

Chesterfield Council on Aging

December 2019 Newsletter



Chesterfield COA & Community Center
400 Main Road, PO Box 7
Chesterfield, MA 01012

Jan Gibeau, Director
coa@townofchesterfieldma.com
413-296-4007

December Calendar of Events

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
2 Advanced Tai Chi 9:30am Feldenkrais 7pm	3 Chair Yoga 10am BP Clinic 11am	4 Coffee & Chat 9am Mah-Jongg 1pm	5 Men's Breakfast 9am Log Cabin Trip 10:30am Beginner T'ai Chi 6:15pm	6 Strength for Life 10am <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted black;"/> Luminary Night Sat. 12/7 3pm
9 Advanced Tai Chi 9:30am Veteran's Agent 11:30am Feldenkrais 7pm	10 Chair Yoga 10am	11 Coffee & Chat 9am Mah-Jongg 1pm	12 Brown Bag 10am Beginner T'ai Chi 6:15pm	13 Strength for Life 10am Writing Workshop 11am
16 Advanced Tai Chi 9:30am Feldenkrais 7pm	17 Chair Yoga 10am	18 Coffee & Chat 9am Mah-Jongg 1pm	19 Beginner T'ai Chi 6:15pm	20 Strength for Life 10am Writing Workshop 11am <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted black;"/> Sundown; Hanukkah begins Sun. 12/22
23 Advanced Tai Chi 9:30am COA Board 10am Veteran's Agent 11:30am Feldenkrais 7pm	24 Chair Yoga 10am	25 Christmas	26 Beginner T'ai Chi 6:15pm	27 Strength for Life 10am Writing Workshop 11am
30 Advanced Tai Chi 9:30am Feldenkrais 7pm	31 Chair Yoga 10am	<div> Jan Gibeau, Director. Office hours: Mon– Thurs. 9am-12pm. Lorrie Childs, Data & Accounting Manager. </div>		

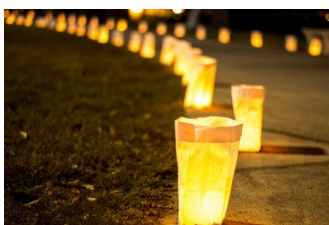
Happy Birthday in December!



Peter Scully, Sarah Donley, Nancy Papillon,
Mary Guilmette, Joseph Gazillo,
Stephen Liimatainen, Judith Lyons,
Donna Safford, Richard Blais, Justin West,
Sharon Imig, Deborah Curtis, Arthur Smith,
Kathy O'Neill, Kathleen Brisbois,
Michael Kuzmeski, Allan Lamere, Mary Bancroft,
Luther Curtis, Kirke Henshaw, Gail Judd,
Marjorie Jasmin, Marguerite Hewes, Bonnie Borst,
Patricia Roberts, Geraldine Rogers, Mary Leake,
Glen Donovan, Judith Lyon, William Coleman,
Marilyn Davidson, Norman Hathaway,
Gaylon Donovan, Holly Chamberlin

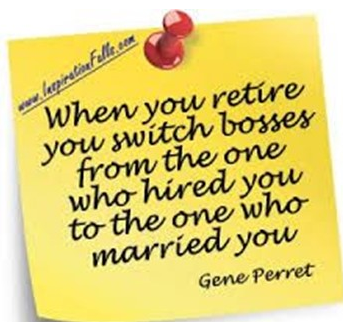
Chesterfield Luminaria Show

Sat. December 7th, 3pm-7pm
Chesterfield Community Center



Come share the fun and refreshments!

Hanukkah Festival of Lights December 22- December 30



BE WHO YOU ARE
AND SAY WHAT YOU FEEL,
BECAUSE THOSE WHO
MIND DON'T MATTER,
AND THOSE WHO MATTER
DON'T MIND.

