



The Blandford Hills Council on Aging News

Phone: 413-848-4279 Ext. 400 or COA@TownofBlandford.com
This Newsletter is sponsored in part by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs

What's Happening at the Center for Active Adults February / March 2020



Valentine's Day Pizza Party



Love is in the air and we all LOVE pizza!
Please join us on Friday, February 14, 2020, at noon, in the COA room for pizza, salad, and a special dessert. Cost is \$5.00 per person.



St. Patrick's Day Dinner

You are invited to our annual **Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner!**

On Friday, March 13, 2020, at noon in the COA room, we will be serving up the best corned beef and cabbage you will ever eat. The cost of the dinner is \$8.00 per person and must be sent in advance.

Please reserve a seat by Friday, March 6, 2020.

Drop off payment at town hall or mail checks to

Blandford Center for Active Adults, 1 Russell Stage Rd Suite 3, Blandford, MA 01008



Emergency Alert System

You will receive official town updates pertaining to emergencies, town news, traffic hazards, fire, police, maintenance and more. If you are not already on the Blandford alert system list, please visit the town website at townofblandford.com Look for "Create/Manage Alerts" and click. Go to "Sign me up" and create an account. You can only sign up online! We have two laptops! Next time you are in the COA/CAA room, ask us to help you do that.



Update on COA/CAA Need a Ride Program

Currently, our vehicle is in use at least twice a week. To help Seniors think of ways to take advantage of our service, we share some "food for thought".

An advantage to our service is that we are able to help Seniors find items in stores, if needed. Seniors need not wait to be picked up after shopping or appointments. When a Senior makes a call to our town number (848-4279, Ext. 400) and leave a message, we try to have a volunteer available for the day and time requested. We travel to the Northampton area, as well as to the Berkshires. Perhaps, a group would like to visit another Senior. Do you have eye appointments where your eyes will be dilated, making driving home difficult? Have you had an operation and need transportation for a short term to grocery shop or go to a doctor check-up? If you have a need not mentioned, feel free to call and ask. We are here to help you.

Weekly Events Offered at your Blandford COA/CAA

Mondays

*Balance, Strength, & Flexibility
Training Exercise at 9:30 A.M.
in the town hall gym
\$5.00 per class
NEW: The second Monday
class of the month is FREE!*



Wednesdays

*The 2nd and 4th Wednesdays...
BOOK CLUB
2:00-4:00 P.M.~ FREE*



Monthly Events Offered at your Blandford COA/CAA

First Friday

*Open House1-3 P.M.
Come in to learn a new game,
socialize, and/or knit.
Bring a snack and we'll provide
the beverages.*



2nd Friday

*Social Hour12 P.M.
Light lunch will be provided.
\$5 per person
Blood Pressure Clinic by B.F.D.*



3rd Friday

Brown Bag delivery 11-11:30 A.M.

4th Friday

*Breakfast10 A.M.
\$5. per person*



**Third Monday: COA/CAA Board meets
at 3 P.M. in the COA room**

The Blandford COA/CAA movie theater has recently closed. Low attendance was the culprit behind this much deliberated decision.

However, when one door closes, perhaps it is time to use another! Ideas are being tossed about and we need your input. Would you like to go to a movie theater on a discounted ticket day when admission is much lower?

If you do not have access to a computer or have poor internet access, the third Friday of the month could be used for that respect. Come up to the COA room and use one of our laptops to research information on the internet, or email family and/or friends. Please give us any ideas you might have.

A New Adventure...It is with some sadness that the COA will no longer continue with Taylor's Group. A few years ago, a wonderfully gifted writer and poet named Taylor Stoehr came into our lives. He offered to facilitate a writing group for Seniors. Those of us who participated made a friend for life in Taylor, who gave us the gift of the "will to express ourselves" in ways we never thought possible. He brought out the best in each and every one of us, regardless of our ability. After his passing, we felt the need to continue in his honor. This group became very close and although some of us did not continue with our writing, we met to discuss all subjects from new ideas in medicine to political issues. It is time to move on since our group has become very small during this past year. So, since there has been a new interest, we will meet on **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, AT 2 PM** to discuss the creation of a **MONTHLY BOOK CLUB**.

Anyone who is interested is encouraged to attend as we organize this new adventure. If you have any questions, please call Judy MacKinnon at 413-427-0983.

Hope to see you there.

LOVE THOSE FEET!

Our next **Foot Clinic** will be held on **Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 11:00 A.M.**

The clinic is open to anyone 65 and older who would like foot care. The cost of the session is \$30.00, with the COA paying \$5.00. The nurse will do an assessment and examination of your feet, trim and file toenails, and finish with a foot and leg massage. If she notices anything that should require further attention, she will recommend that you follow up with your podiatrist. For an appointment, please call Barbara Langmore at 848-2816. An appointment is necessary and required!

Medicare's Plan Finder Fiasco

A glitch in Medicare's revamped prescription plan finder may have steered unwitting seniors to coverage that costs much more than they need to pay, according to Sue Kucharski, our Outreach Worker and Certified SHINE Counselor. The new Plan Finder tool, introduced on Medicare.gov just before the start of the Annual Open Enrollment last year, may have created confusion by obscuring true out-of-pocket costs that seniors should factor into their decisions.

Among the many problems SHINE Counselors experienced were that the information that was posted on the Plan Finder was not the same as what was posted on the insurance company's site. The Plan Finder showed plans that didn't always cover all of the drugs that the senior is on. In addition the default sort was by lowest premium, yet that doesn't necessarily translate to lowest cost over the year.

