

2nd Quarter 2021 Island Connector



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Please note that the Island Connections Newsletter, **STAY CONNECTED** will be published quarterly instead of monthly beginning with this issue.

Our Mission

Island Connections provides free transportation and other services to seniors and people with disabilities from Mount Desert Island and the surrounding islands to enhance their independence and quality of life by utilizing our core group of dedicated volunteers.

Message from the Executive Director

It's been a year and we're still here despite Covid-19! We're still providing the necessary transportation services needed for our island neighbors to get to their lifesaving cancer and dialysis treatments, a wide variety of doctor's appointments, grocery shopping, Meals on Wheels and other food deliveries to help sustain our beloved neighbors. Our volunteers are the true heroes in the Island Connections' story. Over the past year, our service never suffered from a lack of dedicated volunteers and now we are taking our neighbors for their vaccines. Through it all, we have been supported by the community and beyond to keep going.



We've expanded our services yet again by becoming a food delivery partner for the Food Access Program, a partnership with Open Table MDI, the Bar Harbor Food Pantry, COA and Beech Hill Farm. Another way that we are helping to fight food insecurity on and off the island.

A great deal of gratitude goes to our staff and board members who work hard to be sure we continue to deliver on our mission. Our goal is to be here for a very long time to serve our community. Please continue to stay safe and well.

All the best,

Doreen Willett
Executive Director

**CLICK THE PLAY BUTTON BELOW
TO WATCH HOW ISLAND
CONNECTIONS' VOLUNTEERS
PROVIDE CARING RIDES TO OUR
ISLAND NEIGHBORS**



I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE

Visit our
Website



**NEIGHBORS/VOLUNTEERS DO YOU
NEED PPE SUPPLIES FOR YOUR RIDES?**

Please contact the office at 288-4457 to make arrangements for pickup if need a cloth, paper, or plastic mask, gloves, hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes.

**A Message from Amy Manring,
Transportation Coordinator**

A bit of optimism on this blustery day with wind chills below zero - the lone daffodil on the coldest, north side of my house is three inches tall and is insisting spring is closer than we think. Last weekend's flock of robins agree!

Lovely reminders that better times may be closer than we think!

Best to all - Amy



***COVID Update as of
Late March 2021***

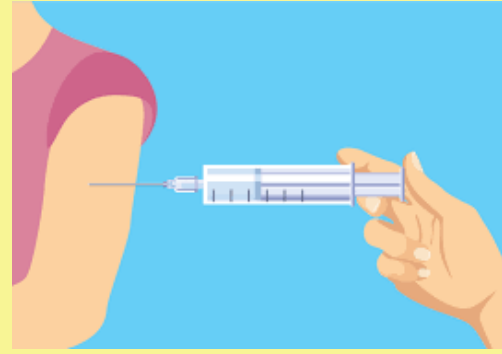
***[Click here for the latest
information regarding
vaccinations in Maine](#)***

While many of us are vaccinated or will be eminently vaccinated, it is still imperative for both drivers and neighbors to wear masks and socially distance by at least 6 feet. Regardless of what you may have read or heard from other folks, we at Island Connections are still requiring BOTH driver and passenger to wear a mask at all times during the drive.

***Our number one priority is the safety
of our neighbors and volunteers
at all times.***

If you know a neighbor or you are a volunteer who needs a mask, sanitizer, gloves or

sanitizing wipes, please call the office at 288-4457.



While masks may be a bit uncomfortable and inhibit direct contact with others, the benefits far outweigh the inconvenience.

Girl Scout Troop 760 Spreads Cheer...

Late last Fall, residents of Malvern Belmont Apartments in Bar Harbor were treated to an uplifting visit from several local Girls Scouts. Their mission was to provide "happy grams" or messages which furnished inspiring and joyful messages to the residents through cards and in-person spoken words (socially distanced, of course). Thank you for making the lives of others happier with your expressions of love and caring expressions.