*Do you enjoy writing?
Want to learn more?*



New Writing Workshop to begin December 13

Join our creative writing group, where we will do exercises designed to inspire you to write in a supportive and relaxing environment. Everyone is welcome and previous experience is not required. Writing can be fiction, nonfiction, poetry or stories, short or long pieces, funny, playful or serious in nature. The purpose of this group is to provide an open and supportive environment where you can enjoy writing and share your writing with the group if you choose to share.

This 10 session workshop is sponsored by the COA and will be run by Valerie Bowlby, who has a BA in creative writing and psychology, has participated in and run creative writing groups in the past, and is currently trying to publish a fictional book. Valerie will provide prompts to help you get started with writing and will provide supportive, positive feedback to help you pursue your interest in writing if you choose to share your writing with the group. This group will take place on Friday mornings from 11am-1pm at the Community Center in Chesterfield. **Please contact Valerie Bowlby at 413-296-4570 to RSVP if you are interested in joining.**

Senility at the Senior Center? Really?

Responses to our COA community survey about programs people like and/or recommend continue to come. We have found all of them to be very helpful. You are probably seeing that we are heeding your advice by adding new programs, such as the ball exercise program and a new writing workshop. We are actively trying to develop evening programs for people who are working. Hopefully you will see flyers about new and interesting topics. We now have a license to show movies.

Despite all the things going on at the Center, the stereotypes of aging persist. One response to the survey stated that people who come to our programs are senile or fragile. The suggestion was to have more vigorous activities, like rock climbing. It was a reminder that ageism is like a tattoo that you can't get rid of, no matter how hard you try. As a nurse I've been hearing these views for over 60 years. Clinically, it's often linked to "gerontophobia", the fear of aging. It's time to revisit our assumptions about aging and disrupt the drift of our conversations.

Old is not senile. Illnesses cause changes in health and function more than age alone. The majority of people I see every day are very much "on the ball", leading, preparing, organizing and managing many things, often at the same time. People found here at the Community Center come to be entertained, hear music, take part in exercise programs like Chair Yoga, T'ai Chi, Strength for Life, and Feldenkrais. They also come just to hang out together in Coffee and Chat. The Mah-Jongg group is there every Wednesday afternoon. Several men love coming to "Men's Breakfast". The library downstairs is open and used, as is the meeting room. The ongoing art exhibits are popular and quite a range of ages visit. When we get Broadband, the computers there will undoubtedly get more use. Yes, older people do use computers, iPads and iPhones... more than we think. Some use the Center for intergenerational programs with parents and kids. A lot goes on behind our doors and those doors are open more often than not, welcoming the Grange, the Boy Scouts, little kids in a child care group and families looking for a place to have celebrations. When I look around, I don't see very many people who I would describe as frail.

It's the best kept public secret because so many people stay away, as they think Senior Centers are for those "old people" who just come to lunches and play Bingo. We do not have Bingo, by the way.

Myths about aging abound. We often believe what's said about us and that belief becomes a self-fulfilling promise that makes us feel even older. We often use negative ways to talk about our own aging.

It's time to change. We should drop words we use to describe ourselves, such as old fogies, senile, over the hill, and geezers. There's a growing movement in the country, supported strongly by AARP, to "Disrupt Aging". If you go to their website you will see more information: www.aarp.org/disrupt-aging/. It's important to check it out because now we have a movement pitting generations against each other. With Millennials, it's called "OK boomer" and provides an avenue for "dissing" people born between 1946 and 1964. What is dissing anyway? Dissing is slang for disrespecting or dismissing, and was originally popularized by hip hop around 1980. In earlier years, around 1925, it was short for being disconnected, in the telephone sense, and used figuratively in slang to mean "weak in the head" (1925).

Think about this little factoid. Did you know that nearly 19% of people 65 and older are working? Even though they may be working on a part-time basis, older adults are living longer and remaining active more than ever. If you look around you will see that many volunteers on town committees are retirees who are busier than ever. Fragile? Not. By the way, will rock climbing be coming soon? Probably not. Maybe someone is pulling our collective legs.

