



The Centerpiece

For Active Senior Living

Serving the Community since 1974

September 2023

Newsletter Volume 43 Issue 9

The Center-Merrimac Living Well

100 East Main Street
Merrimac, MA 01860

Tel: 978-346-9549 Fax: 978-346-0528

Hours M-TH 8:30-4pm, F 8:30-1pm

Web: www.townofmerrimac.com/council-on-aging

Executive Director: Brienne R. Walsh:
bwalsh@townofmerrimac.com

Facebook: Merrimac Council on Aging &
Senior Center

Find our Newsletter Online:
[Senior Center/ Council on Aging - Town of Merrimac, MA](#)

Director's Corner

Hi Everyone!

And just like that, the summer is almost over!



We celebrated last week with an End of Summer Luau and had a wonderful time together! Thank you to everyone that attended!

September starts the autumn season and with it some important events and programs. The staff and I strive to offer as much education, interaction and enjoyment as possible each month for our community!

As many of you may know, September is Alzheimer's Awareness Month and we will be having an engaging presentation on 9/25 about the 10 Warning Signs for Alzheimer's Disease. I hope that you and your families will be able to join us for this important event!

September is also the unofficial start of Flu Season and we will be having our annual Flu Clinic here at the Center. Please see the enclosed insert with more information, space is limited and we would like to vaccinate as many people as possible.

I hope to see you this month!

Stay well!

-Brienne

Reminders:

**** Advanced Registration is required for all activities, classes and events ****

**** No OUTSIDE food is permitted in the building, beverages are allowed. Thank you for respecting our community!**

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LGBTQ+ Social Connection

Evening

Join us for a meal and conversation!

Please register in advance

Hot meal provided free of charge



Thursday September 21, 2023

5:30pm-8pm

New members welcome, feel free to join us!

Attention! Important News!

The Center will be closed on Wednesday 09/27/23 from 11am-1pm for a Staff Development Training. There will be no meal service, including in house dining and delivery. There will also be no programming that day.



Health Advisory:

Please remember to stay home if you are ill or unwell. This is for the safety of all of our community members as well as staff and volunteers.

Thank you!

Holiday Closure for Labor Day!

The Senior Center will be closed on Monday September 4, 2023 in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

The Center will reopen on Tuesday 09/05/23 at 8:30am,. We wish you a safe and happy Labor Day!



Continuing Changes in Senior Center Operations:

Van and NEET Transportation:

8 clients per ride will be allowed on the van to go on van trips. NEET rides are 1 per car.

- 1. Client encouraged to wear a mask**
- 2. Client must use Sanitizer Gel before boarding the van.**
- 3. The Driver cannot assist the client boarding or de-boarding the van/car.**
- 4. Donation for ride should be place in envelope and placed in basket driver will have place on seat behind him/her for your convenience.**
- 5. The van will be sanitized after each ride and before another passenger embarks.**
- 6. Call well in advance (at least 4 business days) for a ride as we are limited in our ability to offer rides.**

A. Eligibility requirement:

- a) Clients must be able to self-transport from their home to the vehicle, enter and exit the back seat. Walkers and Wheelchairs must be done by client only, not the driver.**
- b) Clients must be able to buckle their own seat belt.**
- c) Clients must return signed NEET registration/guidelines form prior to transportation.**

B. Prescreening:

COA scheduler must ask pre-screening COVID-19 questions prior to appointment.

Ordering Meals:

To order a meal, call the Senior Center at 978-346-9549 by Thursday at 11 for meals the following week or order by the month. You can also now order by email! Send your name, phone number, address, dates and meals to be ordered at emurray@townofmerrimac.com

Delivery: Meals will be delivered to your door between 12 and 1 (Merrimac only) with minimal contact. Please mail in your payment by check or leave envelope taped to your door. Food will be left at the door if no one is at home. Meals are \$5.00 per meal, \$25/ per week (as of 5/2/22).

Order food delivered, *for in house dining on Mon-Thurs* or pickup!

**Did you know that the
Merrimac Senior Center is a Certified SNAP Outreach
Partner??**

**We can help with
applications and
recertifications!**

**Call for an
appointment !**



Centerpiece Info—Friends News-Bingo-Bill Duke Class/Game Schedule



Merrimac Senior Center
The Centerpiece for Active Senior Living

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

☐ Please mail my newsletter (\$8.00 for the year)

☐ Please email my newsletter to my email address above (No charge)

Newsletter is available at: <http://townofmerrimac.com/184/Senior-Center>

Please return this form to:

Merrimac Senior Center
100 East Main Street
Merrimac, MA 01860

If paying by check, please make out to: Merrimac COA

BINGO

Bingo is in Session!

Mondays

September 11,18,25

Upstairs Activity Room

Beverages Welcome, Snack Provided

Limited to 20 Players.



Watercolor Class w/ Bill Duke

Monday 09/11/2023

1-4pm

Limited to 10 participants

\$20/per person payable on class day

Games are Back! NEW Days!

45's: Mondays at 1pm-3:30p

Rummikub: Tuesdays at 1pm-3:30p

Cribbage: Wednesdays at 1pm-3:30p

Registration Required!



Friends of the COA - Annual Dues

The Nutrition Program continues to provide meals to anyone who wants one (they are currently serving 40+ meals daily, M-F and delivering them to the door as well as holding a daily congregate meal on Mon-Thurs). The Friends continue to help with the cost. Note that your donations make this possible! Thank you for your continued generosity.

Send your dues or Gift to:

**Friends of the COA, 100 East Main St.,
Merrimac, MA 01860**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel/Cell _____

Dues: \$10__\$25__\$50__\$100__Other__

Donation to Gift Account: _____

Given in Honor of or Memory of:

Upcoming Special Events

10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease

Monday 09/25/23 1:30pm -

See Flyer Insert for More Details!

October Foot Clinic w/Barbara Ullman RN

Tuesday October 17th 9-12pm

All August appointments will be moved to the new date!

By Appointment Only \$30/per visit/cash only

Limited Slots !



Exercise Classes

Advanced Sign Up Required!

Mondays:

Exercise w/Pam at 9:30am \$5

Vinyasa Yoga w/Jane 6pm **No CLASS on 09/04 and 09/11**

\$3/per class

Tuesdays: Meditation & Yoga w/Bianca \$7/class

Wednesdays:

Chair Yoga w/Mary at 1pm; \$5

Thursdays:

Exercise w/Pam at 9:30am \$5

**LINE DANCING HAS BEEN PERMANENTLY
CANCELED BY THE INSTRUCTOR**

Fridays: No Classes on Friday



MERRIMAC SENIOR CENTER ADVENTURES TRIPS & TRAVEL

For full event details request flyer or call the center!

See inserts for Fall Van and FoliageTrips! Details to come!

Contact Denise for additional information!

Dining Out Belles & Romeos

Leaves from COA Tuesday 09/19/23 11:00 AM

A different mystery excursion each month! *Our group will embark on a restaurant adventure to remember! Bus cost is just \$5 and the cost of lunch is on your own!*



Enjoy time with old and new friends!

Call Denise with questions or for additional info. Sign up today !

An Announcement from the Friends of MCOA:

- * **Be sure to purchase raffle tickets for our monthly Friends raffle! A different**
Tickets are available at the reception desk, pay by cash or check only! This

*Friends of
Merrimac COA
Membership
Meeting
Tuesday
September 12th
at 1pm
Please join us!*

***Breakfast with
the Chiefs
Thursday
September 14th
2023
9am
Join us for all the
Town news and
Hot Breakfast!***



NO PUZZLES OR BOOKS AT THIS TIME AS WE REORGANIZE OUR LIBRARY.

ent themed basket each month!

s month is a Tea & Cookies Basket!

Please Note: We are only accepting food pantry donations and Medical Equipment at this time!

Monthly Movie Popcorn & Treats Provided~



**Dungeons & Dragons:
Honor Among Thieves
Starring: Chris Pine &
Michelle Rodriguez**

Tuesday 09/26/23

1:30pm



**Beeyonder Programming is Currently Suspended
due to unforeseen circumstances with tours
abroad. We hope to resume virtual tours soon!**

Community Outreach Column



Outreach & Human Services
Bridget Batcheller, MSW



September is here! I love September because it is my birthday month and it is the start of fall weather. It also means our annual health & wellness fair is back! At our fair this year, you will find a variety of informative resources, local agencies, and free screenings!

