

Living Well



Newsletter
March
2026

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

Save the Date for the Hilltown Resource Volunteer & Job Fair

Saturday, April 25, 2026

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

**New Hingham Regional Elementary School,
Chesterfield, MA**

Rooted in the Hilltowns. Guided by Care. The Northern Hilltown Consortium is proud to sponsor the upcoming **Hilltown Resource, Volunteer & Job Fair**, an event designed to connect community members with meaningful work and volunteer opportunities that directly support older adults across our Hilltowns and western Massachusetts.

This fair brings together local organizations and service providers who are actively seeking compassionate, dependable employees and volunteers. Opportunities range from caregiving, transportation, and nutrition services to outreach, social support, and community engagement. These roles play a vital part in helping seniors remain safe, connected, and able to age with dignity in their own homes. The need is real—and the impact of showing up is profound.

In addition to employment and volunteer opportunities, the fair will highlight a wide range of **resources available to seniors and their families**. Attendees can learn more about services including Veteran Affairs benefits, in-home support, help with housekeeping and daily tasks, transportation assistance, nutrition programs, and other community-based supports designed to make daily life safer and more manageable for older adults. Whether you are a senior seeking assistance, a caregiver looking for guidance, or someone hoping to give back, there will be valuable information available.

At the Council on Aging, we believe every older adult deserves access to support, respect, and compassionate care. By strengthening community partnerships and empowering people to share their time and talents, we reinforce the networks that serve our elders and enrich the fabric of our small towns. When you work or volunteer in elder services, you are not just filling a position—you are becoming a trusted presence in someone's daily life.

All community members are encouraged to attend. Come explore opportunities, connect with local organizations, and help strengthen the care and compassion that define our Hilltown. (See related articles on page 4)

Some of our Senior Center volunteers



We make a living by what we get. We
make a life by what we give.

~Winston Churchill

A candle loses nothing of its light when
lighting another candle. ~James Keller

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

Happening at the 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.

* 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.

Take and Eat

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

Transportation:

Medical & Carpool Rides

Senior Center drivers are available for your **Medical Rides** (funded by PVTA). Rides for shopping & errands can be scheduled through our **Carpool Program** (Funded by Highland Valley Elder Services). Call us at least 3 business days ahead and we will try our best to provide a driver: 268-8407. (Or you can call PVTA Dial-A-Ride at 413-739-7436.)

Health & Wellness:

Foot Nurse

Piper Sagan does foot care at the Senior Center on the second Tuesday every month (March. 10th). Call Carol at 413-338-2920 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? Or would you like to receive wellness calls or a friendly visit now and then? Contact Carol for more info at 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. You can 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:

Weekly Game Sessions in the Café

Join us on Wednesdays, Noon—2 pm for game sessions. Bring a game, cards or activity to share. To sign up, contact Tamar Smith at 413-338-2920 or tsmith@burgy.org, or stop in!

Arts & Crafts Open Studio

Led by Steve Lavalley on 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 1-3:00 pm. Bring your supplies and join us! Contact Steve at stevephal@gmail.com or 413-320-7624.

Men's Breakfast Group

Meets at the Williamsburg Snack Shack on 3rd Thursdays at 8:30 am (Mar. 19th). 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 (Mar. 20th). 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, second Tuesdays, will be on Mar. 10th this month, 10:30-12:30. Bring your device(s) and your questions! For additional help, including purchasing devices, call 413-296-5080 or coaTechHelp@gmail.com. More on Page 7.

SHINE

SHINE can help you with Medicare and Medicare-related insurance issues. For more info, contact Caroline Solan at Highland Valley Elder Services, 413-586-2000, ext. 999 or 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 new coordinator for Williamsburg, Barb Crane at 413-478-1696 or email barbcranehen@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.



Happy Saint Patrick's Day!



Got Cabin Fever?

If you're like me, you stay in when it's cold. It gets dark so early, you hate to bundle up. What do you get? Cabin Fever! That's probably why we do spring cleaning, to get out of the winter fuggs!

Come and join us for some fun activities in and out of the Senior Center! We have outings at the Snack Shack (see below), Open Studio time and Game Days. We have exercise and dance classes and congregate lunches here at the Center. Bring a friend or meet your neighbors at one of these events. Before you know it, we'll be outside in our tee shirts, planting flowers!

