

## Walkathon: Two weeks to go and a new memorial sign option!

By Charity Day, Associate Director of Client Services & Walkathon Planning Committee Member



Charity Day

The Path for Life: LifePath's 31st Annual Walkathon on Saturday, May 6, is just two weeks away! Please join us at 101 Munson Street, Greenfield, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., rain or shine. This year's family-friendly, in-person outdoor event offers the opportunity to celebrate one another and recognize and appreciate that we are all on this journey of aging together. LifePath staff are putting the final touches on our information booths. There will be games, activities, and giveaways.

A new option this year is a memorial sign to honor loved ones. Walkathon teams are often created, or donations are made, in honor of loved ones who have received support or services from LifePath. Since it is LifePath's 31st walkathon, we will be charging only \$31 per double-sided sign, with each side containing either an 11x17 photo or a poem of your choosing. The signs will be prominently displayed on event day. If you would like to order a sign, please email [giving@LifePathMA.org](mailto:giving@LifePathMA.org) or call Charity at (413) 829-9157.

Don't worry, it's not too late to participate! Here's how to join in the fun:

- **INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS** - You can still register individually or set up a team to raise funds by using this link: <https://bit.ly/35W8Drw>
- There are two different distances you can walk. One is a walk around the parking lot called the "Lot Walk" which is approximately 1/10th of a mile. Or you can choose the "Woods Walk" which is just under a mile. There are no walking requirements—you can walk as little or as much as you choose.
- **BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS** - Sponsorship is the backbone of the event. We are asking local businesses to continue to share their generosity with us through sponsorship, starting at \$250. Sign up by using this link: <https://rb.gy/2srab>
- **COMMUNITY PARTNERS** - Come join us on event day! Set up a table and share information about your programs that benefit those in our community. To get started, email [giving@LifePathMA.org](mailto:giving@LifePathMA.org)
- **DONORS** - Respond to requests from fundraisers or make an outright gift at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8u8ku2>

**A new option this year is a memorial sign to honor loved ones.**

Mark your calendars to join us on May 6 to celebrate and learn about how LifePath and other local agencies and businesses support members of our community.

We'd like to recognize these Walkathon sponsors at the **\$1000+ level**

 **Greenfield Savings Bank**

**CompuWorks**  
 healthy technology  
 smarter business

 **Elks USA**

 **NMH**  
 Northfield Mount Hermon

 **Prosperity Planning**

 **Renaissance Builders**

 **SMITH-KELLEHER**  
 FUNERAL HOME  
 AND CREMATION SERVICE

**\$500 Care Coordinator Level**

Bete Fog Nozzle, Inc.; Dead River Company;  
 Freedom Credit Union;  
 Ramon Financial Services

**\$250 At Your Service Level**

Athol Credit Union; Davis Financial Group;  
 Franklin First Federal Credit Union;  
 Liberty Tax Service; Mass Surgical Supply;  
 Rotary Club of Franklin County;  
 Witty's Funeral Home

## Age-Friendly Communities: Implementation & Success in Rural Areas

By Lynne Feldman, Director of Community Services



Lynne Feldman

As our population ages, it's important to ensure that our communities are equipped to meet the needs of older adults. That's why AARP created the Age-Friendly Communities program. This initiative helps cities and towns become more inclusive and accessible for people of all ages, with a focus on older adults.

Since 2020, LifePath, together with its partner FRCOG, has led an Age-Friendly initiative for Franklin County and the North Quabbin. The Age-Friendly Communities program is a multi-step process that involves assessment, planning, and implementation. The Franklin County/North Quabbin project is wrapping up its planning phase.

During this phase, communities create a plan to make changes that will improve the lives of older adults. These changes can take many forms, such as improving transportation options, creating more accessible housing, or increasing access to healthcare. The specific changes that a community makes will depend on its unique needs and resources.

One example of a successful rural Age-Friendly implementation is the village of Bowdoinham, Maine, a town of around

3,000 people. One of their key initiatives was to create a free wellness fair for adults, including demonstrations on fall prevention, dance training, and flu shots. They worked with a local Masons lodge to create a home repair program for elders. Additionally, they created a free door-to-door transportation service.

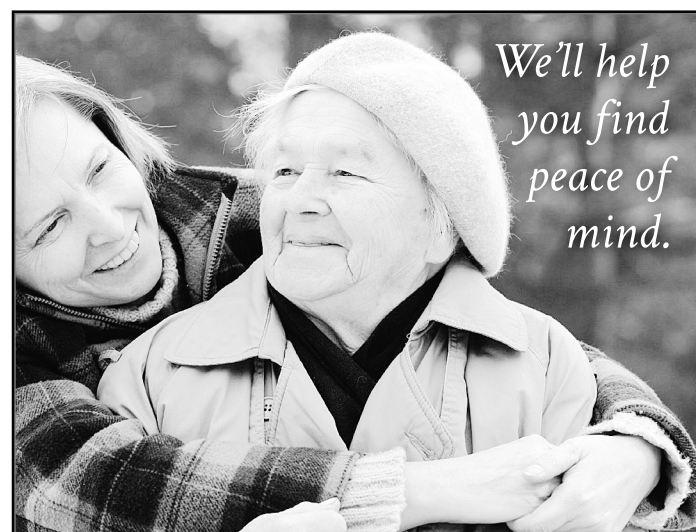
Another successful rural Age-Friendly implementation can be found in the town of Grayson County, Virginia. This community of around 15,000 people, about 50% of whom are age 50 or older, has implemented a number of changes to make the town more accessible for older adults. Given the potential for isolation of the rural residents, they prioritized

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communication in their implementation plan. They worked to make high-speed internet throughout the county. They also plan to develop a community fitness and wellness center to provide opportunities for exercise and physical fitness for older adults. At the center, residents will be able to access dental care in addition to other wellness offerings.

One of the keys to a successful Age-Friendly plan is community involvement. In both Bowdoinham and Grayson County, community members were involved in the planning and implementation process. This helped ensure that the changes that were made were reflective of the community's needs and desires. Here in Franklin County and the North Quabbin, residents have been involved since the beginning and have made all the critical decisions regarding the project.

The Age-Friendly Communities program is an important initiative that helps cities and towns become more inclusive and accessible for people of all ages. Successful, rural Age-Friendly implementations, such as those in Bowdoinham and Grayson County, have shown that with community involvement and strategic partnerships, meaningful changes can be made that benefit everyone in the community. If you'd like to get involved in our local project, please contact me at [lfeldman@LifePathMA.org](mailto:lfeldman@LifePathMA.org).



*You care so wholeheartedly and do so much, but sometimes it's hard to do it all.*

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