

Moving Forward

Activities and Services for Residents 60+



January 2026

INSIDE ...

Program News – Page 2

Hiking News – Page 2

Library News – Page 5

In the Hilltowns – Page 6

Do not miss:

Boston Post Cane Ceremony – January 10th at the Library – All are Welcome!

Upcoming Programs

Help with Heating Costs

**Ideas for Articles?
Recipes to Share?
Let us know!**

**Westhampton COA
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA
01027**

**Christine Blakesley,
Coordinator**

413-203-9808

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
29 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	30 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	31 Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	NEW YEARS	2
5 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	6 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	7 Wellness Clinic Public Health Nurse 10:30 am, Library Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	8 Chair Yoga WW 10-11 am *COA Luncheon Noon, Church	9 Sat., January 10 *Boston Post Cane Ceremony Library 11 am
12 Computer Help Library 10-12 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	13 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	14 Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm Energy Advocate Office Hours 1-2	15 Chair Yoga *Church Dining Room 10-11 am HVES Hot Meal Pickup WW Noon TechConnect Library 2-4 pm	16
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	20 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	21 Wellness Clinic Public Health Nurse 10:30 am, Library Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	22 Chair Yoga WW 10-11 am *Paint Night Watercolors with Mary Cleary Library 6-9 pm	26
26 Computer Help Library 10-12 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	27 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	28 Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	29 Chair Yoga WW 10-11 am *Julia Volkman TedX Talk Natural Learning Library 6 pm	30 Sat. January 21 *Peace and Joy Workshop w/ Roslyn Malkin 10:30 – 12:30 Library

* See more Information inside in the Newsletter.

I've Got a Secret! January Soup and Salad

Is there a little-known fact about you? Do you have a "secret"? Perhaps you held a different kind of job or maybe you have an interesting family tree. Your secret can be silly or serious, the choice is up to you. Join us on January 8th, 2026 for the COA luncheon and find out something interesting about your friends and neighbors.

Please bring your "secret" along with your name in an envelope and after a delicious lunch of soup, salad, bread and dessert, we will try to match the secrets with right person. We will have envelopes and paper at the luncheon in case you forget.



Boston Post Cane Ceremony for Jessie Krug

Saturday, January 10 at the Library – 11:00 am

On behalf of the Town of Westhampton, it is our great honor to invite **Jessie Krug** to a special ceremony recognizing her as the oldest resident of our town.

The Town will present Jessie with the Boston Post Cane, a long-standing New England tradition honoring longevity, citizenship, and community spirit. This presentation will take place on Saturday, January 10th at 11:00 a.m. at the Westhampton Public Library.

Westhampton is a small town, and its strength comes from the people who shape it. Jessie has long been a respected and prominent member of our community, and we are deeply grateful for the example she has set and the presence she continues to share with us.

This ceremony is a way for the town to publicly express its appreciation and celebrate Jessie Krug's remarkable life and contributions.

Everyone is welcome to join the happy occasion.

Golden Cane Background

On August 2, 1909, Mr. Edwin A. Grozier, Publisher of the Boston Post, a newspaper, forwarded to the Board of Selectmen in 700 towns* (no cities included) in New England a gold-headed ebony cane with the request that it be presented with the compliments of the Boston Post to the oldest male citizen of the town, to be used by him as long as he lives (or moves from the town), and at his death handed down to the next

oldest citizen of the town. The cane would belong to the town and not the man [In 1930, after considerable controversy, eligibility for the cane was opened to women as well] who received it.

Mailing List Update/Welcome!

We have updated our mailing list to residents who recently turned 60. Here is some information about the COA:

Councils on Aging – In Massachusetts, Councils on Aging provide support services to elders, families, and caregivers in the community. As a local agency, the Councils on Aging & Senior Centers serve as an elder advocate, offers services, and activities for elders. Here in Westhampton, we do not have a Senior Center. Our COA offers a variety of activities and services using the Town Hall, the Library, the Church, and the Common Room at Westhampton Woods.

Our Leadership – The COA has a part-time Coordinator, Christine Blakesley, who is a Westhampton resident. We have a volunteer board and are always welcoming new members. Board members can be younger than 60. We are part of the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging which provides newsletter production and mailing and many innovative initiatives.

COA Services

Monthly Newsletters – The COA publishes a monthly newsletter which goes to all Westhampton seniors. This newsletter contains all of the up to date activities of the COA. If you are not receiving this newsletter, please call or email the COA Coordinator.

