


Moving Forward

Activities and Services for Resident 60+



February 2025 Calendar of Events

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
3 Knitting Group 6pm, Library	4 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	5 Wellness Clinic w/ Public Health Nurse 10-11:30am, Library Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	6 Chair Yoga WW, 10-11am	7
10 Knitting Group 6pm, Library Computer Class 10-12, Library	11 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	12 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	13 Chair Yoga WW, 10-11am COA Luncheon 12pm, Church Jim Crowell Opening Reception 5:30-7:30, Library	14 Valentine's Day 2/15, 10:30-12:30 Library Breakfast & a Movie
17 Presidents' Day Library closed	18 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library	19 Wellness Clinic w/ Public Health Nurse 10-11:30am, Library Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm Chicken Soup Delivery sign-up	20 Chair Yoga TOWN HALL, 10-11am Hot Lunch Noon, WW	21 
24 Knitting Group 6pm, Library Computer Class 10-12, Library	25 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Games 1:45-3pm, WW Scrabble 2pm, Library Book Club 7pm, Library	26 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	27 Chair Yoga WW, 10-11am Needle Felting 6-8pm, Library Chicken Soup Delivery	28

Westhampton COA ✦ 3 South Road ✦ Westhampton, MA 01027 ✦ Seniors Helping Seniors
 Interim Coordinator: Julia Lennen 413-537-9880 ✦ coa@westhamptonma.org

February Luncheon

Westhampton Congregational Church
Thursday, February 13th at 12PM



Join us for lunch on February 13th at noon. This month we have no set program but are open to suggestions for entertaining ourselves! Food will be home cooked by volunteers. If you enjoy cooking and would like to be in the rotation, please reach out to any Board Member to let us know.

Save the Date – the March Lunch program (March 13th) will be the Fourth Grade Talent Show. As always, Ms. Overstreet and her students are sure to delight. Grandparents are especially welcome and we always make space for family members from out-to-town to join us. Pizza will be served.

Farewell Announcement from Amy Landau, COA Coordinator

December 19, 2024

I am writing with some important and definitely bittersweet news to share with you all. I know this may come as a surprise, but I will be leaving my position as Westhampton Council on Aging Coordinator. My last day will be December 31st.

I have learned SO much and greatly enjoyed my 5 years in this role! But I have decided to make a change in my work focus that more closely aligns with my lengthy educational background (I was a teacher for 12 years!). I have in fact accepted a paraprofessional position at the Westhampton Elementary School. I am looking forward to still being engaged with the Westhampton community even after leaving the COA. I anticipate that I may even see you at a future intergenerational program OR perhaps at the annual 4th grade Talent Show! So in that way we can maintain some connection.

I want you to know that during this transition to a new COA Coordinator (which will hopefully not be long), Julia Lennen has agreed to serve as Interim Coordinator. If you need to reach someone after 12/31, you can contact Julia at coa@westhamptonma.gov or contact the Town Hall.

I wish each and every one of you a very happy new year!

Amy Landau

Julia Lennen Appointed Interim Coordinator

In January, Julia Lennen was appointed Interim COA Coordinator. As a former Coordinator and COA Board member, Julia is familiar with most aspects of the position and will endeavor to provide a seamless transfer as well as organize materials for the next Coordinator.

A revised COA Coordinator job description was approved at the 1/13/2025 Select Board meeting and made available on the Town website, various online platforms, and the MCOA (Massachusetts Councils on Aging) job board.

If the position is still open at the time you get this newsletter, please note:

The Town of Westhampton is seeking qualified applicants for a part-time Council on Aging (“COA”) Coordinator. The position requires considerable initiative and independent judgment and will seek the policy direction of the COA Board. The Coordinator is responsible for preparing and administering the annual operating budget as well as overseeing all operations and provisions of programs offered by the COA. Interested parties should contact the Town Administrator at Town Hall.

Thank You to Our Life Skills Friends!

Santa’s Elves, disguised as Life Skills students from Hampshire Regional, brought cheer to the December Lunch. Delivering goody bags with their teacher, Alison Labrecque, our Life Skills friends brought hand-decorated holiday bags stuffed with home-baked brownies and candy.

Their card says it all!

Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year
from your Life Skills Friends at
Hampshire Regional and the COA



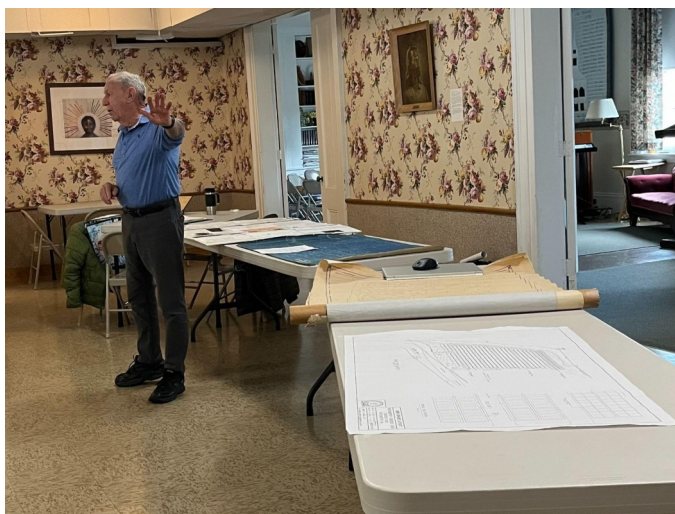
Chicken Soup – Home-Delivered!

The Council on Aging is teaming up with the HRHS Life Skills program again in February. Back by popular demand, our Life Skills friends are bringing you warmth and nutrition in the form of a pint of delicious **chicken soup**. All you need to do is heat it up!



Delivery is planned for **Thursday, February 27th**. Please sign up by February 19th to have your soup delivered right to your home. **Contact Julia Lennen at (413) 537-9880** or jslennen@gmail.com. Let us know if you need one or two for your home.

January Program Recap John Shaw's Cemetery Program



On January 9th, over 40 residents braved the wind chill to share a hearty lunch and hear from John Shaw about the Westhampton Cemetery. John showed us original (and very fragile) maps. He explained the many initiatives that the Cemetery Commission is implementing as well as a peek into the planning for a new area. This expansion will open new plots – including some smaller plots for interring cremains (over 85% of recent burials are cremated remains).

Mr. Shaw has also been working on a database of records for existing graves at the Cemetery to assist interested parties in finding family members and researching their ancestors.

The new town website has more information about the rules. Anyone with questions about the Cemetery should call John at **(413) 207-4527**.

Did you know you might be eligible for Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit?

As a older adult (65 or older by December 31 of the tax year), you may be eligible to claim a refundable credit on your Massachusetts personal income tax return. Turn to the regional section for more information about this tax break.

**Library Hours: Mon & Thu 2pm - 8pm;
Tue & Wed 9am - 12pm & 1pm - 5pm;
Sat 10am - 1pm**
Library closed February 17th.

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

No Yoga on Mondays for the month of Feb.

February/March Artist - Jim Crowell

*Opening Reception Thurs. Feb. 13th
5:30pm - 7:30pm*

Jim Crowell, of Hatfield, is a maker. Now retired from professional cabinetry and finish carpentry, Jim continues to make, creating sculpture, vessels, and bas relief wall pieces that reflect his deep interests in nature and the natural world. Birch bark is his primary material.

Trained in woodworking techniques in his native Florida, Jim Crowell moved from Boston to Hatfield in 1982 and eventually established himself as the consummate local craftsman. He worked as a cabinetmaker, woodworker, and finish carpenter in historic restoration projects for many years, both self-employed and for various local contractors. Jim became well known for his artistry, creativity, and problem-solving skills on the job and in the field. With this body of work, Jim combines his skills as a woodworker with his artistic vision.

Breakfast and a Movie!

Saturday, Feb. 15th from 10:30am to 12:30pm

Bring the grandkids to the library for a sweet, family-friendly movie in celebration of Black History Month. The kiddos will choose from *The Princess and the Frog* (2010), *Soul* (2021), or *TBA*. 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.

Open Needle Felting for Adults with Jo Martin
Thursday February 27th from 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Feeling crafty and creative? Join Jo to design your own needle felting project with guidance from an experienced felter. All materials will be provided. Materials are limited and registration is required. Please call **(413) 527-5386** or email **westhampton@cwmares.org** to sign up.

Need a Ride?

Our Ride Program can help! Contact Danielle Buzzee at **(413) 246-0278** or **Danielle.buzzee@icloud.com**



Message from the Westhampton COA Hikers for January 2025



Westhampton COA Hikers at the Easthampton Manhan Trail Hike to Arcadia on a cold December day.

