

WICKED Aging

spectrum
generations

1.800.639.1553
spectrumgenerations.org

The Central Maine Area
Agency on Aging
& Resource Center



The Waldo County Community Center in Belfast celebrated individuals in the Bridges Adult Day Program, with a beach-themed BBQ on August 21.

WINTER 2025-2026

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SOMETHING NEW IS COMING TO BRIDGES



We're excited to give you a first glimpse of a fresh new look for **Bridges Home & Community Services!** As we continue to grow and evolve to better meet the needs of those we serve,

you'll start to see some updates — including a new logo and visual identity — that reflect our commitment to connection, care, and community.

This rebrand represents more than just a new image. It symbolizes how we're strengthening the programs you know and trust — including Adult Day, Community Support Services, and Personal Support Services — while also welcoming Community Case Management as the newest addition under the Bridges umbrella. Previously part of Spectrum Generations, Community Case Management is excited to join the Bridges family and continue providing critical support to individuals and families across our region.

While the full rollout won't happen until the new year, we wanted to share this early preview with you — our valued community — as we prepare for what's ahead.

Stay tuned... there's more to come!

Community Case Managers Making a World of Difference

Community Case Managers develop individualized support plans that reflect each client's vision for a meaningful life. They help identify and prioritize needs, coordinate services, and provide support during crises and other challenging personal situations.

Last fall, one of our Community Case Managers began working with an adult with an intellectual disability who was experiencing a significant crisis. Over the course of a year, this individual experienced two additional crises, one of which led to an overnight hospital stay as an outpatient.

The first crisis under our care occurred in November 2024, prompting the case manager to submit a request for Section 21 waiver funding. This waiver provides access to a variety of different housing options tailored to individuals with developmental disabilities. Unfortunately, the request was denied, due to insufficient historical documentation of the individual's escalating behaviors.

Learning from this, the case manager ensured all future incidents were thoroughly documented and incorporated into an updated person-centered plan.

During a subsequent crisis, the individual was involved in a violent episode witnessed by her guardian, home support staff, a Developmental Services (DS) Crisis worker, and police. She was transported to the emergency room

and admitted to a behavioral health unit. However, her guardian declined to have her return home due to safety concerns, leaving her effectively homeless.

While hospitalized, the individual underwent a psychological evaluation, and efforts were made to place her in a crisis stabilization unit—a short-term residential program for adults experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Unfortunately, all agencies declined because of her developmental disability.

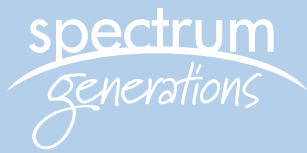
The case manager, in collaboration with the guardian, support team, and DS Crisis staff, confirmed the individual's eligibility for a DS Crisis bed or emergency transitional housing. A new Section 21 reconsideration packet was submitted—this time advocating for placement in a residential waiver home. After working closely with a waiver specialist and updating all required documentation, the individual was approved for the waiver and has since

been placed in a safe and supportive home that meets her needs.

This is the work of our case managers here at Bridges Home & Community Services, according to CCM Director, Sandra Labelle. "When it comes to meeting the needs of an intellectually disabled adult, a case manager can make a world of difference."

For more information or to make a referral, call Sandra Labelle at (207) 620-1667.

In the third quarter of Spectrum Generations' fiscal year 2025, eleven Community Case Managers served a total of 329 individuals across our central and Midcoast service area.



OUR MISSION:

to promote and advance the well-being and independence of older and disabled adults, with the support of their care partners, to live in their community of choice.

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COMMUNITY CENTERS:

Cohen Community Center

22 Town Farm Road
Hallowell

Muskie Community Center

38 Gold Street
Waterville

Waldo Community Center

18 Merriam Road
Belfast

AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER:

Midcoast Regional Center

(co-located with People Plus)
35 Union Street
Brunswick

WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER:

Critical Funding Gaps for Maine's Older Adults



In our spring newsletter we highlighted three bills before the 132nd Legislature—LD 709 (Respite for ME branding), LD 815 (respite funding), and LD 814 (the Older Mainer's Act to support Area Agencies on Aging).

Since then, LD 709 has passed, LD 815 secured just \$100,000, and LD 814 did not advance—but lawmakers did approve a one-time \$3 million supplemental appropriation for all five AAAs. These shifts leave our most vulnerable older Mainers at serious risk of losing access to basic services.

What Changed in Augusta?

LD 815 was funded at only \$100,000, far short of the \$2.25 million needed to extend respite care to all family caregivers statewide. LD 709 passed without any dedicated funding; the "Respite for ME" brand now exists, but the state's annual respite budget remains capped at roughly \$760,000 statewide. Currently limited to Alzheimer's/dementia care, the rules are being re-written to allow increased access to these limited funds. Bottom-line: Increased access... same amount of funding.