Did you know...

1. An almanac prediction states that if snow falls on Christmas Day, Easter will be warm, green and sunny.
2. National Cookie Day is December 4th.
3. The first artificial Christmas tree was made in Germany, fashioned out of goose feathers that were dyed green!
4. "Jingle bells" was composed in 1857, and not for Christmas – it was meant to be a Thanksgiving song!
5. Frost on the shortest day is said to indicate a severe winter.
6. December 8th is Pretend to be a Time Traveler Day.
7. December 20th is National Ugly Sweater Day.



Compiled from: nationaldaycalendar.com/december/, www.kaplaninternational.com, www.rd.com

Core Team Looking up the Road to Complete Streets

As the Chesterfield Age Friendly core team prepares to become part of the network of towns that have been participating in the Complete Streets programs, it's a good time to know more about what that means. A Complete Street is "one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes – walking, biking, transit, and motorized vehicles – for people of all ages." (MassDOT) Complete streets funding allows towns to look at all these factors which we have learned from our AARP survey, covers many expressed concerns about the safety of walking along our roads, especially in and around the town center, as well as the need for more accessible trails that are "age friendly" for older adults.


One of the suggestions made in our core team meetings has been to place benches along Bagg Road and Bryant Street so we could start a walking club in the spring. We used to regularly use that route for a walking group but not everyone can do a mile without finding a place to rest. The Mass DOT (Department of Transportation) funds the Complete Streets programs to design and develop Complete Streets that "contribute toward the safety, health, economic viability and quality of life in a community by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments and providing safer, more accessible and comfortable means of travel between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations..." (MassDOT).

Improvements can include new crosswalks and new bus stops; improved street lighting, changes to traffic signal timings, or other protections needed to support the improvement of local roads in order to make safe walking and biking a reality in closing other critical gaps in transportation networks. The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging is actively collaborating with the Hilltown CDC and Healthy Hampshire as a way to fully develop all of the projects Chesterfield residents said were very important to them.

Winter Weather Reminder:

In these wintery months, please note that the Chesterfield Community Center will be closed to all functions if the Hampshire Regional School District is closed due to inclement weather.

Check Channel 22 or 40 (TV), WHMP (radio) or cancellations.com (web).



Thank You for Your Donations!

Thank you for supporting our Council on Aging programs when you attend fitness, Mah Jongg, Men’s Breakfast, Coffee & Chat, basket and gourd classes, and COA monthly events! We greatly appreciate your donations, which make it possible for us to continue offering a wide array of activities and to create new events and programs that respond to your needs and interests. Please use the form below to make a donation to the Chesterfield COA! ~ Jan Gibeau

***The Chesterfield Council on Aging benefits from your support
for our programs for Chesterfield seniors!***

I would like to contribute to the Chesterfield COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.
(Please make out your check to "Town of Chesterfield" and write "COA programs" in the memo line; mail to Janice Gibeau, Director, Chesterfield COA, PO Box 7, Chesterfield, MA 01012.)

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Thank you for helping support Chesterfield seniors!



Regional News

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



The December holidays will be with us before we know it. Many of the customs involve candles. So, here are a few things to be mindful of when using candles:

- Consider using battery-operated, flameless candles; what doesn't burn can't burn you or your house.
- When using candles that burn, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn or tip over.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Never use a candle where medical oxygen is being used.
- Be careful not to splatter hot wax when extinguishing a candle.

Have very S.A.F.E. holidays!

~ Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

*The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of
your fire departments and the
Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.*

FY20 Housing Rehab Program

Hilltown CDC will be submitting an application for the FY20 CDBG Grant to apply for Housing Rehab in the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, and Worthington. If you have used the Housing Rehab Program in the past, or plan to use it in the future, we'd like to hear from you.