While we often think of health as just a physical aspect, it also includes our mental health. We have to take care of our minds the same way we take care of our bodies. September is Suicide Prevention Awareness month, where mental health professionals and other individuals use this as a time to raise awareness of suicide, a topic that is unfortunately still stigmatized and viewed as taboo. This month is used to focus on shifting public perception by sharing stories, resources and factual information about suicide. A lot of what we think we know and understand about suicide may actually be myths; like talking about suicide will make someone want to die by suicide - **THAT IS NOT TRUE!** Anyone can have suicidal thoughts, and although common, they should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues. Even older adults can experience suicidal thoughts/feelings. In fact, while older adults comprise just 12% of the population, they make up approximately 18% of suicides. Suicidal behavior is common in older adults for a number of reasons, including loneliness, grief/loss of loved ones, loss/lack of independence, chronic illness/pain, financial challenges, and cognitive impairment. If you're struggling with any of these, reach out to your doctor, mental health provider, and/or local Council on Aging for assistance and support. Taking steps to prevent further depression will help to reduce feelings of suicide.

If you, or someone you know, are experiencing suicidal thoughts, please reach out to someone you trust and/or contact the Suicide Crisis Lifeline at 988.

It is important to know what it can look like when someone is thinking of attempting to die by suicide. Here are just some warning signs:

- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive or reckless behavior
- Collecting and saving pills or buying a weapon
- Giving away possessions
- Tying up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Saying goodbye to friends and family

This does not mean everyone will experience all of these behaviors or that if someone is exhibiting these behaviors, that they are suicidal. Being direct and asking questions are the only ways to know for sure. Asking about suicide can be scary, but so can having suicidal thoughts. Be there for that person by supporting them and connecting them with a mental health professional. Just like any other health emergency, we want to address suicide quickly and effectively.

Some tips for addressing a suicidal crisis:

- Ask direct questions ('Do you want to kill yourself? Do you have a plan?')
- Express support and concern
- Remove any means or methods that would harm the person
- Don't argue or debate whether this is right or wrong
- Be patient
- **DO NOT** promise secrecy or make them sign a contract stating they won't kill themselves - **these do not help**

Create a wellness recovery action plan that includes important phone numbers/contacts of trusted and safe people in that person's life, including mental health providers, family, friends, local crisis number, ERs, etc. This should also include the person's personal information (phone number, address, medical conditions or diagnoses, medications, previous suicide attempts, history of drug use, triggers, and what has worked in the past).

**** If someone you know expresses wanting to harm themselves and has the means/method to do so, please call a mental health provider or suicide crisis hotline **IMMEDIATELY!** ****

National Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-8255
Suicide Crisis Lifeline: 988 (text or call) / 988life-line.org (online chat)
National Alliance on Mental Illness Crisis Line: text NAMI to 741-741



Greeting from your Public Health Nurse!

Welcome September! During the fall it is easy to appreciate the beauty of living in the northeast and to take the time to view the fall foliage right here in our own community.

September is also World Alzheimer's Month. In the United States alone, there are 6.2 million people age 65 and older that have Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia. World Alzheimer's Month is a time to raise awareness globally, to change perceptions and to increase public knowledge about Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. You may be wondering, what is the difference between Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease? Dementia is a general term used to describe a decline in mental ability. It describes a group of symptoms associated with a decline in memory, reasoning or other thinking skills that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's Disease is the most common cause of dementia.

Alzheimer's Disease is a degenerative brain disease that is caused by complex brain changes following cell damage. It leads to dementia symptoms that gradually get worse over time. The most common early symptom of Alzheimer's is trouble remembering new information. As Alzheimer's advances, symptoms get more severe and can include confusion and disorientation, as well as changes in behavior. In time, speaking, swallowing and walking become difficult.

Though the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's Disease is increasing age, Alzheimer's and related dementias are not a normal part of aging. As we age, changes occur with our brain and memory. Normal brain aging can result in slower processing speeds and more trouble with multitasking, but routine memory, skills, and knowledge should remain stable.

Some people notice changes in themselves before anyone else does. For others, friends and family are the first to see changes in memory, behavior, or abilities. Memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging. Signs to watch for include: Being unable to complete tasks without help, having trouble naming items or close family members, forgetting the function of familiar items, repeating questions, taking much longer to complete normal tasks, misplacing items often and being unable to retrace steps and getting lost.

