

Living Well



March
2022
Newsletter

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

From our Director

When I began my tenure at the Senior Center in March of 2020, the pandemic was in its infancy. The learning curve of my new position was much different than I had imagined. The Senior Center, along with other Town Departments, had to make many adjustments over the coming months. The Select Board immediately began phone meetings which all departments attended regularly.

It was a unique and interesting way to meet town co-workers and begin new employment. All of us wanted to make sure we were there for folks in town, especially our seniors, who were early on identified as the most vulnerable to this new disease. How was this all going to work? There were many unknowns (as is still the case!).

Fast forwarding two years, I'd like to take a moment to share some thoughts about my work, town employees and their department staff. It is their dedication, compassion, and concern for residents in our community that is notable and unwavering.

Police Chief Denise Wickland and Fire Department Chief Jason Connell have been exemplary in working with the Senior Center to enhance the safety of Seniors living in their homes. Both departments continue to work with the Senior Center through the TRIAD program to prepare seniors for emergencies including the delivery of sand for the winter months.

There are infrequent situations when we need to consult with Police Chief Denise Wickland. In all instances, it is apparent that she has taken the time to get to know our seniors as well as those most vulnerable. Her insight, along with her care and concern for our older residents, has been invaluable. Fire Chief Jason Connell has also been helpful when the Senior Center calls. Currently, the Fire Department and the Senior Center have applied for a Senior SAFE grant.

The Senior Center also enjoyed summer coffee hour social events under the tent on the lawn area at the Town Offices building. The Highway Department, (Dan Banister and his crew), who set up our tent, have been most accommodating in responding to requests from the Senior Center.

I have met with Meekins Library Director, Bev Bullock. We are planning to collaborate and streamline services

to better serve the senior population in accessing technology and library services (stay tuned!). Early on, the library came up with an innovative way to safely distribute books.

This year, we resumed the Pen Pal program with the 6th grade class at the Anne T. Dunphy school. We appreciate Principal Stacey Jenkins, Kolby Lafayette and Mary Stucklen (sixth grade teachers) for their time and effort to make this happen. This much beloved program for seniors to exchange letters with the 6th graders was deeply missed last year.

And a heartfelt thank you to Brenda Lessard, our town clerk, who has responded to the Senior Center's request for this list and that list (among other things) to help us better identify and serve the needs of older adults. Every day Brenda demonstrates her care and compassion for the work we do. This thank you also extends to town administrators, Charlene Nardi and Nick Caccamo, and to the many other town employees (too many to list) who contribute immensely to serve the public. Thank you.

And lastly, the staff at the Senior Center, working tirelessly over the last two years, rose to meet the challenge of providing services under stressful circumstances. Staff made many adjustments in how we provide services: wellness calls, which began early on in March of 2020; delivery of lunch meals to folks who came to our meal site; exercise classes on zoom and outdoors; flu clinics in the parking lot; coffee hours and ice cream social under the tent; coordinated Take and Eat and made phone appointments for SHINE and other services. We distributed masks, met with folks outside, did grocery shopping, picked up prescriptions, and a host of many other things to help Seniors. The success of the Senior Center belongs to them.

So, as my two-year anniversary as Senior Center Director approaches, it is with the knowledge that older adults in Burgoyne and Haydenville are in good hands. I truly am fortunate to work with such dedicated, caring and compassionate people.

In a future Living Well newsletter article, the focus will be on the volunteers and seniors, themselves, who are essential to the well-being of our community.

— Melissa Wilson

Williamsburg Senior Center - 141 Main Street, P.O. Box 193, Haydenville, MA 01039
Phone: 268-8407 ~ Hours: Mon - Thurs, 8:30 - 2:00 ~ Email: seniorcenterdirector@burgoyne.org

SHINE

For help with Medicare and Medicare-related insurance, SHINE can help. If you want to speak to a SHINE agent, call the Senior Center to make an appointment. Leave your name and phone number and we'll have an agent contact you.

