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atHome

Helping Seniors Live Independently



Roberta Beeson

MaH Member Roberta Beeson – Her Journey to Keep Active

By Sandra Faber

Have you heard the recommendation to get 10,000 steps a day? With the innovation of better and better wearable tech devices steps can be tracked and used as a useful goal to motivate us to move more. But there is another device that's not "techie" and helps many take the steps to stay mobile and move more every day as one ages – and that is a walker. Loss of mobility can negatively impact one's mental and physical health.

That is why it is so important to learn about all of your options when it comes to mobility aids.

At a recent Monadnock at Home program, MaH member Roberta Beeson struck up a conversation with other members about the walker she was using. After speaking with her, it was clear that Roberta had done her research. She mentioned she had another walker in her car, that she offered to a fellow member to borrow for our walk across the street.

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At the time, I thought how nice she was to keep an extra walker in her car in case someone should need one, but later I would come to understand that Roberta's determination to keep doing what she loves... enjoying the great outdoors, has led to her wealth of knowledge about, and her accumulation of, mobility devices to tackle almost any scenario. Roberta invited me to her home to show me these devices, how they play a role in her activities, and most importantly to share her knowledge with other Monadnock at Home members.

Early in her career, Roberta was a biology teacher and later became a technical writer for Hewlett Packard. After relocating to Hancock in 1992 and retiring in 1998, she volunteered her knowledge of computer software and hardware to some local nonprofits and found her passion to help these entities with their computer needs. Roberta is quite savvy in this area and enjoys troubleshooting issues. So, it is no surprise that she put these skills to use when she started experiencing mobility issues. All her life, Roberta has been active and has loved being outside experiencing nature while hiking, walking, or kayaking.

When I visited Roberta, she lit up when recalling time spent in the Adirondacks. Finding that the Adirondacks were getting overcrowded, she discovered a new wonderful destination, Campobello Island. She spent her birthday with her sister visiting the island and walking most of the mile-long beach – something she would not have been able to do without her Trionic Veloped walker with nomadic tires!

Roberta has a positive outlook on life. When faced with an obstacle, she pivots and finds a solution, so she can keep on going. The first thing you notice when entering Roberta's home is the beautiful, large picture window. When I comment on the beautiful window and view, Roberta responds showing me her Hemi (one arm) walker. She was

finding it hard to balance while filling the bird feeder which hangs outside her window she explains, so she looked for a solution and now keeps the Hemi walker handy for that purpose. Bringing in multiple items like groceries can be challenging, so Roberta came up with an idea, gathered the parts and asked Monadnock at Home to help put it together. Monadnock at Home volunteers, Bill and Will were happy to bring her idea to fruition and help with the assembly.

Although there was not one incident that prompted Roberta to start using assistive mobility devices, she recalls a fall about five years ago that she now speculates was connected to the

start of her issues. Since that time, she has accumulated five different walkers. Like many, she started with a hiking pole, then two poles, but she found them too slow and frustrating. She was used to going out for a mile walk and still wanted to be able to get close to that. She realized that she would have much more freedom and mobility if she had a walker that was appropriate for her lifestyle.

The devices Roberta

uses are rollators. Rollators are wheeled walkers that also have seats and hand brakes. They are often easier to maneuver than walkers and usually provide the user with more speed. It is recommended to consult with your doctor to determine which type of mobility device would best suit your needs.

The first walker Roberta got was from Medicare with a prescription from her doctor. It has 6-inch wheels and does not fold. She now keeps this walker in her basement for use when she ventures down there. One of the five she keeps in her car and uses for shopping and other outings. Another she got with a "crazy deal" from Job Lot, which gave her a store credit for the cost, essentially getting it for free. The walker she keeps on the main floor of her house, is also the one she chooses to take on her neighborhood walks, venturing on dirt roads and hills and even snow!



Roberta stands outside her home with all of her mobility devices

And of course, there is that one that helped give her a wonderful birthday celebration.

Roberta explains, a good device should allow the person to walk upright behind it, look straight ahead, and go at your regular walking pace. Her all-terrain walker is pricey, but her every day walker was around \$200, she explains. Roberta would like others who might hesitate to use a walker to know that using one should not be viewed as negative. Instead walkers give a person freedom – freedom to continue to stay active and enjoy the places they love – like the beach!



Roberta is happy to talk to Monadnock at Home members individually and even let them try out her walkers. If there is interest, we will also have a program in the spring to further discuss options and see Roberta's walkers up close.

I hope Roberta's story will inspire you to not only consider a mobility aid if appropriate for you, but to also view assistive devices in a new light – one of freedom and independence.

Roberta shows her grocery assistant that MaH Volunteers helped assemble

Mobility Aid Resources

The following is a guide to rollators published by Southern Pharmaceutical Corporation.

MOBILITY MATTERS: Your Guide to Mobility Aids and More

<https://www.spchme.com/resources/mobility-guide>

What is a Rollator Used For?

