



# 2021 Annual Report

## Neighbors Driving Neighbors

PO Box 142 Mt. Vernon, ME 04352 207-860-0677  
neighborsdrivingneighbors.com

Serving the towns of Belgrade, Fayette, Mt. Vernon, Rome and Vienna

Volunteers providing rides to those who don't drive so that they can more easily stay in their own homes.



Barbara York

**We  
Love  
our  
Riders!**



“Stay interested in the world and you will be interesting, maintain your independence, keep busy with hobbies and creative works, don't complain too much about your arthritic pains, and above all, be loving and supportive to your family and friends. Barbara does of all this well, and so continues to be an inspiration to me as I also face the challenges of age.”

Barbara York has never had a license and is “so grateful” for the rides she receives from Neighbors Driving Neighbors. A rider since NDN opened their doors in 2015, Barbara receives rides to medical appointments as her son and daughter-in-law live next door and can take her for errands on the weekends.

Barbara has lived in Belgrade for 81 years. She shared, “I was born in Weld, then my family moved to Belgrade when I was 4.” She was married for 50 years until her husband died 12 years ago. Together they raised four children -- 2 daughters and two sons. Barbara worked at the Belgrade Town Office for 15 years and was a poll worker for 30. “I used to know a lot of people in town but not so much anymore.”

“All of the drivers have been wonderful”, said Barbara. One driver in particular has become a friend, “Sandy has taken me on a lot of rides and I enjoy her company.”

Driver Sandy Colt says, "I have had the good fortune to drive Barbara for Neighbors Driving Neighbors for about 5 years. I look forward to these drives (even the early morning ones!) as Barbara is always a warm and energizing person to spend time with. She and I share laughs, and griefs, stories and recipes. Barbara is a model for me of how to age well:  
(continued)



Lynda Hadsell and Ditzee

**Lynda Hadsell , a rider since the spring of 2019 said, “I am so thankful for all of the NDN volunteer drivers. They are safe drivers, so very kind and I so appreciate that they are willing to do what they do.”**

Along with her 9 lb. medical alert service dog, Lynda Hadsell of Belgrade receives rides and grocery pick-up from NDN. “I was able to drive until both a car accident in 2015 and my Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome pretty much put me out of commission”, said Lynda.

Lynda is able to receive transportation via KVCAP for medical appointments and NDN helps with other destinations.

“My experience with Neighbors Driving Neighbors has been great. I would not have been able to get my aquatic therapy which has kept me from living in a wheelchair. Being able to go to the pool is a lifesaver.”

# Celebrating 6 years of service to our communities!

From the Desk of the President  
November, 2021

NDN, like most groups, continues to struggle in balancing Covid-19 risks and the needs of our riders. We restricted all but deliveries as Covid infections surged in the fall of 2020; then we picked up doing limited rides and grocery and other deliveries until late spring of 2021, when we were back to nearly normal rides. However, the recent surges in Covid, all due to the much more infectious Delta variant, have led us to cut back once again.

We hope the surge will subside as vaccines reach more and more of the unvaccinated pockets in Maine and our service area. Overall, Maine has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country, especially in the elderly, and one of the lowest overall infection rates compared to the rest of the country. But Maine is now belatedly suffering its own surge, so we have cut back to medical rides and deliveries only, and we will stay hunkered down until the surge subsides, hopefully by December. Our 4-member Medical Advisory Committee is meeting monthly, making adjustments in our Covid policies in order to stay up-to-date and safe.

Financially, we have done well and stayed under budget, thanks to your and others' generosity. We also received support from funders, including the feds, for our staff salaries and from other grantors who subsidized Covid-related expenses. Generous contributions from the community came from many individual and some corporate donations, the annual NDN breakfast at the Mt. Vernon Community Center, and strong participation in our on-line auction. Impressively for a non-profit, much less than 10% of our expenses are for administrative costs.

Our biggest challenge currently is replacing retiring board members, some officers, and our executive director. We have search and nominating committees working on that now. Should any of you be interested in helping us as we grow and mature, let me or Sandy Wright know of any interest you might have in serving on one of our essential committees or on the board itself.

Thank you and please stay masked in public for now!

Dan Onion, MD, MPH  
President, NDN

## About Our Services

*Between October 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021, volunteer drivers donated 513 hours of their time. The value of these hours, according to <https://independentsector.org>, is \$14,634. Thirty volunteer drivers completed 262 requests (rides and deliveries) for 37 riders and drove 10,157 miles (a value of \$5,586!). Many additional hours and miles were donated this & every year by board, committee and community members.*

*Despite Covid restrictions, NDN added 16 new riders to its roster between October of 2020 and October of 2021 and brought on 16 new drivers.*



NDN's Board & Staff @ fall retreat

## **What do our board members value about Neighbors Driving Neighbors?**

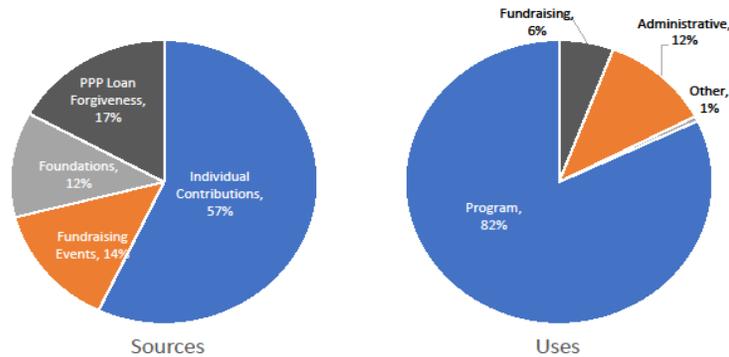
The most important thing to me is that NDN is all about local community: community driven + community run for + by friends + neighbors. Libby Harville, Vienna

I love being part of a community that takes care of people's needs, from driving to foodbank to gathering on dark winter days with neighbors. Pat Onion, Vienna

The immediacy of the knowledge that good deeds are being done -- the obvious benefit to the rider and the rewards to the driver. Bill Rosenberg, Mt. Vernon

## Sources and Uses of Funds

Neighbors Driving Neighbors  
October 2020 through September 2021



With GRATITUDE to All Who Make NDN SHINE!



### 2020 - 2021 Grant Funders

Kennebec Savings Bank  
John T. Gorman Foundation  
United Way of Kennebec Valley

Belgrade Regional Health Center  
Maine Community Foundation  
United Way of Mid-Maine

Elsie and Wm. Viles Foundation  
Agnes M. Lindsay Trust

Thanks to all of the artisans and other generous donors, as well as generous bidders to our annual auction! Special thanks to former Ride Coordinator and volunteer extraordinaire, Irene Goff. Irene, since retiring in January of 2021, has been our volunteer bookkeeper in addition to being an NDN driver. Also, much gratitude to Sarah Firth for her professional facilitation during our retreat. **THANKS TO ALL WHO GIVE SO GENEROUSLY TO NEIGHBORS DRIVING NEIGHBORS!**

### How can YOU give to NDN?

- Send a check to NDN, PO Box 142, Mt. Vernon, ME 04352.
- **Become an NDN Sustaining Supporter** by visiting [www.NeighborsDrivingNeighbors.org](http://www.NeighborsDrivingNeighbors.org)—this increases predictability and sustainability of NDN services. It is more convenient for you: no need to keep resubmitting donations to remain a NDN supporter.
- Apply to be a volunteer driver, and,
- Spread the word to your neighbors that NDN provides free rides to those folks in Belgrade, Fayette, Mt. Vernon, Rome and Vienna that “need a lift”!

### About Our Board of Directors

*NDN’s Board consists of representatives from each of our 5 towns: Harald Bredesen, Mt. Vernon; Kelli Burnham, Fayette; Shelly Fitzgerald, Rome; Libby Harville, Vienna; Jeff Lovitz, Belgrade; Dan Onion, Vienna; Pat Onion, Vienna; Peter Roderick, Rome; William Rosenberg, Mt. Vernon; Becky Seel, Belgrade; Deb Stahler, Mt. Vernon; Paula Thomson, Fayette; Jo Tibby, Mt. Vernon; Tanna Witkin, Belgrade and Sandy Wright, Mt. Vernon.*

*On October 19, 2021, the NDN Board of Directors and staff participated in a retreat to look at our past, our present and our future. It was a worthwhile exercise and one that will move us safely through the next couple of years. Keep your ear to the ground to see what is afoot!*

*Here are two more photos from that day.*



## FOUNDERS PAGE

Dan Onion, Sandy Wright and Shelly Fitzgerald are the real heroes of Neighbors Driving Neighbors. Without their dedication, passion and foresight, NDN may not be in existence today. All have been board officers since the original board was formed in 2015. In 2022, while they all plan to continue as board members, they are stepping down as officers and are encouraging other members to take the lead.

Though NDN provided its first ride in November of 2015, there were 3 years of conversations and community organizing that took place before that could happen.



**DAN ONION**

Dan Onion, while practicing medicine in Augusta, found that the ideal way to best serve his aging patients was to add geriatrics to his practice so he became board certified in geriatrics. He then went on to found Maine Dartmouth Geriatric Medicine. It was with this eye that Dan became involved in the Coalition of Maine Senior Drivers which drew his attention to how his neighbors were struggling to access medical care.

Around this time, the fall of 2012, Mt. Vernon Community Partnership Corp. (CPC) began discussing their concern for a lack of reliable transportation for their community members. Sandy Wright of the CPC reached out to Dan and, together, they facilitated a series of community focus groups to determine the needs of citizens in their towns. The #1 need identified was transportation.

Meanwhile, Shelly Fitzgerald and Tim Pike of Rome were noticing that there were members of their church congregation who were not able to get to church or medical appointments. Dan invited them to attend one of the community forums. Excited at the possibility of joining the work that had begun in the Mt. Vernon/Vienna area, Shelly and Tim held a community forum in Belgrade. They, too, found a desperate need for and enthusiasm about one-on-one transportation services for Belgrade and Rome.

Fayette was added to round out the NDN service area to the 5 towns that are included today. Grants were written and funds received (via the CPC) from the Maine Community Foundation in 2014 to hire experienced consultants that were able to navigate the establishment of a volunteer rides program. In 2015, funds were granted from the Betterment Fund and the Bingham Program to hire a Coordinator. Thus, NDN was launched with a Board of Directors, non-profit status, by-laws, mission statement and its very first drivers and riders.

Quoting Shelly, "Neighbors Driving Neighbors continues to attract committed volunteers and riders. Our mission continues to be understood and appreciated by many community people." Shelly shared that a rider told her that, "It is a lot easier to call an organization for a ride rather than burning out my friends."



**SHELLY FITZGERALD**



**SANDY WRIGHT**

Dan, Sandy and Shelly will be sorely missed in their leadership roles on the NDN board. We are grateful for their early and continued involvement in the organization. Fortunately for our communities, they are active in their volunteer work and vision for healthy, connected communities. And, due to that NDN has a bright future!