

Plainfield Council on Aging

October 2020 Newsletter



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

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October Notes and Tips during Covid-19

Plainfield Mutual Support Network Still Available



The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) in coordination with the Plainfield Police Department, Board of Health, and the Council on Aging is still going strong and ever present in town. We have approximately 17 members who oversee the group of volunteers who will help with grocery shopping, pharmacy needs and will also reach out to individuals who might like a friendly smile or visit on the telephone. We continue in an environment of social distancing and quarantine requirements and are required to wear masks when out in public.

There are homemade masks still available. You may contact either Erin Kelly-Dill at 413-336-0123 or Marissa Valenza at 413-634-5703. Thank you for your continued efforts!

Again, for your information, the PMSN web page is (plainfield-ma.us/supportnetwork). One can also check out our Facebook page, (plainfield mutual aid and support) for additional information. You can also call (413)634-1030 for requests or more information. Please leave a voicemail and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We have also added the H CDC COVID-19 Hilltown Response to our web page (hilltowncdc.org/covid19) for further information and as a valuable resource.

The Federal Census and Presidential Election

To request a Vote By Mail ballot, go to:

www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/2020-Vote-by-Mail-Application.pdf

You can also track your ballot by using this ballot tracking link to make sure your ballot was accepted:

www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema/track/trackmyballot.aspx

If you haven't completed the 2020 Census yet, you can still respond online, by phone, or by mail. This is the link that provides you with different choices on how you can respond:

2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html

Please remember that this Census is crucial to shaping the future of your community!

Clinics Update

- **Foot Clinic:** The Foot Clinic which usually meets in the Cummington Community House is not scheduling any appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic. If this changes, we will let you know. Piper Sagan is doing foot care at the Hadley Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Call them at 413-586-4023 to make an appointment. Piper can also do foot care in your home, using safe practices (\$80). Call her at 413-522-8432 for an appointment.
- **Flu Clinic:** We are working on getting a flu clinic set up in Plainfield. Stay tuned for further information either in the COA newsletter or the Plainfield Post.

HVES Title III Cares Grant

The Plainfield COA along with the Northern Hilltowns COAs Consortium has received a grant. With this money, we have purchased four 14.5" computers. We will lend these computers to any senior who would like to learn how to operate a computer. Especially during these restrictive



times, a computer is a valuable tool to contact family and friends with email or through Zoom video. These computers will be lent out for a 4-month period with basic instruction included in the rental. At the end of the instruction, the computer will be returned to the COA for the next recipient.

Zoom Training

Using Zoom video is a great way to reach out virtually and stay connected – especially as you are staying home during the coronavirus outbreak. Here are the easy steps to join a Zoom call for the first time:

[youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E&t=9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E&t=9s)

AARP Information Pamphlet Available

AARP has made available a pamphlet entitled "Home Fit Guide". The Plainfield COA has ordered 15 of these booklets. Organizing and refurbishing your home to include safety measures is an excellent way to stay out of harm's way.



Household Hazardous Waste Dates

Once a year, the HRMC holds a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection. Residents are asked to email the HRMC with their name, address (Street and Town), and phone number. HRMC confirmation of your reservation (done via email) is required to participate. In 2020, the HRMC has agreements with the following communities to allow HRMC member town residents to participate in their events. In all cases, pre-registration is required. Registration for each of the events typically begins 3-4 weeks prior to the event. If you are an HRMC resident, please contact Kathleen Casey at 413-685-5498 or email hrcm@hrcm-ma.org to inquire about attending one of the following regional events:

DATE/TIME/COMMUNITY:

10/3/20 9 am-noon Chicopee
10/24/20 9 am-noon Westhampton

The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative is composed of these member towns: Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

HRMC PO Box 630 Williamsburg, MA 01096 Phone: 413- 685-5498 Email: hrcm@hrcm-ma.org Website: www.hrcm-ma.org

Thank You

A big thank you goes out to all of you who have contributed to our virtual exercise class hosted by Joan Griswold. Joan now holds classes on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10:15 AM. If you have signed up with her, she will send you a reminder email for connecting to class through Zoom.

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



Highland Valley ELDER SERVICES

**Assisting Elders, Families & Caregivers
through collaboration, education
and advocacy for 45 years.**

413-586-2000

**All programs and services still operational
during the COVID pandemic.**

Information & Referral Services

Family Caregiver Program– Resources for Caregivers

Home Delivered Meals

Community Dining Sites

Ombudsman Services– For Nursing Facility Advocacy

Money Management Assistance

Protective Services

Case Management

Options Counseling

Transportation Concierge

Homemaking, Personal Care, Companion

Personal Emergency Response Systems

**Consumer Directed Options- Hire family/friends to
provide the assistance you need.**

And more...

www.highlandvalley.org

info@highlandvalley.org



Options Counseling provides:

- Free consultation with a certified Options Counselor.
- Unbiased information.
- One-on-one meeting, either in person, over the phone or by email, to discuss what your short and long term goals are.
- Personalized approach that ensures that your choices are respected.
- Exploration of options for paying for services.
- Referrals related to your particular needs and wishes.
- Assistance with planning the next steps.
- Information about long-term care services and supports.

**To connect with an Options Counselor contact Highland Valley Elder Services Information & Referral Department:
413-586-2000**

Chesterfield Community Cupboard closes as the Little Corner Cupboard opens in new location on October 1



Cold weather coming, lack of heat sources and logistical problems with snow plowing have led the Chesterfield Community Support Team, in consultation with the Board of Health, to set up at a smaller site at the entrance to the kitchen at the Chesterfield Community Center. It's been clear that the food that's been offered at the Cupboard has been very appreciated and needed. The need to keep it going will no doubt continue as financial hardships grow, prices of food increase and farm markets begin to close. Even with the Goshen Pantry, CISA coupons and Hilltown Bucks, food insecurity persists.

New protocols have been developed for assuring the health and safety of everyone using the cupboard in the new restricted space. The "Little Corner Cupboard" will be open twice a week on Tuesdays from 9-11am and Thursdays from 2-4pm. Volunteers are required to be on site during the open hours. Strict guidelines for social distancing and sanitizing will continue to be followed and masks are required. The goal of staying as anonymous as possible is still in effect. The duration of the program will be guided by the receipt of business and individual donations.



Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, 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!

Scam Covid-style

You have to admire scammers, in some ways. They see a new thing in life and adjust their pitches to it, and quickly. For instance, did you know some scammers want you to think you can get a government stimulus check from a car dealership? They may send a check that says "COVID-19 Auto Stimulus" with space to endorse the check on the back, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Another example. I ate inside in one restaurant and they asked me for contact information in case they need to do virus tracing, e.g., tell me there has been a potential contact with a person who tested positive for Covid-19. Well, another wrinkle from the scammers is to call and pretend to be a contact tracer and ask questions that go beyond the names of places and people you have come in contact with. A real tracer will never ask you for money or financial information.

Certainly the savvy citizens of Massachusetts would not suffer from these scary scams! Sadly, from Jan. 1 to Sept. 9 in MA, there were 5,664 fraud reports with a loss of \$2.69 million dollars. And that is just what was reported! There was a very sharp increase in cases starting in mid-March. Funny coincidence, that, timed with the virus. These data are from the FTC Covid-10 and Stimulus Reports: public.tableau.com/profile/federal.trade.commission#!/vizhome/COVID-19andStimulusReports/Map

I'm sure you can figure out not to buy a virus testing kit, "early-release" vaccine, or a preventive or cure for Covid-19 from a phone call or email. You won't assume someone who says s/he is calling from the government (Social Security, Centers for Disease Control, etc.) has your best interests in mind. All the old safeguards still hold – don't click on email attachments, don't answer the phone from an unknown source, guard your wallet and identification., don't get pressured into paying, keep some skepticism.

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

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

For all of us on Medicare, it's annual Open Enrollment again. October through the first week in December...we get to go shopping...for our health care coverage. If you don't want to "shop" for different coverage, you don't have to, but there might be a better deal, that is better coverage for less money. And we all love to bargain hunt. Maybe not so much with health insurance? If I've heard it once, I've heard it dozens of times that folks just wish their coverage was simple. Perhaps in my lifetime, it will be, and we will look back on these days of chaos when health insurance companies bombarded us with their advertising as "back in the dark ages".

But in the meantime, our mailbox (and TV) is full of advertisements for health insurance because this is the season to switch if you want to.

What is all the advertising about?

When we turn 65, and we've paid into social security, or our spouse has paid into social security, we get Medicare: original Medicare A & B.



Then we can sign up for a Medicare D plan to cover our Rx, or enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan that covers Rx. Each year in the fall, during Open Enrollment, we get to change our mind and select different coverage. Many Medicare beneficiaries will decide to change their Rx coverage (their Medicare D plans). This happens a lot because the D plans change their prices, change their deductibles...even change their formularies which is the list of Rx they cover. So what was a "good" plan for you last year may not be a good plan for you next year.

