

Fill the Strand Success!

From AIO Food and Energy Assistance
Rockland, Maine

On Monday, January 18, 2021 [AIO Food and Energy Assistance](#) hosted its first FILL THE STRAND food and funds drive to benefit AIO's Food Assistance, Energy Assistance and Weekend Meal Programs. The day was significant as a national day of service, honoring Martin Luther King Jr. The goal was to fill every seat in the theater with a bag of food or funds for food; with the overwhelming support from the community AIO was able to fill the theater three times!

[See photos from the event.](#)

The event was a wonderful collaboration with the [Strand Theatre](#) and Allen Insurance and Financial, which provided an opportunity for the community to connect and participate, in a meaningful, but safe way. The Strand Theatre had the door open and the lights turned on for one of only a few times in the last ten months. "While the pandemic has temporarily closed the doors to the theater, the work of the Strand carries on in new and creative ways—and this effort was no exception," shares Jessie Davis, Executive Director of the Strand. "As a community mainstay, it made absolute sense for the Strand to partner with other deeply-rooted community institutions, AIO & Allen Insurance and Financial, to provide an extra lift to our friends and neighbors in these difficult times!"

Allen Insurance and Financial employees were on hand to help greet, collect, and sort incoming food donations. The goal The generosity of the community has been remarkable- with more than 2000 pounds of food collected, sorted and integrated into AIO's market by the end of the day. More than \$27,000 in financial

donations were raised, which together with the food collected will go directly to AIO's programs that support Knox County families. All together more than 245 people or organizations contributed to Fill the Strand's success.

Liz Jenkins, AIO Board President shares, "We are amazed by the day and the show of support from all corners of the community, especially our partners. I think that we have all been craving an opportunity to "do" something, something meaningful and joyful outside of our own walls, during a year when we've been at home so much. Leila Murphy brought this idea to me a year ago, and while we had to pause plans last spring, when Wendy Bryd from Allen Insurance and Financial contacted me in the late fall about a team project, the stars aligned. Our AIO Weekend Meal program manager, Molly O'Rourke, is a professional events planner so she rounded out our planning team beautifully.

I'm grateful to Leila and Molly for coordinating the event, and to everyone who supported the event-whether donor, volunteer or cheerleader. Thank you. The good energy and the excitement around the event was infectious. We certainly hope to do it again!"

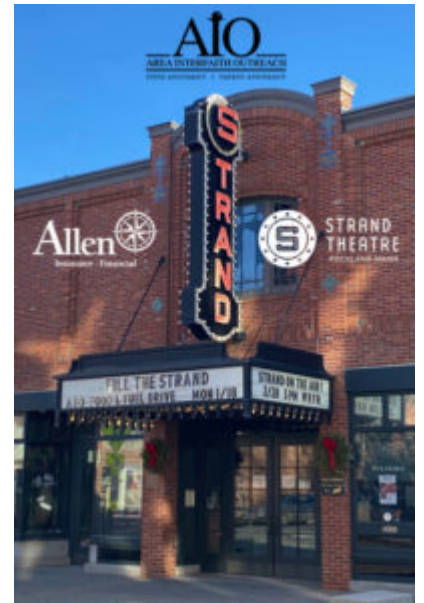
"We're grateful we could play a part in a very special day - one that showed our community at its best," said Mike Pierce, president of Allen Insurance and Financial. Allen Insurance and Financial, was a collection site in the weeks leading up to the event, in addition to having a team of volunteers on the day of the event. Main Street Market also served as a collection site.

A Day of Service in the Community: Doing Things That Need to be Done

Allen Insurance and Financial encouraged employees to use a paid community service day on Jan. 18. Amy Bowen and Sally Miles, members of the business insurance team in our Belfast office, put in some real elbow grease, volunteering for [Waldo Community Action Partners](#) in Belfast, assembling 20 conference room chairs and deep cleaning two of the organization's transport vans.

Says Sally: "It was a great day – we did things that needed to be done!"

MLK Day Food and Funds Drive an Incredible Demonstration of Community Spirit!



How do you find the words to describe an event where teamwork, generosity and community all come together to exceed a goal three times over? That's what happened on Monday, Jan. 18, when a group of Allen employee-owners from our Camden and Rockland offices joined AIO Food and Energy Assistance's team of volunteers at The Strand Theatre in Rockland, which hosted the event. Together we assisted in collecting food and funds in support of AIO's Food Assistance, Energy Assistance and Weekend Meal programs.

