

Living Well



August
2020
Newsletter

Williamsburg Senior Center: Programs & Services for Active Living at 60+

New Feature: Senior of the Month

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to **Donna Gibson**, Chair of the Board of Health for the Town of Williamsburg. She is a Registered Nurse, grew up in the Amish country of PA, and obtained a diploma in Nursing (at the time it was a 3 year program) in PA, as well. She relocated to Williamsburg, MA in 1969, and received a Bachelor's degree from Worcester State College (years later). Donna has worked with the Board of Health since 1983.

She has a rich and wonderful background; working in a variety of nursing capacities, with her longest employment being in psychiatric nursing. Her interests vary from Reiki, Aztec medicine, and herbology, all which enhance a wholistic approach to her nursing craft. In addition to this, she maintains a small farm, raising apples and peaches, blackberries, raspberries, vegetables, and flowers; she also has an extended wood and acreage that surrounds her home.

These are the details that make up Donna's life; however, the essence of who Donna is, is her willingness to give back to her community, her kindness, humility, empathy, dedication to her work, and the ability to laugh at herself. In this time of uncertainty, it is her tireless efforts to get it right and make sure that the Town and its' residents obtain the best level of care and information possible. As Chairperson of the Board of Health, she has taken on a lead role in the Town's response to the pandemic. At 75 years of age, being at too great a risk to do direct patient care (and giving up her part time employment), Donna felt "I could be of more help in my community."

Donna said it was an honor (and humbling) to be highlighted in this way. We feel the same way to have her as part of our community.

Please contact the Senior Center if you know of a likely candidate for our Senior of the Month. All seniors are welcome! We can be reached via mail, email, or simply call us. **We hope to hear from you.**

Reaching Out

We are still making calls to speak with folks on a weekly basis; if this is something you feel you would like, please let us know. It can be just to chat or to help with a specific issue. Please call, we would love to hear from you.

Take and Eat Meal Program

Following up on the July newsletter article highlighting the above, we want to invite any interested groups to become part of this Burgy tradition. The noon time luncheon is a meaningful way to show we care about our community. We can help arrange the use of a kitchen facility (if needed), drivers to deliver meals, and help with the planning and preparation. Please contact the Senior Center at **413-268-8410**.

Modern/Contemporary Dance

The group held its first (since the pandemic) class on June 17 at the Town Hall (outside area). There were many participants who enjoyed the activity. The Senior Center thanks **Susan Waltner** for her efforts in making this happen. The group will continue to meet every Wednesday at 10:00 am at the Town Hall (outside and weather permitting). Anyone can attend (if you can get down on the floor and back up!) Please contact Susan at 268-3295 to sign up. Donations are welcome and help keep our programs running.



Attention Seniors: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the cost of groceries has risen at a dramatic rate. To help offset this marked jump in food prices the Senior Center has increased our capacity to help folks sign up for SNAP Benefits (formerly known as food stamps). Please call Tryna or Melissa at the Senior Center to sign up for this program. It is simple and easy to do.

Williamsburg Senior Center - 141 Main Street, P.O. Box 193 - Haydenville, MA 01039
Phone: 268-8407 - Hours: Mon - Thurs 8:30 - 1:30 - Email: seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org

Third Thursday Men's Group Holds Virtual Meeting

Thanks to Stuart Krantz for his efforts in organizing the first zoom meeting of the Third Thursday Men's Group that occurred on Thursday, July 16th. The group was unable to meet for several months (due to the pandemic), however it is back up and running! The group meets monthly, (third Thursdays, 8:30—9:15 am). Group and community members 60+ are welcome to join in! If you feel you would benefit from individual tutoring in using Zoom, contact Stuart at stuartkrantz@gmail.com. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Larry West at landwest3315@yahoo.com. Again, a big thanks to all who made this possible. We look forward to hearing more!

Needing to Limber Up?

Many of you have missed RSVP's Healthy Bones and Balance group that broke up in December, or you are feeling sluggish and inactive during this social distancing. Some other towns in our consortium of Senior Centers have been getting healthy via Zoom meetings on their computers!