An example that kept us SHINE counselors busy last year was a Humana Walmart's switch. Their \$32 x month D plan that covered a lot of Rx, changed to a \$62 x month plan for the same coverage. If folks read their mail, they were pretty upset. If they knew to call a SHINE counselor, they could "shop" the plans for the upcoming year and discover that Humana had another plan, in the \$30 x month range...which covered almost the same Rx. But you had to know this....and switch.

How does the switch work?

During Open Enrollment, you get to sign up for a new plan if you want. The new plan takes effect January 1st and cancels out your old plan. To see if you should switch, you might contact your SHINE counselor who can do a Plan search/

analysis for you and give you the contact information you need to call and enroll in a new plan.

You can call your senior center to schedule an appointment with a SHINE counselor. 'tis the season to be shoppers, if we want.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

**Saturday, October 24, 2020,
9 am – Noon**

at Westhampton Highway Department

Create a Safe Home: Properly dispose of household hazardous waste. The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC) announces their annual HHW Collection Event for residents of the ten HRMC member communities of: Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

The program is free to HRMC member-town residents, however, reservations and pre-registration is required. Pre-registration runs from October 1-18, 2020. Please email your name, street and mailing address (including town and zip code), and phone number to hrcm@hrcm-ma.org. Or you may phone HRMC with the above information including an email address at 413-685-5498. Note that Huntington residents are asked to provide their transfer station sticker number at the time of registration. HRMC will confirm your registration by email and send an attached confirmation letter to bring with you to the event.

Protect your home and our environment by properly disposing of old or unwanted household chemicals. Products containing lead, petroleum products, pesticides, herbicides, and acids should NOT be poured on the ground, down the drain, or placed in household trash.

The HRMC HHW collection program accepts a wide range of unwanted household products with labels that indicate that special handling is required. Examples of common warnings include "caustic, toxic, corrosive, poison, flammable, warning, danger, caution and keep out of reach of children and pets."



Make your home a safer home by changing your purchasing habits, and adopting some minor changes to the way you clean your home or care for lawns and gardens.

For more information on recycling, visit the "What to do With" link at: www.hrcm-ma.org

Epidemics

The world today seems to find us more stressed and frightened than COVID-19 can explain. The unrest, divisions and anger seeping into the fabric of our lives leaves us hoping, if not longing, to find a way to understand how we got here and what's in the future. Sarah Prince, our yoga teacher, found a passage from Ayurveda, an ancient system of health maintenance. Today it is often referred to as the sister science of yoga. The main text, Charaka Samhita, written 2,000-2,500 years ago, is primarily a discourse between Atreya (a great Ayurvedic physician) and his disciple Agnivesa. It was first written in Sanskrit in a poetic style, as are all Vedic texts. The rhythm, meter and melody of the Vedas allowed for easier memorization.

The Root Cause of Epidemic

Agnivesa asks Atreya, "What is the root cause of Vata imbalance, which is the root cause of an epidemic?" This was Atreya's response (remember, these are written in poetic form, over 2,200 years ago):