Referrals – Although Westhampton does not have dedicated outreach staff, we can help individuals and families with information and referrals to other resources. We work closely with Highland Valley Elder Services and nearby COAs to make sure residents can get help with SHINE counselors (health care options concerning Medicare and Drug and Prescription Advantage programs) as well as fuel assistance and other supplementary programs.

HEN Program (Hilltown Elder Network) - The Hilltown Elder Network (HEN) provides eligible rural elders with in-home services, including home chores and transportation services, which help to insure safe, independent living conditions. To receive HEN assistance, elders must be at least 60 years old, and must meet household income criteria. Call Lillian Baxter at 527-1532 for more information or to sign up.

Medical Equipment - The COA has a variety of medical equipment available to loan to anyone who needs it. In addition to walkers, there are shower stools,

crutches, canes, equipment to use in the bathroom, bed pads and assorted other equipment.

Programs & Classes

The Westhampton Council on Aging is pleased to offer classes and activities that are open to all seniors. If you have ideas for additional activities, please contact one of the Board Members.

Programs – Luncheons, followed by some type of program, are held every month. Programs include music, educational/informational programs. Check your newsletter for upcoming programs. Monthly meal distribution and farm market vouchers are available.

Food and Nutrition – We are a meal distribution site for Highland Valley Elder Services. Sign up to join the monthly hot meal program. The Farmers Market coupon program provides no-cost access to fresh fruit and vegetables at participating locations.

Computer Class – Computer classes are held on the second and fourth Monday mornings at the Westhampton Public Library. Each class has a portion for individual help as well as time for a class lesson. These are free and open to all seniors.

Cards & Games – All seniors are invited to Scrabble, Mahjong, Knitting, and Coffee and Chat. Westhampton Woods, or the Library. Times and locations are in the newsletter.

Chair Yoga and Fitness – You choose the right level of exercise! Yoga classes offer modified yoga poses in or with the support of a chair encourage increased range of motion. Fitness offers a more vigorous workout. Either way, no worries about getting it “right.”

Hikes – When weather permits, the COA offers a monthly hike to a point of interest in our area. These hikes are open to all seniors and are never really strenuous, but details of each hike are given prior to the actual hike. Watch the newsletter for details.

Intergenerational Programs – The COA arranges intergenerational programs (such as the recent program at the elementary school about mushrooms); activities with the Life Skills students at HRHS, and the ever-popular Fourth Grade Talent Show in the Spring. Pre-Covid, we volunteered at the Elementary School for reading programs and plan to restart with the new Principal.

Informational Programs – In addition to the luncheon programs, the COA works with the Library and other organizations to provide information about home care, aging in place, cognitive decline, and other topics. We have even developed a binder to collect your critical information!

Transportation:

The Westhampton COA has a transportation program that provides rides to seniors who are not able to get to appointments or to shopping. Please call Ride Coordinator Danielle Buzzee, (413) 246-0278 or danielle.buzzee@icloud.com to schedule a ride or find out more about the transportation program, including volunteering as a driver.

Friends of Westhampton Council on Aging

The Friends of the Westhampton Council on Aging was started to be the fundraising and activity planning subgroup of the COA. This group has planned trips to several local points of interest and helped sponsor music programs. These trips are open to all Westhampton Seniors and other members of the Friends’ organization. Watch for upcoming trips and programs!

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Do I need to “join” the COA? No. The COA is funded to provide services to all older adults in Westhampton and welcomes younger caretakers and neighbors from other towns to all programs.

How can I get involved? The COA has a Coordinator and a Board. If you are interested in joining the Board or volunteering to help, please reach out to the Coordinator or the Board.

Holiday Concert Wrap-Up

The toe-tapping music of Dear Ella brought warmth and a smile to the audience. The trio welcomed the Life Skills students



who came to drop off their hand-decorated goody bags with *Winter Wonderland*. For the next hour, everyone listened to the group, singing and playing their instruments – ukulele, guitar and drums.

Want to hear more from Dear Ella ...

Listen here: Bandcamp:

<https://dearella.bandcamp.com/>

Facebook: <https://m.facebook.com/DearEllaTrio/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dearellatrio/>

YouTube short promo video:
https://youtu.be/Tg_M_pba-Xw

Website: <https://www.riseupandsing.org/annie/dearella>

Winter and Hiking

During the colder weather, hikes are hard to schedule far in advance. To get on the mailing list for the latest hiking news, email Ray Fontaine:

Westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net ... please note that all group e-mails are sent as blind copies (BCC) for your safety and privacy.

