

2022 Annual Report



North Fork Senior Connections

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

P.O. Box 1738 Paonia, CO 81428



To the North Fork Senior Connections community —

This is the start of our fourth year as North Fork Senior Connections: We became a local 501c(3) in the summer of 2019. We've all managed to weather the storms of a pandemic, of social turmoil and economic dislocations. How did we accomplish it?

I think it can honestly be said that this organization not only continued to fulfill its mission by offering and fulfilling the kinds of volunteer services that help our seniors age in place, but that we attempted to extend that mission by creating and maintaining connections to the North Fork community at large.

Some of that has come about by continuing programs such as our mini-CSA that delivered not only local farm-fresh food to requesting members but also the moments of connection and interaction that accompanied some of those deliveries, the contacts that communicate our care for each other. Yes, leaves got raked, swamp coolers inspected, and gutters cleaned on our two Service Saturdays held in the fall and spring, but I think we've also managed to create spaces in which participation can make cooperation happen.

And, if you were willing to brave the restrictions and wear a mask to protect yourself and others, there were even indoor events that brought us together, like the "Aging Creatively" program in which we participated along with the Paradise Theater, Elsewhere Studios, and the Senior Center. Or new activities like the Book Club, John Valentine's series of gardening classes, the revival of the Brain Boosters course, or the truly special program "Crossing the Generational Divide" that brought local teens and long-time residents of the valley together to explore, in recorded interviews and conversations, the personal side of the community's history. Those are moments that count, that tell us that what we're doing matters. At a special "reunion" gathering of participants at which segments of those interviews were shown at the Paradise, it was clear that real relationships had formed, and that's essentially what Senior Connections is about.

Our team of volunteers and staff has suffered some losses (due to retirement) over the past year — of board members James Schott and Jess Deegan and of our dynamic Program Manager, Linda McCone — but we are always looking to recruit and welcome new volunteers such as our new Vice Chair, Bonnie Eisenberg, and new member Brad Thacker. A special note of appreciation and thanks must go out to our dedicated Program Assistant (our Communicator-In-Chief), Laura Lee Yates, who has continued to keep us on track throughout this year, despite the vagaries of spotty cellphone service and a website that has never quite worked the way it's supposed to.

And, of course, none of this could continue without the ongoing support and encouragement of our generous donors and the army of volunteers who continue to answer the call, show up and do the work of paying it forward, of allowing our seniors to age in place. Congratulations to you all, for all that you've accomplished.

Best wishes for even better connections,
Bruce Woodside
NFSC Chairman of the Board

Volunteer Activities and Events

In addition to providing volunteer help to allow seniors to remain in their homes as long as they wish, it's part of our mission at North Fork Senior Connections to keep things lively for the older adults in our community. As the pandemic eased its grip we began to provide more in-person activities, especially at the Paonia Senior Center, where we now keep regular office hours.

- The Senior Book Club met monthly to discuss fiction and nonfiction books on the chosen topic, such as “Where I’m From” or “Water.”
- Each Wednesday morning, weather permitting, a group of elders walk beside the North Fork at the Paonia River Park, plus a couple of “field trips” to Eagle Rock outside Hotchkiss.
- 106 elders received Halloween treats baked, packaged, and delivered by Senior Connections volunteers.
- Twelve volunteers delivered home-baked goodies to more than seventy-five members on Valentine’s Day.
- Volunteers delivered more than ninety Holiday Cards to seniors, each handcrafted by a kindergartner in Jodi Simpson’s class at Paonia Elementary School.
- March 31st marked the end of our six-month Aging Creatively collaboration with the Paradise Theater, Elsewhere Studios, and the Paonia Senior Center, funded by Next50 Initiative, A.V. Hunter Trust, and the West Elk Community Fund. Each Thursday at no charge attendees enjoyed an activity—Exercise, Senior Movie, Art, or Games—followed by a delicious and healthy lunch from a local caterer or restaurant. The final luncheon featured Celtic music by Lindi Mereness and Fran Stein.
- Monday morning “Koffee Klatches” at the Paonia Senior Center sparked camaraderie and lively conversation.
- Partnering with the Western Slope Conservation Center, member Julie Sapena led a “Mike’s Hike” for a group of seniors along the river at Confluence Park in Delta on 4/14.
- On 5/5, Cinco de Mayo, a historian provided a fascinating tour for North Fork elders of Fort Uncompahgre on the Old Spanish Trail in Delta.
- Long-time members Randy Campbell and Linda McCone presented an eight-week course of the acclaimed “Boost Your Brain and Memory” programs.
- Master Gardener John Valentine shared his expertise during an eight-week series focused on spring gardening in the North Fork Valley.
- Senior Connections members Linda McCone, Cyndi Landes, Connie Hodges, Janet Oja and Laura Lee Yates pieced a colorful “Friendship Quilt,” quilted by Connie Hodges, to decorate the Paonia Senior Center, where we now have our office.
- NFSC invited members of the new local non-profit Wild Sage Natural Burials to give a presentation on “green” burial practices on Monday, November 8. We held an associated program on End-of-Life planning at the Paonia Library on November 17 with Carolyn Ringo and attorney Bindi Penetta, as well as a “Five Wishes” workshop in December facilitated by Jean Ceriani and Carolyn Ringo.
- Multi-talented Yuri Chicovsky continues to lead a weekly “Writing Your Life: Memoir for Seniors” on Wednesday afternoons.
- The delayed-by-Covid effort of students interviewing longtime North Fork Valley elders finally culminated in a film showing at the Paradise Theater on June 3, attended by more than eighty-five people. Special thanks to Paonia Experiential Leadership Academy and all the participants.

Volunteer Activities and Events continued

- Volunteers continue for thirty weeks to deliver CSA bags from the Living Farm to twenty recipients, each filled with four types of produce.
- We continue to spread our message with booths at local events, including the Holiday Fair, Community Fair, and Cherry Days celebration, with plans for Volunteer Fairs in each of the North Fork communities.
- In July of 2021 and again in July of 2022, North Fork Senior Connections was the lucky beneficiary of fundraising dinners cooked and served by the Kids Pasta Project, both held at beautiful Lamborn Mountain Farmstead. The generosity of members who “Paid It Forward” allowed us to treat low-income elders to a special lasagna meal complete with diminutive waitstaff. Special thanks to hosts James & Carol Schott, musicians Ellen Hutto & Dave Sheppard (2021) and Cory Obert and Andrea Lecos of Hard Pressed (2022).
- Last but certainly not least: Teams of volunteers performed seasonal tasks for numerous senior households as part of successful Service Saturdays on November 6 and May 14, followed by a Service Monday of window-washing for residents of the Creek Vista Senior Living Apartments.

Collaboration

Senior Connections works with more than a dozen wonderful local organizations ranging from Kids Pasta Project to the Blue Sage Center for the Arts, from Jodi Simpson’s kindergarten class at Paonia Elementary School to the Western Slope Conservation Center. Our collaborations have enabled all of us to achieve things we couldn’t have done alone.

The highly-popular Aging Creatively collaboration between the Paradise Theater, Elsewhere Studios, the Paonia Senior Center and North Fork Senior Connections brought together elders from all over the North Fork Valley to enjoy exercise, movies, art and games followed by fabulous lunches prepared by local caterers.

Our latest collaborations address the food insecurity of too many local seniors in a region famous for abundance. In addition to our continuing CSA deliveries to twenty folks, we initiated a new endeavor with the great folks at UpRoot Colorado, channeling surplus produce from farms and orchards to elders in need of quality nutrition. As of August we’ve begun distributing surplus organic breads from the generous folks at Mountain Oven in Paonia.

In September of 2021 North Fork Senior Connections moved our office into the Paonia Senior Center on Third Street. Linda McCone, our former program manager who is now vice-president of the Center, explains, “Even prior to Covid, attendance was poor, but when the Center closed for 15 months due to the pandemic many seniors languished due to the social isolation imposed by the restrictions. Collaboration has breathed life back into the Paonia Senior Center.”

Both organizations work to keep local elders active, and by joining forces we’ve made the Center into a place where seniors gather and thrive. Stop by and see us!

