

Plainfield Council on Aging

May 2020 Newsletter



Plainfield Council on Aging
Town Offices, 304 Main St.
Plainfield, MA 01070

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May Notes and Tips during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Plainfield Mutual Support Network

Here in the town of Plainfield, a group of us have virtually gotten together and formed the Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) in coordination with the Plainfield Police Department, Board of Health and the Council on Aging. The purpose of our network is to assist and aid our town folk with any need that might arise during this time of social distancing and quarantine requirements because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This group consists of volunteers willing to help with grocery shopping, pharmacy needs, and reaching out to individuals among other things. We have contacted every person in town via phone calls to survey their needs and/or to volunteer their services.

Please note that individuals over 70 and others with certain health conditions are at increased risk of complications if they contract the COVID-19 virus. The greatest service that they can perform for our community is to stay home. They can in turn volunteer to place neighborly phone calls, help us run this service, contribute to the Hilltown Food Pantry or find alternate ways to support others without direct contact. We also welcome younger neighbors to serve our community by letting them shop and/or pick up prescriptions, etc.



We have created a PMSN web page:
(plainfield-ma.us/supportnetwork),

created a Facebook page:
(Plainfield mutual aid and support)

and created a phone number: (413) 634-1030.
These are all different ways to reach us.

We have added the HCDC COVID-19 Hilltown Response to our webpage (hilltowncdc.org/covid19) for further information and as a valuable resource.

The Rev. Henry (Ton) Whiteside, of the Plainfield Church, has also arranged Sunday services at 10:30 am via Zoom.com.

All town offices are closed to the public at this time. You can still send mail or reach out by phone. Several departments have set up Zoom meetings as well. The Town Hall and the Shaw Hudson Library are also closed for now. The transfer station is open during its regular hours. (Check with plainfield-ma.us for more information.)

Safety Precautions to Follow at Home

One out of five falls can result in broken bones or a head injury. While people tend to think that most falls happen to older people, anyone is susceptible, especially with increased family members in the home or changes to your daily routine. The good news is that most falls can be prevented with a few simple precautions.

- ⇒ **Footwear:** Wear sturdy and proper footwear. Make sure your shoes are properly tied, don't wear just socks without grips, and replace stretched out or loose slippers.
- ⇒ **Areas in your home:** Arrange furniture so there are clear paths between rooms. Don't run extension cords across walking areas; secure loose area rugs with double-faced tape, tacks or slip-resistant backing; and avoid sitting in a chair or on a sofa that is so low that it's difficult to stand up from. Keep flashlights nearby in case of a power outage; keep stairs clear of clutter.
- ⇒ **Bedroom:** Place a lamp, telephone or flashlight near your bed; have a bed that's easy to get in and out of; put a nightlight between your bedroom and the bathroom; and arrange clothes in your closet so that they're easy to reach.
- ⇒ **Bathroom:** Place a slip-resistant rug next to the tub; use a rubber mat or nonskid adhesive textured strips inside the tub or shower. Keep a nightlight in the bathroom and never rush to get there.



Allergies vs Coronavirus

It's important to know the difference between allergies and COVID-19, and understand when to be concerned. That point is when you develop shortness of breath in addition to flu-like aches and pains. Although fever is a common symptom of COVID-19, it's helpful to know that people can have the virus without ever developing a fever. If a patient's symptoms improve with medication or when they stay inside, it's likely they're dealing with allergies. If you suspect your symptoms might possibly be COVID-19, keep a journal of symptoms, possible triggers, and details such as whether windows are open when symptoms start, the time of day when symptoms are worst, the daily weather, and the length of time between when they take an allergy medication and when they feel relief.

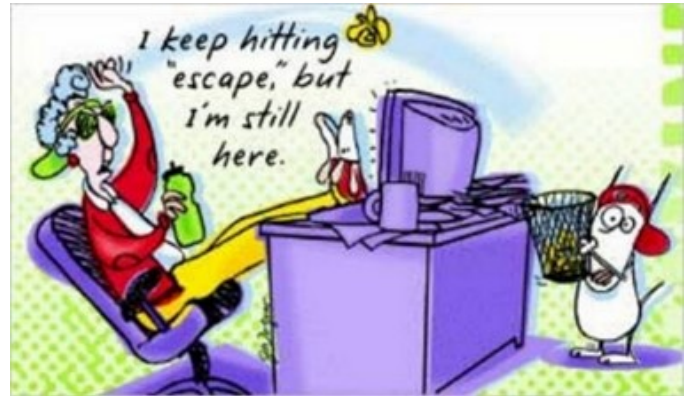
This should give you a greater feeling of control, and that's important because, often, fear comes from a sense of uncertainty and lack of control. Sometimes, just sitting down to document your symptoms will allow you to feel you are doing something to take charge of your health.