~Sherry

Mens' Breakfast

Sometime BC (before Covid), we started the Men's Group. It seemed that a lot of men didn't want to do yoga, but would be interested in getting together for breakfast. It has since become an institution!

In the past, they have done some volunteering and started a collection point at the Snack Shack for food donated to the pantry at the Grange. I'm pretty sure they are solving the problems of the world!

Don't be shy, stop in! The group meets on the third Thursday of every month at 8:30 AM, at the Snack Shack. (Details on page 2)

Ladies Who Lunch

A group of women started going to lunch together in 2019. We didn't meet during the pandemic, but started again in '22. We have a great group of folks who gather now. The waitresses have to push tables together for us all.

Last time we got together, we all shared a piece of cake for an appetizer! We have a great time gabbing, exchanging recipes and ideas. We hate to leave!

Join us! Stop by the Snack Shack on the 3rd Friday of every month at 11:30 AM. Look for our sign—we'll be the big group of women laughing by the door! (Details on page 2)

Presentation with Lunch Topic: Seed Oils Monday, March 30th, 11:00 am

*Presented by Brandon Walton
of Highland Valley Elder Services.*

Are you confused about cooking oils and the effects they might have on our health?

Learn:

- ◆ the difference between mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated oils.
- ◆ the different types of seed oils and where they can all fit in a healthy diet.
- ◆ smoking points and the best oils to cook with, at the right temperatures.

Samples will be available, so we can all see, smell and taste them. And maybe a snack or two that is themed around the education.

**Reservations for lunch are limited!
Please call Tamar early to get on the list:
413-338-2920.**



Ladies Who Lunch Group



Men's Breakfast Group

Volunteering is Good for Your Health

Many organizations, including the Senior Center, rely on volunteers to provide meaningful services to the community. I have asked many folks over the years about why they volunteer. The answer is “I hope to make a difference,” and “I feel better when I volunteer.”

In our transportation program, there is an obvious connection about how this works. Often times, the volunteer drivers will say that they get as much out of helping folks than the person getting the ride.

Research studies show that volunteering leads to better physical and mental health. According to an article published by the American Heart Association and Jeffery Burr, a professor of gerontology at the University of Massachusetts Boston, “compared to non-volunteers, volunteers have less depression, less anxiety, higher self-esteem, greater happiness, and a greater sense of meaning in life.”

Benefits of volunteering:

- * Make new friends
- * Give something back
- * Improve your confidence
- * Better physical and mental health and well-being
- * Develop new skills and valuable work experience.
- * Gain a sense of connection to others in the community.
- * Improve how things work for the better.



Show your commitment:

If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering at the Senior Center, please attend the Employment and Volunteer Fair on April 25th (see details on page 1).
~Melissa Wilson



Volunteers Needed!

We would like to add you to our pool of volunteers! If you'd like to help by giving seniors rides to their medical appointments or essential errands, or if you can spare a couple of hours once or twice a week to help in our Senior Café, please give us a call—we could sure use your help!

Please call us at 413-268-8407 or 413-338-2920. Thank you!

The Williamsburg Senior Center Thanks You for Your Generous Contributions!

Please mail your donation to Williamsburg Senior Center, **PO Box 447**, Haydenville, MA 01039.
Or donate on-line via Unipay: www.burgy.org/senior_center.

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

This month our focus is what to do and not to do treating burns and scalds.



1. First, remove patient from the source of the burn.
2. Call 911 if the burn is deep and/or covering a large area.
3. Run COOL (not cold) water over the burn. This will cool down and stop any boiling fluid under the skin.
4. Do NOT put butter, grease or ointment on the burn. Flush chemical burns continuously with cool water.
5. Remove watches and jewelry from the burn area.
6. If possible, remove clothing from the burned area.
7. If clothing is stuck to the burn, leave it in place and cut away the clothing around the burn.
8. Again, do not hesitate to call 911.
9. Seek medical attention for serious, deep, large area burn treatment.

Have a burn-free and sweet sugar season!

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

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

Good News! March 2026

~Deb Hollingworth

Yipe! This is the time of year when I sometimes hear from folks that the health care plan changes they made last Fall during Open Enrolment...are not working out.

