

# Goshen Council on Aging

## January 2026 Newsletter



Goshen Council on Aging  
40 Main Street  
Goshen, MA 01032

Kerry Normandin, Coordinator  
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**Quilt Winner Drawing:** Congratulations to Elizabeth Glackin of Leeds for winning the quilt raffle, a fundraiser for the Re-imagine Goshen Center Project. A total of \$1,110.00 was donated (222 tickets). The drawing occurred at the COA Christmas luncheon on December 9. The Open Space Committee wishes to thank everyone who donated to the quilt raffle.



would like to sign up to get these nutritious and delicious meals. We would love to increase participation in this program!

**Jan. 21 Crafts Group** from 2-4pm. We are changing it up! Crafts group this month will meet on the third Wednesday in the Library or Dining room (adjacent to the library). We will have hot drinks to share while creating.



Wreath-making  
was a lot of fun  
last month!

We are taking a break from our luncheon this month. See you in February!

**Jan. 7 Games Group** from 2-4pm. We are changing it up! Games Group will meet in the library on the first Wednesday of the month from 2-4pm. We have a variety of games to choose from and we will also have cards. We are planning to have a puzzle making contest in the near future and possibly lessons in Mahjong- let us know if you'd be interested in joining either or both!

**Jan. 15 -Technology Help** in the Library will be available from 12-2pm. You can ask questions regarding your computer, your phone, your tablet or any other technology related question and we will do our best to help. The Tech Connect page of this newsletter also has information about other technology related services.

**Jan. 20 and 27- HVES grab and go lunches-** HVES delivers meals to Goshen COA on the third and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Participants pick up their hot lunch at the Goshen Town Hall from 12:30-1:00pm. The lunch for Jan. 20 is a choice of Pasta Primavera or Lasagna Rolls and the choice for Jan. 27 is Chicken Corn Chowder or Chicken Broccoli Casserole. The meals also include milk, vegetables, and dessert. There is a suggested \$4 donation given to Highland Valley to offset the cost of the meal. Please call Kerry at 268-9354 if you

**The New Year is here!** The Goshen COA is always looking for new ideas- what would you like to learn? To create? To play? To do? Let us know and we will try to make it happen!

**Housing Rehab Help-** The HCDC has a program to help low to moderate income residents with funding for a variety of home repair projects, and they would like to help Goshen residents. There are informational flyers and applications in the Town Offices and you can also call Paula Bilodeau, Housing Rehab Program Manager at **(413) 296-4536** for detailed information and assistance.

**Exercise Classes with Joan-** Exercise classes continue with Joan Griswold on Wednesdays at 10:15 in the Goshen Town Hall. The focus is on functional movement which enhances physical strength and balance. Please wear supportive footwear and bring water and free weights if you have them. This class is also offered simultaneously on Zoom, if you prefer. Contact Joan at **joan@bybhealth.com**. Let's keep moving!

Our condolences to the friends and family of  
**William Kerby.**

**Thursday Movies at Cinemark-** Did you know that the Cinemark Theater at the Hampshire Mall has Senior Movie Day on Thursdays at 10am? You can see the chosen first run movie for only \$6.50. They sell tickets starting at 9:30am and have free coffee and cookies for snacks. There are movies on January 8, 15, 22, and 29. For more information call **413-587-4237** or email **321@cinemark.com**

### Reach Out to our Community Connector!

Do you need help finding resources in the area? Please reach out to our Community Connector, Jen O'Connell. Jen can help with many issues, including: obtaining benefits such as Fuel Assistance and SNAP, Social Security and finding resources so you can continue to live independently at home. She can also help you find programs for home repairs and transportation assistance. Jen can be reached at **413-296-4536 ext. 110** or **communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

**Caroline Solan** is our new SHINE Coordinator and can answer all your Medicare/Advantage plan health insurance questions.

She is available in person on Wednesdays at Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES, 320 Riverside Drive in Florence). You can also call HVES at **413-586-2000** and leave her a message or book an appointment. The most expedited way to reach her would be to send her an email at **csolan@lifepathma.org**.