A rollator is a mobile stability aid that is used when a person can walk but just needs a little help with their balance and stability. Rollators are available in three or four-wheel options and allow you to walk at a quicker pace and help with a normal gait. The user should be able to steer the rollator and operate the handbrakes as needed.

Rollators come in a variety of colors and can be a bit more stylish than walkers. Rollators are often heavier than walkers because of the wheels and brake system that they have.

Types of Rollators Available

There are three main types of rollators, and each comes with its benefits and set of features.

Three-Wheel Rollator: These rollators fit in smaller spaces, can make sharp turns and have increased maneuverability. They're lighter than the four-wheeled options, however, their design means they don't offer a seat. They have one swiveling wheel in the front and two wheels in the back. They often come with a basket, pouch or both for storage.

Four-Wheel Rollator: These rollators offer more stability and enhance mobility and walking speed. Because of their four wheels, they require steering and handbrake operation, which may not make it the best option for all users. These rollators have two swiveling wheels in the front and two wheels in the back. They come with seats that may be padded. They often feature a storage basket or tote bag under the seat.

Heavy-Duty Rollator: These rollators, also known as bariatric rollators, have a higher weight capacity than standard rollators. They usually feature reinforced steel and wider seats, and the wheels tend to be bigger and wider.

Roberta demonstrates a rollator



Accessible Trails and Walking Paths

Roberta is certainly an inspiration to keep on moving despite the challenges we face. Mobility aides can help us navigate the great outdoors as we grow older, but it can still be challenging to find places to walk. There are some wonderful accessible trails in our community that you may be interested in trying. Below are a couple of options.

Paved walking trails and rail trails are a great, mostly flat option. For example, Peterborough has a nice walking trail that can be accessed on Summer St.

To get a bit more access to nature, Crotched Mountain Foundation in Greenfield has accessible trails on their campus that are well maintained and open to the public. “Crotched Mountain’s accessible trails provide a place where everyone – people with disabilities, seniors and families with children – are welcomed and able to experience nature up close,” the Foundation says.

There are two accessible trails: The Dutton Brook Trail and the Gregg Trail. Both were built using the U.S. Forest

Service accessibility standards. These are wilderness trails, so it is important to be prepared and know your own physical, mental, and technical abilities as well as your restrictions.

About the Trails

As the longest accessible trails in a mountainside environment in the United States, the Gregg and Dutton Brook trails combine unique hardpack pathways, boardwalks, moderate grades, switchbacks, and rest stops to create a natural, yet accessible, hiking experience for people of all abilities.

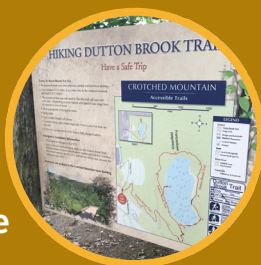
The planning and building of these remarkable trails were led by renowned trail builder Peter Jensen, one of the country’s leading designers and builders of accessible trails. With thirty years of experience, Peter is considered the most skilled and knowledgeable builder of universal access trails in the country.

Funds for this \$500,000 project were raised through private donations and grants.

Dutton Brook Trail

Trail includes a loop that winds around an abandoned beaver-built wetland. The trail features diverse forest and animal habitats. The trail is fairly flat, approximately 2 miles round-trip and winds its way through woodlands. There are boardwalks and observation platforms that provide overlooks onto various natural landscapes.

- Observation decks
- Interpretive signs
- Full trail loop is 2.0 miles
- Maximum 4% grade change
- Mostly shaded



Gregg Trail

Trail is a series of switchbacks rising 200 feet to the top of the knoll. There are panoramic views to the west, south and east of Grand Monadnock. Due to numerous switchbacks, the trail’s grade never exceeds 8%. There are also resting points along the way. The trail winds through open meadows and is 0.8 miles from the parking lot to the top of the knoll.

- Observation deck
- 1.6 miles round trip
- Maximum 8% grade change
- Mostly exposed to sun

Trail Hours

Both trails open 30 minutes after sunrise and close 30 minutes before sunset, depending on current trail conditions.

A trail map can be downloaded online at <https://cmf.org/trails>. The trail map also includes important reminders before you go, such as informing someone of your itinerary and the time you expect to return, as well as the sage advice – hiking with a buddy is always a good idea for safety.

Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director



The US Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion states, “Physical activity may allow older adults to live independently longer, be healthier, have better quality of life, and need less medical care. It can also help older individuals

maintain or improve their health and manage or prevent progression of chronic conditions.”

Sounds good, right?

The reality is, we know that daily movement is so important, but it can get hard to execute as barriers present themselves, such as chronic conditions, aches and pains, weather, lack of accessible pathways or wellness facilities and more.

MaH member Roberta Beeson came to our September program with one of her rolling walkers. She had a few side conversations with members explaining how much this has improved her accessibility. She offered to get the word out to fellow members about the different types of mobility mechanisms one could choose and the impact they can make on one’s life. After talking with Roberta, and hearing from many of you that you are missing the wellness center in our community, I decided to dedicate this newsletter to movement – giving you some ideas and possibly motivation to move more each day!

