

Plainfield Council on Aging

December 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

Please know that our COA board members welcome guests and grandchildren to attend COA luncheons!



We are looking forward to celebrating the holiday season at our December 10th luncheon in Town Hall at noon.

We will be preparing lamb and beef, roasted potatoes, honey glazed carrots, broccoli salad, and dessert. Other desserts are welcome.

Gift bags will be handed out to everyone who leads us in a holiday song during dessert. Sheet music will be available.

We will also have a blood pressure clinic thanks to Kelly Hughes, our visiting nurse from the Northampton Health Department.

Please consider doing home kit Covid testing before attending COA events to curb any spread.



Conditional on RSVP's...a wreath and swag making workshop will take place in Town Hall on December 6th at noon.

Please let Polly know so she can collect enough materials for each person to make their own wreath by Wednesday December 3rd. Eggnog and donuts included.



Curious about the properties of different cooking oils? Want to know how to make handcreams using different oils?

Join Highland Valley Elder Services Nutritionist Brandon Walton on **December 16th or 17th (TBD...an email notice will inform you next week of the exact date) in Town Hall at 1 pm** for a presentation on the nutritional value of oils and how to use them when cooking and then learn how to make luscious, scented and, healthy handcreams using oils from Polly.

Please RSVP at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call 413-212-1581.

Healthy Bones and Balance class with Polly will resume on Tuesdays only beginning September 9th from 4-4:50pm at the Cummington Community House.

You are welcome to join at any time. The classes are free and ongoing. Classes with Jill are scheduled at the same location on Mondays and Thursday at 9:30 and all are welcome to join her as well.



Tech Connect continues until the remaining funds are exhausted.

Whether you want to learn a new skill or need an upgrade, you can still get free equipment like iPads, Chromebooks, PC laptops, and even a desktop computer.

Email Nancy Brown at coatechtrainer@gmail.com or call 413-296-5080 to make a request. Or go to <https://northernhilltownscoas.org/> and submit your request through a form.

All ages are welcome
to attend this holiday concert
sponsored by the COA.
It's free, however donations are welcome.



ASCAP Award Winning
Singer Songwriter Guitarist

Laura Wetzler

"Great voice, great writing!" WBAI NYC
"Superb performances" New York Times
"One of the Very Best!" Pete Seeger

Worldbeat Songs of Resistance, Love, Peace, & The Holidays!



Photo by Frank Aronson

Special Guest
Jazz Bassist Extraordinaire
Wes Brown

Sat. Dec. 13 at 2pm

Plainfield Congregational Church

Main St Plainfield Ma Sponsored by The Plainfield COA Free Concert Donations Welcome

**The next Foot Care Clinic at the
Cummington Community House
is scheduled for Tuesday January 6th.**

Please call Piper Sagan at 413-522-8432 to schedule an appointment (\$50) or a home visit (\$80/session).

**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, SNAP, Social Security. Finding resources so you can continue to live independently at home. Programs for home repairs & transportation assistance. Plus more....

**Jen can be reached at
413-296-4536 ext. 110
or communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

***Funded by a grant from HVES
through funding under the
Federal Older Americans Act***



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.

Or go to www.plainfield-ma.us/council-aging/page/food-meal-programs

**And, if you wish to help a neighbor by
volunteering to pick up food for them,
please let Polly know.**

**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 413-634-2262 or email her at croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov.

A suggested donation of \$4 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

**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.



**Medicare Open Enrollment for
2026 is upon us. It began on
October 15th and ends
on December 7th.**

**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**

call Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center 413-238-5511 or email her at bthomas@hchcweb.org

**Ongoing Programs, Activities & Resources
on the Plainfield Town Website**

Need a friend or support?

Join Polly and/or a nurse for a coffee hour. Schedule a time convenient for you by calling 413-212-1581 or email pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us.



December's Happy Birthdays

**Sally Silberberg, Barbara Westwood,
Philip Alessio, Cathy Shugg,
Patricia Beckwith, Phillip Lococo,
John Burrell, David Crowell,
Donald Shelton, Kate Darling,
Charles King, Alexandra Nelson,
Robert Sadowski, Donald Walters,
Donald Stewart, Howard Bronstein,
Terry Taylor, Steven Lamontagne,
Jon Lynes, Paul Dileo.**



Regional News

SENIORS AWARE OF FIRE EDUCATION

The holiday season is upon us and most of these holiday observances involve electric lights and candles. Here are a few things you can do to keep your celebration bright and safe.



For indoor lights and decorations:

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace lighting with frayed wires, broken sockets, switches, plugs.
- Never overload outlets.
- Use no more than three (3) strings of lights on a single extension cord.
- Remember to turn off the tree lights and all electric decorations before going to bed.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.
- Never use lit candles in the tree or near live or other flammable decorations.
- Keep lit candles at least a foot (12 inches) from flammable items.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended.

For outdoor lights and decorations:

- Only use electric decorations that are rated for outdoor use.
- Plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Use electric connection protectors.
- Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Keep the holidays bright SAFELY!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Depts
The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many area fire departments and the MA Dept of Fire Services

CREDIT - SCORE!

You probably know by now that your credit score can be a VIN (Very Important Number) (yes, I just made that up) to you. Our three credit reporting companies calculate a score to determine how good a risk you are for some entity who might loan you money. A low score of 300 probably means you won't get that housing or car loan you want or a lower rate on insurance, but a score of 700 or higher probably means you will.

While the report itself is free, you can find out your score by going to the web pages of the credit reporting agencies and paying a small fee.. OR, your bank or credit card company may give you that score periodically.

