



WORTHINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING NEWS

JANUARY 2026

BOARD MEMBERS

PHYLLIS DASSATTI-Coordinator
JAY DRESCHNACK - Chair
MARY KAY FARLEY-Co-Chair
Newsletter

EILEEN DANERI
PAT KENNEDY
HEYLYN MYRICK
HELEN PELLETIER
CAMILLE SMITH
JUDY SENA-Secretary

HOMEBOUND VACCINE PROGRAM

Homebound visit available for Covid or Flu vaccine only
Please have your insurance card available
Homebound includes persons with limited mobility and/or
difficult getting out of the home.
Covid Vaccine-Pfizer, Flu Regular and High Dose
Call 413-587-4903

WORTHINGTON COA EVENTS

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON



The Council on Aging hosted the annual Holiday Luncheon on December 8th at the Comfort Kitchen and Bar in Huntington. Sixty -three were in attendance welcoming each other's company and the enjoyment of a fabulous Meal. Julie Lemieux from the Northampton Survival center was presented a monetary donation to the Survival Center which services many of the Hilltown's, including delivery to Worthington.

SOCKS GALORE

The COA 's sock drive has been a huge success with 250 pair of socks donated. 125 pairs to "It Takes A Village" in Huntington

125 pairs to Holyoke Homeless Health Center in Greenfield. A huge thank you to those who have donated to make this the most successful collection ever.

SAND FOR SENIORS

32 Buckets of sand were delivered on December 15 to Worthington Senior Residents Thanks to Chief Scobie and members of Hampshire County Sherriff's Department and TRIAD

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES:

Sundays & Wednesdays

Yoga
Town Hall
9:30 – 10:30
Eileen Daneri-
238-4461

Mondays & Fridays

Bones & Balance
Town Hall
10:00-11:00
Marcia Estelle-
238-5554

Aerobic Training

Monday 4:00-5:00
\$10.00/class

walk-in \$12.00

Strength Training

Town Hall
Thursday 4:00-5:00
Judy Babcock
238-4457

TOWN NOTARY SERVICE



COA board member, Jay Dreschnack Notary Public is available to notarize your documents. call (413) 406-8884, to make an appointment. He will come to your house. There is no charge for this service for Worthington residents.

COMPUTER ASSISTANCE

COA board member, Eileen Daneri will be available to assist you with computer issues. **Please call 238 - 4461 or email: eadanermail.com to inquire**





MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

JANUARY 12 2026- POTLUCK -12:00 at Town Hall

FOOT NURSE:

January 21st at the COA office

Nail clipping, warm foot massage. Discount price of \$25. Call Deb Deane for an appointment. 413-667-5363

JANUARY 22, 2026 Grab-n-go meals

Enrollment forms must be completed before requesting a meal. These forms are available at all COA events Order deadline

Each month there will be two choices for dinner This month's Menu:

LASAGNA, ROLL OR BARBACUE CHICKEN WITH BAKED BEANS, CORN & ICE CREAM

Every third Thursday, meals that have been ordered, will be available for pick up at the Town Hall (12-1:00) We suggest that you bring your own bag for easy transport. **If you or someone you know has not enrolled, contact Phyllis Dassatti (413) 238-5962 to arrange participation**



January 26, 2026
Town Hall
1:00

JOIN THE COA CONSORTIUM'S VOLUNTEER & JOB FAIR!

The Council on Aging (COA) Consortium invites local organizations, community partners, and agencies to participate in our upcoming Volunteer and Job Fair, a community-centered event designed to connect passionate individuals with opportunities to serve and support older adults in our region.

Our Mission:

At the Council on Aging, we believe that every older adult deserves access to support, respect, and compassionate care. By fostering community partnerships and empowering individuals to share their time and talents, we work to enhance the quality of life for seniors and strengthen the networks that serve them.

This fair is your opportunity to showcase your organization, recruit dedicated volunteers or staff, and connect directly with community members who are eager to make a difference. Whether you represent a nonprofit, care facility, health service, or civic organization, we invite you to set up a table or booth and be part of this inspiring day of community connection and collaboration. Reserve your space today and help us build a stronger, more caring community for our aging population!

DATE: April 25th 2026

**WHERE: New Hingham Regional Elementary School
30 Smith Rd
Chesterfield, MA 01012**

WHEN: 10am-2pm

Please contact Christine Blakesley (Westhampton COA Coordinator) to reserve a table.

