

Neighbors Driving Neighbors

ANNUAL
REPORT
2023

Allan Harville, NDN volunteer driver, and Libby Harville, NDN Board Member.





After a challenging few years of pandemic and post-pandemic hurdles, we are excited to share that NDN is back, firing on all cylinders. This year has been particularly eventful. Our amazing drivers have traveled 100,000+ miles since NDN was founded. We expanded the service area to include new riders and drivers in Readfield. Darcy Adams joined NDN as a part-time Program Coordinator, increasing our capacity to coordinate rides and check in with people. We enjoyed the first post-pandemic Driver Appreciation Lunch and the first-ever NDN Donor Appreciation Event, both held at the Viles Mansion in Augusta. In addition, we hosted the Readfield Launch Event, the Annual Online Auction, and the Community Breakfast Fundraiser. It has indeed been a busy year.

While these are all important activities and achievements, the key statistic that we have been monitoring most anxiously over the last year is ride numbers. Many volunteer-based community organizations did not survive COVID-19 as people hunkered down, limiting (for good reasons) the social interactions that are the lifeblood of volunteer organizations. This was also the case for NDN. A year ago the NDN board took a long hard look at our lagging ride numbers and set itself the goal of increasing ride numbers by 50% in one year.

Hence, the very active year. By working with local libraries and aging-in-place committees, getting info into town newsletters, posting on community Facebook groups, showing up with NDN info at local events, and with the help of existing riders and volunteer drivers, we have managed to get the word out that NDN is back. As a result, ride numbers have increased from an average of 35 rides a month for the Jan.–Sept. period in 2022 to an average of 70 rides per month for the same period in 2023. That is a 100% increase! To meet this demand, we are doubling down on recruiting new volunteer drivers and have expanded Darcy's hours so that, together with those of Executive Director Joe Austin, NDN has the equivalent of one full time position.

While it is useful to look at the numbers to confirm that NDN is fulfilling an important function in our towns, it is the personal interactions and stories that drive NDN: stories of companionship, purpose, and a commitment to community—among drivers, riders, and donors.

Many rural communities across Maine struggle with lack of access to transportation, and many have looked to NDN for inspiration. However, they are often doubtful that a volunteer-based model would work for their towns. We should be proud that a volunteer-based organization like Neighbors Driving Neighbors is not only possible, but is also thriving in our communities. It is a sign of a level of trust, good will, and community spirit that make a town a good place to live.

Sincerely,
Harald Bredesen, President

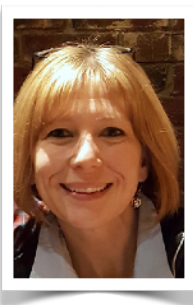
As we finalized this report, we learned of the tragic events in Lewiston. In times like these, having someone to talk to is critical, and we decided not to cancel rides unilaterally, but rather leave that to the discretion of drivers and riders. On behalf of NDN, I want to express my sorrow for the families affected by this tragedy.

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A Year of GROWTH

It has been a year of big changes. In February, we kicked off the year when:

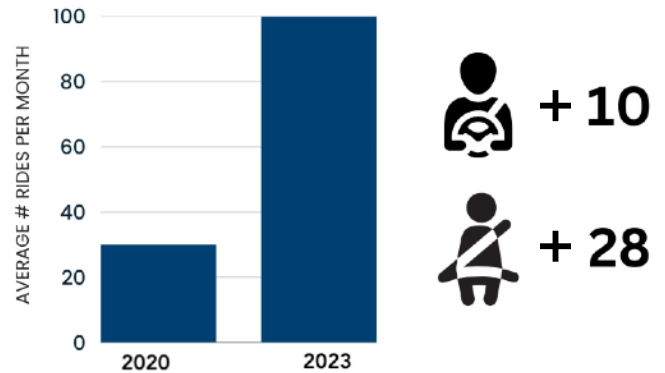
- we offered our first ride to a Readfield resident. The addition of Readfield to our service area brought new riders and drivers.
- we hired Darcy Adams as our part-time Program Coordinator. Darcy has taken on some of the ride coordination duties, along with a variety of tasks behind the scenes to help us make this a smooth operation.



Darcy Adams, left, and Erik Dyer, Readfield Town Manager, at the NDN Readfield launch event

POST PANDEMIC NUMBERS

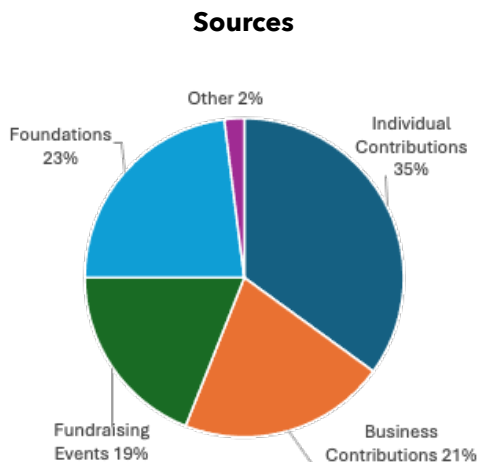
We saw a steady increase in rides as we moved beyond the pandemic. Rides increased from less than 30 per month to more than 100 per month. We added 10 new drivers and 28 new riders to our program.



We are very appreciative of all our donors. A special thanks to our grantors and institutional supporters

Sources and Uses of Funding

Neighbors Driving Neighbors, 12 months ending September 30, 2023



Belgrade Regional Health Center

John T. Gorman Foundation

Kennebec Savings Bank

MaineGeneral Health

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Hats Off to Our Volunteer Drivers



"Over the last decade, I've become aware of the importance of and need for this kind of service... This is becoming a critical resource—especially in small and remote towns, and I wanted to do my part to make it happen."

—John Perry, Volunteer Driver



"What about volunteer driving appeals to me? Socializing and the community service. It's a great experience helping many individuals and it's been pleasurable. Besides, older people are the most interesting."

—Allan Harville, Volunteer Driver

Rider Survey Question

We asked riders: "What's the best part of your experience with NDN?" A few answers:

1. I am able to get to my medical appointments without worrying about it.
2. It's been a life saver to get me to my doctors and tests, and the great company of the drivers. They're the best!
3. I really enjoy meeting the drivers, and this program is a vital part of my life.
4. Everyone is very patient and friendly to me.

EVENTS 2023

We had a busy year with a myriad of events and activities: NDN hosted a Driver Appreciation luncheon at the Viles Mansion in Augusta to honor the work of our drivers. In July, we hosted the Mount Vernon Community Center breakfast with wonderful breakfast foods and an opportunity for community members to gather together. This was our most successful breakfast to date in terms of attendance and donations. We returned to the Viles Mansion in October to recognize some of our donors, offer an introduction to the historic building and give the latest updates on NDN. Additionally, our online auction was one of our most successful to date, raising over \$6,500.



Community Breakfast



Viles Mansion Events



Auction Winners