

WORTHINGTON

COUNCIL ON AGING

February

newsletter

Council on Aging is to identify needs of those in our community age 60 and over and endeavor to develop programs, services and activities to meet those needs. The COA also has a commitment to educate the community at large to the needs of an aging population.

KNITTING GROUP - Tuesdays 3-5 - COA Office Questions call Helen Pelletier 238-4418

COFFEE AND CARING - 1st Thursday of each month – 10:30 - COA Office - Questions call Sandy Epperly - 238-5584

MEALS ON WHEELS - HIGHLAND VALLEY ELDER SERVICES - Donation requested 800-322-0551 OR 413-586-2000

***ELDER ABUSE** - 800-922-2275 OR 413-586-2000 (ELDER ABUSE refers to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult 60 OR OVER)

RSVP Healthy Bones and Balance- Maples I Common Room Monday & Friday 10:30-11:30

TOWN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, Peggy O'Neal Mon, Weds, Thurs 8-4, Tues 8-4 and 5-9

COA Board – Chair, Camille Smith ~ Co-chair, Laurie McAnulty~Secretary, Helen Pelletier, Larry Mason, Pat Kennedy, Barb Pease, Helyn Myrick

Worthington COA Coordinator - Sandy Epperly
413-238-5584 - Office 238-5532 - coa@worthington-ma.us

FOOT NURSE -

Kip Moeller - Last Wednesday- Goshen Town Hall
Appt. necessary - \$30 fee Call Liz 413-268-7122

Diane Roeder - Wednesdays - Chesterfield Community Center
Appt. necessary - \$30 fee -413-374-0457
toesandsolesrn@gmail.com

SHINE COUNSELOR -

Lorraine York-Edberg lyork@edberg@fchcc.org
413-773-5555 ext 2275

HILLTOWN VAN - CALL 413-268-7582 NIGHT BEFORE
- Small fee ~ **must have completed "Demand Response Application" from FRTA.**

CHAIR YOGA - Chesterfield Community Center –Tuesdays
10AM \$3.00 Donation requested

HILLTOWN SOCIAL SERVICES - 413-667-2203.

GOSHEN FOOD PANTRY – Wednesday 1-3 open for
Worthington (3rd Wednesday 1-6) 413-268-7578.

VETERAN'S AGENT - TOM GERYK -

Town Hall – 2nd and 4th Monday 9-11am – **NOTE CHANGE OF PLACE, DATES/ AND TIME!** 1-877-821-0128 tgeryk@northamptonma.gov

IF YOU WOULD LIKE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL, PLEASE SEND YOUR REQUEST TO coa@worthington-ma.us WITH "NEWSLETTER" IN THE SUBJECT LINE. PLEASE NOTE YOUR PHYSICAL ADDRESS FOR RECORD KEEPING.

This newsletter is partially funded by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs through funding under the Federal Older American Acts, the Town of Worthington, the Rolland Fund and private donations.

Worthington council on aging potluck luncheon

MONDAY, February 8, 2016

RH Conwell School Cafeteria

11:30 Blood Pressures

12:00 – Potluck Luncheon

12:30 – Entertainment

Worthington resident, Mary Wheelan

Mary Wheelan, a singer/songwriter, is the producer and host of a TV show called *The Song*. The series has so far been about 130 episodes featuring songwriters from Massachusetts, other states and even other countries. Mary is also a retired senior center director. While she was running the South County Senior Center in South Deerfield she started doing a TV show called *From the Center* through Frontier Community Access Television. That led to her producing *The Song* when the station manager was looking for ideas for more programs. Mary will sing some songs and read some poetry following the potluck luncheon. When she was director at the South County Senior Center a popular activity was the Song/Poem/Story Circles that Mary facilitated once a month. If there is enough interest in something like that here in Worthington where Mary lives she would like to volunteer her time to do a Song/Poem/Story Circle here in town. ~ speak with a board member, Coordinator Sandy Epperly or Mary!

The children will end our program in song – this will be the 100th day of school – they will present their song in celebration.....

Outreach Report by Peg Whalen

A recently funded Community Connections Program (CCP) is taking shape in the hilltowns over the next two years. We have recently hired Susan Bronstein, a retired Westhampton resident with an interest in giving back and staying involved. Susan brings a rich background and skill set to help our seven hill-towns to develop their own customized versions of Community Connections to meet town seniors' specific needs, with a focus on reducing physical and social isolation. Susan and I will talk more in future newsletters about our efforts to address these and other issues affecting older adults and our aging population.

Other outreach activities included a Cumington Community Discussion throughout January. The discussion group included over 15 regular participants every week. The book is easy to read with many stories and thought provoking with specific questions to consider. Being Mortal is not about dying but rather how we want to live from today until the age we live to. Watch for information about the next town scheduled for a community discussion of Being Mortal. Announcements will be from your COA, and in newsletters, area newspapers, and other town newsletters.

