



Celebrating Our Past, Investing in Our Future

WHO ARE WE?

Twenty-five years ago, at the instigation of History and Political Science Professor Hilary Cleveland, a small group of local residents developed a partnership with Colby-Sawyer College to provide intellectual enrichment to the community. With this enthusiastic support, Adventures in Learning (AIL) was born in 1998. Since then, we have successfully met our mission to provide lifelong learning experiences for adults with an interest in the world of ideas. The health benefits of intellectual engagement and social opportunities are well known, particularly to the Kearsarge-Lake Sunapee community with many retirees. By offering a diverse array of stimulating courses and programs throughout the year, AIL provides a vital service to our vibrant community.

“AIL is the retired person’s best local outlet for scholarship. The people we meet in class are neighbors, and because we have common interests, it’s also a great means of social contact.”

– Art Rosen, long-time AIL member and study leader

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

In a typical year, AIL serves over 400 members by offering 40 or more courses ranging from small discussion groups to lecture series. A talented cadre of study leaders forms the backbone of the organization. As a volunteer-driven enterprise, we operate on a modest budget supported by membership dues, course fees, and donations.

Members receive quarterly course catalogs and a newsletter, Horizons, as well as monthly Noteworthy News emails from the AIL office. The emails frequently include announcements of events on the Colby-Sawyer campus and links to sign up for Science Pub and Lunch & Learn, two AIL programs that are free and open to the public. AIL members, community members, and Colby-Sawyer students and staff often attend Science Pub events.

AIL benefits enormously from its special relationship with Colby-Sawyer. The College provides classroom and office space, various overhead needs, partial salary support for paid staff, and access to its faculty for courses and lectures.

IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

AIL suspended its spring and summer 2020 terms because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the fall 2020 term, AIL was able to resume courses online using the Zoom platform. In-person classes resumed in 2022, but at a lower attendance level. Post pandemic, revenues have been somewhat unstable and inflationary demands on the budget have increased.



Remote learning was crucial to AIL’s operations during the first year of the pandemic and continues to be valuable today. Offering online courses expands our reach to members who are hesitant to meet in person, and provides convenience to those who wish to stay connected while they are traveling or spending their winters out of state. While online opportunities have provided benefits to the AIL organization and our members, remote learning also presents technology and training challenges.

While we have been able to offer a variety of excellent courses, the current budget does not permit funding for additional needs, such as technology upgrades, classroom and program enhancements.

FUTURE NEEDS

In 2021, an AIL task force prepared Vision 2026, a strategic plan charting a path for the organization’s foreseeable future. Now we are initiating a 25th anniversary campaign to raise \$80,000 to provide resources to advance the Vision 2026 goals.

- a. **Technology** – AIL is committed to providing both high-quality in-person and remote access courses. In order to deliver on this promise and maintain attractive program offerings, we need to invest in high quality audio-visual and remote access technologies. This will require dedicated resources for IT training as well as ongoing software and hardware investments, considering the continuously changing nature of technology.

- b. **Program Enhancement and Presence in our Community** – AIL would like to increase our visibility in the Kearsarge-Lake Sunapee Region. At present we have a limited advertising budget. With more resources, we could increase our outreach to new residents and offer more opportunities outside of the classroom that members have consistently told us they value, such as membership gatherings, lectures, and trips.

- c. **Classroom Enhancements** – AIL’s dedicated classroom on the Colby-Sawyer campus hosts a variety of activities, including small discussion groups, large meetings, film series and lectures. AIL seeks to furnish the classroom with the equipment and furniture necessary to enhance the learning environment and to provide adequate flexibility and comfort to meet the variety of program requirements.