However, studies show that healthy behaviors may reduce your risk for cognitive decline. Although age, genetics, and family history can't be changed, research suggests that addressing risk factors may prevent or delay dementia cases. Things that you can do to improve brain health and your overall health include, quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy blood pressure level, being physically active, lifestyle changes including maintaining a healthy weight, managing blood sugar, getting enough sleep and staying engaged with family, friends and the community.

If you or a loved one is showing symptoms, schedule an appointment with a primary care provider to get a brain health check up. Be empowered to discuss memory problems. It is also important to talk about issues related to safety, including driving and carrying identification. Symptoms of dementia include getting lost in familiar places, difficulty judging distance, determining color or contrast, and reading, which can make driving difficult. Begin to gather important documents like advanced health care directive/living will, durable power of attorney for health care, and financial or estate planning documents. Discuss your concerns with close family and friends as well so that information is shared and plans are in place to ensure safety. Join groups to get more information or support. The Alzheimer's Association is a great website and has a page called ALZConnected, which is a free online community designed for people living with dementia and those who care for them. Members can post questions about dementia-related issues, offer support, and create public and private groups around specific topics.



Be Well!

Information from: <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/dementia-not-normal-aging.html>; <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia#causes>

RSV VACCINE UPDATE: CDC recommends the use of new Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccines for people ages 60 years and older, using shared clinical decision-making. This means these individuals may receive a single dose of the vaccine based on discussions with their healthcare provider about whether RSV vaccination is right for them. Adults at the highest risk for severe RSV illness include older adults, adults with chronic heart or lung disease, adults with weakened immune systems, and adults living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities. Please talk with your PCP about whether the RSV shot is right for you.

FLU CLINIC: We are planning on hosting a flu vaccine clinic here at the Senior Center sometime in the fall. Stay tuned, more details coming.





Blood Pressure Clinics-Sept.2023

Wednesday September 06

Wednesday September 20

9am-10am

Please note the change in day!

SHARPS Disposal Drop Off Site

New Containers Available for \$ 10



***Public Health Nurse Hours will
be changing effective July 13th!***

New Hours will be:

Tuesdays 8:30am-2:45pm

Wednesdays 8:30am-10:30am

Thursdays 8:30am-2:45pm

***Please feel free to call and leave a
message for Danielle at any time!***

Many Thanks to All, for the Donations to
the Senior Center, Food Pantry and Programming
Initiatives

July 16th-August 15th

**(Supporting Nutrition Program & Food
Pantry)**

Friends of the Merrimac COA

DAVID HEATING AND

COOLING, INC.

Betty Emery

Joe Fantini and Fantini Baking Co.

In Honor of Evelyn Duplisea

Juliette Tardiff

Alberta Peavey

Mary Parry

Bettie Paradis

In Honor of Robert Whitcomb

Heather & Robert Caron



This Month's Important Events

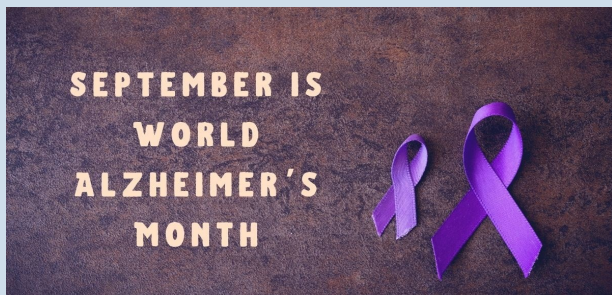
Falls Prevention Awareness Month



Childhood Cancer Awareness Month



World Alzheimer's Month



Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month



The Pool Room is OPEN!

The Pool Room is open **limited** hours
Tues & Thurs 9am-12pm or reservation

Do you knit or crotchet?

Would you like to learn?

Join us for Knitting Group

Tuesdays at 1:00pm



Van Trip Transportation

If you would like to go shopping, please call Nick Fiorello to book a trip in advance. We will do our best to accommodate requests. A minimum of 4 business days is required to book. Thank you.