If you changed your Part D plan during Open Enrollment, using this error-prone Plan Finder, you may have made your decision based on bad information. And you may be in for some unwelcome surprises this year.

The good news is that if you believe you made the wrong plan choice because of using the Plan Finder, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE, and explain your situation. You will have options to change your plan to one that meets your needs considering the true cost to you.

Or you can meet with Sue Kucharski, our SHINE Counselor by calling her at 354-6540 to set up an appointment. She can help you review your plan, and/or work with Medicare to get into a new one.

Changes to the Medicare Savings Program

A new state law in Massachusetts is expanding several Medicare Savings Programs (also known as "MassHealth Buy-In" programs). These programs help older residents and people living with disabilities save money by paying for the cost of the Part B premium which is now deducted from your Social Security benefit.

Starting January 1, 2020, the income and asset limits for these programs have increased, meaning more people will be able to get help paying for Medicare.

And, if you qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, you will also automatically qualify for Extra Help, a program that will help pay for your prescription drugs under Medicare.

If your income and assets are at or below the amounts listed here, you may qualify.

For more information about this program or for help to apply, please contact Sue Kucharski, our SHINE Counselor at 354-6540.

You are a	Your income is at or below	And your assets are at or below
Single Individual	\$1,738/month	\$15,720
Married Couple	\$2,346/month	\$23,600

SAFE DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS AND SHARPS

Employees and members of the community can bring their unwanted **MEDICATIONS** or **SHARPS** from their homes for proper disposal by depositing them in kiosks (collection receptacles) located at the Surgical Center Entrance on the ER side of the hospital at **Baystate Noble in Westfield**.

ACCEPTABLE items at the **MEDICATION** kiosk: Expired, Wasted, Unused, Controlled/NonControlled, Over-the-Counter, and even Hazardous Medications.

PLEASE LEAVE IN ORIGINAL PACKAGING WHEN POSSIBLE.

ACCEPTABLE items at the **SHARPS** kiosk: Sharps (needles, syringes, lancets, auto injectors, infusion sets, etc.)

These must be disposed of in a SHARPS container. Sharps containers must be puncture resistant, non-see through bottles such as a bleach bottle or a one pound coffee can.





Blandford Center for Active Adults
 413-848-4279, ext. 400 or COA@TownofBlandford.com
 February 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Groundhog Day	3 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M.	4	5	6	7 First Friday 1-3 P.M.	8
9	10 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M. FREE CLASS!	11	12 Book Club 2-4 P.M.	13	14 Social Hour 12 Noon Valentine's Day "Pizza Party"	15
16	17 President's Day Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M. COA Board meets 3 P.M.	18	19	20	21 Brown Bag 11-11:30 A.M.	22
23	24 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M.	25	26 Book Club 2-4 P.M. Ash Wednesday	27	28 Breakfast 10 A.M.	29



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 March 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M.	3	4	5	6 First Friday 1-3 P.M. Last day to reserve seat for St. Pat's Dinner	7
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins	9 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M. FREE CLASS	10	11 Book Club 2-4 P.M.	12 Foot Clinic 11 A.M.	13 Social Hour 12 Noon "Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner"	14
15	16 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M. COA Board meets 3 P.M.	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 First day of Spring	20 Brown Bag 11-11:30 A.M.	21
22	23 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M.	24	25 Book Club 2-4 P.M.	26	27	28 Breakfast at The Ripley's Maple Corner Farm 10 A.M.
29	30 Balance, Strength, and Flexibility 9:30 A.M.	31				

BLANDFORD COUNCIL ON AGING
1 RUSSELL STAGE ROAD
SUITE 3
BLANDFORD, MA 01008
413-848-4279 Ext. 400
COA@TownofBlandford.com

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
HUNTINGTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 12
ZIP CODE 01050



**Please Read!
Important Info Inside!**

SPECIAL ONGOING PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS WITH CONTACT INFORMATION

The Southern Hilltown COA Consortium meeting is held on the third Friday of the month at 2:00 P.M. at 3 Maple Street in Chester. The outreach person covering the hilltowns is Sue Kucharski, a trained and certified SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselor. She can be reached at the Consortium office at 413-354-6540. Please contact her to schedule an appointment to discuss your eligibility for benefit programs that can help with insurance, as well as other things.

Brown Bag Program – is available for income eligible Seniors. Call Blandford's COA at 848-4279, ext. 400 for more information. Applications are available outside the COA. Brown Bags can be picked up on the third Friday of each month between 11-11:30 A.M.

Fuel Assistance - For information about fuel assistance contact Hilltown Social Services at 413-667-2203, or pick up an application at the Senior Center.

Need a Ride? - The FRTA Van provides transportation to medical appointments, to shopping and picking up groceries to those 60 and over. Contact George Webb, FRTA driver, at 413-667-3428, or pick up an application at the Senior Center.

Blandford COA/CAA now has their own vehicle. Do you need to get groceries or go on an appointment? We travel to the Northampton area and over to the Berkshires. If you have a need not mentioned, feel free to call and ask. We are here to help you. Call 413-848-4279, ext. 400 and leave a message.

Veteran's Affairs Agent Contact Joe Henning at 413-427-3054 to ask about your Veteran's benefits, medical, and financial questions. You can also go to MassVetsAdvisor.org for One-Stop-Shop for all your benefits.