

Northwoods Partners 2019 Annual Report
Executive Director/ Caregiver Consultant Lisa Porthan
Annual Report Data from January 1 to December 31st 2019
Annual Fiscal Year January 1 2019-December 31st 2019

Mission Statement

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 8836 hours serving area seniors and caregivers from January 1 through December 31st 2019.

Over 500 individuals received one or more of our services in 2019.

Thirteen board & committee members provided 2199 hours of volunteer service to Northwoods Partners.

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

Of the seventy-seven individuals who have enrolled in our volunteer program, sixty-six 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 as well as at the Donor/Volunteer Reception in November.

Transportation Program

Northwoods Partners transportation program continues to be a vital service for the continuum of care for our area seniors.

- In 2019, one thousand twenty-eight rides were provided. Over twenty-nine 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 thirty-one 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, "Your volunteers are angels! They have become good friends. I am so grateful for this service." NP transportation program is vital to the health of our community.

In 2019 the transportation program costs \$19,226.

Exercise Programs

Northwoods Partners offers a variety of programs to help community members take a preventative approach to living well by offering a variety of exercise opportunities.

- These include an evidence-based program called Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance. Staff and a volunteer are certified trainers and offered three twelve-week sessions that met twice a week to seventy participants. This evidence-based class improves muscle strength, flexibility and balance. One participant states, "This program helped me to slow down and stop falls before they start. This class has helped me to have good posture and good balance as well as connected me with great people!"
- 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 being 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.

- NP’s Exercise Buddy program 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 eight 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 2019 twenty-two 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. Twelve 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 2019, the total for all exercise programs cost approximately \$ 14,491.

Friendly Visits Program

- 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-four 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, “It’s so comforting to know I live in a community that cares about its members. I no longer feel alone. NP has been a life saver.”

Northwood's Memory Care Program

NP conducts activities to increase awareness of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and strives to connect caregivers to expanded services, education and resources. These activities include:

- Community education and awareness activities such as Dementia Friendly Business/At Work training; Senior Citizen Law/ Advance Care training; Dementia Friendly Living by Age Well training as well as collaborations with health care providers and care coordinators to support families with care planning; brochures/flyers/newsletters/resource guides were distributed to advertise the availability of resources; provided a day long Healthy Aging Expo addressing a variety of aging issues including memory care support.
- Caregiver support groups, consulting services, stress level assessments, and dementia-friendly companion care to provide respite, activity kits for clients with dementia. These kits 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.
- Reduced Isolation by offering social activities such as our Memories & Movement program; a variety of exercise programs; a transportation program that serves individuals with dementia; resource library including videos for caregivers and games & activities to engage care receivers.

NMC program continues to partner 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 dementias. 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, and improved service to allow for more effective and efficient communication flow between patients, providers and community resources. This partnership 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 eighty 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.

In 2019, the memory care program costs approximately \$28,900.

Caregiver Consulting Services

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

- 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 2019 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 2019, the caregiver consultant program costs approximately \$21,680.

Healthy Aging Expo

We hosted our tenth annual Healthy Aging Expo (formerly Elder Expo Ely). This event is dedicated to senior adults' healthy lifestyles, education and caregiver support. Expert speakers presented on the following topics: Dental Health, Fitness Options, Technology to Improve Health & Quality of Life, Future of Aging, Healthy Approaches to Pain and Dementia Friendly Living. During this six-hour event there were over a dozen vendor tables also sharing information, resources and support to our participants. Free flu shots were provided by our community hospital. Eighty-eight people attended this year.

Aging Mastery Program- New in 2019!

The Aging Mastery Program (AMP) is designed to inform, encourage, and support older adults as they take steps to improve their lives and engage with their communities. AMP empowers older adults to make and maintain small but impactful changes in their behaviors. The program incorporates evidence-informed materials, expert speakers, group discussion and peer support to give participants the skills and tools they need to achieve measurable improvements in managing their health, remaining economically secure, and contributing actively to society. NP coordinated and hosted ten Aging Mastery classes in 2019. Participants stated they made changes to improve their health and well-being and improved their social connectedness after participating in the AMP program.

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.

Age to Age / 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 a like and different. A variety of opportunities including Tech & Coffee, Tree Brigade, 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 2019. 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.