

## Volunteers needed for Town of Gorham boards & committees

**GORHAM, ME** -- The Town Council Appointments Committee is seeking citizen volunteers for various boards and committees to serve a 3 year term. The board and committee vacancies available are as follows:

**NOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - 3**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION - 3**  
**BOARD OF APPEALS - 3**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES - BAXTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY - 3**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - 3**



**SION - 2**  
**FAIR HEARING BOARD - 1**  
**BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW - 1**  
**BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION APPEALS - 3**

**REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE - 2**  
**BOARD OF HEALTH - 1**

If you are interested in applying to serve on any of Town board and/or committee, or for more information, please visit the Town Clerk's Office. To apply, please complete and submit a Committee Volunteer Application available online. You may also contact the Town Clerk's Office at 222-1670 or e-mail the Town Clerk Laurie Nordfors at Inordfors@gorham.me.us.

Applications will be accepted through January 23, 2025. The Appointments Committee will schedule short informal interviews with applicants starting in February and the Town Council will appoint applicants at their March meeting.

## Get outside this winter with PRLT's Gorham-area hikes

**MAINE** -- Embrace the beauty of winter with Presumpscot Regional Land Trust! We're thrilled to share our upcoming events designed to connect you with the natural wonders of our region during the winter. Mark your calendars and join us for these exciting adventures, some highlights of our winter programming include:



Final Four Seasons Walk at Black Brook Preserve, Winter, January 23rd  
Experience the grand finale of our Four Seasons Walk series with an explo-



ration of Black Brook Preserve in winter's embrace.  
Winter Hike at Pride Preserve, January 25th  
Join our board co-president, Sandy Truslow, for a peaceful winter walk through the stunning Pride Preserve of Westbrook.  
Nature Story Time with Walker Memorial Library, February 12th  
Bring the whole fam-

ily for an engaging story time that blends tales of nature with hands-on activities.  
Winter Wildlife Walk with Maine Naturalist Joan Lundin, March 1st  
Discover the stories wildlife leaves behind in winter with Maine Naturalist Joan Lundin, and learn how to spot and interpret animal signs.

More Events to Come! Stay tuned as we add even more opportunities to connect with the land and community this winter. Registration: Visit our website to register for events and learn more. Questions? Contact Brenna Crothers, Outreach Manager, at brenna@prlt.org.

**Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.**

## Gorham Food Pantry Friends needs baked beans this week



**GORHAM, ME** -- Greetings, pantry friends! This week's need is baked beans! If you're plan-

ning your shopping for this week and would like to drop a few cans off at the pantry, you can leave them in the bin as long as the temps aren't too cold. We have volunteers at the pantry on Thursday mornings, so that's always a great time to leave them (8a-9a). You can always message us to schedule a drop off date/time too.

Thanks for helping to feed your neighbors here in Gorham.

## Gorham BackPack Program needs your help restocking Food Closet

**GORHAM, ME** -- A huge THANK YOU to Coach Tanguay, Coach Stone and the members of the indoor track teams for their generous donation to the BackPack Program as part of the GHS Athletic's Winter Sports Food Drive!

For the month of January, we will focus our efforts on restocking the Food Closet at GHS. Items can be dropped off directly at the high school or mailed to GMS and we will deliver. The BackPack Program will also receive a \$1

donation for every \$2.50 reusable Fight Hunger Bag sold during all of January at the Gorham location. We appreciate the continued support of Hannaford! It takes a village and the Gorham village is amazing!

## Navigating the internet workshop at Gorham's BML

### THE INTERNET IS SCARY

A Guide to Internet Street Smarts

**January 25, 2025**  
9 am to 12 pm

Registration Required  
<https://forms.office.com/r/HnRa5UZrDs>  
OR use this QR code

Join us for a special three hour workshop! with local cybersecurity expert Sean Edwards! The digital world, like the physical world, is fundamentally shaped by human nature – with all its creativity, kindness, and potential for connection, as well as its capacity for deception, manipulation, and harm. Our goal isn't to make you afraid of online spaces, but to help you navigate them with confidence. Think of this as your guide to digital street smarts. We'll explore who you might meet in online spaces, what motivates different types of online behavior, how to protect yourself from various forms of harm, and how to build meaningful connections while staying safe. We'll look at both technical protections – the locks and alarms of the digital world – and behavioral strategies that help you recognize and avoid dangerous situations.

*Sean Edwards has spent over two decades working with technology. His journey started as a teenager finding community online in the early days of the internet, giving him unique insight into both the opportunities and dangers of digital life. He now specializes in cybersecurity and online safety education, drawing from his professional technology experience and personal background as a digital native participating in online communities. Based in Standish, Maine, Sean combines technical expertise with real-world perspective to help others navigate an increasingly complex digital world.*

Baxter Memorial Library • 71 South Street • Gorham, ME • (207) 222-1190 • [www.baxterlibrary.org](http://www.baxterlibrary.org)

**GORHAM, ME** -- Join us at Baxter Memorial Library in Gorham for a special three hour workshop and discussion, tailored to attendees' particular concerns regarding internet safety! The digital world, like the physical world, is fundamentally shaped by human nature – with all its creativity, kindness, and potential for connection, as well as

its capacity for deception, manipulation, and harm. Our goal isn't to make you afraid of online spaces, but to help you navigate them with confidence. Think of this as your guide to digital street smarts. We'll explore who you might meet in online spaces, what motivates different types of online behavior, how to protect yourself from various forms of harm, and how to build meaningful connections while staying safe. We'll look at both technical protections – the locks and alarms of the digital world – and behavioral strategies that help you recognize and avoid dangerous situations.

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Based in Standish, Maine, Sean combines technical expertise with real-world perspective to help others navigate an increasingly complex digital world. Please register for this event at Baxter Memorial Library's website.

Sean Edwards has spent over two decades working with technology.

Saturday, January 25, 9 am-12 pm: The Internet is Scary!

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## DHHS awarded \$17M to support maternal care

**AUGUSTA, ME** — The Maine Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Office of MaineCare Services has been selected as one of 15 state Medicaid programs to participate in the Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) Model, an initiative from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) designed to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes for people enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

CMS has awarded DHHS a nearly \$17 million grant, to be administered over 10 years, that will be used to enhance the full range of Maine's maternal

health care services through increased access and quality of supports, improved data infrastructure, and advancing equity-focused initiatives.

The TMaH Model award will help MaineCare address maternal health across the state, by focusing on improving access to care, advancing patient safety, and fostering whole-person care delivery. MaineCare, the state's Medicaid program, will lead the effort in collaboration with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) and a wide range of community partners.

"Creating a system of care where every pregnant

person has timely access to the perinatal care and support they need, regardless of their circumstances or where they live, is fundamental to ensuring the best outcomes for pregnant people and their babies so that families can thrive," said DHHS Commissioner Sara Gagné-Holmes. "The Transforming Maternal Health Model allows DHHS, in partnership with CMS, to build on existing work in the state and ensure that perinatal health care in Maine sets a national example for equity, quality, and safety."

CMS's TMaH Model is a 10-year program and consists of a three-year pre-implementation phase followed by seven years of

implementation. The State of Maine will receive federal funding and technical assistance to achieve key milestones including improving maternal health data infrastructure, facilitating rural regional planning networks, and supporting birthing hospitals in quality improvement initiatives across Maine.

During the first phase of this initiative, Maine DHHS will work with hospitals, health systems, maternal health providers, community organizations, pregnant people, and other partners to develop comprehensive plans for care improvement, workforce expansion, and payment reform. The State aims to im-

plement a new value-based payment model for maternity care by 2028.

This award builds on Maine DHHS's ongoing work to improve maternal and child health outcomes. In recent years, the Department has expanded postpartum coverage to 12 months after birth. Since 2022, DHHS has supported all birthing hospitals to implement the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health evidence-based patient safety bundles, or "AIM" bundles, and advanced initiatives to address behavioral and social health needs for pregnant and postpartum individuals through programs such as the MaineCare MaineMOM program.

