



The Centerpiece

For Active Senior Living

Serving the Community since 1974

April 2024

Newsletter Volume 44 Issue 04

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



Dear Friends:

March was a very cold month, we are hoping for sunshine and warmth for April! We have some great events this month, be sure to look inside!

Continuing with our 50th Anniversary Celebration events, April's special event will be a

Luncheon featuring the culinary talents of Whittier Tech students and a visit with Red Sox Alumni player Rico Petrocelli!

This will be on Wed. 04/24/24 and will be from 11:30am-2pm. The event will be \$8 cash only in advance. Join us for a wonderful afternoon of great food and great company! See the flyer in the inserts and around the Senior Center for more details!

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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Inserts: Monthly Menu , Daily Calendar, Pizza & Poetry, Solar Eclipse, Whittier Luncheon/Red Sox Visit;Monthly Craft, Honoring Choices, Van Trip&Grocery Shopping

APRIL IS NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER MONTH





LGBTQ+ Social Connection

Evening

Join us for a meal and conversation!

Please register in advance

Hot meal provided free of charge



Thursday

5:30pm-8pm April 18th,2024

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, celebrations of life 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!



The Merrimac COA& Senior Center will be closed on Monday April 15,2024 in observance of Patriot's Day. We will reopen at 8:30am on Tuesday 04/16/24.

Van/NEET Rides-Ordering Meals-

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!



Spring is Here! Volunteer!

Become a volunteer driver and help seniors in your community.

You decide when and where to drive.
Mileage reimbursement provided.

Call NEET at 978-388-7474 or visit www.driveforneet.org/volunteer to learn more.





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

Watercolor Class w/Bill Duke

Monday 04/08/24

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.

See the Calendar insert for Games schedule!

Legal Clinic Jason Ebacher, Esq

Thursday 04/04/24 10am-11am

By Appointment , Call Ahead!



Active Events to Keep your Mind Engaged !

Specialty Craft Class !

Featuring Nicole Matthews!

Shell Decoupage Class!

Tuesday 04/23/24 at 1:30pm

Advance Registration Needed!

Space is limited! \$15/cash

Pizza & Poetry Free Pizza!

Theme: Poetry of Spring

Join us to hear poems, discuss your favorites and learn new things! FREE!

Tuesday 04/16/24 at 1:30pm

Advanced Registration Please!

See Insert Flyer for more info!

BINGO

Bingo is in Session!

Mondays

April 1,8,22,29

Upstairs Activity Room

Beverages Welcome, Snack Provided

Limited to 20 Players.



Upcoming Special Events-See Inserts for more details!

Honoring Choices Lunch N Learn

Monday 04/18/24 at 12pm-

Lunch is \$5 and must be reserved in advance.



April Foot Clinic with Barbara Ullman, RN

Tuesday April 2nd, 2024

9:15am-12:15pm



By Appointment Only \$30/per visit/cash only-Limited Slots!

Call Our Public Health Nurse Danielle to Schedule!

Exercise Classes

Advanced Sign Up Required!

Mondays:

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

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

Wednesdays: Chair Yoga w/Mary Van Abs \$5/class

Thursdays:

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

Fridays: NEW CLASS ALERT!!!

The 3B's with Brian!

This class fills up fast, be sure to sign up!!

\$5/class, bring your friends and get ready to

practice the 3B's! Exercise your mind and your body in the same class!



TRIPS & TRAVEL



MERRIMAC SENIOR CENTER ADVENTURES

TRIPS & TRAVEL

VAN TRIP 04/30/24 1:30pm

Make Your Own Sundaes at Putnam Pantry

Bus is \$5 per person, Ice cream on your own.

Dining Out Bells & Romeos –

Join us for lunch

Leaves from COA 11:00am-MYSTERY OUTING!

Tuesday 04/16/24

A different 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!



An Announcement from the Friends of MCOA:

- * **Happy April from the Friends of the MCOA! No April Meeting, we will meet**
- * **April is Volunteer Appreciation Month! Thank you to our volunteers for**

**COA Employment
Opportunity**

Part time

COA Senior Aide

Mon-Thurs.

8:30am-1pm

Year Round Position

Call Brienne

(978) 346-9549

Library News!

Puzzle in Progress!

