

Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



March 2022

Is this Newsletter Important to You? Let us know!

This COA newsletter, "Moving Forward", is funded by the Service Incentive Grant (SIG) from Massachusetts and managed by the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs. As each fiscal year comes to a close, we need to find ways to communicate the value of the newsletter to our funders. And who better than YOU to do that? Has this newsletter been important to you over the years -- particularly during the isolation and stress of the pandemic? If so, would you be willing to write a brief testimonial? Please contact Amy Landau, COA Coordinator at coa@westhamptonma.org or call (413) 203-9808 and leave your name and phone number so she can get back to you. Thank you for considering!



discussion will include methods for making the right decisions about possessions, how and when to let go and how to avoid the most common mistakes within the process. We will touch on decluttering basics, and help you to develop the skills you need to begin the process of downsizing with a sense of purpose and joy rather than dread and uncertainty. It's all within your reach. Why not join the discussion? If you are already on the COA email list, you will receive a reminder email with the Zoom link on the week of March 10th. If you are NOT already on the COA email list, please email coa@westhamptonma.org for the Zoom link.

Programs

Chair Yoga with Angelica Lopez in the Town Hall Thursdays at 9 AM

Come join in-person Chair Yoga sessions with Angelica Lopez in our new location -- the spacious and toasty-warm Town Hall. Angelica graduated from Yoga Sanctuary's 200-hour yoga teacher training program in January 2020. She has since completed several trauma-informed training programs with various organizations including The Veterans' Yoga Project, Yoga 4 Cancer, Transcending Sexual Trauma through Yoga, and The Prison Yoga Project. She uses philosophy, movement and alignment cues in her classes to help her students find a sense of agency and empowerment within.

NOTE: A new Town policy requires that all people and groups inside municipal buildings wear N95, KN95 or surgical masks except where an individual is unable to wear a face mask due to a medical condition or a disability. Groups are limited to 30 people maximum. (This last should not be an issue, however, since yoga classes are small!)

Events

How to downsize at age 60, 70 and beyond with Sensible Sort Professional Organizer Kira Coopersmith

Thursday, March 10th at 12:00 noon via Zoom

Downsizing, decluttering and becoming more organized in our homes can be a daunting and overwhelming prospect no matter your age or situation. It can be even more stressful when there is an external time constraint that must be met. Join Kira Coopersmith of Sensible Sort Professional Organizer on Thursday March 10 at 12:00 to learn how to approach downsizing at any stage and any age, with ease. We will learn how to manage sadness and grief, anxiety, overwhelm and the many forms of stress associated with downsizing. Our

Westhampton COA ✦ 3 South Road ✦ Westhampton, MA 01027 ✦ Seniors Helping Seniors
Coordinator: Amy Landau 413-203-9808 ✦ coa@westhamptonma.org

Joan Griswold Fitness Classes Via Zoom for All Levels

Join others in the Hilltowns for Zoom exercise classes. Certified instructor, Joan Griswold, has been offering a variety of exercise programs on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. All levels of exercisers are welcome! Join others who are working on their personal health. These groups will return in person as soon as it is safe for us all to gather in person. Would you like more information? Contact instructor at joan@bybhealth.com.

Computer Class - Dependent on Library Reopening Plans

To find out if the Library has re-opened, please check the Town website, the Library Facebook page or call: **(413) 527-5386**. If the Library reopens in March, computer class will resume on the 2nd and 4th Mondays - 10 AM to Noon in the Community Room.

Memory Café Program at the Southampton Senior Center

Thursday 10 AM to Noon

Just a reminder that this program is for Westhampton Residents too and there are two more Cafés left (March & April)! Join the free monthly Memory Café for a fun, engaging, supportive environment where attendees can share and receive caregiver support, education, respite and reduce isolation. Memory Cafés encourage people to socialize and enjoy each other's company while reminding them that they are not alone. This monthly program welcomes individuals experiencing all different stages of memory loss, as well as caregivers, family and friends. Programs include artists, musicians, crafts and educational events, as well as activities that promote physical fitness and sensory stimulation. The relaxed, casual atmosphere promotes information sharing & support. Hosted by Southampton Council on Aging and funded by Highland Valley Elder Service Title III Grant.



