



Fall 2020 / Issue No. 35

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can do to support you in your home
and community.*

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atHome

Helping Seniors Live Independently



Celebrating the Grand Opening! Pictured left to right: Michael Blood, Marcia Osborn, Owen Houghton, Rick Harden, Dwight Schenk, Bobbie Gilbert, Tuck Gilbert, Ann Nunn, Linn Perkins, and Bob Dunn.

MaH Marks 10th Anniversary!

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director

September 2020 marked 10 years since Monadnock at Home (MaH) began serving seniors in the Monadnock Region! The very first issue of our newsletter *atHome* soon followed with the cover article written by one of our founders, the late Tuck Gilbert. Titled, "How We Got from Where We Were to Where we Are," Tuck spoke of how three couples sitting around the table talked about their hopes for staying in their own homes as they grew older. The discussions planted seeds of excitement in the group and ultimately the community. Shortly thereafter the

"We are ready, willing, and able to provide the kinds of services we've promised to help people stay in their own homes more simply, safely, and conveniently."

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MaH Marks 10th Anniversary!

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planning began. “And now, at last, the big day has come,” Tuck wrote. “We are ready, willing, and able to provide the kinds of services we’ve promised to help people stay in their own homes more simply, safely, and conveniently,” Ten years ago MaH began with a little hope and that simple promise.

The founding members were wise enough to know that no one individual gets from “where they were to where they are” without a little help. Catholic Charities New Hampshire (CCNH),

“Providing a little help, making connections, and giving encouragement ...”

who shared MaH’s vision for helping seniors thrive within their homes and communities, provided that help. Specifically, CCNH became a premier partner of MaH, helping with staffing and building the foundation of providers. How appropriate that 10 years later the success of MaH and our shared vision of helping seniors in our community would lead us to become a program of CCNH. In addition, critical to turning the hard work of our founders into reality were our first group of MaH members and willing volunteers, many of which are still an active part of MaH.

In this 10 year celebration edition of *atHome*, you will hear from the many people who have been a part of MaH’s journey. Providing a little help, making connections, and giving encouragement are all things that help us get from “where we were to where we are.” I hope you will enjoy these stories and special moments shared by many Monadnock at Home friends.

Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director



Happy 10 Year Anniversary to Monadnock at Home! We would not be where we are today without all of you! I am so fortunate to have been a part of MaH for nearly 8 years now. There are many moments that remind me how thankful and proud I am to be a part of an organization

whose mission is to help others. Simple things such as a hand-written note about how much a volunteer’s help meant to someone, or a friendly conversation with a member who lives alone, reminds me how reaching out to others and making connections makes a big difference in our lives. I am thankful to each and every volunteer and provider for all they do for those we serve.

The year 2020 with COVID-19 has been challenging for all of us. Nonetheless, we continue to provide ways for MaH members to stay connected in a safe manner. I encourage you to participate! In the spring we plan to resume an outdoor, physically distant coffee group, but in the meantime make sure you take advantage of other ways to socialize with others. Every Wednesday morning, make a cup of coffee and dial into our weekly call for some fun conversation. Refer to the newsletter insert for call-in instructions. We have also held a few fun and informative Zoom programs. In September, Monadnock Community Hospital leaders, Cyndee McGuire, Dr. Lindberg, and Laura Gingras, joined us over Zoom to talk about keeping oneself safe in the midst of COVID-19 and flu season. Thank you to Dr. Lindberg for his contributing article, reinforcing the “stay safe” message.

We are so grateful for all of our members, volunteers, providers, partners, supporters and, of course, our founders! I hope you enjoy reading the stories from many who have been a part of MaH throughout the last ten years.

Looking Back with Our Founding Executive Director, Members and Volunteers

Cindy Bowen Founding Executive Director

It was September 22, 2010 at what was then the Peterborough Historical Society. With knees knocking I was standing in front of over 100 guests introducing myself as the Executive Director of the new nonprofit in the area, Monadnock at Home. It was the Opening Celebration of the first "Village" organization of its kind in the State of New Hampshire! What an exciting day it was for members, volunteers, community partners, service



Cindy Bowen

in order for us to hear each other speak. Within the hour, volunteer Dwight was at Alice's home replacing the battery and restoring peace and quiet in her home.

Shortly thereafter, MaH member Francelia also requested volunteer assistance. She needed help with a water filter problem. Volunteer Rick was soon off to Francelia's to change the filter and alleviate the problem. In a follow up call to her, Francelia told me that she was very happy with the help she received and was totally impressed that MaH had volunteers from NASA! Rick, who had retired from NASA, was wearing his NASA shirt revealing his technical expertise!

So that's the way it was. MaH was off and running! Congratulations to MaH on its 10th Anniversary!

Sandy King, Volunteer

I initially heard about MaH in the Summer of 2010 from founding member Owen Houghton. In full support of the concept, I enthusiastically agreed to sit in on a meeting to discuss the possibility of a quarterly newsletter. With

the much-appreciated help of FirstTracks Marketing, who designed our logo and continues to offer in-kind services for layout and design, we published our first issue in the Fall of 2010. I'm happy to report that ten years later MaH is as strong as ever and we continue to produce the newsletter for our members, volunteers, and enthusiastic supporters!