The TMaH funding will build on previous funding awarded to the State of Maine to continue strengthening the perinatal system of care including grants to the Maine CDC for the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant and the State Maternal Health Innovation (SMHI) and Data Capacity Program. In the fall of 2024, DHHS' Office of the Health Insurance Marketplace also received a two-year grant from CMS, the Expanding Access to Women's Health Grant, focused on supporting State efforts to enhance and expand coverage of, and access to, reproductive health care and maternal care.

## CAFAM celebrating Lunar New Year

**WESTBROOK, ME** — The Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM) will ring in the Year of the Snake, Saturday, February 15, 2025, at the Westbrook Performing Arts Center, 471 Stroudwater Road, Westbrook, ME.

This always popular and exciting event is in its 34th year and is the oldest and largest Lunar New Year celebration in Maine.

Dance Performance by students from Bates College and other local performers. The Bangor Chinese School will also perform a dragon dance and a harvest dance.

There will be a Chinese Cultural Village:

Open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with teaching calligraphy, crafts for kids, vendors, and more. Karen Morency will demonstrate tai chi and talk about fermented Chinese food. Steve Wong of Bangor will do lion dance performances most of the day. There will also be a demonstration of dumpling making. The village will also be open during performance intermission.

Chinese food from the Panda Garden Restaurant will be available beginning at noon.

Admission prices: Adults \$15, Children 12 to 5 \$5, Children under 5 Free. The discounted price for CAFAM members is

\$10 for adults. Tickets are available in advance from Eventbrite.com. Day of event tickets: Only cash or check. No credit or debit cards! .

**PLENTY OF FREE PARKING.**

If the live event is cancelled all of the tickets purchased from Eventbrite will automatically be fully refunded.

Sponsored the Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM). For more information go to [www.cafam-maine.org](http://www.cafam-maine.org).

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

## 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine to meet Feb. 10

**MAINE** -- The next meeting of 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine will be held on Monday, February 10, 2025, at The Elks Lodge on Congress Street in Portland. Networking begins at 5:45 PM, with the meeting starting at 6:30 PM. Guests are welcome to attend and learn more about the group.

For more details, visit: [www.100womenwhocaresouthernmaine.com](http://www.100womenwhocaresouthernmaine.com).

Founded in November 2014, 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine is a growing community of women who raise funds for local nonprofits. With 488 members, the group has raised over \$660,000 for a wide variety of causes, including support for veterans, children with disabilities, domestic abuse survivors, animal welfare, and more.

Members commit to donating \$50 each quarter to a nonprofit chosen at each meeting. Three non-



Deb Bergeron, founder of 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine. Deb Maxfield, Camp No Limits. Photo by: LeBel's Lens Photography.

profits present 5-minute pitches followed by a 5-minute Q&A, and the group votes on which nonprofit will receive the donations.

At the November 2024 meeting, Camp No

Limits was chosen as the recipient of donations. The organization will present at the February 10th meeting on how the funds were used. Camp No Limits provides specialized camps for children with limb loss and limb differences, offering mentorship, support, and education in a community-focused environment.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## 2025 Coffin Family Law Fellow announced

**MAINE** -- The Maine Justice Foundation is pleased to announce that New York University School of Law Juris Doctor Candidate, Georgia Whitaker, has been selected as the 2025 Coffin Family Law Fellow.

The Frank M. Coffin Family Law Fellowship provides legal representation in family law matters to clients who have qualified for pro bono assistance through the Volunteer Lawyers Project. Named after Frank M. Coffin, Senior Judge on the First Circuit Court of Appeals, the project supports attorneys based in the Portland, Maine offices of Pine Tree Legal Assistance. Coffin Fellowship attorneys work for and are based at Pine Tree Legal Assistance's Portland office for two years. To date, the Coffin Fellows have worked on a remarkable 2,151 cases on behalf of low-income individuals in Cumberland County who had no other legal aid resources available to them. Whitaker will

be the 29th Coffin Fellow.

Originally from Vashon Island, Washington, Georgia first came to Maine in 2010 to attend Bowdoin College, where she majored in History and Latin American Studies. After receiving a PhD in Latin American History from Harvard University, Georgia pursued her J.D. at New York University School of Law and graduated with honors in 2024. She is currently a law clerk for Judge John A. Woodcock, Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine, and lives in Brunswick with her husband and young daughter. Georgia says, "I hope to spend my career advocating for the rights of individuals and families in Maine and am grateful for the opportunity to begin this work as a Coffin Fellow."

The Fellowship was launched in 1998 with the generous support of Portland area Law Firms. There are 20 participating firms in the program including Berman & Simmons, P.A.;



Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer & Nelson, P.A.; Cloutier, Conley & Duffett P.A.; Curtis Thaxter LLC; Drummond Woodsum; Eaton Peabody; Gideon Asen LLC; Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry; Marcus Clegg; McCloskey, Mina, Cunniff & Frawley, LLC; Murray Plumb &

Murray; Norman, Hanson & DeTroy, LLC; Perkins Thompson, P.A.; Pierce Atwood LLP; Preti, Flaherty, Beliveau & Pachios, LLP; Roach Ruprecht Sanchez & Bischoff, PC; Robinson, Kriger & McCallum; Thistle Weaver & Morris; Thompson Bowie & Hatch



Donate

LLC; and Verrill.

"Over the last 27 years, the Coffin Fellows and the law firms who support their work have made tremendous and lasting impact on the lives of thousands of Mainers in need. They have collectively ensured that the opportunity to seek justice is available to all, irrespective of income" says Michelle Draeger, Executive Director of the Maine Justice Foundation, and member of the Coffin Fellowship Hiring Committee. "This has been and will continue to be an invaluable partnership in support of the principle of access to justice and we are grateful for the breadth of contributions by all participants, including the Coffin Fellows and the supporting

law firms," adds Draeger. Other members of the Hiring Committee are Deirdre Smith, Executive Director of the Volunteer Lawyers Project; Caroline Y. Jova, Family Division Manager, Administrative Office of the Courts for the State of Maine Judicial Branch; and Lucia Chomeau Hunt, Directing Attorney at Pine Tree Legal Assistance. Ms. Whitaker will begin her two-year fellowship in the fall of 2025.

The Maine Justice Foundation, founded in 1983 as the Maine Bar Foundation, is the state's leading funder of civil legal aid and is committed to ensuring access to justice for all Mainers. Find us online at [www.justicemaine.org](http://www.justicemaine.org).

## Gorham native Sadie Dyer receives Pax Scholarship

**PORTSMOUTH, NH** - Impax Asset Management (Impax), a specialist asset manager investing in the transition to a more sustainable economy, today announced the recipients of their second Pax Scholarship at the University of New Hampshire (UNH).

Founded in 2022, the Pax Scholarship awards merit-based scholarships to support students enrolled in the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and a demonstrated focus in sustainability and sustainable investing.

The five recipients of the inaugural Pax Scholarship include:

Sadie J. Dyer (Gorham, ME): Majoring in Business & Sustainability with a minor in Hospital-ity Management

Pakeezah Tariq (Somersworth, NH): Dual majoring in Sustainability



and Economics

Riley K. Bishop (New Ipswich, NH): Major in Business & Sustainability and minoring in Real Estate Finance

Brett R. Schultz (North Reading, MA): Dual majoring in Sustainability and Finance

Julia R. Fichera (Baldwinsville, NY): Majoring in information systems and business analytics with a minor in marketing

Ed Farrington, President, North America, Impax said: "We are pleased to again partner with the Peter T. Paul College and UNH to make a strong investment in these students. On behalf of Impax, we offer our congratulations. And as a proud UNH graduate, I know firsthand

the impact UNH has on our state – and look forward to seeing the change Pakeezah, Brett, Julia, Sadie and Riley make in the coming years."

Lucy Gilson, Dean, UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics said: "We are grateful to Impax for their continued commitment to recognizing and supporting our talented students who are passionate about sustainability and sustainable investing. These scholarships celebrate their accomplishments and provide valuable encouragement as they prepare to become leaders in creating a more sustainable future. Congratula-

tions to this year's recipients – we look forward to the impact they will make in the years ahead."

