


Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



December 2017 ~ Calendar of Events

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
				1 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am
4 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am Knitting Group Library, 6:30-8pm	5 Board & Card Games, WW, 1:30pm	6 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am Coffee & Social Time Library, 10am	7 COA Luncheon Church, Noon Scrabble Library, 5:30pm	8 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am
11 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am Computer Class Library, 10am Knitting Group Library, 6:30-8pm	12 Board & Card Games, WW, 1:30pm Scrabble Library, 1:30pm	13 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am Coffee & Social Time Library, 10am	14 Afternoon movie Library, 1:15pm	15 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am COA Breakfast WW, 8am-9:30am
18 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am Knitting Group Library, 6:30-8pm	19 Board & Card Games, WW, 1:30pm	20 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9 am Coffee & Social Time Library, 10am	21 Scrabble Library, 5:30pm	22 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am
25 Merry Christmas! 	26 Board & Card Games, WW, 1:30pm Scrabble Library, 1:30pm	27 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9 am Coffee & Social Time Library, 10am	28	29 Walking Group Town pk lot, 8 & 9am COA Board Meeting WW, 9:30am

Westhampton COA + 3 South Road + Westhampton, MA 01027 + Seniors Helping Seniors

Coordinator: Julia Lennen 413-537-9880 + westhamptoncoa@comcast.net

In Memoriam

John Warren 1/22/35– 10/13/17

Henry Geryk, Sr. 7/26/28– 10/17/17



December COA Luncheon

On **Thursday, Dec. 7th**, we'll be having our special holiday luncheon of baked Parmesan Crusted Chicken. This dinner will be in place of our usual potluck buffet. The food committee will be asking for specific items to go with the chicken this month. We will still be collecting nonperishable food items for the Easthampton Food Pantry which always seems even more important during the holidays. The entertainment will be a holiday sing-along led by Pat and Bob Miller. (Of course, if anyone would rather just listen to the tunes, that's okay too.) Blood pressure checks will be available before the luncheon and birthday cards will be there to be signed by seniors for those with upcoming celebrations. It should be a festive luncheon!

November Luncheon

Our November potluck luncheon was attended by about 45 seniors. Our friendly local state trooper, George, who covers our area, surprised us with a lovely decorated Thanksgiving cake to share. That, along with our make-your-own sundaes for dessert, really topped off our meal! A rep from Mass. Equipment Distribution Program was our guest and provided information about telephone equipment available for seniors who have difficulty using the phone due to hearing or vision loss. This equipment is available to seniors with a permanent disability at little or no cost to them. If you'd like more information, you can contact Julia Lennen, COA Coordinator at 413-537-9880 or email her at westhamptoncoa@comcast.net



November birthdays: Bill Magrone, Pat Warren, Terry Derouin and Chuck Horn

Veterans Day Breakfast

Outlook Farm was bustling the morning of Nov. 10th when veterans were honored with a free breakfast sponsored by the Friends of the COA and Brad Morse, owner of Outlook. It was the perfect time to thank veterans (both old and young) for their service. About 22 veterans from Westhampton and surrounding towns enjoyed a breakfast with friends and family. Joe Henning, our veteran's agent, was also there to answer any questions they had.



Veterans Day: Jean Webster serving a veteran's breakfast. Photo courtesy of Norm Cotnoir.



Board and Card Games

If you're interested in playing board or card games, head over to Westhampton Woods, Unit F, at 1:30 on Tuesdays this month. You'll enjoy an afternoon of games and socializing. If you'd rather play Scrabble, you'll find that at the library at 1:30 on Dec. 12th and 26th. There will also be Scrabble games at the library on Thursday, Dec. 7th and 21st at 5:30pm.

Computer Classes

These classes continue on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 10:00 'til noon at the library. In December, there will be only one class, Dec. 11th, due to the holidays. If you're having a problem with your computer or want to hear some good tips to make your life easier dealing with your computer, stop at the library anytime when the class is meeting. Bob can help out.

Hikes

On a chilly and sunny November 9th, before the real cold set in, seven of us returned to Westhampton's Lynes Mass Audubon Sanctuary for a great hike. We saw some wonderful recent bear work on an old tree stump and found a nice deer rub. In addition to finding The Bear Claw Tree, we got to use a new trail section. John Clapp leads the next Work Off the Turkey trip to the Mineral Hills, Thursday, November 30, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Carpooling from his house to the trailhead, the hike will include a couple of long, steep climbs, but the rest is moderate. The destination is the Turkey Hill Road quarry. Bad weather date is Thursday, December 2, same times. Details to come by COA Hikers email soon, or reach Chuck: (413) 527-6765, chornrita66@comcast.net. Hope you can join us.



