Chesterfield Council on Aging Newsletter

November 2026

400 Main Rd., P.O. Box 7, Chesterfield, MA 01012 | Phone: 413-296-4007 | Email: coa@townofchesterfieldma.com
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COA Staff & Leadership

Jess Humphries, Director

Office Hours:
Mondays, 9 AM-5 PM
Wednesdays, 10 AM-4 PM
Thursdays, 9 AM-1 PM

COA Advisory Board
Marianne Drake, Chair
Bev Henrichsen, Vice Chair
Francine Frenier, Secretary

Members:
Lillian Bisbee
Lynn Hicks
John Kislo
Jim Martin
Darlene McVeigh

Dee Cinner, Librarian

November Director's Note

Dear readers,

It is a sunny windy beautiful late October day as I write this and a flurry of colorful leaves are blowing across my driveway. This is my first fall in the Hilltowns and it's been a breathtaking one. One of the joys of this past month has been joining the COA's watercolor class and learning to translate some of the season's beauty onto paper. It's a fun and sometimes frustrating pursuit made rewarding by the painters practicing alongside me.

If you'd like to try your hand at something creative this month, I encourage you to join one of our many art classes. It's not too late to join our **Oil painting class on Mondays** or our new **Mixed media art class starting Thursday, November 5th**. We are also launching a **Decorative food art class starting Wednesday, November 18th**! Join us there to learn some creative ways to embellish your holiday plates. *(See details on p. 4)*

Veterans, don't miss our **Veterans Day Brunch on Wednesday, November 11th** in your honor! *(See details below.)*

Wishing you a beautiful month,

Jess



Veterans Day Brunch

Wednesday, Nov. 11th, 10 AM-12 PM



The COA welcomes all Hilltowns veterans and spouses of deceased veterans (and a plus one) to join us for this special brunch. Gather with fellow former service members and enjoy a delicious homemade meal in your honor!

We expect a crowd - **register by November 6th** to secure your spot!

Suggested donation: $3

November 2026 Calendar of Events

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 **No COA Classes** due to election set-up **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am	**3** **Election Day** **Tech Drop-in** 11 am-2 pm	**4**	**5** **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am **Mixed Media Class** 1-3 PM	**6** **Mahjong** 1 pm
9 **Tai Chi** 9:30 am **Strong Seniors** 11:30 am **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am	**10** **Chair Yoga** 10 am **Tech Drop-in** 11 am-2 pm **Mahjong** 1 pm **Gentle Yoga** 3:30 pm	**11** **Veterans Day Brunch** 10 am-12 pm *Registration required*	**12** **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am **Mixed Media Class** 1-3 PM	**13** **Mahjong** 1 pm
16 **Tai Chi** 9:30 am **Strong Seniors** 11:30 am **Oil Painting** 1-3 PM	**17** **Tech Drop-in** 11 am-2 pm **Mahjong** 1 pm	**18** **Decorative Food Art Class** 10 am	**19** **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am **Mixed Media Class** 1-3 PM	**20** **Mahjong** 1 pm
23 **Tai Chi** 9:30 am **Strong Seniors** 11:30 am **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am **Oil Painting** 1-3 PM	**24** **Chair Yoga** 10 am **Tech Drop-in** 11 am-2 pm **Mahjong** 1 pm **Gentle Yoga** 3:30 pm **Expressive Arts** 5:30-7 pm	**25** **Fiber friends** 7 pm	**26** **Thanksgiving Day** COA closed	**27** **Mahjong** 1 pm
30 **Tai Chi** 9:30 am **Strong Seniors** 11:30 am **Grab 'N Go** 11:30 am **Oil Painting** 1-3 PM				

November Exercise Programs

Tai Chi - Mondays 9:30 - 11 am. Tai Chi for stability, balance, and calm focus. Warm-ups followed by instruction in Yang Style long form. All are welcome. **New participants, please contact instructor Marty Phinney in advance for brief orientation:** 413-268-3228 or phinneypottery@gmail.com. *Suggested donation $5.00*

Strong Seniors: Mondays 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Weight training for all abilities to strengthen and condition. *Suggested donation $5.00*

Chair Yoga - Tuesdays 10-11 am. A modified version of traditional yoga, designed to be practiced while sitting on a chair or using the chair for support during standing poses. This is an ideal exercise for seniors, particularly those with limited mobility, balance issues, or health conditions that render traditional yoga poses challenging. The practice includes gentle stretching, strengthening exercises, and focused breathing. We keep it simple and fun, always time to share some laughs. *Suggested donation $5.00*

Gentle Yoga: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 pm. Please join instructor Michelle Ryan for this series. Bring your own mat or props you might need. (The COA has some available for use). *Suggested donation $5.00*

Please remember to register each month for Programs and Classes!

