

Plainfield Council on Aging



May 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

You can now register for COA events on our town website by [following this link!](#)

Directions are on the website. It is extremely helpful when preparing for any occasion to know how many people plan to attend so the amount of supplies needed can be determined ahead of the event. It is also mandated by the state that attendance for all COA activities be documented and submitted in an annual report to AGE (aka, The States Executive Office of Elder Affairs) who grant funds to COA's statewide. If you cannot access the registration form you can always call or email Polly at 413-212-1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us to sign up for activities.



Town Voting will take place this Saturday, May 2nd, from noon to 6pm in Town Hall.

And...mark your calendars for Plainfield's Annual Town Meeting on May 30th (date changed!) at the Safety Complex and starting at 1 pm.



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

Join us for our monthly luncheon on Wednesday May 13th in Town Hall at noon.

We will be serving spaghetti and meatballs, garlic bread, salad and dessert. Additional desserts and donations are welcome.

Rob Shearer will present on Fire Safety and Kelly Hughes will also be on hand to take blood pressure readings.

A special workshop on making beach themed acrylic art will take place in Town Hall on May 28th from 3-5 pm.



Lisa Mendel from Mendel's Stained-Glass Studio will guide us in this activity. Supplies will be provided but you are welcome to bring any small beach items you would like to include in your project.

Please RSVP.

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.



ELDER LAW PRESENTATION

**May 21, 2 p.m., Goshen Town Hall.
Hosted by the
Cummington & Goshen COA's**

Atty. James Loughman from Donovan, O'Connor & Dodgig, LLP will present on the following topics: Veteran Affairs Financial Benefits, how to protect your home and assets, power of attorney and health care proxies, reverse mortgages, Homestead and Life Estates, and Medicare/Medicaid changes.

See additional information in the regional section of this newsletter.

**Looking Ahead
(register/RSVP online in June).**



**Want to learn how to make a
Northeast Woodland
Indigenous style basket
made of Ash bark?**

Jeniffer Lee will guide us in learning this skill at the Plainfield Ball Park on Saturday June 6th from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

**Limited to 12-15 participants with a
suggested donation of \$20.00.
Lunch is included**

**A very special town wide concert featuring
Appalachian Music is planned for Father's
Day, June 21st, at 3pm in the Plainfield
Congregational Church.**

**This is sponsored by the Plainfield Cultural
Council and the COA.**

Carrie and Michael Kline will perform along with Jim Armenti and Joe Blumenthal. With their focus on West Virginia history and tradition, the Klines have performed and recorded music and oral history all over West Virginia and Western Massachusetts. Their voices carry songs with truth and authenticity, and their guitar accompaniments and haunting harmonies get you where you live



**Jim Armenti, Michael Kline,
Carrie Kline & Joe Blumenthal**

**All are welcome to attend this event.
Donations are appreciated.**



**Hampshire Elder Law Program (HELP) is a
program of the Hampshire County Bar
Association which provides civil legal
services at no cost to low-income seniors,
60 years of age and older.**

Services provided include bankruptcy, consumer protection, guardianship, health care proxies, powers of attorney, probate of estates, and wills.

**For more information, contact the
Hampshire County Bar Association by
phone at (413) 586- 8729 or Email:
hcba@crocker.com**



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.**

*I have a poem
on my refrigerator
at home that
reminds me of how
to step into living each day.*

*It is the philosophy I choose.
Everyone is entitled to their own.
I believe Understanding what
motivates anyone to choose as
they do is key to having
compassion. Compassion is the
feeling that can extend kindness.
I choose to extend kindness to
you all ~
With Love, Your friend Polly
(The poem is on the next page)*

Wage Peace
*By Judyth Hill**

*Wage peace with your breath.
Breathe in firemen and rubble,
breathe out whole buildings
and flocks of redwing blackbirds.*

*Breathe in terrorists and breathe out sleeping
children
and freshly mown fields.
Breathe in confusion and breathe out
maple trees.*

*Breathe in the fallen
and breathe out lifelong friendships intact.*

*Wage peace with your listening:
hearing sirens, pray loud.
Remember your tools:
flower seeds, clothes pins, clean rivers.*

*Make soup.
Play music, learn the word for thank you in
three languages.
Learn to knit, and make a hat.
Think of chaos as dancing raspberries,
imagine grief as the outbreath of beauty
or the gesture of fish.
Swim for the other side.*

Wage peace.