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

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## Seniors Not Acting Their Age

# Wintry Conditions on Ragged Mountain



A hiker begins the final push to the summit of Ragged Mountain



An overlook provides unobstructed views of Spruce and Pleasant Mountains



South facing cliffs provide sporadic glimpses of Mirror Lake

One of the many benefits of membership in my outdoor club, the Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society (PPCS), is the ability to network with a large number of outdoor enthusiasts. We have more than 300 adult members so finding companions for an outdoor adventure is often a phone call or club email away.

When I recently announced a proposed last minute December club hike on Ragged Mountain in West Rockport, I received an immediate response from a new member. Yet another advantage of PPCS affiliation is the opportunity to make new friends with similar interests. That was true

in this instance when Art Durity signed on to my trip.

Ragged Mountain is situated near the southwestern terminus of a range of small coastal mountains called the Camden Hills. The Georges Highland Path (GHP), developed and maintained by the Georges River Land Trust, traverses the summit. The 1,288-foot peak provides several spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and dozens of islands in Penobscot Bay.

We met at the Route 17 GHP Trailhead near Mirror Lake on a cool, partly sunny, December morning. When we ar-

rived, ours were the only vehicles in the small parking lot. Observing snow and ice in the area and on the summit, we packed micro spikes for use if icy conditions were encountered.

We descended steep steps next to a kiosk on the GHP and hiked easily on hard-packed snow and sporadic ice in a low area. After crossing an ancient stonewall, we followed the trail as it angled northwesterly in a predominantly hardwood forest and passed over a rocky ridge towards towering cliffs.

Continuing over rolling hills, we intersected Round the Mountain Trail and crossed a small

stream. Round the Mountain Trail is a relatively new biking, walking, and running path that partially circumnavigates Ragged Mountain. Shortly after, we arrived at the base of the cliffs.

The trail turned right and we advanced easterly along the foot of the precipice in uneven boulder-strewn terrain. In the past, the path continued in that direction until nearing Mirror Lake before beginning a steep northerly climb towards the summit. However, since my last visit the trail has been rerouted and turns northeasterly earlier and rises more gradually. The change is an improvement.

Ascending steadily, we rejoined the old path before veering northwest past a large rock formation. The trail narrowed and continued along the edge of south facing cliffs providing sporadic glimpses of Mirror Lake below. We followed the attenuated passage as it rose gradually to an overlook that offered unobstructed views of Spruce and Pleasant Mountains, the southwestern-most peaks in the Camden Hills Range.

Turning right, the trail enters a stunted hard-

wood forest and follows a moderate incline to steep ledges. We scaled the prominence and emerged onto a wide sloping observation point that provided expansive views of Penobscot Bay in the east.

Leaving that scenic location, we passed through a stand of conifer trees and then scrambled over a massive granite protuberance partially covered with ice and snow. Using blue blazes on the rocks as a guide, we skirted along the rim of the lofty escarpment. The prevalence of ice heightened the risk of falls in this potentially hazardous area so we stopped to attach micro spikes to our boots.

Benefiting from improved traction, we clambered abruptly upwards past a sign that directs hikers to the summit. The views in this area were phenomenal. Aptly named Mirror Lake was seemingly at our feet and much of western Penobscot Bay could be seen in the distance.

We completed the final push to the summit and passed a communications tower to another exceptional viewpoint. From that eastern perspective, we enjoyed a stunning panoramic vista

of the northern Camden Hills and much of Penobscot Bay.

Following a brief snack while savoring the wonderful views, we began our return. The micro spikes were invaluable during the precipitous higher elevation descent. We continued to wear them for added security during the remainder of the trek. Our pleasurable return was otherwise problem-free.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* relates nine more challenging Maine mountain hikes including several winter ascents of Mount Katahdin, Traveler Loop and the Marston Range in Baxter State Park.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, *"Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine"* is available at [www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco](http://www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco) or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are *"The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery"* and *"Mountains for Mortals – New England."* Visit his website at [www.ronchase-outdoors.com](http://www.ronchase-outdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchase-outdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchase-outdoors@comcast.net)

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# New Ventures Maine launches competition for small businesses

AUGUSTA, ME—New Ventures Maine (NVME) has announced open applications for their statewide Marketing Mini-Grant competition.

The NVME Marketing Mini-Grant Program aims to strengthen access to markets for small businesses by supporting the development of marketing tools, materials, and activities. NVME will award cash mini-grants—up to \$1,000 per region (defined below)—to microenterprises for new or expanded business marketing and promotion projects through a competitive application process. Applications are due by Fri-

day, February 28, 2025 at noon.

Eligible applicants include individual micro-business owners, business partners, or groups of business owners. Businesses apply to the region in which they are based (see below for details).

Application criteria include: 1) Five or fewer full-time equivalent employees; 2) sales in the past 12 months; and 3) gross annual sales of no more than \$150,000 (previous calendar year).

Terrill Waldman, co-owner of Tandem Glass with Charlie Jenkins, winners of a 2023 marketing mini-grant, said of its



NVME Microenterprise Program Manager Alicia LaFosse accepts a \$3,000 donation from Duncan Mixer, AVP & Commercial Loan Officer at Norway Savings Bank.



impact, “This grant gave us the energy to pursue and invest in a new logo and a ‘suite’ of marketing goodies. We are so proud of the work we have done. Overall, we are currently up 15% in sales over last year. Traffic to our web site is steady and traffic to our brick and mortar shop is up!”

Regions and contacts for the 2025 Winter/Spring contest are:

Cumberland & York Counties: Martha Leonard, 207-245-3663, martha.leonard@maine.edu

Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties: Gina Platt, 207-753-6581, gina.platt@maine.edu

For more information, contact the region representative listed above or visit the New Ventures Maine website.

Marketing mini-grants are sponsored in part by Norway Savings Bank, Katahdin Trust Company, and Kennebec Savings Bank.

“We are excited to sponsor mini-grants that empower small businesses to boost their marketing efforts and overall success,” said Duncan Mixer, AVP & Commercial Loan Officer at Norway Savings Bank. “Bringing financial support to the communities we serve is an important priority for us.”

# MaineCF grants available to nonprofits

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH —Non-profit organizations throughout the state may be eligible for grants from the Maine Community Foundation’s (MaineCF) Community Building Grant Program.

The grant program

invests in local projects and organizations that help build strong communities in all 16 counties. Community Building supports projects and organizations that invest in people, engage with the people served and strengthen community resources.

In 2024, MaineCF’s county and regional committees awarded \$1.97 million in grants through the Community Building Grant Program. Learn more about the Community Building Grant Program and application process at [www.mainecef.org/community-](http://www.mainecef.org/community-building)

building.

The deadline to apply is Friday, Feb. 14.

The Community Building Grant Program is MaineCF’s largest grant program. It is one of the only grant programs in the state that supports a broad range of interest areas, in-

cluding arts, education, environment, economic development and human services.

The grant program offers two types of funding: project grants and general support. Project grants are only available to larger organizations for new projects. General support grants

are geared towards smaller organizations and this flexible funding may support new, expanding or ongoing programs as well as operational needs.

For a list of 2024 Community Building grants by county, visit [www.mainecef.org/recentgrants](http://www.mainecef.org/recentgrants).

# Lung Association: Radon detected in 36.5% of Maine homes

AUGUSTA, ME – Radon remains the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the latest American Lung Association “State of Lung Cancer” report reveals that in Maine, about 37% of radon test results equal or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4 pCi/L. During January for National Radon Action Month, the Lung Association in Maine strongly urges all residents to test their home for radon and take immediate steps to mitigate the threat if high levels are found.

Radon is a colorless, odorless and tasteless naturally occurring radioac-

tive gas emitted from the ground. Radon can enter a home through cracks in floors, basement walls, foundations and other openings. Radon can be present at high levels inside homes, schools and other buildings. It is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year and is the leading cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked.