December into mid-January has been mostly cold with little snow, and as I write this, the ground is still mostly bare, with only traces of snow. We had a hike to Arcadia (the Easthampton Manhan Trail Hike) on December 19, and if it warms up a little bit we'll be hiking in the coming week since there's little or no snow on the radar for most of the rest of the month.

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

Happy Trails, Chuck & Ray

Senior snowshoeing – Feb. 5 & 19

Hilltown Land Trust and All Out Adventures are offering a series of snowshoe treks on Wednesday mornings. Two treks per day, departing at 10 am and 12 pm on February 5 (Bullitt Reservation, Ashfield) and February 19 (DAR state forest, Goshen). Please arrive 15 minutes early. No cost; donation to All Out Adventures is appreciated. Snowshoes, poles and traction aids are provided for free. Registration is required – contact **413-584-2052** or **info@alloutadventures.org**. If you have questions, contact Sarah at **sarah@hilltownlandtrust.org**

Does anyone know a good Groundhog Day joke?

I keep hearing the same one over and over again.

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

Hilltown Community Health Center Needs Assessment

You know what your community needs, and we want to hear from you! Hilltown Community Health Center is conducting a community health needs assessment to learn what you feel your community needs. This survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. If you have questions or would like to speak in person, please contact Debbie DiStefano at ddistefano@hchcweb.org or by phone at (413) 289-8214. Thank you for your consideration.



www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCHC2025

HVES – Good to Know!

If you don't know about Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES), let me tell you a little bit about them. One of their many programs is Money Management; I have volunteered there for several years and can recommend it.

Here's the deal. The first level of their program sets up assistance for elders who are still able to make financial decisions, but might be having some difficulty dealing with their budget, check book, mail, or bank accounts. A second level of the program has HVES provide supervision of individuals who are unable to manage their own financial affairs. An employee of HVES is appointed to manage participant's government benefits and is responsible for writing and signing checks.

What I do for people in the program at the first level is help sort their mail, write out checks for them to sign, and monitor their bank balances. If needed I will talk to their bank about a problem, and help them access HVES for help with fuel assistance, medical insurance, and other such needs. I'll make sure their credit report has been checked for errors and try to help them avoid scams. It's all designed to make their financial life a bit easier.

For all their programs, check out HVES online at highlandvalley.org/our-services/ or call 413-586-2000 ext. 113. Call me if you have questions about volunteering in the Money Management program.

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

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Open Burning Season began on January 15th and will end on May 1st. You will need a permit from your town's Fire Department, which are given on days when it is safe to burn. It is not safe to burn on windy days or on "red flag" days. The Department of Fire Services recommends the following safe open burning practices:

Senior 
SAFE

- The fire area should be at least 75 feet from any dwelling.
- You can only burn from 10am until 4pm.
- You can burn brush, cane, forest debris, and pruning.
- You cannot burn grass, hay, leaves, stumps, tires or construction material and debris.
- An adult should always be present during the burn.
- Keep children and pets a safe distance from the fire.
- Start the fire with paper and kindling. Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid.
- Build one small fire at a time and slowly add to it.
- Have fire control tools at hand — shovels, rakes and a pretested water supply.
- Be prepared to extinguish the fire if the wind picks up or the fire weather changes, before the town calls you to put it out.
- The safest time of the year is when the ground is wet, frozen or snowy. There are a whole lot of Red Flag days in April during which open burning is not allowed.
- Be aware that the fire towers are staffed during open burning season and they are quick to identify and call in unsafe burns.
- If the fire begins to get out of hand, immediately call 911 and have the Fire Department handle it before it gets to any buildings or woods.

Have an early and SAFE open burning season!

--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 February



We Are Surviving into the Future!

TechConnect will continue providing services. Although we have fewer trainings going forward, drop-ins and tech support will continue. Please take advantage of ongoing service.

DELIVERING NOW AND ACCEPTING NEW REQUESTS: Internet Hotspots

It's not too late if you 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 the internet. Hotspots work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us by phone or email. If you requested affordable internet and were not contacted please reach out to us again.

Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and emailing **coatechconnect@gmail.com** is also a great way to reach us.

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** or check the website, **www.northernhilltownscoas.org**, for locations and time. You can attend drop-in at all locations, except Nash Hill.

