

Plainfield Council on Aging



April 2026 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 the COA luncheons!

Join us for our monthly luncheon on Wednesday April 8th in Town Hall at noon.

The menu consists of Ham, scalloped potatoes, carrots, asparagus, rolls and dessert. Additional Desserts and donations are welcome. Kelly Hughes will present on Step Safely: Caring for Your Feet to Prevent Falls and will also be on hand to take blood pressure readings.

A COA Consortium Resource, Job & Volunteer Fair is planned for April 25th at the New Hingham Elementary School in Chesterfield from 10am to 2pm.

Many local institutions will be on hand to inform attendees of the services they provide in our community. In addition, job and volunteer opportunities with COA's in our hill towns and the service organizations at the fair will be advertised.

Please see the regional section of this newsletter for more details.



A free guided tour of Arrowhead, Herman Melville's historic home and farm is planned for Friday April 17th from 11am to noon. It is located at 780 Holmes Road in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

At least 12 participants are needed for this event. Please RSVP with Polly at 413-212-1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us



A discussion series around the book "Let's Talk about Death over Dinner," by Michael Hebb, will be offered at the Cummington Community House in April and May.

"Given the right framing, a "difficult" conversation does not need to be difficult. It can be liberating. It can even be transformative," Michael Hebb.

Death Doula Stacey Mackowiak will lead us through a "guided conversation that transforms a seemingly difficult conversation into one of deep engagement, insight, and empowerment."

Michael's book will be provided at an introductory session on Thursday April 16th from 4-5pm. On Thursdays May 7th and 14th dinners will be held from 4:30-6:30pm to share our thoughts on questions posed in the book.

Participation is limited to 15 individuals. Please RSVP with Polly at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call 413-212-1581.

All individuals in the 7 COA consortium Hilltowns are welcome to participate. (Williamsburg, Goshen, Cummington, Plainfield, Worthington, Chesterfield, and Westhampton).

This is an event funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Council on Aging



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging

Everyone is welcome to attend a special showing of the film INDIGENOUS VOICES on APRIL 4 at 2:00 pm at the Town Hall.

It'll be a fun way to learn about local Indian History with 10 short interviews with your Native neighbors. Q & A discussion after, resources for further learning and popcorn provided. Bring your own seat cushion.



This film was produced by the Nolumbeka project, Robbie Leppzer and Jennifer Lee and has the support of 50 Local Cultural Councils.

Full Moon Movement Theater presents a solo performance by Richard Larson on April 11th in Goshen Town Hall at 2:30 pm.

Richard taught Tai Chi for us last year. His body work has morphed into dance, body mine, and clowning. He is offering a free performance while accepting donations to benefit the Goshen Library.

Join us at Smith College to visit the Art Museum and Botanic Garden on April 21st.



Both venues are always free to visit. We will gather at the museum entrance at 11 am and browse freely until 1 pm when we will stroll over the Campus Center Café for lunch on the COA. Afterwards, participants may leisurely enjoy the Botanic Garden grounds and conservatory (which is open until 4pm)

Tech Connect provides one-on-one training in your home or free equipment like iPads, Chromebooks, PC laptops, desktop computers. 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.

The Young at Heart Chorus is performing at the Academy of Music on April 26th at 3 pm (doors open at 2:30).

[Tickets are \\$25.16-\\$57.90 and can be purchased here.](#)

The original Young at Heart Chorus welcomes its newest counterpart, Y@H NYC, to the stage. After 44 years based in Western Massachusetts, Young at Heart has launched its first-ever satellite group in New York City.

Since September 2025, singers have been meeting weekly at the Abrons Art Center – part of the Henry Street Settlement on Manhattan's Lower East Side – to build this exciting new chapter of the Young at Heart story.

For this special performance, the joint choirs will present songs inspired by, connected to or written in New York City, while Y@H NYC brings an eclectic repertoire including music by Richard Hell and the Voidoids, Stevie Wonder, Joan Armatrading, Jelly Roll, and more.