“Radon levels appear at dangerous levels in too many homes. High levels of radioactive radon gas have been found in every state, but too few proactively work to protect their homes and families from the potentially devastating effects

of exposure,” said Lance Boucher, Director of Advocacy for the Lung Association in Maine. “Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in people in the U.S., and testing is the only way to know if your home is safe. The bright spot is that testing is easy, affordable and readily available at home improvement stores and through trusted online services.”

For National Radon Action Month, the Lung Association offers facts and tips to protect families from radon exposure:

Testing is the first step in reducing the risk of radon-induced lung cancer. Elevated levels of radon are found in homes

in every state, and in some states, radon levels are elevated in as many as 1 in 3 homes. The only way to detect radon in a home is to test your home. Do-it-yourself test kits are simple to use and inexpensive. As a part of a partnership with Protect Environmental, the Lung Association is offering free radon test kits in select markets nationwide. Learn more and request a test kit here.

Always test when buying a home. Testing for radon is always recommended when buying a home. Resources are available for new homeowners here, and are available for real estate professionals here.

Use test results to mitigate the risk. Radon is measured in picocuries per liter (pCi/L). The Environmental Protection Agency recommends taking action to reduce radon if levels are 4.0 pCi/L or greater, and to consider similar actions when the radon level is between 2.0 and 4.0 pCi/L. The goal is to lower the radon level in your home to the lowest possible level. Contact your state radon program for a list of certified mitigation professionals in your state. Some state programs offer financial assistance or low interest loans for radon mitigation.

Your actions could save your family’s lives.

Beyond being the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., radon exposure is the number one cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked. Both smoking and radon can cause lung cancer, but exposure to both increases the risk by about 10 times. If you smoke and are ready to start your journey to quit for good, the Lung Association offers resources at [Lung.org/quit-smoking](http://Lung.org/quit-smoking).

To learn more about radon testing and mitigation, visit at [Lung.org/radon](http://Lung.org/radon) and take the Lung Association’s free Radon Basics course at [Lung.org/radon-basics](http://Lung.org/radon-basics).

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Grants fund clean energy projects in Gorham area

**BANGOR, ME** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director Rhiannon Hampson announced that USDA is awarding sixteen grants and one loan to help increase access to solar energy in Maine. Businesses in nine counties (Cumberland, Hancock, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Somerset, Waldo, Washington, and York) will receive grants to cover up to half the cost of projects to install on-site solar panels. Rural Development will also provide a loan of \$5.025M to Alna Community Solar. The grants and loan come through the agency’s Rural Energy for

America Program (REAP). “USDA’s REAP grants help Maine small businesses and agricultural producers to be a part of the climate solution,” said Director Hampson. “When we reinvest federal dollars right here in Maine, we demonstrate how our government truly partners with each one of us. Helping to make these projects affordable for small businesses ultimately benefits everyone using our shared electric grid, homeowners and businesses alike.”

Nationwide, USDA announced funding for 586 projects today to expand access to clean energy systems and increase the availability of

domestic biofuels. When announcing the awards, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said, “By expanding access to homegrown biofuels and clean energy systems, we are making long-lasting investments that will strengthen our energy independence, address the impacts of climate change and create new market opportunities and revenue streams for American producers while bringing good-paying jobs to rural communities.”

Each farm and business will cover at least half of the total cost for their projects. REAP grants help make a range of clean energy and energy efficiency projects more affordable.

Examples of projects across Maine include:

Hall Brook Farm, an organic farm in Thorndike, will use a \$64K grant towards the installation of a 50-kilowatt roof-mounted solar photovoltaic system. The system is expected to save \$11,324 in annual energy costs.

Monhegan Brewing Company on Monhegan Island will use a \$21K grant towards the installation of an 8.2-kilowatt roof-mounted solar photovoltaic system with battery storage. The system is expected to save the business \$6,754 in annual energy costs.

PKS Woodworks LLC, a third-generation

woodworking company located in South Berwick, Maine, will use a \$75K grant towards the installation of a 52.8-kilowatt roof-mounted solar photovoltaic system. The system is expected to save \$10,479 in annual energy costs.

Brunswick Town Holdings LLC, a small commercial real estate company in Gray, Maine, will use \$51,000 as a Rural Development investment to install a new 39-kilowatt (kW) roofmounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system. The system is expected to generate 51,710 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually.

Grovest 101 LLC, a small real estate busi-

ness located in Wiscasset, Maine, will use \$44,950 as a Rural Development investment to install a new 30.6-kilowatt (kW) roofmounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system. The project is expected to generate 39,260 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually.

The full list of grants in Maine announced today is available at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/3e-n7e7wf>.

Over the last four fiscal years, Rural Development has awarded \$18M in competitive REAP grants to 221 farms and rural small businesses in Maine. A significant portion of the funding came through the

*See Grants, page 14*

## Lakes Region Senior Center invites Gorham seniors to activities

**GORHAM, ME** -- If you are looking for a fun senior center with lots of activities daily, come join us at Little Falls Activity

Center, 40 Acorn Street, Gorham, Maine. We are open from 8:30 to 2 or 3 pm depending on the activity. Our calendar is online.

Call Gerry Day, President, at 839-3859 for more information

Membership fee is \$20 a year with many perks.

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**ThePublicTheatre.org | 782-3200**  
 The Ball will be held at the Kora Shrine Temple, Lewiston  
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 31 Maple Street, Lewiston



# Salvation Army supports California wildfire survivors

**PORTLAND, ME** – As fast-moving wildfires continue to devastate communities across Southern California, The Salvation Army has ramped up efforts to support survivors, temporary evacuees, and emergency responders. Teams are on the ground providing meals, emergency supplies, and emotional and spiritual care to those affected.

The Salvation Army's Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) teams are actively assisting at five emergency shelters and the Family Assistance Center in Pasadena. Comprised of dedicated officers, employees, and volunteers, these teams are offering hot meals, coffee, and a listening ear to those

in need.

Current EDS Support Locations Include:

El Camino Real Charter High School – Woodland Hills

Westwood Recreation Center – Los Angeles

Ritchie Valens Recreation Center – Pacoima

The Fairplex – Pomona

Pan Pacific Recreation Center – Los Angeles

Family Assistance Center – Pasadena

As of January 12, 2025, The Salvation Army has served over 2,500 meals and remains prepared to serve for as long as needed. Once conditions permit, the organization will deploy 13 mobile response canteen units to the hardest-hit



neighborhoods, including those affected by the Eaton Canyon and Palisades fires. These units will provide comfort, food, hydration, and practical assistance to impacted residents.

**How to Help**

The best way to support The Salvation Army's wildfire relief efforts is

through financial donations, which allow the organization to obtain the most-needed resources for immediate relief.

To donate, visit: [www.salarmy.us/socalfires](http://www.salarmy.us/socalfires)

For in-kind and corporate donations, please contact Katherine Fukuda at [Katherine.fukuda@usw.salvationarmy.org](mailto:Katherine.fukuda@usw.salvationarmy.org).



# WinterKids Winter Games kick off with outdoor learning fun



**MAINE** — Let the Games begin! WinterKids is thrilled to announce the official start of the 8th Annual WinterKids Winter Games! From January 13 to February 7, students across Maine will step outside, and embrace the joy of outdoor winter learning. This year's theme, "Weather" invites over 10,000 students and educators to become young scientists, observing and documenting Maine's

winter climate in real time.

Opening ceremonies happened at participating schools across the state today, setting the tone for a month of dynamic challenges and community-building activities.

**Program Highlights:**

16 schools will compete in the Competitive Track, vying for cash prizes up to \$5,000.

75 schools will participate in the Play Along



Track, enjoying activities tailored to their own pace.

Weekly themes—Temperature, Precipitation, Wind, and Clouds—will guide students through engaging outdoor lessons.

What's in store for this year?

The WinterKids Winter Games is not just about education—it's about transformation. The WinterKids Winter Games inspire teamwork by encouraging students to collaborate on outdoor challenges, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared achievement. Through activities such as weather observations, data collection, and creative projects, students and

teachers will be outdoors participating in hands-on lessons.