We continue to look for ways to improve our programs at the CDC, and we welcome your ideas, suggestions, or input about our programs. If you have any recommendations on how we could better design the Housing Rehab Program, improve our overall effectiveness, or any suggestions that might enhance the delivery of our services, please let us know? You can call, email, or fax your comments for our upcoming grant application until January 3, 2020. We look forward to hearing your ideas. Thank you.



Please contact Paula S. Bilodeau, Housing Rehab Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123, fax (413) 296-4020, or email paulab@hilltowncdc.org for comments, program information, or for an application.

Would you like to receive your newsletter 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!

Credit Reports and Death

Some columns are less enjoyable than others to write. My condolences to the two friends who have need for this information in the last month.

Each individual has an account with each of the credit bureaus. This wonderful financial tool is yours alone! With a good credit score, you can get better loan rates, insurance rates, and other benefits. When someone dies and the credit bureaus are told of the death, the account is closed and the score goes to zero. This is to prevent scoundrels from using the account information for their benefit. It also may help you as a survivor from being harassed by someone wanting to part you from your money.

As a survivor, in addition to all the emotions and details you are dealing with, it is a good idea to get a copy of the deceased's credit report from each of the three bureaus so you can get a clearer picture of his or her finances and learn if you are responsible for anything, such as being a co-signer on a credit card. The request for a copy can be made by a spouse or executor.

Send a letter with the following information about the deceased: legal name, Social Security number, date of birth and of death, last known address, a copy of the death certificate or letters testamentary. Include your full name, your address, and if not a spouse, the court document showing your executor status.

After that, you can request the credit bureaus close the account and mark it "Deceased. Do Not Issue Credit". The Social Security Administration should forward this request, but I'd advise making sure it happens. Addresses for the three credit bureaus are easy to find online but call me if you have troubles.

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

Older Patients Deserve Age-Friendly Care

"I've been on my gout medication since the 1990s. No one ever suggested I stop taking it, doc." Jerry was a new patient, in for a general health checkup. He had a variety of health conditions and was taking at least 6 different medicines. When I asked him how long it'd been since his last gout flare, he proudly replied, "I haven't had one in 20 years." Now, maybe he hasn't had a recurrence in two decades because he's been on the medicine, or rather, maybe he just doesn't need to be on the drug anymore.

Jerry's experience isn't unusual: many older patients are still taking medication that had been prescribed to them when they were much younger, without anyone questioning whether they should still be taking it. Think about it – has your doctor ever comprehensively reviewed all your medicines with you – and discontinued one or lowered a dose? It's critical that you review your medications with your doctors and see if there should be any changes. Every drug has risks and benefits, and that balance can sometimes shift as we age. In fact, certain drugs should be outright avoided as you get older. Yet, most older patients are unaware of this.



This is one of many findings surfaced by a recent survey on age-friendly health systems conducted by WebMD and The John A. Hartford Foundation. We surveyed nearly 3,000 patients and caregivers, age 65 and older, and the results were a bit sobering. We learned that the care of older adults is mired in misinformation, especially among minority populations, with older patients and caregivers mistakenly believing that sharp declines in the quality of life are inevitable. Here are a few of the findings that I found most concerning:

- Forty percent of those surveyed were unaware that certain prescription medications affect the quality of their thinking.
- More than two-thirds of caregivers said that the person in their care has difficulty walking around, and half said that they had fallen within the past year. And very few are doing any activities to improve mobility.
- Only a very small percentage talk to their doctors about their concerns and fears or share their future health goals.
- Forty percent of respondents incorrectly think that depression is an inevitable part of aging.

So why are older patients not getting the care and the information that they need?

I think part of the reason is that patients and caregivers often aren't sure what to expect – and what they should demand – from doctors and the health care system. They just accept the status quo, but we need to change that. Patients and caregivers need to know that they can and should ask for care that meets their specific needs.