LD 814 failed to advance, yet the Legislature tucked a one-time \$3 million supplement into the state budget to shore up Older Americans Act programs for the short-term.

Spectrum Generations' FY 26 Allocation

Out of the \$3 million, Spectrum Generations received \$767,813. Our Board and Advisory Council have approved this funding to address the greatest shortfalls in Central Maine:

- **Home-delivered meals:** additional 36,400 meals (totaling 291,000 meals), yet community demand will outpace this capacity.
- **Maintain our social dining capacity:** look for new partners in underserved geographical regions.
- **Case management and social care coordination:** for roughly 250 older adults with complex or multi-health related social needs.
- **Respite and support services:** funding for

67 home modifications plus 517 hourly chore visits, but hundreds of caregivers still face unmet needs.

- Dedicate additional staff hours to **Medicare education and enrollment** with a goal of 600 more assisted enrollments over last year.
- Provide two additional **evidence-based classes** to the community.

Even with these new funds, Meals on Wheels waitlists will persist and family caregivers will continue to shoulder unsustainable burdens.

Why Fully Funding LD 814 Matters

Without the full \$9.75 million called for in LD 814, Area Agencies on Aging cannot:

- Eliminate nutrition service waitlists; expand social dining
- Hire dedicated staff for community navigation and in-home service brokering
- Sustain after-hours helplines and expand caregiver support groups
- Meet evidenced-based health promotion goals or launch AI-driven consumer tools

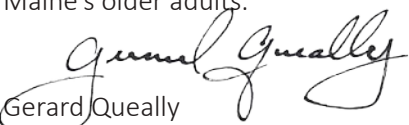
Each day older Mainers go without meals, case management, or respite care, their risk of accidents, isolation, and premature institutionalization increases.

Act: Protect Maine's Older Adults

The second session of the 132nd Legislature convenes soon. Please contact your state Representative and Senator today and urge them to:

1. Pass and fully fund LD 814 at \$9.75 million so Area Agencies on Aging can eliminate service waitlists and modernize delivery.
2. And while LD 815 cannot be resurrected, the passage and full funding of LD 814 will allow Spectrum Generations to allocate some additional resources toward respite care to meet growing community demand..

Make your voice heard in Augusta! Together, we can ensure every Older Mainer lives safely in the community they love. Thank you for standing with Spectrum Generations and Maine's older adults.


Gerard Queally
President and CEO

Delivering meals, kindness, and hope

ONE VOLUNTEER DRIVER'S STORY

ANDREI STRUKOV has been a volunteer driver with the Meals on Wheels program for about two years. Based out of the Muskie Community Center, he brings food, information, and a sense of hope and kindness to 15 individuals weekly on his route in the Waterville area.

The 66-year-old is tall, sprightly, and does not look his age as he loads large refrigerator bags filled with frozen meals into the back of his SUV. It is hard to believe that up until three years ago, he was confined to a wheelchair.

"After my spinal surgery," he said, "I had to slow down a bit." It used to be all work for Andrei, but after regaining his mobility, he reassessed what was important and thought he would "catch-up" on giving back. "I decided I have a very limited time left and money is not that important."

"I'm enjoying this so much," he said, referring to his role as a volunteer Meals on Wheels driver. "It's like a dog running around without a leash." The volunteer driver role suits him well too, as he can relate to the mobility issues several people on his route face daily.

When he lost his mobility, Andrei said he was depressed and felt isolated. "Imagine you are on the move your whole life and suddenly, your world shrinks to the size of your living room."

After people on his Meals on Wheels route read a blurb about his miraculous recovery in Spectrum Generations' newsletter, they wanted to know the name of the surgeon. Many on his route, he said, have limited mobility, and this article, "gave them hope that it is not forever." Spinal surgery sounds scary, he said, but it's not.



1



2



3

Andrei Strukov is a welcome sight to many of the people on his Meals on Wheels route. They laugh, talk, and connect. (1) Andrei prepares the refrigerator bags before loading them into his car. (2) Linda converses with Andrei about his upcoming vacation. (3) Andrei on his route delivering meals.

On one of his stops, two women wait on a porch for their meal delivery. Andrei smiles and says, "Hello friends, how are you doing today?" He then asks if they would like food, or food for thought, referring to a Spectrum Generations newsletter and a flyer on fuel assistance he has brought for them.

