

Living Well

Newsletter
December 2023

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

Hello Everyone!

My name is Marla and I am a regular at the Senior Center congregate meals.

A brief intro: Having spent the majority of the past 3 years (since the advent of Covid), isolated and lonely after being laid off as a preschool teacher, I decided to reach out to the Williamsburg Senior Center. I wanted to maintain a reasonable amount of sanity under these extreme circumstances and major changes in lifestyle.

When I went into the Senior Center office, the first person I met when I walked in the door, was Joy Moore. She immediately sat at a table with me while I filled out a simple form and she asked me some basic questions relevant to my visit. Her name, Joy, depicts exactly who she is. A real Joy!

After the simple paperwork, Joy introduced me to each staff member, all of whom were very kind and welcoming! Next she showed me where the café was and introduced me to the folks who were still in there finishing up lunch. I got to meet Margaret and George, an exceptionally fun, kind and great couple! Also, I got to meet Barbara—another very kind and thoughtful person! They made me feel very welcomed! I was initially shy and a little anxious after so much time alone. I wasn't even sure that I had any social skills left! But I had such a warm welcome from everyone there, from office personnel to the fabulous kitchen staff and the fellow diners, that it has now become an intrinsic part of my daily life. I have gone from shy and anxious, to laughing and sharing stories!

It's such a lovely and welcoming place! I invite anyone and everyone who's eligible for these congregate meals, to come and join us! If you're shy and unsure, that can and will change! You'll be so glad that you have made that first step to becoming a member of a loving, caring, jovial community!

Please, do yourself a favor—come and join us! We need one another. We welcome all newcomers and folks considering returning...**Looking forward to meeting you!**

—Warmly, Marla

PS: I have met new and true friends there, with whom I get together for visits; either out on our porches or at Williamsburg General store, having coffee outside!

Marla (right) with some of her new friends



Note from the Director

The Senior Center was so pleased that Marla reached out to us. While Marla talks about what she gets from the Senior Center, we must add that our lives are enriched by getting to know her. She is pleasant, thoughtful, caring, and we adore her!

On a more serious note, the United States Surgeon General issued a 2023 Advisory titled, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation. The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community." The advisory provides information on the detrimental effects of loneliness and isolation to our mental, emotional, and physical health.

To that end, the Senior Center wants to be a part of building "more connected lives in a more connected society." Our congregate meals program is one of the ways in which this happens. Please join us!
—Melissa Wilson

Williamsburg Senior Center - 141 Main Street, P.O. Box 193, Haydenville, MA 01039
Phone: 268-8407 or 8410 ~ Hours: Mon - Thurs, 8:30 - 2:00 ~ Email: seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org

SHINE

SHINE can help you with Medicare and Medicare-related insurance issues. 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

VA office hours are back! Stop in to see our rep, Dan Nye on 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 11:30—1:00, or call **413-587-1299** for appointments.

Brown Bag: Food for Elders

Eligible seniors can get a free bag of groceries on 2nd Thursdays at the Senior Center. Call the Food Bank at **413-247-9738** or **800-247-9632** or download an application at <https://www.foodbankwma.org>. Send applications to: The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, P.O. Box 160, Hatfield, MA 01038.

Congregate Meals

Meals are being served in the Senior Café Mondays—Thursdays! Fridays are by delivery only. On **Mondays and Thursdays we make fresh-cooked meals**, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays we get meals from Highland Valley Elder Services. **Please join us! Contact Tamar at 268-8419, 2-3 days ahead to reserve a meal**

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.

Foot Nurse

Piper Sagan is doing foot care at the Senior Center **December 12th** and the second Tuesday every other (even) month. Call us (**268-8407**) to make an appointment, (\$50). Piper can also do footcare in your home, (\$80). Call her at **413-522-8432** for an appointment.

Hilltown Elder Network

Also known as the **HEN Program**, is available from the Hilltown Community Development Corporation for housekeeping and other duties. Call the coordinator, **Fran**, at **268-7411** for more info.