Veteran's Service Officer

Though there are no office hours in the Town Offices, the VA office is open and available. **Robert Vigneault** may be reached at his office at **413-587-1299** for appointments.

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 <https://www.foodbankwma.org>. (Click on the Get Help tab and select Brown Bag.) Send applications to: The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, P.O. Box 160, Hatfield, MA 01038.

Highland Valley Meals

Packaged meals are delivered Mon-Fri. Call the Senior Center to register. Suggested donation, \$3/meal can be paid weekly or monthly to Highland Valley Elder Services.

Take and Eat

Two area churches are providing freshly made meals delivered every Saturday. Contact the senior center to find out more or to sign up.

Wellness Calls

The Williamsburg Senior Center is still making friendly calls. If you are feeling lonely, or would like check-up calls, we'll add you to our call list. (268-8407)

Foot Nurse

Piper Sagan is doing foot care at the Senior Center **April 12th** and on second Tuesdays every other (even) month. Call us (268-8407) to make an appointment, (\$50). Piper can also do foot care in your

home, (\$80). Call her at **413-522-8432** for an appointment.

Podiatry

Dr. Coby has appointments available on **March 8th**, and the second Tuesday of every other (odd) month. He accepts insurance for payment. Call us (268-8407) for an appointment.

Medical Rides

The Senior Center drivers are available for your medical rides again! Call us at least 3 days ahead of any rides you need and we will provide a driver. (You can still use PVRTA for medical rides in their vans with **Dial-A-Ride Services, (413) 739-7436.**) Rides for shopping/errands can also be scheduled through our **Car-pool Program**.

Modern/Contemporary Dance

Susan Waltner's dance class is happening on Wednesdays at 10:00 am in the auditorium. Contact Susan at swaltner@smith.edu if you would like to join.

Tai Chi

Instructor Marty Phinney is offering Tai Chi outside or in the auditorium, **Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30 am**. Members or interested others can contact her at **413-268-3228**.

Yoga for You

Yoga classes are led on Zoom **Tuesdays at 6 pm**. Contact her at morales.wolk@gmail.com.

Strength and Cardio Workouts

Joan Griswold is leading workouts via Zoom **Thursdays at 10:15 am**. Visit her at www.bybhealth.com to sign up.

Men's Group

Meets at the **Williamsburg Snack Shack (or Zoom)** on **3rd Thursdays at 8:30 am**. To join, email Larry West (landwest3315@yahoo.com), and become one of the "guys!"

~The Senior Center gratefully accepts donations to help fund many of our programs.~

Monthly Coffee Hour!

The Senior Center is planning an **Indoor Coffee Hour on Thursday, March 24th, 10-11 am.**
(If Covid restrictions permit it)

Please call **268-8407** or email tsmith@burgy.org to sign up, as indoor space is limited.
... Entertainment is a possibility...

Masks are required to enter the building.

Farm Shares!

It is time to think about Farm Share! We had a good season last summer with higher overall satisfaction, and I anticipate a season very similar this year. We will go with Prospect Meadow Farm again; more information will be coming your way soon. Please feel free to express interest by emailing Tamar at tsmith@burgy.org.



New Loan Program for Health Equipment

Members of several Masonic lodges started an innovative loan program that will assist persons in need of medical equipment for their home.

The purpose of the Western Massachusetts Hospital Loan Program is to lend health and hospital equipment to area residents **at no cost**. Recipients do not have to be a Mason to make a request.

The equipment list is extensive and ranges from Hoya lifts, electric hospital beds, electric lift chairs and exercise bikes to crutches, canes, electric scooters, and transfer benches. It also includes sides for beds, mattresses, wheelchairs, commodes, tub rails etc. All equipment is sanitized.

They do not deliver anything. If you or someone you know needs something call Melvyn Hook 413-301-3293. Pick-up is only on Saturdays, 9 am-12 noon at the Masonic Lodge, 72 Broad Street, Westfield, MA. If someone needs an electric bed or Hoya lift they must pick it up with a truck, not a car or SUV (no exceptions).

Caregiver Support Group

Folks who take care of others often feel alone or isolated and don't get the care and support they might need. If that sounds like you, you may be interested in joining a support group for caregivers. We will keep the group small and meet up on zoom for the time being. Contact us at the Senior Center if you are interested.

Free Covid Tests. Did you know you can order COVID tests from the federal government? Order online at covidtests.gov or call 1-800-232-0233

The Armchair Traveler or Adventuring During Covid

Those who know me, know I love to travel. I am excited when I get to plan a trip and I think of every detail. I enlist a friend or a niece and we make a few plans, mostly to get them excited and on-board then I do the rest.

About 13 years ago I proposed my dream trip to my BFF, Trish. She said let's go! She said, "we don't need any plans, let's just go with the flow." Well, that wasn't going to work for me. I was wide awake planning for six months! We packed our bags and "did"



the Northwest, from Jackson Hole, WY to Portland, OR, to the Canadian Rockies and back to WY, we put on 4000 miles, and we had a blast!

As a caregiver, I don't get out much now—then, of course, there's Covid!! So I watch my slide shows on the old Mac computer, reliving my trips. I know a man who watches travel videos and feels like he has been there. A great idea! I'm opting for a staycation—setting up my screen tent for a daily escape and seeking local day trip spots for this spring/summer. Who knows what adventure waits right in our back yards?

As for the future, a month in Taos, NM, perhaps, or the Badlands of the Dakotas? We'll see! ~SL

Many Thanks Every Day from the Williamsburg Senior Center!

The Williamsburg Senior Center relies on donations from the community to support some of our best-loved programs and events. If you would like to donate, there are three ways to contribute:

1. Donate online via Unipay at www.burgy.org/senior-center,
2. Drop off your donation in person during business hours,
3. Mail a donation to Williamsburg Senior Center, PO Box 193, Haydenville, MA 01039 (see below)

Donations of all sizes are welcome, appreciated, and put to good use.

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 Us Support Our Neighbors!



Saint Patrick's Day — Are You Irish?

Top o' the mornin' to ye Lads and Lassies and the rest of the day to 'meself! Are ye Irish perchance? If ye aren't – not to worry because the Irish believe "Everyone is a little Irish on Saint Patrick's Day".

Each year, March 17th is celebrated not only in Ireland but throughout the world by Irish and non-Irish alike. In fact it is the most widely celebrated saint's day on the planet. St. Paddy's Day is known for parades, ancestry, traditions, shamrocks, leprechauns and the "wearin' o' the green". Irish folk outside of Ireland wear something the color of the Emerald Isle on St. Patrick's Day as a show of their commitment to their Irish heritage. This tradition has caught on to include non-Irish folk as well.

St. Patrick's Day is honored in many ways and not only in Irish pubs! Yes, a pint of green beer is often served, however there are also green milkshakes (thanks McDonalds), green cookies, clover-shaped sandwiches as well as other Irish specialties such as corned beef with boiled cabbage and Irish stew.

Did ye know?

- For starters, the real St. Patrick wasn't even Irish. He was born in Britain around A.D. 390.
- The color traditionally associated with St. Patrick was blue, not green.
- Wearing green is believed to make one invisible to leprechauns who would pinch anyone they could see.
- The shamrock was considered a sacred plant in ancient Ireland because it symbolized the rebirth of spring.
- The song "Danny Boy" was written by an Englishman and "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" was written by two Americans.
- There are 10 times more Irish living in North America than in Ireland.
- On any given day 5.5 million pints of Guinness, the famous Irish stout brand, are consumed around the world. According to Guinness, drinking of the "Black Stuff" more than doubles to 13 million pints on St. Patrick's Day.

Some Irish Blessings for ye:

- May your heart be light and happy, may your smile be big and wide, and may your pockets always have a coin or two inside!
- May you always walk in sunshine. May you never want for more. May Irish angels rest their wings right beside your door.
- There are only two kinds of people in the world, the Irish and those who wish they were.

