



Winter-Spring 2023 / Issue No. 43

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atHome

Helping Seniors Live Independently



MaH members have a great time getting to know one another while creating holiday centerpieces.

The Key to Happiness

By Sandy King, Volunteer

When you think about it, happiness has been on our minds for generations. More than 200 years ago our forefathers included the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right in the Declaration of Independence! With that in mind, you may wonder if there are specific steps we can take in our pursuit to achieve happiness or if happiness is innate. Studies show that it's a combination of both. Let's dig a little deeper into a particular study initiated at Harvard University.

Dr. Robert Waldinger is a psychiatrist, professor, and the current director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development. The study began in 1938 and has followed more than 700 participants from all over the

world. Dr. Waldinger documents the 85-year findings in the book *The Good Life, Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness*.

According to Dr. Waldinger, there are two different types of happiness. The first is Hedonic, based on happiness resulting from an event. For instance, you may be ecstatic because you just won the lottery or you're spending the day in one of your favorite places. This type of happiness is generally short lived. The second type is Eudemonic, where happiness is associated with well-being and a sense of purpose in your life. This second type is the secret sauce and has a positive impact on your health and longevity

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The Key to Happiness *Continued from page 1*

when it is simmered long and slow.

So, what's the key ingredient in the secret sauce? The short answer is relationships. The stronger our relationships, the more likely we are to live happy, fulfilling, and overall healthier lives. As Dr. Waldinger states:

"Life is hard and sometimes it comes at you in full attack mode. Warm, connected relationships protect against the slings and arrows of life and of getting old."

The good news is that relationships come in all shapes and sizes and go well beyond a spouse or significant other. They also include family members, friends, coworkers, church participants, book club members, and other community connections.

It's important to remember that relationships require tending. Like plants, they will wither and die if we don't pay attention to them. One approach is to take small steps every day to build and also keep connections by visiting, calling, writing, texting, or emailing those in your inner circle. With the

technology we have available today, it's easier than ever to stay in touch with those we love, even if they live far away.

As a member of Monadnock at Home, you have many opportunities to connect with others by volunteering or participating in our various programs and coffee groups. Don't think of your membership only as a convenience when you need a ride or a trusted service provider to repair an item in your home. We are much more than that. We're also here to help each other minimize isolation and engage



in activities that are thought provoking, fun, and put a smile on your face. Who knows, by participating in our programs, you may even kick your happiness level up a notch!



Meal Train – We Want Your Feedback!

In the past, you may have made a meal for a friend who was recovering from an injury or hospital stay or maybe a friend has done so for you. Wouldn't it be nice for MaH members to help out fellow MaH members with a home cooked meal when needed? The proposed Meal Train program is intended for short-term recovery periods, such as recuperating from a hospital stay or injury or helping during a time of bereavement.

In order to gauge the interest level for such a program, we would like to gather a list of members who would be interested in helping a fellow MaH member by occasionally making and delivering a meal.

MaH staff will coordinate the logistics and communicate between the MaH volunteer and the recipient. This will be limited to members helping members for now, and may grow to include volunteers helping with the delivery in the future.

If you would like to sign up to be a Meal Train member volunteer please email msc@monadnockathome.org or call 603-371-0809. If we receive enough interest, we will update you with a launch date. If a meal is needed for a member in the future, staff will reach out to the member volunteers and see if they are available to assist. If yes, then we will communicate the necessary information.

Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering for this new program!

Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director



Greetings! Call me optimistic, but once we are near the end of February, my mind is on spring! In my mind, I start to imagine walking on pavement with ease — no ice, no snow. I'm heading out the door without a coat and feeling the warm

sun hit me. As winter drags on, it's not just the warm weather and lack of snow, but the ease that I long for.

At Monadnock at Home, we strive to pass along as much ease as we can to members. Passing on referrals to trusted services providers, coordinating rides and other volunteer assistance, watching the weather forecast for planned programs — we hope these actions provide some ease to members. In this issue of *At Home*, we've included tips for happiness and isolation, a new benefit to help members in their time of need, instructions on using transportation services, and

more. I hope that the information here helps make it easier to take advantage of many of the benefits your Monadnock at Home membership provides.

*...we hope
these actions
provide some ease
to members*

In the article about transportation, we share that 25% of active MaH members currently use this service. Monadnock at Home was founded on the principle of offering peace of mind and the reassurance of knowing who to call when assistance is needed. Transportation is a perfect example of how Monadnock at Home provides many benefits, but the types of services and the

frequency of services you use may fluctuate over time. Some members have weekly requests and some just a few times a year, some attend many of our social programs, but don't have many service requests. Knowing we are one phone call away and ready to help is the biggest benefit of all! Whether you use a little or a lot of services right now, know that Monadnock at Home along with our wonderful volunteers are ready to help.

