

Northwoods Partners 2018 Annual Report
Executive Director/ Caregiver Consultant Lisa Porthan
Annual Report Data from January 1 to December 31st 2018
Annual Fiscal Year January 1 2018-December 31st 2018

Mission Statement (updated fall 2015)

The mission of Northwoods Partners is to provide resources that promote independence and healthy aging

Vision

A community where people are able to age with dignity

Values

Compassion Relationships

Dignity Respect

Independence Volunteerism

Volunteers and staff spent 7793 hours serving area seniors and caregivers from January 1 through December 31st 2018. Four hundred and twenty-nine individuals received one or more of our services in 2018.

Fourteen board/committee members provided 2146 hours of volunteer service to Northwoods Partners.

Northwoods Partners recruited, trained and coordinated seventy-five volunteers this year.

Of the seventy-five individuals who have enrolled in our volunteer program, forty-five would be considered active volunteers. Volunteers and staff met quarterly for a volunteer social and training. Volunteer coordination and time management are tracked through our Elderberry software system. Volunteers are recognized annually at a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

Program Update: Transportation

Northwoods Partners transportation program continues to be a vital service for the continuum of care for our area seniors. In 2018, Five hundred and ninety-four rides were provided. Over twenty thousand miles were driven to long distance medical appointments to Virginia, Hibbing, and Duluth. Local rides also included trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, dentist and social outings. An additional twenty-two thousand miles were driven serving clients locally. These rides are provided by trained volunteers and coordinated through the Northwoods Partner office. Volunteer drivers receive reimbursement for long distance rides only. Transportation participants are given a survey and recommended donation request to cover costs but are made aware that no ride is ever denied due to inability to pay. Survey results state participants are pleased with their experience and state this service helps them remain living independent. One client states how much she enjoyed her ride and how fast the trip went due to the great conversation she shared with her volunteer. Another client stated how grateful she is to know NP is here when she has no one else to turn to. This transportation program is vital to the health of our community.

In 2018 the transportation program costs \$19,226.

Program Update: Exercise Programs

Northwoods Partners offers a variety of programs to increase physical activity and help with fall prevention. In 2018, NP provided an evidence based program called Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance. Staff and volunteers became certified trainers and offered three twelve week sessions that met twice a week to sixty-two participants. This evidence based class improves muscle strength, flexibility and balance. This program has been well received and each class is exceeding the maximum number of participants recommended. NP also offered a Tai Ji Quan class for those who wanted to continue on after they have completed the twelve week session. Forty-two individuals have participated in our continuation class this year.

One participant stated how amazed she was at how gently we can move so many muscles. She recommends this class to everyone she sees.

Our director works closely with the Arrowhead Well Care Network to integrate delivery networks of evidence-based programs through the creation of reliable pathways that connect healthcare providers, community organizations, public health and health plans. This includes becoming a part of the Juniper Network which connects individuals to programs that provide education, fitness instruction, and self-care strategies. These efforts have helped create a “well-care” culture which complements our mission.

Additional programs include our Exercise Buddy program which matches volunteers to assist clients with a tailored exercise program they do in their homes. This program also helps increase their strength, flexibility and balance. The staff and volunteers provided seven hundred and thirty-nine one hour exercise sessions with individuals this year.

Northwoods Partners group exercise class continues to meet weekly for one hour in a local church basement. In 2018 twenty-three individuals participated. This class appeals to clients interested in gathering with other individuals to increase physical activity and improve health. This group also provides a wonderful social opportunity for our seniors.

Northwoods Partners Memories and Movement class continues to meet once a week at the Senior Center. Eight to ten individuals participate in this weekly gathering. This class has not only reduced isolation and increased physical activity but it has created some amazing friendships through the sharing of life stories and local history. It provides a pleasant diversion and stimulates the mind as well as provides an opportunity to keep bodies active.

In 2018, the total for all exercise programs cost approximately \$ 14,925.

Program Update: Friendly Visits

Our friendly visit program connects individuals who may be homebound or alone with volunteer visitors. This program helps reduce isolation and connects individuals with

their community. Volunteers have spent almost two thousand hours with thirty clients, sharing life stories, playing cards or attending community functions. Beautiful relationships have been formed and life changing experiences are being gained daily. A recent testimonial stated “I am so grateful to have something to look forward to each week-it brightens my day.”