(413) 203-9808

COA@westhamptonma.gov

LOCAL EVENTS

WORTHINGTON LIBRARY-238-5565

HOURS Tuesday; 3-7
Thursday 10-6
Saturday 10-4



CABIN FEVER CRAFTS

January 17 & 31 Worthington Town Hall
10 am to 1pm

Hand Piecing Quilt. Squares The Basics

Join Ellen DeGrave for 2 Saturday sessions on quilting basics. Come learn the basics, experiment with color choices and fabrics.

Cost: \$50 includes all materials and supports youth programs

****Class is limited to 10 adult participants. Register at the library.**

Hosted by The Friends of the Worthington Library

LISTONS- 238-0144

Old North Road

February Fun :

2/8 Soup-er Bowl party - enter the soup contest and watch the super bowl

2/12 Blooming Table Events Flower Bar

2/28 Frostbite Festival - with music, outdoor bar, raw bar & vendors

LINKS AT WORTHINGTON-238-4464

MEMBERSHIP OFFER:

10 Pack of Plays for \$300.

18 holes including cart.

Must be used during the week. No expiration date.

Contact Marcie at Marcie@greenbarkbookkeeping.com

(put "membership" in subject line)

GOLDEN ROD-238-0144



Regional News

SENIORS AWARE OF FIRE EDUCATION

Winter is here and many people will be out in the cold and on or near very cold water. They will be skating, ice fishing, and driving snowmobiles on lakes, ponds and rivers.



Accidents do happen. A lot of people experience cold emergencies resulting in HYPOTHERMIA — the extreme loss of body heat. If your core body temperature gets below 95 degrees, it can be fatal if untreated. Hypothermia caused by cold water draws away body heat 20-30 times faster than cold air. So here are a few things to help avoid or deal with cold related emergencies:

- Dress properly for cold weather activities. Wool insulates better when dry or wet than man-made fabrics. Keep your head covered. You lose your body heat 50% faster through your head. Keep your feet warm and dry by wearing snow boots and heavy-duty socks.
- If someone falls through ice or into cold water: Call 911 immediately. Many of our fire departments are trained for and have special equipment for cold water rescues. Our ambulances are equipped to care for hypothermic patients.
- Do NOT go out on the ice. You do not want to chance being a victim. REACH...THROW...or ROW. Try to REACH with a stick. Try to THROW a rope, life jacket or any thing that can float. Use an available boat to ROW to bring the victim to shore.
- Send someone to the nearest access point to guide emergency responders to the victim.

We do have a multitude of lakes, ponds and rivers in our hilltowns. Moving water can change the thickness of ice without you seeing it. The only really safe place to skate is at a skating rink. Be SAFE out on the cold water!

--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.

YOU MAY NOT PASS...

We want to say this to all who are trying to mess us up and steal our identity or hard-earned cash. With our increased dependence on computers of all sizes and types, we have learned that we need a good password system. Unfortunately, the common choice many are still using as a password is "12345678", or "Password", or a favorite pet's name after said pet has become famous on our social media.

So what are the current guidelines to tell a thief "Do Not Pass Go?"

1. Use twelve or more characters, including mixes of upper and lower case, numbers, and symbols. An alternate is to use even more characters, perhaps 4 words linked together with a hyphen, e.g., spoon-picnic-ants-cooler. I like this pattern with words that I can remember. When the site asks you for a mix, just add something in the middle.
2. Strategically place special characters or symbols to avoid patterns rather than grouping them at the end. Using "Password!@#" still doesn't cut it.
3. Use different passwords on each of your online accounts and don't repeat a password. A pain, you say? Yes, yes it is. Keep reading, tho.
4. Add another layer of protection, if available, such as getting a text with a security number, or answering security questions. Use multi-factor authentication any time it is offered.
5. Keep software updates current, including any antivirus protection service you have.

To reduce password pain, here are two suggestions. One, consider a password sentence. For example, "I will tell you that my Totally Favorite candy is *hocolate-*overed cashews" would be written as "lwtytmTFcic-cc". Yes, that is something like what I might use.

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Second, there are online “safes” that will hold passwords for you. You make passwords up just once and put them in the safe. You’ll need one good password to access all of these. Over the next month or two, I am going to try some. If any of you are using a safe, please tell me which one and how you like it.

As always, stay safe!

Jean O’Neil

TRIAD Committee member

jeanoneilmass@gmail.com; 413-268-2228

Your Community Connector

Jennifer O’Connell is working for the Hilltown COAs as the Community Connector. She is available to help Hilltown residents that 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:

- Obtaining benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security, etc.
- Getting help so you can continue living independently at home
- Arranging for repairs
- Connecting to local groups / activities to prevent isolation and have fun with other community members
- Transportation assistance
- Being unsure of what you need or where to turn

Any and all inquiries are welcome. Call Jennifer at 413-296-4536 ext.110 or email communityconnectjo@gmail.com

GOOD NEWS FOR DECEMBER 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

At the risk of repeating myself.....I’m going to talk about how to handle buyer’s remorse.... again.