Jon Morrill of Kittery Trading Post, a proud WinterKids Supporting Sponsor, shared why this program resonates with the community: "Kids are the future of our business, our economy, and the state resources. Anything that we can do to enrich the lifestyle of our children, we're all about that." His words reflect the shared commitment of WinterKids and its partners to nurture healthy, vibrant communities through outdoor engagement and education.

Schools report tangible benefits during the four-



week program, including increased attendance and fewer visits to the nurse, demonstrating the positive impact of active, outdoor learning on students' overall well-being. WinterKids provides weekly incentives like keychain thermometers, tape measures, sunglasses, and weather notebooks for added inspiration!

WinterKids encourages local media outlets to join us in sharing this in-

credible story of community, learning, and resilience. Find a participating school near you and celebrate the energy of winter learning in action!

The Winter Games are sponsored in part by Aroma Joe's, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, MMG Insurance, and the Stockhouse Station.

For a detailed map of partner schools and more information, visit [winterkids.org/winter-games/](http://winterkids.org/winter-games/).

# DAR Scholarship accepting applications by Jan. 31

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – Undergraduate and graduate students studying music can apply for the DAR Marian Anderson Legacy Scholarship through January 31, 2025. Sponsored by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), the scholarship provides a one-time \$5,000 award to one student annually who is pursuing undergraduate or graduate study in music.

Marian Anderson (1897-1993) was a groundbreaking African American contralto and an inspiration for civil rights. "This scholarship pays tribute to Marian Anderson's life, and the Daughters of the American Revolution seeks to honor her legacy through today's aspiring musicians. Her legacy lives

on in others who aim for excellence in musical studies, are committed to their communities, and willing to stand up for what is right," said Pamela Wright, DAR President General.

Applicants should be accepted or currently enrolled in an accredited university or college in the United States and have a concentration in music in their course of study. Music performance, composition, theory, or education are all areas that students may be specialized in to qualify for the scholarship. They should have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent GPA on the scale used by the institution.

Applications require references sent through the application system, so



students need to request their references ahead of the Jan. 31st application deadline.

In honor of Ms.

Anderson's commitment to the community throughout her life and her willingness to share her incredible talent with

the world, applicants are asked to write a personal statement describing their humanitarian or volunteer contributions on behalf of

their community and/or country.

To recognize the city Marian Anderson called home, preference will be given to students from the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania metropolitan area, even if they are not pursuing music studies in the Philadelphia area.

This scholarship is not automatically renewed. However, recipients may reapply for consideration each year for up to four consecutive years.

The scholarship is supported by the Daughters of the American Revolution's Marian Anderson Legacy Fund. Learn more about the relationship between Marian Anderson and the DAR, and the organization's on-going efforts to honor her memory at [www.dar.org/MarianAnderson](http://www.dar.org/MarianAnderson)



# Camp is calling! Girl Scouts open registration for summer campers

**STATEWIDE** – Ready for limitless fun, friends, and new experiences? Girl Scouts of Maine (GSME) is excited to announce the official opening of online registration for Summer 2025 overnight camp sessions. Beginning January 15 at 9:00 a.m., prospective campers of all ages can register by visiting the camp page on our website—no Girl Scout experience necessary!

The upcoming season ushers in a wave of first-time and returnee campers ready to explore outdoor programs and new hands-on activities this summer. Beginning sessions in July, a wide variety of single

and multi-week camp opportunities are offered at both Camp Pondicherry in Bridgton, and Camp Natarwi in Baxter State Park. Each camp provides unique, unforgettable experiences amongst some of Maine’s most scenic natural settings.

Nestled on over 600 acres in the foothills of the White Mountains, Camp Pondicherry has a private waterfront on Adams Pond and miles of untouched woodlands, fields, hills, and trails to explore. In addition to classic GSME summer camp offerings such as archery, hatchet-throwing, swimming, arts and crafts, kayaking, hiking, and fire safety, oth-



er Pondicherry-specific activities include horseback riding, theater, and more!

“I am so pleased to be returning for a third summer as Camp Director! All of our camp programs are designed to build lifelong skills and foster independence. This year, I’m most excited about our Ultimate Camp Experience. Our two-week Ultimate Camp Experience gives girls an

opportunity to enjoy both of our GSME summer camps,” says Tonia Stewart, Camp Pondicherry Director.

For nearly 90 years, Camp Natarwi has provided a unique camping experience for Girl Scouts. Located in Baxter State Park, Camp Natarwi sits in the shadow of Mt. Katahdin, hugging the shoreline of Lower Togue Pond

and making it the perfect spot for breathtaking views and pristine waters. Natarwi-specific camp activities include rock-climbing, paddleboarding, backpacking, and boating.

“I’m super excited about all of our programs this year, especially our three-week Wilderness Expedition program. The campers in that program will get to explore so much of our North Maine woods,” says Barbara Ireland, Camp Natarwi Director.

Check out the 2025 GSME Summer Camp Guide for more information on pricing, specific camp sessions, themed weeks, programs, activi-

ties, and important dates. Whether you’re interested in classic camp adventures or specialized programs, there’s something for every camper with GSME.

Looking for an inspiring summer job? GSME summer camps are the perfect opportunity to strengthen leadership skills, build friendships, and spend meaningful time in the outdoors as a counselor or staff member! Camp staff are CPR and first-aid certified, and many hold advanced certifications such as lifeguarding, archery instruction, wilderness first-aid, and more. Visit the summer camp employment page on our website to learn more!



**Send all items for Names & Faces to the editor. Deadline is Friday by five pm.**



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# Long-term effects of trafficking, what you can do to prevent it

By Enough is Enough  
The lifelong impact of human trafficking is very real. Angelea Valenti said she was trafficked at the age of 17. She shared the following in a recent Sarasota Herald-Tribune editorial:

Like many victims, I was vulnerable and isolated, making me an easy target for predators. One of the most painful aspects of being trafficked was the feeling of invisibility. I remember walking through the streets with tears streaming down my face, which was sometimes beaten and bruised. People saw me, but no one ever asked if I needed help.

She said the trauma took everything from her - her childhood, her ability to trust, and her sense of self-worth. The impact of trafficking can create devastating, long-lasting trauma

ma that permeates every aspect of a survivor's life.

In addition to the impact of physical violence and abuse, survivors carry deep psychological wounds that can persist indefinitely. Trauma can manifest as severe anxiety disorders, PTSD, depression, and substance abuse issues. Trafficking victims face brutal exploitation, being sold 15-40 times daily, with shortened life expectancies due to violence, disease, overdose, and untreated medical conditions.

Sex trafficking can happen in any community, and to anyone. It occurs when someone uses force, fraud or coercion to cause a commercial sex act with an adult or causes a minor to commit a commercial sex act. The average age a child becomes involved in sex trafficking is 12 years

old, and more than half of sex trafficking victims are lured into their situation online, making the internet the most common place where victims are recruited.

Education and awareness can lead to prevention. Some of the physical and behavior indications that someone is being trafficked include the following:

Unexplained absences from school

Changes in usual attire, behavior or relationships

Suddenly has more expensive material possessions

Shows signs of injuries and abuse

Chronically runs away from home

Fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous and paranoid

Sex Trafficking 101

## Quick Guide

Be sure to download a complimentary copy of EIE's Sex Trafficking 101 Quick Guide for Parents and Educators at [https://internetsafety101.org/objects/Sex\\_Trafficking\\_101\\_Quick\\_Guide\\_-\\_Copyright.pdf](https://internetsafety101.org/objects/Sex_Trafficking_101_Quick_Guide_-_Copyright.pdf). It contains helpful facts, information about vulnerabilities that make children/youth targets by predators, the grooming process and more.

See Enough Is Enough's Sex Traffickers 101 section containing greater detail about human trafficking, which the F.B.I says is the 2nd largest criminal industry per illicit revenue generated -- just behind drug trafficking. Be sure to review provided "conversation starters" designed to help you initiate an open and frank discussion with your child.

