

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING

Fiscal Year 2014

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES: Juana Trujillo and Joan Golowich each completed two three-year terms on the Council on Aging. New members appointed were John Magarian and Tim Atteridge. Susan Dierks became Secretary. Joel Gordon and Jack Wollensak were reappointed for their second three-year terms.

FY 14 HIGHLIGHTS

- Nutrition Site Leadership Change. Kathleen Nelson was hired as the new director of the Amherst Lunch Site in August 2013 after the previous director, Sandra Beighley, left in early July. During the summer interim period, staff members Helen MacMellon and Maura Plante as well as previous lunch site director, Evie Ross, volunteered management time and then assisted with Kathy's training.
- A New Logo Design was created by Andrea Terry (Professor of Art at Connecticut College) for the COA letterhead, *Senior Spirit* masthead and business cards.
- Social Worker Helen MacMellon will be supported by the Friends for her increased hours, thus enabling the Town to support her with the benefit package. As the Town picks up more of Karen's salary, Formula Grant money will then be freed up to be used increasingly to fund Helen.
- MCOA Annual Conference was held in Sturbridge October 2-4. Attendees were John Magarian, Jack Wollensak, Sue Dierks, and Helen MacMellon. Reports were given at subsequent COA meetings.
- Eveline Sears Senior Activist Awards were presented to Rosemary Koffler and Bob Johnson with much appreciation for their many years of faithful service given to the Senior Center.
- Lounge and Furniture Upgrades were made with the acquisition of two new love seats and seven easy chairs in burgundy and red. As well, 30 stacking chairs were purchased for the Pole room, a metal cabinet for fitness equipment, and a new desk was bought for the lunch site director. The height of the reception desk was lowered to be more welcoming for people in wheelchairs. The Friends paid for these upgrades.
- New Senior Aide, Christine Stewart, will work 20 hours per week assisting Maura Plante in administrative tasks, data entry and helping with Meals on Wheels.
- The Long Range Planning Committee has visited 15 area Senior Centers and talked with a number of site directors and MCOA Executive director David Stevens as well as the Survival Center Director as part of their research on plans for a new Senior Center for Amherst. They have determined the size of a potential center in Amherst, including the number of parking spaces, site size, and location. They have also studied alternative courses available for increasing senior center space and studied steps taken by other towns, which led to the financing and building of their senior center buildings.
- Hilltown Community Health Center Satellite. A special meeting was held with the COA, Town Manager, Health Department and a representative from Cooley Dickinson Hospital to discuss their plans for a possible installation of a health center in the Bangs Center. The COA expressed their concerns for the effects of this addition to the Bangs Center on the activities of the Senior Center and the additional exposure to health risks to seniors. Another information session was held with Janet Bunce, a member of SHAG whose goal is to represent the interest and needs of seniors.
- HVES New Director Jera Jamison was appointed. Discussions are underway for solutions to reduce the financial shortfall in the nutrition program.
- Parking Sticker Sales continue to be a success and much welcomed by seniors who frequent the senior center.

- Transportation for Seniors was discussed at meetings with the PVRTA who are adding additional services that should help seniors. The possibility of providing a Senior Surrey transportation program using our 7-passenger van is being investigated.
- Ron Bohonowicz, Director of Facilities for the Town and the Schools, regarding the Bangs Center for FY 15, presented a Bangs Center Renovation and Repair update. Six bathrooms need to be upgraded, with new fixtures compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, partitions, and flooring. As well, he is looking at possible new flooring in some rooms and new carpets in the upstairs hall and in the senior area.
- A New Medical Ride “Fee-for Service” Policy was instituted as the demand for “Wellness Rides” was so huge that it completely used the small HVES seed grant given for that purpose.
- A \$2,000 Grant Award from the Amherst Club “Love Notes” fundraiser was given to the Senior Center. This grant helps support the weekly clinics at Ann Whalen and the Clark House for our nurse Lisa White.
- The Friends continued to raise funds for programs at the Senior Center through the Annual “Follies: variety show, Bertucci’s dinner fundraiser, bakes sales on voting days, and the Census solicitation.
- Select Board Candidates were invited to an afternoon forum in March to present their platforms to the public and to become better acquainted with the Senior Center and elder concerns.