Another Successful MaH Soup Delivery Season

A special thank you to Mayfair Farm for donating homemade soups again this year! Nothing beats homemade soup in the winter and our staff and members are so grateful! Thank you also to our volunteers who help make the program run. From hosting the soup drop and pick up site, to bringing the soup to the member's door, we appreciate all you do!



that delivered the soup were very pleasant to chat with. Good job all around - 5 stars!"

— Fran, MaH member

Words of appreciation:

"I love it! It's been so nice and its really gourmet soup! Mayfair Farm has always been a favorite of mine and it's been a real treat! It gives me something to look forward to!"

— Roberta, MaH member

"An introduction to variety - they were all very good! The two gentlemen

"I think the soup was delicious. The varieties were great and sometimes when I got them I was not sure I would like them but I tried them all and all were delicious. So happy to be with Monadnock at Home."

— Maureen, MaH member

"I just love doing this! I look forward

to seeing my people!

— Kathy, MaH volunteer

"The thing that we hear from the people is how much they love the soup! So, Mayfair Farm should know how much it is appreciated! Their eyes light up when they see us because they know they are getting their soup! We spend a few minutes chatting with everyone, asking how they are, a little check in."

— Bill, MaH Volunteer.

Bill went on to share how it's good for the volunteers to get out and see people too and the soup delivery provides this opportunity.

Thank you again to MayFair Farm and to everyone who makes our soup program happen! We could not do it without you!

"Coffee" Group through the Years

by Deanna Mullins

The Monadnock at Home Coffee Group began meeting a number of years ago at the Bagel Mill in Peterborough. After a few years, the group changed its meeting spot to Parker House Coffee at Noone Falls. This was a nice somewhat midway point between the towns that we serve. MaH members enjoyed getting

This has always been an independent group with staff dropping in here and there or getting involved if the group needs help finding a new meeting place. Over the years, this group that once met monthly has begun gathering twice a month. Sometimes they decide it would be fun to meet somewhere



A gazebo get together for the MaH Coffee Group behind the United Church of Jaffrey

together for coffee and to visit with other members. Once Parker House Coffee moved its location, MaH staff contacted the Jaffrey Civic Center director, who was very happy to welcome the group. Through all of the location changes, the group has persevered.

In 2020, a few months after the COVID shut down, the group needed a meeting spot that was outside where they could maintain a safe social distance, but still enjoy each other's company. The parking lot of the United Church of Jaffrey, was a perfect spot. It is a peaceful spot surrounded by trees, with a gazebo for shelter from the rain, and a memory garden. MaH members brought their own lawn chairs – and their own beverages – and they would gather outdoors and catch up with each other. When the cold weather came, the group moved back indoors to the Jaffrey Civic Center where they would be warm and have the added bonus of enjoying art exhibits.

for lunch on a non-Coffee Group day. We joke about continuing to call this the "Coffee Group" when they no longer meet in a coffee house. But the focus of this group has never been the coffee – it has always been connecting with other members who turn into friends.

Recently we have had some interest in alternating locations to make this fun social group accessible to more members. This year, February through April, we are excited to hold Coffee Group in both Peterborough and Jaffrey! In place of a separate "Drop-In Program," MaH staff will attend the Peterborough location as well. The meeting spot could adjust once the warmer weather returns. We will keep you updated. We had a great turnout for the February Coffee Group and we hope more members will attend in the future. Maybe we will even surprise everyone with coffee sometime!

Member Lending Library



Do you have books you'd like to share with other members or perhaps there's a book you'd like to borrow from a member? We're reaching out to see if there is any interest in forming a member library. If you'd like to participate, please call Sandra or Deanna at 603-371-0809 and we'll get the ball rolling!



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.*

Social Isolation and Cognitive Health

by Sandra Faber



A recent study by Johns Hopkins researchers found that social isolation among adults is associated with a higher risk of developing dementia. Dr. Thomas Cudjoe, an assistant professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins and a senior author of the study, said in a news release, “Social connections matter for our cognitive health, and the risk of social isolation is potentially modifiable for older adults.”

