

Moving Forward

Activities and Services for Resident 60+



December 2024 Calendar of Events

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
2 Knitting Group 6pm, Library Yoga 6pm, Library	3 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	4 Wellness Clinic w/ Public Health Nurse 10-11:30am, Library Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	5 Chair Yoga WW, 10-11am Watercolor Paint Night 6-8pm, Library	6
9 Computer Classes 10am-12pm Knitting Group 6pm, Library Yoga 6pm, Library	10 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	11 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	12 Chair Yoga WW, 10-11am AEIOUkes Christmas Concert 1pm, Church Art Always Studio Reception 6-7:30pm, Library	13
16 Knitting Group 6pm, Library Yoga 6pm, Library	17 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	18 Wellness Clinic w/ Public Health Nurse 10-11:30am, Library Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	19 Chair Yoga WW, 10-11am Hot Lunch Noon, WW	20 12/21 10:30am-12:30pm Breakfast and a Movie Library
23 Computer Classes 10am-12pm Knitting Group 6pm, Library Yoga 6pm, Library	24 Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	25 	26	27
30 Knitting Group 6pm, Library Yoga 6pm, Library	31 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library			

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

Westhampton Friends of COA
**Christmas Concert with
AEIOUKes**

Westhampton Congregational Church
Thursday, December 12th at 12PM



What better way to start the Christmas season than by attending a Christmas Concert? The Friend of the Westhampton Council on Aging would like to remind all Westhampton Seniors that the AEIOUKes will be performing a Christmas Concert in the sanctuary of our church on Thursday, December 12th beginning at 1:00 p.m. This unique musical group, under the direction of Patrick Callinan, promises to be a vibrant, fun filled, toe tapping time. A light snack will be served after the concert.

Holiday Grab 'n' Go

Wednesday, December 12 at 12:15
Town Hall (lower) Parking Lot

Drive through the Town Hall Parking lot or stop by on your way to the holiday concert. Baked goods, lovingly made by the Life Skills students at Hampshire Regional, will be paired with other goodies to bring you holiday cheer! If you can't make it that day or the weather is inclement, we will arrange a delivery (contact Julia Lennen at **413-537-9880**).

How to Avoid Online Scams & Misinformation

Last October, we had an excellent program at the Town Hall led by Leon Uy of Tech Hub on how to avoid dangerous online scams and misinformation. This program was brought to us by Tech Connect, the COA and the Tech Foundry. Here are some tips we learned:

- If you receive a "Virus Alert" popping up on your computer, CLOSE your browser. This is a scam. DO NOT call any phone numbers or give out your information no matter what!
- When you receive an unfamiliar email, look at the email address carefully. Does it have odd scrambled letters/characters? Are there mistakes in the text? Avoid! Mark as spam and block!
- You can also look up the website they indicate yourself with a fresh search on Google. Top

results are sponsored ads – scroll down further for actual search results. Look for HTTPS in the URL and the padlock icon. This means the website is secure. Avoid all others.

- The last 3 letters of a website give information on that website. Ex. ".com" – commercial, ".co" – same but international, ".edu" – education (university), ".net" -- web/tech companies, ".org" – non-profit, ".info" – info site, ".mil" – military
- Also beware of FALSE information that has gone "viral" (appearing everywhere, even from your Facebook friends!). It's often inaccurate. Do some online research on your own. If you cut/paste the email or text into a Google search field, it may come flagged as fake. You can also fact check at **www.snopes.com**
- Many images are being produced by artificial intelligence (AI). They are getting more and more sophisticated. Look for odd tell-tales like distortions and extra fingers!
- If you receive any kind of alarming message or email that is telling you to do something RIGHT AWAY, it's most likely a scam. Never rush into any action. Scammers rely on making people panic into ill-advised behavior.

Going Through a Tough Time? Know Someone Who Could Use Help?