This is private information! How can they do this!? What right do they have?!? A money lender, such as a credit card company, wants to know how your credit life is going, what kind of risk they are taking in loaning you money. Therefore they have a right to periodically check you out, a soft inquiry that does not affect your score. Then it is just a service for them to share that score with you.

Is there any risk in this? No, if you make sure you are on the actual credit card site, and if you follow another link from that website, make sure it is a legitimate site. Call the card's customer service if you have any doubts. Also, the score may not be exactly what you would get from going to the credit bureau yourself, as the score may come from a slightly different calculation method. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com

The November newsletter had a good article by the District Attorney's office on freezing your credit reports. Because we say to do this all the time, it was good to save that article.

Cheers,
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com; 413-268-2228

On the Road Again...

TRIPS IN 2025/2026



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

For more info call 413-296-4291

Email: francine.frenier@gmail.com

Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

**Hamilton at the Bushnell on Wednesday,
November 12 with the Holyoke Senior Center.
Call 413-322-5625 for more information. Tickets
are going fast.**

**There are day trips to Radio City Rockettes and
NYC on your own-- all leaving from Chicopee.
If interested, call 413-593-3939 for more
information.**

*****2026 Multi Day trips to Washington DC
and Mackinac Island *****

**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.

**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. Pre-
show lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$TBD.
Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and
mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

**Day Trip July TBD 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 6, 2026. Those
on the cancelled trip from July 2025 will be
given first chance to sign up.

**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
quickly filled up. Please email to be added to
the wait list.**



**Photo from October 16, 2025 event
enjoyed by a large group of
attendees.**

The Lumberjack Feud Supper Show had
40 participants. The event was exciting
and won rave reviews. It truly was

The WILDEST Show In Town.

GOOD NEWS FOR DECEMBER 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

As you read this.... Open Enrollment is over for another year.....unless you are one of the BlueCross PPO Advantage members who got a “termination” letter saying your Plan was ending December 31st. If that’s the case, you actually have more time to make a decision about your coverage.

If you do nothing.... and December 31st comes and goes.... and your PPO plan ends.... you will automatically revert to “original Medicare A&B without Rx coverage.” But you will have until February 28th to pick a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage.

And with luck, there should be SHINE appointments available in January and February for help if you need it. Remember if you wanted to pick up a Medicare Supplement plan (that we used to call Medex), you can do that anytime during the year!

For folks who have a United Health/AARP Medicare Advantage plan, there’s another problem.

You may have received a letter saying that Brigham and Woman’s medical providers (including hospitals) will not be in network for United Health next year.

For more information call the number on the back of your UHC card to ask if you can use your doctor and/or hospital and be billed at the out of network co-pay?

It might be time to dump UHC and either revert to original Medicare A&B and pick up a D plan for Rx.....or switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan. Not all Advantage plans work well in our hill towns. Health New England and BlueCross usually are best. You should have until March 31st to do this.

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
- Being 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 communityconnector@gmail.com

LAST MINUTE MEDICARE COVERAGE RESOURCE

By Adam Frank, Councils on Aging and Grants Program Coordinator, Executive Office of Aging & Independence

With so many residents seeking help to review their Medicare coverage options, SHINE appointments are filling quickly—and we want to make sure everyone still has access to reliable information and support.

To help meet this growing demand, the state SHINE team partnered with AARP to create an educational video that offers an overview of Medicare and the Open Enrollment process. The video explains coverage options and demonstrates how to use the Medicare Plan Finder to compare Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans available in your area.

You can watch the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFgjEI3-SZO>

TECHNOLOGY HELP FOR DECEMBER



Tech Support home visit available by appointment

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com for appt.

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. Leave a message at 413-296-5080, or use the online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org.

Drop in Centers (no appointment needed)

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Chesterfield, **every Tuesday** from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 12/18

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, usually 3rd Thursday, 12/18

ONE WEEK EARLY DUE TO CHRISTMAS

Williamsburg Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30, 2nd Tuesday, 12/9

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 12/9

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri eadaneri@gmail.com.

NOTE: Drop-in Centers in Cummington and Plainfield have been discontinued due to low demand. Town residents should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield site.

Internet Hotspots

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 internet and work in most areas in the Hilltowns. If you are interested, please contact us by phone 413-296-5080. Unlimited data plans are available through February. At this point, funding for hotspots will end and residents can purchase their own SIM card for \$30/month from Mint Mobile or the carrier of their choice.



Men's and women's haircuts, manicures, colors, facials, and other hair care options are being offered at Smith Vocational High School. Appointment times have changed to Tuesday and Thursday from 9- 11 am. Appointments are available now through mid-May.

\$5.00 is the cost for a haircut. Please call for other prices. The Smith Vocational Cosmetology students provide the services with their teacher Ms. Daniels alongside.

Simply call 413-587-1414 ext. 3531 for an appointment.

The Salon is located Smith Vocational High School in Room 124 of Building A at 80 Locust St., Northampton.

ALL ARE WELCOME



**PLAINFIELD COUNCIL ON AGING
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
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**

Scam Alert!

Medicare Imposter Schemes



WHAT THEY SAY

- They need your Medicare number to send you a new card.
- They threaten to take away your benefits if you don't sign up for their plan.
- They offer "free" medical equipment or supplies.
- They say your doctor asked them to call.

WHAT TO DO

- Just hang up!
- Medicare will not call you asking for your Medicare, Social Security number or personal information.
- Report suspicious calls & messages.

**Medicare
1-800-633-4227**

**Senior Medicare
Patrol
1-800-892-0890**

*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
Attorney General.**

