



AARP Challenge Grant: The Red Chair Project

### 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.

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### AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD STEERING COMMITTEE:

- Chair: Galen Malecha
- Vice Chair: Dayna Norvald
- Secretary/Treasure: Patty Ciernia
- Nan Just
- CC Linstroth
- David DeLong
- Anne Plesskonco: Neighbors Helping Neighbors of Family Services Rochester
- Jami Reister: City Council

The common thread among the enrolled communities and states 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.

In the next five years, Minnesota will have 50,000 more residents who are age 80 or older than we have today.

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AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD —CONNECTING AROUND MINNESOTA



**JUNE 2024 — AARP Roundtable Conversation with Nancy LeaMond**

Age-friendly Northfield (AFN) members; Patty Ciernia and Nan Just, represented Minnesota’s Age-friendly communities at a recent state meeting. AARP’s chief advocacy and engagement officer, Nancy LeaMond has responsibility for advancing the organization’s social mission on behalf of Americans 50-plus and their families. She leads government affairs and legislative campaigns for AARP, widely seen as one of the most powerful advocacy organizations in the country. She has been named by The Hill as one of the “Top Lobbyists” every year since 2011.

Conversations around housing transportation, access to home and community-based services, the development of the Multisector Blueprint for Aging, and recent advancements and challenges we face in the Minnesota legislature were on the agenda.



**2024 — AARP Minnesota Age-friendly Communities Quarterly Meeting**

In 2016, Northfield was the 5th city in Minnesota to join the Liveable Communities Network. Now there 22 cities and 6 counties.

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

**AFN in AARP MAY BULLETIN:**  
[Age-Friendly Activities Aim For Healthier, Safer State](#)



**AARP RURAL LAB**

**AARP Livable Communities helps rural and remote communities connect with and learn from one another across the country.**

CC Linstroth, AFN member, participates in the monthly meetings with National AARP Rural Lab. Launched in 2019, AARP Rural Lab reaches more than 225 communities in 36 states — from small towns with 139 residents to regions of nearly 200,000 residents — that are invited by AARP state offices to participate.

Despite the difference in location and size, rural and remote towns, counties, small cities and regions are united by a strong connection to place, a history of leveraging assets for the good of the community, and a desire to maximize residents’ health and well-being.

Participants meet monthly to share information and ideas that rural and remote communities can use to kickstart innovative solutions to local challenges.



**AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD** receives 5 year plaque in recognition of completing the first 5-year community work plan.

Front row L-R: CC Linstroth, Nan Just, Patty Ciernia  
Back row: Jay Haapala; AARP Minneosta, Galen Malecha, Jami Reister, David DeLong, Mayor Rhonda Pownell, Anne Pleskonko



**Winter Walking Indoors**

**Avoid the ice, wind and blustery temps of Minnesota winter and walk the halls at Northfield High School.**

This is no cost and no registration required. Walk Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 7:00am or 3:30pm to 5:00pm. No steps, accessible walking!

Must enter the building between 3:30-4:30pm, as building doors lock at 4:30pm. Enter Northfield High School at Door 1.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: Age-Friendly NORTHFIELD, Northfield COMMUNITY EDUCATION

**AFN HEALTH, WELLNESS, SOCIALIZATION, AND INCLUSION DOMAIN TEAM**

We have continued to publicize the community walking times inside Northfield High School. We purchased large ads in the quarterly Community Ed & Rec 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 Sunday has continued with locations at both Bridgewater Elementary and Northfield High School. The following was submitted by our Community Ed & Rec Department to Pickleball Central and Minnesota Recreation & Parks magazine: "Due to the high volume of participation, a second site was added to the opportunities in the fall of 2023 and winter of 2024. Additional equipment was purchased by Age Friendly Northfield, and an additional supervisor was hired and trained. A total of 604 people of all ages participated in the offerings this 2023-2024 school year. CC Linstroth has been elated at the cross-generational participation. People of all ages, including families, have stopped in to take part in the free program!"

The biggest event we sponsored and organized was the Free Community Street Dance on July 13th. There was a large crowd of all ages from Northfield and the surrounding areas filling the 400 block of Division with dancers. The bounce house was full of children the entire time. There was always a mixture of ages dancing and enjoying food and beverages from our local businesses. There have been lots of queries relating to the repeating of this event next year.