Register online at
https://www.townofchesterfieldma.com/council-aging

OR

By phone or email at
413-296-4007 or coa@townofchesterfieldma.com

November Special Programs

Oil Painting Classes - Mondays, 1-3 PM through November

It's not too late to join us at the COA for this ongoing series led by instructor Fran Kidder! Classes will be held on Monday 11/16, 11/23, and 11/30 from 1-3 PM. Students are asked to provide their own paints, brushes, and canvas, if able. (Please contact the COA if you would like assistance acquiring supplies.) All skill levels welcome! *Suggested donation $10/class*

Mixed Media Art Class - Thursdays, 1-3 PM starting November 5th

Instructor Maureen Senn-McNally is back to teach a class on collage, mixed media, and print-making! Classes will be held every Thursday, 1-3 PM from November 5th through January 14th excluding holidays. Students are asked to provide their own supplies, if able. A supply list will be sent to registrants prior to the first class. (Please contact the COA if you would like assistance acquiring supplies.) All skill levels welcome! *Suggested donation $10/class*

Decorative Food Art Class - Wednesday, November 18th, 10-11 AM

Want to spruce up your holiday plates? Join us for this hands-on three-part series and learn to craft everything from a tomato rose to an apple swan! Trained chef John Kislo will provide instruction. Participants are asked to bring their own paring knife and small cutting board. (Please contact the COA if you would like help acquiring supplies.) Classes two and three will take place on Dec. 2nd and Dec. 16th at 10 AM. Manual dexterity and comfort using a small paring knife are required for this class. *Suggested donation $5*

Expressive Arts Group - Tuesday, November 24th, 5:30-7 PM

This monthly group for grieving adults offers a safe space to make a visual response to prompts using collage. There are no limits on how, when, or where the person passed away. For some, the word "art" can be scary, but don't worry. Please know that this group isn't about what you make, instead it's about y-o-u-r individual and unique process. This group is led by Shelly Lenn, Cooley Dickinson Hospice Bereavement Coordinator. **Email slenn@mgb.org to register.**

More November Programs!

Fiber Friends - Wednesday, November 25th, 7 PM

Calling all fiber craft enthusiasts! Do you knit, crochet, needle point, embroider, cross-stitch, tat, rug hook, spin, weave, quilt, sew, felt, macrame? Join us for opportunities to learn from each other and build friendships. All levels of experience are welcome! Bring your current WIP (work in progress), or start something new! Last Wednesday of the month at the COA.

Questions? Email Jeane Anastas at jwa1@nyu.edu or Trish Colson-Montgomery at trishcolson@gmail.com.

Northern Hilltowns Consortium

Chesterfield is a member of the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging. The consortium is a collaborative that includes the town Councils on Aging of Williamsburg, Westhampton, Chesterfield, Worthington, Cummington and Plainfield. **Residents of the Hilltowns are welcome to attend events at any of the Consortium COAs.** For more information, including a calendar of events, check out the website!

www.northernhilltownscoas.org

A Note on Suggested Donations

You may notice that most of our programs request a suggested donation of $3-10, depending on the class or event. These donations help us offset the costs of our programs and we are so grateful for them! State and federal funding for elder services have been reduced in recent years so your donations are a valuable source of consistent financial support. That said, please know that if donating would cause you financial hardship, you are still welcome and encouraged to attend our programming. These are hard times for many people, and we never want anyone to miss out on a class or event due to lack of funds. Please feel free to call, email, or drop by my office with any questions or concerns.

Resources

Foot Nurse

The COA offers a foot clinic with Piper Sagan, RN every other month. **The next clinic will be on Monday, November 16th with appointments available from 9 AM-12 PM.** The cost is $50 for Chesterfield residents and $60 for non-residents.

