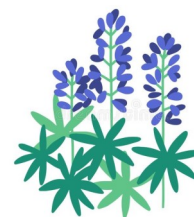


Cummington Council on Aging

June 2025 Newsletter



Cummington Council on Aging
PO Box 95, 33 Main St.
Cummington, MA 01026

Coordinator: Chrisoula Roumeliotis
COA Office Phone: 413-634-2262, menu option 8
COA Email: croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

Potluck Picnic at Pettingill Park

Wednesday, June 25th from Noon to 1:30pm

Our annual potluck picnic at the pavilion at Pettingill Park (Main Street, Cummington) will be on Wednesday, June 25th, Noon-1:30. The COA will provide chicken, meatballs, baked beans, pasta salad, potato salad, fruit salad, chips, and beverages. Please bring a dessert or side dish to share. Music by One Part Luck. HOPE nurse from the health center will be available for blood pressure readings. Join us! *Paid for in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services.*



June 4th- Elder Law Presentation in Goshen

Attorney Sarah Dolven from Sharp, Heyman, Dolven & Elkins, LLP, will be at the **Goshen Town Hall** on Wednesday, June 4th from **4-5 p.m.** She will be presenting on Essential Documents (such as wills, powers of attorney and health care proxies) and the Realities of Protecting our Assets. There will be time for questions. Refreshments will be provided. **Cummington residents are welcome to attend.** *Sponsored by the Massachusetts Bar Association with assistance from the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.*

Healthy Bones & Balance exercise class – update to schedule. Please note that, for the summer, the Tuesday afternoon and Friday morning exercise classes are on a break. We will let you know when they resume in the fall. The Monday and Thursday morning classes will continue as usual.

Brown Bag: Food For Elders

The Brown Bag program (run by the Food Bank of Western Mass.) provides a free bag of groceries to eligible seniors once a month. To be eligible, you must be over 55 and have a gross monthly income

below \$2,608 for a household of one and below \$3,525 for a household of two. If you already receive SSI, SNAP, Medicaid, Fuel Assistance, or Veteran's Aid and are at least 55 years old, you likely qualify; if you receive SSDI for a documented disability and are under 55, you likely qualify. Please call the COA at 634-2262, option 8, if you are interested.

Five Gallon Sand Buckets

Did you receive a bucket of sand from the Fire Department, and have you used all of the sand? If so, please return the empty buckets to the Community House (go in the side entrance and look for the sign). Also, we will collect any 5-gallon buckets (preferably with covers) that you do not need and that are in good condition for future sand deliveries. We will even take empty kitty litter buckets, as long as they are large, in good condition and have their covers. If you have any questions or need help getting your bucket(s) to us, give us a call at 634-2262, option 8.

Ongoing Programs, Activities & Resources

For more information on any of these programs, activities and resources, contact the COA at croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov or 634-2262. Unless otherwise indicated, these programs take place in the dining room area of the Community House.

Weekly Grab and Go Hot Meal– every Tuesday

Leave your name and phone number with the COA to reserve your meal. Suggested donation of \$4 per meal goes to HVES.

Healthy Bones and Balance– Mondays, and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Coffee Hour

Mondays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Needlework Group

Thursdays, 1-4pm.

Resource cart

Everything on the cart is free; available whenever the Community House is open

Exercise Equipment

Pedal exercisers and sets of hand weights (1, 3 and 5 pounds) are available for you to borrow.

Drop in Tech support

Second Wednesday of every month, 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact TechConnect at **413-296-5080**. No appointment needed.

Shine counselor

(Medicare related insurance issues)

Caroline Solan can be reached at **413-586-2000** or **csolan@lifepathma.org**

MassHealth/Medicaid

Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center: **bthomas@hchcweb.org** or **413-238-5511**.

Connector program

(services beyond health insurance)

Jennifer O'Connell at **413-296-4536 ext. 110** or **communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

Foot Clinic

The next foot clinic will be on **Tuesday, July 1st** with Piper Sagan at the Community House. The cost is \$40 for Cummington residents and \$50 for non-residents. Contact the COA to make an appointment.