Grants and Donations

We would like to thank our foundation partners for their generosity from July 2021 through June 2022: **Western Colorado Community Foundation/West Elk Community Fund, \$1,500; Western Colorado Community Foundation/Dave and Mary Wood Fund, \$10,000; NextFifty Initiative, \$12,000; Aging Creatively, \$1,600; Rocky Mountain Health Foundation, \$6,000; Community Foundation of Utah/Topper Family Fund, \$5,000; Alpine Bank, \$250.**

We can't do what we do without your support!

Total All Grants

\$36,350

And we thank our many individual donors whose financial support continues to be essential to our mission.



In Gratitude

Three people instrumental in the early success of North Fork Senior Connections have moved on to other endeavors. Long-time program manager Linda McCone is now the vice-president of the Paonia Senior Center, where she continues to serve the elder community. We deeply miss the wise counsel of Board members James Schott and Jess Deegan and wish them all the best.

Membership

Our members are the beating heart of North Fork Senior Connections, whether they receive services or volunteer to help others. The pandemic drove home the importance of reaching across the generations, and with the aid of vaccinations person-to-person interactions are now possible, though we remain cautious. It's clear that social isolation was exacerbated for seniors and we have accelerated our programming to combat the resultant loneliness.

Our roster of active volunteers has grown to 125, with 90 receiving members (up from 67 the previous year.) We've fostered the concept of "paying it forward": everyone ages and it makes it far easier to accept assistance when you've offered help to others. Among our membership are folks with physical limitations who volunteer to deliver produce, help with mailings, or drive folks to appointments—the "two-way street."

Service Saturday continues to be a keynote endeavor, taking place spring and fall to aid elders with seasonal chores like installing swamp-coolers, cleaning gutters, raking leaves and washing windows. The participation of students swells the ranks of volunteers and brightens the lives of senior homeowners; one of the local schools has requested we add "Service Fridays" so their students can help out during school hours as part of their required community service.



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08/02/22
Cash Basis

North Fork Senior Connections
Profit & Loss
July 2021 through June 2022

	<u>Jul '21 - Jun 22</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
INCOME	
Donations	15,886.40
Foundation Grants	36,100.00
Fund Raisers	1,100.00
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Total INCOME	53,086.40
Other Types of Income	62.54
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Total Income	53,148.94
Expense	
General Operating Expense	
Accounting/Payroll Service	1,623.50
Ins. Liability, D&O, Work Comp	1,992.00
Memberships	120.00
General Operating Expense - Other	70.00
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Total General Operating Expense	3,805.50
Program Expenses	
Background Checks	324.45
Community Support Program	169.20
Contracted Services	13,950.00
Event Expenses	
Food and Catering	775.64
Event Expenses - Other	1,849.35
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Total Event Expenses	2,624.99
Mgmt Platform, Database, Web	982.94
Office & Program Supplies	981.52
Payroll Expense	
Taxes-Payroll	2,079.85
Wages	27,214.00
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Total Payroll Expense	29,293.85
Phone, Internet	354.39
Postage, Printing & Advertising	2,876.64
Program Supplies	53.19
Program Expenses - Other	82.86
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Total Program Expenses	51,694.03
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Total Expense	55,499.53
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Net Ordinary Income	-2,350.59
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Net Income	-2,350.59



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Brad Thacker, Member

Medeina Ryan, Program

Manager

Laura Lee Yates,

Communication Specialist

Gone but Not Forgotten

Joyce Chapdelaine, who left us on February 5, 2022, will long be remembered by all who knew her as a lover of books, the Catholic Church (and the "Bible Babes"), her extended family, and the Paonia Senior Center, where she used to greet people from her wheelchair.

Local caterer Lea Petmezas shared her talents with us through the Aging Creatively program, providing tasty nutritious lunches for local seniors. She will be greatly missed.

Phyllis Swackhamer was a wonderful teacher who shared her love of Kripalu Yoga with many North Fork folks.

Phyllis was passionate about protecting our Valley and worked tirelessly as an environmental activist. She passed away on July 18, 2022.

Linda Wright passed away on March 8, 2022, after a long life rich with love and family. We'll miss her smile and enthusiasm for books.