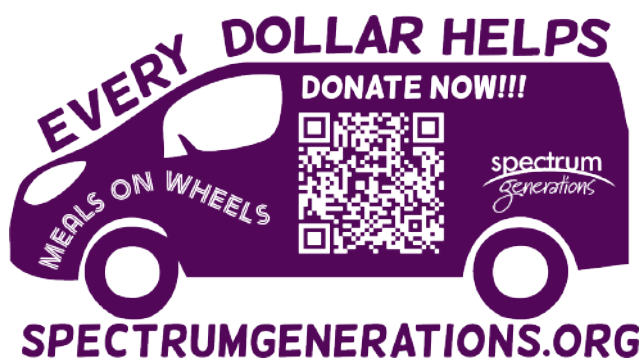
"The social aspect is pretty big," he said. "That's what bothered me a lot – being disconnected." There is no substitute for human connection.

After a visit, one person, "Linda," asks how long Andrei will be away on vacation. Without missing a beat, Andrei responds, "There's going to be a young good-looking guy delivering your food for me while I'm away." Linda said she will still miss him when he is gone.

Andrei reminisced about a person on his route who he had befriended who died. She was not wealthy and could not afford a taxi to take her around. "It sucks to be disabled and have no money," he said. Speaking on funding programs such as Meals on Wheels, he said, "who are we as a society if we can't take care of our neediest?"

■ A 2023 advisory report from the U.S. Surgeon General found that social connection increases the odds for survival by 50%. "Socially connected people tend to live longer, ...while those experiencing social deficits including isolation, loneliness, and poor-quality relationships, are more likely to die earlier..."

■ According to Meals on Wheels America, providers nationwide are overwhelmed by rising demand and limited funding, leaving many seniors on long waitlists. Despite efforts to innovate, more resources are urgently needed to support seniors facing hunger and isolation. Without increased funding, the crisis will worsen as the aging population grows.



You can help Maine's older adults struggling with hunger and isolation.

MEET OUR DIETITIAN!



KIRSTEN SOLOMON

is excited to offer 1:1 nutrition counseling through Spectrum Generations. If you're interested in learning more about how diet

can improve your overall health and well-being, feel free to call or email. To schedule a 1:1 counseling session or to get more information, contact:

(207) 620-1648

ksolomon@spectrumgenerations.org.

Malnutrition Awareness: WHY IT MATTERS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Did you know that older adults are at greater risk of malnutrition? Malnutrition happens when our bodies don't get enough of the nutrients they need — especially protein — to stay strong and healthy. It can cause weakness, fatigue, delayed healing, more falls and fractures, longer hospital stays, and challenges living independently.

Warning signs include poor appetite, unintentional weight loss, and reduced strength. Causes range from active disease treatment, chronic illness and side effects of medications to limited income or social isolation. While malnutrition often goes unnoticed, with awareness and support, it can be prevented.

At Spectrum Generations, reducing malnutrition is central to our mission. We support older adults through:

- CONGREGATE DINING & HOME-DELIVERED MEALS
- ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING FOR INDIVIDUALS AND CAREGIVERS
- INTERACTIVE NUTRITION WORKSHOPS AND HANDS-ON COOKING CLASSES
- EDUCATIONAL NEWSLETTERS

Every meal served is supported by community donations. Your contribution helps older adults receive the nutrition they need to stay healthy and independent.



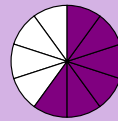
2 out of 3 recipients

report that meals make up half or more of all food eaten that day

COMBAT SOCIAL ISOLATION, AND PROVIDE CARE



8 out of 10 individuals say they see their friends more because of congregate dining



6 out of 10 people say Meals on Wheels helps them to live independently

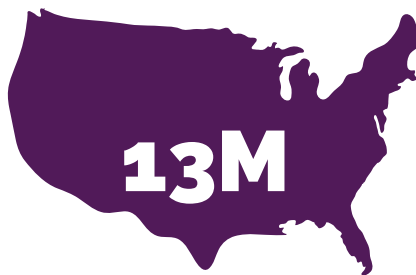


75% of home delivered meals participants

say regular visits from a driver or volunteer make them feel safer at home

Older adults are at greater risk of hunger and malnutrition.

Nearly 13 million older adults in the United States are threatened by or experience hunger



Older adults face higher malnutrition risk due to appetite loss, mobility issues, medications, and more



90% of our individuals say that the meals help **maintain or improve their health**



One study found **malnutrition rates dropped from 42% to 8%** after three months of Meals on Wheels



A Meals on Wheels study saw **food insecurity among older adults cut nearly in half**



70% of our participants say their other meals are simple, making ours their **most nutritious meal of the day**

Every tray served or meal delivered supports part of the bigger mission.

