

Living Well



Newsletter
December
2025

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

Let's Play Games!

The Senior Center was contacted by a resident who is interested in "game playing sessions" at our site. We would love to be a part of this! Games can include card games, board games, or perhaps other activities. Please see the article to the right.

I decided to explore this idea of why we love to play games. What is it we get out of this? There are several things that come to mind. However, before I do, I want to share a quote from George Bernard Shaw:

"We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing."

Playing games is first and foremost an opportunity to play. Something children seem to do naturally, but sometimes as adults, we lose this sense of "play." All cultures and animals display the ability for play. And it always looks like fun!

Games bring people together and promote social interaction. The games can serve as an ice breaker. You might not know someone, but learning to play a new game can be a great way to meet new people. Cards and games are also an enjoyable and relaxing way of being together with family and friends.

Playing games makes us use our cognitive abilities and provides stimulation. It makes you think about what to do next. It can provide a challenge and offer some competition. And most importantly, playing games is entertaining!

I also came across the following about the "unwritten rules of games. Don't play too slow, or force others to play too fast, or complain incessantly." I am going to confess – my family likes to play games. We do not follow the unwritten rules.

In essence, game sessions are a great way to reduce isolation and loneliness. We at the senior center are committed to building community with folks to address this issue. We look forward to hosting game sessions at the senior center. Let the games begin!
~Melissa Wilson

Who Wants to Play a Game?

The Williamsburg Senior Center would like to establish a weekly session for playing card games (cribbage anyone?), board games, or unique word games like Quiddler.



We're looking at a two-hour session within a 10 am — 2 pm time frame on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. Interested folks can call or email **Karen Mason** to discuss your interests and time preferences:

Email: mason@issr.umass.edu
Phone: 413-268-7059 or 522-2761

Holiday Sing-A-Long!



Steve Calderone, a professional pianist, will be leading us in song on **December 8th at 12:30 pm**, following our lunch program. All are welcome to attend and participate.

Steve is a local church organist. He has performed in several other venues in the area. We are excited that he has agreed to be here with us to promote the holiday spirit!

Please RSVP by phone, 413-268-8410 or email seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org to reserve your seat. We hope to see you there!

Williamsburg Senior Center ~ 141 Main Street, P.O. Box 447, Haydenville, MA 01039

Phone: 268-8407 or 8410 ~ Hours: Mon - Thurs, 8:30 - 2:00

Melissa Wilson, Director ~ Email: seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org ~ www.burgy.org/senior-center

Food Programs:

Congregate Meals

Meals are 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 to eat in or *Grab-n-Go!* Contact Tamar, 2 or 3 days ahead to reserve a meal. 413-338-2920 or tsmith@burgy.org.

Grab-n-Go!

Meals prepared and packaged by Highland Valley Elder Services are free for anyone 60+ on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 11:30 am and 12 pm. Contact Tamar at 413-338-2920, tsmith@burgy.org to reserve a meal.

Take and Eat

Two area churches provide delicious, freshly-made meals, delivered every Saturday. Contact Carol Hendricks to find out more or to sign up: 413-338-2920. Donations accepted.

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.

Transportation:

Medical Rides

Senior Center drivers are available for your medical rides funded by PVTA. Call us at least 3 business days ahead and we will try our best to provide a driver: 268-8407. (You can also use PVTA 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 business days ahead and we'll try our best to provide you a driver: 413-268-8407. Funded by Highland Valley Elder Services.

Health/Wellness:

Foot Nurse

Piper Sagan does foot care at the Senior Center on the second Tuesday every month. Call us at 268-8407 to make an appointment, (\$50). Piper can also do footcare in your home, (\$90). Call her at 413-522-8432 for a home appointment.

Companion Program Friendly Visits / Wellness Calls

Would you or someone you know benefit from a regular companion, someone who could help you with errands, maybe go out to lunch or take rides? Or would you like to receive wellness calls or a friendly visit now and then? Contact Carol for more info. 413-338-2920. Companion Program is funded by Highland Valley Elder Services.

Healthy Bones & Balance

Mary Bisbee leads HB&B, 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.

Yoga Practice

Carol Conz leads Yoga Practice on Mondays at 10:30 am in the auditorium. Contact her at 413-531-7321 or carolconz57@gmail.com for more information. Free class sponsored by RSVP.

Tai Chi *

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

Modern / Contemporary Dance*

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

Strength and Cardio Workouts*

Joan Griswold leads workouts via Zoom Thursdays at 10:15 am. Visit her at www.bybhealth.com to sign up. Other hours may also be available.