FY 15 FUTURE PLANS

- The Senior Center will continue to pursue the possibility of a new stand-alone Senior Center building that would better accommodate the growing senior population for their social, physical, and psychological well-being. As well, the COA will explore intermediate ideas for better use of the space in the Bangs Center, especially as other agencies are shifted into other spaces in the Town.
- The COA remains committed to maintaining home delivery of meals to elders in need, despite the continual financial constraints.
- The COA will continue to work with and support the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center in their fundraising events, especially the Annual Amherst Follies.
- The COA will continue to work toward incorporating an Adult Social Day Care Program into any new space we might acquire at the Senior Center.
- The COA is committed to an ongoing collaborative relationship with the Select Board and other Town agencies as we seek to provide updated stimulating activities and aid for the seniors of our Town.

AMHERST SENIOR CENTER

PRINCIPAL GOAL: To run a multi-purpose Senior Center that serves as the community focal point for the provision of services to the elderly. The Senior Center works to initiate, facilitate, coordinate, and/or provide those services which in the broadest sense enhance dignity, support independence, maintain health, and promote the involvement of Amherst’s elderly in the general community.

THE SENIOR CENTER: A VITAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Whether it’s simply reading our 16-page bi-monthly newsletter, THE SENIOR SPIRIT, or coming in daily for the hot lunch program, Amherst’s older residents have come to rely on the Senior Center. Here are examples of some of our program and service offerings in FY 14:

CLINICS AND SPECIAL HEALTH - RELATED SERVICES: Weekly foot care and ear irrigation clinics with RN Sharon Beaulieu, bi-monthly ear irrigation clinics with Dr. Daniel Clapp, weekly massage clinics, weekly blood pressure clinics, flu immunization clinic with Health Department, hearing aid repair, free consultations two

days a week with Lisa White R.N., BSN, psychological counseling, monthly “Tooth Fairy” teeth cleaning clinics with Marcie Foreman, Acupuncture for Relaxation Clinics, Physical Therapy Consultations, Free Convalescent Equipment Loan Closet, Medical Rides, Free Bone Density Screening Clinic.

FITNESS PROGRAMS/CLASSES: Gentle Fitness, Tai Chi, Folkdance, Line dancing, Ballroom dancing, Osteoporosis Progressive Resistance Training Exercise, Function Well, Senior Yoga, Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, Level One Yoga Mat Classes, Zumba classes, Raja Yoga .

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES, EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS

HEALTH SEMINARS: “What’s New in Memory Disorders and Treatment” with Dr. Mitchell Clionsky, Total Joint Replacements with Dr. Daniel McBride., Lyme and Other Tickborne Illness—Be “Tick Smart”, Asthma—Your Questions Answered with Dr. Thomas Plaut, Being Active and Keeping Steady on Your Feet with Dr. Patricia Young, Positive Attitude in Recovery From Epilepsy and Stroke”, Improving Sleep Quality As We Age Series; Healing Through the Holidays Seminar, Do You Know Your “Five Wishes” Seminar, Essential Nutrient Requirements of Mature Adults: Introduction and Macronutrient Requirements, Brief Behavioral Treatment for Chronic Insomnia in Older Adults with Dr. Wendy Chabot, Preventing Falls Among Older Adults—Series offered by the VNA & Cooley Dickinson Hospital, The Changing Landscape of Health Care: Accountable Care Organizations and Care Management, Learn How To Live Pain Free, Medication Reconciliation, How to Treat Asthma, “How I Beat Type II Diabetes and High Cholesterol” by Susan Hanaburgh, **CAREGIVERS SPEAKERS BUREAU:**

Alzheimer’s Disease Seminar, Caregiver Stress Seminar, Legal Issues for Caregivers Seminar, Respite Services for Caregivers Seminar, Home Visit Therapy. **FINANCIAL and LEGAL PROGRAMS:** Credit Report Assistance; Howard Singer’s monthly “Money Talk”; Edward Jones’ Financial Seminars, Monthly Legal Clinics with Attorney Ed Smith; AARP Foundation Finances 50+ Series. **WRITING, MUSIC and**

LITERATURE COURSES: weekly Memoir Writing workshops, “Fearlessly Confronting the Blank Page” with Alice Shane, “Writing in Post-Retirement: Taking a Risk”, Shakespeare’s The Comedy of Errors, Shakespeare’s Henry VIII, Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare’s Richard II, “The Classical Song Cycle from Schubert to Modern Times”, Hector Berlioz: The Artist as Hero, Shakespeare’s A Summer Night’s Dream, Gustav Mahler’s “Enigmatic Middle Symphonies & the Vienna Years” , The Surprising Benefits of Listening to Music for Better Health and Longer Life. **ART**