To promote and advance the well-being and independence of older and disabled adults, with the support of their care partners, to live in the community of their choice.

United Way of Kennebec Valley DAY OF ACTION

As part of their Day of Action, the United Way of Kennebec Valley, along with several community partners, provided a variety of volunteer services at Spectrum Generations' Muskie Community Center on July 17. This year marked the organization's 70th anniversary. Thank you United Way of Kennebec Valley for your continued support!



From left are Sabrina Gormley, Director of Marketing & Membership at Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Angela Hamlin, Senior Staff Attorney at Legal Services for Maine Elders, Heather Szela of Sprague & Curtis Real Estate, Lynn Kidd, Program Coordinator at Catholic Charities, Hannah Trickett of Maine Housing, and Lexi Villamin, Marketing Intern at United Way of Kennebec Valley.

Meet Diane Miller-Schrader, Caregiver and Spectrum Generations Volunteer



Caring for a parent, spouse, or relative can be a stressful and difficult endeavor which can lead to burnout and negative health outcomes for the caregiver. To help manage the vast number of challenges, Spectrum Generations' Caregiving and Community Services provides resources that support caregivers so they may find a healthy balance between providing care for a loved one and their own health.

What benefit did receiving assistance and support through the Family Caregiver and Community Services Team at Spectrum Generations offer?

Relief and peace of mind knowing that staff were advocating on my behalf and that I didn't have to navigate the issues alone—especially without any family to help.

Advocating for bills that should have been covered under insurance.

"How many caregivers pay bills that could have been covered because they are too stressed or overwhelmed," she said. "I do not know what I would have done without the staff helping and advocating for me."

Diane also noted she received support and guidance navigating Medicare appeals, with specialists advocating on her behalf as a caregiver.

What benefit(s) would you have received, had you known about the program earlier on?

Diane noted "peace of mind" as a primary benefit. Having someone stay at home with her husband while she is out of the

house allows her to have freedom from anxiety and stress. The ability to still live life without worries about how he is being taken care of allows her to go to lunch with friends, volunteer, run errands, etc.

What advice do you have for other caregivers who might be in the same situation you were in?

Call Spectrum Generations to find out more about our services for caregivers. For legal assistance, call Legal Services for Maine Elders.



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR!



Rita Fraser
FAMILY CAREGIVER SPECIALIST

Here is what Community Services Director Katie Carlson had to say about Rita:

Rita consistently demonstrates she is an asset to the Family Caregiver Team. She has earned the respect of her coworkers as well as the people we serve. She proactively shares information with her colleagues if she suspects it may be helpful to them. She patiently walks them through processes or provides helpful information on agency programs and does so without being asked. She truly wants her colleagues to succeed and for people in need to receive the assistance they are reaching out for.

Thank you, Rita. Your efforts are appreciated and make a significant difference in the lives of others.



Fall Into Support with Genny, Our New Virtual Assistant!



As the leaves change, let Genny help you navigate Medicare, Meals on Wheels, caregiver support, and more. She's always here (24/7) with helpful answers and friendly guidance — no raking required.

Hi, I'm Genny!
Looking for answers
faster than pumpkin pie
disappears?
I'm here to help!

FIND GENNY AT:
www.spectrumgenerations.org

ALL STAFF DAY

AUGUST 27, 2025

A Refreshing Day of Connection and Renewal at Camp Wavus in Jefferson

The all staff day at the Wavus lakeside retreat was nothing short of delightful. Nestled among tall pines and overlooking the calm, shimmering water, the setting offered a perfect blend of tranquility and inspiration. From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming—an ideal backdrop for reconnecting with colleagues outside the usual work environment.

By the end of the day, as the clouds moved in from a passing storm, we left feeling recharged, more connected, and reminded of the value of our shared mission. It was a joyful experience that blended nature, community, and purpose—one we'll remember fondly.



JEFF JOHNSON
10-year Longevity Award



TUG O' WAR CHAMPIONS.



HENRY DYER
FY25 Q3 Above and Beyond Award



GARY HURTUBISE
20-year Longevity Award



Spectrum Generations
One Weston Court
Suite 109
Augusta, ME 04330
spectrumgenerations.org

28TH ANNUAL
Gene & Lucille Letourneau
ICE FISHING Derby



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Muskie Community Center
38 Gold Street | Waterville
(Weigh-in between 2 - 5 p.m.)

For sponsorship information,
contact Sandra MacDonald at
(207) 873-4745.

Benefitting Spectrum Generations' Programs & Services including Meals on Wheels.

FAMILY FUN

Corn Hole | S'mores Bar

Concessions | Fire Pit | Popcorn

Silent Auction



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