

# Chesterfield Council on Aging

## November 2020 Newsletter



### Chesterfield COA & Community Center

400 Main Road, PO Box 7  
Chesterfield, MA 01012

### Jan Gibeau, Director

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413-296-4007

### Good News:

The good news is that we have been able to continue with some of the programs that have kept us in touch: Chair Yoga and Coffee Hour (weather permitting), Tai Chi outdoors, etc. Funding from Highland Valley Elder Services has supported these programs, even though some of the exercise and intergenerational events have been produced with Zoom.



Fran Ryan's Zoom programs on Black Bears was seen by over 100 people, with kids at New Hingham and older adults also tuning in through Zoom. The plan is to expand these offerings to both entertain and educate people of all ages. In fact, we'd like to offer more of Fran's presentations on animals, their habits and habitats online. We are fortunate that Highland Valley Elder Services has kept the funding of Title IIIB grants at the same level for the coming year, for which we are all grateful. COAs are trying to forge other new ways to keep important services in place. Thanks to HVES we were able to purchase the equipment and other supports needed to launch new ways of getting important information out into the towns. Virtual programs will allow people to take part in programs from their own homes. Even now, people with internet have access to exercise, cooking classes, etc. There are no charges or fees to attend programs funded through the COA. We can only suggest that donations be made to offset costs.

### Bad News

Despite funds being provided by the federal, state and local agencies, and our Chesterfield Council on

Aging being unable to offer on site programs, donations have plummeted dramatically. Virtual services still need donations. Donations are used to extend the number of classes and events that could be offered beyond what any grant could cover. They also support activities that have no other source of funding. Your donations help to fill that gap. We could use your help. Do you have suggestions for keeping the momentum going?

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### THE COMMUNITY CUPBOARD HAS MOVED to the Chesterfield Community Center

#### New Weekly Hours:

Tuesdays: 4 to 6 PM  
Fridays 9 to 11 AM

*With thanks for generous help from Florence Bank, Chesterfield Council on Aging, Hilltown CDC, Dakin Humane Society, and anonymous*

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### Food for thought: Thoughts of Food

Use of the Chesterfield Community Cupboard tells us that the need for help for food has not gone away. Unemployment is still threatening economic security, prices are rising and the potential surges of the flu and COVID are with us. The risks may well keep people home more and looking for safer places to pick up food "close to home".

The combination of food and medical insecurity can be daunting. The Community Support Team of Volunteers has been looking at how they can continue to help during the fall and winter. The first step has been taken; finding a new space that had heat, electricity, refrigeration and safe accessibility. Moving to the kitchen at the Community Center turned out to be the perfect place. In consultation with the Emergency Management Team, Select Board and the Board of Health, new protocols are in place and the Cupboard opened October 6th. Located at 400 Main Street, the Community Center has ample parking, a handicap accessible ramp and secure separation from the rest of the building. The Chesterfield Community

Center itself is still closed to the public. There is ample space for social distancing in the entry way. Sanitization within the foyer and kitchen meets all CDC requirements.

The Chesterfield Community Food Cupboard offers the same types of food as before but the hours have been limited to twice weekly on Tuesday 4-6pm and Friday from 9-11am. Volunteers will continue to do the shopping but several have offered to donate extra time to manage the storing and distribution of food. Time is precious and we are so fortunate to have such faithful volunteers. We need more. If you would like to help call Jan Gibeau at 296-4007.

How will it work? To shorten the time waiting, there will be checklists available to let the volunteers know before someone's entry what categories of foodstuffs are wanted; i.e. dairy products, veggies, eggs, cereals etc. A volunteer will pick up the checklists, number them and bring them inside. Only one person can be inside the foyer at a time. People can stay in their cars while they wait to enter or stand at the bottom of the ramp. As soon as someone leaves, the next person may enter. If someone needs assistance, a volunteer can help with picking up the checklist and carrying food back to the car.

Can you help keep this going? We need donations of both perishable or non-perishable food or other products you think might help. There is a large white donation box just outside of the main entry of the Community Center. Does your garden runneth over? Given the harvest season, we would love to have more winter squashes, pumpkins, carrots, potatoes, apples or whatever else you find that has mounted up enough to "exceed your expectations".