If you have questions about MassHealth, contact **Buliah Mae Thomas** at the Hilltown Community Health Center: **413-238-5511** or **bthomas@hchcweb.org**



**Hilltown Easy Ride** is a Hilltown Community Development program that provides transportation for seniors in the Hilltowns to important medical appointments, to gain access to healthy food and to keep important self-care and social opportunities. There are also times when residents need rides to participate in COA offerings.

If you have interest in being a paid driver, the HCDC is hiring. This is an on-call position that pays \$20 per hour and reimburses for mileage. Please reach out to Ed, the Easy Ride Program Coordinator to express your interest. He can be reached at **(413) 296-4232** or by email: **ride@hilltowncdc.org**

**The Ashmere Project** recently purchased the former boyscout camp in Chesterfield. They provide residential summer retreats for a community of adults with and without disabilities. They run 100% on donations and are **looking for volunteers**. If this is of interest to you and you have a skill to share, you can find more information about ways to help at **ashmereproject.org**.

The next **Foot Care Clinic** at the Cummington Community House is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Please call Piper Sagan at **413-522-8432** to schedule an appointment (\$50) or a home visit (\$80/session).

### Happy Birthday in January!

Kris Celatka, Jon Patton, Sandra Greenwood, Donald Otis, Barbara LeBeau, Patricia Quintilian, Judith Walsh, Betsy Burnett, Kathleen Eastman, Phyllis Sarafin, Diane Bushee, Robin Langer, Martha Packard, Jane Karras, Angela Otis, John Rooney Jr., Donna Williams, Daniel Soto, Patricia Morey, John Bourgeois, Cecile Carr, Michael Mc Grath, Neil Wheeler Jr., Peter Provost, Renee Riley, Jeffrey Korostoff



### *The Goshen Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programming for local seniors!*

I would like to contribute to the Goshen COA. My contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is attached.

**(Please make out your check to "Goshen Council of Aging" and write "Program Support Fund" in the memo line; mail to Goshen COA, 40 Main St. Goshen, MA 01032.)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



# Regional News

## SENIORS AWARE OF FIRE EDUCATION

Winter is here and many people will be out in the cold and on or near very cold water. They will be skating, ice fishing, and driving snowmobiles on lakes, ponds and rivers. Accidents do happen. A lot of people experience cold emergencies resulting in HYPOTHERMIA — the extreme loss of body heat. If your core body temperature gets below 95 degrees, it can be fatal if untreated. Hypothermia caused by cold water draws away body heat 20-30 times faster than cold air. So here are a few things to help avoid or deal with cold related emergencies:



- Dress properly for cold weather activities. Wool insulates better when dry or wet than man-made fabrics.
- Keep your head covered. You lose your body heat 50% faster through your head.
- Keep your feet warm and dry by wearing snow boots and heavy-duty socks.
- If someone falls through ice or into cold water: Call 911 immediately. Many of our fire departments are trained for and have special equipment for cold water rescues. Our ambulances are equipped to care for hypothermic patients.
- Do NOT go out on the ice. You do not want to chance being a victim.
- REACH...THROW...or ROW. Try to REACH with a stick. Try to THROW a rope, life jacket or any thing that can float. Use an available boat to ROW to bring the victim to shore.
- Send someone to the nearest access point to guide emergency responders to the victim. We do have a multitude of lakes, ponds and rivers in our hilltowns. Moving water can change the thickness of ice without you seeing it. The only really safe place to skate is at a skating rink.

Be SAFE out on the cold water!

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

## "YOU MAY NOT PASS"...

... is what we want to say to all who are trying to mess us up and steal our identity or hard-earned cash. With our increased dependence on computers of all sizes and types, we have learned that we need a good password system. Unfortunately, the common choice many are still using as a password is "12345678", or "Password", or a favorite pet's name after said pet has become famous on our social media.

So what are the current guidelines to tell a thief "Do Not Pass Go?"

1. Use twelve or more characters, including mixes of upper and lower case, numbers, and symbols. An alternative is to use even more characters, perhaps 4 words linked together with a hyphen, e.g., spoon-picnic-ants-cooler. I like this pattern with words that I can remember. When the site asks you for a mix, just add something in the middle.
2. Strategically place special characters or symbols to avoid patterns rather than grouping them at the end. Using "Password!@#" still doesn't cut it.
3. Use different passwords on each of your online accounts and don't repeat a password. A pain, you say? Yes, yes it is. Keep reading, though.
4. Add another layer of protection, if available, such as getting a text with a security number, or answering security questions. Use multi-factor authentication any time it is offered.
5. Keep software updates current, including any antivirus protection service you have.