In all, 2,219 pounds of food and \$24,502 were collected. AIO's original goal of filling the seats in the Strand was exceeded by three times, with a total of 1,128 seats filled – each with a bag of food. (And the original funds goal of \$10,000 was shattered, too!)

It was a day of community, connection and joy and a great way to celebrate Martin Luther King Day in Rockland.

We're truly grateful for

- All who donated food and funds.
- Our fellow volunteers from AIO and The Strand.

- AIO for stellar event organization and for the opportunity to participate in this special event.
 - The Strand for a warm, welcoming venue.
 - Main Street Markets in Rockland, for being a food collection site and rolling a huge cart of donations down Main Street from the market to the Strand.
 - Photographers Tara Rice, Leila Murphy and Dan Bookham for these photos we can share with you.
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Supporting a Waldo County YMCA Food Drive

When the call came in from the [Waldo County YMCA](#) in December 2020 about a food drive to help fill food pantries at schools in the county, our six-member Belfast office team leapt into action and as of Friday, Jan. 15, together had raised a total of \$825 in cash donations, which includes donations from the entire office as well as additional contributions from a number of fellow employee-owners and a partial company match in the form of Hannaford gift cards.

Shown here are, from left, are Libby Davis, Amy Bowen and Joella Rossignol, with just some of the groceries Amy was able to buy with those funds.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Filling The Strand Theatre with Food and Funds

AIO Food and Energy Assistance is hosting its first FILL THE STRAND food and funds drive to benefit AIO's Food Assistance, Energy Assistance and Weekend Meal Programs. In partnership with the Strand Theatre and Allen Insurance and Financial, this event challenges the community to fill every seat in the historic theater with bags of food and funds for AIO's programs. AIO was inspired by GatherNH, who has held a successful Fill the Hall event in Portsmouth, NH at the Music Hall and who provided guidance to AIO.

Coordinators would like to encourage community organizations, businesses, and residents to do food and fund drives within their groups, workplaces, and neighborhoods to help with the drive. As of Friday, Jan. 15, \$12,000 has been raised in support of the event; food items will be sorted and weighed on Monday, Jan. 18. Donations will be accepted at The Strand in Rockland that day, with all COVID protocols followed.

Non-perishable food with a current expiration date is appreciated (no glass please). Most needed items include:

- ready rice pouches
- macaroni and cheese and pasta
- cereal & oatmeal
- pop-top canned foods and Chef Boyardee meals
- single serving lunch items
- 100% juice boxes, shelf stable milk, powdered milk
- kid-friendly snacks (granola bars, peanut butter crackers, 6-pack raisins)

Whether a monetary gift or food donation – your support will help the people in our community who need it the most.

Due to COVID-19 the majority of the food and funds collection will take place in the weeks leading up to Jan. 18. Food collection sites have been established at area businesses, including:

- Allen Insurance & Financial offices (Rockland and Camden)
- Main Street Markets (Rockland)
- AIO Food and Energy Assistance (Rockland)

On Jan. 18 volunteers will be at the Strand Theatre between 9:00-2:00pm to receive food and funds donations—curbside—to limit the number of people inside the Strand Theatre itself.

Monetary donations are welcome – and in fact your dollar goes further since AIO can purchase food through partners at a competitive price. Individuals can sponsor a bag at \$25, which will fill one seat in the theater. Those interested in sponsoring a bag through a financial donation [can make it online.](#)

In the Spirit of Helping Others

Our clients include many of the small businesses and non-profit organizations we count on in our communities. News and social media include stories daily of Mainers helping Mainers and raising money to help others. We thought we would highlight some those efforts.

Opportunity Knox: Hosted online by the Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce, this is a centralized way to send funds to Knox County area businesses and non-profit organizations. You decide how much you want to give in support, and the website allows you to divide that amount among the businesses and organizations listed. Many, though not all, of those listed are our clients. Participation is not automatic – businesses and non-profits have to ask to be listed. More information: opportunityknox.me

In Belfast, the City of Belfast has set up the **Belfast Keep the Faith Fund**, which is providing grocery vouchers to residents and grants to small businesses. Individuals can call 338-3370 x131 for more information. Donations can be made by check to the City of Belfast with subject line: Belfast KTF Fund and mailed to: City of Belfast, Attn: Belfast Keep the Faith Fund. 131 Church Street, Belfast, ME 04915. A donation to the Belfast Keep the Faith Fund is tax deductible. More information: cityofbelfast.org/groceryvoucher and cityofbelfast.org/smallbusinessgrant.

