

Plainfield Council on Aging

October 2024 Newsletter



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

Polly Ryan, Coordinator
413-212-1581
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us

October Luncheon

Wednesday, October 9th at Noon
Town Hall

On the menu is grilled orange chicken, scallop potatoes, veggies, salad and dessert. Other desserts are welcome. Deb Hollingsworth, who is retiring from the SHINE program, will give a presentation on Health Insurance options available during the "Medicare Open Enrollment" period for 2024. A nurse from the Health Department in Northampton, Kelly Hughes, will also conduct a blood pressure clinic.

Covid & Flu Vaccine Clinic

October 9th, 10am-1pm

Mark your calendars for a **Covid/flu clinic on October 9th from 10 am to 1pm at the Plainfield Safety Complex**. Pre-registration is recommended at northamptonma.gov/2219/vax or by calling **413-587-4903**. Registering will save time and help the clinic organizers know how many vaccines to bring, however, walk-ins are welcome (please bring your insurance card). Vaccines are free but insurance helps to cover some of the cost. Anyone 19 years of age and older can register.



Homebound? Call **413-587-4903** to arrange an in-home vaccination or go to northamptonma.gov/2219/Vaccine-Programs

Interested in learning Tai Chi? There has been a venue & time change. Richard Larson, a fellow senior and dancer from Goshen, will lead a class in the 8 Ways of Tai Chi at the **Cumington Community House on Tuesdays at 2 pm starting October 1st**. These 8 simple repeating movements, involving the principles of Tai Chi, develop strength, balance, relaxation and peace

of mind as a moving meditation. Richard studied Tai Chi form and the 8 Ways at the NY School of Tai Chi Chuan. This class is ongoing and free. You may join at any time.

Just for fun, a road trip to the Emily Dickinson Museum & lunch is happening on October 25th. A reserved van will leave Plainfield Town Hall at 9:30am and return by 3pm. A guided tour is scheduled for 11am. Lunch will follow at The Works Café. Please RSVP with Polly **413-212-1581** or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us Only 12 seats are available on the Van.

Additional Healthy Bones & Balance exercise classes will be held at the **Cumington Community House** and lead by Polly! Starting November 12th. She will lead classes **every Tuesday at 3pm and every Friday at 9:30am**. Feel free to join anytime. The classes are free and ongoing.

Our SHINE/Connector expert, Deb Hollingsworth, is retiring! It will be hard to fill her shoes! Caroline Solan is replacing her 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 to 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. The Connector Program is run through the Northern Hilltown COA consortium, and they are looking to hire someone to fill this role. This person will be able to guide people in finding services beyond health insurance. If you are interested in a well-paid part-time job, contact the COA Director at the Chesterfield Council on Aging, **413-296-4007** or email coa@townofchesterfieldma.com.

If you have questions about MassHealth call Bu-liah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community

Health Center **413-238-5511** or email her at **bthomas@hchcweb.org**

You can also call TRIAD directly at **413-582-7787**.

Anyone interested in a **Pen pal program** with sixth graders from Sanderson Academy? Please let Polly know...

Got Food?

There are several programs for receiving food and/or prepared meals delivered to your home regardless of your income. Check in with Polly to find one that fits your needs. And, if you wish to help a neighbor by volunteering to pick up food for them, please check in with Polly as well.

Grab and go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House. They can be picked up **every Tuesday between noon and 12:30**. To register or order for the first time, call Chrisoula at **634-2262** or **croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov**. A suggested donation of \$3 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

A Mobile Market comes to Plainfield's Town Hall every 3rd Tuesday of each month through November from 1-3 pm. Goods from local farms will be available at a "pay what you can" price. This is an extension of the Hilltown Market located at 19 Sawyer Road in Worthington where farm goods are sold Tuesday-Saturday 10-6pm and Sundays 12-4pm. Home deliveries can also be arranged at **hilltownmobilemarket.com**. Snap benefits are welcome. They also have FREE stuff to give away.

Winter is around the corner and if you would like a bucket of sand delivered to your house, please contact Polly at **413-212-1581** or Shirley at **413-446-9608** and we will arrange it with TRIAD.

The COA newsletter is only available now in digital format which you can receive in your email or access on websites. Please contact Kristen Estelle at **regionalcoanews@gmail.com** to get on the email list. Places to look for COA news are in the Plainfield Post, on the Facebook page "Everything Plainfield", as well as on our town and the Northern Hilltown consortium websites. Check it out at **northernhilltownscoas.org/** Updates and reminders will be sent to our email list using a service called MailChimp. A limited number of printed copies will be available in the library and Polly will mail you one if desired, give her a call to get on that mailing list **(413) 212-1581**.

Fresh Covid test kits (expire in spring of 2025) are available. Arrange to get some from Shirley by calling **413-446-9608**. She can also access durable medical equipment for you if needed. If she is unavailable call Polly at **413-212-1581** or Jeannie at **413-522-1687**.