Advances in medicine have allowed us to live longer,

and that's great. But now we need medical care that will help to optimize our health as we age. We need age-friendly care that is evidence-based, causes no harm, and is always consistent with what matters to the older person. But that kind of change will only happen if patients and caregivers ask for it and start to expect it. So, if you're an older patient, or caregiver, I hope you'll take a few minutes and read the results of the survey (www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/age-health-care-survey) It may open your eyes to some things that you didn't know you could be asking of your doctors.

And, in case you are wondering, Jerry did decide to stop his gout medicine and he has been doing very well!

~ John Whyte, MD MPH

John Whyte, MD, MPH, is a board-certified internist and the Chief Medical Officer at WebMD, where he leads efforts to develop and expand strategic partnerships that create meaningful change around important and timely public health issues. As a popular health writer, he has been published extensively both in medical and mainstream publications.

General Contractors

Are you are interested in steady, local work?

Hilltown CDC is currently seeking General Contractors who are interested in bidding on Housing Rehabilitation projects funded by grant programs. We recently received the FY19 Housing Rehab Grant and will be bidding 22 projects in the upcoming months. In addition, we're in the process of applying for the FY20 Housing Rehab Grant for another anticipated 20-22 projects.

Projects are planned in the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, and Worthington with an average project cost of \$30,000.00 - \$40,000.00. Contractors working on Housing Rehab projects are guaranteed payment for all work with a quick turnaround on invoices as well as a steady source of local, year around work.

GC's must possess a valid Contractor Supervisor's License and a Home Improvement Contractor's License. Lead certification is preferred, but not required. General Liability coverage as well as Workers' Compensation insurance (if applicable) is required.

HCDC is an EEO/Section 3 Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Please contact Paula Bilodeau, Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123 for an application or email paulab@hilltowncdc.org.

Funding is provided by the US Dept. of HUD/DHCD and MA CDBG Programs.

On the Go!



The Northampton Senior Center has arranged the following outings, and you are welcome to join!

Please make your reservations early as these trips fill up fast! **Call Francine Frenier at the Northampton Senior Center: 413-587-1228.**

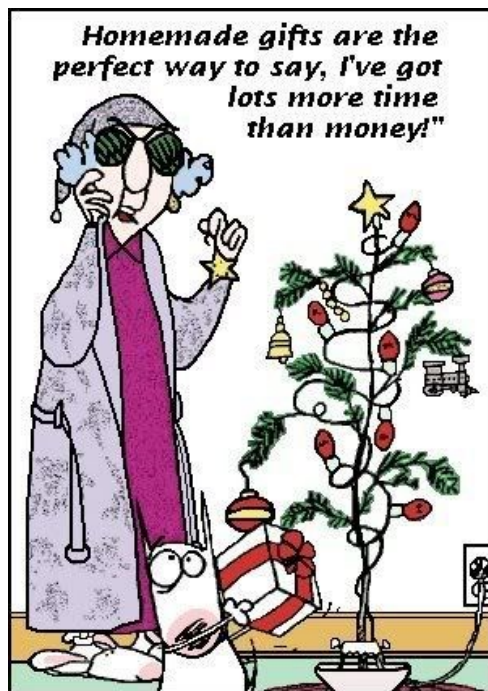
Quick Look 2020

Jan 14: New England Air Museum, docent guided tour, lunch on your own at Friendly's in Windsor, CT. \$65 due by Dec. 14th.

Feb 24: Day trip to the MGM Casino in Springfield. Cost is \$25 per person. Casino bonus to be determined. Payment is due by January 27th. Limited seats. No refunds due to bargain price.

May 1-10: Memphis/Nashville 10-day bus trip. See the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame, Memphis Rock N' Soul Museum, Graceland and other sites. Cost per person in a double room is \$1070. Receive a \$25 discount if paid in full by February 3, 2020.

May 31-Jun 13: Mediterranean Cruise 14 days— only a few seats remain. Passport required. Excursions available. Deadline to sign up January 15, 2020.



