

Gold LEAF Institute – where learning is social, local, and lifelong.

There is a special kind of energy that comes from joining a small group of people who are there simply because they want to learn. No tests. No grades. No pressure. Just curiosity, conversation, and the pleasure of discovering something new.

That spirit is at the heart of the Gold LEAF Institute, a member-run senior college affiliated with the University of Maine at Farmington. Established in 1997, Gold LEAF serves adults in Franklin County and the surrounding region, offering opportunities for people age 50 and older—along with spouses or partners of any age—to continue learning, exploring, and connecting with others.

Gold LEAF stands for Lifelong Education At Farmington, and the name captures the organization's purpose beautifully. Members come together for small classes—often with fewer than 15 people—along with discussions, field trips, social gatherings, and special programs that reflect a wide range of interests. Sessions might include nature walks or a local history talk; another might feature literature, science, current events, food, technology, health and wellness, or the arts; still another offers community by dining together, crafting and coffee together, or book discussions.

What makes Gold LEAF especially meaningful is its close-knit learning environment. With small class sizes, members have more opportunities to ask questions, share experiences, join the conversation, and get to know one another. Participants bring their own interests, talents, and enthusiasm to the group, helping shape a welcoming community where learning feels personal and engaging.

As part of Maine's senior college network, Gold LEAF reflects a statewide commitment to enrichment, engagement, and friendship in later life. It proves that learning does not stop in adulthood - it often becomes more personal, more relaxed, and more rewarding.

For many members, Gold LEAF is about more than gaining knowledge. It is about staying active, meeting new people, sharing ideas, and finding joy in the company of others who value lifelong learning.

Curiosity has no age limit—and at Gold LEAF Institute, there is always something new to discover.