On behalf of the town of Hiram, Maine, I am pleased to submit this letter of interest in and commitment to the AARP/World Health Organization Network of Age-Friendly communities. Hiram recognizes the importance of encouraging and promoting age-friendly planning and policies to address our changing demographics and enhance independent living for our older residents, and is committed to a process of continual improvement to support active and healthy aging.

Older residents from our area have formed a Sacopee Valley wide group, the Grateful Undead, to identify and address issues of concern to our elders. Their activities support the health and welfare of many elders in our town.

- In collaboration with the local Sacopee Valley Health Center, they have developed a network of volunteer transporters to drive elders to medical and other important appointments.

- In 2017 they conducted a six town survey of needs (including Cornish, Hiram, Porter, Baldwin, Parsonsfield and Newfield) which helped identify issues most important to local older residents.

- In 2018-2019 they researched, published and distributed a handbook of resources specifically addressing senior’s needs to over 1500 older local residents.

- They are currently developing a Handy Helper Brigade of volunteers from local Masons and Grange organizations to respond to needs for home repairs essential for older residents to continue living in their homes.

- In the near future the Grateful Undead will be developing a Money Minder program of volunteers trained by the Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging and Seniors Plus to work with seniors to help them with paying their bills.

- The group is also developing a telephone buddy call system to older residents who are home-bound without available family support.

We understand that affiliation with AARP will provide these volunteers coverage in liability to carry out these neighborly activities and that for that to happen Hiram must affiliate with the Age Friendly Community.

As the head select person from and on behalf of the Town of Hiram, I enthusiastically offer full endorsement for the AARP/World Health Organization Network of Age-Friendly Communities and its support of our local Grateful Undead group of volunteers.

Sincerely, 12/9/21