Living Fully, Aging Gracefully

The next Zoom meeting for this group is **Tuesday, June 10th**. For more information on this program, contact **annieb@crocker.com** or **fandellaf@gmail.com** or call Lucy at **634-5576**.

Medical Equipment

Walkers, crutches, shower seats and tub transfer seats, toilet seat risers, and more are available for your use. We also accept donations of clean equipment in good condition; please reach out if you have something to donate.

Easy Ride Van & Driver Pool

The Hilltown Easy Ride van and the Driver Pool program provide rides for medical appointments, medical errands and shopping to Northampton and Pittsfield. Contact Ed Pelletier of the Hilltown CDC Transportation program at **296-4232** for more information and to arrange a ride.



Happy Birthday in June!

Helen Griffith, Judith Hinton, Pamela Howland, Nancy Jamison, Judith Jenkins, Douglas Bailey, Lawrence Pasko, Daniel Smith, Rosemary Seifert-Graf, Maureen Tumenas, Lisa Harvey, Carolyn Urekew, Thomas Tear, Robin Robbins, George Fenton, Jeffrey Vanasse, Stefanie Wondriska-Clark, Lisa Edson, Jeffrey Guiel, Michael Witt, Elise Scheidel, Scott Brown, Michael Cronin, Robert Douyard, Steven Paul, Donna Vanasse



The Cummington Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programs for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Cummington COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please make out your check to Cummington Council of Aging and mail to Cummington COA, PO Box 95 Cummington, MA 01026.)

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____



Seniors Aware of Fire Education

As you plan your summer vacation, here are some things to think about hotel/motel fire safety. First of all, select a hotel or motel that has a smoke detector and a sprinkler system in the room. Here are some things to think about or do after you have checked in:

Senior 
SAFE

- Check out TWO ways out of the hallway. The elevator is NOT one of them.
- Count the number of doors to the nearest exit and the number of doors to the other exit.
- If you are deaf, ask for a Hearing Impaired Kit or a room with a strobe fire alarm
- Keep your room key/card, your eyeglasses, your wallet and a flash light on the night table. Take them with you when the fire alarm sounds.
- Feel the door with the back of your hand. If it is really hot, do not open it.
- If it is cool, open it a little. If smoke, heat and flames rush in, close the door.
- If the hallway is clear or just has smoke in it, get low and go, counting the doors to the best exit.
- If you cannot reach an exit, return to your room.

If you are stuck in your room:

- Put wet towels around the door to discourage smoke and heat from getting in the room
- If possible, open the window and hang a sheet or towel out of it to let the firefighters know you are there.
- Do NOT jump out the window.
- Cover your face with a wet cloth and stay low by the window.
- Call 911 and let them know which room you are trapped in.

I hope you do not have to do any of this, but do think about it as you move into your hotel/motel. Have a SAFE vacation!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the MA Dept. of Fire Services.

Joy oh Joy – two more new scams?

Well, new to me. Sorry to pass these on, but forewarned is forearmed, right?

First one: I got an email from someone I hadn't corresponded with or seen for at least three years. She asked if I used Amazon and I wrote back yes. She then asked if I could help her out. She had a good friend with a birthday and wanted to get her an Amazon gift card today but there was a problem with her credit card. Could I order the gift card and pay for it, she would repay me when things with the bank were straightened out. Umm, no way would have been my answer if I had written back.

One of the cues on this was the perceived urgency – card needed **TODAY!** Also, I liked the person presumably sending the email so there was a personal connection designed to make me feel like I should help her out.

Second one: this might not be a scam but it has Buyer Beware all over it. A friend was online for help with a computer-related accessory and signed into the chat to get technical assistance. She was asked to pay a dollar deposit – a fully refundable dollar deposit – so she put in her debit card number. Things started feeling wonky so she did NOT give her security ID and quit the site. The phone rang and it was her bank calling about three questionable charges just attempted of \$55 each.