The study tracked 5,022 U.S. citizens with an average age of 76, with no signs of dementia and not living in a residential care facility. 23% of participants were socially isolated and 77% were not. Adjusting for demographic difference and health factors, the study showed that over the course of nine years, the risk factor for developing dementia was 27% higher for those who were socially isolated, compared to those who were not.

The pandemic has gotten us to

think more about social isolation among all age groups. But, since one in four older adults in the United States experience social isolation, it is important for this group to assess their situation and take steps to increase their social interactions.

A second study looking at the impact of technology on social isolation showed that access to technology can help prevent social isolation. This may be the case, and platforms like Zoom certainly helped during the pandemic, but it’s a lot more fun to enjoy each other’s company in-person!

Joining a group and taking advantage of social opportunities that are available is a great first step. In 2022, Monadnock at Home provided 50 social/educational programs to members, averaging seven attendees per program. If you have not participated in one of our programs in the past, we hope you will give one a try this year!

Besides purely social programs such as Coffee Group and ice cream socials, we also offer many programs centering around wellness. Our Stronger Memory program started up in February. This program not only provides practical ways to utilize memory functions, but it also provides a gathering space to share experiences, concerns, and life memories with peers. Recently, participants shared their first job experiences. This led to many realizing their first jobs were similar and some even grew up near one another!

In April, we are planning our second Monadnock at Home’s Got Talent program. This was a huge success a few years back. Recalling our past and sharing it with others helps to make and grow our social connections, which improve quality of life, and you guessed it, reduces isolation – which we now know is good for our health! Please join us!

Covered Bridges of New Hampshire with Kim Varney Chandler

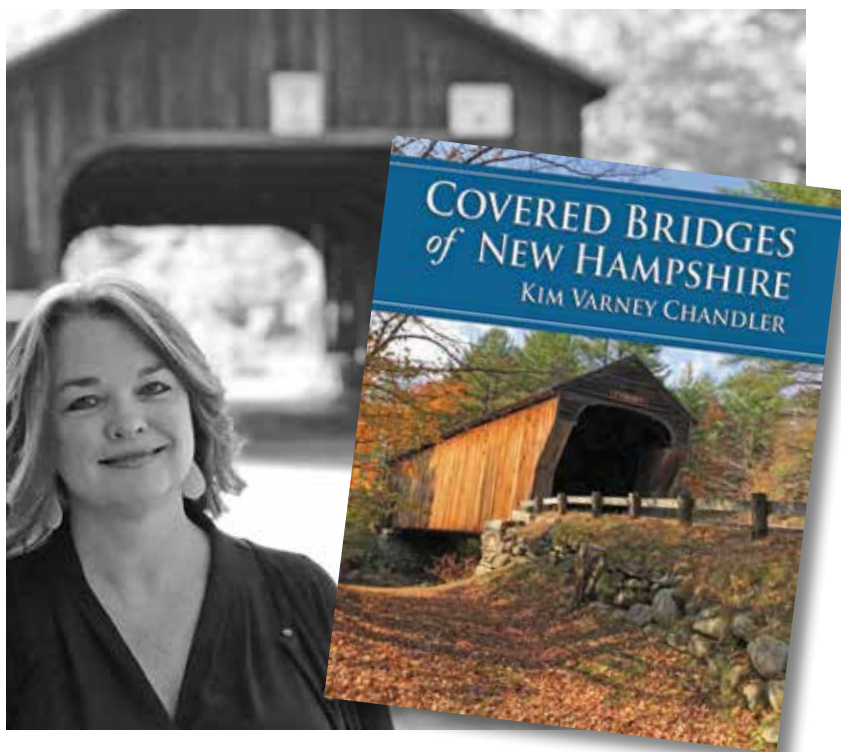
Monadnock at Home members ended the year learning the history of New Hampshire's covered bridges from Kim Chandler. Kim, a former board member of Monadnock at Home, is a high school councilor and author of the engaging and beautifully illustrated book *Covered Bridges of New Hampshire*.

During the pandemic, Kim took her skills in photography and her love of history and delved deeper into a project she had developed a passion for years earlier: the history of New Hampshire's covered bridges.

Kim wowed the group not only with the gorgeous photos she took of each

Monadnock at Home memory that is sure to surface each time they think of covered bridges.

