



# 2024 Maine AmeriCorps Member Conference

## Finding Community: Uniting Through Service

- When:** Wednesday, April 4, 2024 ~~3/30/24~~ ~~3/29/24~~
- Check-in opens at 8:15 AM; Conference starts promptly at 9 AM
- Where:** Snow Pond Center for the Arts, 8 Goldenrod Lane (Off of Route 23), Sydney, Maine (Directions Below)
- Cost:** \$35 cost-share includes continental breakfast, lunch, full day of workshop sessions, door prize drawings, and more! (Most programs include this fee in their budgets; check with your program staff to verify).

**Registration** deadline is **March 29<sup>th</sup>** ~~3/29/24~~

Please register for the conference using this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024ACConf>

### CONFERENCE AGENDA:

8:15 - 8:55 am	Check-in and Networking Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00 am	Opening and Morning Plenary
10:10 - 10:55 am	Session 1 Workshops
11:00 – 11:45am	Morning Networking
11:50 am - 12:35 pm	Session 2 Workshops
12:35 - 1:05 pm	Lunch
1:05 – 1:50 pm	AmeriCorps Alumni Panel
2:00 - 2:45 pm	Session 3 Workshops
2:50 - 3:45 pm	Networking Activity session
3:45 - 4:15 pm	Closing & Door Prizes



## Directions to the [Snow Pond Center for the Arts](#):

The **Snow Pond Center for the Arts** is located at 8 Goldenrod Lane in Sidney, Maine, 04330. Directions are available via [Google Maps](#)

### From the South:

Take Route 95 North to exit 112B to merge onto ME-11 N/ME-27 N/ME-8 N/Civic Center Drive/New Belgrade Road toward Augusta/Belgrade.

After 4 miles, turn right onto ME-23 N/Pond Road.

Snow Pond Center will be on your left after approximately 7.2 miles.

### From the North:

Take Route 95 South to exit 127 (ME-11/ME-137 toward Waterville/Oakland).

Turn right on ME-11S/ME-137W/Kennedy Memorial Drive.

After 0.7 miles, turn left onto Country Club Road.

At the end, turn right onto Webb Road.

After crossing over Middle Road, turn left onto ME-23S/Snow Pond Road.

Snow Pond Center will be on your right after approximately 3.2 miles.

**Remember to let program & site staff know your travel plans.**

**This year's conference meals are sponsored by**



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*Good Serves Here*

# 2024 Session Descriptions and Presenter Bios

Please choose **a first and a second** choice in **each of the three session blocks**

Individual presentations will be closed to registration as they fill up – register early to get the best selection

## **Workshop Session I – 10:10 to 10:55 am**

1. **How to Start a Community Garden; Cathy Ryder, Ending Hunger Corps, Eastern Maine Community College, Bangor; and Carrie Damiani, Ending Hunger Corps, Food Access & Community Development VISTA Alan Day Community Garden, Harrison**

Are you interested in gardening, food, and community? Then you'll love our workshop on how to start a community garden in your area. You'll learn how to turn any spot into a beautiful and productive garden, where you can grow your own fruits and vegetables, and share them with your neighbors. This is a great way to learn a new skill, meet new people, and make a positive impact on your community. Don't wait, sign up today and get ready to dig in!

*Cathy has a strong passion for helping others, which led her to pursue an Associate in Human Services from EMCC. She joined AmeriCorps because it matched her personal vision of serving my community. Maine has been her home for most of her adult life. Cathy enjoys outdoor activities, including gardening, hiking, and camping. She planned, designed, built, and maintained a community garden on campus to help supply the food pantry with fresh produce. Cathy did this through recruiting experts, students, community volunteers, writing grants, and forming partnerships on campus and in the community.*

*Carrie received a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond, but wanted to move back to New England and was drawn to work at the Alan Day Community Garden (ADCG) because of the way it serves as a hub for local food and community. As a VISTA at the ADCG, Carrie has been working to incorporate the ADCG's new commercial kitchen space into opportunities for local students, food producers, and community members to make connections and enjoy local food together.*

2. **Promoting Positive Youth Development Through Exploration & Play; Aine Jordan and Zach Dewey, I Know ME & Game Loft, Maine Youth Alliance, Belfast**

If you know who you are, and you know where you are from, then you can find where you are going! Learn how to promote positive development in youths through highlighting their strengths and exploring their community, because knowing Maine is our superpower!

We are better contributors to a community when we know these things; which can be learned by exploring that community, and learning by experience. We can learn about one another's strengths and become stronger as a team through playing games. Every individual has strengths, which can be positively contributed to help the community as a whole.