Make sure that those discussions take place often! Finally, remind your child to NEVER arrange to meet with someone that he/she has only met online, and to come to you if a request for an in-person meeting has been made.

## REPORT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Call 1-888-373-7888 | Text BeFree (233733) - The National Human Trafficking Hotline is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls, texts, and live chats from anywhere in the United States, 24 hours a day, 7

days a week

*Enough Is Enough® is a national non-partisan, non-profit organization who has led the fight to make the Internet safer for children and families since 1994. EIE's efforts are focused on combating internet p\*rnography, child sexual abuse material, sexual predation, sex trafficking and cyberbullying by incorporating a four-pronged prevention strategy with shared responsibilities between the public, corporate America, government and faith community.*

## SAPARS, community partners host film on sex trafficking

AUBURN, ME -- Join Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, along with several community partners, Thursday, Jan-

uary 30th from 5-7pm at the Auburn Public Library for a special screening of Sexploitation and an engaging discussion to follow.

Sex trafficking is here. It's happening in Maine. In this special film, you'll meet 4 brave Mainers who not only survived their experi-

ences with sex trafficking, but have thrived in the aftermath, choosing to now serve others with similar experiences.

## National Human Trafficking Prevention Month 2025

By Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State January 16, 2025

January marks National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, an important opportunity to raise awareness, strengthen advocacy efforts, support survivors, and engage communities in a collective call to action to combat human trafficking. Human trafficking exploits individuals, fractures communities, undermines the rule of law, and threatens national security. Govern-

ments should lead on developing strong anti-trafficking responses.

Over the course of the past four years, we have sought accountability for individuals and organizations profiting from forced labor and launched innovative partnerships with foreign governments to prevent trafficking, protect survivors, and prosecute traffickers. We have also worked to help foreign governments and communities engage trafficking survivor-leaders

and establish formal ways for survivors to shape and inform anti-trafficking efforts.

As we look ahead to 2025, we acknowledge both the gains made in the fight against this terrible crime and the need for sustained, joint efforts to eliminate human trafficking, in all its forms, around the world. Together, we can create a world where human trafficking is no longer tolerated and every individual can live in dignity and freedom.

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# Volunteer as a helpline advocate

The statewide sexual assault helpline is Maine's only dedicated helpline for survivors of sexual violence and their allies.

It's a place for people to call when they need short-term, immediate support or information related to sexual violence and its im-

pacts. This free and confidential resource operates 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and relies on volunteers, called volunteer advocates, to help answer calls. Volunteer advocates listen, provide emotional support, talk about options, help with planning for safety, and make referrals to other services. In some areas, volunteer advocates also meet with survivors and families at hospitals and police stations.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer advocate, we'd love to talk to you! We're always looking for dedicated people who care about issues of sexual violence and want to make a difference.

Volunteer advocates are supported at the sexual assault support center in their area, and although every center does things a little differently, all volunteer advocates must:

## mecasa MAINE COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

be 18 years of age or older, have access to a reliable phone, pass background checks, and successfully completing the Foundations of Advocacy training.

It's preferred that volunteers also have access to an email account.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer advocate, contact the sexual assault support center in your area.

York or Cumberland\* County:

Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

Learn more and fill out their application form here: <https://sarssm.bamboohr.com/careers/22>

\* SARSSM serves all of Cumberland County EXCEPT: Brunswick, Harpswell, Harpswell Neck, Great Island, Bailey Island, & Orrs Island (which are served by SASSMM) AND Bridgton & Harrison (which are served by SAPARS).

Androscoggin, Franklin, or Oxford County, and Bridgton & Harrison in Western Cumberland:

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services (SAPARS)

Learn more here:

<https://www.sapars.org/get-involved.html> or contact Jamie at [jamie.de-mers@sapars.org](mailto:jamie.de-mers@sapars.org)

Eastern Cumberland (Brunswick and Harpswell), Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, or Waldo County:

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

For more information, email [outreach@sassmm.org](mailto:outreach@sassmm.org). You can also fill out the Volunteer interest form on SASSMM's volunteer page here: <https://www.sassmm.org/volunteer.html>

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**"SEXPLOITATION" A FILM SCREENING**

JAN. 30TH 2025  
5:00 PM TO 7:00 PM  
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In this film, meet 4 courageous Maine women who endured the dark world of sex trafficking and survived, recovered and turned their trauma into a life of service for others.

A QUESTION AND ANSWER STYLE DISCUSSION WILL FOLLOW THE FILM.

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### WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS...**

- Exploiting a person through force, fraud, or coercion
- Anyone under the age of 18 involved in a commercial sex act
- Sex trafficking, forced labor, and domestic servitude
- A highly profitable crime
- Exploitation-based and does not require movement across borders or any type of transportation

**THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

- SEX TRAFFICKING**: Victims are manipulated or forced against their will to engage in sex acts for money.
- FORCED LABOR**: Victims are made to work for little or no pay. Very often, they are forced to manufacture or grow products that we use and consume every day.
- DOMESTIC SERVITUDE**: Victims are hidden in plain sight, forced to work in homes across the United States as nannies, maids, or domestic help.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS HAPPENING IN THE UNITED STATES**

SUBURBS, RURAL TOWNS, CITIES

**IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE**

NO MATTER AGE, RACE, GENDER IDENTITY, SEX, ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, IMMIGRATION STATUS, AND SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS

VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING MIGHT BE AFRAID TO COME FORWARD, OR WE MAY NOT RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS, EVEN IF IT IS HAPPENING RIGHT IN FRONT OF US.

**RECOGNIZE AND REPORT HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

- To report suspected trafficking to federal law enforcement, call 1-866-347-2423 or submit a tip online at [www.ice.gov/tips](http://www.ice.gov/tips)
- Get help from the National Human Trafficking Hotline by calling 1-888-373-7888 or text HELP or INFO to 233733 (BEFREE).
- Call 911 or local law enforcement if someone is in immediate danger.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Visit the Blue Campaign website to learn more about the indicators of human trafficking: [DHS.gov/BlueCampaign](http://DHS.gov/BlueCampaign)
- Use Blue Campaign materials to raise awareness of human trafficking in your community.
- Follow @DHSBlueCampaign on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

**BLUE CAMPAIGN** One Voice. One Mission. End Human Trafficking.

**OUT OF THE SHADOWS EXPOSING THE MYTHS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**MYTH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS ONLY SEX TRAFFICKING** **TRUTH: 28% OF THE 20.9 MILLION VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUFFER FROM FORCED LABOR**

**MYTH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS WILL SELF IDENTIFY** **TRUTH: 50% OF VICTIMS DO NOT CONTACT A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL**

**MYTH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS NOT IN MY COMMUNITY** **TRUTH: 30,000+ CASES OF PORN WITH HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORTED IN ALL 50 STATES DC & UC TERRITORIES**

**MYTH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING ONLY AFFECTS THE VICTIM** **TRUTH: THE CRIME OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A SYMPTOM OF A SOCIETAL PROBLEM**

**MYTH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING ONLY HAPPENS TO CHILDREN** **TRUTH: SINCE 2010, NATIONAL HOTLINE CASES REPORTED: 62% ADULTS**

**MYTH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING ONLY HAPPENS TO WOMEN** **TRUTH: SINCE 2010, NATIONAL HOTLINE CASES REPORTED: 18% MEN**

**Human Trafficking is a crime and you can make a difference.**

Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has received over 108,304 calls and identified over 20,540 potential cases of human trafficking. You can receive help, report a tip, or request information or training by calling:

**National Human Trafficking Hotline**  
888-373-7888  
[act.hhs.gov/endtrafficking](http://act.hhs.gov/endtrafficking)

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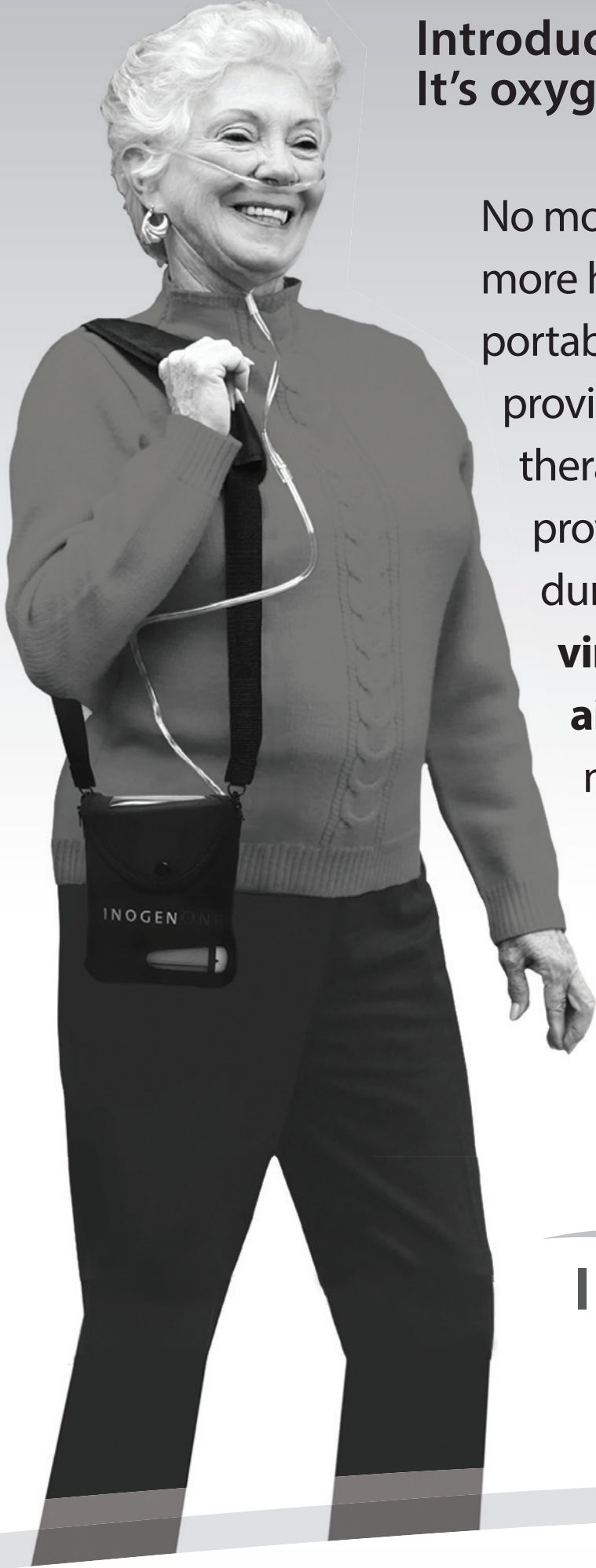
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# BBB scam alert: Road toll collection services text messages

**EASTERN MA, ME, RI & VT** - If you've been on a road trip, you're probably familiar with modern tolling systems that allow you to pay your toll fees online. If you anticipate paying for any outstanding tolls, watch out for this text message phishing scam. Fraudsters are impersonating toll collection services, trying to trick consumers into paying for fake outstanding tolls. They may even use AI technology to create more convincing fake websites or personalized messages to include your personal information.

How the scam works  
You receive a text message from what appears to be a state tollway collection service, like the Illinois Tollway, the Florida Turnpike (Sunpass), Georgia Peach Pass, or EZ Drive

MA. The text message says you owe a road toll fee of \$11.69 or around \$12, but you need to pay it immediately to avoid a late fee of \$50. Other variations are in Massachusetts for \$6.99, Georgia Peach Pass for \$3.75, the Ohio Turnpike for \$7.60 or even \$97.50, with a \$150 penalty, and Texas Toll for \$7.79.

The message includes a link to settle your balance, which appears to be from the state's toll service, making the message look legitimate. However, if you click the link, you may notice they are asking for sensitive personal information, like your Social Security number. If you proceed and provide your personal and payment information on the website, scammers could now have access to that information, and you may have lost some

money.  
BBB Scam Tracker has received reports of text messages that appear to be from toll-collection services. One consumer recently shared, I received a text from EZDrive MA Alert - 63 964 942 8797 with the message: "Your vehicle has an unpaid toll bill. To avoid excessive late fees on your bill, please settle it promptly. Thank you for your cooperation! Total amount: \$6.99 Now Payment: <https://ezdrive-map.xin/vip> Please reply Y, then exit the SMS and open it again to activate the link, or copy the link to your Safari browser and open it)" I did not pay the bill because I know I have an auto pay on my EZDriveMA account. However, at first I thought it was legitimate.

Another consumer shared, "Text received say-

ing my vehicle has outstanding toll invoices, to avoid excessive late fees settle your balance in a timely manner. Then a link was provided."

How to avoid text message phishing scams

Verify your outstanding toll balance with the legitimate agency. Instead of clicking on the link in the text message, go to your web browser, find the toll service's actual website, and log in to your account to verify if you have any outstanding toll payments. Another way to verify this is by calling the toll service's customer service line. Do not call the phone number that texted you or any phone numbers included in the text message. Instead, find the toll service's legitimate phone number on their website.

Know the warning

signs of a fake text. If you receive an unusual text message, there are several things to look for to help you identify if it's fake. Read BBB's tips on spotting the red flags of fake text messages.

Don't click on links or download files that are unexpectedly texted to you. It may be hard to identify if a link sent in a text message is safe. Scammers can disguise a URL to appear legitimate when it isn't.

Don't give out your personal information. Phishing scams often ask you to provide personal information like your birthdate, Social Security number, and more. Never give out this information unless you are 100% certain you're talking or working with a legitimate person or agency you can trust.

Block the number and

delete the message. Do not engage with the scammer if you think you received a fake text message. Instead, block the phone number and delete the text message. Refusing to engage and blocking the phone number can help prevent scammers from contacting you again.

If you receive a text message impersonating a road toll collection service, report it. You can file a report with BBB Scam Tracker to help warn others about this new scam, and you can search for other reports of the scam in your area. In addition, file a report with the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov). Reporting scams helps consumers become aware of scams and helps law enforcement track down scammers.

# Tips for safer generator usage for home & business owners

**MAINE** -- If your electricity goes out, a generator can keep power flowing to your home or business. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing manufacturers and

suppliers of outdoor power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles, and golf cars, reminds home and business owners to keep safety in mind when using genera-

tors this winter.

"Not having power when you need it is frustrating, so a generator can provide emergency backup power at a reasonable cost," says Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI. "It's important to follow all manufacturer's instructions, and never place a generator in your garage or inside your home or building. It should be a safe distance from the structure and not near an air intake."

More tips include:

- #1 - Take stock of your generator. Make sure equipment is in good working order before starting and using it. Do this before a storm hits.
- #2 - Review the directions. Follow all manufacturer's instructions. Review the owner's manuals (look manuals up online if you cannot find them) so equipment is operated safely.
- #3 - Install a battery operated carbon monoxide detector in your home. This alarm will sound if dangerous levels of carbon

monoxide enter the building.

#4 - Have the right fuel on hand. Use the type of fuel recommended by the generator manufacturer to protect this important investment. It is illegal to use any fuel with more than 10% ethanol in outdoor power equipment. (For more information on proper fueling for outdoor power equipment visit <https://www.opei.org/programs/ethanolwarning/>). It's best to use fresh fuel, but if you are using fuel that has been sitting in a gas can for more than 30 days, add fuel stabilizer to it. Store gas only in an approved container and away from heat sources.

#5 - Ensure portable generators have plenty of ventilation. Generators should NEVER be used in an enclosed area or placed inside a home, a building, or a garage, even if the windows or doors are open. Place the generator outside and away from windows, doors, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to drift indoors.

#6 - Keep the generator dry. Do not use a generator in wet conditions. Cover and vent a generator. Model-specific tents or generator covers can be found online for purchase and at home centers and hardware stores.

#7 - Only add fuel to a cool generator. Before refueling, turn the generator off and let it cool down.