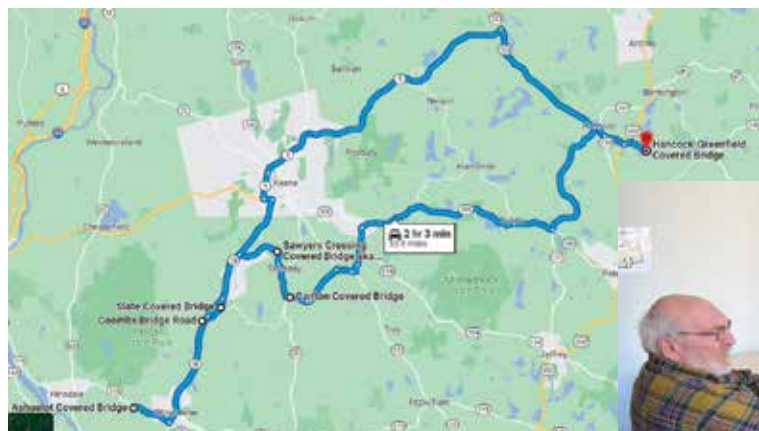
"On an outing to visit Saint-Gaudens National Park in Cornish, NH, we approached a covered bridge that crossed the Connecticut River to Windsor, Vermont. Our bus driver pulled over after noticing a sign cautioning vehicles over 10 feet from entering the bridge," Cyndy explained.



the experience added some extra excitement!

As Kim's presentation ended, many members showed interest in visiting bridges and bringing along the book to read the history while in the presence of each bridge.

Typing NH covered bridges into Google Maps will display their locations. I gave this a try and found



bridge, but the companion historical photos and factual account of the design, building, and sometimes rebuilding of the bridges. Kim's account not only made us appreciate the historical significance of New Hampshire's bridges, but the community effort that has been required throughout the years to retain these beautiful structures.

MaH members Owen Houghton and Cyndy Martell shared an early

"I was eager to do my part in navigating the safe passage," Owen added, "I exited the van and began to block traffic as I guided the van down the middle of the bridge to a successful crossing."

"We all held our collective breath," Cyndy exclaimed. They both agreed,

that starting from the Hancock-Greenfield Covered Bridge I could travel down to the Ashuelot Covered Bridge and back, seeing six covered bridges in a two-hour driving time. Add in lunch and historical readings from the book and you have yourself a day trip!



Getting to Medical Appointments after Giving up Driving

One of the many services that Monadnock at Home provides to members is volunteer-driven transportation services. We work in partnership with Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) to help members get to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other essential needs. Last year MaH received 539 medical appointment ride requests from our members and 89 requests for trips to the grocery store. Approximately 25% of MaH members no longer drive and are currently utilizing our transportation services. In our recent member survey, 32% of the respondents who are still driving answered "yes" to the question "Have you ever considered giving up driving?"

If you are one of those 32% of respondents, or if you have simply wondered about the process for requesting a ride, read on to learn the process of requesting volunteer transportation to a medical or social service appointments. (In the next newsletter, we will discuss the process for grocery shopping.)

Step 1: Give us a call at 603-371-0809. We are happy to take the information for your requested ride or answer any questions you may have about getting help with transportation.

Step 2: Give us notice AT LEAST five business days prior to your appointment – not including the day you need the ride. This gives more time to find a volunteer driver and increases the likelihood that the ride will be filled. We do understand that sometimes a medical appointment is ordered by a doctor that results in less notice. Please call us in this case as well, as we can assess the likelihood of filling the short-notice request at that particular time and also discuss other options with you,

including our independent service providers that provide paid transportation.

Step 3: Give us the details. When you call to request a ride, we will ask for the

ride is filled. If the ride is not filled on the ride board, we make calls to volunteers in case they had not seen the posted request. You will also receive a call from the driver



following information in order to post the ride request:

- ☐ Appointment Date
- ☐ Appointment Time
- ☐ Length of the Appointment
- ☐ Destination – including practice & doctor name for a medical appointment

It is as easy as that to request a ride and we take over from there! In most cases we will post the ride with CVTC. The first time you make a transportation request from MaH, you will receive a call from CVTC to set you up in their system. This allows us to expand the volunteer pool and increase the likelihood that you will receive a ride. Behind the scenes, MaH staff is monitoring your request and will notify you when the

the day before your appointment or earlier, to introduce themselves and confirm your pick-up time. If for some reason the ride does not get filled, we will reach out to you to discuss options.

What if you need to change to your request?

If you need to make a change or cancel your request, it is important that you call Monadnock at Home directly. We will take care of making the change or canceling the request. If a driver has already picked up the ride, MaH staff will make sure the volunteer gets notified.

We know that making the decision to give up driving is a difficult one, but if that time comes, Monadnock at Home is here to provide assistance and peace of mind!

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*Twenty one years
of serving friends
and family in the
Monadnock Region*



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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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