

Northwoods Partners 2017 Annual Report
Executive Director/ Caregiver Consultant Lisa Porthan
Annual Report Data from January 1 to December 31st 2017
Annual Fiscal Year January 1 2017-December 31 2017

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 6285 hours serving area seniors and caregivers from January 1 through December 31st 2017.

Fifteen board/committee members provided 1,736 hours of volunteer service to Northwoods Partners.

Northwoods Partners recruited, trained and coordinated sixty-nine volunteers this year.

Of the sixty-nine individuals who have enrolled in our volunteer program, fifty-two 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 2017, Six hundred and thirty rides were provided. These rides included trips to medical appointments in Virginia, Hibbing, Cook and Duluth. These rides also included trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, dentist and social outings. 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 in their homes. This transportation program is vital to the health of our community.

Program Update: Exercise Programs

Northwoods Partners offers a variety of programs to increase physical activity and help with fall prevention. A new evidence based program was offered this year, Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance. Staff and volunteers became certified trainers and offered four twelve week sessions that met twice a week to over seventy-five 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.

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 758 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. 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 started 2015 continues to meet once a week at the Senior Center. 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.

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 many hours with these clients, sharing life stories, playing cards or attending community functions. Beautiful relationships have been formed and life changing experiences are being gained daily. One testimonial stated "NP gave me someone I can think of as family, someone who I can count on." The time shared and simple acts of kindness with a senior is priceless.

Program Update: Northwood's Memory Care-

In 2017, Northwoods Partners was chosen as an ACT on Alzheimer's Dementia Friendly Community. By becoming an ACT community, NP has begun the 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. NP plays the lead role in developing an action team which is currently assessing the community. In 2017, the community will be invited to learn of its findings and to help create action plans to fill gaps and educate the community.

NMC program partnered with Essentia Health on the Dementia-Capable Health Care Home project for the past two years. 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 project 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. In 2016 this partnership and work was recognized by being awarded the 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 one hundred 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 seventh annual Healthy Aging Expo (formerly Elder Expo Ely). This event is dedicated to senior adults' healthy lifestyles, education and caregiver support. The past seven years our keynote speaker has focused on addressing dementia care and support. This year's keynote speakers included Dr. Terry Barclay, Neuropsychologist from Health Partners in Edina and his wife Michelle Barclay who is the Executive Co-Lead for the ACT on Alzheimer's. Additional speakers address topics such as Living Well with Chronic Conditions, Why We get Fat and What We can do about It, Tai Ji Quan, Advance Care Planning/ Healthcare Directives, and Medication Safety. 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.

Program Update: Caregiver Consulting

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

This past year our Caregiver Consultant was on the steering committee for Advance Care Planning Initiative in Ely as well as became a certified facilitator for

Advanced Health Care Directives. As part of the steering committee NP played a key role in the planning/hosting of the first ever Convenings event to Ely. Convenings is a series of public presentations throughout the state of Minnesota, based on the book *We Know How This Ends* by Bruce Kramer and Cathy Wurzer. This book is about healing even if there is no cure, light even when there is darkness and meaningful living in the face of impending death. This event was attended by over 150 people.

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 began implementing this program in the fall of 2015. 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.

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 and volunteer recruitment as needed.

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 2017. 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.