**Join us to finish the
1000 piece puzzle on
the table! Drop by any-
time!**

**Please remember to
sign out books in the
binder. No due dates!**

**Return books go in the
wooden crate!**

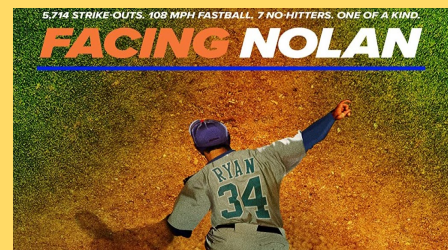
Men's Breakfast

Thurs 04/11/24

9:30am-FREE!



**Featuring a Screen-
ing of the Sports
Documentary:**



Facing Nolan

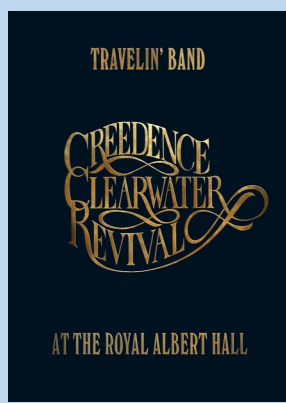
**Advanced
Registration
Required,
Limited Seating!**

BOOKS AGAIN! PLEASE ONLY TITLES FROM 2012-PRESENT! LARGE PRINT NEEDED ESPECIALLY!

on Tuesday 05/07/24 1pm
all you do!



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



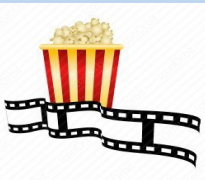
Monthly Movies!

Travelin' Band: Creedence Clearwater

Revival at

Royal Albert Hall

Thurs.04/25/24 at 1:30pm



Never Seen Before Concert & Exclusive Footage!

What Happens Later

Tuesday 04/30/24 1:30pm

Starring Meg Ryan

and David Duchovny



****Popcorn and Snacks Provided****

Community Outreach Column with Bridget Batcheller, MSW



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



.Happy April! Spring is just around the corner.

April is Stress Awareness Month - did you know that?! I didn't! Apparently, it has been recognized as such since 1992 to help raise awareness of the stressors in our daily life and how we can manage stress. Stress is something that happens to everyone; everyone will experience it one way or another, but it will look different from person to person.

When we think of stress, we usually think of it negatively or as a bad thing, but there can actually be a healthy kind of stress! Stress can be a motivator that helps you get daily challenges done or a feeling you get when you're excited. That feeling of excitement is called eustress, or good stress, and it can serve as inspiration, motivation, focus, and even help enhance your performance. Maybe you've felt it while on a date, riding a rollercoaster, playing a game of some sort. You feel nervous about the activity or event happening, but it doesn't last forever.

If you find that feeling of stress is staying with you longer, leaving you tired and on edge, you may be experiencing bad stress, or distress. This is concerning and harmful to your health because it can lead to anxiety, headaches, insomnia, confusion, and poor focus or performance. Bad stress can be acute or chronic, depending on the amount of stressors present in your life and how well you are able to manage them. That's why it is so important that we are able to recognize what stresses us out and create coping strategies or find ways to relax. What stresses one person out is going to look different person to person, but some common stressors include money, relationships, work, school, and discrimination or racial inequities.



How you react to the stress is what determines whether it is good or bad. So if we can find ways to notice the stress without reacting to it, or have tools that we can use to bring us back to a state of calm, it allows us to have some control over these feelings.

Some tools or techniques you can practice to manage your stress are:

Deep breathing

Positive affirmations

Doing things that bring you joy

Setting boundaries for yourself

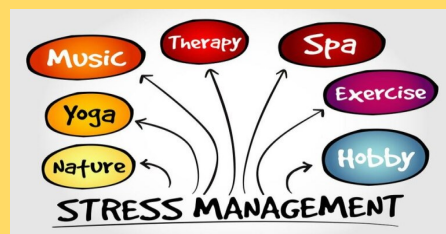
Replacing negative thoughts or reactions to stress with positive ones, or just simply stating that the negative thought you are having is irrational or untrue.

Only taking on what you have time for

Understanding that there are things that will be out of your control

Some of my favorite things to do when I am feeling overwhelmed or stressed out is to listen to calming music, pet my dog, take a warm bath, get a really tight squeeze or hug from a loved one, or read.

