Pownal residents in need
can access
Freeport Community Services'
Carol Kaplan Fuel Fund.**



CALL US
(207) 865-3985 ext. 205



EMAIL US
aliechty@fcsmaine.org



AFFP'S UKULELE JAM ROCKS ON

“Initially, we thought we were going to do it for just eight weeks or so, but people just wanted to keep going,” said Ukulele Jam leader Bonnie Walstrom.

The group has been strumming along every Monday since its launch in March 2024. It boasts a core of 6-8 regular members, with many others dropping in as their schedules allow.

Bonnie encourages participants to suggest songs they'd like to play, creating a repertoire that spans different generations and tastes. Over the past year, the group has performed at two events hosted by Age-Friendly Freeport and Pownal and FCS, sharing their joy and music with the community.

The Ukulele Jam is part of AFFP's lineup of regular, no cost programs designed to bring the community together. AFFP offers Yoga and Ukulele each Monday, Tai Chi every Tuesday, and monthly events like Bingo, socials, and Tech Time—a session to get help with your devices.

The Ukulele Jam welcomes everyone, from total



beginners to experienced musicians. “We help each other, depending on who you're sitting next to, and I hand out chord sheets to guide everyone,” said Bonnie. “We usually start with an easy song and gradually work our way to something more challenging.”

For more information about AFFP and its programs, visit the calendar on the FCS website or go to fcsmaine.org/age-friendly.

THERE WHEN YOU NEED IT: FCS MEDICAL LOAN CLOSET

In July 2024, Tina Edwards experienced a life-changing fall that left her with a broken hip. Her recovery involved six months of non-weight-bearing movement and rigorous physical therapy, requiring a variety of mobility equipment. Fortunately, she was able to borrow everything she needed from Freeport Community Services' (FCS) Medical Loan Closet.

“I was able to get six pieces of equipment that made a huge difference in my recovery,” Tina shared.

Tina borrowed a walker, a toilet seat, a transfer bench for the bathroom, a wheelchair, and two rollator walkers—one for each level of her home. This setup made navigating stairs and different areas of her home much easier. Having access to the right equipment brought her a sense of freedom during a challenging time.

“The wheelchair allowed me to get around the house when I was too tired to use the walker. It also helped me stay mobile—I could get to the Y to use the pool and even work on dog training in my driveway,” Tina explained. “Being able to borrow all that equipment made a world of difference. It not only made my recovery smoother but also saved us a significant amount of money. I'm incredibly grateful that this service exists.”

The FCS Medical Loan Closet continues to be a vital resource for individuals in the community, providing essential equipment to those in need during critical times.



TINA EDWARDS WITH SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT SHE BORROWED FROM THE MEDICAL LOAN CLOSET. TINA IS ALREADY BACK TO PLAYING PICKLEBALL AFTER BREAKING HER HIP IN JULY.



SUMMER AT FCS: SUPPORTING STUDENTS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

At Freeport Community Services, summer is all about supporting students—and each year, our programs grow to meet the needs of local families.

In 2023, we launched the **Summer Snacks** program, which provides weekly bags of food filled with ready-to-prepare meals, fresh vegetables, fruit, and milk. FCS served 180 children each week, helping to ensure no child went hungry while school was out.

During our annual **Community Day**, families lined up to take advantage of our popular **backpack and school supply giveaway**. Thanks to donations from L.L.Bean, local businesses, and

generous community members, we distributed 200 backpacks and supply kits to prepare students for a successful school year.

That evening, we brought the community together for a special Birthday Bash. Kids and parents enjoyed live music, free hot dogs and hamburgers grilled by our Rotary Club friends, and delicious offerings from Maine Beer Company and Freeport Oyster Bar.

We're also proud of the **Carol Southall Summer Camp Scholarships**, which gave 68 children the chance to attend summer camps of their choice. This program, made possible by community

donations and grants from our partners, ensures kids have enriching experiences during the summer months.

Together with our generous partners and supporters, we're making sure summer is a time of opportunity and joy for local students and families.



GROWING NEED CONTINUED FROM PG 1

the Freeport Police Department, the Town of Freeport, and other local agencies on Facebook for timely updates.

Audience members raised concerns about unreliable cell service in rural areas, particularly during storms when connections often fail. Goodman suggested keeping a CV radio as an alternative in such situations, noting that police also rely on radio communication as a backup when

cell service is unavailable.

Officials outlined plans to install generators at key locations, such as the library, to create spaces for socialization, learning, and shelter during prolonged power outages. These facilities would also provide charging stations for essential devices.