<https://jkstalent.com/everyone-little-irish-saint-patricks-day/#.Yfq5ferMJPY>

Ways to Make Dressing Easier for Seniors with Arthritis

There are a variety of age-related health conditions that can make it more challenging for seniors to live independently. One of the most frustrating day-to-day challenges is the difficulty of getting dressed, particularly in the mornings, when joints can be especially stiff and sore. Needing help to change clothes can lead to a loss of self-esteem and a reduced sense of independence, so finding ways to keep yourself or your aging loved one self-sufficient in regard to dressing is important.

Here are some ideas to help you:

- Most important — get dressed while seated.
Trying to maintain balance with stiff joints can be difficult. To avoid falling, it is safer and easier to dress while sitting on a chair or on the bed to put on each piece of clothing, including shoes and socks. You might find a chair beside the bed or a bed rail helpful for getting up and down. Also, be sure to sit when changing into or out of boots or outside shoes.
- Choose comfortable clothes
- Avoid clothing with buttons—use pullover shirts
- Use trousers with an elasticized waist.
- Choose slip-on shoes

Some of these ideas will help and some may not. You can get more information at the website: www.homecareassistancewaterloo.ca/easing-the-dressing-process-for-aging-adults-with-arthritis/

What's Happening at Meekins?

Meekins Library

2 Williams St., Williamsburg, MA 01096

(413) 268-7472

We have new expanded hours!

Tuesdays 10-6

Wednesdays 1-7

Thursdays 3-6

Saturdays 9-2

Both entrances are now open.

Masks are required for entry.

Visit our website: www.meekins-library.org.

Visit the Town of Williamsburg Website:

www.burgy.org

Facebook: Williamsburg Senior Center

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter or receive this newsletter by email only, contact us at

268-8407, or sloomis@burgy.org.

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



This month's fire safety tips have to do with our state's open burning season, which began January 15 and ends May 1. I am sharing this information here in March, so you might do your outdoor burning this month rather than wait until April. April is usually the worst month for brush fires, because last year's dead grass, leaves and wood are dangerous tinder and the April winds are strong and unpredictable. To burn brush safely.

- Your brush pile must be at least 75 feet from dwellings.
- Burning is permitted between 10am and 4pm.
- Get or call in for a burning permit from your Fire Department or town office.
- Use paper and kindling to start the fire and add larger pieces of wood.
- Do not use gasoline or kerosene to start a fire because of the risk of injury.
- Have fire control tools at hand, shovels, rakes, water supply.
- An adult must attend the fire until it is totally out.
- Watch the wind, if it picks up enough to move a flag, extinguish the fire.
- If the fire gets out of control, immediately call the fire department (911).

Have a SAFE burning season!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington 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!

Wills, two questions

QUESTION. Do I really have to do a will?

Answer 1. No, you do not have to do a will if you are okay with the state distributing your assets for you, and if you don't care that you potentially leave a gigantic headache for others.

Answer 2. Yes, if you do care how your assets are divided up, if you want a relative or friend taken care of, if you would like a favorite charity to benefit from your hard work, if you want to be kind to those who must finish up your life's matters.

QUESTION. Won't this cost me an arm and a leg?

Answer 1. If you have a simple estate, you may be fine doing a will using pre-prepared forms. They can be done carefully and correctly (i.e., make sure you follow the directions) and in our state be accepted by the court. "Simple" means few investments or real estate, and uncomplicated family lines. Check out **Nolo.com** (the Quicken WillMaker) and **Legalzoom.com**, two of the longer-standing sources.

Answer 2. There are some sources available to us to get low-cost attorney help. Contact the places below and inquire about income thresholds.

- Community Legal Aid in Hampshire County, **(413) 584-4034**
- Hampshire County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service, **(413) 586-8729**
- MA Legal Resource Finder, **masslrf.org/en/home**
- National Association of Elder Care Attorneys, **www.naela.org/**

PS Remember we have until April 20 to recheck our credit reports for totally free!

Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

March's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

The Massachusetts Circuit Breaker tax credit has been around for a couple decades now, but I still think it's one of the best kept secrets.

It was designed to give low income homeowners a break on their property taxes.....up to \$1,170 this year. (And you can file for this benefit even if you are renting!)