Medical Rides

Senior Center drivers are available for your medical rides funded by **PVTA**. **Call us at least 3 days ahead** and we will provide a driver. (You can also use their **Dial-A-Ride Services, 413-739-7436.**)

Carpool Rides*

Rides for shopping/errands can be scheduled through our **Carpool Program**. **Call us at least 3 days ahead** and we will try our best to provide you a driver.

Companion Program/Friendly Visits*

Would you or someone you know benefit from a friendly visit or a regular companion? We can set it up for you! Contact us for more info.

** The previous two programs are provided by a Title III Grant through Highland Valley Elder Services.*

Wellness Calls

The Williamsburg Senior Center makes friendly calls. If you are feeling lonely, or would like check-up calls, we'll add you to our call list. (**268-8419**)

Modern/Contemporary Dance

Susan Waltner's very popular dance class happens on **Wednesdays at 10:00 am** in the auditorium or on the lawn. Contact her at swaltner@smith.edu if you would like to join. Donations gratefully accepted.

Tai Chi

Marty Phinney offers Tai Chi outside or in the auditorium, **Tuesdays, 9:30 am**. Members or interested folks can contact her at **413-268-3228**. Donations gratefully accepted.

Healthy Bones & Balance

Mary Bisbee leads HB&B on **Mondays at 1 pm** (except holidays) and **Thursdays at 9:30 am in the Auditorium**. Call the Senior Center to sign up or stop in to check it out! This **free class** is sponsored by RSVP.

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. Other hours may also be available.

Men's Group

Meets at the **Williamsburg Snack Shack** on **3rd Thursdays at 8:30 am (Dec. 21st)**. To join, email **Larry West** (landwest3315@yahoo.com), and become one of the "guys!"

Ladies Who Lunch

Meets at the **Williamsburg Snack Shack** on **3rd Fridays at 11:30 am (Dec. 15th)**. Please stop in and join us or call **268-8407** for info. (Look for our sign!)

Technology Program

Need help using your cell phone, computer or other devices? The Senior Center has a group of volunteers who can help! Volunteers work one-on-one with folks and arrange a time that works for both parties. **Contact the office at 413-268-8407 to schedule an appointment.**

Podiatry: *Dr. Coby has unexpectedly passed away. We will be looking for another podiatrist. We'll let you know if we find one. Until then, you are welcome to schedule with the Foot Nurse.*

From Our Transportation Desk:

If you are interested in becoming a driver for our rides programs, please give us a call! We are looking for folks who can drive seniors to their appointments. Whether you can dedicate a day or two or be available by request, we'd be glad to sign you up. A stipend is paid per ride. Call Joy at 413-268-8407.



Join us for a

Holiday Sing-Along!

with **Larry West** and
members of **Voices of the Valley**

**Thursday, December 14th
12:30 PM**

in the Senior Center Café

Come for the music at 12:30 or you can
make a reservation and come for lunch
at 11:15 am and stay for the music!

**Contact us at 413-268-8410 to
reserve your seat!**

Café News

If you've never had lunch in the Senior Center Café, consider stopping by to see what it's all about!

One thing it's about is good food: Home cooked meals on Mondays and Thursdays and prepared meals by Highland Valley Elder Services on Tuesday and Wednesdays.

The other thing is camaraderie: Come to visit your neighbors and friends. Make new friends! Spend an hour visiting and get involved in lively conversation, (see *Marla's story on Page 1*). Stay for programs; music, storytellers, monthly raffle and other events.

We look forward to seeing you in the Café. Please call Tamar at least a day ahead to make sure we have a meal for you—413-268-8419. **See you soon!**



A Short List of Holidays Celebrated in December

- St. Nicholas Day (Dec. 5 or 6)
- Immaculate Conception Day (Dec. 8)
- Bodhi Day (Dec. 8)
- Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe (Dec. 12)
- Hanukkah (Dec. 18-26)
- Winter Solstice (Dec. 21)
- Yule (Dec. 21-Jan.1)
- Christmas (Dec. 25)
- Boxing Day (Dec. 26)
- Kwanzaa (Dec. 26-Jan. 1)
- Zarathosht Diso (Dec. 26)
- New Year's Eve (Dec. 31)

The Williamsburg Senior Center relies on donations from the community to support our well-attended 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.