Outreach to each town COA board is our focus in the coming weeks. I will continue joining board members at their regular meetings. Remember, COA meetings are open, public meetings. If you have a chance to attend a COA meeting in your town I urge you to join the board. It is enlightening to hear what the COA is working on, learn about all the board does that may be unknown to many, and have a chance to ask questions or offer suggestions. If you have questions or comments I am very interested in talking with you. I can be reached by phone at 413-404-4566 and email at pwhalen@hchcweb.org.

By Request from Peg Whalen

Many hill town residents are unaware of what a town Council on Aging does. In this month's article I explain, briefly, a little about the Council on Aging (COA), the Coordinator or Senior Center Director position, the ways in which COAs are funded. Each town has a Council on Aging supported by funding from the State of Massachusetts, and may have additional funds from the town. Your COA's function is to develop priorities, serve as advocates and offer opportunities to access programs, services and activities for town residents age 60 + and their care-givers. COA provide a range of ... programs from information and referral, outreach, transportation, meals ... to health screening, health insurance information benefits counseling, fitness, recreation, computer access, education/life-long learning. The COA also sponsors activities and events to provide seniors with opportunities to give back, socialize, alleviate isolation or lessen loneliness.

In the northern hilltowns COA staff only work on a part-time basis. Some COA coordinators are paid for as few as 10 hours a month. It is important to be aware that much of your COA coordinator's efforts go uncompensated. The levels and complexity of senior needs often result in hours worked beyond the official paid time. Coordinators and directors also meet regularly with COA boards, and organize events and activities like luncheons and hikes. This gap between time worked and paid time is particularly a problem for our smaller towns.

State support for COAs is based on \$9 per resident age 60+ using the 2010 town's senior count from 2010 Census. [With Baby Boomers now reaching their 60's the number of new seniors is increasing rapidly above the 2010 figures.] The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs provides a minimum of \$4,500/yr to towns with less than 500 seniors. Across our towns, seniors number between 200 in smaller towns to over 650 in a larger hill town. Many, but not all, northern hill town COAs also receives town funds. However, town support for the COA varies widely. In one community there are no town funds to support the COA; in others the COA receives enough support to operate Senior Centers. Each COA determines its own priorities based on unique local circumstances, resources and interests.

I urge you to inquire about how your town financially supports your COA. Quality of seniors' lives in your town can only benefit from your inquiry about adequate support for the town's own COA.

* Italicized sentences retrieved from <http://www.mass.gov/elders/service-orgs-advocates/coa/overview-of-councils-on-aging.htm>

Prescription Drug Costs too High?

Look into the **Extra Help** program from the Social Security Administration! You may be eligible to apply for **Extra Help** in meeting prescription drug costs... and you can be a homeowner and still *potentially* qualify for this program.

Benefits for 2016 include drug co-pays as low as \$2.95 for generics and \$7.40 for brand name drugs. An **Extra Help** application can be completed anytime during the year. If you want assistance or want to apply, contact the SHINE representative.

Extra Help	Monthly Income Limit	Asset Limit
Individual	\$1,491/month	\$13,640
Couple	\$2,011	\$27,250

Social Security contact information: **1-800-772-1213** or apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp.

At the January potluck we had a surprise birthday party in honor of the 98th birthday of Golden Cane Holder, Barbara Dunlevy. Selectman Evan Johnson presented Barbara with an official citation from the House of Representatives signed by State Representative Steve Kulik, along with his letter of regret that he was unable to attend. Thanks to all who joined us for this occasion! And, of course, the children from R.H. Conwell sang a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday for Barbara – what a joyous sound from the mouths of 51 children. Thanks to Ed Pelletier for the wonderful photos!





“Dear Barbara,

I regret that I am unable to attend today’s Council on Aging luncheon to join in the community’s celebration of your 98th birthday. However, I am pleased to forward this official citation from the House of Representatives honoring you on this occasion, and also for being the holder of Worthington’s Gold Cane, signifying that you are the town’s most senior resident.

You are an inspiration to everyone with your varied interests and activities, and I think we all hope that we can follow in your footsteps and live a long and interesting life in the home and community that we love. I join with your family, friends and the entire Worthington community in wishing you both a Happy Birthday, and a Happy New Year.

With Warmest Regards

*STEPHEN KULIK
State Representative”*

Hilltown Elder Network (HEN)

This program provides eligible seniors with up to two hours of housework/shopping/etc. per week. HEN is run by the Hilltown Community Development Corp (HCDC). If you could use a little help around the house call Helen Pelletier at 238-4418 – you must meet income guidelines to qualify for these services.



As you may know, Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) in Massachusetts have a Family Caregiver Support Specialist to provide support to family caregivers caring for older adults -- or adults of any age living with Alzheimer's -- and grandparents (55+) caring for grandchildren. The Family Caregiver Support Specialist focuses on caregiver needs through one-on-one counseling, in-home assessments and referrals to in-home and other respite services. Contact Highland Valley Elder Services.

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY FROM YOUR COA BOARD –
Camille Smith – Chair; Laurie McAnulty – Co-Chair; Helen
Pelletier – Secretary; Barb Pease, Pat Kennedy, Larry Mason,
Helyn Myrick and Coordinator Sandy Epperly**