To reduce password pain, here are two suggestions. One, consider a password sentence. For example, "I will tell you that my Totally Favorite candy is \*hocolate-\*overed cashews" would be written as "lwtytmTFcic-cc". Yes, that is something like what I might use.

(cont.)

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Second, there are online “safes” that will hold passwords for you. You make passwords up just once and put them in the safe. You’ll need one good password to access all of these. Over the next month or two, I am going to try some. If any of you are using a safe, please tell me which one and how you like it.

As always, stay safe!

Jean O’Neil

TRIAD Committee member

[jeanoneilmass@gmail.com](mailto:jeanoneilmass@gmail.com); 413-268-2228

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## Your Community Connector

Jennifer O’Connell is working for the Hilltown COAs as the Community Connector. She is available to help Hilltown residents that are experiencing challenges, hardship and/or need assistance. Jennifer can help you meet a variety of your needs to make life easier.

Some examples are:

- Obtaining benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security, etc.
- Getting help so you can continue living independently at home
- Arranging for repairs
- Connecting to local groups / activities to prevent isolation and have fun with other community members
- Transportation assistance
- Helping when you are unsure of what you need or where to turn

Any and all inquiries are welcome. Call Jennifer at **413-296-4536 ext.110** or email **[communityconnectjo@gmail.com](mailto:communityconnectjo@gmail.com)**

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## GOOD NEWS FOR JANUARY 2026

**By Deb Hollingworth**

At the risk of repeating myself, I’m going to talk about how to handle buyer’s remorse.... again.

Many of you may have made health insurance decisions during Open Enrollment to change your coverage. Some of you may have made changes because you got a “termination letter” saying your BlueCross PPO Advantage plan ended December 31st 2025, or perhaps your Medicare Advantage plan’s network of providers “shrank” as was the case with United Health Care, and your doctors are no longer in network for United Health Care.

And many of us may have changed our Rx coverage, and signed up for a different Medicare D plan for next year.

Whatever the reason, you may have changed your health insurance coverage. So the question is: what if it turns out you don’t like your new plan? Are you stuck with your new choice?

1. The answer is “No, you’re not stuck if you have a Medicare Advantage plan because Congress ‘adjusted’ the regulations governing Advantage plans and we now have from January 1st to March 31st to bail out of our Medicare Advantage plans and choose another, or revert to “original Medicare” and pick a Medicare D plan.”

2. The answer is “No, you’re not stuck if you have been approved for the Medicare Savings Plan which automatically gave you Extra Help which subsidizes your Rx costs.” (Remember the purple letter from social security?) Extra Help lets you change your Medicare D plan quarterly, so you can choose another D plan that you think might work better for you.

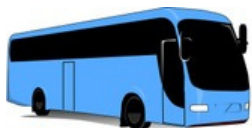
3. The answer is “No, you’re not stuck with your new plan if an error was made during your Open Enrollment sign up.” That requires help from Medicare to confirm but it may be possible to switch plans if an error during sign up occurred.

If you have questions you can call your senior center to see if a SHINE appointment is needed. Sometimes a simple call to your health insurer provider can “fix” a problem. Always start by first calling the 800 number on the back of your card.



## On the Road Again...

### TRIPS IN 2026



**Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat BEFORE mailing payments.**

For more info call 413-296-4291

Email: [francine.frenier@gmail.com](mailto:francine.frenier@gmail.com)

**Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096**

**Multi Day Trip April 17-21, Washington DC** 5 days, 4 nights Admission to the George Washington Mount Vernon Estate, Garden & Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution, Capitol Building, World War II Memorial and more. Price \$790. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by January 26, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **No money is due until early January.**

**Day Trip May 3, 2026, Sunday A Grand Night for Singing** at the Seven Angels Theater in Waterbury, CT. Pre-show lunch at San Marino's Restaurant. Price \$132. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March 6, 2026

**Day Trip June 17, 2026 Isle of Shoals Cruise and Lobster Lunch** Enjoy at 2.5-hour cruise from Portsmouth, NH to the Isles of Shoals. Before the cruise, enjoy lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$160. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

**Day Trip June TBD, Million Dollar Quartet play.** In the planning stages. Theater is in New London, NH. Includes luncheon. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

**Day Trip July 1st FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.** Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch of gourmet sandwiches on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt & the first Presidential Library. Price \$140. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May 6, 2026. Wait list only.