On MDI, the **Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce** is highlighting those businesses staying open on their website here: visitbarharbor.com/open. To the best of our knowledge there's no formal effort launched in Southwest Harbor yet, but we are monitoring the situation and should that change we'll update this information asap.

Statewide, a host of organizations have banded together to launch **Pay It Forward Maine** which works in a similar fashion to the Pen Bay Chamber's Opportunity Knox. You can find full details here: payitforwardmaine.com

Also, there is the statewide **Maine Helps** program, designed to connect Mainers looking to volunteer time, treasure or talent so that their impact is maximized and everyone stays safe in the process. Maine Helps connects you with ways to immediately help support nonprofits, businesses, and your community in the fight against COVID-19. More information can be found at this link maine.gov/covid19/maine-helps

Update 4/27/2020:

The UMaine Cooperative Extension is providing an updated list of agricultural

(cheese, eggs, produce, etc.) and seafood pickup locations where consumers can purchase food from the people who produce or grow it. Many local fishermen and producers are organizing more informal efforts. Additional information about these can be found on social media outlets like Facebook. Here is a link to the Cooperative Extension web page:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/agriculture/farm-product-and-pickup-directory/>

Any support for these efforts— however small it seems – can make a difference for our communities.

Chemo Caps for Kids Program Receives Strong Support from Midcoast Community



Kim Edgar

Allen Insurance and Financial is pleased to announce its continued support for the Chemo Caps for Kids initiative sponsored by Commonwealth Cares Fund Inc., the 501(c)(3) charity founded by Allen's Registered Investment Adviser—broker/dealer, Commonwealth Financial Network®. Chemo Caps for Kids provides hand-knit and crocheted hats to children undergoing cancer treatment.

“We’ve donated more than 5,000 hats to hospitals across the United States through our Chemo Caps for Kids program,” said Commonwealth CEO Wayne Bloom. “What started as a homegrown

effort to help bring smiles to a few kids' faces has grown into a community-wide project that is making an even greater impact. Our knitters and crocheters now include employees, advisors, family of staff and advisors, and friends of friends who are all using their talents to help kids who are in treatment."

For five years, Allen Insurance and Financial has been participating in the creation of these caps and invites the community to join the effort. Kimberly Edgar of Allen's Camden office is coordinating the program locally.

"We are grateful to Cashmere Goat in Camden, Maine Alpaca Experience in Northport, Unity and Ellsworth and Heavenly Socks Yarns in Belfast for their help with publicity to their customers," said Edgar, noting that a large of Midcoast knitters, all pretty much anonymous, have dedicated serious time and creativity to this cause.