and CRAFTS CLASSES: Valentine Paper Flower Workshop, How to Show Value With Pencil and Pen and Ink Classes, Beginning Still Life Classes, Landscape and Cityscape Drawing Classes, Introduction or Review of Basic Drawing Skills Series, Drawing People Classes, Drawing Animals Classes, Introduction to Colored Pencil, Drawing Fabric, Basic Color Theory, Drawing Trees, Drawing Rocks and Water, Drawing Landscapes or Seascapes, Basic One Point and Two Point Perspective, Drawing Cityscapes, Combination Still Life, Introduction to Oil Pastels, How to Make Shadow Boxes, Basic Watercolor Painting Classes, Woodcarving Classes, ”The Pleasures of Art” Seminar, “Art Through the Ages” Seminar, Three Centuries of French Landscape Seminar, The Magic of Paper Marbling, “The Joy of Japanese Prints”. **COSMOLOGY CLASSES:** The Multiverse, The Basis of Theoretical Physics, Black Holes, Dark Energy & The Accelerating Universe classes; The Universe is Disappearing, Uncertainty as Quantum Uncertainty, Beyond the Big Bang. **OTHER CLASSES and SEMINARS:** AARP “You’ve Earned a Say” Community Conversation; Amherst Fire Department

Safety Seminars on Falls Prevention, Kitchen Safety, Fire Prevention and 911; Weekly New Options Discussions; Telling Your Life Story discussions; Conversational Spanish Classes; Technology Classes--Facebook Basics, How to Install Skype, and Help With Your Cell Phone; and hundreds of one-on-one computer tutoring lessons.

SOCIAL RECREATION: MUSIC PROGRAMS: Bill Shontz Concert; Concert with Laurie Festa; Valley Light Opera “The Petit Pinafore”; Concert with “Rockin’ Robin” Dave Mindell; Mixed Country Show with Donna Lee; Concert by Tim Van Egmond; Davis Bates’ Songs and Stories; Steve Henderson “Mabel and Jerry” One –Act Play; Concert with Lisa Woods, Teri LaFleur & Jerry Noble; Concert with Dawn Kelley & Dick Miller; Tim Van Egmond in Concert; weekly Name That Tune singing and dancing session, lunchtime weekly piano entertainment by Gerry Weinstock. **GAMES:** bridge, scrabble, billiards, chess, Chinese Mahjongg, weekly cribbage classes/games, Mexican Train Dominos, ping pong. **TRIPS:** Isles of Shoals Cruise & Lobster Luncheon, Mystic Seaport, Day in Hampton Beach, Day in Rockport, Eastern States Exposition, L.L. Bean in Freeport, Maine, Quadrangle of Museums in Springfield, Bright Nights & Dinner at the Salem Cross Inn, Cinemark Movie & Dinner at Goten, New England Spring Garden & Flower Show, Canadian Rockies by Train 9-day trip, Shades of Ireland 10-day trip, Salem Cross Inn Fireplace Feast, Kennedy Library, Boston Symphony Orchestra Concert, Multiband Pops at UMass. **SPECIAL EVENTS:** Iraqi Student Fundraiser; Annual Volunteer Awards Tea; Thanksgiving Dinner; Annual Holiday Party; Amherst College “Ageless” Singing Suppers, Fifth Annual Spring Follies, Ice Cream Social, Public Safety Picnic at Hadley Young Men’s Club.

SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS: HVES (Highland Valley Elder Services) Title III Congregate hot lunch program, Meals on Wheels evening hot supper through the University of Massachusetts, HVES Title III Home Delivered hot lunch, AARP Tax Assistance, leaf raking and help with snow/ice removal, personal care/homemaking referral, friendly visitor program, social worker counseling/I+R, Brown Bag monthly groceries through Western Mass. Food Bank, Food Box monthly groceries through Amherst Survival Center, free weekly bread/produce giveaway, fuel assistance, emergency food pantry, volunteer driving to doctor’s appointments, SHINE health insurance counseling, Convalescent Loan Closet, Tax Work-Off Plan intake, & placement, subsidized van ticket sales, wellness grants, farmers’ market coupon distribution, medical rides, free medical equipment loan closet, and partnership with the SALT Council to provide services such as house numbering, RUOK, File of Life, Drug Take Back Day, SAFE Elder project), Salvation Army Office Hours for Emergency Assistance, H.E.L.P. (Hampshire Elder Law Program) Assistance, Prescription Pick-Up and Delivery, PVTa ID cards photos, private pay home help, parking sticker program, home safety assessments, Free Breakfast Pilot Program, Free Bi-Monthly Newsletter.