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) is here to help! BHHL is a valuable resource for individuals seeking support with mental health, substance use, and emotional well-being. It's totally FREE, confidential and no health insurance is needed. The Help Line is open to anyone -- including deaf or hard of hearing, individuals with disabilities and whose first language is not English. Call or text: **(833) 773-2445**. You can also chat live at **masshelpline.com/chat**

Save the Date:

FAQ Westhampton Center Cemetery Luncheon Program, January 9th at Noon

John Shaw, Chair of the Cemetery Commission, will provide updates on the Cemetery Commission activities and answer your questions. Look for more information in the January newsletter.

Veterans Benefits Information

Our Veterans Agent, Joe Henning, passed along this helpful new website: **MassVetsAdvisor.org**

Not a computer user or dealing with a thorny problem? Reach out to Joe at **(413) 427-3054** or **mojohen@comcast.net**

Library Hours: Mon & Thu 2pm - 8pm;
Tue & Wed 9am - 12pm & 1pm - 5pm;
Sat 10am - 1pm

Library closed Tues. Dec. 24th, Weds. Dec.
25th and Weds. January 1st.

Please check the town website or Facebook or
Instagram @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for
library updates. To place a request for
curbside pickup, please call (413) 527-5386
or email westhampton@cwmares.org

*Yoga is drop-in, first-come/first-served, and regis-
tration is not required. Please check Facebook and
the town calendar for updates on yoga.



December/January Artists

Art Always Studio

Reception: Thurs. Dec. 12th from 6-7:30pm

Artists from the Art Always Studio in Florence will be exhibiting their work for the months of December 2024 and January 2025 at the Westhampton Library. The artists, from two different classes, have been painting together with their instructor Lindsay Fogg-Willets and will exhibit paintings done in class of various subjects and mediums.

Paint Nature - Watercolor Paint Night with Mary Cleary

Thursday, December 5th from 6pm to 8pm

Paint a seasonal painting while learning basic watercolor techniques and color theory. Registration is required as space is limited. Call (413)527-5386 or email westhampton@cwmares.org to sign up. All materials provided. Bring yourself and your creativity! Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.

Breakfast and a Movie!

Saturday, December 21st from 10:30am to 12:30pm

Bring the grandkids to the library for a sweet, family-friendly seasonal movie. The kiddos will have three film options and can vote on their favorite. Breakfast pastries and juice will be served. Pajamas and stuffies are welcome and encouraged. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.

Mystery Identity Revealed!

Mystery Westhampton Resident #13, shown in this photo which appeared on the table for our Throwback Thursday program back on May 9th has been revealed! This 2 year old toddler is **Ilene Lorow!**



Message from the Westhampton COA Hikers for December 2024



Westhampton COA Hikers at Park Hill Orchard on October 3 (Chuck Horn photo).

As I write this, the warm weather (and drought!) seems to have extended our hiking season this year. Nonetheless by the time you read this the landscape may be covered with an icy crust - or maybe not! Regardless. We plan to continue to offer hikes as long as we can this fall season – barring any health or other personal reasons that could come up.

So if you enjoy hiking with a great group of people, get on our email list and come join us in and around Westhampton by subscribing to our group email list: westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net Please note that all group emails are sent as blind copies (BCC) for your safety and privacy.

~ Happy trails, Chuck & Ray

Happy New Year

Manna Community Kitchen
FREE

Holiday Meal

December 25th, Noon-2 PM,
Edwards Church, 48 Elm Street, Northampton

Please register by Dec. 23rd to pick up
your meals or arrange free delivery.

Call or text us at 413-282-8086
mannanorthampton.org



***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

Bad News, Good News

Do you want the Bad news first? Then we will end with the Good, being positive as we are.

The Bad – scams are on the rise in frequency, diversity and impact. Around 50% of people of all ages are likely to lose money to a scam, sometimes hundreds of dollars. The types of scams, e.g., grandparent, social media hack, QR codes, etc., make our exposure and danger so much more likely than before. As for impact, in addition to including how awful we feel about being scammed, the total monetary cost per year in the US might be 10 billion dollars or more. That's dollars with a B.

