

AGE FRIENDLY HEALTHY LIVING WEEKEND

“Developing Strength & Balance to Overcome Everyday Challenges”

Event Overview

Over the past year-and-a-half, Age Friendly South Portland (AFSP) has participated in the Maine Council on Aging’s “Municipal Data Across Sectors for Healthy Aging” project, alongside a diverse array of organizations based in our community. The purpose of this project has been to create a data dashboard containing relevant information regarding the needs of South Portland’s older adult population, with the specific objective of helping the city’s stakeholders and leadership make data-driven decisions that could be measured over time.

As a result of compiling South Portland’s data dashboard, it clearly demonstrated older residents’ challenges with falls and fall-related risks. For example, in 2020 nearly one quarter (24%) of all EMS calls reported by residents over 60 years of age were for fall-related incidents in private residences, with the majority of those calls (66%) reported by adults between the ages of 70 and 89 years. Furthermore, while many organizations offer a range of strength, balance, and active programming in our community, there is currently no central “anchor” program based in the city with a concerted effort to tackle falls and fall-related challenges head on.

After discussion with members of the Maine Council on Aging’s workgroup, it was decided that the creation of such an anchor program would be of immense value to the community – and a concept that could be built upon with additional programming and resources over time – to help spread awareness of fall prevention and intervention best practices, lessons learned, and available resources.

The details included in the sections below identify an initial framework for the program, tentatively titled “Age Friendly Healthy Living Weekend” with a theme of “Developing Strength & Balance to Overcome Everyday Challenges,” for which feedback will be solicited from all involved stakeholders and subsequently reviewed and incorporated prior to the event.

Event Objective

Establish an annual falls prevention and intervention informational event in partnership with key healthcare, community, and business partners to promote strength, balance, and active programming.

Event Framework

Day 1 Activities

- Date/Time: Friday, September 24, 2021; 6:00 – 7:30PM (1.5 hours)
- Location: South Portland Community Center (“Senior Wing” event hall)
- Purpose: Provide an educational session, including a keynote presentation followed by a panel discussion focused on increasing the awareness of falls prevention and intervention practices through multiple perspectives highlighting the importance of strength, balance, and staying active. A draft itinerary for the event includes:
 - Introductory Welcome: Chad MacLeod, Susan Henderson (AFSP)

- Keynote Presentation: Jason Adour (Maine Strong Balance Center)
- Panel Discussion:
 - ED/Hospital Perspective: Karen Taylor (Maine Medical Center; retired)
 - Physical Therapy Perspective: Jana Grant (Northern Light Homecare and Hospice), Bernadette Kroon (University of Southern Maine)
 - Pharmacist Perspective: TBD (University of New England)
 - Community-Based Organization Perspective: Anna Guest (SMAA)
 - Community Member/Lived Experience Perspective: Maxine Beecher (resident)
 - Bike/Pedestrian Safety Perspective: Tony Grande (South Portland Bike/Pedestrian Committee)
- Involvement Partners: Maine Strong Balance Center, Northern Light Homecare and Hospice, University of Southern Maine, University of New England, Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA), South Portland Bike/Pedestrian Committee, Age Friendly South Portland

Day 2 Activities

- Date/Time: Saturday, September 25, 2021; 9:00 AM – 1:00PM (4 hours)
- Locations:
 - Fair Event: South Portland Community Center (Nutter Road parking lot; for weather alternative, “Senior Wing” event hall)
 - Walking Event: South Portland High School (outdoor track; for weather alternative, TBD)
- Purpose: Host a fair-like event including partners showcasing and/or demonstrating key information, tools, and best practices that can assist with and/or inform falls prevention and intervention practices. As part of the fair event, provide an opportunity for older adult attendees to receive a free, in-person falls risk assessment screening by Maine Strong Balance Center and University of New England Balance Club members. Additionally, attendees can participate in a walking event to learn more about healthy living practices, including strength and balance exercises, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and much more. Additional detail for key activities include:
 - *Check-In:* Individuals attending the fair event will “check in” at a central location to receive introductory materials, sign up for future mailings/opportunities from Age Friendly South Portland, etc., and generally learn more about how to most fully participate in the day’s activities.
 - *Falls Risk-Assessment Screening:* Individuals attending the fair event could also choose to participate in a free falls risk-assessment screening. Participants would receive (a) a scorecard including the results of their assessment that could be used for future benchmarking purposes and (b) a checklist of potential partners at the fair to visit based on the categorization of their assessment’s results (e.g., no immediate future risk, potential future risk, current risk).
 - *Walking Event:* Interested attendees could also continue on from the fair event to a walking event where they would learn more about how to stay active, introduce



strength/balance exercises into their daily routines, and stay safe when walking or bicycling in the public by using dedicated paths available throughout the city.

- **Involved Partners:** Maine Strong Balance Center, Northern Light Homecare and Hospice, University of Southern Maine, University of New England, Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA), South Portland Bike/Pedestrian Committee, South Portland Community Center, South Portland Public Library, Maine Council on Aging, HealthInfoNet, City of South Portland, Age Friendly South Portland, and others (pending confirmation)

To incentivize attendance and participation in each of the event's days/activities, attendees would be provided with a "punch card," whereby the number of activities (e.g., keynote, panel, fair, falls risk screening, walking event, etc.) that they are involved in would correspond to how many raffles they are entered into to receive prizes from local businesses. The purpose of the incentive is that if attendees participate in each day's activities, they would be best educated and served in their falls prevention/intervention practices.

Continue Learning

For more information about Age Friendly South Portland's "Age Friendly Healthy Living Weekend" event, including to learn more about how to participate in the event's activities, please contact Chad MacLeod, Vice Chair of Age Friendly South Portland, via email at cmacleod039@gmail.com.

As key partners confirm their interest and participation in the event's activities, a more formal communication will be made to all involved stakeholders with detailed logistics and additional information. Related materials will be shared later in the summer in the late-July/early-August timeframe.

