



The Centerpiece

For Active Senior Living

Serving the Community since 1974

October 2023

Newsletter Volume 43 Issue 10

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!



Cooler temperatures have arrived and with that comes pumpkins, apple cider, football and lots of fun events with the holiday season right around the corner. We have some great events for October! Two new groups, Women's

Discussion and Grief Support will begin this month and the staff and I think you will get so much from both of these new programs. Sign up and join us to find out what they are all about!

Our Foot Clinic with Barbara is back after having the summer off! Be sure to book appointments if you haven't already as there are limited slots! Our Annual Trunk or Treat returns with lots of opportunities to help with getting candy ready or participating with trunk or treating !

The Craft Fair also returns after a long hiatus of 3 years and we are thrilled to be back to hosting this great event! Sandy and her helpful volunteers have been working so hard to get everything ready, be sure to stop by on 10/21 from 9-2! I hope to see you all at our events 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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I'm so glad we live in a world,
where there are

OCTOBERS

Anne of Green Gables



LGBTQ+ Social Connection

Evening

Join us for a meal and conversation!

Please register in advance

Hot meal provided free of charge



Thursday October 19th, 2023

5:30pm-8pm

New members welcome, feel free to join us!

Are You Looking for Event Space?

Our rooms are available for rental on most evenings and weekends.

Join us to host baby showers, bridal showers, birthday parties, holiday events and more!

Call Brienne at 978 346 9549



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 Columbus/Indigenous People's Day

The Senior Center will be closed on Monday October 9, 2023 in observance of the Columbus/Indigenous People's Day.

The Center will reopen on Tuesday 10/10/23 at 8:30am,.



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

October 2,16,23,30

Upstairs Activity Room

Beverages Welcome, Snack Provided

Limited to 20 Players.



Watercolor Class w/Bill Duke

Monday 10/02/2023

1-4pm

Limited to 10 participants

\$20/per person payable on class day.
Sign up is first come, first serve and will be lottery based if the list is long.

Games are Back! NEW Days!

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

Rummikub: Tuesdays at 1pm-3:30p

Cribbage: Wednesdays at 1pm-3:30p

Join us! We are happy to teach!



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-See Inserts for more details!

Trunk or Treat Candy Packaging Wed 10/18/23 1pm

Hip Hop Yoga w/Rhondae Wed 10/25/23 11am

Women's Discussion Group Wed. 10/25/23 1:30pm

Halloween Trivia 10/31/23 1:30pm

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 Available!



Exercise Classes

Advanced Sign Up Required!

Mondays:

Exercise w/Pam at 9:30am \$5 **NO CLASS 10/2,10/4, 10/9**

Vinyasa Yoga w/Jane 6pm

\$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 Van Trips, Holiday Pops and More!

Contact Denise for additional information!

Dining Out Belles & Romeos –Join us for a Fun Farm Day!

Leaves from COA 11:00 AM Wed October 18, 2023



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! If the bus is full, you can always join us in your own car!

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

An Announcement from the Friends of MCOA:

* Thank you for all your recent support of our raffle baskets! Be sure to look

*Friends of
Merrimac COA
Membership
Meeting
10/3/23
at 1pm
Please join us!*

***Join us on
Thursday
10/19/2023
9:30am
Free
Hot Breakfast
With a Screening of
David Attenborough's
Life on Our Planet!
Advanced
Registration
Encouraged!***



Check out for more raffles this fall!

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

Free Spaghetti Luncheon Sponsored by
Coastal Connections

In House Dining Meal Only-No Delivery or Pickup!



Tuesday 010/24/23

12:00pm

Advanced Registration Required!

Stay and Join us for Our Monthly Movie!



1:30pm

The Good House

Starring Sigourney Weaver & Kevin Kline

Popcorn and Snacks Provided!