- ⇒ March 24, 2022
- ⇒ April 21, 2022

For more information call **(413) 529-2105**.
NOTE: Transportation by van is possible if booked one week in advance.

Foot care Resources

- Debra Deane: **(413) 667-5363**
- Foot care by Nurses: **(413) 367-8369**

Library Events & Programs

Hours: Mon & Thu 2pm - 8pm; Tue & Wed 9am - 12pm & 1pm - 5pm; Sat 10am - 1pm
Visitors to all town buildings, including the library, are required to wear face masks indoors. This is in order to protect our youngest readers and other vulnerable populations against COVID-19. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Please check the town website or Facebook @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for the latest news and events. *PLEASE NOTE: The library is still open for in-person browsing and materials pickup. We also still offer curbside pickup. To place a request for curbside pickup, please email westhampton@cwmares.org or call (413) 527-5386.

Book Group Tuesday, March 22 at 7pm

Book Group meets once a month and is always open to new members! Please email Meaghan at mschwelm@cwmares.org for a copy of this month's book. In March we will read "All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake" by Tiya Miles, winner of the 2021 National Book Award for Nonfiction. Sitting in the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture is a rough cotton bag, called "Ashley's Sack," embroidered with just a handful of words that evoke a sweeping family story of loss and of love passed down through generations. In 1850s South Carolina, just before nine-year-old Ashley was sold, her mother, Rose, gave her a sack filled with just a few things as a token of her love..." -from publisher

March/April Art Exhibition

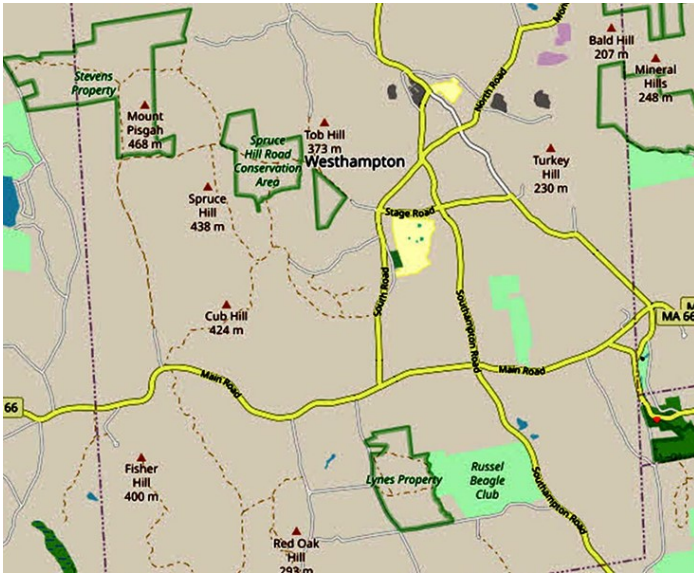
The Art Exhibit for March and April 2022 will feature oil paintings by Bernardston artists Marie and Steve Welch. They are recently retired and have more time to paint and have exhibited up and down the valley. They are long-time members of the Deerfield Valley Art Association. Their work is comprised of landscapes and seascapes in various sizes including miniatures.



"We are grateful to live in rural Massachusetts surrounded by God's creation. Painting allows us to share what we see every day. We hope you will be able to take a few minutes for a peaceful tour through our landscapes."

Articles

A Message from the Westhampton COA Hikers for March



Map of the central part of Westhampton.

As I write this the landscape isn't too inviting. There's a crust of snow on most everything with more crusty stuff coming. The newsletter has a three-week lead time before you read this so I'm hoping for a more inviting landscape by then.