The Good – more agencies and organizations are paying attention and marshaling resources! I've compiled a list of sources for avoiding and reporting scams.

AARP. The Association of Retired Persons keeps up with types of scams and issues alerts along with other educational materials. There is a Watchdog Alerts newsletter. Go to their scam web page: www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/

BBB. Better Business Bureau prepares topical scam alerts, highlighting current and most active scams. Mind-boggling. To sign up for their newsletter, go to www.bbb.org/us/news/scams, then scroll to the bottom and click on "Sign up for scam alerts".

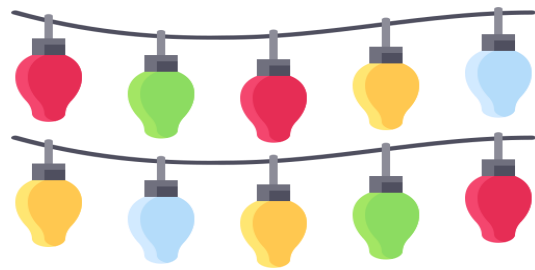
BBC. The British Broadcasting Corporation posts a page called Be Scam Safe with a really full set of scam videos and articles. Type into your browser "Be Scam Safe" to connect.

CFPB. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau at www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/fraud/ talks about understanding scams, knowing your rights, and how-to guides.

DA. The Northwestern District Attorney's office advocates for all residents, especially elders, focusing on education and prevention of consumer scams and elder exploitation. Go to www.northwesternda.org/prevention and click on Consumer Protection or call **413-586-9225**.

VA. The Veteran's Administration has a new service with information, reporting, and assistance on scams for veterans, service members, and their families. Visit www.VSAFE.gov, or call 1-833-388-7233.

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



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.

Senior 
SAFE

For indoor lights and decorations:

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace any lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- 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 other 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 SAFElly!

--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.

Tech. Help and Training for December



We have more people to help you with your tech needs and requests. Our long period of low staffing is at an end. With more hands on deck we are hoping our final three months will have much higher efficiency and shorter response times.

More 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**.

Being delivered now: Internet Hotspots

Need affordable internet access? Have you already requested affordable internet? We have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet. They work like WIFI without cable or fiber service. Hotspots work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more about how these devices could benefit you, please contact us by phone or email. If you requested affordable internet and were not contacted in November, please reach out to us again. Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and email to coatechhelp@gmail.com is also a great way to reach us.

Devices for you: PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets

Ky Martus continues distributing devices. Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. 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
Three Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (12/6, 12/13 & 12/27)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (12/11)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St.
Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12-2 (12/19)

- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (12/19)
- Westhampton: to be scheduled. Please contact us for details, coatechhelp@gmail.com or call **413-296-5080** for day/time.
- Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 12/10 from 10 to Noon
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 12/10 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: tech support at COA office.
Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

Tech Training:

Must pre-register for training no later than one week 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

Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will restart on Thursdays on December 12, 19 and January 9, 16 from 1:00 - 2:30.

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class starts, over six Wednesdays, 10:30-Noon. December 4, 11, 18 and Jan 8, 15, 22, 10:30-Noon.

Tech Workshops:

- 12/6, 10:30-11:30 Computer Maintenance
- 12/9, 1 - 2:30 Organizing, Storing, & Moving Digital Photos (ONLINE CLASS)
- 12/13, 10:30-11:30 Windows Accessibility
- 12/17, 1- 2:30 Android phones
- 1/10, 10:30 - 11:30 Misinformation
- 1/15, 12- 1:00 Self Learning
- 1/24, 10:30 -11:30 Google Suite
- 1/29, 10- 11:30 iPhones
- 1/29, 6 - 7:00 pm Learn & Watch:
YouTube, Libby, Kanopy



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 late April TBD. **Encore Casino.*** Boston Harbor casino trip. Lunch on your own, options available on site.

