

# Plainfield Council on Aging

## March 2025 Newsletter



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

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

## St. Patrick's Day Luncheon

Wednesday, March 12th at Noon  
Town Hall

We will be serving a traditional corned beef and cabbage dinner as well as a vegetarian version. Desserts are welcome. A nurse from the Health Department in Northampton, Kelly Hughes, will be on hand for blood pressure readings. Hilltown based performers Caleb Harris, Jeff Knox and Phil Darrow of the Rolling Scones will play mainly traditional Irish music and also some Scottish, American Fiddle Tunes, and even a few tunes from the Canadian Maritimes. It's toe tappin' and hand clappin' performance for everyone!



**Need a bit of Spring?** Join us on **March 14th** for a trip to the **Botanic Garden of Smith College** to see their **Spring Flower Show**. Lunch will follow at the Chesterfield General Store. A van will leave Town Hall at 9am and return between 2 and 3pm. Please make reservations with Polly: **413-212-1581** or [pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us](mailto:pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us)

The next **Foot Care Clinic** at the Community House in Cummington is scheduled for **March 4th**. Please call Piper Sagan at **413-522-8432** to schedule an appointment (\$50) or a home visit (\$80/session).

**Filing for Social Security?** Join Polly at Town Hall to view a free virtual AARP seminar, **March 4 at noon**, where they'll share tips, tools, and resources to help you decide on the right time to file. Lunch included.

**Join us for a matinee** at the Town Hall on **March 22nd at 2pm**. A notice via MailChimp will be sent out to inform you about what's playing. Popcorn and other treats will be had along with plenty of comradery.

## A discussion group around the book

**"Being Mortal"** will be facilitated by Peg Whalen on Mondays for five weeks **starting March 31st** (ending April 28th) at Town Hall from 11am to 1pm. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* is a non-fiction book by American surgeon Atul Gawande. The book addresses end-of-life care, hospice care, and contains Gawande's reflections and personal stories. He suggests that medical care should focus on well-being rather than survival. *Being Mortal* has won awards, appeared on lists of best books, and been featured in a documentary. Lunch is included! RSVP with Polly: 413-212-1581, [pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us](mailto:pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us)

## Healthy Bones & Balance exercise classes

continue to be held at the Cummington Community House every Tuesday at 3pm and every Friday at 9:30am. Feel free to join at any time. The classes are free and ongoing. Classes are also scheduled at the same location on Mondays and Thursday at 9:30.

## 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](mailto:csolan@lifepathma.org).

## 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 email **croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov**. A suggested donation of \$3 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

The Plainfield Library hosts **drop-in tech support** every 3rd Thursday of each month from 5pm to 8pm. Tech Savvy Plainfield resident, Lee Locke-Hardy, has graciously volunteered her time for this. Thank you, Lee!

**The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN)** has a list of volunteers willing to provide rides to local vendors and medical appointments. Please call **413-634-0170** a few days ahead to schedule something. Leave a message with your contact information and details of your transportation needs.

**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**.

May your troubles be less,  
And your blessing be more.  
And nothing but happiness,  
Come through your door.

Irish Blessing



**The Connector Program** is run through the Northern Hilltown COA consortium. This program helps guide people in finding services beyond health insurance. If you need this kind of help, contact Jennifer O'Connell at **communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

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



### Happy Birthday!

Judith Gowdy, Richard Phelps, Robert Silberberg, Robert Kasper, Betsey Howes, John Westwood, Kay Gilbert, Kathryn Jensen, Jane Lewandowski, Meredith Howard, Andrea Lynes, Beverly Major, Joan Timberlake, Michael Brigley, James Markham, Sarah Stull, David Filkins



***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**



# PLEASE do your Power of Attorney now!

For more information, please revisit page 5 of the June 2022 newsletter:

<https://northernhilltownscoas.org/files>

For financial safety,  
Jean O'Neil  
TRIAD Committee member  
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com, 413-268-2228

## Seniors Aware of Fire Education

This month our focus is what to do and not to do treating burns and scalds.



1. First of all, remove the patient from the source of the burn.
2. Call 911 if the burn is deep and/or covering a large area.
3. Run COOL (not cold) water over the burn. This will cool down and stop the boiling fluid under the skin.
4. Do NOT put butter, grease or ointment on the burn.
5. Flush a chemical burn continuously with cool water.
6. Remove watches and jewelry from the burn area.
7. If possible, remove clothing from the burn area.
8. If clothing is stuck to the burn, leave it in place and cut away the clothing around the burn.
9. Again, do not hesitate to call 911 and seek medical attention for serious, deep, large area burn treatment.

Have a burn-free and sweet sugar season!

--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.*



Please join us!

### "Sharing Stories, Creating Change" Hilltown Exhibit Opening & Community Gathering

The Hampshire County Community Story Archive presents a collection of food stories sharing community wisdom for a better future.

Saturday, March 8th

1:30 to 3:30pm

Join in conversation with storytellers at 2pm

Meekins Library, Community Room  
2 Williams Street, Williamsburg

Free & open to the public.  
Refreshments will be served!