She had gotten hooked up with JustAnswer.com, a valid service that contracts to provide technical advice. There is a \$5 or \$1 dollar fee to start up, then a monthly fee of \$55. Some who have tried to quit the service have found that difficult. If you are doing a technical chat, it is free unless they give you the fine print. Hence, Buyer Beware.

Do stay safe,
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com
413-268-2228



Tech. Help and Training for June



GREAT NEWS!

TechConnect will continue providing services through a partnership with Northampton Open Media. Although we have fewer trainings going forward, drop-ins and tech support will continue. Please take advantage of ongoing service.

DELIVERING NOW AND ACCEPTING NEW REQUESTS: Internet Hotspots

It's not too late if you need affordable internet access! We have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access the internet, and they work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us by phone or email. Call **413-296-5080** or email **coatechdevices@gmail.com**.

Tech Support Available by appointment

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in, or by appointment: **coaTechHelp@gmail.com**, phone or text msg **413-296-5080** or check the website, **www.northernhilltownscoas.org**, for locations and time. You can attend drop-in at all locations, except Nash Hill.

Devices for you: PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks, iPads and Android tablets

There is still time to join the Digital World while supplies last. We have ordered more PC laptops/ computers, refurbished Chromebooks, iPads and Android tablets. If you need or are waiting for a device to connect to the internet, have something so old it is not working effectively, or need a different type of device please contact us. Email **coatechdevices@gmail.com**, leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, **www.northernhilltownscoas.org**

Drop in Centers: All are Welcome at Any Location! (no appointment needed)

- Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd. Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00 Two Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (6/13 and 6/27)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (6/11)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St. Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (6/19)

- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (6/19)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd. Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (6/26)
- Williamsburg Meekins Library Drop-In tech support 2nd Tuesday 6/10 from 10:30-12:30 Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support 2nd Tuesday 6/10 from 10 to Noon

Tech Training:

MUST pre-register for training no later than one week before the scheduled training date. All classes held at the Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd, lower level. To register, email **coaTechTrainer@gmail.com**, call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website **www.northernhilltownscoas.org**

Tech Workshops, June into August:

***Note Change To June Workshops** from mailing

*On Fridays twice a month from **10:30–11:30** at Chesterfield Community Center*

- 6/13 - Microsoft Excel
- 6/27 - Canva
- 7/18 - Windows Basics
- 8/1 - Google Drive

Computer Classes:

No ongoing computer classes are scheduled. An alternate online resource for basic training can be accessed, with help from us, at **www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/login/?location=17640-MG8N-techconnect**

We can set up your access to this website and help you begin to train yourself for very basic to more advanced beginner digital literacy.



On the Road Again... 2025 Trips



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **before** mailing any payments to determine availability: 413-296-4291, francine.frenier@gmail.com. Mailing address: 11 Stage Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096.

*Multi Day Trip June 22-26. **Montreal & Ottawa. Passports required.*** Visit the Biodome, Notre Dame Basilica, Montreal's Underground City, Parliament Hill, Cruise on the St. Lawrence River. Payment of \$1,052 due **NOW**. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **Wait-list only.**

*Day Trip July 16. **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.*** Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price \$140. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address **NOW. Call or email above to be added to the Wait List.**

*Day Trip August 3. Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox Woo Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies Lehigh Valley IronPigs*** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ballpark-fare buffet are included. Cost \$90.00 due **NOW**. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above. **Call or email above to be added to the Wait List.**

*Day Trip Sept. TBD. **The BIG E**,* an annual favorite, with free entertainment at The Court of Honor Stage.

*Day Trip Oct. 9. **A Chorus Line.*** Center orchestra seating for the 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Center Orchestra seating. Lunch at The Gelston House. Price \$177. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by August 1.