Community Outreach Column



***Outreach & Human Services
Bridget Batcheller, MSW***



.Happy October! October 1st is International Day of Older Persons, which was originally adopted in 1990 by the United Nations, and observed for the first time in 1991. The purpose of the holiday is to increase awareness of the impact of having an aging population, since almost 900 million people in the world are older than 60 years old, currently. In fact, by 2050 there will be more people over 60 than there are children in the world, for the first time ever. We want people in society to be able to grow old with dignity and fully embrace aging. Longevity is becoming more and more common, so having an older population and how to support them is something we should pay attention to. I appreciate holidays like this because it is a way to educate younger people on the many issues that older adults face. It also reminds us to take the time to be kind and humble and teaches us that we still have much to learn about ourselves and others.

I wanted to share a unique opportunity here – some of you may have heard about it before or read about it but apparently, ping pong, or table tennis, is quite the beneficial game if you're suffering from Parkinson's disease, or other similar ailments. "While all forms of exercise are beneficial, the thing that makes ping-pong unique is that it incorporates a focus on balance, hand-eye coordination, and the rhythm or pace of reciprocal play," says Dr. Elana Clar, a neurologist at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey, and therefore, activates the areas of the brain most impacted by the disease. These areas handle tasks such as planning and problem solving, "so it really hits the trifecta of physical, cognitive and social activities." (Clar), with the goal of trying to improve attention, movement, mood and even social connection. You might be wondering how this group came to fruition. It was inspired by Nenad Bach, a Croatian-American musician and rock star, who had been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and noticed that his motor symptoms and mood were improved by playing ping pong. This non-pharmacological approach to his treatment was encouraged by his neurologists who confirmed his improved status (<https://www.pingpongparkinson.org/about.html>) group

This New York based group emerged into a non-profit, whose model is based on the concept of neuroplasticity – the brain's capacity to make new neurons and connections through challenging physical exercise. Although medication remains the focus for Parkinson's treatment, there is compelling evidence for the need for a regular exercise program. A local resident thought this would be beneficial and looked to an already existing table tennis program at the Newburyport Council on Aging. They've adapted it for those with Parkinson's to be able to play and is welcome to all ages and residents from surrounding towns. The table tennis therapy program is free and meets at the Newburyport Senior Center every Tuesday from 1:15-2:00 pm. The program has been offered since March 2023 and is extending an invitation to Merrimac residents who may struggle with symptoms of Parkinson's or other similar physical and cognitive impairments. For those who are interested or have any questions, please contact Denise or myself (Bridget) at 978-346-9549. We would love to bring you to the Newburyport COA for some beneficial fun!

Denise & I would also like to offer a women's discussion group at the senior center starting October 25th from 1:30-2:30 pm. This group will be a safe and welcoming space for all who feel the need to be in community and have a place to share what has been weighing on your mind. We will also be starting a grief support group this month as well – so be on the lookout for that if that's something that you're needing.



Greeting from your Public Health Nurse!

Fall is here and this is a wonderful season to be outdoors! The weather is neither too hot nor too cold, so take this time to go out for a walk and be physically active outdoors. Better yet, call a friend/neighbor/family member to see if they can join you, having an active social life is just as important as being physically active!

Recently, the Surgeon General raised an alarm about an “Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation” in the United States. A report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) points out that more than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated.

Social connection is a fundamental human need, as essential to survival as shelter, food and water. A lack of social connection poses a significant risk for individual health and longevity. People who are lonely experience emotional pain which can activate the same stress responses in the body as physical pain. When this goes on for an extended period, it can lead to chronic inflammation and reduced immunity. This increases the risk of chronic diseases and can leave a person more susceptible to infectious diseases as well.

Social isolation can significantly increase a person's risk of premature death. This risk rivals those associated with smoking, physical inactivity and obesity. The physical health consequences of insufficient connection include a 29% increased risk of heart disease, a 32% increased risk of stroke, and a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. A lack of social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day! Social isolation is also associated with an increased risk for anxiety, depression and suicide.