Veterans Services

Vet Crisis: 1-800-273-8255, press 1

Kevin Hunt, Veterans Services
KHunt@CityofNewburyport.com

Office: 978-462-2201

Fax: 978-462-2275

Newburyport Office: 331 High Street,
Newburyport, MA 01950



Jeremiah Murphy, Veterans Services

Amesbury Office: 978-388-8136

Fax: 978-388-8127/68

68 Elm Street, Amesbury, MA 01913

Feel free to contact either office! Senior citizen veterans or widow(er) of a veteran may be eligible for monthly financial assistance & reimbursement of medical expenses if your income is within certain guidelines. Note: house of residence & vehicles are not counted as assets.



Senator Barry Finegold



Dear Neighbors,

My District Legislative Director, Janice Phillips will have office hours at the Merrimac Senior Center each month. August hours were on Thursday August 31 and she greatly enjoyed meeting those of you needing assistance.

Look for Janice in September as she will be at the Center during the Health and Wellness Fair on 09/21/23!

As always, please reach out if I can be of assistance. You can reach me directly at

barry.finegold@masenate.gov or contact my office at 617-722-1612.

Yours in Service,
Barry



Hello Veterans and Family Members

As a reminder, the Veteran Services office is here to assist Veterans and their dependents acquire local, state and federal benefits. In order to apply for these benefits, the Veteran or family member will need the Veterans DD-214, otherwise called a discharge document. This is the most important document for a Veteran to retain, as no benefits can be provided without this document. If you have a copy of your DD-214, you should keep it in a safe location and make sure your family members know where to locate this document.

If you cannot locate your DD-214 and you were from Massachusetts when you enlisted, the Veteran Services office may be able to download a copy from the Massachusetts online database. If you were not a resident of Massachusetts when you enlisted, a copy of the DD-214 may be requested from the National Personnel Record Center which is a part of the National Archives located in St. Louis Missouri. An online request can be made at the following website: <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>

If you need assistance in requesting your DD-214, call our office @ 978-388-8136 and we will assist you with obtaining these records.

Jeremiah Murphy
Veterans Agent



SENIOR CENTER STAFF

Exec. Director: Brienne R. Walsh

Program Coordinator: Denise Gilman

Public Health Nurse: Danielle Cataldo, RN, MSN

Kitchen Chef: Judy Kimber Morrill

Outreach/ Human Services Coordinator: Bridget Batcheller, MSW, LC

Volunteer Coordinator: Sandra Blanchet

Transportation Coordinator, Van Driver: Nick Fiorello

Senior Aide & Van Driver : Vacancy

Custodian/Van Driver: Wayne Jones

Food & Nutrition Director: Eileen Murray, CDM, CFPP

Food Pantry Coordinator (Volunteer): Candie Benjamin

Trips: Denise Gilman

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Chairwoman, Dave Vance, Vice Chairman, Candie Benjamin, Secretary, Maryann Mikson, Clerk MEMBERS: Betty Elliott, Kathy Devaney, Donna Doherty (Mtgs. On 4th Friday of month, 11am no meeting in Nov., Dec., July, & August, unless needed)

THE CENTERPIECE VOLUNTEERS

COLLATING & MAILING: Bill Gaylardo, Maryann

Mikson, Nancy Lind, Betty Elliott, Barbara Sheehan, Toni Quimby

FRIENDS of the Merrimac COA Officers: President: Ann Murphy Vice President: Joann Crenshaw Treasurer: Richard Fournier, Secretary: Pat Lundin Members: Any and all who have paid their dues and are welcome to attend meetings! (Generally the 1st Tuesday of the month, Please join us!)

**To find our newsletter online,
The Centerpiece for Senior Living, go to:**
<https://mycommunityonline.com/organization/merrimac-senior-center>



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging

Non-Profit Org
**U.S. POST-
AGE
PAID**
**PERMIT NO.
3**



Staff EMAILS:

If you have any questions, concerns, or need help, please call the senior center or email any of the following:

The COA Director, Brienne Walsh
bwalsh@townofmerrimac.com

Program Coordinator: Denise Gilman
dgilman@townofmerrimac.com

Outreach & Human Services Bridget Batcheller
bbatcheller@townofmerrimac.com

Food & Nutrition Director: Eileen Murray
emurray@townofmerrimac.com

Nursing Services: nurse@townofmerrimac.com

Transportation, Nick Fiorello:
nfiorello@townofmerrimac.com

***Please join us in wishing a fond farewell to our
COA Senior Aide Paul Charron! His final
working day with us was 08/24/23.***