Barbara, Ray, Mary Ellen, Shirl, Wendy, Lynn and Chuck (taking picture) at Lynes Wildlife Sanctuary in Nov.

Monthly Breakfast

You're invited to join other seniors for breakfast on Friday, Dec. 15th, from 8:00—9:30 at Westhampton Woods, Unit F. Come and have some homemade coffecake or quick breads with friends and neighbors. There's always hot cereal, coffee, tea, hot cocoa and milk and sometimes added surprises, too! Good conversation is always there also.



November COA breakfast: Mary and Dave Laprade, Carol and Bill Magrone, Bill Tracy and Leonard Day

Westhampton Fall Festival Pie Sale

Thanks to the many, many seniors who baked pies for the annual COA pie sale, the Friends reported a profit of \$465.69. It was a beautiful summer-like day on October 15th for the festival this year!



Shirley Raymond, Deb Barthelette, and Jean Webster after selling 44 pies.

December Library Events

Come hear the Jolly Jingers present a **holiday concert at the library after school on December 11 at 3:30pm.**

Also, on **December 11 at 6:30pm** there will be a program on **Bullet Journaling**. Get creative and organized with bullet journaling just in time for the new year. Please call, email or stop by the library to sign up. We will provide all supplies but feel free to bring a journal if you'd like.

Save the Date

Be sure to enjoy a nutritious hot lunch with your neighbors on January 4th. We will kick off the new year with life-saving information from Fire Chief Norris. Chief Norris will walk us through winter fire safety tips, especially for homes heated with wood or pellets. He will also talk about smoke and CO2 detectors, recent recalls for fire extinguishers and other recommendations to keep us safe in our homes.

We will also hear from Joe Henning, our Veterans Agent, with up-to-date information on Veterans benefits for our service members and their spouses. Make sure you are getting the benefits you deserve.

*Mark
your
Calendar*

RESOURCES DIRECTORY



Domestic Violence Advocate , Hilltown Safety at Home (HS@H)	413 559-8039
If you need help in an emergency, call 911 or the Safe Passage hotline	888 345-5282
Elder Abuse Hotline	800 922-2275
First Call for Help Information and Referral Resources	800 339-7779
Fuel Assistance Application and Recertification	800 370-0940
Hilltown Elder Network – H E N (sponsored by Hilltown CDC)	413 296-4536
Veterans' Service Officer Tom Geryk	413 587-1299
(Westhampton) Joe Henning	413 207-3541
(Plainfield) Upper Pioneer Valley Veteran's Services District in Greenfield	413 772-1571
Regional Outreach Coordinator , Peg Whalen	413-404-4566
DO NOT CALL Registry	888 382-1222

Food Services:

Food Bank of Western Massachusetts Brown Bag Program	800 247-9632 or 413 268-8407
Food Stamps - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	413 552-5400
For assistance call Fran @ Williamsburg COA	413 268-8407
Hilltown Food Pantry - Goshen Town Hall - Diane Meehan, Director	413 268-7578 Wed 1-3; 3 rd Wed 1-6
Meal Site Williamsburg Senior Center	413 268-8407
Meals on Wheels Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES)	413 586-2000 or 800 322-0551
Northampton Survival Center , 265 Prospect St. Northampton	413 586-6564
Salvation Army Emergency Food, Fuel or Medication Vouchers	413 586-5336/6564

Health Services:

Highland Valley Elder Services Intake referral for homecare, etc.	413 586-2000
Hilltown Community Health Center - Medical & Dental	413 238-5511, ext. 131
HOPE Nurse , Robin Laferriere, RN	413 238-5511, ext. 313
Janet Dimock , HealthWise Community Health Worker	413 238-5511, ext. 149
Podiatrist Dr. Michael Coby , call Williamsburg Senior Center to schedule (Alternating months at the Senior Center)	413 268-8407
Foot Care Oni, RN , foot care in Goshen, Call Liz Loven for appt.	413 268-7122
Oni, RN , foot care in Williamsburg or in-home visits	413 268-8407
Oni, RN , foot care in Plainfield or in-home visits	413-522-7219
Diane Roeder , foot care in Whamp & Chesterfield	413 374-0457
SHINE, Medicare & Drug Coverage Part D & Prescription Advantage	
Wayne Glaser	Call your COA for appointment
Richard Bauman (Westhampton)	413 527-5240
Lorraine York-Edberg	413 773-5555, ext 2275
Mass Health and New Health Coverage	
John Bergeron, HCHC-Huntington	413 667-2203
Buliah Mae Thomas at Hilltown Comm. Health Center	413 667-2203