PARTICIPATION IN FREE/LOW COST FOOD PROGRAMS

Name of Program	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Congregate Hot Lunch	5,966 (17% increase)	5,804 (2.8% decrease caused by 7 snow days i.e. 150 meals otherwise the program had no measurable change)	5,285 (8% decrease. This year we lost a number of daily diners. Seven went into nursing homes or moved and one who died.)	5,669 (6% increase as more people seek to cut their grocery bills)	5,798 (2% increase as more people seek to cut their grocery bills)
Meals on Wheels (UMass food delivered mid-afternoon)	4,622 (7% increase) impressive, considering 3 snow days.	4,867 (5.3% increase-- if there had been no snow days the count would have been 5009 meals or a 8.4% increase)	6,074 (19% increase) (More community awareness with discharge planners)	6,068 No change	6,435 (Several people have had to switch from the HVES home delivered meals which are no longer available to them)
Home delivered meals (HVES food delivered at 11 AM)	15,182 (5.5% decrease) due to the weather and grantor's fiscal constraints	13,924 (8.3% decrease) partially due to 4 days of weather issues = 245 meals. (Otherwise 6.7 % decrease)	10,805 (22% decrease) meals for 30 people were suspended or terminated by HVES for various reasons.)	10,231 (9% decrease because many people are no longer eligible for this grant-funded program managed by HVES)	8,327 (8% decrease because many people are no longer eligible for this grant-funded program managed by HVES)
Brown Bag (Western Mass Food Bank)	1,054 (4% increase)	979 (7.2% decrease)	820 (16% decrease b/c the Western Mass Food Bank is following the income guidelines more closely as food resources are more limited.)	862 Food costs have increased and this program provides more food security.	927 Food costs have increased and this program provides more food security.
Senior Mobile Pantry (Survival Center food)	468 (13.9% decrease)	429 (8.4 % decrease)	421 (More seniors are opting to go to the Survival Center where they can be more selective about their food choices.)	468 Food costs have increased and this program provides more food security.	788 Food costs have increased and this program provides more food security.
Free Bread & Produce Giveaway	2129 (9% decrease BUT #s would have increased if we didn't have to cancel six times.)	2,262 (6.3% increase) The program would have seen a 15.7% increase if we didn't have to cancel 4 weeks due to snow and elections	2,007 (11% decrease probably because there is less food to go around. Merchants are trying not to overstock and overbake.)	2,403 Food costs have increased and this program provides more food security.	2,891 Food costs have increased and this program provides more food security.
Grocery Pantry Emergency Food Give-away	42 (6.7% decrease)	37 (12% decrease because more people are participating in the weekly free bread and produce program.)	29 (21% decrease in visits b/c more people are going to the Survival Center where there is a larger emergency pantry.)	38 Many seniors live on limited incomes and are having a hard time making their money last through the month.	30 This decrease is due to increases in other free food programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS (THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

COPING WITH INCREASING SOCIAL WORK DEMANDS. The quantity and complexity of new and chronic cases continues to be difficult to manage with one full time and one part-time social worker on staff. The Council on Aging, ever sensitive to the changing demands at the Senior Center, voted to work immediately to increase the PT social worker's hours from 15 to 19 per week and to get her reclassified in FY 14 using Friends' funds. A subcommittee of the Council on Aging met with the Town Manager to approve these immediate changes and to urge him to support raising her hours to 30 per week with benefits in FY 15. The Town Manager was receptive and the Council on Aging subcommittee understood that the upgrade and finding monies for eventual full-time employment is a process and can't be managed all at once given the Town's fiscal constraints. The agreement worked out was to increase the hours to 30/week in FY 15 and add benefits. Initially the Friends, together with a larger portion of the EOEAF Formula Grant, will share the cost of the salary increase and the Town will pay the benefits. Each of the next two subsequent years the Town will increase its share of the Senior Center personnel costs and reduce the need for Friends' funding in this area.

AMHERST LUNCH SITE UPDATE. A new lunch site director was hired at the beginning of August 2013 after an extensive double round of very expensive advertising when the former director left the Senior Center at the beginning of July. Other Senior Center staff completely covered the site work for over a month and then assisted with the training in August and September. The funding formula of \$1.19 per home delivered meal to cover any overhead is highly inadequate given the greatly reduced numbers of elders who are approved for a delivery. A number of steps were taken to end the Town fiscal year in this grant account in the black. Highland Valley agreed to add funds to cover half of the shortfall and UMass Meals on Wheels funds were also used. To reduce overhead costs going forward, the site director's hours were reduced starting on June 23rd from 3.5 a day to 3 a day.