Joan Griswold of Goshen has been leading **Strength and Cardio workouts** via Zoom with great success. Joan has a website where you can learn more of what she can do to help folks out, www.bybhealth.com. Contact us at the Senior Center if you are interested in signing up!

Brown Bag: Food for Elders

This program provides a free bag of healthy groceries to eligible seniors once a month at the Senior Center. Food items supplement your grocery shopping. Brown Bag is for people over 55 who meet income guidelines. If you qualify for SSI, Medicaid, Fuel Assistance, Veteran's Aid, or have a documented disability, you may qualify.

Call The Food Bank at 413-247-9738 or 800-247-9632 or download a printable application at www.foodbankwma.org. (Click on the Get Help tab and select Brown Bag.) Applications can be sent to:

**The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts,
P.O. Box 160, Hatfield, MA 01038**

Active Senior Programs

SHINE

For insurance issues, call the Senior Center to leave messages for Wayne Glaser. Leave your name and phone number, and we'll get the message to him. (268-8407).

Veteran's Service Officer

The VA office is still open and available to all. Tom Geryk may be reached at his office at 413-587-1299.

Foot Nurse

Piper Sagan is able to do foot care in your home, using safe practices. Price is \$80 per visit. Call her at 413-522-8432 for an appointment.

Podiatry

Dr. Coby can be reached at 413-774-4450.

Modern/Contemporary Dance

Susan Waltner's dance class- see article on pg 1.

Yoga for You

Yoga classes are led on Zoom and are going "swimmingly"! Tuesdays at 6 pm. Contact Michele at: morales.wolk@gmail.com.

Tai Chi

Instructor Marty Phinney is offering an outdoor activity. Details and times may vary. Group members or interested others can contact her at 413-268-3228.

Medical Rides

PVTA is providing rides in their vans for Dr. appointments or other medical reasons. Pre-registration is necessary the first time. We can help you with that! (268-8407). If you've already registered with them, call 413-739-7436 or 866-277-7741 to schedule.

Computer and Cell Phone Help

Call us if you are having problems. We'll connect you to our consultants. They may be able to help you by phone.

Other programs may restart as it becomes safe to do so. We'll keep you posted!

The Williamsburg Senior Center counts on YOUR support to continue our programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Williamsburg Senior Center. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please write your check to **Town of Williamsburg** with "Senior Center program support" on the memo line.)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Preventing Heat Stress

People who are most at risk for health effects because of extreme heat events can take steps to protect themselves by staying in air conditioned or cooler locations during heat waves, or indoors when air quality is poor. To find a facility to get cool during extreme heat in your area, check out information on Cooling Centers. Other steps to prevent heat related illness are listed below.

- ⇒ If there is no air conditioning in the home, open windows and shades on the shady side and close them on the sunny side to try to cool it down.
- ⇒ Drink plenty of fluids but avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks.
- ⇒ Beat the heat with cool showers and baths.
- ⇒ Take regular breaks from physical activity, and avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day (between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.).
- ⇒ Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing to help keep cool.
- ⇒ Stay out of the sun as much as possible, and try to stay in an air conditioned location if possible.
- ⇒ Wear sunscreen and a ventilated hat (e.g., straw or mesh) when in the sun, even if it is cloudy.
- ⇒ Never leave children, pets or those with special needs in a parked car, even briefly. Temperatures in the car can become dangerous within a few minutes.
- ⇒ Check on neighbors, family and friends, especially those who are elderly or have special needs.
- ⇒ Conserve water and power during heat waves by turning off lights and non-essential appliances, and reducing non-essential use of water.



Would you like to receive your newsletter 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!

Eternal Electronic Life - Killing Accounts

Last month I wrote about social media platforms and dealing with them after a person dies. That led to more reading and thinking, and I ended up with an Everplans note about online accounts. I read through it with astonishment – I did not realize how many online things there are to join!