Money helps. Locked donation boxes will be available on-site and checks can be mailed to Chesterfield Council on Aging, listing the Chesterfield Little Corner Cupboard in the note section. But we also need help with raising funds and donations from more people and businesses. Several members of the COA have offered to reach out to potential sources and all suggestions are welcomed.

***Please help us to  
put some happy  
into Happy  
Thanksgiving.***

*Photo: Amy Gevalis,  
one of the Community  
Support Team  
volunteers.*



## **Reflections on Living During a Pandemic: Nan Clark**

Jan asked me to write something for the newsletter so here is my two cents. I and my family are well. My son Scott, a chocolatier in NYC, had a mild case of COVID way back in April when we still hadn't heard much about it. He self-quarantined and fully recovered. My daughter Roxane in West Hartford is a hospice nurse so she is truly on the front lines. In town, my daughter Heather lives nearby and takes very good care of me; groceries, etc. Her salon was shut down but she is now open and safe. I will be so glad to get a new perm soon.

The Madelaine Chocolate company was closed but is now up and running because we all know chocolate is a necessary food item. My kids, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and I feel very fortunate to be well and we visit often by phone, always ending "I love you".

How do I keep sane? Was I ever? In the midst of a coronavirus crisis, job insecurity, political posturing, violent storms, violent people, possible isolation -WOW- I hug my cats! Seriously, I do and they comfort me and help me sleep. On pleasant days I walk on my wooded road with my rollator and read in my yard.

With good help from Cindy at our library, I have gone back to school to learn some very important truths that we were missing from education right through college; white privilege and rampant racism were never discussed. I was born into white privilege and now at 91 I am learning just what that means both socially and politically. This summer I have read at least a dozen books to enlighten myself. Our library has educated me with books by Henry Louis Gates, Toni Morrison, Jennifer Harvey, Isabel Wilkerson, Ibram Kendi and others. I've learned about America's Great Migration from 1915-1970 and am just finishing "Across That Bridge" by John Lewis. In order to keep a balance in my heart and soul, I've also read lighter novels, animal stories, who-done-its, love stories and watched funny films.

Once the snow flies, jigsaw puzzles will appear on my kitchen table. I like the challenge while soft music plays in the background. At my age I'm supposed to have wisdom. If any of this seems wise to you, please try it. You might like it too. Just be sure to pat your cat, or, dog, or bunny, feed and enjoy your winter birds, support our Chesterfield Community Cupboard -and eat some chocolate every day!



## **Will Thanksgiving be a real “Turkey” this year?**

This is the Covid-19 holiday season we’ve dreaded since the early spring. It’s the time of year when we look forward to hugging our families and friends, having folks over for large dinners, passing around tasty hors d’oeuvres, traveling to see children and grandchildren and feeling connected to others in many special ways. Traditions abound. Options for coping help but can’t replace the comfort of longstanding annual rituals. Under the circumstances, how can we really be thankful at Thanksgiving? In searching for information on Thanksgiving an article written by Arvind Devalis seemed to provide a compelling way to answer such a question.

Here are a few excerpts to consider:

### **1. Live with an attitude of gratitude.**

Gratitude is all about appreciating the things you have in your life—every day, and not just on Thanksgiving Day. From today onward, begin to value all the goodness, beauty, and love around you. This can be as majestic as a sunset or as simple as the feel of the clothes you wear.

Gratitude is a way of reaching back to your natural state of happiness. Notice what’s right instead of what’s wrong, and begin to see every “problem” as an opportunity for growth and development. Is your glass half full or half empty? Be thankful for a gift from a friend, a child’s smile, a stranger’s kindness, and even the weather, regardless of whether it is raining or the sun is shining.

### **2. Show your appreciation of others.**

Countless people contribute daily to make your life what it is. From the postman to the checkout assistant, everyone you interact with plays a key role in helping you flow through your day. The food at your table, your car, and the clothes you wear—all these things are possible only because of the toil and sweat of thousands of strangers around the world. Though you will never personally meet or know all these kind people, you can certainly show your appreciation to the people you meet daily. Even just genuinely saying thank you from the heart will mean a lot to them.