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 _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Thank You for Helping Us Support Our Neighbors!

Thank You for Your Support!



During the course of the year, the Senior Center receive notes from seniors we have had contact with. It is usually to thank us for how we have helped them. I'd like to take this opportunity to share some of them with you. **It is our turn to thank you for your donations that help us help them!**

"My ride to the dentist was great. Finding the Senior Center feels like finding buried treasure."

"She called to thank you for all your hard work. She has a \$1319 credit on her oil bill because of all your hard work with fuel assistance. She is most grateful."

"Thanks so much for the excellent quality of the newsletter, for the many activities and resources you provide, and for your enthusiasm and great spirit!"

"Thank you for all you do for Williamsburg seniors."

"Merry Christmas to our COA family."

"Thank you all for everything you do throughout the year to make life easier for us seniors."

"Thank you for all you do – you are all so capable and kind."

"Thank you for your continued kindness and for getting me a ride to Springfield when I was so worried about it. I thanked the driver and told him I'd be donating in his honor to the Senior Center."

"I have a friend who lives alone in Williamsburg and is way into her 80's. Recently she has not been able to drive her car and lives alone in an old house with a chair lift. I don't know how she manages. However, she has told me over and over again that it is the Williamsburg Senior Center which makes her life possible, taking her to every doctors' appointment and helping with grocery shopping and other necessary errands. She sings praises every day for WSC!"

Again, THANK YOU for your support.

—Submitted by Melissa Wilson

Manna Community Kitchen

FREE

Holiday Meal

December 25th, Noon—2 PM,

Edwards Church, 48 Elm Street, Northampton

Please register by Dec. 20th to pick up your meals or arrange for free delivery.

Call us or text 413-570-0787 and leave a message letting them know how many meals and name, address, and telephone number.

mannanorthampton.org

Pen Pal Program News

In 2017 we started the Pen Pal Program, with 6th graders at the Anne T. Dunphy School and Williamsburg/Haydenville seniors writing to each other. What a rewarding program it turned out to be! Participating seniors enjoyed getting to know "their" pen pals, and the students were happy to meet "their" seniors! The 6th grade teachers invited seniors to events at the school, where they got to hang out together and enjoy their art shows and participate in activities. Friendships blossomed!

This year we are beginning our 6th year as Pen Pals! We have 16 dedicated Senior Pen Pals, and 19 students—a few of us have taken two! We look forward to opening new friendships and keeping our spirits young!

—Sherry Loomis

Get the Digital Version!

You can get a color digital image (a pdf download of this newsletter) along with, or instead of a paper copy! As postage rates go up and grant funding goes down, we may resort to digital copies more and more. Join a list of your neighbors who already get digital copies!

Visit our website, www.burgy.org or our Facebook Group: [Williamsburg Senior Center](#)

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter or receive a digital copy by email, contact us, leaving your name, email address and phone number at **268-8410**, or sloomis@burgy.org.

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

The holiday season is upon us. Here are a few ways by which you can keep your celebration bright and safe:

Senior 
SAFE

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed by an approved testing service.
- Replace lighting that has frayed wire, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets. Use no more than three (3) strands of lights on a single extension chord.
- Never, ever use candles on trees, near live and other flammable decorations.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.

Keep the season bright SAFELY!

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

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the MA Dept. of Fire Services.

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!



December's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

In time for the Holidays: some good news from Boston. Governor Healy came through on the proposed increase for the Circuit Breaker benefit. Doubled it! From \$1200 to \$2400. The Circuit Breaker is a "rebate" on your property tax for low income home owners. That was the original premise. But low income means you qualify if your property taxes represent more than 10% of your gross income. And you can add your water/sewer bill to that amount too if you are billed for that. Example: if your property taxes and water/sewer bill are \$5,000 and your income is less than \$50,000/year, then you'd qualify for the Circuit Breaker benefit. For more information, you can contact your senior center for details and they can help you apply. NOTE: to apply you must file a Massachusetts income tax return (whether or not you have taxable income) and include a Schedule CB. You tax return is processed, and you are sent a check!

