

Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA)

*Recognized by the World Health Organization as a member
of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities*

Member AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities

To the Selectboard and Residents of Bowdoinham:

The Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) is a volunteer board appointed by the Selectboard to advise the Town of Bowdoinham about making the community more aging friendly and to sponsor programming that will help older residents of Bowdoinham thrive in the community.

The mission of the Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) is to provide services and advocacy that enable older residents of Bowdoinham to live in their homes for as long as possible as well as provide programs geared to keeping older adults active and engaged in the community.

The following Bowdoinham residents served on the Advisory Committee on Aging in 2015:

Theresa Turgeon, Acting Chair
Gracia Woodward, Secretary
George Christopher
Robert Curtis
Martha Cushing
Tom DeForeest
Rachel Evans
Linda Jariz
Patricia Melander
Kathy Pszczolkowski
Dick Rose
Joan Smith
Joanne Savoie

In 2014, the Bowdoinham residents who served as ACOA members, with the help of 44 volunteers, contributed 1253 volunteer hours to make Bowdoinham an even better place to grow older.

ACOA-Sponsored Activities and Programs, 2014

ACOA-Sponsored Activities with Volunteer Facilitators	Participants
Bridge and Cribbage lessons	22
Exercise and Recreation Programs: Golfing, Indoor Walking, Hiking Group, Tai Chi, Exercise with Kathy, Seated Yoga	61
Movie Afternoons	14
Day Trips	43
Crafting Group	18
<i>Let's Talk about Aging</i> group	19
Summer Fun: Summer Picnic, Scavenger Hunt	34
Winter Holiday Party	17
Special Events and Workshops: AARP Safe Driving Class, Collage, Facebook for Seniors, Genealogy, Internet Safety, Matter of Balance, Photography, Wine Making, Wood Carving,	97
Lunch with Lynn (Town Landing, Lynn Spiro)	23
Village Seniors Luncheon Speakers	69
Celebrate Bowdoinham Tent & Photography Contest	73
Wellness Fair	68

This year, ACOA continued to sponsor activities, programs and services for residents of Bowdoinham.

The ACOA-sponsored **Shipmates Senior Center** offered social opportunities tailored for people age 60 and older. Ongoing activities included cribbage, a crafting group, day trips, special workshops, and a monthly movie discussion group. Special events included a collage workshop, wood carving demonstration and wine-making class. Izzy Drehobel, a senior at Mt Ararat HS completed her Capstone with ACOA. One of her projects was to work on the collage workshop.



Collage workshop

Among new programs started by the Shipmates in 2015 were monthly blood pressure checks and a discussion group, "Let's Talk about Aging".

The **Safety and Accessibility** group continued to work with the Select Board and the Town Manager to increase accessibility. The Town of Bowdoinham made several changes in 2015. Wide paths that can accommodate a wheelchair or walker and accessible picnic benches have been added to Mailly Waterfront Park. The Town installed an additional railing down the middle of the library steps and added heated treads to melt the ice and snow on those stairs steps. Other changes were made to improve access to the Coombs Municipal Building at the ramp entrance.



Tool Table

ACOA's "tool table" is a display of tools to help with everyday activities that can be challenging, such as opening jars, tying shoelaces, or reaching for a seatbelt. It has been featured on both the AARP and WHO Age Friendly World website. The Safety and Accessibility group is working with the Bowdoinham Public Library to create a way for library patrons to borrow the devices to try at home.

ACOA also continues to offer **physical and recreational opportunities**. Several new programs were offered—golfing, a hiking group, and Exercise with Kathy, a DVD exercise class.



The **Second Annual Aging (Well)ness Fair** was attended by 68 visitors this year—an increase of 27%. Sixteen social service and health organizations shared information and provided demonstrations. Donations were accepted for the Bowdoinham Food Pantry. Twenty-eight pounds of food and \$28.80 were donated.

For the second year, ACOA had a tent at **Celebrate Bowdoinham**. World-famous fortune teller *Madam B* told the fortunes of people from 4 months to 84+ years. Bingo was enjoyed by people of all ages. Everyone was a winner, with or without a fortune to guide them while they played!



Madame B

Fourteen people entered the "Bowdoinham: A Great Place to Be" photo contest.



AARP Safe Driving class

Visitors to the tent voted for their favorite picture. All of the photos were gorgeous and clearly showed some of the many reasons Bowdoinham is a great place to live.

As part of the Aging Well(ness) Fair, AARP offered a Safe Driving Class that was attended by 21 people. Participants were reminded of some safe driving habits, learned ways to adjust their cars and shared hints and tips to make them safer drivers.

ACOA was awarded a grant from AARP to work with the Bowdoinham Public Library on its age-friendly initiative. Part of the grant money was to conduct a needs assessment of older residents to find out what they believed the strengths of the library were and to explore what people thought the library could do to be more aging friendly. As a result of the collaboration with the library (using money from the AARP grant), the library has been able to add more large print and audio books to their collection and is offering a series of technology classes specifically geared to older residents.



The mailing crew sent 750 surveys to Bowdoinham residents age 60+

The accomplishments of this past year are due to the dedication and expertise of the members of the Advisory Committee on Aging, to the support given to the committee by the Select Board, and to the work of many talented and enthusiastic volunteers. ACOA is also grateful for the collaboration of so many local organizations and social service providers who work to make Bowdoinham a highly desirable place to grow old. Whether it is the Select Board or a Town department that works with ACOA to make sure that residents are comfortable and safe participating in programs or a local organization that works with ACOA to expand the programs available to older residents, Bowdoinham's menu of opportunities for older residents is the envy of many communities.