**Donations gratefully accepted for these programs.*

Just for Fun:

Arts & Crafts Open Studio

Now led by Steve Lavalley and will continue on 2nd and 4th Thursdays between 1-3 pm. Bring your supplies and join us! Que? Call Steve at 413-320-7624 or steve-phal@gmail.com

Men's Breakfast Group

Meets at the Williamsburg Snack Shack on 3rd Thursdays at 8:30 am (Dec 18th). To join, email Larry West landwest3315@yahoo.com or stop in!

Ladies Who Lunch

Meets at the Williamsburg Snack Shack on 3rd Fridays at 11:30 am (Dec., 19th). Please stop in and join us or call 268-8407 for info. (Look for our sign!)

Other Services:

Technology Program

Drop-in Center at Meekins Library will be on December 9th this month, 10:30-12:30. Bring your device(s) and your questions! For additional help, including purchasing devices, call 413-296-5080 or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com. See more on Page 7.

SHINE

SHINE can help you with Medicare and Medicare-related insurance issues. For info, contact Caroline Solan at Highland Valley Elder Services, 413-586-2000, ext. 999 (Option 2) or email her at csolan@lifepathma.org

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, Christine Reeves, 413-346-3042 or creeveshen@gmail.com.

Veteran's Service Officer

Stop in and see your VA rep, Dan Nye, on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, upstairs, from 11:30 am — 1:00 pm or call 413-587-1299 for an appointment.

**Senior Center will be closed
December 24 & 25th**

Happy Holidays!



What ARE All Those HOLIDAYS? Or "What Happened to Merry Christmas?"

I've heard both of those questions a lot over the last few years. First let me say, **it's always okay to say "Merry Christmas!"** One of the best things about our town, our area, and our country is the diversity we have all around us. We can be sensitive to this wonderful variety by including other holidays in our greetings.

I looked up December holidays and found this article by Today:

"There are 12 months in a year and each one of them has a variety of noteworthy holidays and observances. December, however, is truly next level.

Starting with the first day of the month, right on through to the last, there are a variety of happenings going on, including the **winter solstice, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day**, just to name a few.

To help you keep track of all the month's events, we've gathered a comprehensive list of December holidays and observances to add to your 2025 calendar. This detailed **rundown includes a variety of fun observances like National Cookie Day, Festivus, Ugly Sweater Day and Bathtub Party Day**, along with important dates like Giving Tuesday and Wreaths Across America."

The list was almost 6 pages long, so I'll pass on their website if you want to see for yourself how many happy holidays you can have. Just reading the list made me happy! All these happenings are bound to keep you busy right into the new year!

<https://www.today.com/life/holidays/december-holidays-and-observances-rcna43152>

So, Happy Holidays to you!

~Sherry Loomis

Happy Holidays



From Manna Meals!

Manna Meals will be providing a **FREE Holiday meal** for pick-up or delivery in Williamsburg and Haydenville.

To order, please call **413-282-8125** or call the Senior Center for help signing up (413-338-2920)

Please sign up by Tuesday, December 23rd.
Meal will be delivered on December 25th.



New Smoke and CO Alarms

The Fire Department is planning to install smoke alarms and CO alarms for seniors in town who are most in need of them. If your home was built prior to 1975 with only battery powered (not hardwired) alarms, we can help.

This grant is being coordinated by Shawna Rogers, S.A.F.E & Senior S.A.F.E Coordinator for the Williamsburg Fire Department.

If interested, please contact the Senior Center at **413-268-8410** or seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org, to sign up. We will contact you with an install date.

Foothills Health District

Public Health Nurse Lily Stafford, RN offers walk-in hours (no appt needed) for Williamsburg residents on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 10:00 - 11:30 am at the Foothills office, 45B Main Street, Williamsburg.

Stop by for medication assistance, blood pressure checks, referral assistance, connections to care and more. Call us at: **413-268-8404**.

Thank You for Your Support!

Over the course of the year, we have many interactions with seniors in the community. We strive to be of help to folks and offer some assistance for the many situations that can present themselves. **We are also grateful to be of service to the community and are moved by the heartfelt feedback we receive.** I'd like to share what some folks have sent to us:

"Thank you once again for running the great program to help today's youth learn the wonderful art of writing and receiving letters." (This is in reference to the Pen Pal Program in which seniors exchange letters with Anne T. Dunphy 6th graders).

"Thank you for the opportunity to dine with fellow 'seniors' and enjoy delicious meals on Mondays and Thursdays. It's a delight to reunite with friends. The Senior Center is a gift!"

"I hope this will be the last batch of PT appointments. I can't wait to have only lunches at the Senior Center on my calendar. Thanks, again and again for breaking the ice for me at these gatherings. They are SO much fun."