**SUPPLEMENTAL
INURANCE NOW
AVAILABLE FOR**

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

As a means of making our drivers and neighbors as safe as possible, supplemental drivers insurance is now activated for all Island Connections drivers during driving sessions for Island Connections. The drivers must be current with providing us with their up-to-date and valid driver's license and insurance verification. If you would like to read the details of the policy, please [click here](#) to view it in its entirety.



**Do you have questions about the new insurance?
Want to Chat about this?**

Please send an email to dana@islandconnections.org by Wednesday, April 7 to receive a ZOOM invite scheduled for Thursday April 8 at 1pm for a discussion about the insurance.



***HAPPY
HOLIDAYS***



Major upcoming holidays...

Passover, begins Saturday March 27

Easter, Sunday April 4

Ramadan, begins Tuesday April 13

Patriots' Day, Monday April 19

(Offices are closed Patriots' Day but rides will persist)

Mothers' Day, Sunday May 9

Memorial Day, Monday May 31

Fathers' Day, Sunday June 20



RIDES

on the RISE

Island Connections volunteers are amazing! The first quarter of calendar year 2021:

- 1089 rides were completed
- 15 new neighbors were added
- 10 new drivers were added



The increase in rides from the same time period in the previous year is 5.1%.

Of course, given the increase in needed transportation services, we are always in need of increasing our most valuable asset, volunteers. If you or someone you know would like to find out what it means to become a volunteer driver for Island Connections, please be sure to call and speak to Dana Mastroianni.

Our Joy Riding recruitment Program proved to be an excellent recruiting method for Island Connections. Future dates will be announced. Can we ask YOU, our volunteer drivers, to help spread the word about the amazing work YOU do for our island neighbors and how they can help too by volunteering some of their time to do the same.

As many know, it's actually very easy to help us and rewarding. We have 720 living hours in a month and by donating 1 hour of time, a neighbor can be transported to and from an in town medical appointment. Please share this newsletter with your friends or family members who who want to volunteer for Island Connections . They can merely click on the [apply to volunteer](#) link below or call us at 288-4457 and speak to Dana Mastroianni. Thank you for your consideration or helping us spread the word!

Island Connections Honored by Bar Harbor Bank and Trust

Bar Harbor Bank & Trust employees chose Island Connections to benefit from their "**Casual for a Cause**" Program in the last quarter of 2020.

They recognized the passion and dedication that our organization has to help strengthen individuals and families in our community by providing our free transportation services especially during the pandemic.

The BHBT employees participate by making donations throughout the year,



Lisa Parsons, Senior Vice President at Bar Harbor Bank

while having the opportunity to wear casual clothes on Fridays. We are filled with so much gratitude for their support.

Doreen

& Trust presents IC Executive Director, Doreen Willett, with a check for \$1631 collected through the "Casual for a Cause" program in late 2020.

APPLY TO VOLUNTEER

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VOLUNTEER DRIVER?



WHY VOLUNTEER?

- It brings people together. You get to meet new people and make new friends.
- It promotes self-growth. You can use your skills and learn new skills.
- You make a difference. Volunteering makes you feel appreciated and needed. It provides an opportunity to give back what has been given to you.
- It strengthens our community and breaks down barriers of fear and misunderstanding.

*Thank you for your
consideration*

Island Connections Now Partnering With the FOOD ACCESS PROJECT (FAP)

Island Connections has become the newest partner with the non-profit FOOD ACCESS PROJECT (FAP) here on MDI. Much like the "wheels" portion of "Meals on Wheels", IC volunteer drivers are now driving food boxes on Saturday's to nearly 85 recipients

as of late March. The collaboration includes Open Table MDI, College of the Atlantic, Beech Hill Farms, Share the Harvest, The Bar Harbor Food Pantry, and Healthy Acadia's Gleaning Initiative. For more information visit the [website](#).