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

A WILLIAMSBURG FORUM ON OUR CLIMATE AND ENERGY FUTURE

Sunday, October 6, 2 pm

How to Save Money with Energy Upgrades

Learn about Federal and state incentives and programs to help residents and businesses save money.

Sunday, October 20, 2 pm

Your Electricity Bill 101

Understanding your bill, why rates change, energy sources for electricity in our area, "community choice" aggregation. Bring a copy of your bill to follow along!

Sunday, November 3, 2 pm

Our Electricity Future

Learn about interconnectivity, Community Choice 2.0, micro-grids, and power sharing.

Events are at Anne T. Dunphy School,
1 Petticoat Hill Rd, Williamsburg
Childcare & light refreshments provided.

Position Available: Community Connector

The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging seeks outreach worker to serve as the "Connector" to help older adults and their family caregivers find and connect with the best resources to:

- Find and join programs that will support independent living in their own homes
- Answer questions about eligibility for benefits: health insurance, pharmacy subsidies, fuel assistance, SNAP benefits, property tax rebates
- Identify services or programs that are the best fit to individual or family needs
- Help manage changes in medical conditions, or finances, or housing
- Guide people through the required processes to successfully obtain and/or enroll in services they require

Flexible hours: 18/month. Work from home. Some home visits when necessary.

Looking for a person with experience working with older adults, knowledge of aging resources, excellent communication skills, experience using computer and internet services.

Driver's license required
Salary: \$21 /hour

If interested, please submit resume and/or contact:

COA Director, Chesterfield Council on Aging
413-296-4007 or
coa@townofchesterfieldma.com

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

October is **FIRE SAFETY MONTH** and the topic is how to make and practice a home escape plan when your smoke alarm wakes you up.

Senior 
SAFE

First, make a HOME ESCAPE PLAN:

- Make a plan that includes TWO WAYS out of every room.
- Draw a floor plan of your house. Include doors, windows, halls, stairs and fire escapes. Use arrows to show escape routes — two ways out of every room.
- Make sure the windows in your plan open easily and are not painted shut.
- Keep pathways free of obstacles.
- Choose a MEETING PLACE safely outdoors.

Second, PRACTICE your home escape plan. Plans only work if practiced.

- Hold a FIRE DRILL at least twice a year; one day drill and one night drill.
- Plan on how to help anyone who may need to be assisted after the drill, make any necessary adjustments to your plan.

Third, WHEN THE ALARM SOUNDS:

- Get out of bed and go to your bedroom door.
- Feel the door with the BACK OF YOUR HAND.
- If it feels cool, open the door slowly. If the way out is clear of fire, get low and go.
- Do not open the door if it is hot. Go to your window, open it. If you can not get out safely, shout and signal for help. One of the first firefighters there will walk around the whole building, checking to see if someone is trapped.
- Once you are out, STAY OUT! Do not go back in.
- Call 911 from your cell phone.
- Go to your family MEETING PLACE.
- Let the firefighters know if everyone is safely out of the house.

Hope you never need your HOME ESCAPE PLAN. But having one which every one in your home knows, will make all the difference.

Have a great fire SAFE month,

--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.



Tech. Help and Training for October



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE TECH CONNECT FAIR ON 9/21! The event was a success, with many new demonstrations, exhibitors, and a silent tech auction.

Tech Support Available by Appointment

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in or appointment: coaTechHelp@gmail.com, phone or text msg **413-296-5080**. Response within a day.

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
Bi-Weekly on Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (10/4 and 10/18)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (10/9)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St.
Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12-2 (10/17)
- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (10/17)
- Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Rd.
Drop-In tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (10/24)
- Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 10/8 from 10 to Noon
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 10/8 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington Library, 1 Huntington Rd.
Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

Tech Training:

Must pre-register for classes 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 coaTechConnect@gmail.com; call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will restart on Thursdays 1-2:30pm, on 10/3 for 4 weeks

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class starts Wednesdays 10:30 – Noon, on 10/23 for 6 weeks

Tech Workshops:

- Facebook – Fri, 10/4, 10:30 – 11:30
- What does THAT mean: tech terms – Wed, 10/9, 11:00 - 12:00pm
- MS Excel – Fri, 10/18, 10:30 – 11:30
- Streaming – Sat, 10/26, 10:30 - 12:00pm
- Internet Basics– Fri. 11/1, 10:30-11:30am
- Using Medical Portals & Telehealth– Thurs. 11/14, 10:00-12:00pm
- Microsoft Word– Fri. 11/15, 10:30-11:30

Internet Hotspots, PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets available: Our staff member Ky Martus, is distributing devices. Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. We have more PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad 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 coatechconnect@gmail.com, leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Need affordable internet access?

We now have a way for you to affordably connect to the internet using an internet "Hotspot" device. They work like WIFI without cable or fiber service. If you are interested in learning more about how these devices work and how they could benefit you, please contact us by phone or email.

