



A rural community of neighbors helping aging adults lead independent and engaged lives at home.

**Leverett + New Salem +
Shutesbury + Wendell
1-413-345-6894**

Village Neighbors News

Working Together to Create Community!

www.villageneighbors.org

P.O.Box 501, Shutesbury, MA 01072
generalinfo@villageneighbors.org

January / February 2022, Issue 17

*Village Neighbors is a community volunteer-run organization, part of the Village-to-Village national network, with **FREE Membership** for anyone over 60 in our 4 Towns: Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell.*

FREE MEMBER SERVICES INCLUDE: **Helping Hands-** easy fix-its, grocery deliveries, garden help, household tasks, meal prep, move furniture, organize household items, pet care, plant care, shoveling, wood stacking; **Member Well Being-** check in call, errands, friendly visits, walks, information organization and referrals, post hospital help, respite for Care Givers; **Tech Support-** electronics, TV, computer, phone, tablets; **Transportation**

VN Gift Bags 2021

With the wonderful enthusiasm of our volunteers, Village Neighbors Gift Bags were put together and delivered to every VN Member's home again this year. The bags included products and gift certificates from our local vendors and artisans: **Apple Bottom Soap Co., A Cut Above The Rest Hair Stylist, Dean's Beans, Diemand Farm, LaunchSpace, Leverett Village Co-op, New Salem General Store, and Wendell Country Store.** They were generously supported by contributions from the **Greenfield Savings Bank** and the **Greenfield Cooperative Bank.**

Our deepest gratitude to everyone involved.

Some member responses to the gifts:

"Each lovely gift was chosen with thought and will certainly be put to good use."

"We thank the sponsors and accolades go to the individuals who assembled, contacted sponsors and donors, and those who delivered the goodies"

"Thank you Village Neighbors for your ongoing thoughtfulness. I am happy to have the little bag advertising your organization."

"I've been meaning to write and send thanks for the wonderful treat bag I found at my house the other day. I just ate a piece of the smooth and delicious dark chocolate, and enjoyed the gingerbread tea and Dean's Beans coffee too. I look forward to taking a ride over to Diemand Farm Store to try the soup as well. Thanks for everything you do, and for taking care of our community. It is very much appreciated."

Small Home Repairs 2022

The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts has generously renewed our grant for **Small Home Repairs** again for 2022. The amazing team of volunteers who have been working to assist our members in keeping their homes safe and in good repair will be back to work in the Spring. We have serviced over 62 households so far. Look for the new application this Spring with our March newsletter.

The Church Street Fund is administered by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.



Writing To Remember 2022

Ruth Flohr's inspiring memoir writing program **Writing to Remember** will be offered again for **Free** this Spring with the generous sponsorship by **Mass Cultural Grants** from **Leverett, Shutesbury, Wendell and New Salem.**



In this memoir writing class you will discover the inspiration and tools to effectively begin writing your life-story. This class is open to fledgling writers as well as seasoned writers.

This method includes instruction, reading memoir samples, discussion, and impromptu writing exercises with feedback. There will also be an online forum with writing resources and a platform to post your stories.

For more information or to sign up for the next round of workshops, please contact **Ruth Flohr** at **978-544-6534** or email pr@villageneighbors.org.

Upcoming Programs

Become a More Savvy Volunteer

We are excited that **LifePath** is offering a series of seminars for Village Neighbors and other Franklin/Hampshire village volunteers which will allow us to gain perspectives and share best practices. We hope that all our volunteers will take advantage of this opportunity and join these virtual meetings.

Village Learning Series Program:

Session 1 (January 11th, 2-3pm) - **Village Updates: Presentations by the regional Village programs**

Session 2 (February 8th, 2-3pm) - **Working with Older Adults: Presentations on Boundaries & Protective Services**

Session 3 (March 8th, 2-3pm) - **Resources: Presentations on Transportation supports (FRTA) and General Supports (LifePath)**

For more information please contact **Nour Elkhataby Strauch** at nelkhatabystrauch@lifepathma.org or **413-829-9274**.

OASIS - GCC Program

OASIS stands for **Older Adults Seeking, Inspiring and Serving** - a department at **Greenfield Community College**. Welcoming all members of the older adult community to participate in any way they can envision — whether it is taking courses (\$50 for anyone over 60), leading workshops, mentoring students, volunteering on campus, or working with other members of the older adult community directly.

OASIS is joining with **Cyberseniors.org**. Any senior can call and get free tech help and many more opportunities. Call toll free **1-844-217-3057**.

OASIS is also recruiting and training youth to help seniors.

Find out more from **Judy Raper**, raperj@gcc.mass.edu, GCC Associate Dean of Community Engagement.

Catch Up On Some Of The Seminars You Missed

Recordings of VN Zoom lectures are now available on our website at villageneighbors.org / **News** menu / **Village Neighbors Seminar Recordings**.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PROVIDING A SEMINAR OR ACTIVITY TO VN MEMBERS, please contact membership@villageneighbors.org. We can provide technical support to get your seminar or activity up and running.

COVID Vaccination Appointments

Phone Access Information - Initial and Booster

Primary Care

Most primary care offices now offer vaccinations and boosters. Call your PCP to inquire.

211, the Mass.gov hotline

Before calling, have your COVID-19 vaccine record available.

Dial **211**. Press 1 if you are eligible to receive the COVID-19 initial vaccine or booster. Press 1 to schedule an appointment. You will be connected to an agent who will help you sign up for a vaccine or booster appointment. The Agent will ask for your zip code. The agent will inform you of the locations that are closest to your area. You will be able to choose the location, date, and time based on availability. You will be asked to verify your name, date of birth, address, phone number, and the date and location of the COVID-19 vaccines you have received. You may also sign up for the flu shot at the same time that you receive the vaccine or booster.

Pharmacies

Big Y & Rite Aid: Phone appointments not available. Call the Mass.gov hotline: **211**

CVS: 800-746-7287

Call the number above, when connected press 1, when asked how can I help you, say "schedule a vaccine appointment", then say "agent" and you will be connected to an agent to schedule an appointment.

Walgreen's: 800-925-4733.

Call the number above, when asked, say your zip code, then you will be asked: tell me what you are calling about, say "schedule a vaccine appointment", then continue to answer the questions. When scheduling an appointment, mention the location of the pharmacy where you want to schedule your appointment.

Walmart: 978-544-6405

Call the number and press 0. You will be connected to the pharmacy to schedule an appointment.

In-home vaccinations

Call **833-983-0485**

Village Neighbors are available to assist with calling for your appointment and driving you to receive your vaccine or booster. All VN drivers are fully vaccinated. Call **1-413-345-6894** and leave a message for services, or email services@villageneighbors.org

Upcoming Programs

Cooking Soup For Health and Happiness

January 11, 2022 • 6:30-7:30 pm on Zoom **FREE**

This is a cooking demonstration with plenty of time for Q&A. The program is led by **Leslie Cerier**, “**The Organic Gourmet**”, internationally renown farm-to-table vegetarian chef, nationally known author, frequent guest on TV and radio, recipe developer, cooking teacher and motivational speaker.

Find out more at www.lesliecerier.com/event/cooking-soups-for-health-and-happiness

Please contact leslie@lesliecerier.com to register and receive your zoom link.

Sponsored by the **Dunbarton Public Library**

MA Home Modification Loan Program

January 6, 4-5:30 pm on Zoom **FREE**

*This program is being shared with Village Neighbors from our sister community **Amherst Neighbors**.*

Did you know?

Massachusetts provides no-interest loans to homeowners and small landlords to fund making changes to their existing building to keep disabled or elderly persons remaining in their homes and communities.

These loans don't need to be repaid by homeowners until you sell your home!

Join us with staff from Wayfinders, our local agency entrusted with shepherding us through the process.

For more information, and to register, go to amherstneighbors.org. Non-members do not need to log in. Just click on the specific session you wish to attend or click “View the Calendar” to see all scheduled events. For more information or assistance with registration please contact amherstneighbors01002@gmail.com.

As always, these programs are **free and open to the public**. You'll get the zoom link and a reminder after you sign up.

Please DONATE to Village Neighbors and support our Free Membership. You can donate online at www.villageneighbors.org or mail a check to **P.O.Box 501, Shutesbury, MA 01072**

VN News

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Monday, January 10, 6:30 to 7:30 PM

Hybrid meeting both on Zoom and in person at the Wendell Senior Center: 2 Locke Village Road, Wendell

Please RSVP by email to volunteers@villageneighbors.org or by leaving a phone message at **413 345 6894** to let us know how you will attend. **In-person attendees should be fully vaccinated against COVID.** Zoom attendees will receive an application and volunteer handbook by email to copy at home, or request mailed paper copies they cannot be printed at home. If you plan to serve as a volunteer driver, please bring copy of your driver's license and Coverage Selections page of your car insurance policy, and be prepared to show your vaccination card. Those not driving will not need those items.

Age-Friendly Survey

As part of the **Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities Project**, **LifePath** and participating towns will be launching a regional survey for residents over the age of 50. This survey will help us better understand the needs of older people in our region, and which supports can help them remain independent for as long as possible.

The survey will be available both online and in print. When you see it, please take about 15 minutes to share your views on what you need now and as you get older, and how services for older adults can improve. It is our chance to get our voices heard about what services we may need in the next several years. If you have trouble filling out the survey, contact a VN call manager for assistance services@villageneighbors.org.

If you have any questions about the survey or the Age and Dementia-Friendly Project, please contact **Nour Elkhataby Strauch**, Age-Friendly Program Manager, at nelkhatabystrauch@lifepathma.org or **413-829-9274**.

Free Consumer Protection Calendar

The **Consumer Protection Unit** and **NWDA Elders & Persons with Disabilities** Unit has once again created a Consumer Calendar featuring helpful information about scams and other issues. If you would like a copy, please feel free to reach out by telephone at **413-437-5817** or email **Anita Wilson**, Director, Consumer Protection Unit, Northwestern District Attorney's Office Anita.Wilson@State.MA.US

Your Village Neighbors Need YOU!

Village Neighbors has grown quickly while meeting the new challenges posed through CoVid in our elderly community. We need Volunteers to assist members at home, and also behind the scenes in the committees that keep our organization working! Contribute as much or as little time as you want. Match your interests and skills to what's needed in the community. *Join the fun and make a difference...*

Membership / Volunteer Committee

- Recruit and welcome new members and volunteers
- Do new member intake visits
- Conduct volunteer orientations and trainings
- Create and coordinate social activities and programs
- Develop Dementia Friendly community outreach and training

Volunteer Orientations are run by the Membership/Volunteer Committee. Join us at the VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION, Monday, January 10, 6:30 pm, Wendell Senior Center or Zoom, if you would like to experience this committee in action and find out more about what we do.

membership@villageneighbors.org

Service Committee / Call Managers

- Answer requests from Members and connect them with Volunteers waiting to assist
- Assess needs and services
- Train and oversee Call Managers
- Handle vendor services
- Work with the Membership/Volunteer Committee to triage concerns for members and volunteers

Call Managers work from home to manage member requests.

servicerequests@villageneighbors.org

Events / PR Committee

- Events • Promotions • Tabling at community events • Newsletter
- Outreach and Press • Social media • Event Calendar

Contact the Events/PR Committee to learn about opportunities to be involved in planning our next exciting event and connecting with our community.

pr@villageneighbors.org

Fund Raising Committee

- Provide the money for Village Neighbors to function and grow
- Research funding • Develop fund raising events • Develop funding circles (sources) - donations, members, volunteers, and contributors • Research and apply for grants • Recruit local sponsors -banks, businesses

With Free membership, Village Neighbors counts on voluntary contributions, funding and grants to meet our income needs. Volunteers are needed to make this happen!

fundraising@villageneighbors.org

IT Committee

- Provide assistance to members with all things electronic
- Website maintenance • Email & Zoom communications

In the 21st century, internet has become integral to daily life. IT assists members and committees to navigate the challenges.

volunteers@villageneighbors.org

Cheerful New Year Salutations from the VN Services Committee & Call Managers!

As we cross the threshold into 2022 the Call Manager team would like to take a pause for gratitude. **Thank you to all of the willing, able, and cheerful Village Neighbors volunteers.** You make a tremendous difference to the people you show up for. From our seat we see the rich variety of member requests that come in being met by the care of helpful neighbors. We witness the difference your generosity brings to our towns' elders. We have discovered over these years of facilitating this community of helping hands that the most rewarding thing for people on the giving *and* receiving ends is the friendly connection that happens along the way.

As we head into the winter months, which even without covid can be a time of isolation in the hills, **we want to remind members** that Village Neighbors is a great place to ask for a weekly or monthly check-in call from a volunteer, or someone to take a walk with on a sunny day, or for a person who might read to you if your vision is challenged. And we will always be here for rides, groceries, small in-home fix-its, organizational or technical assistance, dump runs, and yard work.

The Services Committee has been brainstorming about how to improve our winter support networks. We are experimenting with organizing a new effort, called **Snow Buddies!** We got this idea from another Village, albeit in a significantly more suburban setting. They set up neighborhood teams to shovel walkways and clear cars after a snowstorm. Do you think this would be a good idea to modify for hilltown realities? Would you be willing to volunteer to help folks in your town who have trouble shoveling out? This would NOT involve plowing or clearing driveways, just digging out paths and car windshields, and seeing to necessities like heating fuel tank access. If you would like to be called for Snow Buddy service, have ideas about how to make this work up here in the hills, or if you know someone (younger) who has a shovel and would like to help out, please email:

servicerequests@villageneighbors.org

Put 'Snow Buddy' in the subject line and we'll put you on the pilot project list.

Thank you for being a part of Village Neighbors!

May this next spin around the sun bring welcome surprises.

~ the VN Services Committee