

# Age-Friendly NORTHFIELD

2025 Mid-year Report to the City of Northfield



## MISSION

**WE ARE** ... a community that values a high quality of life for all of its residents.

**WE HEARD** ... what community qualities are important to the citizens aged 50 and older and what more is needed.

**WE ENVISION** ... a community that promotes independence and a high quality of life for citizens as they age.

**WE WILL** ... work with the community to implement the changes that will assure livability of Northfield for today's and tomorrow's older adults.

## AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD BOARD:

Brad Ness - Northfield City Council  
Carla Johnson - FiftyNorth  
CC Linstroth - Friends of Downtown Northfield, SEMAAA, (Vice-chair)  
Chris Johnson - SEMAAA  
David Delong - Community Member  
Galen Malecha - Rice County Commissioner (Chair)  
Mike Thorsteinson - Community Member  
Randi Callahan - Three Rivers Community Action  
Risi Karim - City of Northfield  
Sarah Kuball - Three Rivers Community Action  
Tom Hayden - Family Services Rochester

The common thread among the enrolled communities is the belief that the places where we live are more livable and better able to support people of all ages, when local leaders commit to improving the quality of life for the very young, the very old, and everyone in between.



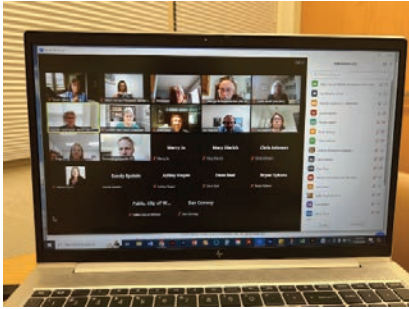
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Age-Friendly Northfield is sponsored in-part through financial contributions by the City of Northfield.



AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD — CONNECTING AROUND MINNESOTA



2025 — AARP Minnesota Age-friendly Communities Quarterly Meeting

In 2016, Northfield was the 5th city in Minnesota to join the Liveable Communities Network. Now there 26 cities and 6 counties and the State of MN.

We meet quarterly to share updates on our work in progress; challenges and accomplishments.

AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD — CONNECTING IN NORTHFIELD



▲ Hispanic Heritage Day

▼ Pride in the Park



▲ Monthly spot on KYMN Radio, sharing updates and resources for older adults in the area.



▲ Outreach: Kildahl Park Point Cooperative



▲ Transportation Outreach: Northfield Rotary



▲ AFN 2025 Board



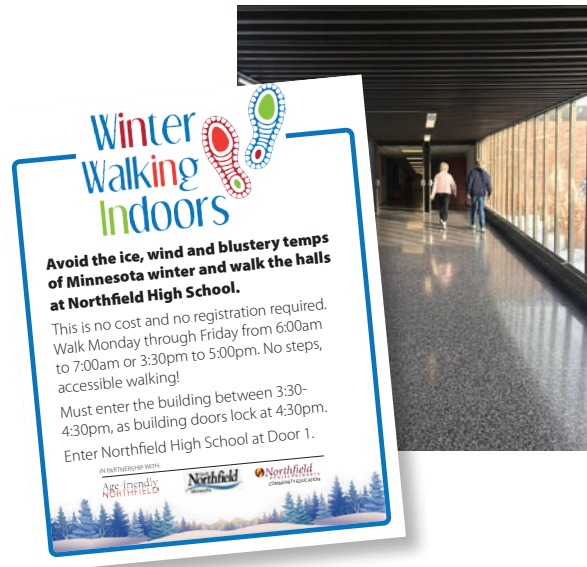
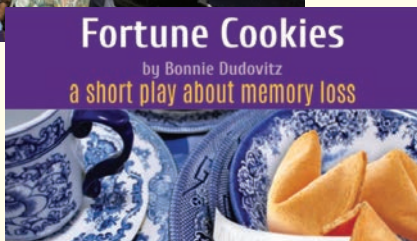


## THE REMEMBER PROJECT

The Remember Project is a Minneapolis-based theatre initiative that uses the arts to reduce the stigma surrounding dementia and memory loss. Age-Friendly Northfield sponsored two sessions with The Remember Project for the Northfield community.

The Remember Project aims to build dementia-friendly communities through storytelling and dialogue. Each performance is followed by a facilitated group conversation, encouraging reflection and connection. This dialogue helps to normalize difficult conversations about memory loss and caregiving.

**Why It Matters:** Over 100,000 Minnesotans live with dementia, and 250,000 serve as caregivers. The project fosters empathy, awareness, and preparedness for individuals and families navigating memory loss.



## WALKING IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

We have continued to publicize the community walking times inside Northfield High School. We purchased large ads in the quarterly Community Education brochure to remind every one of this opportunity for free physical activity. The state AARP wrote a feature article about the collaboration between AFN and the school district. This continues to be popular as friends walk and visit, families walk with older family members, and residents use the space to complete physical therapy plans.



Free Pickleball was held at both Bridgewater Elementary and Northfield High School. A total of 664 people participated during the 2024-2025 school year. People of all ages, including families, stop in to take part in the free program.



### ROCK STEADY BOXING

Since beginning our Rock Steady Boxing program in February, we have had strong and consistent participation. Our group has connected socially and emotionally. All have gotten and continued to get stronger.

Our collaborator, Northfield YMCA, is currently adding certified coaches to meet the growing number of people wanting to take this free class.



### BRIDGE SQUARE — THIRD THURSDAY

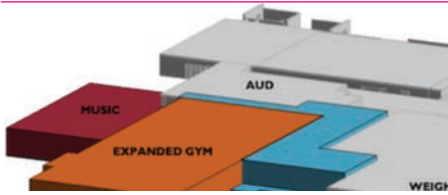
Third Thursday on Bridge Square has traditionally been an evening to shop local and catch a bargain. The new collaboration with Age-Friendly Northfield and Fermentation Friends has elevated the community activity bringing music, dancing and games to the street. Age-friendly Northfield encourages the free opportunity for community members of all ages to socialize in a welcoming and intergenerational environment. AFN purchased corn-hole games and sponsored bands that inspire kicking up your heels and dancing.



### NORDIC WALKING

In collaboration with Northfield Public Library, AFN purchased five pairs of Nordic Walking poles that are free to check out at the library. The poles are available for group checkout to encourage socialization while pursuing a full-body physical workout.





AFN is part of the core planning team for the expanded High School gymnasium which will have four full-size basketball courts and an indoor walking track. We advocated for increased time and access to both the walking track and daily gym time for community members to enjoy such activities as pickleball.



After 56 years on the air, KYMN in Northfield launched an urgent campaign to save its tower. AFN supported our local radio station by contributing to SAVE OUR TOWER. A significant portion of KYMN's audience is our area's older adults. This current local source of up-to-date news and happenings provides a vital and free source of information.



AFN met with the Parks Advisory Board to share feedback on the Shechler, Riverside and Dresden Hills Parks redevelopment.



AFN met with the Architects designing the riverfront redevelopment and the new Northfield Depot to address the ease of mobility and accessibility.

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## Age-Friendly NORTHFIELD

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For a local activity or group to receive support from AFN, the activity or project must be: free, provide opportunities for physical activity and socialization, and engage in collaboration with at least one other community organization. Below are the organizations with whom AFN has developed meaningful collaborations and outcomes in 2025:

South East MN Area Agency on Aging (SEMAAA)  
AARP MN  
Northfield Retirement Community  
FiftyNorth  
Friends of Downtown Northfield  
City of Northfield  
Family Service Rochester  
(serves an eleven county area)  
KYMN  
Bruce Jacobson (City Consultant on Public Bldgs  
& Outdoor Spaces)

Northfield Community Education  
Northfield Pickleball Association  
Northfield Public Schools  
ARLA (Bethel Lutheran Church -  
Anti-Racism Learning and Advocacy)  
Northfield YMCA  
Northfield Public Library  
Three Rivers Community Action  
Carleton College  
St. Olaf College

**The Transportation Team has representation from the following organizations.**

Carleton College, Family Services of Rochester, Rice County Public Health, Community Resident, St. Olaf College, SE MN Area Agency on Aging, Three Rivers Community Action Agency, Vivie (Northfield Retirement Community)

**Over the past year the Age-Friendly Northfield (AFN) Transportation Team has actively engaged the Northfield community to explore the benefits of Lyft as a transportation option.**

On November 14, 2024, we partnered with St. Olaf College to share information and engage students in conversations about Lyft's potential and how it might meet their transportation needs. That same afternoon, we hosted a hybrid educational session at FiftyNorth featuring Sheri Wegner from ConnectAbilityMN. Sheri shared how her organization successfully uses Lyft to meet transportation needs for elderly and disabled residents in rural Stearns County. The session allowed attendees to ask questions and gain a better understanding of what Lyft could offer. With Sheri's permission, the Zoom presentation was recorded for future use.

The next community engagement meeting took place at FiftyNorth on January 14, 2025, with 25 attendees. We were able to share Sheri's recorded presentation, with attendees again able to ask questions and learn about Lyft. The Transportation Team also provided information about the requirements for becoming a Lyft driver and where to find additional information. On January 23, 2025, members of the Transportation Team were interviewed on KYMN to share what we were learning regarding Lyft with the KYMN listening audience.

On March 29 th , 2025 at the Community Market Fair in Dundas we connected with attendees and fellow exhibitors, continuing to share information and increase awareness.



A Lyft Driver Training session was held on May 20, 2025, at FiftyNorth, with presentations from a former Lyft driver and one of our own team members who had gone through the process to become a certified Lyft driver. There were 10 individuals in attendance, with one who was already in the process and only needed his vehicle inspection to be completed. An additional attendee from that event is pursuing certification. Thanks to the support of AFN and the City of Northfield, we are able to offer vehicle inspection fee reimbursement for up to 7 drivers. By the end of August Northfield will have three certified Lyft drivers.

On July 24, a member of the Transportation Team presented Lyft information to the Northfield Rotary. As a result of this meeting the Northfield Hospital and Clinics shared the information with their Volunteer Meals on Wheels Drivers. Additional information on becoming a Lyft Driver was requested by St. Dominics.

Our next event was a Transportation Fair held on August 26, 2025. Attendees came to learn more about transportation options in and around Northfield. The AFN Transportation Team will hosted a table with information about becoming a Lyft driver and also gather information on those that would like to attend a Lyft Rider Education Session in the future.