And if that wasn't enough, there are more presents under the tree. Mass Senior Action has been working on this for years, and has succeeded in getting the asset eligibility limit removed for the MassHealth Buy-in programs. I'll say that again: assets will no longer be counted. This means that if your income is less than \$2,734/month, or, if you are married, less than \$3,698/month, the State of Massachusetts will pay your Medicare B premium and you will get a letter from social security saying your check will be increasing because they are no longer deducting for Medicare B.

This is huge. And many of you will qualify.

We may have to wait a while until MassHealth is able to process ourready for this?....2 page application! The regulation change goes into effect January 1st, 2024, and hopefully we won't have to wait long before they are up and running, ready to process our applications. Stay tuned for updates.

Who knew we'd get two such great benefits to start next year! Happy Holidays!

The Book- Part 4. Household Matters

By Jean O' Neil and Deb Hollingworth

Our home may be our castle (Sir Edward Coke, 1604). But Jean and Deb do not have serfs to run things, and we assume neither do you. Therefore, we have to do it all.

Some of these items will not apply to renters but many will, so use what fits you.

Household Overhead

What does it take each month, each quarter, to keep things running? Include information on utilities, heat, electricity, phone and internet. Who is the provider, how to contact them, what is the monthly cost, how is the bill paid (write a check, automatic from bank?). You might repeat information on house or renter insurance. It doesn't hurt to double count, meaning you may have already provided a password for an account reading from one of our previous articles, but adding it here may be helpful to someone else trying to arrange to keep things going.

Household Management

What has to happen to keep things running? Change the water filters, change the air filters, clean the water softener, clean the washing machine and clothes dryer vents, check and replace fire and smoke detectors. Outdoors: oil the garage door, clean the gutters, refresh a deck finish, clean the grill pan. Just in case anyone else was irritated by the huge invasion of Asian lady beetles this year – no, they are not ladylike – add in a check of places around the house where bugs and larger animals (mice, anyone?) can get in.

Both Jean and Deb keep a file of potential contacts, meaning folks who might come in useful. That might include a backup for snow clearing, or a new person to clean gutters.

Computers have become indispensable to many of us in managing our affairs. Include who you get to fix or update your computer. And again, it doesn't hurt to repeat the password to open the computer. Add appropriate backups to your Book file, meaning the location of a backup hard drive and any password for access.

Household Improvements

It is really useful to keep records of major home improvements, both for warranty purposes and possible tax credits. Consider if you have done a heating system upgrade, installed solar power, done ra-

don mitigation, made major roof repairs, added insulation or new windows and doors, made handicap modifications, or other major renovations.

Specific to you

Do you have a plant that came from your grandmother? Include watering instructions.

So about that heirloom clock – when Jean's husband's father and stepmother got married, they each had pieces and parts of the same old striking kitchen clock. They assembled a single clock and got it working. We now have it and enjoy it. But if you don't hold your mouth right when you wind it and if you don't wind it twice a week, it gets quite petulant. So the directions for running the clock are in our instructions on household management.

And P.S. We know this is a lot, truly we do. Next month, the last month, is a wrap-up with suggestions for taking bites of the elephant (or whatever large image you want to use). So be brave and of good cheer – the end is in sight!



If you or someone you know is age 60 or older and has been a victim of fraud, help is standing by at the National Elder Fraud Hotline.

1-833-FRAUD-11

1-833-372-8311

www.justice.gov/stopelderfraud

10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday–Friday

English/Español/Other languages available

Reporting is the first step.

Reporting can help authorities identify those who commit fraud and can also prevent others from becoming victims. Our experts will help victims navigate this process.

No fear, total understanding.

The hotline is staffed by professionals who know how to support victims of fraud. Callers can count on our case managers to be caring and understanding.

Personalized service at no cost.

Callers will reach a case manager who will help them through the reporting process at the federal, state, and local levels. Victims will also be connected with other resources on a case-by-case basis.

Providing Help, Restoring Hope

Financial scams and abuses that target older people are happening more and more. This hotline is a free resource created by the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime to help people report elder fraud.