Transportation Services

Cummington Neighbor to Neighbor Drivers	413 634-2262
Westhampton transportation appts or groc. shopping, Louise Jasionkowski	413 527-5134
Williamsburg Medical Rides Williamsburg Senior Center (to schedule)	413 268-8407
PVTA Dial-A-Ride (tickets sold at Williamsburg Senior Center)	866 277-7741
FRTA Van Fran Goebel	413 296-4232

Local Councils on Aging

Chesterfield COA , Janice Gibeau	413 296-4007
Cummington COA , Ann Parsons	413 634-2262
Goshen COA , Evelyn Culver	413 268-3316
Plainfield COA , Deborah Thibault	413 634-0275
Westhampton COA , Julia Lennen	413 537-9880
Williamsburg Senior Center , Marie Westburg	413 268-8407
Worthington COA , Sandra Epperly	413 238-5584



Regional News

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Senior SAFE

The holiday season is upon us. Here are a few things for you to consider to make for a safe season:

- Water your cut or live Christmas tree daily.
- Do not overload your extension cords.
- Keep burning candles at least 12 inches away from any combustible materials.
- Extinguish burning candles before leaving the room.
- Do not leave the kitchen when cooking things on the stove or microwave.

Have a very SAFE holiday season.

--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.*

Reiki is now being offered in the Worthington COA office on Monday and Friday mornings for a \$15 donation. By appointment only. To make an appointment, call Susan Ryan, Certified Reiki II and Hospice Reiki Practitioner at 413-588-1771 or email: sparrow3261.sr@gmail.com

Reiki (pronounced Ray-key) is a Japanese word meaning universal life energy. Reiki is a safe, gentle hands-on healing. It is not massage, hypnosis or a tool for diagnosing illness. Reiki is practiced in every country in the world and is being used in various settings, including hospitals, hospice and self-care.

Reiki is a technique that gently and powerfully promotes balance among the body's systems and the regenerative processes of the body and mind. It naturally activates life forces within us by using our own natural ability to take in positive energies that restore the body's natural ability to heal itself.

It is a safe and non-invasive form of hands-on healing. Reiki is used to relieve pain, strengthen immune system, rebalance the functioning of the organs, eliminate toxins from the body, calm the mind and emotions, aid in concentration, help in the grieving process and generally accelerate the body's own healing process. Reiki is not affiliated with any particular religion or religious practice.

Though Reiki techniques appear simple, the effects can feel profound. Most people experience deep relaxation. One may also feel tingling, pulsing, a feeling of warmth, or fall asleep. Recipients report an increased feeling of relaxation and a sense of well-being.

FREEZE!!

Ok, so what would You have me title this note after warning you last month that this would be about getting credit freezes placed on your credit reports, huh?

With a credit freeze in place with each of the credit bureaus, no one can access your account to do anything, fraudulent or otherwise. The exceptions to this are government agencies and collectors. You receive a pin that you can use to thaw your report if you need, say to apply for a car loan.

Go to Equifax.com, scroll to the fine white print at the bottom of the page, and under Credit Report Assistance find "Place a security freeze on reports". Click there and follow the directions which are pretty straightforward. There is NO FEE if you do this with Equifax by January 31, 2018. There will be a fee after that, or to remove a freeze. Either print the pdf page as instructed or write down your pin and keep it safe. Or both.

Go to Transunion.com, Credit Report Assistance at the top, click on "Credit Freeze" and proceed to register. You will need a password of your own for this step, or your account information if you already have one. I'd unclick the YES box when you see it.

Go to Experian.com, follow similar links as for Transunion. This one costs \$5.00.

Honesty report – I could not complete the Transunion freeze because I already have an account and we do not agree on my user name and password. The fee will also be \$5.00.