*Tara and her team have created a new community center where local suppers are bringing folks together and raising funding for ongoing Age-Friendly work. Sarah has established community gardens by fostering partnerships and engaging community members; these model gardens demonstrate alternative growing methods aimed at teaching the next generation as well as supporting gardening for all ages.*

*Zachariah Dewey is the program manager for IKME, he plans and leads all of our activities and outings. Zach has been with the program for several years, and facilitates strengths-based programming, which often includes role play games. He is very well-versed in the values of game play, as well as in facilitating role play games.*

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3. **Darning and Visible Mending Instruction;** *Maya Shyevitch, AmeriCorps Resilience Corps, Greater Portland Council of Governments, Chebeague Island, Casco Bay*

Darn! Have you ever been tempted to get rid of socks because they're full of holes? Come learn how to fix them instead while adding beautiful, personal touches to your clothing through the art of visible mending. Participants will learn some basic principles of darning and walk away with an appreciation for visible mending and an interest in pursuing the subject further.

**Bring your own item in need of a small patch and get hands on darning experience!**

*Maya learned how to darn last summer and has spent many hours since mending clothes and other items for herself and her loved ones. Visible mending is a great way to reduce waste & spending while adding personal, beautiful touches to beloved items. It is a fun skill that everyone can learn at a basic level fairly quickly.*

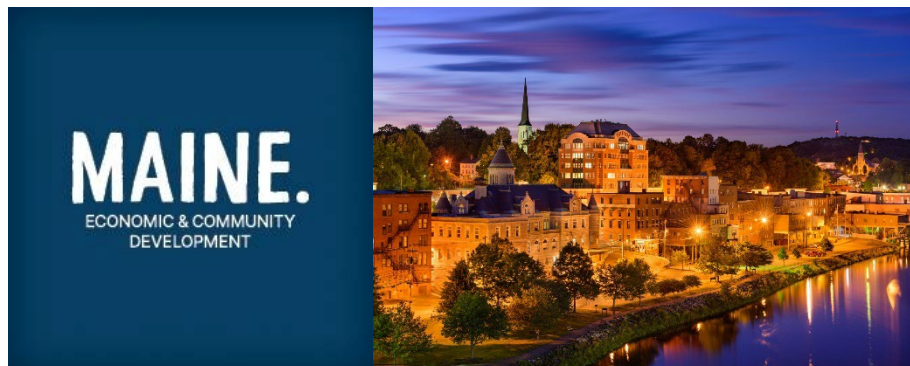
**DON'T FORGET** to choose a first and a second choice in each of the three session blocks

**Morning Networking – 11:05 to 11:35 am**

**Creating Community – Making Connections through what you know and what you want to know**

In your registration you will be asked to answer four brief questions that will form help the committee form initial network groups. The groups will mix and remix during this half hour session

**And remember our sponsors**



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## Workshop Session II – 11:50 am to 12:30 pm

1. **“In Good Taste!” Interactive Taste Test Best Practices; Chelsea Marshall, Ending Hunger Corps, RSU 13, Rockland**

Do you have a passion for fresh produce and want to share your excitement with your clients, but you're unsure where to start? Do you want to share a love of fruits and veggies with clients of all ages? Then this session is for you! Join Chelsea, School Meal Champion and Outreach VISTA at RSU13, for an interactive session on how to host fun fresh produce taste tests. This session will cover best practices, food safety, planning, and you'll get to experience delicious fruits and veggies for yourself!

*Prior to working for Fighting Hunger Corps Maine, Chelsea spent over nine years working for UF/IFAS Extension, Family Nutrition Program (SNAP-ed) in Florida, four and a half years as a nutrition educator and four years as the Regional Public Health Specialist for seven North Florida counties. She was responsible for implementing policy, system, and environmental changes to help make the healthy choice the easy choice. Chelsea was the Healthy Schools Lead Specialist, serving as the main point of contact for FNP's school-based interventions in Florida. She has a Master of Social Work Degree from Florida State University with a concentration in Social Policy and Leadership, and interned with Second Harvest of The Big Bend as Child Nutrition Intern. She currently serves improving the school meals program at RSU 13.*

2. **Homesteading in Maine; Alexandra Merchant, AmeriCorps Resilience Corps Sustainability Fellow, Greater Portland Council of Governments, Portland**

In the 1960's, flocks of people left the comforts of modern living for the peace of rural living in the back-to-the-land movement. Maine has a unique history as a leader in this movement. The movements philosophy had a lasting impact on the state and on the world. Now, years later, there has been a resurgence of this lifestyle in the modern homesteading movement. Join this session to learn more about the history of homesteading as well as homesteading today!

Participants will leave with an understanding of Maine's unique history in the back-to-the-land movement, what modern homesteading is, who chooses to homestead, and why they chose to homestead.

*Lexi was born in Michigan and received her BS in Biology from Central Michigan University. After graduation, she worked for an environmental nonprofit in Los Angeles, CA. The experience working with communities around the issue of sustainability drove her to pursue her Masters in Sociology at UNH. There she focused on Environmental Sociology and wrote a thesis on the modern homesteading and back-to-the-land movement in Maine.*

3. **Using your Segal Education Award; Benjamin Koehler, Providing free outdoor programming to the good people of Skowhegan. Skowhegan AmeriCorps Outdoor Recreation Program, Main Street Skowhegan.**

Don't leave money on the table! Use that Segal Education Award! This workshop will teach you how to spend your award, and where you can spend it.