What to expect when calling 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311).



We will respond quickly. We will connect you to a live contact as soon as possible.



Victims will be assigned a case manager.



Callers will always be treated with understanding and respect.

On the Road Again... 2024 Trips



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **before** mailing any payments to determine availability: 413-296-4291, francine.frenier@gmail.com. Mailing address: 11 Stage Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096.

Day Trip Tuesday, May 14. Neil Diamond -The Tribute from Las Vegas - Rob Garrett, known as the King of Diamonds, performs at the Aqua Turf Club, CT. Family style meal of Chicken ala Kathryn & Broiled Scrod included. The \$137 Payment to FNCS is due by March 12. Please mail them to the address above. **ONLY FIVE SEATS AVAILABLE.**

Nine Day Trip May 29- June 6, 2024. Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick. Passport required. Check your expiration date. Cost \$1,644, per person dbl. occupancy - \$25 discount if paid in full by **February 20th.** Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. **Wait List Only.** Going on the waitlist is encouraged on this date.

Day Trip June TBD. Lake Sunapee Luncheon Cruise- Vermont Country Store. A two hour luncheon cruise on Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire. This trip includes Luncheon buffet and a stop at the Vermont Country Store.

Day Trip July TBD. Encore Casino. Boston Harbor casino trip. Lunch on your own, options available on site.

Day Trip August 7th. Resorts World Casino-- Catskills, NY trip. Can you get enough of Elvis? Enjoy a lovely ride to the Catskills. Included: King in Concert show, Buffet Lunch and \$25 free slot play, driver gratuity. The \$145 Payment to FNCS is due by May 5. Please mail to the address above. Please include your date of birth for the player card.

Four Day Trip September 30- October 3. Lancaster, PA. Sight & Sound production of the biblical show Daniel. Cost \$646, per person dbl. occupancy - \$25 discount if paid in full by **June 20th.** Includes: Sight & Sound Theater show, tour of Philadelphia, time in Hershey's Chocolate World, 6 meals, hotels, driver gratuity. **Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. Call now to reserve your spot.**

*Day Trip October TBD. Lake George Cruise-*Take a 2½ hour luncheon cruise through the vistas of Lake George. The Captain's Luncheon Buffet will be served on board. Danny Lombardo performs on the keyboard.

Technology Help and Training for December and January

December **DROP-IN** Center hours canceled. Tech support can be scheduled **by appointment.** See **contact numbers below.**

DROP-IN will be continuing in January on the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month, on Wednesdays, 10am–3pm, at the Chesterfield Community Center. DROP-IN or pre-schedule a time slot online at northernhilltownscoas.org. More DROP-IN days to be added as we identify volunteers willing to commit to time for support. 1/3, 1/17, 2/7, 2/21

Second and fourth weeks computer classes: Continuing in December on Thursdays from 1-3pm, in the Computer room at the Chesterfield Community Center, lower level. Classes scheduled for 12/7, 12/23, 01/11, 01/25, 2/1, 2/15. Class size limited. Please call 296-5080 or email coatechhelp@gmail.com.

Get answers to your tech questions by phone: 413-296-5080, and leave a message. Calls returned within 1 day or sooner. Same day support coming as volunteers are identified.

Get help with your technology questions by email at coatechhelp@gmail.com. Same day response is often provided.

December Tech Talk

Scammers have found a new way to exploit our technology. With the growth in smartphone use, iPhone and Android, our text messages have been invaded. This form of scam is called “Smishing” or “SMS phishing”. This has occurred because texting is low cost for scammers and it works just often enough to keep them doing it. This is what you need to know: No bank will EVER ask for banking info by text message. Report any text like this to your bank and then to the FTC (ReportFraud.ftc.gov). Never click a link or make a call in response to a text claiming to be from your bank. If you do click, immediately call your bank's fraud/security number. Learn more at www.banksneveraskthat.com/

You can block text message senders, similar to blocking unwanted callers. The way to block differs by the type of device. Contact us for help by emailing us at coatechhelp@gmail.com, calling or texting **413-296-5080**. Someone will help you block the annoying texts and calls.

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

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Our Many Volunteers

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