



## 2020 MCOA Award Recipients

For many years, the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) has honored the outstanding work of aging services leaders, legislators and advocates with a series of annual awards. This year, we felt compelled to re-imagine most, but not all, of our awards to match the times we're experiencing. 2020 has been a year that has challenged us all to be our best selves, to be agile, compassionate, and resilient. During this year of unrelenting change, we have watched and been so inspired by so many Mainers who have risen to the challenge with innovative spirits and genuine kindness. Except for our Lasting Legacy Award, this year, we've chosen to honor leaders who stepped up in remarkable ways to ensure older adults in their communities were able to access the things they needed while they were staying safe at home. Without question, our Lasting Legacy Award honoree also was inspiring in his response to COVID-19, but we wish to honor him for his impressive sustained leadership rather than to focus on his work this year. Please join us in honoring these wonderful Mainers.

The **MCOA's Lasting Legacy Award** recognizes and celebrates the sustained leadership of people whose commitment, ideals, and actions throughout their careers have brought about lasting and positive change to the lives of older Mainers.

**Don Harden** has been a devoted and tenacious advocate for more than 40 years as a leader with Catholic Charities Maine. After serving in the Army, he earned his Masters Degree and embarked on a career-long journey to improve the lives of Mainers. Serving first in the child care sector, Don became the Director of what is now known as Support and Recovery Services. In 2005, Don expanded his role to take on multiple programs serving older people, including Independent Support Services, known as the Homemaker Program, growing it quickly into a statewide program that helps older Mainers age well at home. Knowing this is what older Mainers want, Don tirelessly advocated for quality home and community services, and for workers, mostly women, who do this work. He has not been deterred by staffing shortages and budget cuts, nor given up in the face of incremental gains, of which there have been many. Don is an icon in the human services world, a true collaborator who brings a quiet confidence to his advocacy that makes legislators want to listen. One peer wrote, "Don is the EF Hutton of aging; when he talks, we all listen to his sage wisdom." He is generous with his time to help others learn and values the strength of many voices. Don is a founding member of the MCOA and serves on the Board of Directors. For his unfailing pursuit of quality services for older Mainers and living wages for direct care workers, and his mentorship of others working in aging services, the Maine Council on Aging is proud to present Don with the 2020 Lasting Legacy Award.

The **2020 MCOA Legislator of the Year Award** recognizes and celebrates the sustained efforts of a legislative leader who worked through the COVID-19 crisis collaboratively with communities, institutions, governments, and businesses to develop and implement solutions that have improved the health and safety of older Mainers.

**Representative Chloe Maxmin** may be a new face in the Maine legislature, but she is already a strong voice for Maine's older adults. As soon as the COVID-19 pandemic hit, she enlisted more than 200 volunteers to contact and triage the needs of more than 3,000 older residents living in her district. The more than 12,000 calls made by Chloe and her volunteers resulted in groceries and prescriptions being delivered, rides to doctor appointments being arranged, and masks and social support being made available. One of the volunteers involved said that Chloe is the type of person we need in office, "one who has the compassion and empathy to reach out to her constituents." Aside from her immediate and impressive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, she also sponsored a key bill regarding transportation for older people in the legislature, and has continued to make older people a primary focus of her work as a lawmaker. The Maine Council on Aging is proud to honor Representative Maxmin as the 2020 Legislator of the Year.

The **2020 MCOA Trailblazing Award** recognizes and celebrates the contributions of community members who, in the face of COVID-19, have responded through actions and/or advocacy in incredible and innovative ways to make Maine a safer place for us all to age with dignity, health, purpose and security. *This year's Trailblazing Award honors two recipients.*

**Surrey Hardcastle** has an impressive reputation as a champion for older people. For four years, she has been the chair of the Food Team of Harpswell Aging at Home, a grassroots volunteer organization that helps make Harpswell a community for a lifetime. When COVID-19 hit, Surrey had been leading the Lunch With Friends (LWF) Program, a wildly successful free weekly lunch program that serves thousands of volunteer cooked meals each year. Undeterred by the threat of COVID, she and her team, following all CDC coronavirus protocols for sanitizing, re-packing, and delivering, quickly shifted gears to a take-out lunch format called Meals-To-Go. Every Tuesday from mid-March through the end of June, volunteers prepared hundreds of meals that were dropped off at a central location and then picked up by LWF regulars or distributed to homebound people. During this time, Surrey and 100 volunteers prepared and distributed 5,555 meals to 2,208 people, remarkable in a town of 5000. Her work inspired volunteers to buy lobsters, not only to help local fisherman, but also to make lobster mac 'n cheese lunches! Her innovative thinking and warm enthusiasm was the catalyst for a town-wide effort that benefited hundreds of families, both those receiving the food and those volunteering their time, skill and resources. Because of her immediate and inspiring response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maine Council on Aging is honored to present Surrey with the 2020 Trailblazing Award.

**Lynn Steed** is a member of Age Friendly Saco and a volunteer with the Saco Food Pantry. When COVID hit and many older people did not feel comfortable going out to get groceries, Lynn developed a network of volunteers to deliver food. She went to the pantry many times to fulfill food requests for others, and was able to serve hundreds of older people seeking food assistance from a pantry for the first time. Not content to serve just those in her own community, Lynn reached out to serve the needs of older people in neighboring communities as well, often involving the local police department to assist in a food delivery for a family in need. Because Lynn worked tirelessly to address increased food insecurity brought on by the pandemic, the Maine Council on Aging is honored to present her with the 2020 Trailblazing Award.

The **2020 MCOA Business Excellence Award** recognizes and celebrates the efforts of Maine employers that pivoted to implement creative and strategic practices during the COVID-19 public health crisis that supported the health and social health needs of older Mainers and/or the providers who serve them.

**The Green Ladle** is a restaurant that offers a well-rounded culinary education to juniors and seniors from high schools in the Lewiston area. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, students and instructors opted to utilize the tips they'd been saving as a group to provide meals for 500 older adults, veterans, and first responders rather than to provide themselves with a senior trip. Students prepared the meals and organized volunteers to deliver it, with local restaurants donating the food. Because of their generosity, the Maine Council on Aging is honored to present The Green Ladle with the 2020 Business Excellence Award.