*Never has the world seemed so fresh and
precious.
have a cup of tea and rejoice.
Act as if armistice has already arrived.
Celebrate today.*

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.



May's Happy Birthdays

Emily Cavin, James Shearer, Lori Lamontagne, David Kramer, Margaret Keller, Lynn Fate, Maggie Hendricks, Hendrik Messenger, Earl Walrath, Darlene Graham, Denise Sessions, Barbara Threatt, Ellen Dupont, William Sheppard, Mary Potter, Jewel Green, Margaret Connell, Nikki Smith, Gerald Connell.



May Regional News

ELDER LAW ISSUES



Local seniors are welcome to come learn about Elder Law issues at a **free** event. This presentation is hosted by the Goshen and Cummington COA's on May 21, 2026. It is being held at 2:00pm in the Goshen Town Hall.

Atty. James Loughman from Donovan, O'Connor & Dodgig, LLP will be the volunteer speaker.

This event is part of the statewide Elder Law Education Program presented by the Massachusetts Bar Association (MBA). Their education program corresponds with the publication of a revised and expanded "2026 Elder Law Education Guide," the 17th edition of the resource guide. The guide will be available at the event and is online at the MBA's companion website, www.massbar.org/elderlaw.



The topics to be discussed this year include:

- Veteran Affairs Financial Benefits,
- how to protect your home and assets,
- power of attorney and health care proxies,
- reverse mortgages,
- Homestead and Life Estates, and
- Medicare/Medicaid changes.

For more information about the presentation, contact Kerry at coa@goshen-ma.us or Chrisoula at croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS - A FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM

Strength In Numbers- A Fall Prevention Program will be a six-week program starting on May 4 at the Goshen Town Hall at 1:30-2:30pm.



Taught by Physical and Occupational Therapists from the Cooley Dickinson VNA, this

free program covers topics including:

- determining our own risk of falling,
- strength and balance activities to do at home,
- managing medications,
- visual concerns and age-related changes,
- home safety recommendations.

Practical items will be distributed free of charge to participants.

To reap the full benefits of the program, participants are asked to commit to all six sessions if possible. We will meet on six consecutive Mondays with the exception of Memorial Day on May 25.

This program is **free** thanks to grants from the Eversource Energy Foundation and the Roy Foundation.



To **sign up** please contact Kerry Normandin **by April 29** at coa@goshen-ma.us or call 268-8236 ext 118.

We welcome and encourage older adults from all the Hilltowns to attend.

GOOD NEWS FOR MAY 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

When looking for home care help, it's important to understand that Massachusetts does not regulate these businesses unless they have contracts with MassHealth, other State agencies, or are certified Medicare home care providers. Being regulated means they have to meet standards of care in order to keep their certification.

Of approximately 400 home care companies in Massachusetts, only about 1/3 of them are subject to regulation. Standards of care include CORI checking their employees, supervising them on the job, and providing ongoing training to ensure a level of skill. So, that's a good thing.

But odds are, you are more likely to find a company that is not regulated. Does this matter?

Depends on what kind of help you need, and perhaps how long you expect to need it. Because home care help is expensive and regulated companies can bill Medicare, and MassHealth, and may have contracts with the VA or State Home Care agencies like Highland Valley. Which means there may be help paying for the services you need.

Unregulated companies are most likely to be private pay only. Cost of care varies depending on where you live, what you need and how many hours per day, or a week you need.

One good thing in favor of the private pay providers.... the customer is always right, because if you're not happy, you can take your business elsewhere, so these home care providers are highly motivated to please.

While the regulated, certified providers must meet standards of care, they sometimes have issues when it comes to customer service. So there's a trade off.