My frustration is that you have to file a Massachusetts income tax return in order to apply for this benefit. The folks this benefit was meant to help often don't have taxable income, meaning their incomes are too low, so they don't have to file an income tax.

For the first decade or so this benefit was available, very few people applied, even though thousands were eligible! It's because they didn't file an income tax...they didn't need to, so they never applied for the benefit.

Question: Can you file an income tax return if you don't have taxable income? Sure, but why would you?

Here's the reason to file: if your income is less than \$62,000 (single) or less than \$93,000 (married) and your property taxes and half of your water/sewer bill add up to more than 10% of your income, then you are eligible.

At last, some relief from rising property taxes: as long as your home is assessed at less than \$848,000. When you file a Massachusetts income tax return, you include a schedule CB which captures information on your property taxes and water/sewer costs.

You might Google "Mass.gov circuit breaker" for a complete description of the program. They have an excellent video that goes through the process step by step. Imagine getting up to a \$1,071 rebate on your taxes...and if you haven't filed before, but think you might have been eligible in previous years...you can get Massachusetts income tax return forms online for 2020, 2019, 2018 and file for those years too!

If you do this before April 15th this year, you could be eligible for 4 years worth of rebates!



For those who are caregivers and those who care about how we treat each other...

Some very good tips for caregivers can be found in a free booklet by Jennifer Ghent-Fuller called The Dementia Experience (www.smashwords.com/books/view/210580) It's worth the read.

As I read it, I began to wonder if some of the tips could just as well apply to how we generally treat each other everyday. Some tips are thoughtful reminders for all of us. Some could be good for avoiding arguments in the home, especially with teenagers, for instance. Certainly these are good tips if you are trying to take care of someone who needs your help. Given limitations on space, I've included only a partial list, but as you look them over why not pick out the ones that you think would make anyone's day easier?

The "Dont's"

- Do not demand that they reason or problem-solve
- Do not demand that they remember
- Do not demand that they get their facts straight
- Do not correct their ideas or scold them
- Do not think that they really do remember, but are pretending not to
- Do not use a "bossy" dictatorial attitude in care

The "Do's"

- Enter into their frame of reality, or their 'world'
- Be aware of their mood or state of mind
- Use few words and simple phrases
- OR use no words, just friendly gestures and simple motions
- Constantly reassure them that everything is 'OK'
- Maximize use of remaining abilities
- Provide a safe physical environment

Language Needs

- Use clear and simple sentences
- Speak slowly and calmly
- Wait patiently for a response
- Speak softly, soothingly and gently
- Reassure with your tone and manner
- Do one thing at a time
- Be aware of your body language and use it to communicate relaxation and reassurance
- Use a soft, soothing touch
- Be aware of the individual's unique triggers
- If they become distressed, stop immediately and allow them time to calm down – don't try to restart the activity right away

Having taught this material for years, I still marvel at how much it hones our abilities to be sensitive human beings. ~Jan Gibeau

On the Road Again...



2022 Trip Lineup

Listed are the bus trip destinations with various travel groups. Most trips are limited to 36 passengers. Chesterfield COA and *Friends of Northampton Senior Center* are helping with the cost of some trips. Contact Francine Frenier if interested or want more information by calling 413-296-4291 or emailing francine.frenier@gmail.com.

Day Trip. Encore Boston Harbor Casino. Postponed till May/June 2022.

Day Trip May 5. Country Shopping in Southern Vermont Trip. Includes visit to Grafton Village Cheese, lunch at The Marina, and stops at the Vermont Country Store & Allen Brother's Farm Market. Cost \$103, \$10 discount if paid by 3/24/22. Vaccination proof requirement by the restaurant. Flyer available.

Taking interest lists on the following:

Day Trip May 18: Dancing Dream Abba Tribute Band at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Includes chicken & salmon lunch. Cost \$113, \$10 discount if paid by 3/31/22. Flyer available.