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

Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. There is still time to join the Digital World. Ky Martus continues distributing devices. 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
Two Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (2/7 and 2/21)

- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (2/12)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St. Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (2/20)
- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (2/20)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd. Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (2/27)
- Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 2/11 from 10 to Noon
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 2/11 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: drop-in 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**

Tech Workshops:

- 2/7, 10:30-11:30 Using Chromebooks
- 2/19, 10-11:30 iPhones (rescheduled from 1/29)
- 2/21, 10:30-11:30 Understanding & Using Zoom

Computer Classes:

No ongoing computer classes are scheduled. An alternate online resource for basic training can be accessed, with help from us, at **www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/login/?location=17640-MG8N-techconnect**
We can set up your access to this website and help you begin to train yourself for very basic to more advanced beginner digital literacy.



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 May 6. One day at **Encore Casino**. Free Slot play. Lunch on your own. Restaurants on site. Cost TBD. I need 40 to sign up to make this trip affordable.

Day Trip May 19. **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. Price \$144. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March 24.

Day Trip June 8. **Winnepesaukee Railroad**. Enjoy a complete turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train while touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price \$137. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 8.

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. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **There are a few open seats.**

Day Trip July 16. **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 28.

Day Trip August 3. Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies Lehigh Valley IronPigs** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ballpark-fare buffet are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 1.

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

Day Trip Oct. 9. **A Chorus Line**. Center orchestra seating for the 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. Price \$177. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by August 1. Note date change.

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

It's that time of year when we begin to gather up tax documents, just like 140 million other tax payers. You might add some additional documents for your MA tax return. Massachusetts is one of 25 States to offer the Circuit Breaker Tax refund designed to help low income home owners. **This year the MA Circuit Breaker maximum benefit has increased to \$2,730... so it's worth taking the time to figure out if you are eligible!**

The Circuit Breaker benefit was 'invented' back in the late 1960s. Massachusetts began offering in it the mid-1990s. Now the program has grown to 25 States plus the District of Columbia. Here in New England- Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut- have Circuit Breaker programs. Programs vary from State to State, but all offer a tax refund to seniors who are low income home owners.

To be eligible:

1. You need to be a Massachusetts resident, meaning your primary residence is here, in MA.
2. You need to be 65 or older.
3. Your property tax needs to be more than 10% of your income. EXAMPLE: property tax is \$5,200, income would need to be less than \$52,000/year.
4. You can file for Circuit Breaker in any year(s) that at least one homeowner in the household was 65 or older by December 31st.
5. Your income must be less than \$72,000 single, or \$109,000 married filing jointly. (Each year this income figure changes/increases for cost of living.)
6. Your property cannot be worth more than \$1,172,000 (this figure also increases each year)

To apply:

1. You file a Massachusetts income tax (whether or not you have taxable income) and include a Schedule CB with your tax return.
2. You will need to provide proof of property tax paid. Usually a copy of your property tax bill is sufficient, but they can ask to see cancelled checks to prove payment. (You need to be current with your property tax payments)
3. You can also count 1/2 of your water/sewer bill(s) in which case you would need to include copies of those bills
4. You need to provide income information which includes: taxable income like social security, pension, employment. Gross, not net income. (Circuit breaker does not count one time income like life insurance payments, inheritance, property sale.)

For more information, visit www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit

Westhampton Council on Aging
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

**Westhampton
Council on Aging**

Julia Lennen, Interim
Coordinator & Chair

Colleen Basile, Secretary

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Outdoor Programs

Lorraine Galica
Dave Goddard
Board Members

Lillian Baxter,
HEN Representative

Daniel Valinski,
Newsletter Editor

Kristen Estelle,
Newsletter Designer
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

Need a ride?

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

Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit Info Session

Thursday, February 6th from 3-4:30PM

Hilltown CDC, 387 Main Road, Chesterfield (in the conference room)

Presented by Denise LeDuc

DID YOU KNOW seniors over the age of 65 can get a Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit on their tax return in Massachusetts? Even if you do not need to file a MA tax return- file one and include schedule CB to receive up to the maximum of \$2,730 for 2024. This is a refundable credit, which means even if you do not owe MA taxes you can get this sent money to you. To be considered, 2024 total income for a single cannot exceed \$72,000, head of household \$91,000 and \$109,000 for married filing a joint return. Your property taxes must exceed 10% of your Massachusetts income for the year. If you did not file the CB form you can go back and file for the past three years!

For more information, visit

www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit

ALSO if you are over 70 and meet income requirements you may qualify for some exemptions through the town- you will need to file for this by March 31st annually.

Please join us for this important program!

Questions? Contact Joan Griswold: 413-296-4536 x102