Chillingly,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD Committee Member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Heating Discounts & Fuel Assistance

December is upon us and bringing with it the need to start using our heating systems again. We pray for mild weather but grit our teeth anticipating the need to pay heating costs. Each of the major utility companies, Eversource, National Grid, Columbia Gas, among others, offer many different discounts to customers but you must ask! These discounts can be substantial, ranging from 22% to 30% of your bill. There are also financial hardship and winter shutoff protections between 11/15 and 3/15 and protection for seniors age 65 and over. Luckily, fuel assistance applications are now available through your COA. To see if you are eligible check the criteria below:



Program Description

Massachusetts Fuel Assistance provides eligible households with help in paying winter heating bills. The program pays fixed amounts based on household income. Additional support is also available to households having a high energy burden. Community Action in Greenfield serves both the Franklin and Hampshire County areas. If eligible, the agency sends heating bill payments directly to your primary heat source vendor (oil, propane, wood, pellet or coal dealer, or gas or electric utility). Fuel assistance is available for renters if heat is included in the rent and for those living in subsidized housing.

General Program Requirements

To qualify for the Fuel Assistance program, you must be a Massachusetts resident and need financial assistance for home energy costs. You also must have an annual household income (before taxes) that is below 60 percent of the State Median Income (this amount differs by household size and by year). For a household of 1, the income must be at or below \$34,001; for a household of 2 income must be at or below \$44,463. (Contact your COA for cutoffs for households of 3 or more). Note that assets are NOT considered.

What do I need to do?

To apply for Fuel Assistance, you need to provide a variety of information. This short list provides a general idea of the kinds of information you are asked to provide: proof of citizenship, identity of head of household, rent agreement or real estate ownership, income. You also must identify your fuel company, submit an electric bill, and show addition or loss of a household member. Contact the Energy Assistance Program at Community Action today for an application or specific instructions about supporting materials needed: **(413) 774-2310**. Or, contact your COA.

Exemptions on Property Tax

An exemption relieves a taxpayer from the legal obligation to pay the full amount of their local property tax. In most cases, a homeowner does not repay an exemption. Exemption programs typically provide between \$500 and \$1,000 per year in property tax relief to the adult who meets the town's specific income and asset requirements

Who is eligible for an exemption and the amount of the relief depends upon the local options enacted within each city and town. State law gives cities and towns a "local option" to decide which local tax relief programs it will offer its residents and to set local guidelines for who will qualify. For the exact eligibility requirements of your town, especially due dates for applying, check with the Tax Assessor in your city or town.

To get an exemption, the homeowner must file an application each year with the town Assessor where the property is located. **Generally, applications for exemptions are due on December 15th each year or 3 months after the actual tax bills are mailed, whichever is later.** Check with the local Assessor to know the actual filing deadline. Filing on time is required. By law, the Assessors may not waive this filing deadline, nor act on a late application, for any reason. Also, filing an application does not entitle the homeowner to delay paying their tax payment.

Each town decides what the maximum income level can be in order to be eligible – it can range widely. Ask your local Assessor for the actual income levels used for their exemptions. You must provide the Assessor with whatever information is reasonably required to verify your eligibility. This information may include, but is not limited to: Birth certificates, evidence of ownership and occupancy, income tax returns, bank and other asset account statements.

This just a quick summary of property tax exemptions. To find out about the specific eligibility and application requirements in your town, you must contact your local Board of Assessors. Under state law, only your Board of Assessors, as the local tax administrator, can decide whether you qualify for an exemption. If you disagree with its decision, you may appeal.



On the Go!

The COAs in the hilltowns and in the valley offer many opportunities to get out of the house and do something fun with other people.



Finding trips that work for you is our goal!

Consequently, the Northern Hilltowns Councils on Aging Consortium will be providing monthly lists of trips, including information about each trip and contact points for reserving a spot. If you know of an interesting group event, let us know: regionalcoanews@gmail.com.

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.**

April 26- Thursday: Sister Act, a musical comedy, will be performed at Westchester Theater in Elmsford, NY. A full luncheon is included. Cost is \$125. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by March 15.

May 8- Tuesday: Maggiano's Cooking Demo & Lunch, and JFK Library Centennial Celebration. Learn tricks of the trade and enjoy a three course family-style luncheon. Then visit the JFK Library for its 100th celebration exhibit. Cost is \$114. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by March 27.

May 25-June 4: Mt. Rushmore and the Black Hills of South Dakota, 11 days, via bus, \$950 with double occupancy. Roommates available. Fourteen attractions and sites galore. Pay in installments or pay in full by Feb. 1 and receive a \$25 discount. \$100 Deposit. Trip insurance available.

