



Woodstock, Vermont *The Shire Town of Windsor County*

TOWN-VILLAGE MANAGER GOVERNMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Woodstock Completes Bench Installation Project as Part of the 2026 AARP
Community Challenge Grant Program**

WOODSTOCK, VT - The Town of Woodstock is excited to announce the completion of its Bench Installation Project, made possible through a 2026 AARP Community Challenge grant.

With the assistance of Artistree, Woodstock partnered with local artist Tara Wray to create designs for the benches. Tara used inspiration from artist and educator Josef Albers (1888–1976), whose groundbreaking work in color theory explored how colors are perceived not in isolation, but in relation to those around them. The bench designs are meant to evoke the feeling of Vermont through its many seasons. The benches were painted with assistance from members of the Thompson Senior Center and Woodstock resident Julie Martin.

Upon completion of painting the benches, they were placed between Tribou Park and East End Park to provide safe resting points for older adults traveling between housing, services, parks, and the village center. The benches will increase mobility and independence, improve access to goods and healthcare, and reinforce pedestrian activity. Both functional and artistic, they will enhance the streetscape and better connect the village's east end with the village center. Woodstock is currently collecting feedback from community members and users of the benches via an online survey using the QR code found on the benches.

This milestone comes during a landmark year for the AARP Community Challenge: 2026 marks the program's 10-year anniversary and its most significant expansion to date. AARP has doubled the size of the program, investing \$8.3 million to support 750 quick-action projects nationwide. This transformational growth reflects AARP's decade-long commitment to tangible, fast-moving improvements that spark long-term changing communities of all sizes.

The AARP Community Challenge is a key part of AARP's nationwide [Livable Communities](#) initiative, which helps cities, towns, neighborhoods, and rural areas become great places for people of all ages – with an emphasis on those 50 and older.

To learn more about Community Challenge projects across the country, including the hundreds funded this year, visit <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>. You can also explore an interactive map showcasing current and past projects at <https://livablemap.aarp.org/#/view=map>.



Pictured above: Community bench painting day volunteers, and at the center is local artist Tara Wray. Volunteers for the day included: Rose Smith, Suzan Harlow, Beverly Audsley, Elizabeth Hollinshead, Sarah (Parliman) Wilson, and Charlie Hague.