### **3. Celebrate life every day.**

As you celebrate Thanksgiving, the party will be over before you know it. But why wait for next Thanksgiving to celebrate life? Look for ways to celebrate every day, even if it’s just a nice cup of coffee or a cool glass of water. Part of celebrating life every day is to give yourself the best

things possible. So eat healthy and quality food. Your zest for life depends so much on what you put into your body. So celebrate with quality and nutritious food.

And remember to exercise regularly and make it fun. Do also take time out to rest and get enough sleep. After all, you don’t want to get too tired for the next day of celebrating life!

### **4. Enjoy nature’s bounty.**

Nature is a huge dining table; you just have to feast from it. Make it a habit to go for a walk every day and bask in some greenery, or maybe stroll along a seashore if you are so lucky. Every now and then, look at a sunset, cloud formation, or trees. You can get so busy. Just learn to become present to the beauty of nature and keep at it.



### **5. Share your abundance.**

You are blessed with so much abundance, from your worldly goods, your wisdom, your innate goodness, and indeed nature’s bounty. You have been given so much, so share it with others every day and don’t wait for this time next year. Invite friends to your home, support worthy causes, help someone in a positive way—you get the idea. There are umpteen ways you can share and spread your abundance.

### **6. Truly appreciate your loved ones.**

As you spend time with your loved ones, you can appreciate and fully accept them, no matter what their quirks are. Can’t you?! So why not continue this for the rest of the year? We so often take people for granted only to miss them as soon as they have left. Many times loved ones leave and we wish we’d told them how much they mean to us. Show your loved ones you truly care for them every day and not just on a few special occasions each year. You don’t even have to make a grand gesture to show your appreciation. Sometimes all they want is some quality time with you and your full presence. The little things can make a big difference.

### **7. Contribute to others and bring people together.**

Ultimately, we are all interconnected, even if we don’t know each other and have nothing in common. Regardless of your relationship, look for ways to contribute to others. In any situation, ask yourself: How can I help? How can I contribute here?

Connect with people without wanting anything from them. Make at least one friendly phone call each day, with no intention to get some business or anything else—just a friendly hello without any expectation. By creating a sense of togetherness, you will help to generate and instill in others a

sense of community and well-being.

Become conscious of the joy you get from all your positive acts. When you give the gift of a smile or a kind word, you create a wonderful ripple effect of joy that touches many, and helps build bridges between everyone.

### **Have a Happy Thanksgiving everyone—tomorrow and everyday!**

\*Arvind Devalia is a coach, blogger, speaker and author of two Amazon best-sellers: "Love is all that Matters" and "Get the Life you Love." Arvind blogs about how to make it happen in your life and for a better world at [www.ArvindDevalia.com/blog](http://www.ArvindDevalia.com/blog)

### **Thanksgiving Guidelines from the CDC**

Thanksgiving is a time when many families travel long distances to celebrate together. Travel increases the chance of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others. If you must travel, be informed of the risks involved.

#### **Lower risk activities**

- ⇒ Having a small dinner with only people who live in your household
- ⇒ Preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors, especially those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and delivering them in a way that doesn't involve contact with others.
- ⇒ Having a virtual dinner and sharing recipes with friends and family
- ⇒ Shopping online rather than in person on the day after Thanksgiving or the next Monday.
- ⇒ Watching sports events, parades, and movies from home

#### **Moderate risk activities**

- ⇒ Having a small outdoor dinner with family and friends who live in your community
- ⇒ Lower your risk by following CDC's recommendations on hosting gatherings or cook-outs
- ⇒ Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is encouraged or enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing
- ⇒ Attending a small outdoor sports events with safety precautions in place

#### **Higher risk activities**

Avoid these higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- ⇒ Going shopping in crowded stores just before, on, or after Thanksgiving
- ⇒ Participating or being a spectator at a crowded race
- ⇒ Attending crowded parades
- ⇒ Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors

### **Happy Birthday in November!**

Janet Russell, Eileen Delano, Frances Breau, Marilyn Donovan, Joyce Follet, Sarah Prince, Peter Banister, Robert Aller, Margaret Ladd, Joseph Shinn, Sally Sites-Robertson, William Robertson, Robin Bak, Paul Lampron, Joyce Harris, Marvin Jones, Nancy Westgate, Dennis Pittsinger, William Gessing, Edward Kolosewicz, Matt Barron, Sallyann Fortini, Nancy Westgate, Marvin Jones, Joyce Harris, John Cennamo, Christina Demelker, C.J. Lammers, Therese Brigley, Roland Lebeau, Michael Mcneight, Ruby Donovan, Eileen Delano, Janet Russell, Colleen Wickland, Harold LaLam, Michael Leff, Matt Barron, Fredrick Randall, Jo A. Root.