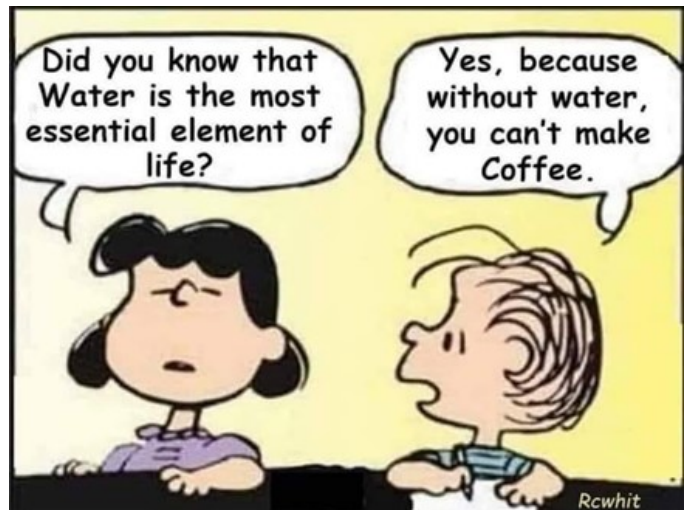
We plan to resume hiking when the terrain becomes less hazardous and more enjoyable to navigate, and hopefully, weather permitting, our rambles will have started by the time you read this. I'm hoping for an active season ahead with a wide range of hikes. So stay tuned for WCOA Hikers' emails.

For anyone interested in joining the Westhampton COA Hikers, email us at westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net and we will add you to our email hikers list. Please note that all group emails are sent as blind copies (BCC) for your safety and privacy.

A Community of Readers - Pat Miller

I was thrilled to learn about a new book written about Lucy Stone called *Leaving Coy's Hill: A Novel* by Katherine Sherbrooke. All of my life I had heard from my mom all the wonderful things about Lucy Stone – she is my great, great, great Aunt, and grew up in West Brookfield at Coy's Hill, in the very home where my mother lived as a child for many years. Lucy Stone is one of the lesser known women who did so much for women's rights – others involved in the fight for rights were upset because Lucy was also advocating for the right for black men to vote.

I loved reading this 'story' but it took me a long time. I had to keep looking up information to see what parts were true. So much has changed in the last 150 years! This book was very easy to read and the author did so much research. After reading this book I decided I wanted to go back and reread the 1930 biography (*Lucy Stone: Pioneer Woman Suffragist*) written by her daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell. Luckily our library has CWMARS so I was able to request the book and received it very quickly and enjoyed it even more after reading *Leaving Coy's Hill*.



A Bit Of Humor – A Very Sticky Situation

As the movie was just getting to the peak thriller moment, a woman began searching for something on the floor which disturbed the man in the seat next to her.

"What are you looking for?" the man asked, clearly annoyed.

"I dropped a caramel on the floor.", she said, continuing to search under her seat. "I think it fell under my seat."

"You're going to all this trouble for a caramel that fell onto a dirty floor?", the man asked her in disbelief.

"I most certainly am!", the woman replied. "My teeth are in it!"

~ Compliments
of a Plainfield COA Board member



TRIAD COUNCIL

Seniors, Police, and Support Services Together — Learning ~ Informing ~ Empowering

Complex Art of Aging and Dying with Dignity

Nearly 15% of adults in the USA provide unpaid care to another adult. The End is the easy part, how we get there is the tricky part. Once we experience a physical/emotional set-back having various stages of needed assistance, we are confronted with choices. How many choices we have are subject to the planning we did. If you want to be safe, comfortable, or have some dignity in a facility with a private room and bath, you best have full knowledge of how to protect your assets, know the complexities of Medicare, Medicaid, your private health insurance benefits, and have written directives on your Special Wishes. Your job of being responsible for your own well-being is far from over if you only have a Will, a Power of Attorney, MOLST Form, and Health Care Proxy in place.

The Avoided "Talk"

Aging, falling, a stroke, or being in a life altering accident at any age brings us to varying stages of asking for help that we mightily resist. Despite dysfunctional and complex family dynamics, we often begin by relying on family/friends for daily support to reach that elusive goal of staying in our homes as long as possible. Insurance for medical or mental conditions requiring daily in-home care is limited. Unless you are one of those few seniors who have actually learned the inner workings of what I call the Complex Art of Aging & Dying with Dignity within the framework of the MA financial and medical worlds, you have some decisions to make for your future and the demanding daily needs of Caregiving.