Day Trip June 9. Corvettes Doo Wop Revue. Whole New England steamed Lobster and all you can eat chicken & ribs with all the fixings. Self-Drive to the Log Cabin. Cost \$68. Half price for Chesterfield seniors age 60 and over. Due by May 9. Flyer available.

Day Trip Aug 10. The Jersey Tenors, a musical tribute to Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Includes lunch. Cost \$114, \$10 discount if paid by 6/30/22. Flyer Available.

Multi Day Aug 15-17. Kennebunkport & Portland Maine Coastal Tour. 3 days. Cost \$359, \$25 discount if paid by 5/8/2022. Flyer available.

Multi Day Oct 14-23. Nashville, Memphis & Rock & Roll Hall of Fame—10 days. \$1,205, \$25 discount if paid by 7/2/22. Flyer available.

Day Trip July. Thomaston, Connecticut. Naugy Scenic Train Ride.

Day Trip July/August. Worcester, MA Red Sox Triple A affiliate team, Woo Sox game.

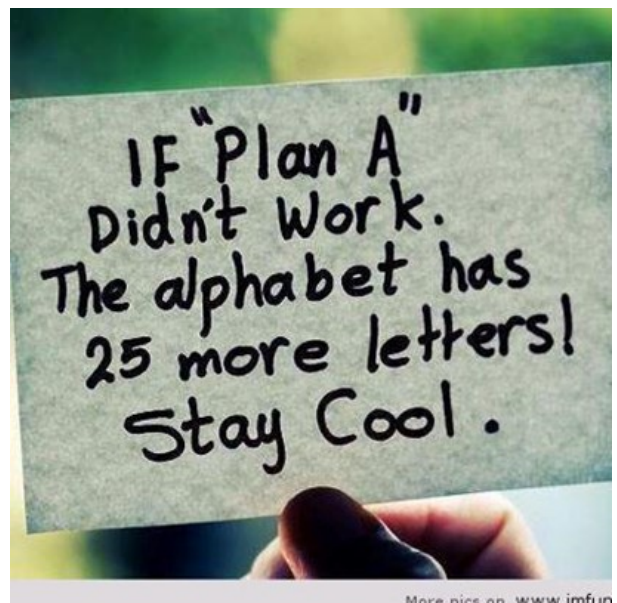
Day Trip Sept. The Big E

Day Trip Late Sept/Early Oct. Wareham, MA. Cranberry Bog Tour.

Is the COA Newsletter Important to You? Let us know!

The newsletter is funded by the Service Incentive Grant (SIG) from Massachusetts and managed by the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs. SIG has funded the newsletter for over six years and the Consortium has managed its logistics for all seven Northern Hilltowns—designing, printing and mailing it to your home complete with a regional section linking each of our towns.

As each fiscal year comes to an end, we need to continue to communicate the value of the newsletter to our funders. And you are the most uniquely positioned to express that. Has the newsletter been important to you over the years -- particularly during the isolation and stress of the pandemic? Would you be willing to write a brief testimonial on its significance? If so, please contact your town's COA Director/Coordinator.



More pics on www.imfun

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.

**Haircuts are being offered at
Smith Vocational School
Cosmetology Department!**

Cuts starting at \$6.00

To make an appointment
call (413) 587-1414 ext. 3531

Dates are Fridays:
March 18th, April 15th and
May 20th.



Community Action is pleased to announce our **Older Adult Home Modification Program (OAHMP)**, a new initiative designed for eligible lower-income homeowners, age 62 and older, living in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and looking to maintain independence and lead safe and productive lives in their homes.

Through this program, lower-income older adults can improve general home safety through no-cost modifications that reduce the risk of falling, increase accessibility, and improve the home's functional abilities.

If you currently receive Fuel Assistance and could benefit from the installation of grab bars, railings, temporary ramps, tub/shower transfer benches, raised toilet seats with hand rails, and stair steps, please contact us!

For income eligibility and more info visit: www.communityaction.us/homerepair
Contact Community Action: 413-774-2310 option 4, homerepairs@communityaction.us



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PIONEER VALLEY**
Access • Opportunity • Community