SAND!

If you would like a bucket of sand (with some salt – like what they use on the roads) delivered to your home, contact:

Julia (413) 537-9880 or jslennen@gmail.com

to arrange a delivery. Please specify where you want the bucket placed and if you have last year's bucket to exchange, leave it out. Special thanks to the Highway Department for helping us stay on our feet.

High Heating Costs



(from the CAPV website)

Update 12/17/2025

Great news!

Federal funding for this year's Fuel Assistance program has been released to the states and tribal organizations. We are continuing to review Fuel Assistance applications and serve heat emergencies. We want to help you stay warm this season!

We know this delay in fuel assistance has been a hardship for many. We are processing all applications as quickly as we can, in the order they were received. At this time, the program is reviewing applications received up to mid-to-late October.

The best way to check your application status is to call our automated system at 413 774 2310 (follow prompts 1 and 4)- we know talking to a real person is reassuring, but this tool frees up our team to process approvals faster.



Thank you for your patience and partnership during this busy time!

Applications for the 2025-2026 season are being mailed now. Applied with us many years ago? That's okay! Contact us for info on how to sign up again.

To apply, <https://www.toapply.org/CA> or call (413) 774-2310

Join the Email Reminder List

Our newsletter goes out once a month and our deadlines are in the middle of each month. Sometimes this means we miss telling you about an upcoming event!

Sign up to get emails from the Council on Aging with updates and reminders by contacting Christine Blakesley at coa@westhamptonma.gov.



Veterans' Corner



From Tom Geryk our Veteran's Agent ...

Our free veterans' luncheon for January will be on January 3rd at the Easthampton Congregational Church (ECC) at noon.

Veterans' coffee hours at ECC will be 9:00-11:00 every Wednesday following the luncheon.

Veterans are always welcome to bring a guest to the luncheons and coffee hours.

Reach Tom at: tgeryk@easthamptonma.gov or 413-529-4599; 413-270-2254

Top 10 Healthy New Year's Resolutions

The American Geriatrics Society's Health in Aging Foundation recommends these top 10 healthy New Year's resolutions for older adults to help achieve your goal of becoming and staying healthy.

Eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, low-fat dairy and healthy fats In later life, you still need healthy foods, but fewer calories. The USDA's Choose My Plate program (choosemyplate.gov), and your healthcare provider, can help you make good choices. Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Choose a variety with deep colors: dark green, bright yellow, and

orange choices like spinach, collard greens, carrots, oranges, and cantaloupe are especially nutritious. Include nuts, beans, and/ or legumes in your daily menu. Choose fiber-rich whole grain bread, brown rice, and whole grain pasta. Pick less fatty meats like chicken or turkey. Have heart-healthy fish, like tuna, salmon, or shrimp, twice a week. Include sources of calcium and Vitamin D to help keep your bones strong. Two daily servings of low-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese are a good way to get these nutrients. Use healthier fats, such as olive and canola oils, instead of butter or lard. Use herbs and spices to add flavor when cooking, which reduces the need to add salt or fat.

Be active Physical activity can be safe and healthy for older adults—even if you have heart disease, diabetes, or arthritis! In fact, many of these conditions get better with mild to moderate physical activity. Exercises such as tai chi, water aerobics, walking, and stretching can also help you control your weight, build your muscles and bones, and improve your balance, posture, and mood. Check with your insurance plan to see if you are eligible for the SilverSneakers program, which can provide access to local fitness centers.

See your provider regularly You should schedule an annual Medicare wellness visit with your healthcare provider around your birthday month to discuss health screenings and any changes in your advance directives. At each visit, talk to your provider about all the medications you're taking, and whether or not you still need them. Find out if you should be getting any new or booster immunizations/shots.

Guard against falls One in every three older adults falls each year — and falls are a leading cause of injuries and death among older adults. Exercises such as walking or working out with an elastic band can increase your strength, balance, and flexibility and help you avoid falls. Also ask your healthcare provider to check that you're not taking any pills that can make you more likely to fall. Eliminate items in your home that are easy to trip over, like throw rugs. Insert grab bars in your bathtub or shower, and install night lights so it's easier to see at night.