"Henry says he wishes that when we are in our 90's we have such kind people in our lives like he and his wife have."

"Enclosed is a donation to the COA in appreciation for your continuing support of Joan Griswold's exercise classes."

"Thank you for your past sponsorship of these marvelous classes. I'm still taking them 2 1/2 years since I moved to Maine."

Again, thank you for your support.

~Melissa Wilson

Keeping Seniors On Safe Footing

The Sand for Seniors Program is a cooperative effort between the Hampshire County TRIAD, Williamsburg COA, and the Williamsburg Police and Fire Departments

The program is meant as a preventative measure to ensure safety for seniors in winter months.

This year on November 8th approximately 48 sand buckets were delivered to seniors.

Thank you to TRIAD and the Williamsburg Police and Fire Departments for providing this service.



Cultural Council News

The Williamsburg Cultural Council is looking to do more cultural activities throughout the year. This could include open studios, performances, workshops, readings, classes, art shows, etc.

We would like to get a better sense of who in town does what (painting, acting, singing, sculpting, writing, dancing, etc.), and who might be interested in sharing their talents with the community.

Email Rob Longley at robertblongley@gmail.com or give him a call at 860-748-5533.

The Williamsburg Senior Center Thanks You for Your Generous Contributions!

Please mail your donation to Williamsburg Senior Center, **PO Box 447**, 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!



Regional News

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

The holiday season is upon us and most of these holiday observances involve electric lights and candles. Here are a few things you can do to keep your celebration bright and safe. For indoor lights and decorations:

Senior 
SAFE

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace any lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets.
- Use no more than three (3) strings of lights on a single extension cord.
- Remember to turn off the tree lights and other electric decorations before going to bed.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.
- Never use lit candles in the tree or near live or other flammable decorations.
- Keep lit candles at least a foot (12 inches) from flammable items.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended. For outdoor lights and decorations:
- Only use electric decorations that are rated for outdoor use.
- Plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Use electric connection protectors.
- Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Keep the holidays bright SAFELY!

Worth Noyes
Fire and Life Safety Educator
Williamsburg and Cummington Fire Department

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



Credit - SCORE!

You probably know by now that your credit score can be a VIN (Very Important Number) (yes, I just made that up) to you. Our three credit reporting companies calculate a score to determine how good a risk you are for some entity who might loan you money. A low score of 300 probably means you won't get that housing or car loan you want or a lower rate on insurance, but a score of 700 or higher probably means you will.

You can find out your score by going to the web pages of the credit reporting agencies and paying a small fee. OR, your bank or credit card company may give you that score periodically.

This is private information! How can they do this!? What right do they have?!? A money lender, such as a credit card company, wants to know how your credit life is going, what kind of risk they are taking in loaning you money. Therefore they have a right to periodically check you out, a soft inquiry that does not affect your score. Then it is just a service for them to share that score with you.

Is there any risk in this? No, if you make sure you are on the actual credit card site, and if you follow another link from that website, make sure it is a legitimate site. Call the card's customer service if you have any doubts. Also, the score may not be exactly what you would get from going to the credit bureau yourself, as the score provided may come from a slightly different mode of calculation.

The November newsletter had a good article by the District Attorney's office on freezing your credit reports. Because we say to do this all the time, it was good to have that article. Visit AnnualCredit-Report.com.

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



Good News December 2025

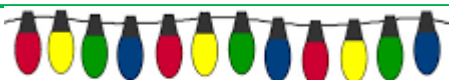
~Deb Hollingworth

As you read this...Open Enrollment is over for another year...unless you are one of the BlueCross PPO Advantage members who got a "termination" letter saying your Plan was ending December 31st. If that's the case, you actually have more time to make a decision about your coverage.

If you do nothing...and December 31st comes and goes...and your PPO plan ends...you will automatically revert to "original Medicare A&B, without Rx coverage. But you will have until February 28th to pick a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage.

And with luck, there should be SHINE appointments available in January and February for help if you need it. Remember if you wanted to pick up a Medicare Supplement plan (that we used to call Medex), you can do that anytime during the year! For folks who have a United Health/AARP Medicare Advantage plan, there's another problem. You may have received a letter saying that Brigham and Woman's medical providers (including hospitals) will not be in network for United Health next year.

For more information call the number on the back of your UHC card to ask if you can use your doctor and/or hospital and be billed at the out of network co-pay? It might be time to dump UHC and either revert to original Medicare A&B and pick up a D plan for Rx....or switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan. Not all Advantage plans work well in our hill towns. Health New England and BlueCross usually are best. You should have until March 31st to do this.