Until adults have honest discussions to plan with their kids, family/ friends deciding who is going to step up to the plate to share in the physical, stressful, and essential daily tasks, then conflicts will occur. Managing a person's care can rekindle family rivalries that have long been dormant and the discord can tear families apart. Two underlying themes run through most disputes about their family member's care: injustice and inheritance.

Injustice: When taking on a disproportionate share of someone's care, that sense of unfairness can cause resentment. Often it is due to proximity, those living further away are often "off the hook" while the nearest ones are obliged to take on the daily caregiving role. When the caregiver asks for help, often the other ones don't appreciate the time involved, how much help is needed, or how many essential tasks the caregiver is doing.

Inheritance: Many clash over finances. Since 2007 the American household's net worth is declining and there is an even smaller inheritance to divide. In a perfect world, folks are selfless and not motivated by money. If elders do not discuss finances and their own priorities for comfort and care either at home or in a facility, it will cause conflicts. Competition enters when family members are forced to make decisions without prior heartfelt conversations and written directives.

If you haven't had that honest heartfelt conversation, spring can be a new beginning.

Enjoy the sugaring season!

The Westhampton Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Westhampton COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please write your check to The Friends of the Westhampton Council on Aging, write "program support fund" in the memo line, and mail to Charlotte Wood, 14 Perry Hill Rd. Westhampton, MA 01027.)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Westhampton Council on Aging

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



This month's fire safety tips have to do with our state's open burning season, which began January 15 and ends May 1. I am sharing this information here in March, so you might do your outdoor burning this month rather than wait until April. April is usually the worst month for brush fires, because last year's dead grass, leaves and wood are dangerous tinder and the April winds are strong and unpredictable. To burn brush safely.

- Your brush pile must be at least 75 feet from dwellings.
- Burning is permitted between 10am and 4pm.
- Get or call in for a burning permit from your Fire Department or town office.
- Use paper and kindling to start the fire and add larger pieces of wood.
- Do not use gasoline or kerosene to start a fire because of the risk of injury.
- Have fire control tools at hand, shovels, rakes, water supply.
- An adult must attend the fire until it is totally out.
- Watch the wind, if it picks up enough to move a flag, extinguish the fire.
- If the fire gets out of control, immediately call the fire department (911).

Have a SAFE burning season!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.



Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at **regionalcoanews@gmail.com** to be put on the email list. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

Wills, two questions

QUESTION. Do I really have to do a will?

Answer 1. No, you do not have to do a will if you are okay with the state distributing your assets for you, and if you don't care that you potentially leave a gigantic headache for others.

Answer 2. Yes, if you do care how your assets are divided up, if you want a relative or friend taken care of, if you would like a favorite charity to benefit from your hard work, if you want to be kind to those who must finish up your life's matters.

QUESTION. Won't this cost me an arm and a leg?

Answer 1. If you have a simple estate, you may be fine doing a will using pre-prepared forms. They can be done carefully and correctly (i.e., make sure you follow the directions) and in our state be accepted by the court. "Simple" means few investments or real estate, and uncomplicated family lines. Check out **Nolo.com** (the Quicken WillMaker) and **Legalzoom.com**, two of the longer-standing sources.

Answer 2. There are some sources available to us to get low-cost attorney help. Contact the places below and inquire about income thresholds.

- Community Legal Aid in Hampshire County, **(413) 584-4034**
- Hampshire County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service, **(413) 586-8729**
- MA Legal Resource Finder, **masslrf.org/en/home**
- National Association of Elder Care Attorneys, **www.naela.org/**

PS Remember we have until April 20 to recheck our credit reports for totally free!

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

March's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

The Massachusetts Circuit Breaker tax credit has been around for a couple decades now, but I still think it's one of the best kept secrets.

It was designed to give low income homeowners a break on their property taxes.....up to \$1,170 this year. (And you can file for this benefit even if you are renting!)

