

# Living Well



December  
2020  
Newsletter

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

**We are happy to share with our readers the remarkable and caring people (and their sentiments) who live in our community. The Senior Center relies on their generosity and the Town's support to continue to help folks who use our services. Here is what some folks had to say:**

## MEALS PROGRAMS

"You are doing such an important job, getting meals to seniors and calling those who are home alone. You are also drastically reducing the shopping-exposure time for the family, friends and neighbors of seniors. This is so helpful in keeping us all safe. We appreciate all that you are doing."

"The meals are a godsend – they not only keep us out of the grocery store, they also keep the people who shop for us out of the grocery store. It keeps us all safe. It's why I love living in Williamsburg."

"I look forward to the Saturday meals and the lovely people that knock on my door. I can see their smile in their eyes even with the masks on. "

"God bless you all, Thanks and Love"

"I still feel connected to the town "

## DONATIONS

"This check is for the Senior Center with Thanks for all their help to me before and after my surgery. Seemed the least I could do especially since I'll probably be comin' round that mountain once or twice again."

## FARMSHARES

"I thank you for the work involved in setting up the Senior Center CSA! I am a confirmed meat eater. However this summer's CSA has changed my cooking and eating habits. I am cooking spaghetti squash and eggplant parmigiana. Working on Kale chips! Thank you so much!"

"Thank you so much for organizing this farm share for 2020. This is a wonderful thing for our seniors!"

"Thank you, Melinda, I look forward to picking up the farm share, and meeting you! Thank you for making the program possible."

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate in a farm share. I appreciate coordination and work done by the farmers and you all at the Senior Center. I hope the senior share opportunity will continue – getting the produce so easily and efficiently is a wonderful "treat" and at a good price."

"I got a Farm Share Bag with all kinds of produce today. I feel as though it is Christmas--it's beautiful! It cheers me up amazingly! Thanks so much, Tamar, Melinda and Lisa. The program and all of your hard work was and is VERY appreciated. The produce was diverse, farm-fresh and a delight every single week!"

## CURBSIDE & PHONE VISITS

"I felt we had a warm visit that enabled us to get some sense of each other. I learned from her son that she does get lonely in spite of a number of visits with people. I intend to visit again soon."

"One thing I love about these calls is that I get to hear what's going on in the world other than what my children tell me."

## NEWSLETTER

"Thanks for all you do for the Seniors in town, me included."

"Thank you for the newsletter. It's crammed with useful information."

***Please see pages 2 – 4 for more from your neighbors!***

On November 11th, as I drove down the street and found the flag crew hanging flags in our town, I realized we wouldn't be having the usual parade for Veterans Day. We at the Senior Center want to express our deep gratitude to all who have served our country. With all the political unrest, it is sometimes difficult to see what wonderful freedom we have in this country, and it is so, thanks to of the great men and women who served. We honor you as our heroes!



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

## CURRENT TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR SENIORS IN WILLIAMSBURG/HAYDENVILLE

Due to safety for all involved during the Covid 19 lockdown, the Senior Center can't provide door-to-door rides. Sadly, this is our current reality.

PVTA (Pioneer Valley Transit Authority) is doing its best to meet the needs of Seniors in the Hilltowns. Other than the usual PVTA bus service to our area, they provide us with **Dial-A-Ride Services, (413) 739-7436**, for seniors 60 and over. These rides are demand-responsive. Rides are available **Monday – Friday from 6:30 AM to 5 PM** during the pandemic. **One-way rides are \$3 - \$5 depending on locations and distance.** Companions must be booked and pay full fare. Tickets can be purchased at the Senior Center. Let us know if you need help paying for the rides so we can help.

One-time advance PVTA registration is required before you can call for rides. **Register for Dial-A Rides at (413) 739-7436 for a short intake or call the Senior Center at 413-268-8407 and we'll do it for you.** Once you register, they will tell you:

- You'll get a call the night before your trip that will give you a 20-minute pick-up window;
- You can call as late as 4:30pm the night before a needed ride; however, it's best to call as soon as you know you'll need transportation to assure a spot.



### Volunteer Opportunity: Join the Williamsburg Council on Aging Advisory Board

Council on Aging Advisory Board members work with the Senior Center Director and staff to identify needs of the community's elderly population; to educate and enlist community support concerning these needs; and to help design, promote, and implement services or programs for seniors.

Commitment includes a meeting at 12:15 on the third Wednesday of each month, currently being held via zoom meetings. Appointments are for one, two, or three years.

Here's a chance to collaborate with congenial colleagues to support our most vulnerable citizens. Contact the Senior Center Director, Melissa Wilson, at 413-268-8410 or email her at [seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org](mailto:seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org).

### Holiday Meals From Manna Soup Kitchen

If you have a need or desire for a holiday meal, Manna Soup Kitchen will deliver free fresh-cooked full dinners to Williamsburg/Haydenville residents. Prepared and delivered by volunteers, these meals are a special treat during the holidays.

**To order, call Kim at 413-695-3514 and enjoy the holidays.**

### Pen Pal Program

Would you like to be a pen pal to a Burgy 6th grader? We'd like to take the program into its 4th year! We're not yet sure how it will operate this year, but the teachers are working on a plan. Please contact the senior center to get on the list — we will get back to you asap. (268-8407)

*The Take and Eat program was mentioned in the newsletter which reminded me that I wrote a poem in thanks for that program:*

### Take and Eat

Life's demands seemed never to end  
Schooldays held me fast until grown  
Time then to stand tall even to bend  
Toward volunteering, never to groan

Energy my middle name steps taken  
Two at a time work & fun the same  
Jobs easily in pairs once I'd awoken  
To needs unmet a new world aflame

With possibilities of self-awareness  
My name in lights & above the fold  
Love's mystery at last in fond caress  
No longer one alone strong and bold

Youth would last forever as I fought  
To conquer poverty, to make a name  
Before this sad year ending in ought  
I dined with the Lord.  
Finally, Apostle-like fame!

~James Francis Cahillane

## Currently Active Senior Programs

### SHINE

For insurance issues, call the Senior Center to make an appointment. Leave your name and phone number and we'll let an agent know to contact you.

### Veteran's Service Officer

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

### Medical Rides

PVTA is providing medical rides in their vans. (See article on pg 2)

### Foot Nurse

Piper Sagan is doing foot care at the Hadley Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Call them at 413-586-4023 to make an appointment. Piper can also do foot care in your home, using safe practices (\$80). Call her at 413-522-8432 for an appointment.

### Podiatry

Dr. Coby can be reached at 413-774-4450. He has an office at 7 Main Street, Florence.

### Modern/Contemporary Dance

Susan Waltner's dance class is still being held outdoors in the garden behind the Town Offices on Wednesdays at 10:30, weather permitting.

### Yoga for You

Yoga classes are led on Zoom Tuesdays at 6 pm. Contact Michele at [morales.wolk@gmail.com](mailto:morales.wolk@gmail.com).

### Tai Chi

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

### Third Thursday Men's Group

Meets via zoom meeting on 3rd Thursdays @ 8:30 am. This ongoing group meeting has been very popular. Email Larry ([landwest3315@yahoo.com](mailto:landwest3315@yahoo.com)) to get on the contact list. Join in the conversation!

### Strength and Cardio Workouts

Joan Griswold of Goshen is leading Strength and Cardio workouts via Zoom Thursdays at 10:15 am. Check Joan's website at [www.bybhealth.com](http://www.bybhealth.com). Contact the Senior Center to sign 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. Call The Food Bank at 413-247-9738 or 800-247-9632 or download a printable application at [www.foodbankwma.org](http://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.

### Take and Eat

Two area churches are providing freshly made meals delivered every Saturday. The program is looking for other groups that might want to participate. Contact the senior center to find out more or to sign up.

### Wellness Calls

The Williamsburg Senior Center is making calls weekly or monthly to see how you are doing. If you are feeling lonely, or would like a check-up call, we'd be glad to add you to our call list. Call us at 268-8407. Thanks to Carol Hendricks & Tryna Hope!

### Stay informed! Subscribe to Living Well Newsletter!

This newsletter has gone out to an extended list in hopes of reaching ALL seniors. If you don't usually receive the Living Well Newsletter every month and want to, please call us at 268-8407 or email [sloomis@burgy.org](mailto:sloomis@burgy.org). Leave your name, address and phone number. Let us know if you prefer a paper or a digital newsletter (include your email address).

The Senior Center is grateful for all the wonderful donations that you have given us! We thank you for your financial and your volunteer donations which keep our programs running and enable us to serve the community!

If you would like to contribute, please fill out the form below and send your donation to **Williamsburg Senior Center, P.O. Box 193, Haydenville, MA 01039**. Again, we thank you!

### 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!**

## 2020: The Year in Review

2020 started with a January trip to **Magic Wings** in Deerfield. A great tropical escape for a few hours on a cold afternoon! In February, we were musically entertained by **singer Duane Carlson**, who puts on a great show. We also had a trip to **Steve's Sugar Shack** for pancakes and maple syrup—this has been a favorite for several years. In March we had **A Celtic Celebration with Davis Bates**. Singing and storytelling accompanied by several instruments kept many of us enthralled for an hour. **Thanks to the Williamsburg Cultural Council and YOUR donations**, these programs have been fun and entertaining!

On March 9th **Melissa Wilson** became our new Director. She was there for a week before the shut-down happened. **Thanks, Melissa, for adapting to our new way of running a Senior Center!**

With Covid-19 shutting us down in March, this year has been different and challenging! We had full programming until mid-March, then we had to improvise. The first order of importance was getting meals out to seniors who regularly ate at the Senior Center Café. **Highland Valley Elder Services** immediately picked up the slack and we were able to deliver packaged meals to seniors who were signed up. **Thank you to Norma Whitley** for delivering these meals five days a week to 12-15 homes for almost 8 months!

The Brown Bag program continues with the Food Bank of Western Mass providing pre-boxed packages of food monthly to about 20 seniors. **Thanks to all the volunteers who've made that possible, especially Russ Richardson and Linda Weeks.**

The Take and Eat program had already started, with fresh-made meals delivered to 20-30 seniors every Saturday. Williamsburg Congregational Church and Our Lady of the Hills Church alternate Saturdays, and **we thank the volunteers who operate this wonderful program.** The meals were and are generous and full of surprises, often providing one or more extra meals!

Melinda, our meal site coordinator, was able to start and operate a Farm Share Program, which distributed a bag of locally grown food weekly to about 50 people for a very low price. **A big thank you to Melinda McCall, Tamar Smith and Lisa Tucker**, who worked very hard to see that everyone got a good share every week!

As we got a better understanding of the Covid situation, some programs came back in a new way. **Joan Griswold** of Goshen offers a Strength & Cardio class via Zoom, which became popular in many of the local towns, including Burgy. **Michele Wolk** started Yoga for You Zoom classes, too. **Marty Phinney's** Tai Chi began practicing outside, as did **Susan Waltner's** Contemporary Dance Class. **Thanks to all the instructors who have adapted and offered classes in a new way!**

The Third Thursday Men's group continues meeting every month with Zoom meetings. I'm sure they miss those early breakfast meetings, but they continue the social group in a new way! **Thanks go to the men who are keeping their social network alive!**

This summer we were able to revive the small group started in 2019 called **Seniors Who Kayak**. 5 of us took a couple of trips to the DAR and Highland Lake later this summer. **Thanks to Larry West, his pickup truck and spare kayaks!** It sure felt great to be out on that water, social distancing, visiting, soaking up the scenery.

We also thank **Barbara Estes and Susan Farrell** for their work in the Café before we shut our doors. And many thanks to the **Council on Aging Advisory Board** for their constant and dependable support.

AND so many more! Your donations to the Senior Center come in so many ways and from folks too numerous to count. We value all of you and ask the question, **"What can the Williamsburg Senior Center do for you?"**

Sincerely,

Melissa Wilson  
Carol Hendricks  
Tryna Hope  
Sherry Loomis  
Tamar Smith



Duane Carlson

Davis Bates



Contemporary Dance Class



Seniors Who Kayak



Seniors Aware of Fire Education



This year's holiday season will be very different for many people because of COVID; one of the things many people will do is decorate their homes with bright lights to shine during this dark time. Here are a few suggestions on how to brighten your corner of the world safely:

- ⇒ Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed by an approved testing agency.
- ⇒ Replace old lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- ⇒ Never overload outlets.
- ⇒ Use no more than 3 strands of lights on a single extension cord.
- ⇒ Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.

For outdoor lights consider:

- ⇒ Using only lights rated for outdoor use.
- ⇒ Plug outdoor decorations into a ground-fault circuit interrupter.
- ⇒ Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Have a SAFE and happy holiday season.

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

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



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

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

**Charity – where does it begin?**

Everyone has a favorite cause to support. This time of year, we are inundated with requests to part with our money for a really good organization! So, how to tell if this is a good idea or not? How to tell how much is enough?

First, can you afford it? Your budgetary "needs" should be considered first, like rent or mortgage, heat, and groceries. After that, we have "wants", savings, and discretionary spending. Charity contributions are considered discretionary – I cannot think of an exception to this.

Second, which cause do you like? As an ecologist and farmer's daughter, I lean toward environmental, conservation, and agricultural / food issues. We may support medical research, literacy, veteran's programs, animal welfare – the list goes on. We may support local fundraisers or children's programs or the library.

Third, is the cause being considered a valid one, a good one? Valid means not a scam! A good one means considerations such as how much money is spent on management, i.e., does a large percentage of income go to the actual cause. I still like Charity Navigator (**www.charitynavigator.org**) for analysis of many causes, though they will not feature our local scene. One benefit of this resource is that they now show Advisories: charities "that raise concerns". A second benefit is that you can donate anonymously to a listed organization! That means fewer mailings coming in the mail! Less inundation!

With charity in my heart,  
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member  
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

## Experts say they're usually fine — but here's what to consider when choosing your specs

by Sarah Elizabeth Adler, AARP  
September 24, 2020



Who needs reading glasses? All of us do, eventually, thanks to a condition called presbyopia — a gradual loss of the ability to clearly see things up close — that becomes noticeable for most people beginning in their 40s. Because presbyopia is caused by age-related changes to the lens of the eye, it isn't preventable or reversible. But experts say that the right pair of reading glasses, including those readily available at retailers like a dollar store or pharmacy, can help bring small print and other objects, like your smartphone screen, back into focus.

Here's how to find your perfect pair.

### Over-the-counter reading glasses

"Reading glasses from a drugstore are, in fact, perfectly safe," says ophthalmologist Michelle Andreoli, M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, who notes that over-the-counter reading glasses, including low-cost dollar store options, can help you focus up close and will not damage your eyesight. But, she adds, once your up-close vision starts changing, you can expect it to continue to worsen into your mid-60s. That means the reading-glass strength you start out with will need to increase as the years go by. "A good rule of thumb is that any strength of [reading glasses] will last someone between 45 and 65 about two years," Andreoli says.

Experts say the best way to determine what strength you need in the first place is with a yearly eye exam, which can tell you what power (notated with a number like +1.00 or +2.50) you need. The higher the number is, the stronger the glasses are. If you haven't been to the eye doctor or want a way to double-check in the store, Andreoli recommends grabbing a greeting card from the stationery aisle to carry out a DIY test: Hold the card at a comfortable reading distance and try on several pairs until you find the ones that work best.

If you're stuck between two pairs? "In most cases, when two reading-glass powers seem equally suitable, choose the glasses with the lower power," says optometrist William Reynolds, president of

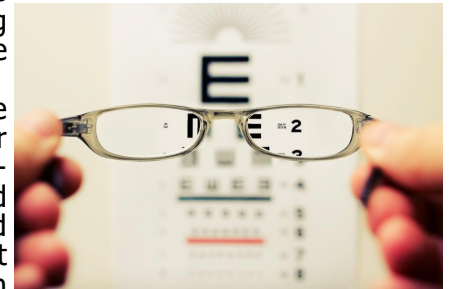
the American Optometric Association. "Picking reading glasses that are too strong typically will cause more discomfort problems than reading glasses that are a little too weak."

Another thing to keep in mind is the activity you'll be using the reading glasses for. Working on the computer, for example, typically takes place at a greater distance than reading a book, and thus requires a lower strength.

### Prescription reading glasses

The over-the-counter route isn't right for everyone, Reynolds says, including people who have astigmatism

(meaning the eye's cornea or lens isn't perfectly round) and those who need a different strength for each



eye. In those cases, prescription reading glasses from the eye doctor are a better option. The most popular choice of prescription reading glasses are progressive lenses, Reynolds says. They combine multiple prescriptions in one lens, with a gradual top-to-bottom change, allowing someone to wear just one pair of glasses to correct far-away, middle-distance and up-close vision.

For people who otherwise have no vision problems, Andreoli says that reading-glass lenses that are clear (non-prescription) on top are another popular option available from the eye doctor. They can be worn continuously and eliminate the need to take your reading glasses on and off throughout the day.

Fredric Grethel, a board member of The Vision Council, a nonprofit optical industry trade association, notes that prescription reading glasses might also be a better choice for someone who wants more options, such as blue-light blocking lenses or an antireflective coating — not to mention a greater selection of fashionable frame choices. "The world has really changed from some years ago," Grethel says of the numerous reading-glass options — both over-the-counter and prescription — available today. "Now they're fashionable, they're fun, and they can give you personality."



## How to Strengthen Your Lungs to Fight COVID-19

by Michelle Crouch, AARP  
July 31, 2020



As you know, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can cause serious lung damage and breathing problems — along with a host of other health issues. And as the virus continues to spread, you may be wondering if strengthening your lungs will help you fight it off if you are infected.

"One of the first things that happens with COVID is that you get short of breath and your oxygen saturation begins to fall," says Raymond Casciari, a pulmonologist at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange, California. "The better condition your lungs are in, the better off you will be."

To get your lungs into better shape, the top critical-care pulmonologists we interviewed all agreed that the best option — hands down — is regular old physical activity, the kind that gets your heart rate up. "Anything that makes you breathe faster is basically a breathing exercise," says Joshua Denson, a pulmonary and critical care specialist and assistant professor of medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine. "My first advice would not be, 'Go sit in a chair and breathe deeply.' I'd say, 'Get on a bike and ride 20 minutes a day,' or 'Go for a brisk walk.'" Aim for activity that ramps up your breathing.

Staying active is especially important for older Americans, because lung function decreases as you age. Over time, the muscles that support your breathing become weaker, lung tissue loses elasticity and the air sacs inside your lungs become baggier. Studies show exercise can slow that decline and boost lung function.

Aerobic activity also helps air get into the deepest parts of your lungs that you don't use when you are sedentary, says Bruce Levy, chief of the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

"If there are any secretions or pollutants you've breathed in, aerobic activity helps you clear them out of your lung and decreases your risk of infection or pneumonia," he says. "Aerobic fitness also helps your body obtain oxygen from the environment and use it in the most efficient manner," he says. "If you happen to get COVID, if you've been doing cardio, that's going to help you."

What's important for lung health, Levy and others say, is to exercise at an intensity that quickens your breathing rate and leaves you feeling breathless, whether it's swimming, biking or walking briskly.

"Some older adults are deathly afraid of feeling 'short of breath,'" Casciari says. "I have to convince them that it's a good thing."

**How breathing exercises can help:** Deep breathing exercises are another way to get air deep into your lungs and clear secretions. Although they're not as effective as physical activity, they are better than doing nothing for people who are sedentary, pulmonologists say, and they can be particularly helpful for people who have mobility issues.

"If you're bedridden, or caring for someone who's bedridden, doing some controlled breathing can be very useful because there is no other way to train," Levy says. "If you are not exercising, the base of your lungs can partially collapse, which increases the risk for infection if you breathe in a virus."

Levy notes that if you already exercise regularly (and don't have a chronic lung condition), breathing exercises may not confer any additional respiratory benefit, but they certainly won't cause any harm. Besides, you may reap other benefits: Research shows slow, controlled breathing can help lower your heart rate, stabilize your blood pressure and ease anxiety.

### Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

Already December! The Good News is that the deep frost arrived late and with the last spurt of warm weather there was still time to plant more tulips. There's hopeful news about a Covid vaccine, and the election is behind us. Perhaps there is reason to believe that the next few months will not be so stressful.

Dealing with Covid may mean not seeing the whole family for holidays, but senior centers are coming up with new ideas to celebrate. Whether it's a drive by and pick up Turkey dinner, or holiday gift cards that may arrive in your mail box, we are inventing new ways to reach out to family and friends. The theme song for the long winter that lies ahead is....don't hibernate....keep in touch.

Zoom meetings for coffee and chat, book clubs, writing groups, puzzle exchanges, cooking classes and/or recipe exchanges and exercise classes are still happening.

Senior centers are also making calls to "phone buddies", so if you'd like a phone call, for no reason other than to chat, let them know. As the days get shorter and colder, it's important to keep in touch.

Times like these, we need to be inventive, thoughtful and on the look out for ways to help.



**Williamsburg Senior Center**  
**141 Main Street**  
**P.O. Box 193**  
**Haydenville, MA 01039**

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Our Many Volunteers

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

## **'Mass Appeal': *Special Senior Edition!***

Council On Aging Directors from throughout Western Mass have been working with Mass Appeal co-host Patrick Berry on a special edition of the show that will focus on older adults. What began as a collaboration to highlight area Senior Center holiday performers, morphed into an entire show dedicated to the topic of aging adults in our area.



**Tune in to WWLP Channel 22 for Mass Appeal on Tuesday, December 8th at 11am** for an hour filled with information and local entertainers performing both original holiday pieces as well as traditional favorites. Topics that co-hosts Alanna Flood and Patrick Berry will delve into the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of older adults, caregiver stress, nutrition, and fitness. When a group of dedicated, compassionate, committed Senior Center Directors teams up with a talented television duo, the results are definitely worth watching!