*Multi Day Trip October 12-18. **Biltmore Estate & Smoky Mountains, Asheville, NC.*** Seven days, six nights. Visit the Biltmore Estate, the St. Lawrence Basilica, historic Gatlinburg, TN & Asheville, NC. Guided tour of the Smoky Mountains National Park. Price \$1,099. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by July 18. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **A 2nd bus has a few open seats.**

*Day Trip Sunday, December 7. **A Holiday Event in Waltham, MA.*** Reagle Music Theater Players beloved Christmas extravaganza--100 performers, live orchestra, dancers, living nativity, and yuletide tunes. Pre-show lunch at The Chateau Restaurant. Price \$160 (approx.) Make a check payable to Landmark Tours, mail to address above by Oct. 13.

There are day trips to Bronx Zoo, Provincetown, Hampton Beach, Statue of Liberty, Salem, Mohegan Sun, Radio City Rockettes all leaving from Chicopee. If interested, call 413-296-4291 for more info.

Good News for June 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

Let's talk about ways to get help at home, and how to pay for it. If you are having difficulty bathing, dressing, doing housework, grocery shopping or getting to doctor appointments, there are services available.

Through Medicare: these services need a doctor's order and are delivered by Certified Medicare Home Care providers like VNAs. They are designed to be short term. Usually few weeks, and often after a medical event like a stroke, heart attack, or surgery for hip or knee replacement. Medicare funded services are NOT designed to be long term. They do not come on a daily basis. Typically the VNA might send a worker a couple times a week for 3-4 weeks.

State home care services through Highland Valley can provide help with personal care, housekeeping, grocery shopping or transportation. They are designed to be short term, or long term. A co-pay is charged. Co-pays are determined on a sliding scale, based on your income. State home care services are typically a couple hours, once or twice a week. Services are delivered by Certified home care providers like our local VNAs. Availability of workers can be an issue.

MassHealth is the only medical insurance that provides substantial hours of home care help, even on a daily basis. This help can come through a Certified Medicare home care provider like a VNA, but also can be someone you hire on your own. MassHealth will pay caregivers for the help they provide. Your caregiver can be anyone you are not married to. This is often the best option for someone who might need a number of hours of help on a daily basis. To access this benefit, you need to be eligible for MassHealth. Which means you must have limited income and assets. However, you can have as much as \$2,900/ month in income if you apply as a Frail elder waiver. Countable assets must be \$2,000 or less. But your primary residence, a car, term life insurance and pre-paid burial contracts are all uncountable assets. Excess assets can be transferred. This is where I run into the misconception that there is a 5 year look back for any asset transfer. This applies only to applicants seeking nursing home payment.

If your intent is to remain in your home, you can transfer assets, and then apply for MassHealth. You report the transfers so that MassHealth has a record of them in case, in the future, you might require nursing home care. If you want MassHealth to pay your nursing home bill, the 5 year look back applies. If you want MassHealth to pay for care at home, the 5 year look back does not apply.

MassHealth has a couple of programs that pay family caregivers. The most familiar, perhaps the most popular, is the PCA program (*cont. on next page*)

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(continued from previous page) where you hire your own worker....and MassHealth pays them.

Probably the best way to learn more about the MassHealth programs that pay caregivers is to speak to an Options Counselor at Highland Valley: 586-2000, or an Options Counselor at STAV-ROS 256-0473 or an Options Counselor at LifePath in Greenfield 773-5555.

They can help determine which MassHealth program might work best for your situation. Next month we can talk about the Adult Family Care program which is another way MassHealth can pay family for the help they provide.



Funded in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act

FITNESS FOR ALL WITH JOAN

These movement opportunities have been created by a certified fitness instructor/personal trainer with functionality and mobility for daily life in mind. Come move with us in person or via Zoom. Make the time to invest in your health, in YOU!



**Classes offered on Monday, Wednesday,
Thursday & Friday**



M, 9:30 AM W, TH 10:15 AM, FRI 9 & 10:15 AM



Monday: Zoom only
Wednesday: Goshen COA/Zoom
Thursday: Zoom only
Friday: Chesterfield COA/Zoom

*Donations are welcome to support these class offerings

COME JOIN US



413-537-8337



www.bybhealth.com

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