My frustration is that you have to file a Massachusetts income tax return in order to apply for this benefit. The folks this benefit was meant to help often don't have taxable income, meaning their incomes are too low, so they don't have to file an income tax.

For the first decade or so this benefit was available, very few people applied, even though thousands were eligible! It's because they didn't file an income tax...they didn't need to, so they never applied for the benefit.

Question: Can you file an income tax return if you don't have taxable income? Sure, but why would you?

Here's the reason to file: if your income is less than \$62,000 (single) or less than \$93,000 (married) and your property taxes and half of your water/sewer bill add up to more than 10% of your income, then you are eligible.

At last, some relief from rising property taxes: as long as your home is assessed at less than \$848,000. When you file a Massachusetts income tax return, you include a schedule CB which captures information on your property taxes and water/sewer costs.

You might Google "Mass.gov circuit breaker" for a complete description of the program. They have an excellent video that goes through the process step by step. Imagine getting up to a \$1,071 rebate on your taxes...and if you haven't filed before, but think you might have been eligible in previous years...you can get Massachusetts income tax return forms online for 2020, 2019, 2018 and file for those years too!

If you do this before April 15th this year, you could be eligible for 4 years worth of rebates!



For those who are caregivers and those who care about how we treat each other...

Some very good tips for caregivers can be found in a free booklet by Jennifer Ghent-Fuller called The Dementia Experience (www.smashwords.com/books/view/210580) It's worth the read.

As I read it, I began to wonder if some of the tips could just as well apply to how we generally treat each other everyday. Some tips are thoughtful reminders for all of us. Some could be good for avoiding arguments in the home, especially with teenagers, for instance. Certainly these are good tips if you are trying to take care of someone who needs your help. Given limitations on space, I've included only a partial list, but as you look them over why not pick out the ones that you think would make anyone's day easier?

The "Dont's"

- Do not demand that they reason or problem-solve
- Do not demand that they remember
- Do not demand that they get their facts straight
- Do not correct their ideas or scold them
- Do not think that they really do remember, but are pretending not to
- Do not use a "bossy" dictatorial attitude in care

The "Do's"

- Enter into their frame of reality, or their 'world'
- Be aware of their mood or state of mind
- Use few words and simple phrases
- OR use no words, just friendly gestures and simple motions
- Constantly reassure them that everything is 'OK'
- Maximize use of remaining abilities
- Provide a safe physical environment

Language Needs

- Use clear and simple sentences
- Speak slowly and calmly
- Wait patiently for a response
- Speak softly, soothingly and gently
- Reassure with your tone and manner
- Do one thing at a time
- Be aware of your body language and use it to communicate relaxation and reassurance
- Use a soft, soothing touch
- Be aware of the individual's unique triggers
- If they become distressed, stop immediately and allow them time to calm down – don't try to restart the activity right away

Having taught this material for years, I still marvel at how much it hones our abilities to be sensitive human beings. ~Jan Gibeau

On the Road Again...



2022 Trip Lineup

Listed are the bus trip destinations with various travel groups. Most trips are limited to 36 passengers. Chesterfield COA and *Friends of Northampton Senior Center* are helping with the cost of some trips. Contact Francine Frenier if interested or want more information by calling 413-296-4291 or emailing francine.frenier@gmail.com.

Day Trip. Encore Boston Harbor Casino. Postponed till May/June 2022.

Day Trip May 5. Country Shopping in Southern Vermont Trip. Includes visit to Grafton Village Cheese, lunch at The Marina, and stops at the Vermont Country Store & Allen Brother's Farm Market. Cost \$103, \$10 discount if paid by 3/24/22. Vaccination proof requirement by the restaurant. Flyer available.

Taking interest lists on the following:

Day Trip May 18: Dancing Dream Abba Tribute Band at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Includes chicken & salmon lunch. Cost \$113, \$10 discount if paid by 3/31/22. Flyer available.

Day Trip June 9. Corvettes Doo Wop Revue. Whole New England steamed Lobster and all you can eat chicken & ribs with all the fixings. Self-Drive to the Log Cabin. Cost \$68. Half price for Chesterfield seniors age 60 and over. Due by May 9. Flyer available.