Contact the COA for an appointment: 413-296-4007 or coa@townofchesterfieldma.com

Caregiver Support

The Huntington Council on Aging offers information and support services for caregivers. **A weekly support group is held on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. at Stanton Hall** as part of the Hilltown Memory Cafe.

For more information please contact Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-5283 or caregiveroutreach@huntingtonma.us

This program is made possible in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act

Hampshire Elder Law Program (HELP)

This program by the Hampshire County Bar Association provides civil legal services at no cost to low-income seniors, 60 years of age and older. Services include bankruptcy, consumer protection, guardianship, health care proxies, powers of attorney, probate of estates, and wills.

For more information, contact the Hampshire County Bar Association at (413) 586- 8729 or hcba@crocker.com

SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)

The SHINE Program provides free health insurance information, counseling, and assistance to people who are eligible for Medicare.

For more information contact Caroline Solan at Highland Valley Elder Services: 413-586-2000 ext. 999 (option 2) or csolan@lifepathma.org

Resources, cont.

Hilltown Elder Network (HEN) Program

This program provides eligible seniors with in-home services, such as home chores or transportation assistance. Seniors must be at least 62 years old, meet household income criteria, and be ineligible for other forms of assistance.

For more information, please contact Helen Pelletier at 413-238-4418.

TRIAD Medical Equipment

This program provides used medical equipment pick-up and delivery free of charge to seniors in Chesterfield. Interested in learning more? Visit the Hampshire County Sheriff's Official website at www.hampshiresheriffs.com/ or call 413-582-7787.

Hilltown Easy Ride Van

This program serves seniors over 60 residing in Chesterfield and other hilltowns. Services include regularly scheduled shopping trips to Northampton and rides to medical appointments. **Interested riders must be pre-approved for eligibility.**

For more information or to apply visit https://www.hilltowncdc.org/transportation or call 413-296-4232.

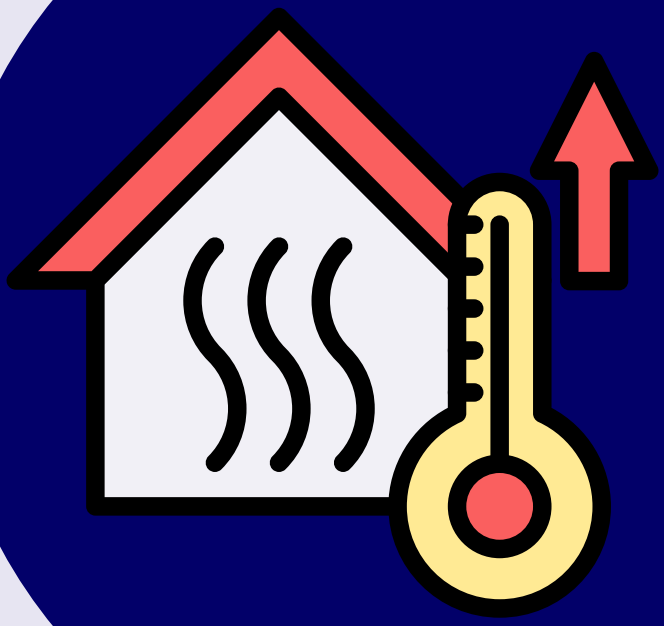
NEW COA Medical Supply Closet

The COA has a small medical supply closet thanks to generous donations from community members. Please contact us if you would like to use any of these items. Current inventory includes:

- Wheelchair
- Single point cane
- Front-wheeled folding walker
- XL Adult pull-up diapers
- Absorbent bed pads
- Medical gloves
- Electronic hearing aid cleaner

Need help paying for heat this winter?

The MA Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) may be able to help.



What is HEAP?

HEAP is a fuel assistance program that can help you pay your winter heating bills.

Who is eligible?

Eligibility is based on several factors, including household size and income. Homeowners and renters, including households whose cost of heat is included in rent, can apply. See back of flyer for program income limits.

How can I apply?

You can apply Oct. 1st through April 30th on the MA HEAP website, www.toapply.org/MassHEAP *OR* through our local agency, Community Action Pioneer Valley, over the phone (413-774-2310), online (www.toapply.org/CA), or in person (see locations on back of flyer).