Looking Ahead

Mark our calendars for the Plainfield's Annual Town Meeting on May 2nd at the Safety Complex and starting at 1 pm.



And voting will take place in Town Hall from noon to 6 pm

Celebrate Mother's Day at the Berkshire Botanic Garden on May 9th.

Admission is free and everyone can enjoy SpringFest which features food trucks and plenty of activities for little ones like a petting zoo, pony rides, face painting, classic lawn games, and more. A traditional Maypole dance also adds a whimsical, old-world flourish to the day's lineup.

In addition, you can peruse their "Plant Sale" which starts May 8th and runs through the weekend.



The next Foot Care Clinic at the Cummington Community House is scheduled for Friday May 1st. Note the new day!

An additional Foot Care Clinic is now available at the Chesterfield Community Center every second Wednesday of each Month.

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.

Healthy Bones and Balance class with Polly are on Tuesdays 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.

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.

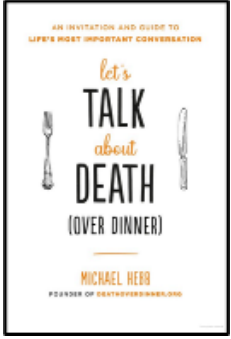


April's Happy Birthdays

Susan Allen, Clara Bouricius, Harold Westwood, Anne Marie Barbanti, Ellen Baer, Dandy Bro, Lee Monroe, Francis Blair, Patrick Williamson, Bonita Benoit, Timothy Mead, Michael Petrilli, Maria Stuart, Gary Rzab, Ruth Osgood, Christine Stockman, Elric Walker, Mary Benisek, Norman Bland, Amanda Walters, Elaine Sidney, Anne Williamson, Rosealeta Chadwick Beckwith



April Regional News



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Participation is limited to 15 individuals. We still have space. Please RSVP with Polly at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call 413-212-1581.

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SAVE THE DATE

Hilltown Resource, Volunteer & Job Fair

Whether you are seeking assistance, wanting a way to give back or looking for part-time work, this fair has something for everyone regardless of age.

Please join us! ALL community members encouraged to attend

Saturday, **April 25, 2026**

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**New Hingham Elementary School
30 Smith Rd, Chesterfield, MA**

Why Come? Our hilltowns thrive when we show up for one another. Your impact can be profound. Help strengthen the economy and networks that enrich our community and serve older adults.

What You Will Find? We will have information brochures, limited **tech help, blood pressure clinic**, and HEN program help and job **applications**. There also are **giveaways and door prizes**: Campground stay, Williamsburg Market gift certificates, stained glass, and others.

Participating organizations include:

- Hilltown CDC,**
- Highland Valley Elder Services,**
- HEN Program,**
- Foothills Health District, SHINE,**
- Trinity Health, Service Net,**
- TechConnect,**
- Veterans Affairs,**
- Elder Care Access,**
- New England Wound Center,**
- Consumer Protection,**
- Funeral Consumer Alliance**
- Blood Pressure Clinic, and more**

GOOD NEWS FOR APRIL 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

Finding home care resources can be a challenge.

If you need a little help...like grocery shopping, rides to medical appointments, meal prep, trips to the bank, or help remembering to take Rx, there are several affordable resources available.

If you need help daily for personal care like bathing, dressing as well as help with laundry and meal prep, then finding a reliable, skilled provider can be more complex.

Let's start with those of us who need a little bit of help to keep ahead of housework, laundry and making meals. And perhaps you want to give up driving, but still need to get to medical appointments, or out to do errands.

Affordable resources might include home care services from Highland Valley Elder Services, 586-2000 or the HEN (Hilltown Elder Network) program at the Hilltown CDC 296-4232.

Your COA or senior center might be able to help with transportation to appointments and help with meals. They also can recommend ways to get you started thinking about what kind of help you need, and who provides it. Most of these services are free or at a low cost.

For even more help understanding what's available, call the Community Connector, 413-296-4536 ext. 110, or send an email to communityconnectjo@gmail.com.