**Day Trip August and September Encore Casino and Big E.**

**Multi Day Trip September 27- October 3, Mackinac Island,** the quaint Michigan island where no vehicles are allowed. Trip is for 7 days, 6 nights. Tour the island by horse & carriage, cruise the Soo Locks, visit Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, Frankenmuth Bavarian Village and much more, not to mention the plentiful fudge shops. Price \$959. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by June 27, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **No money is due until next year. This trip has quickly filled up. Please email to be added to the wait list.**

## Hilltown CDC Announces Availability of Housing Rehabilitation Funds and Begins Work on FY26 Community Development Block Grant Application

Hilltown Community Development Corporation (Hilltown CDC), on behalf of the Town of Chesterfield, is moving forward with the expenditure of existing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds while also preparing a new FY26 grant application to bring additional resources into the region.

At this time, **income-eligible single-family homeowners** in Chesterfield may apply for assistance through the Housing Rehabilitation Program. Eligible rehabilitation work includes septic system and well replacement, heating system replacement, lead paint remediation, siding, windows, doors, insulation, roof, and the correction of state building and sanitary code violations.

In addition to Chesterfield's available funds, CDBG awards from fiscal years **FY24 and FY25** provide housing rehabilitation funding for homeowners in **Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Peru, Savoy, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.**

Hilltown CDC has also been contracted to prepare the **FY26 Chesterfield CDBG application**, which will include continued Housing Rehabilitation funding. As part of this process, the organization is seeking community input on additional **social service programming** that could benefit residents of the communities listed above.

Community members, local partners, and service providers are invited to share ideas or request more information by contacting:

**Faith Williams, Associate Director,  
Hilltown CDC**

Phone: 413-296-4536 ext. 123

Email: [faithw@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:faithw@hilltowncdc.org)

## TECHNOLOGY HELP FOR JANUARY



**Call 413-296-5080 for any of the TechConnect services. Leave a message and we will return your call.**

**Tech Support home visits are available by appt.**

We can visit your home to troubleshoot home-based tech issues (like printers, networks, desktops, TVs).

**Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops, desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads**

If you need a device to connect to the internet or have something so old it is not working effectively, please contact us. We have received a new shipment and have plenty of inventory. Leave a message at 413-296-5080, or use the online request form on our website, [www.northernhilltownscoas.org](http://www.northernhilltownscoas.org)

**Drop-in Centers** (no appointment needed)  
Chesterfield

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 1/15

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 1/22

Williamsburg

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday, 1/8

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 1/8

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri [eadaneri@gmail.com](mailto:eadaneri@gmail.com).

**NOTE:** *Plainfield and Cummington Drop-in Centers have been discontinued due to low demand. Residents of these towns should call for an appointment or use the Chesterfield site.*

**Internet Hotspots**

If you have been given a hotspot from the project, your data plan will be expiring in either December or February. The grant can no longer fund the plan. You can keep the device but you must purchase a SIM card for \$30/month from Mint Mobile or a carrier of your choice. Call us with any questions you have.

**GOSHEN COUNCIL ON AGING  
TOWN OF GOSHEN  
40 MAIN STREET  
GOSHEN, MA 01032**

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# SCAM ALERT!



**Looking for bargains online? Protect yourself  
from online shopping scams.**

- **Research the seller.** Search online for the name followed by "complaint" or "scam."
- **Pay by credit card** so you can file a dispute if there's a problem with your purchase.
- **Keep records.** Save your receipt and shipping information in case something goes wrong.
- **Watch out** for ads with brand-name products at unusually low prices. It could be a scam.

*If you have a  
consumer problem  
or question,  
contact the  
Northwestern  
District  
Attorney's  
Consumer  
Protection Unit*

**Greenfield  
(413) 774-3186  
Northampton  
(413) 586-9225**

**Working in cooperation  
with the Office of the MA  
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