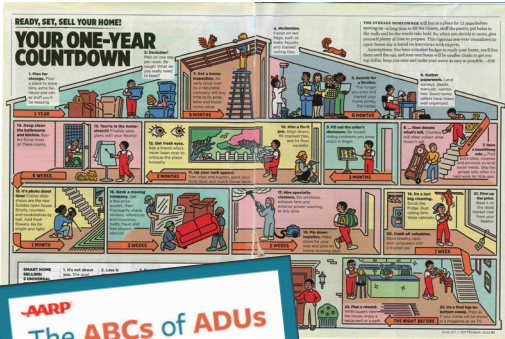
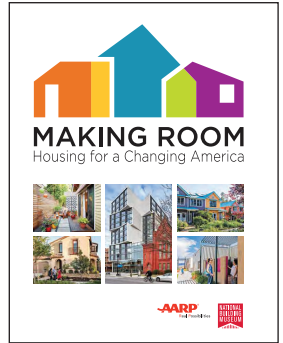




### AFN TRANSPORTATION DOMAIN TEAM

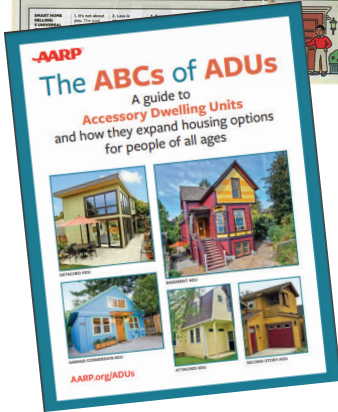
Age Friendly Northfield conducted a survey with residents 50+ specific to in-home services and supports in the Spring of 2022. Survey results identified transportation as an area that needed more options. Beginning in 2023 AFN created a Domain Transportation Team to specifically focus on the development of Lyft within the Northfield Community. Most of 2023 was spent on educating ourselves on what it would take to accomplish this. That education included meetings with The City's Transportation Advisory Committee, Dakota County who has implemented this option for their older adults and disabled populations, and having several meetings with Sheri Wegner from an organization called Connectability MN. Based on what we learned we set out to recruit additional members to our Transportation Team which now includes representation from St. Olaf College, Carleton College, Southeast MN Area Agency on Aging, Three Rivers Community Action Agency, Rice County Public Health, and the Northfield Retirement Community.

As of June, 2024 we have engaged Connectability MN to assist us. Connectability MN has great resources that walks a community through the necessary steps to bring Lyft into our community as an additional transportation option. We are developing a calendar with a series of community meetings to be held this Fall. These meetings are designed to engage all community leaders and residents in discussions on how Lyft can be added as a transportation for all.



July, 2024

We have an active Housing Domain group that has organized and presented several workshops that were well attended. These workshops included:



**The ABC's of ADU's**

What's an Accessory Dwelling Unit and why might I want one? ADUs can be used for many purposes, from housing aging parents or adult children to providing additional space for a home office or studio. We'll have a representative from the City join us to talk about what's allowed and not allowed with Accessory Dwelling Units. We'll also have someone from Yard Homes a non-profit builder providing ADU's throughout Minnesota. We will also hear from a person who will be utilizing a Yard Home to add an Accessory Dwelling Unit right here in Northfield!

**Universal Design: Aging in Place becomes Ageless Space**

Every 11 seconds someone is treated in an emergency room for a fall that could have been prevented by simple modifications like improved lighting, grab bars, and non-slip mats. This workshop is offered to help people learn how to stay in the home they love by turning where they live into a "lifelong home". It will also show some options for building a Universally Designed home from the ground up. We will be joined by Johnson Reiland Builders (a local builder) who are building/modifying homes with Universal Design elements in our community. A representative from AARP will share a checklist to keep your home fit. Habitat for Humanity will also join us to talk about their Aging in Place Programs. We want to help you change your home, not your address!



**Downsizing to Rightsizing**

This workshop is for people thinking about the next chapter of housing in their lives. How do you prepare for this big transition? How far in advance should you be thinking ahead? We'll have experts in packing/organizing join us and we'll have some local realtors who have helped people in this life transition. This was our best attended event!



**Tour de'Age**

Let's tour some Accessory Dwelling Units and some homes with Universal Design Features. We had three homes to tour: One home that had an attached ADU; one home that was built from the ground up with universal design principles and one home, in a new development, that's geared for people who want one level living.

**Should I Stay or Should I Go?**

Deciding the next housing chapter of your life can be complicated. This workshop will answer financing questions whether you're considering staying in your home and remodeling it to meet your current needs or if it's time to sell and buy a different home that better suits you. Paula Norgaard with Cambria Mortgage and Chris Graupman with Wells Fargo will talk about traditional mortgages, home equity loans, reverse mortgages, etc. Join us to help you answer the question: "Should I Stay or Should I Go"?



**NEXT UP: Vendor List**

Our next project is assembling a trusted vendor list in our community. We are often asked, "Who is a good handyman?" We are inviting contractors in our community to come and meet us so we can learn about what they offer so we can feel confident about putting them on a trusted vendor list.