*Day Trip May TBD. **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 or with a guide. Price TBD.

*Day Trip June TBD. **Winnepesaukee Railroad.*** Enjoy a delicious turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train while touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price TBD.

*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, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

*Day Trip July TBD. **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.*** Start your day with a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy lunch at Mahoney's Irish Pub & Steakhouse (TBD.) Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price TBD.

*Day Trip August 3. Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ball-park-fare buffet for our group are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above.*

*Day Trip Sept. TBD. **The BIG E,*** an annual favorite, with free entertainment at The Court of Honor Stage.

*Day Trip Sept 5-Oct 26 TBD. **A Chorus Line.*** 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. More details to come. Price TBD. Wed.Thurs.Sun

*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, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. ***As of December 2024, Diamond Tours is expecting this trip to go, despite the hurricane damage. 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 December

By Deborah Hollingworth

The Good News this month is a reminder that we have a resource called The Connector which can work for you if you have questions about benefits, resources, and services. When your circumstances change, and you could use some help, but don't know what's available or where to start, the Connector can help you "connect" with the resources you need.

This help is available to the seven hilltowns of Plainfield, Cummington, Worthington, Goshen, Chesterfield, Williamsburg and Westhampton through a grant from Highland Valley. We have helped people figure out housing options, determine if folks are eligible for benefits like fuel assistance, SNAP, Circuit Breaker property tax rebates, and if folks qualify for subsidies on their health insurance.

Often it's brainstorming on how to survive a change in medical conditions, or shrinking finances and increasing household overhead/bills. What to do when life throws us a curve ball, or when we might be worried about outliving our savings/investments.

The Connector can help you understand what's available when you're being discharged from a nursing home, or whether you might be eligible for MassHealth and whether MassHealth might pay family caregivers for the help they provide.

There's help out there, but unless you know the eligibility requirements... unless you know how the 'system' works... unless you know what's available... you can't get it, if you don't know about it.

The Connector is here to help you get those resources, over a phone call or a home visit to help with an application. Whatever works for your situation. It's a no cost resource, funded through Highland Valley.

To get help, call your COA and they will get you Connected!

Westhampton Council on Aging
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

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Need a ride?

Contact Danielle Buzzee at:
(413) 246-0278
or by email:
danielle.buzzee@icloud.com

The Goshen Council on Aging invites you to a three part discussion group based on the book *Let's Talk About Death Over Dinner* by Michael Hebb.

* **January 7, 2025, 4-5pm**

Introduction and receive a copy of the book.

* **February 18, 2025, 4-6:30pm**

Catered dinner and a prompted discussion facilitated by Stacey Mackowiak, End of Life Doula.

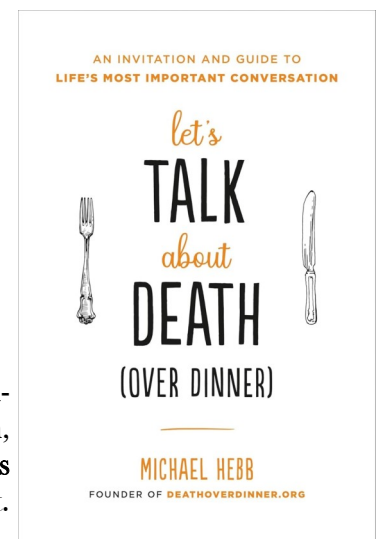
* **February 25, 2025, 4-5pm**

Follow up conversation (optional).

This important and engaging program is free and limited to 15 participants; older adults from all Hilltowns are welcome. Please contact Kerry Normandin, Goshen COA Director, by 1/3 to sign up: 413-268-9354 or coa@goshen-ma.us All three parts will take place in the John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St. Goshen, MA. Funded by a grant from the MCOA.

"...encourages people to pull up a chair, break bread, and really talk about the one thing we all have in common."

"...transform your difficult conversations into an opportunity of celebration and meaning, changing not only the way we die, but also the way we live."



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging