

Harper Center Bulletin

Harper Center Bulletin #206

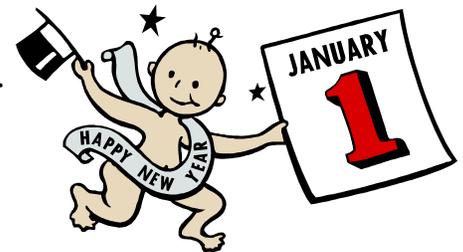
January 1st, 2012

Williamstown Council
on Aging

January 2012 Newsletter

Welcome to 2012! Happy New Year!

There are a whole bunch of people out there who think that some Mayan calendar designed several thousand years ago predicts the end of the world in 2012. Yeah, right. It's been made on a big old piece of round stone. The last date is December 21, 2012. You know why it's the last date? Because it's a round stone and they ran out of room, that's why. Duh. So, anyway, in honor of the end of the world-ites-is that a word? It is now, we'll have end dates all thru the year. Because of the success of the "Hot Dog Extravaganza" in December, we'll be having an "End of January Hamburger Extravaganza" with all the fixins' and side dishes on January 31st, right before the Friendship Club Bingo. Then we'll see who wins the end bingo game for January...Sound good?



OK, moving on now...Maggie has asked me to remind everyone to bring in supplies for the NARH "Pedibear" program to the friendship club meeting. You'll remember that we talked about this last month. Essentially, they're looking for supplies to create these wonderful animals, specifically the stuffing for the actual "guts" of the bears, as well a ribbon, which is in short supply, and thread. Manual labor is not required but monetary donations for the fund are welcome. Ask Maggie Guiden for details.

Inside this issue:

Animal program	2
File of Life	2
Taxes!	2
Avoiding Falls	3
Medicare updates	3
Art Expressions	3
Page 4 news	4

The Williamstown Council on Aging lives within it's World Headquarters office in the Harper Center at 118 Church Street. We're officially open for business from 8:00A.M.until 4:00P.M. Monday through Friday and Sundays at noon for lunch. You can call us at 458-8250, fax us at 458-5156 or email; bogrady@williamstown.net

We've been serving Williamstown seniors since 1966!

A support group

Sometimes a big, bad event can leave a body with a sense of loss. And sometimes you just need someone to talk to about that loss. In August, we lost a large chunk of the Spruces when Irene came to town. We have friends who lost their homes and possessions and have started anew. That can be hard. Dealing with the aftermath of the disaster can leave one with questions and feelings needing expression beyond normal conversation. Support groups are sometimes the answer to those questions. Every Saturday morning at 10:00, a Spruces Survivors oriented support group will meet at St. John's Church on Park Street. Participation is open to all current and former Spruces residents and will run thru February 11th. An additional support group will also be offered in North Adams on Thursday evenings. Contact Robin Lenz at Higher Ground at 458-4273 for information.



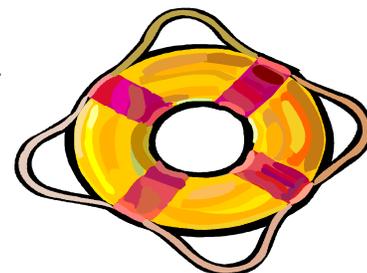
Meow

There are a lot of kitties out there. Some of them, like my family cats Seasons Louise and Harry, have nice homes. Others are not so lucky. Some end up in shelters waiting for their “forever” homes. So what does this have to do with us? Well...on Tuesday January 24 at 12:30, Judy Bombardier and Janice Paquette from Williamstown Commons will be here to talk about a unique program they have over there on Adams Road. They have a relationship with the Second Chance Animal Shelter up in Shaftsbury to foster cats at the nursing home until they’re adopted. And they’ve been successful; their current guest is the 33rd feline they’ve hosted since the program began! Thirty two adoptions and counting! Anyway, the animals have not always included cats but they’ll tell you about the program and the joy the cat visitors bring to their residents every day. They’re bringing lunch which is, of course, at noon—Turkey and ham sandwiches, chocolate chip cookies and vegetable soup. You guys know how good their soup is! Yup, there is a sign up, usual spot...

File of life

So, what’s the matter with people anyway? We always asking about the file of life and everyone nods in agreement and takes one home with them. Then what happens? Is it filled out to include all the latest medical information, just in case? Of course not! ? Well, OK, some of you do but my recent experience has been that folks have not followed up...

File of life is, of course, the “red magnetized plastic thingy” which sticks on the refrigerator door. You record all your pertinent medical data including emergency contact and who you want to be notified in case of an emergency. That’s truly important stuff and it works, if it’s updated. Ambulance responders, emergency room people and doctors have all found them to be useful tools and in the case of a couple people whom I knew were unable to speak was a real life saver. We have versions to alert people that there may be a pet in the house too. So PLEASE folks, fill them out. And ask us for information regarding the File of life, or if you would like one or know someone who could use it.



Here comes the tax man...

Here we go again! The start of the new year is pretty much fun until we start realizing that we have to account for last year and yes, the government money counters will be watching. Some of us will jump through all the hoops and file our own taxes. The rest of us will need a little help. And we have that available right here at the Harper Center. Our good friend Pim Goodbody and his trained and certified band of AARP volunteers will be back again beginning Saturday, February 4th to help file your state and federal income taxes. Individuals with low and moderate income are welcome to call and arrange an individual appointment. While we target seniors, this program is open to all ages meaning that you do not have to be an AARP member! So call us at 458-8250 and we’ll set you up with an hour-long session with a tax aide. You’ll need to bring all applicable tax paperwork for 2011 and additionally, your 2010 tax return papers too. Sessions will be from 9:00A.M.to noon on Saturday and 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 on Tuesday evenings. Be prepared to spend an hour. Did I mention it’s free? Call 458-8250 to schedule as appointments are required!

Avoiding falls

Oh yes, we all know about falls don't we? Once we had an "avoiding falls" seminar here at Harper and I asked how many people had fallen and just about everyone in the room had fallen at least once sometime or another. Several of you indicated that you had been thru multiple falls, one wit stated that "Oh, I fall all the time" and drew laughs from the assembled. Unfortunately, others indicated that they'd fallen, broken something, were hospitalized, had surgery, and temporarily institutionalized for rehab purposes. Not funny any more, right?



Truth is that falls have been the cause for a very significant number of serious injuries and even death and are the leading cause for unnecessary institutional placement. Whether the culprit behind the fall is poor balance, tripping over ill placed rugs or slipping on slippery stairs, many falls are avoidable. You can wear non skid shoes, toss throw rugs, improve home lighting among other things. Those other things will be the topic of our conversation with the folks from Amedisys Home Health, some new kids in town. You met Edita, the manager, a couple weeks ago. She'll be back on Tuesday, January 17 at 12:30 to cover this important topic. Lunch first? Sure. We'll post the menu next week!

Medicare updates...

The 2011 Medicare Open Enrollment ended on December 7th, 2011 but there are still changes you can make if qualified. Ready?

For those with a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can leave your plan between January 1st and February 14 and switch to original Medicare but not to another Advantage Plan. Coverage would begin on the first day of the following month.

If you had a TUFTS Medicare Prescription Drug Plan and DID NOT select a different Medicare Drug plan for 2012, you have until the end of February to enroll in a new Medicare D plan for 2012.

For those with Prescription Advantage or getting "extra help" you can change your plan anytime during the year. Prescription Advantage people can do this only once but "extra help" participants can change monthly if you wish.

Need help or information? Call us at 458-8250 and our SHINE Counselor Peg Jenks will help you sort it out!

Art expressions

Our new friend Meg Greenawalt from Sweetbrook will be here at Harper on Thursday, January 12 at 1:00 to present another of her trademark fun programs. This one is entitled "Art Expressions". Art Expressions does not really teach art, rather it will encourage and engage participants in watercolor painting, which will result in a delightful group project. All you have to do is bring yourselves, all needed art supplies will be provided. It's guaranteed to be a good time! Of course we'll provide refreshments!

And for those of you who think this might sound familiar, you're right! This program was originally scheduled in December but was cancelled, I think, because of snow...



**Williamstown Council on
Aging**

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You all will remember Trevor Murphy, the musician who has been here on a couple different occasions to entertain us so wonderfully in the past? Well, he's coming back, courtesy of our friends the Norton's and bringing a couple Irish musicians and step dancers with him. Won't that be cool I just don't know exactly when. You'll notice that there are a couple "TBA" slots on Thursday afternoons, this performance will be on Thursday, just don't know which one yet. Stay tuned!

And, speaking of Thursday, Marion will be hosting a showing of *Thelma and Louise*, a great movie, at 1:00. Snacks during the flick? Of course!

Page four news and notes

Serena Merrill, our Foot Care Nurse, will be here at the Harper Center on Tuesday, January 17 to clip toenails and rub aching feet. She's booked totally for January, folks, but still has a couple February openings. Need an appointment? Please call soon as they go quickly!

Peg Jenks, our SHINE Counselor, will be here on Wednesday January 18 at 10:30 to assist those with questions about their health care insurance. Appointments not required but helpful. She's also available for individual consultation thru the office at the Harper Center so call us at 458-8250 and we'll set you up.

Our good friends at Interim Health Care have indicated that they will continue to provide the monthly blood pressure clinic during 2012 on the second Tuesday, at high noon, just prior to the Friendship Club meeting. And thank you Kira and friends for continuing to support the Williamstown COA in 2012!

The monthly Brown Bag offering, sponsored by the Foodbank of Western Massachusetts will revert to it's normal timeslot for January and will be ready for pick up or delivery on Friday afternoon, January 27th, right here at Harper. Brown Bag is a monthly food supplement of shelf stable foods and fresh fruits and veggies in season literally delivered in a brown paper sack. Interested? Call us here at 458-8250 and we'll talk!



WHERE'S MY SNOW!!!! I want to go skiing!