Exercise Classes

Joan Griswold has not been idle during this pandemic. She has created some virtual exercises for all of us. Check them out. They are a lot of fun!

Chair: <https://youtu.be/2sdBcLwWQMg>

Stretch break: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mfGAVomopY>



Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in lock down! Actually I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. The vacuum was very unsympathetic... told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything but the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to ...yes, you guessed itpull myself together.

Thank You for Your Donations!

We are very grateful to everyone who has donated/contributed to the COA these past several months. You allowed us to flourish in the challenge to better serve the folks in Plainfield. The COA relies on the support of friends like you so we continue that conversation and understanding. Thank You!

The Plainfield Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to help build important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Plainfield Council on Aging. My contribution of \$ _____ is attached.
(Please write your check to The Town of Plainfield and mail to Plainfield COA, 304 Main St. Plainfield, MA 01070)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Plainfield Council on Aging

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



As the coronavirus spreads into our hilltowns, you have been given a lot of good advice on social distancing and what to do if you come down with it or are exposed to it.

Our topic this month is what to do if you or a loved one needs an ambulance.

It is easy; dial 911. Listen to the dispatcher and answer his/her questions. You may be very anxious, but don't be impatient. The dispatcher needs to ask the questions so that the appropriate response team will get to you.

Breath, keep your distance and be SAFE!

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

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

Summer is still coming. Save this date!
Thursday August 20, 2020

Let's go back to when Life was Simple:
Pickety Place Luncheon
Mason, New Hampshire

5-Course Luncheon,
Acres of gardens, greenhouse,
unique Herbs and Gift Shop



Chesterfield Adults 60
and older: \$25 p/p
All other residents and others: \$40

Motor Coach will depart from
Chesterfield Comm. Center 8:45am, return 5pm
Goshen Town Hall 9am, return 4:45pm

To register and to get more information,
call Maryanne Coleman: 296-4787

Full Payment due at time of registration

**Would you like to receive your newsletter
by email instead of snail mail?**

If so, please email Kristen at
regionalcoanews@gmail.com to be put on
the email list. Include your address so I will know
which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

Spring Cleaning

No, not windows, though mine are a little dirty... let's talk about those annoying piles of paper. Can you imagine having just a few tidy, labeled, and filed stacks of paperwork? Can you imagine no risk of sliding on a loose piece of paper and falling? Can you imagine someone being able to come into your home and find the medical records you need right now because you went to the hospital? No? Well, we have some time, so let's see what can be done.

First, find a container such as file drawers or cardboard boxes of a size to hold folders. Find folders or dividers. Get a marking pen and/or labels. Find a box for shred and recycle.

Second, find a clear surface and lay out your piles and stacks, sorted into their relevant topics. Determine by topic if they are: keep forever, keep several years, keep a year or less, or shred and recycle. Those things to be kept can be sorted by date, and you may find that some older documents really don't have to be kept. What are the topics? Insurance, bank, automobile, mortgage, utilities, medical, purchases... you get the picture.

Make sure you have topics that relate to taxes. As you might expect, the IRS rules for what to keep and how long to keep it are lengthy and won't even fit this column. Here are the basics:

www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/how-long-should-i-keep-records

Other things such as automobile titles or house deeds, and on the other end, expired warranties for products you don't even still have are simpler to determine. I found several good lists of topics and their timetable for keeping. If you can't access these yourself, give a holler after you've started your process and can see what you have to deal with.

Cleanly,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth



Seems like there is a scarcity of "good news" these days as we learn to deal with this Covid-19 pandemic, developing new habits of social distancing, scrupulous hand washing, and disinfecting surfaces. Hopefully it's not too early to say we might be seeing some "flattening of the curve" because of our new habits?