Rick Harnden, Founder, Member, Volunteer

Of the various tasks I've volunteered to do over the years, I've always enjoyed those that involved problem solving the most. One of my best memories is the day I was dispatched to the home of a member to investigate a DVD player that wasn't working; I knew this would be right up my alley. The player was in a poorly-lit corner of the living room, on the bottom shelf of a TV stand. Luckily, I had a flashlight at my disposal. After removing the cover of the unit, I took the top off the disc drawer mechanism. Removing the disc from the drawer revealed that a second DVD lay underneath it! Since the bottom disc was completely black and the whole device was in a dimly lit corner, it was an understandable mistake and a fairly easy fix. The member was grateful and happy that their movie plans could proceed as planned!

"What an exciting day it was for members, volunteers, community partners, service providers, and folks wanting to learn more about MaH."

providers, and folks wanting to learn more about MaH.

Fast forward to about a week or so later, when I received the first request for volunteer assistance. MaH member Alice called and asked for help with changing the battery in a smoke detector. The sound was so loud in the background that Alice had to go out on her front porch



OUR MISSION

The Mission of Monadnock at Home is to provide seniors of the Monadnock Region with the support and practical means to live and thrive in their homes and communities.



Mark helping member Paula with groceries

Mark Lombardi, Volunteer

Before I retired a little more than 2 years ago, I resolved to stay busy and active. I'd also come to appreciate that I'd been very fortunate throughout my life, in no small part due to the support and encouragement from others. It was increasingly important to me to "give back" in any way that I could.

About that same time, I discovered Monadnock at Home and immediately thought of my parents whom I had helped out with small jobs around their home over the years. They were always grateful for the small jobs I took on that seemed simple to me, but impossible for them. I had also thought off and on about people who had given up driving, and how that must be very confining (But I hadn't thought much about the routine necessary travel these

***"Volunteering with
Monadnock at Home
seemed like a perfect
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people still had to do but couldn't on their own.)

Volunteering with Monadnock at Home seemed like a perfect fit for me. As a volunteer, I quickly discovered how immensely grateful folks were for me doing small things that I generally enjoyed doing anyway. It also became apparent to me how critical the services of Monadnock at Home are to helping

people stay living independently as long as possible. The whole experience has been gratifying to me.

My biggest surprise though (and it shouldn't have been), was discovering how many very interesting people live in our community. It's pure fun listening to the stories of the client's experiences throughout their lifetimes, and it's made me grateful for mine.

I truly believe that I have gotten much more out of this experience than I have put in.

Kathy Salamy, Volunteer

"I pick up a stranger, but drop off a friend."

Bill Joyner, Volunteer

My neighbor Will and I have been helping Monadnock At Home members with various chores and soup delivery for the past year. We have enjoyed meeting many very interesting people who needed a little help to stay independent in their home. They have always been very appreciative of what we do and it has been satisfying for us to be able to give back to our community. A little conversation with them while we are doing a small project makes for a better day for all of us. Don't hesitate to call on the team of Will and Bill as we look forward to it!

Bob Dunn, Founder, Member, Volunteer

Seven or so years ago, I was asked if I'd be interested in placing a daily phone call to a Monadnock at Home member. Her name was Arlene and she lived alone in her rambling family home in Peterborough.

I live alone also, so am well aware of how lonely one can be at times. I decided this would be a good thing to do, not only for Arlene, but for me too.

I was told that Arlene liked the idea of a check-in call, but was not sure about speaking to a stranger each morning, so I might have to be very patient. Well, that information was correct, because I remember our first phone call was all

of ten seconds and one word answers. In fact, for the first month I was getting a serious guilt complex, wondering if she'd ever open up and feel comfortable. Then gradually I began to understand what made Arlene comfortable. It was humor! She loved a joke or an expression that she found amusing. I started to lighten up with our conversations, and I began to feel a smile in her voice and our phone calls were lasting longer too.

That was seven years ago! Now she waits eagerly for my call every morning and I love to hear her smiling voice. She tells me "It makes my day to hear your voice."

I feel blessed that I have the opportunity to bring a smile, a laugh or a pleasurable moment to someone that truly enjoys life. It's a simple thing to do... a phone call to lift one's spirits and make one's day, not just for the recipient but the caller too!

Bobbie Gilbert, Founder, Member, Volunteer

Wow, ten years for Monadnock at Home! It takes me back to its beginnings when Laura and Michael Redmond, Owen and Norma Houghton and Tuck and I first got together to talk about the need for such an organization in the Monadnock region. We had heard about Beacon Hill Village which was the first of these organizations to form and it sounded like something that would be important for our area. We pulled in other key people to be part of the discussion and investigation into its viability. A real concern was that a group like Beacon Hill Village was in a small urban area and we would be dealing with several small towns in a spread-out rural area. There was well



Dwight replacing a door knob for a member

"...the most intense joy for me has been the interaction with members, doing interesting handyman things that always seemed so appreciated."

over a year of planning and meeting with interested people in each of the towns. I remember the day we finally said "it's time to fish or cut bait" and we voted to move ahead with founding Monadnock at Home. And here we are ten years later through lots of hard work and good leadership in staff, board members, volunteers and members. Cheers for all of you who helped this happen and thrive! It has made a real difference in the lives of many people.