The good news is that with greater awareness of this issue, we can take steps to maintain and strengthen our ties to family and friends, expand our social circles and become more involved in the community around us. There are steps that you can take now to increase connection to others by sharing things that you already do, like eating a meal with a friend. We offer lunch delivery and in house dining here at the Senior Center Mon-Thur and we can pick folks up who are unable to drive here (Merrimac only for driving). Please call to sign up

and come join us! Exercising with others is a great social activity and is good for your body. We offer several options for exercise including, chair yoga, vinyasa yoga and meditation. Also, make it a point to get to know your neighbors, use social media or write a letter to a friend/family member. Think about taking a class to learn something new and to expand your circle of friends. We have several classes and activities at the Senior Center ranging from bingo, knitting, painting and rummikub to trips off site for lunch and adventures! There are also several volunteer opportunities here or elsewhere in the community to deepen your sense of purpose and help others. Reach out, we are all looking for opportunities to connect and form new relationships.



COVID VACCINE UPDATE: As of my writing of this article (9/13/23), the FDA and the CDC have approved and made recommendations for an updated covid vaccine. At this time, it is recommended that everyone age 6 months and older receive the updated vaccine which protects against the most recent currently circulating strains of the virus. People should talk to their doctors about when to get the updated shot because it largely depends on individual risk levels and situations. However, for people who are at higher risk of getting severely ill from Covid, including older adults and those who are immunocompromised, it is recommended that they should get a new vaccine as soon as they can.

In order to be best protected as we head into the colder months and respiratory virus season, it is recommended that seniors get the updated covid vaccine, the flu vaccine and the RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) vaccine, which is recommended for those age 60 and older after discussion with their primary care provider.

Be Well!

Information From: <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/loneliness-and-social-isolation-tips-staying-connected>



Blood Pressure Clinics-Oct.2023

Wednesday October 4th

Wednesday October 18th

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!

Office Hours are:

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

August 16th-September 15th

(Supporting Nutrition Program & Food Pantry)

Friends of the Merrimac COA

DAVID HEATING AND

COOLING, INC.

Betty Emery

Marie Joyce Stolarski

Joe Fantini and Fantini Baking Co.

In Honor of Muriel McNair

Norman and Carol Denault

In Honor of Robert Whitcomb

Alberta Peavey

Linda Parker



This Month's Important Events

National Domestic Violence Awareness



Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Fire Prevention Month



National Audiology Awareness Month



The Pool Room is OPEN!

The Pool Room is open! Join us!

Tues & Thurs 9am-12pm or reservation

Do you knit or crochet?

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.

October Office hours will be on Wednesday 10/18/23 from 10:30-11:30am.

We loved seeing everyone at the Health & Wellness Fair in September!

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

Are you aware that in Massachusetts if you are receiving VA Disability Compensation and own property you are entitled to a property exemption due to that VA disability rating? Also, Widows and Widowers of Veterans are also entitled to a property tax exemption if you are receiving VA Disability Indemnity Compensation. If you think you may qualify for these tax exemptions, contact your local Assessor's office to apply for these tax exemptions. The local Assessors offices are currently mailing the tax exemption applications to previous recipients of the tax exemption.

Another benefit for disabled Veterans and their dependents is the Massachusetts Veteran Annuity program. This Annuity of \$2,000 is paid in two installments to Gold Star parents and spouses, Veterans who are rated with a 100% Service-Connected Disability rating or to the surviving spouse of a Veteran who passed away due to a service connected disability. If you need more information regarding this program, please contact Veteran Services for more information.

Looking forward to November, we are already planning events for Veterans Day which will include ceremonies, breakfast and lunches to show appreciation to the many Veterans from the area who have served their country. We will share those details as we get closer to Veterans Day.

In the meantime, feel free to contact the Veteran Services Offices in Amesbury 978-388-8136 or Newburyport 978-462-2201 if you need assistance.

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

***We have free COVID tests and masks
for anyone that needs these items!***