Meanwhile neighbors check on neighbors, families and friends keep in touch with social media, new groups of volunteers spring up and our leaders are thinking of ways to work collectively. Who could have imagined Governor Baker putting together a deal with China for over a million face masks and having the New England Patriots jet go pick them up and deliver to Massachusetts hospitals, and our National Guard escorting some of these masks to New York hospitals? It sounds like a movie script, but difficult times call for creative solutions.

More good news:

We have until July to file both our State and Federal income taxes. The Food Stamp program has not been reduced as expected and pop-up Food Pantries are happening in our communities.

Along the same lines, Governor Baker has "frozen" MassHealth benefits. This means those MassHealth consumers who have to file their re-application paperwork won't lose benefits. Those individuals in the process of filing new applications for MassHealth benefits have more time to get their applications completed. Your time won't run out if you miss a deadline. This decision keeps MassHealth benefits in place and suspends deadlines for getting paperwork completed.

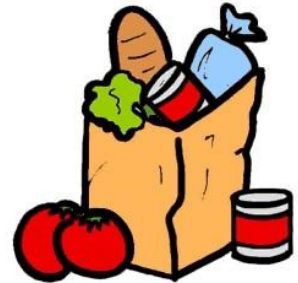
Here's hoping next month will see more progress defeating this pandemic. Until then, stay well, and help a friend or neighbor when you can.

The Hilltown Food Pantry, with its permanent location in Goshen, is open every Wednesday from 1-3pm [extended hours to 6pm are temporarily suspended] and will serve the remaining towns of its service area: Chesterfield, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, and Williamsburg. Food distribution for this site has moved across the parking lot to the Goshen Town Hall assembly room. Again for space considerations to help clients, volunteers and staff maintain a safe distance from one another as bags are packed and distributed.

Both sites offer drive by pick up of prepacked bags of groceries for people who are struggling to have food on hand during this national pandemic emergency. The supplies include shelf stable items, fresh produce and other food items as available.

Hilltowners may also choose to access emergency food from Northampton Survival Center at the Jackson Street Elementary School, 120 Jackson St, Northampton on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12-3pm during the national Covid-19 crisis.

For more information go to the website: www.northamptonssurvival.org or call 413-268-7578.



Hilltown Food Pantry Reopens

Hilltown Food Pantry, a program of Northampton Survival Center, is open for food distribution to residents of the hilltowns of western Hampshire County.

In order to better adhere to the physical distancing guidelines our state is prescribing, and to help people stay closer to their homes, a temporary sister pantry has been opened at the R.H. Conwell Elementary School on Route 112 in Worthington to serve residents of Worthington and Cummington who are in need of grocery supplies. Please call 413-238-1999 to reserve bags for pick up on Thursdays from 1 – 1:30pm at the school.

The **Hilltown Mobile Market** is coming back this summer with more farms, new locations, a longer season, and double the number of farm shares!

Your support during our pilot season last year resulted in increased grant funding to purchase a market vehicle and broaden our reach to more communities. Starting in July, we will bring "pop-up" markets to Blandford, Cummington, Huntington, and Worthington each week for twelve weeks, stocked with the freshest Hilltown-grown produce. Stop by and shop with cash, credit, debit, SNAP, WIC, or Senior FMNP Coupons, or sign-up in advance for a **Hilltown Mobile Market Farm Share** to support our farms and guarantee your pick of that week's harvest. The

Farm Share is an affordable option with a sliding scale between \$5-20 per week and is also eligible for HIP (Healthy Incentives Program) reimbursements!

The market is supported by *Healthy Hampshire*, *Hilltown Community Development* and the *Hilltown Community Health Center*.

For more information or to sign up for a farm share, visit **hilltownmobilemarket.info** or contact Caitlin Marquis: 413-588-5562, cmarquis@collaborative.org.

Joan Griswold stays in touch and keeps us moving

During our time of keeping our distance while staying close, Joan has made it so much easier for those in her exercise classes to get through it all. Her daily email messages bring encouraging thoughts, important insights and images of her strategies for "working it out" outside. Her emails are refreshing in more ways than one. Here is one of them:

When times get tough, we have to do our best to keep moving!