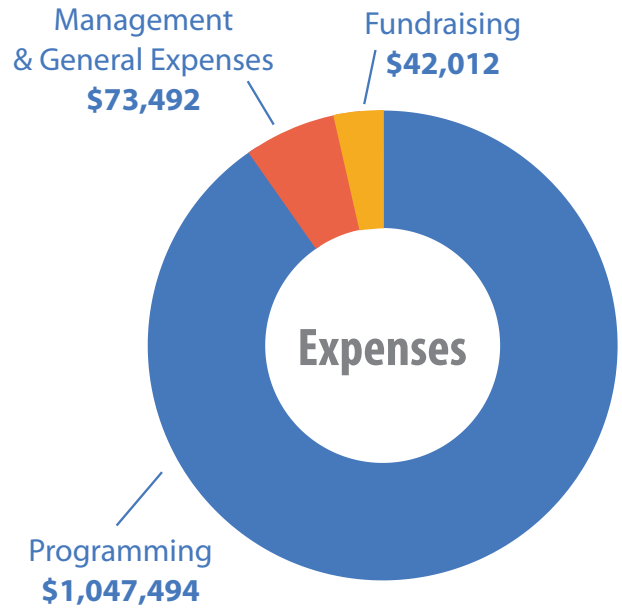
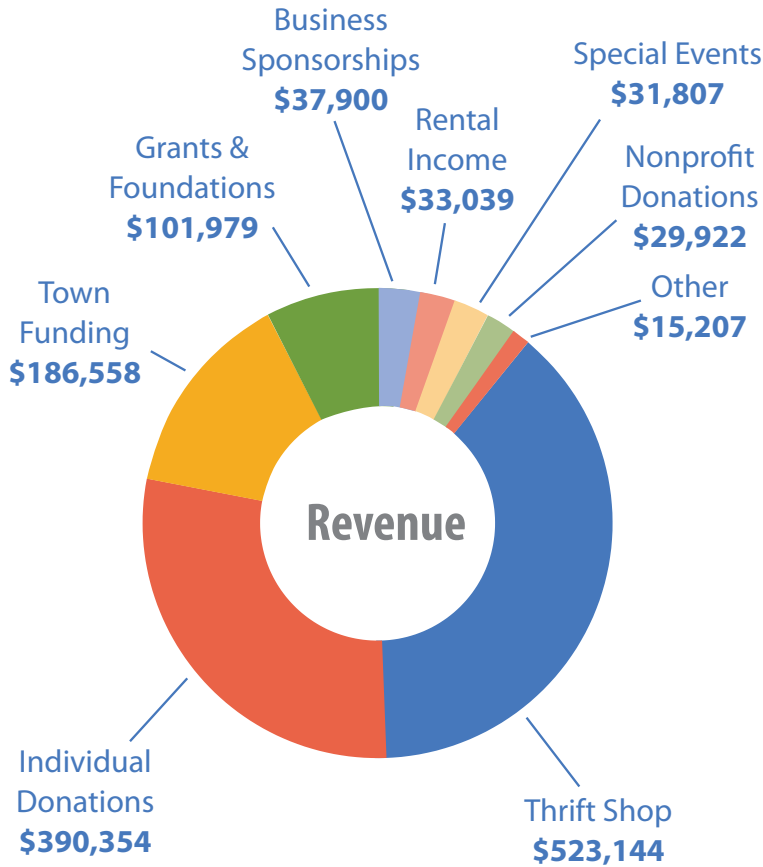
Cumberland County is preparing to host Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training

sessions for residents, offering hands-on disaster preparedness training and scenario-based exercises. "It's a lot of preparing for the worst and hoping for the best," said Brittany O'Neil, Cumberland County Response Coordinator.

Looking ahead, AFFP plans to distribute disaster readiness kits to older adults in need in early 2025 as part of its ongoing efforts to support community resilience.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

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



HELP US MEET THE NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY
 Our goal is to raise \$175,000 to support our work over the coming year.

DONATE TO OUR CRITICAL FUNDRAISING DRIVE TODAY!

50 YEARS Freeport Community Services
fcsmaine.org/give

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

L.L.Bean

THANK YOU TO OUR FOOD DONATION PARTNERS

VISIT US

53 Depot Street
Freeport, Maine 04032
Freeport Community Services
Monday - Friday 9-5

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

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

NEWS FROM FREEPORT COMMUNITY SERVICES

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
Communications x220
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