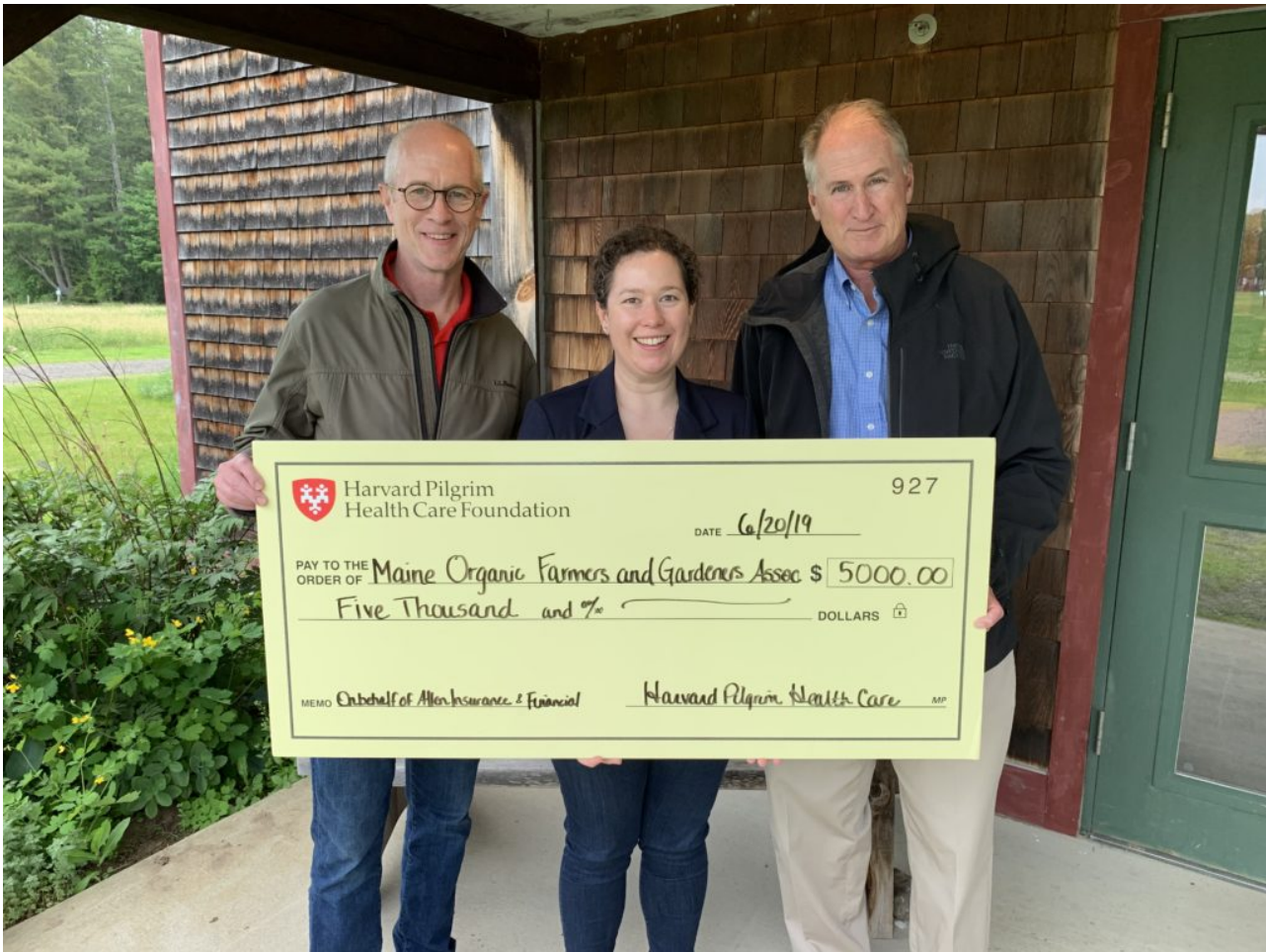
Anyone interested in donating yarn or knitting time to this project can call Edgar at 230-5831.

Some of hats from Maine have been distributed to hospitals in New England as well as to places such as Phoenix Children's Hospital and the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

Commonwealth Cares provides contributions of time, talent, and financial support to a wide range of philanthropic efforts aimed at relieving human suffering, promoting social and economic growth, and sustaining and protecting our planet's resources. All operating and administrative expenses for Commonwealth Cares are borne by Commonwealth. One hundred percent of every dollar contributed goes directly to those in need.

MOFGA Receives Grant from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Allen Insurance and Financial

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) recently received a \$5,000 grant from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation and Allen Insurance and Financial to increase access to and affordability of healthy, nutritious food for low income families. MOGFA has a longstanding commitment to help all Maine people acquire local, organic foods regardless of geography or income. Pictured in the photo, left to right, are: Bill Whitmore, Maine Market Vice President, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care; Sarah Alexander, Executive Director, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association; and Dan Wyman, JD, Insured Benefits Manager, Allen Insurance and Financial.



Supporting Waldo Community Action Partners 2017

Allen Insurance and Financial has helped Waldo Community Action Partners kick off a fundraising drive to replace the commercial kitchen stove used by the WCAP Head Start program.

The stove, which has been repaired numerous times until it could be repaired no more, is used daily to prepare nutritious meals for almost 50 children and parents. Dan Bookham of Allen



Insurance and Financial's business insurance division recently presented a check to WCAP Head Start Director Jessie Francis.

WCAP Head Start serves children ages three to five, four days a week, for 128 days per year. WCAP Head Start offers part-time (four hours a day) and full-times (six hours a day) options depending on the needs of the family. Placement is based on a number of criteria; the primary one is family income. There is no fee for WCAP Head Start programs. More information is online at waldocap.org.

Head Start was created in 1964 to give preschool children a "head start" in formal education. Throughout the decades, Head Start has expanded their services to involve the whole family. Head Start supports families in give different component areas: health, nutrition, education, social services, and parent involvement.

Supporting the Waldo County YMCA

Allen Insurance and Financial is a sponsor of the 2016 Canoe Races put on by the Waldo County YMCA. These are the 37th annual St. George Canoe Race, which was March 26 and the 43rd annual Passagassawakeag River Race, set for Saturday, April 2.

In this photo, Allen Insurance and Financial's Karen Reed, center, poses with Dale Cross and Karen Varney of the Waldo County YMCA.

