

STAYING WARM

Yes, it's definitely winter in Maine, but NDN is keeping the car—and hearts—warm.

A Success Story: Jen & Becky

In the spring of 2019, Jen had her first ride with volunteer NDN driver, Becky Seel. What developed was a special connection from the beginning.

Jen Reed began using NDN's ride service in 2018 after hearing about it from some Mt. Vernon Food Pantry volunteers. Jen recalls having great experiences with rides provided by Dan Onion, Irene Goff, and a few others including Becky Seel. She says she has always felt comfortable talking with Becky and considers her a trusted friend, commenting on their relationship recently:

"I can let my guard down and be myself with Becky. We talk about everything—politics, family, financial concerns, health concerns, parenting issues, and resources for dealing with home repairs and tax issues, to name a few. If I'm sad or worried about something, I know I can call or email Becky for advice or a shoulder to cry on. I call these my 'personal 911 calls.' I always feel calmer after talking to Becky."

Additionally, Jen says that they enjoy solving a problem together. "Becky has been a mentor to me. She's helped me and my son develop better

organizational skills by making suggestions and providing helpful supplies," Jen relates. Their relationship has deepened, evidenced by the thoughtful things that Becky has done to "boost our spirits throughout the year, giving us cards and notes, little treats, birthday and Christmas gifts."

Becky feels the same way. She explains, "It's hard to believe that it has only been a few years that I've known Jen and her son. I care about them deeply. They now have a car, so I will no longer be driving her to various appointments and errands on a regular basis, but I have no doubt that we will maintain our close personal

friendship. It's important to us both."

Jen reflects on what their friendship has grown into, saying, "Our relationship has definitely grown over the past three years and we've become even closer. I think of Becky as family."

Theirs is a different kind of success story...not measured in numbers, but in connection.



Jen Reed, at left, and Becky Seel

NEED A RIDE? If you are a resident of Belgrade, Fayette, Mount Vernon, Rome, or Vienna, please call **207-860-0677** or visit neighborsdrivingneighbors.org to register with the group.



Santa's Helpers

This past December, five NDN volunteer drivers acted as elves when they delivered gift baskets through the snow to 18 individuals in the Mt. Vernon and Vienna area. Working in cooperation with the Mt. Vernon Giving Tree committee, the team hoped to spread some holiday joy to their neighbors' homes. Pat Rawson of the Giving Tree says, "It was wonderful hearing how much everyone enjoyed it—the recipients *and* the deliverers! We love how other organizations in town work together to bring so much cheer."



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Welcome!

New Board Member, Cindy Murphy

Cindy and her husband, Bill, moved to Mt. Vernon in 2021, after a long search for a lake house. Although they are in Maine for only part of the year, she says they genuinely feel like a part of the community. Recent retirees, they both became interested in NDN after hearing about them at town events. Bill is a driver and Cindy is thrilled to be using her marketing and design background to help with social media and outreach. In fact, she is a member of the Outreach committee as well as a board member. She says, "After retiring from a 30+ year career in media, it is wonderful that I get to bring my skill set to an organization as meaningful and worthwhile as NDN."



New Volunteer Driver, Steve Symonds

Steve and his wife, Beth, moved to Belgrade in 1985 shortly after they married. They have lived in the same house since and raised two great kids, Renee and Chandler. Steve has recently retired from software consulting in the lumber and hardware industry. Prior to that, he was the director of information systems for Hammond Lumber Company for 20 years. Through the years, he has volunteered with Belgrade Rec and Scouting. When asked why he volunteers for NDN, he says, "I feel it is important that people be able to live in their homes regardless of transportation. NDN is a part of the solution that allows that to happen, and I am happy to be part of that solution."



Upcoming Driver Orientation!



Keep an eye out for a new driver orientation in February. If interested in driving, meeting your neighbors, and contributing to the health of our communities, contact Joe Austin at

207-860-0677 or email neighborsdrivingneighbors@gmail.com for more information.