Let me say that there are many Certified/Regulated home care providers that provide excellent customer service and understand the importance of maintaining a reputation for same. You might look for well established companies who have been in business long enough to establish a reputation for excellence.

Where do you go to look for these providers? You might start with the [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) web site. This site lists certified Medicare providers and starts by asking your zip code to narrow the search for those companies near you.

The Massachusetts Home Care Aide Council also has a helpful web site. This council is a non-profit association of home care agencies that provides training opportunities as well as guidelines for standards of care.

Mass Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Directory helps those who would like to become a PCA worker, those looking for PCA training.... and those looking to hire a PCA worker.

You also might speak with your doctor's office, hospital or rehab for a recommendation, especially if you think Medicare might pay for services.

To get you started.... Your senior center may be able to recommend several home care providers. A lot will depend on what kind of help you need, and whether or not there are ways to get help paying for it.

Next month we'll explore who pays for home care help and whether or not you might qualify for MassHealth benefits.

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 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.

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 check payable to Landmark Tours and mail NOW to the address above. Wait list only.

Day Trip July 12, 13, 14 or 15, Tall Ships in Boston
Contact First Choice Tours 1-413-665-9090.
Also, Southamptton Senior Center has a trip scheduled for July 13th. \$ 157. Departs at 6:00 AM. Call 413-529-2105 to sign up.

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 a check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 6, 2026. 19 more passengers are needed for this trip to go.

Day Trip September, TBD Big E.

Day Trip, December 8th, Merry Christmazz Holiday Variety Show. Jimmy Mazz performs seasonal traditional and contemporary tunes from various artists. Yankee Pot Roast lunch and show at Storrowton's Carriage House, W. Springfield. A drive through Bright Nights follows. Make an \$80 check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by October 6, 2026.

TECH CONNECT
SUCCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS



TECH HELP FOR MAY

TechHub workshops and tech support sessions
Chesterfield workshops are one hour beginning at 10:30 am and technical support will follow from 11:30-1:30. Sessions will be held at 400 Main St., Chesterfield, downstairs. Classes are free and there is no need to register. Meekins Library also will host TechHub for workshops and tech support sessions.

Workshops in Chesterfield

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

Workshops at Meekins Library (Workshop at 1:30 followed by 1 hour of tech support)

May 11 Google Workspaces

June 1 Cloud Basics

Tech Support home visit appointments available.

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit.

Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops and iPads.

If you are looking for a free refurbished laptop or iPad, please call 413-296-5080 and leave us a message. We will offer free devices while our supply lasts. If you have received a device and are not using it, please call our number to arrange a return so someone else can use it.

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, 5/21

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 5/28

Williamsburg

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
(call library for latest information)

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 5/12

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



Organizing Partners:

Cummington
Tree Alliance

HILLTOWN
VISION



CUMMINGTON
CULTURAL DISTRICT

Cross Pollination

Community Biodiversity Program Cummington

Learn More:



Announcing **Cross Pollination**, a participatory, community-wide biodiversity restoration and education initiative

- **Climate-Resilient Tree and Shrub Planting**
- **Community Orchard and Historic Garden**
- **Pollinator Corridor**
- **Experiential Learning, Interpretive Signage & Educational Guides**

More details and invitations to take part coming soon!

Contact: cummingtontrees@gmail.com
cummingtonculture.art/cross-pollination-2026

Support:

GRASS
ROOTS
FUND



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413-570-5544

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

SCAM ALERT!

If someone knocks on your door saying they have "leftover asphalt" and they offer to pave, repair, or seal your driveway today, **it's a scam!**

- Resist the pressure to act quickly even if it sounds like a good deal
- Get a written contract even for small repairs
- Never pay for the entire project up front
- Get at least 3 written estimates before hiring someone to do work at your home
- Report suspicious paving crews to police

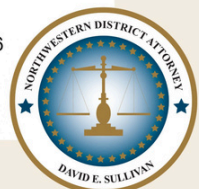


**Northwestern
District Attorney's
Consumer Protection Unit**

Northampton
(413) 586-9225

Greenfield
(413) 774-3186

Working in cooperation with the Office of
the Massachusetts Attorney General



***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