Highland Valley has a free consultation service called Options Counseling which can give you an overview of resources for your particular situation.

The next challenge is paying for home care services.

Home care help can be paid for a number of ways.

1. Medicare pays for home care services if you are discharged home after rehab or hospital for a planned surgery or after an unplanned medical event. Your doctor can "write orders" for OT, PT or RN. While helpful, these services are not designed to give you daily assistance and are short term, usually for 2-4 weeks.
2. If you need more help and are an eligible veteran, you may be able to get ongoing services through the VA. Call your senior center to see when you can speak with your veteran's agent.
3. While Medicare doesn't pay for ongoing home care help, MassHealth does. And you may be eligible for MassHealth benefits. Check with your SHINE counselor for eligibility requirements. Our SHINE counselor for the hill towns is Caroline Solan at Highland Valley 413-586-2000 or you can call the Regional SHINE office at Lifepath in Greenfield, 413-773-5555.
4. Long Term Insurance policies, if you have one, pay for home care benefits. So dust off that policy you began years ago and read the contract to see how to access your benefit.
5. Paying privately is expensive, but if you want to stay home safe and get the care you need, this may be the time to consider it.

Next month we'll talk about how to look for home care services providers. Meanwhile, don't miss an opportunity to see what's available at the **April 25th Resources Fair which is being held at New Hingham School** in Chesterfield.

See you there!

DEMENTIA TALK – FOR CAREGIVERS

Are you a caregiver of a person who has dementia? Caregiving is hard work; education, support, and community can all have a positive impact! Heidi Zahra, MSN RN, is a faculty lecturer at the Elaine Marieb College of Nursing from UMass Amherst.

Zahra will speak with caregivers on the topic of sleep, a very common challenge for caregivers of people with dementia. She will also share additional educational offerings and programs for care partners. This is a nice way to connect with other caregivers and share ideas and stories.

WHAT IS THE NORTHERN HILLTOWNS CONSORTIUM?



The Northern Hilltowns Consortium (NHC) is comprised of the Directors/Coordinators of seven Northern Hilltowns – Williamsburg, Westhampton, Chesterfield, Goshen, Cummington, Worthington and Plainfield.

This group of COAs has been meeting monthly since the late 1990's. It is a partnership, collaboration, support group, network of dedicated, knowledgeable, and highly effective COA leaders. The group focuses on ways to improve quality of life, help maintain independence, reduce isolation and loneliness to support aging in place in the hilltowns.

The Consortium has had success in applying for grants over the years because our small towns collaborate. This funding benefits our seven-town region, most notably bringing you the TechConnect Program (nearly \$300,000 in 2023). The NHC has been awarded Service Incentive Grants (SIG) since 2015 to develop and coordinate services in our region. For several years we have also received Highland Valley Elder Service grants for our Community Connector Program, intergenerational and fitness programming. The group has hosted region wide events, such as the successful "Let's Have a Conversation about Memory", featuring Dr. Rebecca Starr. NHC collaborates to get grants and create worthwhile events to bring to you and our communities.

The NHC website contains every COA's newsletter each month. We encourage you to read all or some of them. It also has a variety of information about resources, tech services, and town COA details. Please visit the website at <https://www.northernhilltownscoas.org>.

All seven of the Consortium Councils on Aging will be at the April 25th Resource, Volunteer and Job Fair

FREE GUIDED TOUR - MELVILLE HOMESTEAD



A free guided tour of Arrowhead, Herman Melville's historic home and farm, is planned for Friday April 17th from 11am to noon. It is located at 780 Holmes Road in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. At least 12 participants are needed for this event. Please RSVP with Polly at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call 413-212-1581

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

The Hilltown Elder Network (HEN program) is looking to help our Hilltown seniors! If you are in need of assistance with house cleaning, meal prep, grocery shopping, or transportation please call the number below to sign up. It is a free service, if income eligible, provided by the Hilltown CDC.