Usually this happens when they go to pick up a prescription and discover that this year's co-pay is significantly more than they had to pay last year. Or, if they had a United Health Care (AARP) plan and didn't change it, they might be told that their medical provider can't bill their United plan any more.

WHY are all these changes happening?

Because they can. And health insurers are always trying to improve their bottom line...and they are allowed to charge more for Rx co-pays, drop medical providers from their network and increase co-pays for medical services if it improves their profit margins.

The **Good News** is that if you are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan...you are allowed to switch to another Advantage plan or opt out altogether and return to original Medicare and enroll in a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage. You have until March 31st to make any changes. After that, you are locked into your plan's coverage until January next year.

You can ignore all this if you have an Advantage Plan that is through your retirement/pension. It is usually unwise to opt out of health coverage provided through your pension...because if you do make a change, you will not be able to get that pension benefit back.

Best strategy is to check with a SHINE counselor to see if you can make changes, and see if there are better options. **Our SHINE counselor for the hilltowns is Caroline Solan** at Highland Valley Elder Services, 413-586-2000, or you can call the Regional SHINE office at Lifepath in Greenfield, 413-773-5555.

#SlamTheScam 2026

National "Slam the Scam" Day is designated by Social Security's Office of the Inspector General to raise awareness of government imposter scams, which continue to spread across the United States. **Slam the Scam Day is Thursday, March 5th**, as part of National Consumer Protection Week, which takes place this year from March 1-7.



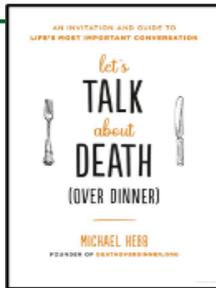
Watch for more info at
<https://youtu.be/c6svESSADHM>



Daylight Savings Time
Begins March 8th!
Don't forget to
Spring Ahead!

A Unique Experience

A discussion series around the book "Let's Talk about Death over Dinner," by Michael Hebb, will be offered at the **Cumming-ton Community House** in April and May.



"Given the right framing, a "difficult" conversation does not need to be difficult. It can be liberating. It can even be transformative," Michael Hebb.

Death Doula **Stacey Mackowiak** will lead us through a "guided conversation that transforms a seemingly difficult conversation into one of deep engagement, insight, and empowerment."

Michael's book will be provided at an **introductory session on Thursday, April 16th from 4 - 5 pm. On Thursdays, May 7th and 14th, dinners will be held from 4:30 - 6:30 pm** to share our thoughts on questions posed in the book.

Participation is limited to 15 individuals. **Please RSVP with Polly at 413-212-1581 or email: pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us.**

All individuals in the seven COA Consortium hilltowns are welcome to participate: Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

This event is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Council on Aging



Community CPR & First Aid Class

Hosted by Westhampton Recreation Committee

**Tuesday, March 24th, 6:00-7:30 pm
at the Westhampton Town Hall,
1 South Rd, Westhampton**

Learn Basic First Aid; Hands-only CPR for adults, children and infants; how to use a community AED; Narcan administration; and proper use of EpiPens.

No prior experience needed. Participants should be able to perform chest compressions on training dummies. Time for questions included.

Free, open to the public. Registration is required by March 14th at tinyurl.com/westhamptoncpr.

Questions? John Shaw, Instructor, at jfshaw1@comcast.net.

On the Road Again...



***** Trips in 2026 *****

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

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 is due NOW. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. A few seats are still available**

Day Trip, Sunday, May 3rd: 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 NOW.**

Day Trip, June 11th: Million Dollar Quartet play. New London Barn Playhouse presents a jukebox musical that dramatizes a real and remarkable moment in music history. Four future legends, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis happened to gather in the same studio. Includes a buffet luncheon at Colby-Sawyer College. Price \$177. **Check to be payable to Landmark Tours and mailed to the address above by April 6, 2026.**

Day Trip June 23rd, Portsmouth Harbor Cruise and Fosters' Lobster/Clambake. Before the Harbor cruise, enjoy lunch at Fosters in York Maine offering a choice of **lobster or BBQ chicken or vegetarian option**. Price \$160. Make a payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 16, 2026. (Replaces the Isles of Shoals trip.)