Income Limits for HEAP*

Household Size	Maximum Income
1	$53,585
2	$70,073
3	$86,561
4	$103,049
5	$119,536
6	$136,024
7	$139,116
8	$142, 207

*Not all income counts toward eligibility, so please confirm your actual eligibility with your local agency.

CAPV Hours & Locations

Greenfield Office:
377 Main St, Greenfield, MA

Open Monday-Friday 8:30AM-4:30PM
(closed 12:00PM-12:30PM)

Northampton Office:
155 Pleasant St, Northampton, MA

Open Tuesday-Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM
(closed 12:00PM-12:30PM)

GOOD NEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2026

by Deb Hollingworth

Here we are in November, the middle of Open Enrollment for Medicare plans. At the risk of beating a dead horse (because you've probably heard enough about Open Enrollment) here's a review of your options, and reasons you might want to check them out.

My first question is: "What coverage do you have now?" My next question is "How is that working for you?"

If you're happy with your current coverage, and you haven't received any letters from your insurance provider saying there would be changes, you can sit tight this year.

If you want to check to see if there will be changes to your RX co-pays next year, you can go online at Medicare.gov or speak with a SHINE counselor. Use the online Plan Finder to check out prices for 2027. The Plan Finder looks at RX co-pays for both Advantage plans as well as stand alone Medicare D plans. You can also see Plan details for Advantage Plan co-pays for medical services.

There are a number of reasons why this might be important. It could be a change in medical conditions, a new diagnosis, or a new prescription that you need to take. And this year, those of you who received a letter from BlueCross about changes in their HMO and PPO plans should look at options to change coverage.

Options during Open Enrollment:

1. You can dis-enroll in your Advantage plan by enrolling in a medicare D plan. (This will automatically end your Advantage plan as of January 1st when your D plan becomes effective)
2. You can enroll in a different Advantage plan
3. You can go back to original Medicare when you enroll in a D plan.
4. If you go back to original Medicare with a stand alone D plan, you can pick up a Supplement plan (like Medex) anytime during the year.

Remember that these changes we make now during Open Enrollment, take effect January 1st 2027.

Questions?

- Call Highland Valley 586-2000 to make an in-person appointment with Caroline Solan, our SHINE counselor for the Hilltowns.
- Phone Lifepath in Greenfield 413-773-5555. Lifepath is our Regional SHINE office.
- Call the Medicare help line 800-633-4227....please excuse the typo in last month's newsletter!
- For help with BlueCross changes, you might start with the customer service number on the back of your card.
- Call your senior center.

On the Road Again...



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat BEFORE mailing payments.

For more info call **413-296-4291**

Email: **francine.frenier@gmail.com**

Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

TRIPS IN 2027

Multi Day Trip April 25th-May 1st: **Savannah, Jekyll Island & Beaufort, SC.** Seven days, six nights. Visit Savannah, "The Belle of Georgia," Magnificent Beaufort, SC "The queen of the Carolina Sea Islands," and Port Royal Sound Maritime Museum and more. Price $987 per person, double occupancy. A $25 discount is given if paid in full by January 25, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above *after the first of the year.*

Multi Day Trip October 17- 23: **Chicago, 7 days, 6 nights.** The partial itinerary includes a tour of Chicago, a skyline cruise on Lake Michigan, a visit to a historic Navy Pier and museums. Includes hotels, breakfasts and 4 dinners. Price $946 per person, double occupancy. A $25 discount is given if paid in full by July 17, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

Multi Day Trip July 22-25: ** (exact dates to be determined) **3-days/2 nights** trip to Baltimore to see the Red Sox play two games against the Baltimore Orioles along with some sightseeing.

Day Trip December TBD **Christmastime at the Reagle Theater** in Waltham, Ma. In the planning stages.

TECH CONNECT SUCCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS — TECH HELP FOR NOVEMBER

TechConnect will be offering Q&A style classes this fall on the second Tuesday of the month at the Chesterfield COA. Bring your questions and contributions to our roundtable discussion. No registration necessary. Hosted by Lizzy Canady from 1-2 PM on the following dates:

- 11/10/2026: Medical Portals, taught by Peg Whalen
- 12/8/2026: Artificial Intelligence: Trends & Topics

Tech Support home visits are available by appointment. Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit.