Visit [hcfpc.collaborative.org](https://hcfpc.collaborative.org) to learn more

*Funded by Mass in Motion, an initiative of MA Dept. of Public Health & Williamsburg Cultural Council, a local agency supported by MA Cultural Council.*



## Tech. Help and Training for March



### GREAT NEWS!

TechConnect will continue providing services. 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. Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and emailing **coatechconnect@gmail.com** is also a great way to reach us.

### 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. 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**

### 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 (3/7 and 3/21)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (3/12)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St. Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (3/20)

- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (3/20)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd. Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (3/27)
- Williamsburg  
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support  
2nd Tuesday 3/11 from 10 to Noon  
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support  
2nd Tuesday 3/11 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: drop-in tech support at COA office. Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

### Tech Training:

MUST pre-register for training no later than two days 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, March through August:

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

- 3/7 - Computer Maintenance
- 3/21 - Misinformation
- 4/4 - Social Media
- 4/18 - Cloud Basics
- 5/2 - Intro to Google Suite
- 5/16- Microsoft Word
- 6/6 - Microsoft Excel
- 6/20 - 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.

*Day Trip May 6.* One day at **Encore Casino in Everett, MA.** Free Slot play. Lunch on your own. Restaurants on site. Cost \$40. I need 15 to sign up to make this trip affordable. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to the address above by March 6.

*Day Trip May 19.* **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum & Maggiano's Little Italy.** Enjoy a delicious family-style lunch at Maggiano's. Tour three floors of galleries at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on your own. Price \$144. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March 24. **Waitlist only.**

*Day Trip June 8.* **Winnepesaukee Railroad.** Enjoy a complete turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train while touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price \$137. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 8. **Waitlist only.**

*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. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **A few seats remain.**

*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 above by May 28.

*Day Trip August 3.* Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red 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. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 1.

*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. **Note date change.**

*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. **As of March 2025, Diamond Tours**

**is expecting this trip to go, despite the hurricane damage around the area. Please stay tuned.**

*Day Trip Nov-Dec.* **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 TBD. Sundays.

## Good News for March 2025

Being a caregiver is usually not something you imagine, or plan for. It just happens. It could be your parents needing help, or your child becomes disabled, or your life partner's medical problems become debilitating. Your caregiver responsibilities can happen in an instant due to accident and/or injury. Or they can grow slowly, when the person you are helping begins needing more and more support. It can become overwhelming, and isolating where you focus on what needs to be done day by day.

How do you manage? What help is available?

We usually look to our health insurance because caregiver tasks include helping with personal care, meals, cleaning, grocery shopping, managing Rx, and keeping track of doctor appointments. For those of us over 65 who have Medicare as our primary health insurance, we are surprised and disappointed to discover that Medicare doesn't cover home care services or nursing home costs except for short periods of rehab, or after a hospitalization when your doctor can write orders for the VNA to deliver limited home care help.

In Massachusetts, we also have the State Home Care program which can provide ongoing home care services for residents over 60. These services include help with meals, housekeeping, personal care, transportation to medical appointments, lifeline services and a program called Options counseling to help understand other resources. Unfortunately, availability of workers for home care is limited, especially here in the hill towns. Highland Valley is the agency who oversees and pays for these home care services. Often authorized hours go unfilled because there aren't available workers.

So while Medicare and Highland Valley may pay for some home care, when our caregiver needs are greater, MassHealth is the resource that can help caregivers pay for the help they need.

MassHealth is medical insurance for those with limited financial resources. However, MassHealth has different income and asset eligibility limits for different programs. For caregivers, there are a couple of programs that help.

The PCA (Personal Care Attendant) program lets you hire your own worker, and Mass Health pays for a number of hours determined by a nursing assessment. So those who have significant medical problems, would qualify for more hours than those with less need. The worker you hire can be anyone (*cont. on next pg*)

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**Plainfield COA**

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

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

**Mary Potter, Secretary**  
mary@potterhomebuilders.com  
413-734-5430

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

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

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Newsletter Designer  
**Kristen Estelle**  
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

(cont. from previous pg) who is not married to the MassHealth member. The PCA program has higher income eligibility limits, and “excess” assets can be transferred before applying. This program pays for care at home, not nursing home. MassHealth also pays for the Adult Family Care Program, like the foster care system, a caregiver can be paid for managing the Mass Health member’s care at home. AFC pays the caregiver a tax free stipend for managing and coordinating services. The program also provides a RN and social worker to help the caregiver access other resources and services.

To enroll in either of these programs, the person needing help must be eligible for Mass Health.

You might contact your senior center or SHINE counselor to ask about Mass Health eligibility. Don’t assume you’re not eligible- it’s worth a conversation to explore the options.



## Spring/ Summer Clothing Exchange

**Saturday, April 26th, 9am-3pm**

Goshen Congregational Church  
45 Main St. Goshen



Get a new spring wardrobe for your family without spending a cent! Drop off your washed, gently-used men’s, women’s and children’s spring/summer clothing and accessories at the church on Wednesday 4/23 from 6-8pm or Friday 4/25 from 9am-3pm (you can also call Laura at 268-7005 to arrange a different time), then come back to shop on Sat. the 26th from 9am-3pm! All are invited to participate whether you donate clothes or not.