Many of you may have made health insurance decisions, during Open Enrollment to change your coverage. Some of you may have made changes because you got a “termination letter” saying your BlueCross PPO Advantage plan ended December 31st 2025.....or perhaps your Medicare Advantage plan’s network of providers “shrank” as was the case with United Health Care, and your doctors are no longer in network for United Health Care.

And many of us may have changed our Rx coverage, and signed up for a different Medicare D plan for next year.

Whatever the reason, you may have changed your health insurance coverage. So the question is....what if it turns out you don’t like your new plan? Are you stuck with your new choice?

1. The answer is “no” you’re not stuck if you have a Medicare Advantage plan because Congress ‘adjusted’ the regulations governing Advantage plans and we now have from January 1st to March 31st to bail out of our Medicare Advantage plans and choose another, or revert to “original Medicare” and pick a Medicare D plan.

2. The answer is “no” you’re not stuck if you have been approved for the Medicare Savings Plan....which automatically gave you Extra Help which subsidizes your Rx costs. (Remember the purple letter from social security?) Extra Help lets you change your Medicare D plan quarterly, so you can choose another D plan that you think might work better for you.

3. The answer is “no” you’re not stuck with your new plan if an error was made during your Open Enrollment sign up. That requires help from Medicare to confirm....but it may be possible to switch plans if an error during sign up occurred.

If you have questions....you can call your senior center to see if a SHINE appointment is needed. Sometimes a simple call to your health insurer provider can “fix” a problem. Always start by first calling the 800 number on the back of your card.

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. 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 check 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 at 2.5-hour cruise from Portsmouth, NH to the Isles of Shoals. Before the cruise, enjoy lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$160. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

Day Trip June TBD, Million Dollar Quartet play. In the planning stages. Theater is in New London, NH. Includes luncheon. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

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 and mail to the address above by May 6, 2026. Wait list only.

Day Trip August and September Encore Casino and Big E.

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.

Hilltown CDC Announces Availability of Housing Rehabilitation Funds and Begins Work on FY26 Community Development Block Grant Application

Hilltown Community Development Corporation (Hilltown CDC), on behalf of the Town of Chesterfield, is moving forward with the expenditure of existing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds while also preparing a new FY26 grant application to bring additional resources into the region.

At this time, **income-eligible single-family homeowners** in Chesterfield may apply for assistance through the Housing Rehabilitation Program. Eligible rehabilitation work includes septic system and well replacement, heating system replacement, lead paint remediation, siding, windows, doors, insulation, roof, and the correction of state building and sanitary code violations.

In addition to Chesterfield's available funds, CDBG awards from fiscal years **FY24 and FY25** provide housing rehabilitation funding for homeowners in **Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Peru, Savoy, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington**.

Hilltown CDC has also been contracted to prepare the **FY26 Chesterfield CDBG application**, which will include continued Housing Rehabilitation funding. As part of this process, the organization is seeking community input on additional **social service programming** that could benefit residents of the communities listed above.

Community members, local partners, and service providers are invited to share ideas or request more information by contacting:

**Faith Williams, Associate Director,
Hilltown CDC**

Phone: 413-296-4536 ext. 123

Email: faithw@hilltowncdc.org

TECHNOLOGY HELP FOR JANUARY



Call 413-296-5080 for any of the TechConnect services. Leave a message and we will return your call.

Tech Support home visits are available by appt.

We can visit your home to troubleshoot home-based tech issues (like printers, networks, desktops, TVs).

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. We have received a new shipment and have plenty of inventory. 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

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 1/15

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 1/22

Williamsburg

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday, 1/8

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 1/8

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri eadaneri@gmail.com.

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

Internet Hotspots

If you have been given a hotspot from the project, your data plan will be expiring in either December or February. The grant can no longer fund the plan. You can keep the device but you must purchase a SIM card for \$30/month from Mint Mobile or a carrier of your choice. Call us with any questions you have.

WORTHINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING
ATTN: PHYLLIS DASSATTI PO BOX 7
WORTHINGTON, MA 01098

WORTHINGTON COA
PHYLLIS DASSATTI,
COORDINATOR
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413-238-5962

CAMILLE SMITH, CHAIR
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JUDY SENA, SECRETARY
HELEN PELLETIER
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SUSAN VANBUREN
EILEEN DANERI
MARYKAY FARLEY
JAY DRESCHNACK

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
Attorney General.**