Just a few common accounts many of us have – Amazon, Ancestry, Apple, AT&T, Barnes & Noble, Comcast, ebay, Facebook, FedEx ... Yahoo, Yelp and many in between. Here is where you can go to find a link to closing all these accounts – over 230 entities:

www.everplans.com/articles/how-to-close-online-accounts-and-services-when-someone-dies

This information could be quite useful if you are an Executor / Personal Representative for someone's estate. Seems like scrolling through these names could be helpful in cleaning up our own digital lives, e.g., managing passwords, scrapping old accounts that may not be useful anymore but that are hanging around.

Everplans is a business that charges for services, not a government or educational institution site which I usually prefer to give you. But it seems to have some good stuff. The main page is www.everplans.com, then look at Resources & Guides, Planning Categories, and Digital Estate for more information than I've written.

Yes, life is still more complicated!
 Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
 413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

It's the time of year when the zucchini are beginning to be big enough to eat, and you have to be up early if you're going to stay ahead of the weeds which thrive in this weather. Hot weather hasn't done away with Covid-19. It looks like we will need to be cautious for the foreseeable future. Dealing with the unknown and keeping positive as we ride out this pandemic, is the challenge.

Lately I've had an uptick in calls from folks thinking about retiring. Those of us who worked past our 65th birthday are asking if this is a good time to give up the paycheck. Some have been furloughed because of Covid, and lost their health insurance. People in that circumstance may want to enroll in Medicare.

Social Security administers Medicare and their offices are closed but the good news is that Social Security has made signing up for Medicare a little easier during this public health emergency.

Applying online is an excellent way to start. Social Security's website has a reputation for being user friendly. To give it a try, go to www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare. If you are losing your employer's health insurance because you've been furloughed, or because you've decided to quit working, you can check the website for information on the process of signing up, but you will need to call Social Security. Our local office is in Holyoke: 877-480-4989.

If you lost your health insurance because of Covid, or because you decide to quit work, Medicare allows you to enroll now with coverage starting the first day of the next month. You will need to verify your last day of health insurance coverage. You can do this with a copy of your pay stub showing health benefits being deducted, or a statement showing health insurance premiums being paid, or a CMS L564 form which you can download from the social security website. Paperwork gets mailed (Certified mail is recommended) to the Holyoke social security office. The mailing address is 200 High Street, Holyoke MA 01040.

For questions about what Medicare costs, or to enroll in supplemental Medicare plans, or to get Rx coverage, give your senior center a call to make an appointment with a SHINE counselor.



COVID-19 Face Covering Decision Guide



Are you leaving home?

Face covering is required to be worn when you cannot maintain six feet of social distance to another person who does not live in your household. A person who cannot wear a face covering for medical reasons is not required to provide documentation.

Are you outdoors less than 6 feet away from someone who doesn't live with you?

Face covering is required to be worn.

Are you an employee or customer of grocery, pharmacy, retail, or shared transit, even if you will be more than 6 feet away from others?

Face covering is required to be worn. A business may deny service to a person who refuses to wear a mask for nonmedical reasons.

Are you at any indoor business or organization, less than 6 feet away from someone who doesn't live with you?

Face covering is required to be worn.

Minimize the use of confined spaces, elevators, control rooms, and vehicles, by more than one individual at a time.

All workers in such spaces at that same time are required to wear face coverings.

Are you alone in an elevator, inside an indoor shared common area, or other indoor enclosed area?

Face covering is recommended.

Questions?

Email: safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov
or visit: mass.gov/dols

COVID-19 and the price of AGEISM

Ageism is one of the social problems made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our ageist views of older or some might say mature adults as frail or irrelevant creates a distorted picture of how communities successfully get through crises. Using age alone to identify people as frail, thus automatically needing protection, distorts the fact that the pillars of support we rely on in our towns during this pandemic are often older.

More than ever we are learning that getting through this crisis requires building intergenerational solidarity. It's not that age is irrelevant but being compromised by chronic illnesses and comorbidities are stronger risk factors for all age groups, as are race and poverty. It flies in the face of reality to ignore the fact that many older adults in our communities are playing crucial roles in protecting others who are struggling. They are also practicing social distancing, keeping their hands clean, and wearing masks as they do so.