If you are looking to volunteer, this is a perfect opportunity to join the faithful team of volunteer drivers who are helping other neighbors on the island. Please call Island Connections at 207-288-4457 if you would like to volunteer and complete an [online application](#).



**THANK YOU TO AARP FOR PROVIDING
DETAILS OF KNOWN SCAMS TO WATCH
FOR**



Please consider publishing these alerts in your local publications, and share them on social media, too. AARP Maine will publish the alerts on their website www.aarp.org/me each Tuesday. If you have alerts to suggest, please send them to us and we will add them into our scam alert schedule. Questions? Suggestions? Contact Jane Margesson jmargesson@aarp.org or 207-229-5628 (cell).

Week 1 – Red Flag Warning – Gift Card Payments

A key part of being able to spot a scam is knowing the red flags – those signs that suggest that just maybe what you’re confronting isn’t legitimate. One of the biggest red flags these days is anyone who tries to convince you that you owe some debt or other obligation, and the quickest way to address the issue is to purchase gift cards and share the information off the back.

Why gift cards? First, they are readily available. You see them at your grocery store, department store, and hardware store. Second, it’s a way that criminals can get your money instantly and the money is easy to move around. As soon as a target sends the numbers to the gift card they’ve purchased, the criminal is able to convert it to currency in an instant. Not surprisingly, the Federal Trade Commission reports that gift cards have been the most common form of payment in scams since 2018.

Anytime you are directed to pay a debt or other obligation with a gift card, it is a scam.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call the AARP Fraud Watch Helpline at 1-877-908-3360.

Week 2 – Avoiding IRS Collection Scams

Tax time is here again and so are the IRS impostors! Scammers posing as IRS agents or Treasury Department officials are out there once again, calling to convince taxpayers that they owe back taxes and face immediate arrest. Know this: the IRS will initially contact you through the mail if you owe back taxes. If you receive an unexpected phone call, an email or a text indicating it’s from the IRS, do not engage. Report the scam attempt to the IRS at 800-366-4484 or www.tigta.gov. If you receive an email, forward it to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov, and then delete it.



Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

Week 3 -- Social Security Scams Rule

2020 was the year of new twists on scams. There were COVID testing scams, miracle cure scams, stimulus scams and vaccine scams, but one scam stood out above them all. The Social Security impostor scam.

Social Security impostor scams continue to be the most prevalent in the United States. In 2020, the Social Security Office of Inspector General received well over 700,000 reports of Social Security impostor scams, and 70% of the calls to the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline were related to Social Security impostors.

Remember, the real Social Security Administration will not call you unless you are already in discussions with the agency on a particular issue. They certainly won't threaten to cut off your benefits or seek to "help" with an identity theft problem. Anyone who does is NOT from the Social Security Administration.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call the AARP Fraud Watch Helpline at 1-877-908-3360.

Week 4 – Do Me a Favor Clergy Scams

The ongoing remote world we're living in has many of us getting used to doing more of our activities virtually. When we can't be face to face, it makes for rich targets for adept scammers.

One trending scam is when a criminal impersonates clergy. The crook spoofs the e-mail address of a given faith leader and sends a message to a congregant requesting a favor. They will claim they are busy or out of town and just need you to purchase a dozen gift cards that will be used to help congregants in need. All you need to do is buy them (say, \$100 each) and email a picture of the front and back of the cards. And of course, you will be reimbursed.



Fraud Watch Network

April 2021 State Scam Alerts

If you're ever asked to do a favor like this, take a pause and think, "*Would this person really ask me to do this?*" Contact the person yourself and get validation they are who they say they are. And if the request was for gift cards, you'll learn it was a scam attempt.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 1-877-908-3360 to report a scam or get help if you've fallen victim.

Champion Circle Monthly Giving Program

As part of our annual appeal, we are able to offer an online giving option that offers you the ability to support Island Connections on a monthly basis. We invite you to seriously consider our ***Champion Connector's Circle Program*** for the following reasons. Monthly giving makes it easier for you to plan ahead for your annual giving, and alleviates the potential challenge of a large outlay of funds at the end of the year. **Your donation can be easily and securely debited from a credit card or bank account of your choosing.** You can set it up to debit your account



automatically each month, and not have to think about it again. And it helps Island Connections by providing a consistent and steady cash flow stream throughout the year. All you need to do is [click on the link](#) and simply follow the instructions for the monthly giving program. It's that easy! Please note that one time gifts can be made on this giving link as well.

If you require any additional assistance or have any questions, please call Doreen at 207-288-4457.



DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR VOLUNTEER DRIVER REWARDS PROGRAM?

Back in 2011, when gas prices were climbing higher than we had seen, Island Connections started a Driver Rewards Program to help our volunteer drivers who were working hard for our neighbors

each day.

The way it works is that points are accumulated for every ride given by a volunteer to a neighbor. The point system is based on the number of rides given and destination of the rides. Each month Amy Manring, our Transportation Coordinator, reviews all of the data to create a list of those volunteers who have accumulated 30 points at which time we mail each of them a \$ 25.00 gift card from Irving/Circle K. Their points revert back to 0 and they begin accumulating all over again. It's our way of giving back to those who give of themselves, their time and their resources. All of our active volunteers are eligible to accumulate points by driving for Island Connections.

Island Connections Driver Rewards Program is made possible through grant funding provided by the Hattie A. and Fred C. Lynam Trust Fund through Bar Harbor Bank and Trust Service and Witham Family Foundation.

Volunteer Reminder



*****To all of our volunteers**
Thank you for supporting
our neighbors in every way
that you do!***



Island Connections Out In the Community

Working with other local area agencies...

Our Executive Director, in her role as a member of the Outreach Committee of the Bar Harbor Congregational Church, pictured here from left to right with Chad Kessell, BHFP Board Member, Pastor Rob Benson of the BHCC, Sarah Graves, BHFP staff member and Elise Thomas, and IC Executive Director, Doreen Willett. Pastor Rob and Doreen were presenting a check to the Bar Harbor Food Pantry, one of Island Connections partners in the Food Access program, to help with expenses related to the installation of a new freezer.



HELPFUL INFORMATION FROM OTHER RESOURCES

SUCCESSFUL AGING EXPO INFO FROM MAINE SENIOR GUIDE: Mark your calendar for May 3-10, 2021. Successful Aging Expos platform will be hosting an

online Spring Fling, with many live talks, classes and workshops. You'll be able to get more info about programs and companies focused on older Mainers, too. And it's free and easy to attend! [Click here](#) to learn more.

MOVING FORWARD INITIATIVE FROM THE GOVERNOR

This is a plan, which provides clear, predictable guidance for Maine people, business and visitors to plan for the summer and further establishes Maine as a safe place to visit. See the details [here](#).



ISLAND EXPLORER RELEASES 2021 SCHEDULE

For those who plan on using the transportation services offered by the Island Explorer, please see the alterations to routes and the 2021 schedule for all passengers by clicking on the Island Explorer logo to the right..



HOW ARE WE DOING???

We would love your feedback on how we're doing in our community. Please feel free to call or e-mail with your comments.

If you need information about Island Connections or in need of a ride, please contact our Transportation Coordinator, [Amy Manring](#).

CONTACT US

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday

9:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Telephone: 207-288-4457

Doreen Willett

Executive Director

Island Connections

www.islconnections.org

Bar Harbor, ME 04609

director@islconnections.org

Have you given any thought to Planned Giving?

Perhaps you would like to speak to us about leaving a bequest to Island Connections but didn't know how to get started.

[Contact Doreen Willett](#) to start the conversation about creating a sustainable giving plan. We thank you for your consideration.



Island Connections * 93 Cottage Street, Suite 101, Bar Harbor, ME 04609
Phone 207-288-4457 * info@islconnections.org * www.islconnections.org

STAY CONNECTED