We have free refurbished laptops while supplies last. Please call 413-296-5080 and leave us a message if you are interested. If you have a device from us and are not using it, please call our number to arrange a return so someone else can use it.

Drop-in Centers *(no appointment needed)*
Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd. Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11 AM-2 PM

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12-2 PM, 3rd Thursday, 11/19

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2-4 PM, 4th Thursday

Williamsburg: Meekins Library Drop-In tech support (call library for latest information)
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10 AM-12 PM, 2nd Tuesday, 11/10

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri, eadaneri@gmail.com.

NOM NORTHAMPTON OPEN MEDIA

Losing Hilltown Landlines by Peg Whalen

Early in September, current Verizon phone and DSL customers received a six-page letter. Many hilltown customers found it confusing and, understandably, feel concerned. I want to explain why Verizon is making this change, clarify what the letter actually says, and answer some common questions.

WHY IS THIS CHANGE HAPPENING?
What drives this change? Increasing costs and decreasing profits. Verizon has to make costly repairs and replace copper wires because their coverings age, stretch, crack, and break. Copper theft is increasing. Maintaining outdated wires for fewer households doesn't make financial sense.

WHAT DOES THE LETTER REALLY SAY?
Customers first see the words "What's Changing and When" and the date "November 30, 2026." What will actually happen to you on November 30, 2026? Nothing! That date simply marks the day Verizon told the FCC it wants to discontinue service. It is simply Verizon's request, not a final decision. Verizon cannot disconnect your service without required approval. The FCC has not decided the matter as of October 15th. A September 29th document indicates the FCC needs more time to review their request and won't automatically approve it. I believe you can count on the change happening eventually. Will it happen on November 30, 2026? NO!

The letter's 3rd page contains a notice because the FCC required Verizon to include it. The notice explains how you can share your opinion. The FCC will post its public notice on its website, www.fcc.gov. As of mid-October, that notice has not appeared. If you or your town officials submit comments to the FCC, identify the proceeding using WC Docket No. 26-252. .
My summary of the rest of the letter? "You should know there are plenty of options for getting phone service, and each comes with its own pitfalls."

Technical jargon may also confuse you. Here is what some of it means:

- "Legacy" are older "obsolete" equipment, including some landline-connected home alarms and personal emergency buttons,
- "Fiber" means fiber-optic wires. These wires have hair thin strands of glass that transmit sound/info using light, hence the term optic.
- "FiOS™" is Verizon's trademarked name for its fiber-optic service.
- "Mobile wireless voice options" are wireless calling services, either cell phones, satellite phones, WIFI calling or VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). If you own a flip phone, a flat phone that doesn't fold, cell phone, smartphone, iPhone, Android or Pixel, you already have a mobile wireless voice option.

Losing Hilltown Landlines, cont.

COMMON QUESTIONS
How do I get help? Contact your Council on Aging (COA), TechConnect, 296-5080, MA Department of Telecommunications, 800-392-6066, Whip City Fiber, 413-485-1251, Wired West, 833-991-9378 or other service.

What happens to medical devices? Some older medical monitors connect to landlines. Newer medical devices can use the same technology as cell phones. Tell your doctor about the upcoming change. Your doctor can help you find a replacement that communicates through cellular networks.

Do I have to get internet service? Or a cell phone? Maybe. If you already have broadband, Wi-Fi, a funny-looking box with flashing lights, a hotspot, or an internet bill from Whip City Fiber or Wired West, you are already paying for internet service. Adding phone service may be simple. If you don't have internet service, you could get it and use it only for your phone, or you could choose a basic cell phone instead.

Are any options exactly like a landline during a power outage? Nope! Today's alternatives all require electricity, either from an outlet or a battery. However, you can buy battery backups that provide temporary power when the electricity goes out. Think of them as tiny generators. Options include an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), a device with a built-in battery, or a portable power station. You can also charge phones and laptops from a car battery using an inexpensive adapter that plugs into the vehicle's cigarette-lighter-style outlet. And during extended power outages, town emergency plans include places where residents can charge their devices.

How do I pick an option? This doesn't have to be expensive. Help is available if you want to find the lowest-cost option. TechConnect staff can help you understand the choices and decide which one best meets your needs.

Do I have a choice? No. Is it fair? Maybe not. Is there help? Yes! Plenty of help is available with choosing, obtaining, and learning to use your new service.