



## Economy Brings Neighbors Together

The local Food and Fuel Partnership for Caledonia and Southern Essex counties is comprised of concerned citizens, faith groups, non profits and state agencies who realized the challenges many of their neighbors would face as the rising cost of oil drove up prices last summer. Through these partnerships it became clear that our communities are stronger for the safety net created by neighbors helping neighbors. With new concerns growing daily the value of this safety net will be more important than ever. Please read on to find out where to turn when you need help, how to get involved and even suggestions on where to meet your neighbors.

## Who are my Neighbors?

Neighbors are part of the community we live in, whether they are just around the corner or several miles down the road. With our busy lives it can be hard to find the time or opportunity to meet our neighbors. Schools, churches and service organizations can help us stay connected in the community.

**Neighborhood Organizations** can also be formed to build a sense of community and provide an opportunity for neighbors to meet. These groups may organize events, share concerns or create a network to share skills, needs and services. Neighbors in the "4Seasons Neighborhood Organization" of Saint Johnsbury have been meeting for the last 5 years; their mission is "to make their neighborhood an even greater place to live by getting neighbors together". Additional neighborhood organizations are currently forming in the Saint Johnsbury area with the support of the **Community Justice Center**; if you would like information about joining or forming a group in your community contact **Dinah Yessne at 748-2977** for more information.

## SMALL WAYS TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Any contribution of time or money, no matter how small, helps to make a difference in the overall well-being of our communities. Getting involved does NOT mean large commitments of time, energy or money.

Here are a few simple suggestions:

- Stop by. Leave a friendly note. Shovel walks without being asked. Check for icy conditions on walkways if your neighbor is elderly or disabled. Find a reason to "check" in.
- Befriend a neighbor. Make time regularly to offer coffee or tea. Suggest short walks together. Offer to run an errand, walk a pet or share a ride. Include neighbors in a common cause mini-fundraiser or social event.
- Participate in a benefit activity to raise awareness and solicit small donations of food or money to support a local cause. Suggest an event to your child's teacher. Model community caring to your teens by taking them along to drop off food, to make donations, or to help a neighbor.

## Neighbors Continue the Circle of Care

Many of your neighbors have spent years working hard and helping others in the community. Over time, many older adults gain new appreciation for this circle of caring when they find themselves receiving the same generosity from others. Those who can no longer do the things they once enjoyed have shared with the staff from the Agency on Aging how much it means to have a neighbor call or check-in.

Volunteers delivering for the meals on wheels programs often say they get more than they give from the appreciation they receive as they bring meals to their homebound neighbors. There are many ways we can all help each other: remembering to look for that swirl of smoke that tells you your neighbors' house is warm or sharing a simple errand to the store can "make a world of difference".

Vermonters have always been independent and generous at the same time. This is how generations have created strong communities in northern Vermont. Today this tradition is more important than ever, as economic concerns grow daily. Sharing the skills and resources we have to offer, and knowing where to turn when we need help, can help each of us find security in the days ahead. For more information on volunteering or connecting with services for older adults contact the **Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont 1-800-642-5119**.



## Children and Caring Connections with Community

Recently, my grandson's Second Grade class decided to collect child-friendly, healthy, nonperishable food items for donation to the local food shelf. During the month of January, on each Monday morning, students brought in one healthy food item that they had been involved in choosing. The classroom buzzed each Monday morning as students proudly showed parents and any other passersby the "pile of food" their generosity was building. My grandson took great pleasure in the shopping-for-others experience; the first week he chose soup, the second, spaghetti sauce, the third baked beans, and the fourth applesauce. As I am sure his teacher had planned, making these decisions and participating in a group effort to respond to the needs of his community, had strengthened his understanding of what helping one another means when some within the community find themselves in need. And the cost of these four Monday morning lessons to his family? Approximately \$5.00. A small price to pay to ensure that an individual in our community, who may be struggling in this current economy, has something nutritious to eat.

I am just one proud grandmother among many who would like to remind you of how our rich tradition of compassionately caring communities is being preserved! I am rewarded, once again, by our Northeast Kingdom schools that do so much to instill the heartfelt desire to help others in our children and proud of my grandson who renews my hope for a world that will continue in kindness and caring.



## VERMONT 2-1-1

**By dialing 2-1-1 from any phone in Vermont, all Vermonters are provided with personal assistance that assures access to appropriate, accurate and comprehensive information about federal, state, and community resources.**



## Bridges

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Food and Fuel Partnership for Caledonia and Southern Essex

## GIVING VOICE TO YOUR HEART

In these tough times, even the smallest acts of kindness go a long way toward helping our neighbors make it through.



### Donations of Food, Time or Money to Food Shelves

#### Kingdom Community Services

Call 751-8581

#### The Open Door

Call 684-3903

#### NEKCA Food Shelf

Call 748-6040

#### Lyndon Area Food Shelf

Call 626-5586

#### Groton Food Shelf

Call 584-3276

#### Sheffield Food Shelf

Call 745-7491

#### Hardwick Area Food Shelf

Call 472-5940

#### Lunenburg /Gilman Food Shelf

Call 892-7713

#### Helping Other People Everyday

Call 626-3228

### Volunteer Opportunities

#### Area Agency on Aging & AmeriCorps

Call 748-5182

#### Retired Senior Volunteer Program

Call 626-5135

#### Faith in Action

Call 626-1212

#### Rural Community Transportation (RCT)

Call 748-8170

#### Umbrella

Call 748-8645

#### Community Justice Center

Call 748-2977

### Monetary Donation Suggestions

#### Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Fuel/utility and emergency housing/ financial assistance & more

#### Area Agency on Aging

Support programs and services for older adults

#### Green Mountain United Way

Community program support

#### Umbrella

Support services for victims of domestic and/or sexual violence

#### Local faith congregations

Discretionary financial assistance

#### Local Neighbor to Neighbor organizations

Neighbor Help Funds

## Attention Saint Johnsbury area Neighbors

- **Disabled American Veterans**
- **Transportation System Seeking Volunteers.**
- A van is available and waiting in Saint Johnsbury for volunteers to assist area veterans in getting to daytime medical appointments in the Dartmouth and White River area. Volunteers need only a valid driver's license and willingness to drive as their schedule and the need calls for. Total time commitment is usually 4 to 6 hours and funds for lunch are provided. For more information contact: **Winston Dowland 895-4680**