If you are a senior looking to make a little extra money (\$22 an hour) while helping out a community member, please call! Hours are flexible and can be as little as two hours a week. We have some HEN caregivers that are also receive HEN services.

We will be having a job fair on Saturday, April 25th from 10-2 at New Hingham Elementary school. The Hilltown Elder Network will have a booth with all the info you will need to get started as a caregiver or sign up to begin receiving help. Feel free to contact Jennifer O'Connell at 413-296-4536 ext. 110 or email at jennifero@hilltowncdc.org for more information or to sign up sooner than the job fair.

On the Road Again.. TRIPS IN 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

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 NOW to the address above. Wait list available.

Day Trip May 8th, Friday, FDR Homestead, Library and Val Kill. Contact Forbes Library 413-587-1011.

Day Trip June 11th, Thursday, Million Dollar Quartet play. New London Barn Playhouse presents a jukebox musical that dramatizes a real and remarkable moment in music history. Four future legends, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis happened to gather in the same studio. Includes a buffet luncheon at Colby-Sawyer College. Price \$177. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail NOW to the address above. I need 10 more to make the trip a-Go.

Day Trip June 23rd, Tuesday, Portsmouth Harbor Cruise and Fosters' Lobster/Clambake. Before the Portsmouth Harbor cruise, enjoy lunch at Fosters in York Maine offering a choice of lobster or BBQ chicken or Vegetarian option. Price \$160. Make a payable to Landmark Tours and mail NOW to the address above.

Day Trip July 12, 13, 14 or 15 Tall Ships in Boston
Contact First Choice Tours 1-413-665-9090.

Day Trip August 3rd, Monday Encore Casino. \$50 Cost Includes: round trip bus transportation, driver gratuity & \$20 in free slot play. Meals on your own. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 6, 2026. 35 passengers are needed for this trip to go.

Day Trip September TBD Big E.

Day Trip Nov/Dec TBD Holiday trip

TECH CONNECT
SUCCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS



TECH HELP FOR APRIL

TechHub workshops and tech support sessions are returning to Chesterfield. Alternate Friday workshops are 1-hour beginning at 10:30 am. Technical support drop-in sessions follow from 11:30-1:30. All sessions are held downstairs at 400 Main St., Chesterfield. Classes are free. No need to register. See below for date and topic changes from previous newsletters.

Workshops

April 3 Online Safety & Avoiding Misinformation

April 17 Introduction to Google Workspace

May 1 Cloud Basics & Google Drive

May 15 MS Excel Basics

May 29 Windows 11 Operating System Basics

June 12 Designing with Canva

June 26 Zoom Basics

Tech Support home visit is available by appointment. Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com for help.

Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops 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.

Drop-in Centers (no appointment needed)

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 4/16

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 4/23

Williamsburg

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30, 2nd Tuesday, 4/14

Nash Hill Place Resident tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 4/14

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

NOTE: Plainfield/Cummington residents should call 413-296-5080 for an appt or use Chesterfield site.

Internet Hotspots

Hotspot funding ended. Call 413-296-5080 for help on finding the right low- cost internet plan for you.



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304 MAIN ST.
PLAINFIELD, MA 01070

PLAINFIELD COA

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413-634-2290

SCAM ALERT!

The Northwestern District Attorney's Office
Consumer Protection Unit offers free
assistance to residents.

We Can Help With:

- Disputes between residents and businesses
- Preparing consumers before major purchases
- Protecting individuals from fraud, identity theft, and scams
- Educating the public on consumer protection

**For a consumer question or
complaint please call:**

Northampton
(413) 586-9225
Greenfield
(413) 774-3186

Working in cooperation with the Office of
the Massachusetts Attorney General



SCAM ALERT!

Concerned about identity theft?
Consider **FREEZING YOUR CREDIT.**

A credit freeze limits outside access to
your credit reports. It can help prevent
someone from opening new accounts
and loans in your name.

Call the credit agencies for a **FREE**
credit freeze:

Equifax 1-800-685-1111
Experian 1-888-397-3742
Transunion 1-888-909-8872

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