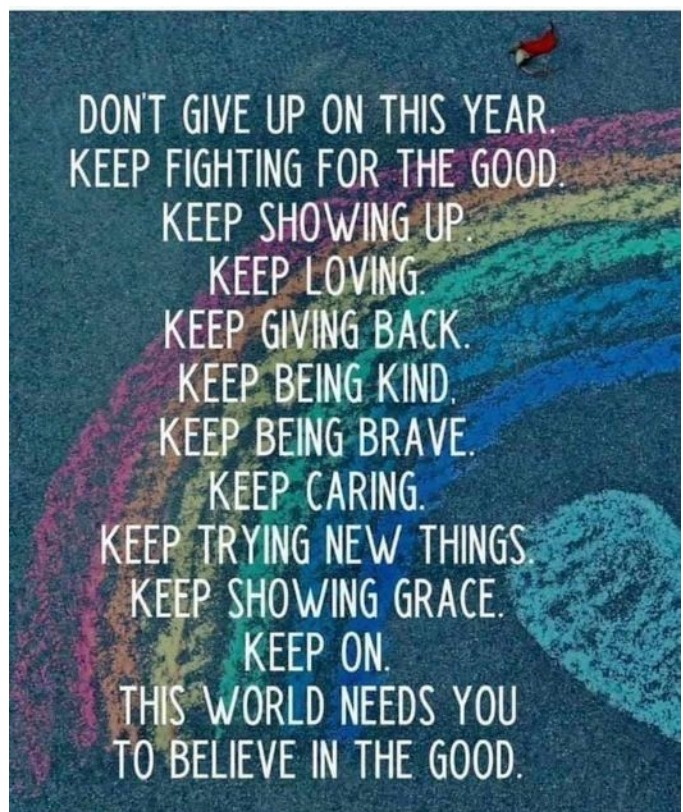
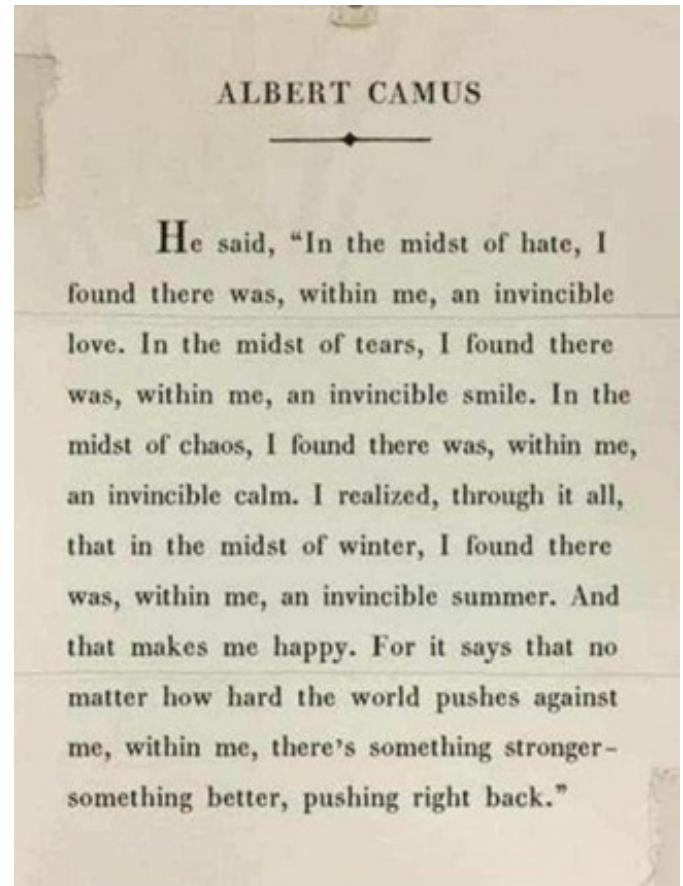
The root cause of derangement of vata and epidemic is unrighteousness. When the Heads of country, city, guild and community have transgressed the virtuous path and deal unrighteously with the people, their officers and subordinates, the people of the city and community, and merchants carry this unrighteousness further.

Thus, the unrighteousness puts pressure on and forces righteousness to disappear. Then the people with righteousness, having disappeared, are abandoned even by the Gods. Consequently, when righteousness has disappeared, unrighteousness has the upper hand and the Gods have deserted the place, the seasons get affected and because of this, it does not rain on time or at all. There is abnormal rainfall, winds do not flow properly, the land is affected, water reservoirs are dried up, and herbs, giving up their natural properties, acquire morbidity or die. Then epidemics break out due to polluted environment and food.

Likewise, unrighteousness is also cause of the destruction of community by weapons. Those who have excessively increased greed, anger, attachment, and conceit, disregarding the weak, attack each other.

Sharma, PV Charaka Samhita, Vimanasthanum, Ch. 3. Verses 20, 21 Chaukhamba Orientalia. Delhi. 1981

During this challenging time everyone who looks for truth and the right thing to do and does it will bring balance back to our planet.



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

October is Fall Prevention Month

CATCH YOURSELF! Simple Steps to Prevent Falls

Your risk of falling increases when you have:

- fallen before
- balance problems
- chronic diseases
- depression
- hazards in the home
- a lot of medications
- memory problems
- muscle weakness
- problems walking
- vision problems

Reduce your risk of falling and stay independent, healthy and strong by following these steps:

1. **Get a fall risk assessment.** Talk to your doctor about your fall risk, especially if you have any of the conditions above.
2. **Review your medications.** Bring all your meds and supplements to your doctor or pharmacist at least once a year and when there are changes in your health. Ask about side effects and interactions, especially if you take four or more meds.
3. **Have your vision checked** once a year by an eye doctor.
4. **Engage in regular physical activity.** Ask your doctor about the best activities for you and make a plan. Doing Strength and balance exercises using your lower body can build your strength, improve your balance and coordination, and reduce your risk of falling.
5. **Assess your home and make changes for safety.** Use a home safety checklist or talk with a professional to look for things inside your home that make you more likely to fall. Change your home to make it safer; reduce clutter, improve lighting in rooms, hallways and stairwells; and install handrails and grab bars.

For more information, visit: www.stopfalls.org.