Day Trip, July 1st: FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise. Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch of gourmet sandwiches on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt & the first Presidential Library. **Price \$140. Make check payable to Landmark Tours, mail to the address above by May 6, 2026. Wait list only.**

Day Trip July 12, 13, 14 or 15th, Tall Ships in Boston. Contact The Travel Group 1-888-320-8687 for more info.

Day Trip August 3rd, Encore Casino. \$50 Cost includes: round trip bus transportation, driver gratuity & \$20 in free slot play. Meals on your own. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 6, 2026. 35 passengers are needed for this trip to go.

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

TechConnect - Technology Help for March

TECH CONNECT 2.0 has continued operating on funds from the original Tech Connect program since March of 2025. With the support of Northampton Open Media, the Alliance for Digital Equity, our COA directors, volunteers and librarians, we have supported over 350 technology calls from older adults in the hilltowns. We grow more popular as word of mouth spreads that we are a source of refurbished devices, free tech support and training.

We are exploring state and community grants. It has been rough going in the current funding climate. We are funded through the spring / early summer, but then must rely on ourselves and the community to support the service if we are to continue.

We are considering asking for donations for home visits, placing a donation box at drop-in sessions, and launching a fundraising drive in April. Stay tuned for specific changes and announcements in the next COA newsletter.

NEW! Best Ever! TechHub is returning on alternate Fridays to present one-hour workshops, beginning at 10:30 am. A 2-hour drop-in session will follow. All sessions will be held at 400 Main St., Chesterfield, downstairs. No need to register.

- March 6 Zoom Basics
- March 20 Social Media Basics
- April 3 Online Safety Basics
- April 17 Avoiding Misinformation
- May 1 Cloud Basics *
- May 15 MS Excel
- May 29 Windows Operating System Basics
- June 5 Designing with Canva

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 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.

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, 2/19.
- **Westhampton Library** Drop-In tech support from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday, 2/26.
- **Williamsburg, Meekins Library** Drop-In tech support from 10:30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday, 2/10.
- **Nash Hill Place Resident** Drop-In tech support, 2nd Tuesday, 10:00 to Noon, 2/10.
- **Worthington Tech Support** - contact Eileen Daneri eadaneri@gmail.com.

NOTE: Plainfield and Cummington residents should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield site.

Internet Hotspots

Funding for hotspots data will end this month. Call for help on finding the right low-cost internet

TECH TALK

from Peg Whalen

I want to share once again an experience I had a while ago so that others can benefit from my mistake. On a trip to Philadelphia by train, I brought two carry-on bags with me and my laptop. To keep the laptop safe when I briefly left my seat, I tucked it overhead between my carry-on bags. Later, when I was exiting the train, I got distracted. I grabbed both carry-on bags and, yup, you guessed it, I left the laptop behind. Losing the laptop itself was frustrating but could be replaced at some expense. The information loss was a tragedy. Before leaving, I had not backed up the files, photos, and programs on the laptop. **I knew better!** It happened anyway.

Backup your information in case of device loss, viruses, scams, equipment failure. If you do not know how to protect electronic information, find assistance with ways to stay safe.

What should I have done? I could have used one of the "clouds", like Microsoft OneDrive, Google Drive, Apple iCloud, or my external hard drive at home.

I urge you to consider attending the ***May 1 Cloud Basics workshop offered by TechHub**. Make an informed decision about trusting Clouds. I wish I had had my head in the Clouds!

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

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Our Many Volunteers



You'll enjoy meeting your neighbors for great home-cooked meals in our Café Mondays & Thursdays!



Call for Reservations: 413-338-2920

Your Community Connector

Jennifer O'Connell is working for the Hilltown COAs as the Community Connector. She is available to help Hilltown residents who are experiencing challenges, hardship and/or need assistance. Jennifer can help you meet a variety of your needs to make life easier. Some examples are assistance with:

- Benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security, etc.
- Living independently at home
- Arranging for repairs
- Connecting to local groups
- Activities to have fun with others
- Transportation
- Discussing what you may need

Any and all inquiries are welcome.

Call Jennifer at 413-296-4536 ext.110 or email communityconnectio@gmail.com