June 21-Thursday: The Gilded Age of the Berkshires. Tour Ventfort Hall and The Mount. Buffet lunch on terrace at The Mount. Cost is \$112. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by May 7.

June 26-28: Three Day Tour to Lancaster, PA. Two shows, Jesus at Sight & Sound and The Wizard of Oz at Dutch Apple Dinner Theater and more. \$434 with double occupancy. Pay in installments or pay in full by April 5th and receive a \$25 discount. \$50 Deposit. Trip insurance available.

July 10- Tuesday: Tour of Mark Twain Home and Wickham Gardens. Lunch at Promenade Shops on your own. Cost is \$74. There is a \$10

discount if paid in full by June 1.

July 18 – Wednesday: Hartford Yard Goats baseball game, a double A affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. Field box seats and bus transportation included. Cost is \$37.00. **Sign-up required by December 15, 2017.**

Sept. 7-11: Washington D.C., 5 days, via bus, \$540 with double occupancy. Full day at the Smithsonian. Pay in installments or pay in full by June 1 and receive a \$25 discount. \$100 Deposit. Trip insurance available.

Coming to the Bushnell in Hartford, CT: **HAMILTON**--date to be determined. (Probably late 2018 or early 2019)

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.

Fall Proof Tip of the Month

Exercise is one of the most important things you can do to prevent falls! Study after study finds that exercise (especially in combination with home safety modifications and eye exams) will help you prevent falls.

What kind of exercise? Balance, strength, and walking are all helpful. There are many ways to approach this. You can join an exercise group, like Healthy Bones and Balance, Tai Chi, Yoga, or dance. You can do your own strength training by using resistive bands or homemade weights. You should emphasize the muscles that keep you upright. Please check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program.



Here are a some examples of exercises you can do: **Heel raises:** Stand up straight behind a chair, holding the back with both hands. Position your feet hip-width apart. Lift up on your toes. Hold. Lower your heels to the floor. Repeat 10 times. **Single leg balancing:** Stand facing the wall and hold the wall with both hands. Raise one foot off the ground for 10 counts. Repeat with the other foot. Progress by: holding the wall with finger tips, one hand, no hands. Repeat 5-10 times on each side.

John Yount is a Physical Therapist and Falls Prevention Coordinator for Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice. John is also a geriatric physical therapist and member of the Massachusetts Statewide Coalition on Falls Prevention. You can contact John at: jyount@Cooleydickinson.org

Westhampton Council on Aging
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PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
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This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

**Highland Valley Elder Services, Inc. participates in
Subaru's "Share the Love" promotion
this Holiday Season**

Highland Valley Elder Services, Inc. is proud to announce an event this holiday season to help put an end to senior hunger. This local effort is part of the Meals On Wheels America's participation in the national Subaru of America, Inc.'s 10th "Share the Love" event, designed as a way for Subaru dealers to give back to their local communities.

This year Subaru's "Share the Love" event runs from November 16, 2017 to January 2, 2018. **For every new Subaru sold or leased during "Share the Love", Subaru will donate \$250 to the customer's choice of charity, including Meals On Wheels America.** Meals on Wheels America distributes the funds to local Meals on Wheels providers within the same state as the dealership where the customer bought the car, keeping the money local. Over the past eight years, proceeds from the Subaru "Share the Love" event have provided much needed funds for Highland Valley Elder Services' Meals On Wheels program which delivers around 500 meals to elders in 24 Hampshire and Hampden county towns every day.

Highland Valley serves older adults and their families through collaboration, education, advocacy and a range of programs designed to support them where they live. **For more info, please go to highlandvalley.org or call 413-586-2000.**

**Get Credits for Making Connections:
the Community Credits program is
Looking for Volunteers**

Could you do errands, yard work, driving, computer troubleshooting, window washing, housecleaning or other activities for a senior in your community? If you or someone you know can volunteer, please call Lorrie Childs, Community Credits program coordinator, at 413 296-4742 or childsl@verizon.net



It Takes a Village is looking for dedicated volunteers to visit families with newborns here in the Hilltowns. Volunteers help with tasks like dishes, laundry, or just holding the baby so mom can take a shower or a nap. Help new Hilltown families feel supported. Email info@hilltownvillage.org, call (413) 650-3640, or visit www.hilltownvillage.org for more information.