Dwight Schenk, Founder, Member, Volunteer

I think my sharpest memory of

Monadnock at Home goes back ten years when Julie and I were invited by Carolyn Saari to come for dinner to meet Tuck and Bobbie. Bobbie talked excitedly about this new idea they were hatching to help elders stay in their own homes. I remember saying, somewhat offhandedly, "Sounds like a neat idea. Let me know if I can help at all." Had I known Bobbie before, I wouldn't

have been at all surprised when I found myself attending Steering Committee meetings two weeks later and applying for federal and state charters. Those were busy years, but good ones. The admin chores have always felt valuable to be doing, but the most intense joy for me has been the interaction with members, doing interesting handyman things that always seemed so appreciated.

Owen Houghton, Founder, Member, Volunteer

Over the last ten years, I have so many good memories of fun trips with MaH members— two stand out. In the



Visit to Saint Gaudens
National Historic Park 2013

“I feel blessed that I have the opportunity to bring a smile, a laugh or a pleasurable moment to someone that truly enjoys life.”



Connecticut River Cruise 2013

early days of MaH, Michelle from Good Shepherd would drive MaH members on our planned outings using the Good Shepherd van. On one outing to visit Saint-Gaudens National Park in Cornish, NH, we approached a covered bridge that crossed the Connecticut River to Windsor, Vermont. Michelle pulled over after noticing a sign cautioning vehicles over 10 feet from entering the bridge. Eager to do my part in navigating the safe passage, I exited the van and began to block traffic as I guided the van down the middle of the bridge to a successful crossing. Saint-Gaudens was inspiring and fun, but the adventure getting there made it even more memorable!

The second was a lovely Connecticut River cruise with guides out of Northfield, NH Recreational Center, where we studied the different archeology of the two shores in each state and marveled at eagles!

Linn Perkins, Founder, Emeritus Member*

I recently checked in with Linn Perkins, one of MaH's founders and original members who now lives in Virginia with his daughter. We talked about the ten-year anniversary of MaH. "I was enthusiastic about the idea," he recalled. "I hosted a wine & cheese party with 16 of my friends that were all around my age and I was happy to see they all ended up becoming members in MaH themselves!" Linn went on to say that MaH served him well and was a great help to him over the years, especially when he needed to fix up his house before his move to Virginia. Linn described how much he looked forward to his weekly calls to MaH to coordinate his grocery deliveries. "Having groceries ordered and delivered by MaH volunteers was a huge help to me," he said. "Throughout many of life's changes, MaH has been a great assurance for me and my late wife. Many years ago, MaH was a good way to approach my retirement and now I am enjoying my retirement, living with my daughter in Virginia. Many people can benefit from MaH's care as I have. I have great hope for MaH's future."

**Written by Sandra Faber*



Thanks To All Who Walked To End Alzheimer's!

In September, we had so much fun participating in the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's®. Thank you to all of you who supported our efforts and donated to such a worthy cause! You have helped move us closer to a world without Alzheimer's disease!



Monthly Coffee Hour

MaH members gather at 10am on the first Tuesday of each month for conversation and delicious coffee! If you'd like a reminder call, please contact MaH at 603-371-0809.

**NOTE:
SUSPENDED DUE TO
COVID-19**

Be Sure To Get Your Flu Shot!

By Dr. Michael Lindberg, Chief Medical Officer at Monadnock Community Hospital

Welcome to autumn, a beautiful time of year in New Hampshire! The days are becoming cooler, the nights longer, and the holidays are rapidly approaching.

In this year of COVID-19 and its associated 250,000 plus deaths, it would be easy to ignore the possible co-existence of influenza. However, influenza is still dangerous because it can exacerbate chronic conditions such as congestive heart failure, obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and other debilitating illnesses.

The good news is that we have both a vaccine to help prevent influenza infection as well as antiviral treatments that can reduce the severity of the disease. Everyone over the age of 6 months and without contraindications should be vaccinated against influenza on an annual basis. While no vaccine is 100% protective, this year's influenza vaccine appears well suited to protect against the current strains.

Why is it particularly important to get vaccinated against influenza this year? There are now two viruses to worry about: influenza and COVID-19. Both can severely impact your immune system, both are highly contagious, both are highly lethal and you can catch both at the same time.

Reducing influenza illness will make it easier to recognize and deal with COVID-19, as its surge progresses, while decreasing the risk of co-infection.

In addition to becoming vaccinated against influenza, do not forget the other common precautions that can reduce the spread of both influenza and COVID-19. Please continue to social distance, frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water or with a hand sanitizer, wear a face covering, and try not to touch your face. Practicing social distancing and wearing a face covering is a courtesy that shows respect and caring for yourself and all those you interact with. Both practices have been shown to save lives.

Stay safe and protect yourself with an influenza vaccination. And let us all hope that an effective and proven safe vaccine against COVID-19 will be developed soon.



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