

# SPRING REVS UP

NDN is renewed and ready to welcome new drivers, riders and move forward in 2024.

## Driver Spotlight: Katharina Burdet

Meet engaged and enthusiastic Katharina Burdet and find out what “drives” her to volunteer time to NDN.

*NDN: Please tell me about yourself.*

KB: I’m originally from Switzerland, but have lived in Maine for almost 50 years and I really love it here. I live in Belgrade on beautiful Long Pond with my husband Rene. I have a son and a daughter and two grandchildren with whom I try to spend as much time as possible. I’m a retired RN and I love to bike, hike, swim, ski, snowshoe and tend to my flower garden.

*NDN: How did you become aware of/interested in Neighbors Driving Neighbors?*

KB: I noticed a poster at my physical therapy office, and the idea of driving a neighbor immediately appealed to me.

*NDN: What about volunteer driving appealed to you?*

KB: Living out in the country, I’ve always been aware of how important reliable transportation is. In Switzerland, public transportation is widespread and well organized, but here, many have to rely on family and friends to take them to appointments, shopping, etc. in order to stay in their homes as long as possible. So it’s a pleasure for me to be able to help some neighbors and “give back” a little.

*NDN: Did you have any concerns or worries prior to volunteering? If so, were those overcome or made less concerning once you started driving?*

KB: No, I didn’t have any concerns, because I found out right away that NDN is very well organized. The needs

of the clients, the distances and addresses (where to pick up and where to bring people) and the time involved are very clearly stated on the website, and it’s very easy to sign up for driving anyone. The communication from and with the executive director and his assistant is excellent. And I love the flexibility of driving for NDN—I can sign up whenever my schedule allows.

*NDN: Can you describe the volunteer driving experience?*

KB: I very much enjoy meeting new people, and it’s always inspiring to hear their stories. It’s also fun getting to know my neighborhood in a new way.

*NDN: Is there a memorable rider or trip you’d like to share (without naming names)?*

KB: I have enjoyed all of my rides and am impressed by the variety of destinations: doctor’s appointments, work, church, etc. And always, there is such gratitude for the rides, which leaves me feeling that I was able to help someone in a small way.

*NDN: What advice would you give to anyone thinking about volunteering as a driver for NDN?*

KB: I would highly recommend volunteering for NDN—it’s fun, satisfying and helpful to many.

*NDN: Is there anything else you’d like to share?*

KB: I would like to mention how great the computer program is that we use for signing up to drive and then report on the drive. It’s truly helpful and so easy!



*Katharina on the road for NDN.*



## Do You Like to Drive and Help Others?



On Feb. 27, Neighbors Driving Neighbors' Executive Director, Joe Austin, attended a meeting of the Maine Volunteer Ride Program Coordinators' Network to discuss volunteer recruitment

among other topics.

He reports it was a well attended meeting with representatives from York County Community Action, Age-Friendly Biddeford, Neighbor to Neighbor (St. George), Rural Community Action Ministry (Leeds, Wayne), Age Friendly Saco, and the American Cancer Society. While many of these programs range in size and scope, Joe notes, "Everyone seems to struggle with driver recruitment."

To that end, NDN is currently in the process of setting up monthly Driver Information and Orientation meetings. These 90 minute sessions will hopefully be scheduled on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at the same time.

By having pre-set orientation sessions, NDN will be able to advertise and invite people to attend. Each session will include the basics of how the program works including the do's and don'ts.

Additionally, NDN will have a current driver present to share their experience and how driving for NDN fits into their life. The goal is to have four sessions each in Belgrade, Mount Vernon, and Readfield, rotating each month.

Please watch the NDN Facebook page for confirmed dates and times.



## Planning Ahead

*Winter is a good time to gather together and take stock of where you've been and plan for what's ahead. Last month, NDN did just that at a midwinter retreat.*

Our overall goal is to create more awareness and inroads into the community to ensure that as many folks as possible know of our service and can easily access us if needed. After much discussion, goals were set and prioritized. Among them:

- Strengthen our board by adding new members from all the areas we serve including our most recent addition of Readfield.
- Engage and appreciate our drivers even more. They are the heart of NDN and we seek to enlarge our driver pool and enlist their input whenever possible.
- Continue outreach to partner organizations—especially medical practices—and strengthen those relationships.
- Develop and assemble more robust information packets for distribution at local events where we can also answer questions from prospective riders and drivers.

Our hope is to keep NDN strong and moving forward.



### Coming Up

#### July 20:

*Annual Community Breakfast, Mt. Vernon Community Center*

#### month of July:

*Annual Online Auction, [BiddingOwl.com](http://BiddingOwl.com) starting July 1*

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