All Those Papers! Part 2

By Jean O'Neill

It is a myth that piles of paper will procreate. I think... I could be wrong. This note was hard to write – lots of individual situations. If I have missed something you are particularly interested in, let me know. A basic rule of thumb is to keep paper for a year unless you have a reason for longer. I know – a mealy-mouth answer. Another rule of thumb is anything that you deem important that would be hard to replace should be kept. This might include correspondence with the Social Security office on a specific matter.

Really Important Stuff. You could write this paragraph. Keep these indefinitely - birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, adoption papers, Social Security card, property deeds, estate documents, and military discharge papers.

Banking. Keep either paper or electronic bank statements for a year. You might want some of them longer for convenience on reminders about an expenditure, but the bank keeps these electronically
(continued on page 6)

On the Road Again... 2024 & 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.

Day Trip Friday, December 13. Festival of Trees and Red Rose Lunch. Enjoy the uniquely decorated Christmas Trees at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield. Enter a chance to win a tree and associated gifts. Some are worth hundreds of dollars. Then walk over to the Red Rose Italian Restaurant for lunch: pizza, salad and bread. The \$30 Payment to Francine Frenier is due by October 25. Please mail a check to the address above. NO REFUNDS due to bargain price. Waitlist available.

~~~~~2025~~~~~

*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. Price \$1,052. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by March 26, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

*Day Trip TBD. Winnepesaukee Railroad.* Enjoy a delicious turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train. Tour the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price TBD.

*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, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

~~~~~

More to come! Any new ideas or special events are always welcome. Please email Francine at **francine.frenier@gmail.com**. Any interest in a Woosox game? Please email me.

THANK YOU to all the passengers who joined the trips. I hope you enjoy travelling to various places and meeting new friends as much as I do.

~ Francine



October's Good News By Deb Hollingworth

The Good News this month is about changing of the guard. We have a **new SHINE counselor** for Highland Valley which includes our 7 hill towns! Her name is **Caroline Solan** and you can make an appointment to see her in person at Highland Valley (320 Riverside Drive in Florence). She will be working Wednesdays every week. Or you can call her there at **413-586-2000** and leave a message, or book an appointment for a phone call, or visit. Email works too. She can be reached at **csolan@lifepathma.org**.

The best way to reach Caroline depends on why you need to speak with her. If you have a "time sensitive" question, like an impending nursing home discharge, or a termination of coverage from your health plan, or questions about enrolling in a Medicare supplement because you have a new medical condition that you think might require hospitalization, the best strategy might be to email her. Because then she can get back to you as soon as she's able.

If you have questions about Open Enrollment and whether or not you should keep your current Medicare supplement plan or switch, then the best strategy might be to call Highland Valley and schedule a Wednesday appointment. Ask for the Intake department for a SHINE appointment.

When you call you will be asked for: your name, date of birth, zip code and reason you are calling. If you have MassHealth, then they should also ask for your MassHealth ID number which is on your blue MassHealth card. You may have to wait a while for an in person appointment. Asking for a phone call might be a shorter wait and sending an email might be the most expedient way to get in touch.

For folks who have issues with their MassHealth coverage and have home care services through Highland Valley: you can call and ask the Intake department if it's possible to leave a message for Scott or Oognah.

If you have MassHealth issues, but don't get homecare services from Highland Valley, you can contact Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Health Center: call 413-238-5511, or email **bthomas@hchcweb.org**

Remember you can always call your local senior center who will have all this information.

We are so lucky to have Caroline joining the SHINE team!

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

Plainfield COA

Polly Ryan, Coordinator
413-212-1581
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us

Shirley Todd, Chair
Ginger237ma@yahoo.com
413-634-2134

Susan Pearson, Secretary
spearsonbooks@gmail.com
413-634-0025

Susan Honneus
413-743-5345
stormpetrel22@gmail.com

Ann Irvine
413-634-5698
irvinea@verizon.net

Mary Potter
413-734-5430
mary@potterhomebuilders.com

Bonnie Phillips
413-634-2290
bfillups21@icloud.com

Newsletter Designer
Kristen Estelle

("All those Papers" continued from page 4)

and you can retrieve them. Canceled checks can go after a year.

Bills. Our utility bills, phone bills and the like can be discarded after you verify they are paid.

Credit card receipts. After a purchase shows up and you verify it, you can usually discard the receipt. Keep it if needed for proof of purchase such as a warranty claim.

Insurance. Keep your active policy documents, and a year's worth of billings. Older billings can go away.

Investments. Inquire with your broker or whomever holds your investments. They may keep all the paperwork, or it may be your responsibility. If it is up to you, keep transaction items until the investment item is sold and the taxes settled.

Loans including Co-Signs. Paperwork for a loan should be kept until the loan is settled and any tax paperwork dealt with.

Property. You should hold records that relate to property until the period of limitations expires for the year in which you dispose of the property. In general, keep property papers for three years to allow some dust to settle.

Purchases. Keep receipts as long as the warranty period, and manuals as long as you have the item and it still works. Hope it's a long time...

Again, Whew!
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com
413-268-2228