Toast with a smaller glass Excessive drinking can make you feel depressed, increase your chances of falling,

cause trouble sleeping, interact with your medications, and can contribute to other health problems. One drink = 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor. The recommended limit for older men is no more than 14 drinks per week and for older women, no more than 7 per week.

Give your brain a workout The more you use your mind, the better it will work. Reading is a good choice. Socializing also gives your brain a boost, so join a bridge club or a discussion group at your local library or senior center. Or take a course at your local community college — some offer free classes for adults 65 and older.

Quit smoking Did you know that cigarette smokers are twice as likely to develop heart disease as non-smokers? It is never too late to quit. You can still reduce your risk of many health problems, breathe easier, have more energy, and sleep better if you quit smoking. You can access the National Cancer Institute's website (www.smokefree.gov) for resources. Additionally, ask your healthcare provider for help. Don't lose hope if you failed to quit in the past. On average, smokers try about four times before they quit for good.

Speak up when you feel down or anxious About 1 in 5 older adults suffers from depression or anxiety. Some possible signs of depression can be lingering sadness, tiredness, loss of appetite or pleasure in doing things you once enjoyed. You may also have difficulty sleeping, worry, irritability, and wanting to be alone. If you have any of these signs for more than two weeks, talk to your healthcare provider and reach out to friends and family.

Get enough sleep Older adults need less sleep than younger people, right? Wrong! Older people need just as much — at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night. Avoid daytime naps, which can keep you up in the evening. Visit the National Sleep Foundation's website (www.sleepfoundation.org) for more tips on how to sleep better.

Reconsider multivitamins Reconsider using vitamins or nutrition supplements. as many older adults do not need them. Consult your healthcare provider if you have any issues or concerns about your nutrition.

Library News

January Library Programs

Hours:

Mon & Thu 2pm - 8pm

Tue & Wed 9am - 12pm & 1pm - 5pm

Sat 10am - 1pm

Closed January 1 and 19

Please check the town website or Facebook or Instagram @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for library updates. To place a request for curbside pickup,

please email westhampton@cwmars.org or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring Programs (Holidays may impact schedule)

- Computer Help w/Bob Miller 2nd and 4th Mondays 10am-noon
- Knitting Group - Mondays at 6pm
- Yoga - Mondays at 6pm
*Yoga is drop-in, first-come/first-served, and registration is not required. Please check Facebook and the town calendar for updates on yoga at the library.
- Scrabble Group - Tuesdays at 2pm
- Book Group – Fourth Tuesday (9/30).
- Walk-in Wellness Clinics w/ Westhampton's Public Health Nurse - First and Third Wednesday 10 – 11:30
- Coffee & Chat - Wednesdays from 10am - 12pm
- Tech Connect drop-in tech help - Thursday, December 18 from 2pm - 4pm

Tech Connect Devices Available for Checkout!

Thanks to a grant from the Northern Hilltown COAs and Tech Connect: Success for Older Adults, the following devices are now available for a 3-week loan:

Android Galaxy Tablet, Casio Keyboard, Kindle Paperwhite EReader, HP Chromebook Laptops. For more information, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/439y6p3d>

Paint Night with Mary Cleary

Thursday, January 22nd from 6PM - 8PM

Please join Mary Cleary at the library for a watercolor workshop. Access your inner artist by learning watercolor techniques to compose a unique work of art. Supplies provided. Bring your creativity! Please sign up at the Westhampton Library as space is limited. **Register by emailing westhampton@cwmars.org or calling 413-527-5386.** Special thanks to the Friends of

Westhampton Public Library and the Lyn Keating Programming Fund for sponsoring this program.

Julia Volkman on her TedX Talk ***Thursday, January 29th at 6PM***

Hear local educator, Julia Volkman, discuss her recent TEDx talk on how common teaching practices inadvertently work against the brain's natural learning systems. Julia is an educator, researcher and mentor who has been teaching students and mentoring educators in both private and public school settings since 1997. She is a faculty member of the Brain Health Initiative, a guest lecturer for Harvard University's Neuroscience of Learning course, and the founder and president of Maitri Learning, an educational project devoted to evidence-based and child-centered learning.

Julia earned her AMI 3–6+ diploma from the Montreal Montessori Training Centre, a bilingual program, and her master's degree from Harvard University, where her graduate research on the Montessori movable alphabet earned the Harvard Dean's Prize for Outstanding Research.