*Ben is a college graduate, who decided to go back to school to take classes that interest him. Throughout this journey, he has learned a lot about navigating the use of the AmeriCorps Segal Award and the financial aid system.*

*Participants will learn how to access your award, different ways to use your ed award, tax implications, and strategies to make the most of what you will earn after completing your service*

**REMEMBER** to choose a first and a second choice in each of the three session blocks

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## **Workshop Session III – 2:00 pm to 2:45 pm – Alumni Sessions**

### **1. Designing the Maine Climate Corps; Kirsten Brewer, Climate Corps Coordinator, Augusta**

In 2022 the Maine State Legislature formally created the Maine Climate Corps. This new service program operates as a network model, with multiple programs across the state engaged in climate action across different sectors. The program is still actively under development as Volunteer Maine and partners pursue funding and build out new programs. As currently serving members, we are interested in your feedback. You are experts in service programs: what are vital components? What areas of climate action would you, your peers, or youth you engage like to participate in? What content would be essential in a climate corps training program?

Come ready to learn more about this new initiative as well as reflect and share your ideas about what makes for strong service corps programming.

*As the Climate Corps Coordinator, Kirsten provides outreach and assistance to potential Climate Corps grantees and coordinates with state and federal agencies to develop programs and policies that enable the Climate Corps to meet the goals of Maine Won't Wait, the state's Climate Action Plan.*

*Prior to joining Volunteer Maine, Kirsten worked with environmental non-profits focused on land conservation and environmental policy. While at the Kennebec Land Trust, she supported the Local Wood WORKS initiative and learned about sustainable forestry and local wood products as a climate mitigation strategy. She holds a Master of Science in Natural Resources from the University of Vermont and a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies and Spanish from Pitzer College. She was a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in South Korea.*

*Kirsten was also an AmeriCorps program manager, training and supporting those who serve as well as engaging community volunteers. She is a two-time AmeriCorps State alum, having served with the CEDO We All Belong Program in Burlington, Vermont and with the Maryland Conservation Corps. She is active in the community as an officer in the Maine Chapter of the Fulbright Association, a board member for GrowSmart Maine, and co-leader of CAPITAL, Augusta's Bike and Pedestrian Committee.*

### **2. Life After AmeriCorps; Solange Carpenter & Jen Craven, Goodwill AmeriCorps & AmeriCorps Alums**

Are you nearing the end of your term? Are you anxious about Life After AmeriCorps? What's next?! Let us help you set yourself up for the future. Come learn the tips and strategies of negotiating the transition and make the most out of your unique service experience. Learn strategies for easing the transition from a term of service into the "real" world, and discover opportunities with AmeriCorps Alums!

*Sol served three AmeriCorps terms, first as a State & National member with an Energy Efficiency program called "Green Iowa" in Northeast Iowa, then as a VISTA with Hunger Free America at Preble Street in Portland training providers about SNAP, and finally as the Training and Reporting VISTA Leader at Goodwill Industries of Northern New England in Portland. Sol was the Program Coordinator at Maine Campus Compact, overseeing the Maine Partnership for Environmental Stewardship AmeriCorps program and is now back with Goodwill as a member of the AmeriCorps Program Staff*

*Jen also is a staff member at Goodwill Industries of Northern New England. She is an alum, and has been an AmeriCorps program director in the past.*

### **3. Get Real - Speaking Authentically; Deidrah Stanchfield, Maine Conservation Corps,**

Have you been waiting for another sleep-inducing communication workshop? This is not that one! Join us for an active after lunch conversation about your true self, and how sharing can benefit your future service and career. Attendees in this interactive session will learn about speaking your truth, and how authentic communication can be an asset for both you and your community.

*Coming from an 8 year career in healthcare, Deidrah joined the Conservation Corps as a Field Team member in 2013. Since then, she has completed two 900 hour terms of service, been the Director for the Augusta Community Warming Center, and been with MCC since 2013, becoming the Program Coordinator for Environmental Stewards in 2016. Helping people grow has always been a passion, and using authentic communication has been the cornerstone of her success in that area.*

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4. **In Depth Learning from Members of the Alum Panel; *Varies, Session based on availability of Alum Panel during this time block***

Members of the Alum panel have been asked to stay and offer a seminar style conversation to allow attendees the option of diving a little deeper into their areas of expertise and hear more about their personal journeys.

More information about the particular alums involved will be available closer to the conference . If this kind of conversation interests you, feel free to make this a **“second choice”** for this time block and we will offer the option to adjust your registration prior to the conference – after the full details are available.

**Conference Support also generously provided by**



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