Day Trip Aug 10. The Jersey Tenors, a musical tribute to Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Includes lunch. Cost \$114, \$10 discount if paid by 6/30/22. Flyer Available.

Multi Day Aug 15-17. Kennebunkport & Portland Maine Coastal Tour. 3 days. Cost \$359, \$25 discount if paid by 5/8/2022. Flyer available.

Multi Day Oct 14-23. Nashville, Memphis & Rock & Roll Hall of Fame—10 days. \$1,205, \$25 discount if paid by 7/2/22. Flyer available.

Day Trip July. Thomaston, Connecticut. Naugy Scenic Train Ride.

Day Trip July/August. Worcester, MA Red Sox Triple A affiliate team, Woo Sox game.

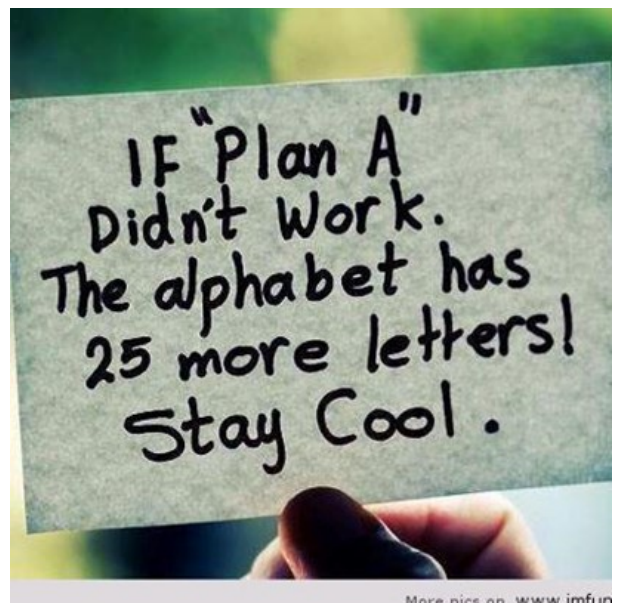
Day Trip Sept. The Big E

Day Trip Late Sept/Early Oct. Wareham, MA. Cranberry Bog Tour.

Is the COA Newsletter Important to You? Let us know!

The newsletter is funded by the Service Incentive Grant (SIG) from Massachusetts and managed by the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs. SIG has funded the newsletter for over six years and the Consortium has managed its logistics for all seven Northern Hilltowns—designing, printing and mailing it to your home complete with a regional section linking each of our towns.

As each fiscal year comes to an end, we need to continue to communicate the value of the newsletter to our funders. And you are the most uniquely positioned to express that. Has the newsletter been important to you over the years -- particularly during the isolation and stress of the pandemic? Would you be willing to write a brief testimonial on its significance? If so, please contact your town's COA Director/Coordinator.



More pics on www.imfun

Westhampton Council on Aging
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027

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Daniel Valinski,
Newsletter Editor

Kristen Estelle,
Newsletter Designer

This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

**Haircuts are being offered at
Smith Vocational School
Cosmetology Department!**

Cuts starting at \$6.00

To make an appointment
call (413) 587-1414 ext. 3531

Dates are Fridays:
March 18th, April 15th and
May 20th.



Community Action is pleased to announce our **Older Adult Home Modification Program (OAHMP)**, a new initiative designed for eligible lower-income homeowners, age 62 and older, living in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and looking to maintain independence and lead safe and productive lives in their homes.

Through this program, lower-income older adults can improve general home safety through no-cost modifications that reduce the risk of falling, increase accessibility, and improve the home's functional abilities.

If you currently receive Fuel Assistance and could benefit from the installation of grab bars, railings, temporary ramps, tub/shower transfer benches, raised toilet seats with hand rails, and stair steps, please contact us!

For income eligibility and more info visit: www.communityaction.us/homerepair
Contact Community Action: 413-774-2310 option 4, homerepairs@communityaction.us



**COMMUNITY ACTION
PIONEER VALLEY**
Access • Opportunity • Community