It seems like it all changed, in just a mere few days. Life as we knew it came to a screeching halt while fear and anxiety began to escalate. Our day to day routines became disrupted, and it took some time for some to realize just how serious things had become. The reality has now sunk in; it's a different world out there right now.

In those final days, I recall the experience of being told I could not teach my exercise classes I so adore, I could not teach valuable CPR skills to folks looking to be helpful in a time of need. If someone had told me a month ago that life as we knew it would be changing like never before, I am not so sure I could have believed them yet here it is, right outside our doors.

Here we are in the midst of the corona storm. We all know someone who knows someone impacted by this storm. We are told to stay great distances apart, and while being outdoors is a great idea, you have to avoid all the mobs. As I continue to navigate my way through each day, I know in my heart the most important thing I can do is to "continue to support". A giver by nature, this comes easily to me. What is harder is relaying it via a media means.

There are some important points that I try to relay. **The most important is to be sure you move your body, each and every day, in some way.** Maintaining some physical movement is good, for both the mind and body. I created a YouTube channel for all to resource. There are exercise, nutrition and relaxation videos available for all. Check out my channel at:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCtInbx8RBhb_GC4fvN3icJw/featured

Subscribe to be informed when I update and add more! I have now begun to also provide Zoom exercise sessions for the Monday, Wednesday and Friday groups. Contact me for additional information.

Routine in your day is an absolute must. Have a plan or a list of what needs to be done! Try to have things that you can incorporate into your day, and make you feel good! Maybe it is reading, calling a friend to talk or writing a poem, tending to your plants, or simply sitting quietly and appreciating being alone. If alone is something you are feeling too strongly, there is an email list that allows participants to write and share with others. If this sounds like something you need in your day, just let me know and on the email distribution list your name will go!

Eating wholesome and healthy foods supports healthy brain function. This is also an important consideration for keeping your immunity at its optimal function. Hand washing and good hygiene along with distance from others is important, but how about being mindful of what you decide to fuel your body with each and every time you reach for something? Carbs are so easy to consume in a pinch, but do not forget to have something with protein content each and every time you eat.

I personally believe the best way to start the best day is to get up and get your exercise out of the way. Morning is a wonderful to wake up your heart and challenge your muscles, or to be outside enjoying fresh air and the beauty that surrounds us here in the hills. I have never been more appreciative of the little trails, low traffic roadways and local little streams. They provide such beautiful and tranquil scenes. Be in these wonderful moments as much as you can; stop and cherish them as the gift that they are. Breathe deeply and expand those lungs, feel your belly extend then engage core to spine. Do not forget your muscles need attention too! Pick up those free weights and crank out a simple strength exercise or two!

Stay plenty hydrated, for this, too, is important as it keeps your joints lubricated and your body functions regulated. It's great for your skin while it flushes your body of all the crazy toxins!

Maintain a positive attitude the best that you can. It is really easy to be down when you watch the news and engage with others who cannot see the positive things that surround them every day. I am so incredibly thankful for the elders who I am fortunate to know; they have taught me that sometimes you have to admit things are out of your control. Once you acknowledge that this is the case, you can move about your day with greater dignity and grace.

We will gather in person again sometime soon! Until then, be sure to make the effort to take care of YOU. The corona storm will indeed pass. Until then, please stay healthy and safe.

Plainfield Council on Aging
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This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

TIPS TO AVOID CORONAVIRUS SCAMS



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



- **Hang up on robocalls.** Don't press any numbers. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from scam Coronavirus treatments to work-at-home schemes. The recording might say that pressing a number will let you speak to a live operator or remove you from their call list, but it might lead to more robocalls.

- **Ignore online offers for vaccinations and home test kits.** Scammers are trying to get you to buy products that aren't proven to treat or prevent the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) — online or in stores. At this time, there also are no FDA-authorized home test kits for the Coronavirus.

- **Fact-check information.** Scammers, and sometimes well-meaning people, share information that hasn't been verified. Before you pass on any messages, contact trusted sources.

- **Know who you're buying from.** Online sellers may claim to have in-demand products, like cleaning, household, and health and medical supplies when, in fact, they don't.

- **Don't respond to texts and emails about checks from the government.** Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer.

- **Don't click on links from sources you don't know.** They could download viruses onto your computer or device.

- **Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about the virus.** Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- **Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites.** If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.