#8 - Charge & use battery-powered generators/inverters properly. Recharge only with the charger specified by the manufacturer. A charger that is suitable for one type of battery pack may not be compatible with another battery pack. Follow all charging instructions and do not charge the battery pack or equipment outside the temperature range specified in the instructions. Charging improperly or at temperatures outside the specified range may damage the battery.

#9 - Plug in safely. If you don't yet have a transfer switch, you can use the outlets on the generator. It's best to plug in appli-

ances directly to the generator. If you must use an extension cord, it should be heavy-duty and designed for outdoor use. It should be rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Make sure the cord is free of cuts, and the plug has all three prongs.

#10 - Install a transfer switch. A transfer switch connects the generator to the circuit panel and lets you power hardwired appliances. Most transfer switches also help avoid overload by displaying wattage usage levels.

#11 - Do not use the generator to "backfeed" power into your home electrical system. Trying to power your home's electrical wiring by "backfeeding" - where you plug the generator into a wall outlet - is dangerous. You could hurt utility workers and neighbors served by the same transformer. Backfeeding bypasses built-in circuit protection devices, so you could damage your electronics or start an electrical fire.

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# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

**Wednesdays**  
**GORHAM** -- Story Hour every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 at North Gorham Public Library.

**Thursdays**  
**LEWISTON** -- Baby Sensory Playtime in the Lewiston Public Library's Children's Department every Thursday morning from 10am to 12pm.

Drop-in and join us for Baby Sensory Playtime! Babies and their caregivers will have the opportunity to interact with a variety of sensory toys and socialize with other families with young children. Playtime with sensory toys contributes to a baby's cognitive development, fine motor skills, social and emotional development, creativity, and language development.

**Recommended** for babies ages birth-18 months and their caregivers. Siblings are always welcome. This program is free, open to the public and no registration is required.

**Jan 25**  
**AUBURN** -- There will be a baked bean supper at Sixth St. Congregational Church at 109 Sixth St. in Auburn on Saturday, January 25th from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The menu consists of two kinds of beans, brown bread, cole slaw, red and brown hot dogs, assorted casseroles, assorted des-

serts and beverage. The cost of the meal is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 5 to 12, under age 5 is free. All are welcome. Take-out is available.

**Jan 25**  
**GRAY** -- The First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at 5:00 at the Parish House, 5 Brown Street, Gray. Handicapped Accessible.

Meals are single-sized and are \$10.00 each. Please pay at the door. The Menu includes: Variety of Casseroles & Salads, Baked Pea Beans & Red Kidney, Red Hot Dogs, Breads, Assortment of Desserts & Beverages

**Jan 25**  
**LISBON FALLS** -- Dine In/Take Out Bean Supper, Saturday, January 25th from 4:30pm - 5:30pm or SOLD OUT

Lisbon United Methodist Church, 14 School Street, Lisbon Falls, ME

Sponsored by the Methodist Women Adults \$9.00

Menu: Pea Beans, Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, dinner roll and a slice of pie!

**Jan 25**  
**BUXTON** -- Try

our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, November 30, 2024 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family.

Please note: We will offer the option of takeout containers for those who do not want to come inside for seating.

**Jan 27**  
**LEWISTON** -- Lewiston Public Library for Painting Class: Paint a Winter Scene in the 2nd floor Idea Lab on Monday, January 27th at 4pm. Recommended for children ages 10 - 14 years old.

Come learn how to paint a winter scene with step-by-step instruction by local artist, Nicole Ann. Get creative by painting a snowy landscape scene using acrylic paints on canvas panels. All materials are provided. This program is free, open to the public, and no registration is required.

The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street.

**Jan 27**  
**AUBURN** -- FILM

SCREENING & DISCUSSION -- ELECTIONS, POPULISM, AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN THE AMERICAS with Dr. Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz, Associate Professor of Politics and Chair of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program, Bates College, Monday, January 27, 2025 -- 4:30-5:30 p.m., Androscoggin Community Room, Auburn Public Library

**Jan 30-Feb 2**  
**HERMON** -- Celebrity Egg Riders are revved up for the 52nd annual Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-in Weekend to benefit Pine Tree Camp.

Thursday, January 30: Live WABI-TV5 Telethon and Dysart's Spaghetti Dinner, 4:00pm at Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop, 530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon

Friday, January 31: Live and Silent Auction - Hosted by Maine Cabin Masters Jedi and Dixie, 6:00pm at Morgan Hill Event Center, 82 Morgan Hill Lane, Hermon

Saturday, February 1: Celebrity Egg Ride and Poker Run, 9:30am at Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop, 530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon

Sunday, February 2: Penobscot Snowmobile Club Radar Run, Noon at the Penobscot Snowmobile Club, 795 Bog Road,

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**Feb 3**  
**AUBURN** -- On February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4-6 at the Auburn Public Library, the Stanton Bird Club will be hosting the third in its 2024- 25 lecture series presenting "Birding in the Falkland Islands" with Loring (Danny) Danforth, PhD.

**Feb 13**  
**AUBURN** -- BOOK DISCUSSION --DEMOCRACY AWAKENING: NOTES ON THE STATE OF AMERICA by Heather Cox Richardson. Thursday, February 13, 2025 - 4:00-5:00 p.m., Auburn Public Library

**Feb 15**  
**WESTBROOK** -- The Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM) will ring in the Year of the Snake, Saturday, February 15, 2025, at the Westbrook Performing Arts Center, 471 Stroudwater Road, Westbrook, ME

**Grants**

*Continued from page 6*

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which enabled Rural Development to fund up to half the cost of eligible clean energy projects. To date, USDA has invested more than \$14M from the IRA in 171 REAP grants in Maine. In that same period, the agency has provided \$192M in loans and loan guarantees for large-scale clean energy projects in the state.

Pheonix and Megan O'Brien of Hall Brook Farm will be part of a farmer panel discussion at the State of Maine Agricultural Trades Show in Augusta on Tuesday, January 14th. The panel will discuss "Making USDA Work for You," and the participating farmers will talk about programs including REAP. There will be other informational sessions and exhibits from USDA throughout the free, three-day show.

## GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

# Field Funding Campaign

The Gorham Youth Baseball & Softball Association is making a large capital investment to provide updates and add fields to accommodate practice and game schedules:

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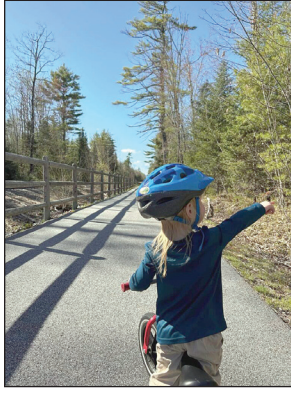
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# Mountain Division Alliance starts 2025 with a new name



**WINDHAM, ME** -The Mountain Division Alliance is an advocacy organization whose mission is to work with the nine communities along the Mountain Division Rail corridor, Maine Department of Transportation, and other organizations and stakeholders to create a safe, welcoming, contiguous trail that connects existing paved portions of the trail to provide for active transportation and recreation opportunities from Fryeburg to Portland.

In July 2023 the passage of legislation (LD404) authorized the MaineDOT to remove the rail and plan and construct 31 miles of new trail until rail stretching from Fryeburg to Standish. This presents an opportunity for the Organization to promote the trail to a broader group of

people in and outside of Maine to whom we are not as well-known. After considerable discussion and debate, the Board decided to come up with a new name reflecting our singular focus.

Friends of the Mountain Division Trail (FOTMDT) is the new name of the organization effective 1/9/25. "It better reflects our sentiment and commitment to this invaluable Maine state asset and how we will accomplish our new mission and vision" says Doug Smith, President of the organization.

Smith and the Board of FOTMDT invite all members of the public to join us in working toward

our vision to have communities along the Mountain Division Line connected by trails that are safe and welcoming for active transportation and recreation, improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors, create economic benefits by attracting tourists and businesses to Southern and Western Maine, and further connect to a network of trails across Maine and beyond.

Please visit our new website and learn more about our advocacy efforts, and how you can support our activities.



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