Of course, before embarking on a new exercise regimen, consult with your healthcare provider. Your provider can give you personalized advice based on your health condition and recommend activities that suit your individual needs.

Art Show

Monadnock at Home members enjoyed getting together to support a fellow MaH member and local artist. Francelia Clark had a one-woman show of watercolors entitled “Joy!” on display at the Hancock Town Library throughout the month of September. Members gathered to view her artwork and were treated to the artist’s own insights as Francelia selected a number of paintings to highlight and share stories about. Monadnock at Home members are quite a talented bunch, and some of the other artists in attendance took the opportunity to ask a few technical questions about Francelia’s process. The group then headed across the street to Fiddlehead’s for coffee or a delicious bite to eat. In keeping with the theme



MaH members listen as Francelia talks about her watercolors

of the art show, it truly was a joy to sit out on the covered porch and enjoy a beautiful day sharing great conversation with everyone!

Smokey Said WHAT? Fire & Our Ecosystem

In September, guest speaker Joy Wetzel, an interpretive ranger with the Student Conservation Association and New Hampshire State Parks, educated MaH members on fire and our ecosystem. With wildfires being in the news more and more, this was a timely and informative topic. While playing a game of “Fact or Myth” we learned that fires can actually be good for our ecosystem – with the help of professionals! We also learned that contrary to what many people assume, wet winters can actually fuel wildfires in areas that are prone to them. Joy shared an interesting story about the uniqueness of our own Mount Monadnock, with the tree line being unusual for a mountain of its height. In discussing this, Joy shared the following quote from Henry David Thoreau about the mountain he loved most:

“A man in Peterborough told me that his father told him that Monadnock used to be covered with forest; that fires ran through it and killed the turf; then the trees were blown down, and their roots turned up and formed a dense and impenetrable thicket in which wolves abounded... till finally they set fire to this thicket and it made the greatest fire they had ever had in the country.”

– Henry David Thoreau, 1852

Joy stated that there is no concrete proof to back up this word-of-mouth story, but it is some interesting local lore!



***MaH members
learn about fire and
our ecosystem***

Summer Picnic at MacDowell Lake



***MaH members get to know each other with a fun game
of Bingo and look out onto Edward MacDowell Lake***

In recent years we have started and ended the summer with trips to Kimball Farm for ice cream. While those outings are always popular, we decided to close out this year’s summer season with another fun outdoor activity – a picnic! Monadnock at Home members and staff met at the



lakeside pavilion at MacDowell Lake for an end of summer gathering. It was a beautiful, sunny day and members enjoyed lively conversation and a delicious picnic lunch from the Bagel Mill. We also played a fun adaptation of Bingo which allowed us to share some stories and find out fun facts about everyone in attendance. At the end of the picnic, the group wandered down to the water to admire the beautiful and peaceful scenery of MacDowell Lake.

Monthly Coffee Hour Update

The MaH Member Coffee Group is moving inside for the winter! The group will continue to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 10:00am, but these gatherings will be held indoors and the group will split their time between Jaffrey and Peterborough. This is a fun and welcoming group that always enjoys having new people join in the conversation! If you have questions or would like to receive updates regarding possible changes due to weather, please contact MaH at 603-371-0809.



TUESDAY 11/7	TUESDAY 11/21	TUESDAY 12/5	TUESDAY 12/19
Jaffrey Civic Center	Peterborough Town Library	Jaffrey Civic Center	Peterborough Town Library
40 Main Street	Abbot Board Room	40 Main Street	Abbot Board Room
Jaffrey	2 Concord Street	Jaffrey	2 Concord Street

Winter is Coming!

If you have an air conditioner in your window, it should be out by now. Call us if it is not, and we will have a volunteer come help you out.

If you don't have a plow provider lined up yet, let us know and we will give you a referral to one of our providers.

And once again we are putting together our Winter Storm Check In call lists and staff and volunteers will be calling to check on members with any big storms that come our way this winter.



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.

10 Quick Tips to Move More... Sit Less

FIND ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES –

More pleasure, less chore

SET REALISTIC GOALS – Start Small

STRENGTH TRAIN – Bodyweight & resistance bands

STAY SOCIALLY ACTIVE – Walk with a friend

PRIORITIZE BALANCE AND FLEXIBILITY –

Prevent falls and maintain mobility

MINDFUL WALKING AND MEDITATION –

Physical & Mental wellbeing

ADAPT TO YOUR ABILITIES – Chair exercises are effective

STAY HYDRATED – Essential for health

CREATE A ROUTINE – Habit – Habit – Habit!

CELEBRATE PROGRESS – Stay Motivated!



Why Become a MaH Member?

- You gain peace of mind.
- Your worries of living alone are eased.
- You become an active part of a bigger community.
- You gain the security of knowing you can get help on issues that arise — big or small.

Contact us to see how MaH can help you live and thrive in your home and community.

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