LOUNGE REDECORATION, NEW CHAIRS AND LUNCH WORK STATION UPGRADES.

This year the Council on Aging and Friends focused on three major upgrades at our senior center. The first was to purchase new more comfortable stacking chairs for our primary classrooms and conference room. Two different styles were selected by the participants based on ergonomic requirements for different fitness classes and meetings. Second, new upholstered chairs and love seats were selected to create flexible conversation groupings within the lounge to replace the very old huge couches which were the only option for seating. The third upgrade was the purchase of a work station for our lunch site director to replace the folding tables she had been using.

LOGO. A new logo was designed by volunteer Andrea Terry, Professor of Art at Connecticut College, to be used on the Senior Center newsletter masthead, letterhead and business cards. The design depicts a tree with the triple Senior Center focus of EDUCATION, RECREATION and SUPPORT. The new modern look is much more professional, fresh and modern.

SENIOR HEALTH SERVICES. The Senior Center offers a no-cost nursing clinic two days a week @ four hours a day as part of our Senior Health Services Program. Funds for this have been provided by a very generous community donation of \$10,000 each year since 2000. In FY 11 morning walk in clinics were added in two apartment buildings adjacent to the Senior Center at a cost of approximately \$6,000. Funding for the clinics has been provided primarily by the Friends of the ASC. This year a grant of \$2,000 from The Amherst Club was awarded to the Senior Center to help pay for the outreach clinics. Letters have been sent to management of each apartment building recently asking for their financial support in an attempt to lighten the personnel funding needs asked of the Friends.

MCOA ANNUAL CONFERENCE. Three Council on Aging members and one staff member attended the Annual MCOA Conference in Sturbridge this year. One outgrowth was a change to our Mission Statement, but most importantly was the greater understanding of the huge variety of funding, programs and facilities that senior centers are working with. Of particular interest were the sessions relating to building a new senior center which has been a major focus of the Council of Aging research for three years.

LONG RANGE PLANNING. The committee had sessions with: 1) John Catlin, an architect who has designed many new senior centers in Massachusetts, 2) Tina Gorman who is director of the Westfield Council on Aging and 3) David Stevens who is Director of the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging. We had earlier determined the building and site size required for a new Amherst senior center and its general configuration. This study was reported to the Select Board and Town Manager. The meetings mentioned above had the

The meetings mentioned above had the objective of learning about the next steps in the building process – fund-raising, building committee selection, project manager selection and promoting the project with the Town government and the Town’s people. At Mr. Stevens’ suggestion, we held an open forum with the Select Board candidates to acquaint them with senior citizen issues. We also made the above new senior center report available to Town Meeting members.

In FY 14 approximately 16,101 hours of volunteer time was given by 253 volunteers in the following categories:

# of Hours Given	# of Volunteers
20 hours/week or more	2
5 hrs/wk up to 19.5 hrs/wk	12
1-5 hrs/wk	64
10hrs/yr to 50hrs/yr	102
Less than 10 hrs/yr	94

In-kind donations represent tangible goods or services generally considered essential for the Senior Center’s operations, but not paid for out of its budget. See the table looking at some FY 13 in-kind donations (this list is not exhaustive.) The estimated in-kind total for FY 14 is \$599,008.

In-Kind Donation	Estimated Value
Rent/Space (gross square feet=13,505)	\$152,250
Gas donated by meals deliverers, staff	\$3,619
Utilities	\$23,000
Van, Gas & Service	\$645
Custodial/Maintenance	\$28,762
Plowing/Outside Maintenance	\$16,607
Durable Medical Equipment	\$23,396
Computers/phones/printers/tech. support	\$41,600
Donated Goods	\$23,395
Program Supplies	\$9,314
Recognition Event	\$574
Furniture/Equipment	\$16,196
Office Supplies	\$264
Entertainers	\$2,900

In-Kind Donation	Estimated Value
MSC® Service Annual Fee	\$1,170
Luncheons, food for all nutrition programs	\$238,634
Cable TV Service, Golden Age Radio	\$718
Books/Videos/Magazines/Puzzles	\$1,500
Piano tuning	\$95
Nursing Center Expenses	\$17,500
Newsletter	\$9,803
Lunch Site Director	\$11,953
Water Cooler/Heater Rental	\$240
ADs	\$5,521
Van Driver	\$1,507
Parking Expenses	\$350
Conference Fees/Membership Dues	\$1,325
Senior Aide	\$7,770

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hirsh Pagano, Director