Share the Love with Vulnerable Seniors this Year



Highland Valley
ELDER SERVICES

Exciting news! For the 12th year running, the Meals on Wheels network is participating in the 2019 Subaru Share the Love Event. Over the past eleven years, Subaru and its retailers have helped Meals on Wheels to deliver more than 2.2 million meals nationwide to seniors in need.

Why does Subaru support Meals on Wheels? Too many seniors are struggling to stay independent and healthy. **One in four seniors lives alone in isolation and one in seven seniors might not know from where their next meal is coming.** This is simply unacceptable, which is why Highland Valley Elder Services provides the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks to the seniors of Hampshire and Hampden counties. This vital support keeps seniors in their own homes, where they want to be. We're incredibly grateful to Subaru and its Retailers for supporting our organization and the seniors we serve.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

This November 14, 2019, through January 2, 2020, for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased, Subaru will donate \$250 to the customer's choice of participating charities.* Meals on Wheels is one of four national participating charities and has been since the inception of the event. Through this event, as a member of Meals on Wheels America, Highland Valley Elder Services will receive a share of the donation from Subaru vehicles sold at participating Subaru Retailers.

You might not be in the market to purchase a new car, but if you are, please look into the Subaru Share the Love Event to learn more. If you're not shopping for a new vehicle, *you can still help* by spreading the word to your family and friends. Share our posts about the Share the Love Event on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. And remember: this holiday season you can ensure our senior neighbors are not forgotten, when you purchase or lease a new Subaru and select Meals on Wheels as your charity of choice.

*Disclaimer: Subaru will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased from November 14, 2019, through January 2, 2020, to four national charities designated by the purchaser or lessee. Pre-approved Hometown Charities may be selected for donation depending on retailer participation. For every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased during the campaign period, participating retailers will donate a minimum of \$50 in total to their registered Hometown Charities. Purchasers/lessees must make their charity designations by January 15, 2020. The four national charities will receive a guaranteed minimum donation of \$250,000 each. See your local Subaru retailer for details or visit subaru.com/share. All donations made by Subaru of America, Inc.

Chesterfield COA

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Outreach Com: Jan Gibeau,
Lorrie Childs, Marilyn Davidson



Newsletter Designer:
Kristen Estelle

This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Out and About in December

Wednesday, December 4th, 6 pm
An Intro to Aromatherapy: The Basics

Williamsburg Town Offices Café
143 Main Street, Haydenville
Presenter: Kay Judge, Clinical Aromatherapist

This class is designed to provide a basic understanding of what the use of essential oils is all about. Create a room spray from commonly used essential oils to take home. A materials fee of \$25.00 will be collected. All are invited! Please call 268-8407 to register.

Sat. December 7th, 9am-3pm
Fundraiser Vendor/ Craft Fair

John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St., Goshen

This event raises money for the Chesterfield-Goshen Children's Fund, which helps provide holiday gifts to local children and families who need a little help this season. Baked goods, handmade wreaths, raffle and more.

Sun. December 15th, 3pm
Hymn Sing

Goshen Congregational Church, 45 Main St., Goshen

Fri. December 20th 9am & 10am
Spa Day at Smith Vocational
80 Locust St. Northampton

Smith Vocational collaborates with the Chesterfield COA by offering a "spa day" once a month to seniors in the surrounding area. Cosmetology students are offering: Haircuts \$6.00; Manicures \$5.00; Facials \$9.00. Please call 413-587-1414 x3531 to make an appointment. Each appointment takes about an hour and are scheduled for 9am and 10am in Room 124 of Building A at the school.

Mondays, 4:30-5:30pm
Ukulele Group
Williamsburg Town Offices, Auditorium
143 Main St. Haydenville

All are welcome! Dan Frank is facilitator and members have varying ability; all come for the sheer enjoyment of strumming their ukuleles and singing along. A free-will offering is collected at the end of the session.