### ***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!***



## Seniors Aware of Fire Education

### Senior SAFE

The focus of Fire Safety Month was how to prevent cooking fires. The theme was chosen with a few facts in mind.

1. The leading cause of house fires has been kitchen fires.
  2. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.
  3. Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove. Here are a few ways by which you can prevent fires in your kitchen:
- ⇒ If you are sleepy or have consumed a bit too much alcohol, do not use the stove.
  - ⇒ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, broiling or grilling food.
  - ⇒ Stay in your home when food is cooking.
  - ⇒ Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
  - ⇒ Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top.
  - ⇒ One extra idea -- don't let pan and pot handles overhang the stove top edge where they can be bumped into and pour scalding liquid on you.

Have a safe Thanksgiving!

--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.*



**Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, by email instead of snail mail?**

If so, please email Kristen at **regionalcoanews@gmail.com** to be put on the email list. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

## Phone scams, Medicare style

So my latest irritation is those calls telling me I am eligible for Medicare supplies and they will be HAPPY to send me a back brace, knee brace, or Medical Item of the Day. The source of the calls will be some town in Massachusetts, or most recently a Williamsburg number. So far they haven't sent me anything... what if they do?

From the FTC: **"Don't accept medical equipment you get in the mail — unless you or your doctor ordered it. If it comes to your door and you didn't order it, you can keep it as a gift. You don't have to pay for things you didn't order... if you give them your information, they'll use it to fraudulently bill Medicare. This uses up your medical benefits, which means you might not be able to get the right brace later, if your doctor prescribes one."**

How do you tell if the scammers have been successful? Every now and again you will get a letter from Medicare in the mail, a Medicare Summary Notice, that says "This is not a bill" and it will show charges that Medicare paid. If you do not recognize a charge, or know it is one of those braces, call the phone number on the letter and report the blinking buggers.

The same rule holds if the mail brings you other merchandise with a bill, but you didn't order it. You can keep it, try to send it back at their expense, give it away, or use it to line a trash can.

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

## Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

As I sit down to write, we are about three weeks away from the Presidential election, so it's difficult to think about anything else these days. But we are also in the midst of Open Enrollment for Medicare beneficiaries who might like to look over their coverage and compare plans for this coming year, especially if you've received a letter from your Medicare Rx plan saying coverage is changing and cost is increasing. And if that's not good news...our mailboxes are filled with advertising from other insurance plans saying they can do a better job for us. Can all that go straight to the recycling bin? Or do we need to do something?

There are 1,326,207 Medicare beneficiaries in Massachusetts. Many of us can ignore all this advertising, and ignore the fact that it's Open Enrollment season, because we get our health insurance coverage through our retirement/pension plans, or through the VA. And those who have MassHealth or X-tra help (also called the Low Income Subsidy), do not have to make any changes to their coverage. They can ignore and recycle all the advertising in their mailbox.

For the rest of us, we might do well to check out our coverage. Typically the letter from our insurance plan says they have changed their Formulary, switching some of the generics we take into "another tier", which is another way to say they are going to charge us more for our generic Rx than they did last year. You may have received a letter from your Rx Plan that said they were increasing your monthly premium? We expect shrinking coverage and increasing costs as a way of life. But here's a new wrinkle. It has become more important to know where to shop, and which pharmacy to use. Pharmacy chains, pharmaceutical companies and health insurance plans are connected in ways that are not apparent to us, meaning they often own, or are in business with each other. So picking up your medications at Stop and Shop might be a different price than shopping at CVS.