Peace & Joy Workshop w/ Roslyn Malkin ***Saturday, January 31st from 10:30AM - 12:30PM***

Come and discover with Roslyn new ways to use writing, drawing, humor, self-compassion and more to bring greater peace and joy into your life and relationships. With guest appearances by the dolphins and whales! This workshop will be presented by Roslyn Malkin, Ph.D. Roslyn is a personal and spiritual mentor, author, family business consultant, world traveler, and lover of bad puns. Visit: liveyourgreatness.net Light refreshments will be provided. Optional: Bring a small object to help create our sacred space. **To register: call 413-527-5386 or email westhampton@cwmars.org**

Out and about in the Hilltowns

Editor's Note:

Columns from Triad, Deb Hollingworth and Worth Noyes are not available at this time and will be included next month.

TechConnect Technology Help for January



Tech Support home visit is available by appointment

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com for help.

Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops, desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads

if you need a device to connect to the internet or have something so old it is not working effectively, please contact us. Leave a message at 413-296-5080, or use the online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Drop-in Centers

(no appointment needed)

- Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd. Chesterfield - Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00
- Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday,
- Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 3rd Thursday
- Williamsburg
 - Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday,
 - Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday,
- Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri at eadaneri@gmail.com.

NOTE: Drop-in Centers in Plainfield and Cummington have been discontinued due to low demand. Residents of these towns should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield site.

Internet Hotspots

If you need affordable internet access, we have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet and work in most areas in the Hilltowns. If you are interested, please contact us by phone 413-296-5080. Unlimited data plans are available through February. At this point, funding for hotspots will end and residents can purchase their own SIM card for \$30/month from Mint Mobile or the carrier of their choice.

Hit the Road - Roadtrips

Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **BEFORE** mailing payments. For more information

- call 413-296-4291 or
- email: francine.frenier@gmail.com
- mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

Day Trips

Day Trip May 3, 2026, Sunday A Grand Night for Singing at the Seven Angels Theater in Waterbury, CT. Pre-show lunch at San Marino's Restaurant. Price \$TBD. Make a payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March TBD.

Day Trip June TBD Isle of Shoals Cruise and Lobster Lunch Enjoy at 2.5-hour cruise from Portsmouth, NH to the Isles of Shoals. Pre-show lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April TBD.

Day Trip July TBD 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 \$TBD. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May TBD. Those on the cancelled trip from July 2025 will be given first chance to sign up.

Multi Day Trips



April 17-2, 2026 Washington DC 5 days, 4 nights. Visit or tour George Washington Mount Vernon Estate, Garden & Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution, Capitol Building,

World War II Memorial and more. Price \$790. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by January 26, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. No money is due until early January.

Multi Day Trip September 27- October 3, 2026 Mackinac Island, the quaint Michigan island where no vehicles are allowed. Trip is for 7 days, 6 nights. Tour the island by horse & carriage, cruise the Soo Locks, visit Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, Frankenmuth Bavarian Village and much more, not to mention the plentiful fudge shops. Price \$959. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by June 27, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. No money is due until next year. This trip quickly filled up. Please email to be added to the wait list.

The Westhampton Council on Aging benefits from your support for our programs for local seniors!

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

(Please make out your check to The Friends of the Westhampton COA and write "Program Support Fund" in the memo line; mail to Charlotte Wood, 14 Perry Hill Rd., Westhampton, MA 01027).

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Westhampton COA

Christine Blakesley,
Coordinator

Julia Lennen, Chair

Colleen Basile, Secretary

Ray Fontaine,

Lorraine Galica

Dave Goddard

Lillian Baxter,
HEN Representative

Need a ride?

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

Recipe of the Month

Broccoli cheese casserole (Louise Jasionkowski)

1 large head of broccoli	2 beaten eggs
1 cup grated cheddar cheese	salt & pepper to taste
1 can mushroom soup	½ cup mayonnaise
1 Tbsp onion flakes	1 strip ritz crackers (about 30)

Cook broccoli 5 min. or longer to make tender then drain. (I cut broccoli in bite size pieces before I cook it.)

Mix together remaining ingredients (except crackers)

Mix with cooked broccoli. Spread in 9x13 pan.

Crush crackers over broccoli

Melt ¼ cup butter or margarine. Drizzle over crackers.

Bake at 350 for 30-45 min.