Program Update: Northwood's Memory Care-

In 2018, Northwoods Partners completed the ACT four phase process in engaging the community, assessing its strengths and gaps and creating action plans to become a community wide dementia friendly place to live. As part of the ongoing work to become dementia friendly NP has hosted community trainings including Dementia Friendly At Work & the Virtual Dementia Tour provided by the Age Well Arrowhead, as well as Effective Communication Strategies by the Alzheimer's Association and MN Legal Aid presented on Senior Law Issues. NP applied and received a grant from the Northland Foundation to fund a Caregiver Support Kits project. This project included expanding caregiver support through the development of activity kits for clients with dementia and caregivers to provide meaningful sensory and tactile activities to counteract the anxiety, boredom and loneliness that often accompanies the disease. These kits also provide resources and activities for the caregivers to help reduce stress and provide support for them in their caregiving journey. This project also fostered collaborations with local church groups, the community hospital, local wellness center and other community organizations who share a similar passion for this cause.

NMC program partners with Essentia Health on providing a Dementia-Capable Health Care Home. Northwoods Partners and Essentia share a common commitment to a coordinated, integrated partnership between primary care and community-based services for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia's. Our work has been focused on implementing a better continuity of care to improve the quality of life and care for these individuals and their caregivers. Through this collaboration we have created communication tools, built relationships, improved service, as well as added computer software and technology to allow for more effective and efficient communication flow between patients, providers and community

resources. This partnership and work was recognized by being awarded the 2016 Innovative Preventive Care Recognition Award from Health Partners in Excellence Program.

Our caregiver consultant has spent over one thousand hours supporting caregivers, care receivers and their families dealing with dementia related issues. This year over seventy caregivers & care receivers' benefited from participation in this program. Our NMC program helps guide families through this very difficult journey. This program provided assessment, education, family meetings and care planning. This year Northwoods Partners provided two support groups for the caregiver's, one meeting in Ely, the other in Babbitt. Volunteers and staff are also able to provide a social experience for the care receiver during these meetings if needed.

We hosted our eight annual Healthy Aging Expo (formerly Elder Expo Ely). This event is dedicated to senior adults' healthy lifestyles, education and caregiver support. The past eight years our keynote speaker has focused on addressing dementia care and support. This year's keynote speaker was Ann Forrest Clark speaking on Innovations and Technology for Living with Dementia. Additional topics that were presented included Dental Health as We Age, Bridges to Community Health, Pain Management and Opioid Use and Abuse, Mental Wellness resources, Gardening for Health & Well-being and Community Wide Adjustments for a Dementia Friendly Community. During this event there were over a dozen vendor tables also sharing information, resources and support to our participants. Approximately seventy people attended this year.

In 2018, the memory care program costs approximately \$35,360.

Program Update: Caregiver Consulting

Northwoods Partners provides professional assessment, information, education, coordination and training for caregivers and care receivers.

This past three years our Caregiver Consultant has been on the Advance Care Planning Initiative in Ely. Our Caregiver Consultant is a certified facilitator for Advanced Health Care Directives. At intake NP clients are asked if they have a

healthcare directive and if not, they are provided the forms and education about the importance of Health Care Directives.

Our Caregiver Consultant continues her work as a trained REACH facilitator (Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health in the Community). This support program provides caregivers with four sessions to address stress, assess risk and engage caregivers in problem solving and skill building techniques. It provides additional resources to caregivers and staff. NP is no longer funded through REACH in 2018 but we continue to provide this resource and service to our clients. Caregivers have shown a decrease in their stress levels as well as report an improved quality of life for the care receiver and caregiver after participating in the REACH intervention.

Northwoods Partners continues to build a resource library which offers a variety of literature and videos to share with caregivers, families, health care professionals, and volunteers for support and education.

In 2018, the caregiver consultant program costs approximately \$19,680.

Program Update: Respite/Hospice

We continue to coordinate volunteer help for the person who cares for a chronically ill home-bound loved one. We continue to partner with Essentia Health Hospice & Palliative Care. This partnership includes referrals, brochure and flyers disbursement and volunteer recruitment as needed.

Program Update: Rural Aging Initiative

NP has partnered with other community members and organizations such as Ely Community Resource in an effort to bring generations together. This program enables elders, adults, and youth to explore how their generations are both alike and different. A variety of opportunities including Tech & Coffee, Slovenian Fest & Polka Dance to name a couple have been created to help strengthen relationships among all ages.

Who are we serving?

Northwoods Partners clients include those individuals who are aged, and or chronically ill as well as caregivers and their families. The majority of these clients are considered low income by the Federal Poverty guidelines for 2018. Our services are provided to individuals living within an area of approximately 480 square miles. This includes Ely, Winton, Babbitt, Tower, Soudan and surrounding townships.

Highlight of 2017

Our Executive Director was recognized as Visionary Leader of the Year by the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits for 2017. This award is given to someone who demonstrates the ability to develop and implement creative and effective organizational leadership strategies, and is able to create and nurture valuable collaborations and partnerships, and who advance the work of nonprofits and strengthens community.