LAST MINUTE MEDICARE COVERAGE RESOURCE

By Adam Frank
Councils on Aging and Grants Program Coordinator
Executive Office of Aging & Independence
Your Partners in Aging.

With so many residents seeking help to review their Medicare coverage options, SHINE appointments are filling quickly—and we want to make sure everyone still has access to reliable information and support.

To help meet this growing demand, the state **SHINE team partnered with AARP** to create an educational video that offers an overview of Medicare and the Open Enrollment process. The video explains coverage options and demonstrates how to use the Medicare Plan Finder to compare Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans available in your area.

You can watch the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFqjEI3-SZO>



Pictures

Photos in this issue reflect on different events we have offered at the Williamsburg Senior Center.

- Page 3, Volunteer Appreciation open house
- Page 4, Pen Pals gathering
- Page 5, Men's 3rd Thursday Breakfast
- Page 6, Ice Cream Social and Fresh-cooked meals by Toni and crew

Consider joining us at some of our fun events, for instance the **Holiday Sing-A-Long** on December 8th!

Watch future issues of Living Well for more events. Come and mingle with your neighbors!

Contact us to sign up for your own digital copy today, sloomis@burgy.org or visit us on our website, www.burgy.org.



On the Road Again...

*** Trips in 2025/6 ***



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat
BEFORE mailing payments.

For more info call **413-296-4291**

Email: francine.frenier@gmail.com

Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, Ma 01096

~~~~~2025~~~~~

There are **day trips to Radio City Rockettes, Craft Festival at Mohegan, NYC on your own**-- all leaving from Chicopee. If interested, call 413-296-4291 or 413-593-3939 for more information.

~~~~~2026~~~~~

Multi Day Trip April 17-21 Washington DC 5 days, 4 nights. Admission to the George Washington Mount Vernon Estate, Garden & Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution, Capitol Building, World War II Memorial and more. **Price \$790. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by January 26, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. No money is due until early January.**

Day Trip May 3, 2026, Sunday A Grand Night for Singing at the Seven Angels Theater in Waterbury, CT. Pre-show lunch at San Marino's Restaurant.

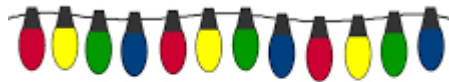
Price \$132. Make a payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March 6, 2026.

Day Trip June 17, 2026 Isle of Shoals Cruise and Lobster Lunch Enjoy a 2.5-hour cruise from Portsmouth, NH to the Isles of Shoals. Pre-show lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

Day Trip July TBD FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise. Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt & the first Presidential Library. Price \$TBD. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May TBD, 2026. Those on the cancelled trip from July 2025 will be given first chance to sign up.

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

** Join us for a trip - leave the planning to us! **



TechConnect Technology Help for December

Tech Support home visit is available by appointment. Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com for help.

Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops, desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads. If you need a device to connect to the internet or have something so old it is not working effectively, please contact us. **Leave a message at 413-296-5080**, or use the online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Drop-in Centers (no appointment needed):

- **Chesterfield Community Center**, 400 Main Rd. Chesterfield. Weekly, all Tuesdays, 11:00 to 2:00
- **Goshen Library**, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 12/18
- **Westhampton Library** Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 3rd Thursday, 12/18. Session moved one week due to Christmas.
- **Williamsburg, Meekins Library** Drop-In tech sup-

port from 10 :30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday, 12/9

- **Nash Hill Place** Resident Drop-In tech support, 2nd Tuesday, 10:00 to Noon, 12/9
- **Worthington Tech Support** - contact Eileen Daneri eadaneri@gmail.com.

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

Internet Hotspots:

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

Williamsburg Senior Center
141 Main Street
P.O. Box 447
Haydenville, MA 01039

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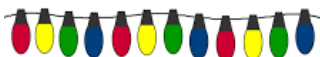
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Tamar Smith
&
Our Many Volunteers



Scam Alert!

Medicare Imposter Schemes



WHAT THEY SAY

- They need your Medicare number to send you a new card.
- They threaten to take away your benefits if you don't sign up for their plan.
- They offer "free" medical equipment or supplies.
- They say your doctor asked them to call.

WHAT TO DO

- Just hang up!
- Medicare will not call you asking for your Medicare, Social Security number or personal information.
- Report suspicious calls & messages.

Medicare
1-800-633-4227

**Senior Medicare
Patrol**
1-800-892-0890

*If you have a
consumer problem or
question, contact the*

**Northwestern
District
Attorney's
Consumer
Protection Unit**

Greenfield
(413) 774-3186
Northampton
(413) 586-9225

**Working in cooperation
with the Office of the MA
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