In many Hilltowns, those 60 and over constitute a third of the taxpayers and the bulk of the volunteers who keep town operations going. Take a look at your town committees and volunteers. How many of them continue to work to make the community safer? Do you automatically see them as frail? What a misleading image. For example, the Chesterfield Community Cupboard support team includes a range of ages, from people in their 50s to 80+. They shop, sort and store food, and keep everything clean and sanitized.

What's emerging as a major COVID-19 threat is the risks to all age groups of not taking the simple but necessary precautions: washing hands, social distancing and wearing masks. People 60 and older are not the ones driving the surges in infection rates that we are seeing. Because of their perception of risk, older people are more likely to limit their time in public and take the precautions that limit the risk of infection for everyone. Yet Dan Patrick, the lieutenant governor of Texas, suggested those over 70 "sacrifice" themselves for the good of the economy by accepting and participating in re-opening activities. It should be noted that Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and recognized as a tireless leader in getting us all through the pandemic, is not publicly referred to as the "old and frail" Dr. Fauci.

What difference does ageism make when we are all in crisis mode? Here are some thoughts from gerontological experts.

⇒ The World Health Organization identifies ageism as the last socially accepted form of prejudice... perceptions of older adults as frail and weak impacts the kind of care they receive and the health care outcomes they experience... In the U.S these perceptions are reinforced in medical training: geriatric care doesn't even appear on the list of required

training for doctors. (Nash & Schnarss, *The Conversation*, June 15, 2020).

⇒ Kate de Medeiros notes that "of all the isms, ageism is arguably the hardest to address because old age is neither a valued stage of life nor an identity many claim. The pandemic is making it worse (Aging: Covid-19. Hastings Bioethics Forum. May 14, 2020)

⇒ "In addition to the misrepresentation of COVID-19 as an 'older adult' problem, many countries have chosen to impose stricter restrictions on older adults, ordering them to remain inside during the pandemic. These restrictions exacerbate the longstanding problems of older adults' isolation and the health consequences of social disconnectedness that existed long before the pandemic. While restrictions may aim to be protective, such policies have often translated into patronizing public communications depicting all older adults as 'vulnerable members of society.'" (Age and Ageing)

Now is the time to put a new face on aging. While you're at it, put a fresh mask on. We are all in this together.

Jan Gibeau, Director
Chesterfield council on Aging

The logo for the United States Census 2020. It features the words "United States" in a smaller font above the word "Census" in a large, bold, black font, with "2020" below it in a similar large, bold, black font.

The 2020 Census is underway! It counts every living person in the USA. From August 11 to October 31, Census takers will interview homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census.

If you have not responded, you can do so by returning the mailings you should have received from the U.S. Census Bureau.

If you didn't receive your mailings, no problem! You can fill out your information over the phone with a verified Census Bureau representative at 844-330-2020. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's staff to have a conversation about Census operations at 833-621-2020.

Your community depends on your Census response for funding and representation for the next decade to come. The impact on your community include: school lunches, plans for highways, support for firefighters and families in need. Census results affect your community every day. Please respond if you haven't already done so.

Williamsburg Senior Center
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Haydenville, MA 01039

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

Contract Tracing Calls—5 Things to Know

A contact tracer from your state health department might call if you've been exposed to COVID-19. But scammers are pretending to be contact tracers, too. Here's how you can spot the scam.

1. **Real contact tracers won't ask for money.** Only scammers insist on payment by gift card, money transfer or cryptocurrency.
2. **Contact tracing doesn't require your bank account or credit card number.** Never share account information with anybody who contacts you asking for it.
3. **Legitimate contact tracers will never ask for your Social Security number.** Never give any part of your Social Security number to anyone who contacts you.
4. **Your immigration status doesn't matter for contact tracing, so real tracers won't ask.** If they do, you can bet it's a scam.
5. **Do not click on a link in a text or email.** Doing so can download malware onto your device.

Talking to a real contact tracer helps stop the spread of COVID-19. Reporting scammers helps stop them, too. Report fake contact tracers to your state and at ftc.gov/complaint.

For more information about contact tracing visit your state health department's website and ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams