

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Summary

In the fall of 2021 two Granges in Washington County passed smoke free policies to create safe places for community members to gather and socialize. Grange halls in Maine have history that dates back to the 1850's, but they have evolved to meet the needs of rural communities. Though the years the Grange has been a place to discuss agricultural and household issues; they often took strong positions on legislative issues and education and served as a resource for many Mainers to support the needs of their communities. Today, the Grange is a place for community members to celebrate their communities and host events that bring people in the community together. The Jonesboro Grange #357 and The Alexander Grange #304 host many community events throughout the year.



Need/ Issue

Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease among nonsmokers each year in the United States. Two Granges in Washington County committed to working with Healthy Acadia to create smoke free policies and provide all people of their communities with smoke free spaces to come together.

Intervention/ Program Description

Granges in Maine are being revitalized! One of the major goals of the Granges is to engage the community in events and bring community members and families together. In September 2021, The Jonesboro Grange #357 joined with Healthy Acadia and passed a smoke free policy. Rebekah Hodgson, Jonesboro Grange Board Member, & Katie Sell, Community Health Coordinator at Healthy Acadia, first connected over social media about the idea of creating a policy.

Both Rebekah and Katie have deep roots in Washington County. The Jonesboro Grange hosts many events throughout the year including: sponsoring the 2021 Crush Cancer 5K, which raised over \$5,000 for local nonprofit organizations that help people fighting cancer; touch-a-truck event for families; blueberry festival with events for the entire family; Halloween Spooktacular; Veterans Day lunch; Christmas and other holiday celebrations; and much more!

In October 2021, Alexander Grange #304 became the second Grange in Washington County to pass a smoke free policy with Healthy Acadia's support. The Alexander Grange, like the Jonesboro Grange, holds many community events for people of all ages, including: sponsoring community dinners; delivering wreaths to community members; and other holiday/seasonal events.

“If the Jonesboro Grange can take this measure to help others stay safe at our community events, I hope other organizations will jump on board. The Grange members are excited about this opportunity to help keep our air clean and healthy for all.”

— REBEKAH HODGSON - BOARD MEMBER & COMMUNITY EVENTS DIRECTOR, JONESBORO GRANGE #357

Results/ Success

Creating healthy and smoke free spaces for current and future generations to engage with and in their communities is a goal of both the Jonesboro and Alexander Grange. These adopted policies have created awareness about the importance of smoke free areas and a connection to resources.

Sustainability

Both the Jonesboro and Alexander Granges took advantage of mini grant funding to create a policy, and they both also received free signage to help create consistent messaging about tobacco use. Each year, in the United States alone, there are 480,000 deaths due to tobacco-related illness. Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death and leads to disease and disability. These two organizations are helping create smoke free spaces in rural Washington County for everyone! For more information and a directory of local Grange halls in Maine, visit mainestategrange.org.

For More Information Contact Us At:

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