We are in luck because the **Medicare.gov** website can sort this all out for us. By typing in your list of Rx, and the zip code where you live, the website program can sort through the details of all 27 Medicare Rx plans in our area and rank them in order of least cost for best coverage! You can try using the website yourself, or call your senior center for a SHINE appointment.

One more piece of good news is the **Massachusetts Pharmacy Outreach Program**. This is especially helpful for situations where your Rx is expensive, or is not something you've taken before

and you'd like to know more about the drug. The Pharmacy Outreach Program is a free service provided by the University of Massachusetts and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. It's your reference librarian, available by phone, Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 5pm: **1-866-633-1617**. They look for affordable solutions for you, and can help submit Patient Assistance applications if you qualify to get your Rx free or greatly reduced from the pharmaceutical manufacturer. One of my favorite stories is about my Mom calling them to find out if it might be safe to double the dose of her particular Rx and cut the pill in half. That way she'd save almost \$300 for the year. They said it should be OK, and to ask her doctor. She did. And saved enough money to get her chair reupholstered.

Open Enrollment runs from October 15th-December 7th each year. Call your senior center for a SHINE appointment if you need help sorting it all out.



"You get a call from this number about a busted oven, you're busy. Understand?"

## Joan Griswold's Zoom Exercise Classes

Thank you to all who join Joan Griswold's zoom exercise classes! We are very thankful that she does such a great job keeping our muscle strengthening class going and that she is interested in continuing this through the winter months.



Most of our COAs receive grants from Highland Valley Elder Services that partially fund many of our classes. We also use donations to keep paying teachers like Joan. Your donations make her classes possible.

### **In order to continue, we need donations from each of the seven Northern Hilltowns.**

Joan works for each town in six-week sessions. When we were meeting in person, we had a donation jar in which we asked everyone to put in a donation that they could afford. We are very thankful for the donations that have been sent in, but we still need your support. Otherwise, we will not have the funds to keep Joan's classes on Zoom.

When sending in a donation, please send it to the town you would like to support. Joan lists them on her email that she sends out every week. If you would like to join Joan's classes, send her an email: [joan@bybhealth.com](mailto:joan@bybhealth.com)

[careconsultationmanh@alz.org](mailto:careconsultationmanh@alz.org) to schedule a Care Consultation today.

We know this is an unprecedented time, and no one should be doing this alone. The Alzheimer's Association staff are still operational and continue to help families each day living with dementia. Our 24/7 Helpline is available at 1-800-272-3900 to anyone who needs to talk about the challenges of dementia during this time. Our Helpline staff are available around the clock for any questions or concerns you might have. They can help address feelings of isolation, and link you to other resources.

Additionally, we are now offering all of our educational programs and support groups via video conference or over the phone. We also offer Meet Ups for those living with dementia. Virtual Alz Meet Ups are a fun, social hour that provide an opportunity to connect with others living through a similar experience.



## **Diane Meehan retires from the Hilltown Food Pantry after 30 Years**

A familiar face to many, Diane Meehan recently retired from her position as Director of the Hilltown Food Pantry in Goshen. She started as a volunteer coordinator of the Pantry which has been in numerous locations (Cumington, Chesterfield, Haydenville and finally, in Goshen).

Thank you, Diane, for your many years of dedication and hard work. As the Goshen select board wrote in their letter to you, "You truly embody the popular phrase, 'Think Globally, Act Locally'. The many volunteers and people whom you have touched have enjoyed working with you and wish you all the best as you retire."

## **Free Resources from the Alzheimer's Association**

Did you or someone in your family recently receive a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia? Would you like some help navigating decisions after a diagnosis? Are you worried about how to provide the best care for a loved one? Are you concerned about your own memory?



The Alzheimer's Association provides free Care Consultations that are confidential and personalized to the needs of individuals and families. Consultations can be provided by phone or video conference and can include family members in separate locations. Call 617-393-2100 or email



**Chesterfield Council on Aging**  
**400 Main Road, P.O. Box 7**  
**Chesterfield, MA 01012**

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Kristen Estelle

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This is going to be the  
first year our family  
won't be going to Hawaii  
because of the virus.

Usually it's because  
we can't afford it.



COFFEE AND JELLY BEANS