What works for you is unique to you and your life and the stressors that you experience. If your stress is too much to manage, please reach out to a health professional or someone you trust. You can reach out to the Behavioral Health Helpline at 833-773-2445. The Merrimac Senior Center is always available if you need someone to talk to, and we offer groups that provide people with a space to be able to vent or share similar experiences, such as our Women's Discussion Group every 3rd Thursday of the month and our Grief Support Group every 4th Thursday of the month.



Greeting from your Public Health Nurse!

April is a time when we really begin to see signs of spring with more buds beginning to form on the trees and flowers just starting to pop up. April is also Parkinson's Awareness Month. Parkinson's Awareness Month is an opportunity to increase awareness about Parkinson's and its symptoms, as well as to support people through this disorder.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that affects the nervous system. It is the second most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's disease. Parkinson's is a long-term mobility disorder where the central nervous system degenerates over time and this impacts the motor system. Symptoms appear slowly, with the first symptom typically being a barely noticeable tremor in one hand. Tremors are common, but the disorder may also cause stiffness or slowing of movement over time. Population prevalence of Parkinson's disease increases from about 1% at age 60 to about 4% by age 80. Approximately 10 million people in the world have Parkinson's disease.

Motor symptoms like trembling, stiffness, and rigidity are usually associated with Parkinson's disease. One side is often affected first, but as the disease progresses, both sides are affected. In the early stages, the person's face may show little or no expression. Their arms may not swing during walking. Speech may become soft or slurred. Over time, disease symptoms often worsen and cognitive decline is common at later stages.

Parkinson's disease is thought to arise from complex interactions between genetic and environmental factors, which remain mostly unknown. Diagnosis of Parkinson's is usually based on a thorough history and examination. Neurologists observe changes in gait, facial expressions, handwriting, and other motor functions. While there is no specific diagnostic test, doctors look for classic signs such as the typical "pill-rolling" tremor, slowness of movement, rigidity, and abnormal gait pattern. Symptom improvement after taking Parkinson's medication, such as carbidopa-levodopa, often confirms the diagnosis.

There is no cure for this disease, and additional research is required. However, awareness, medications, and information can help those who are impacted. There is no one-size-fits all treatment for Parkinson's. Treatment should be tailored to an individual's symptoms via a shared decision-making process with your healthcare provider. Treatment will include exercise and possibly working with physical

therapy, occupational therapy, and/or speech therapy. It may also include medications specific to the needs of the individual, such as medications aimed at improving movement, or at improving non-movement symptoms like constipation, urinary dysfunction, or sleep.



The Parkinson's Foundation has a New England Chapter and provides information and support to individuals and families living with the disease. We know that exercise is beneficial for all of us, especially those living with Parkinson's. The Newburyport Senior Center offers table tennis therapy on most Tuesday afternoons. It is advertised as a modified session and a social event focused on providing a customized opportunity for individuals living with physical or cognitive impairments. All are welcome for ping pong and it is especially helpful for those with Parkinson's, as it helps with dexterity, hand-eye coordination, fine motor control and mental health.

COVID UPDATE: CDC updated and simplified guidance regarding covid so it is more in line with recommendations for other respiratory viruses. If you have covid, stay home and away from others while you feel sick and return to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication. Upon resuming normal activities, the CDC encourages additional prevention strategies for the next 5 days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing hygiene practices, wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping a distance from others, and/or getting tested for respiratory viruses. For people with covid and influenza, treatment is available and can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness.

Be Well!

Information From:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/parkinsons-disease/parkinsons-disease-causes-symptoms-and-treatments>





Blood Pressure Clinics

April 2024

Wednesday April 3rd

Wednesday April 17th

9am-10am



SHARPS Disposal Drop Off Site

New Containers Available for \$ 10

Disposal is free!

Public Health Nurse

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 8:30am-2:30pm

Wednesday 8:30am-10:45am

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

Feb.16th-March 15th

Supporting Nutrition Program

Food Pantry & Programming

Friends of the Merrimac COA

DAVID HEATING AND

COOLING, INC.

Betty Emery

Joe Fantini and Fantini Baking Co.

Alice Alosky

Dave Sharkey

Patricia Sweeney & Family

Merrimac Couplings

Harry Powers

Martin & Gail Casey

Shirley Mitchell

Maryellen Russo



**It's April Fools' Day.
Seems like some folks
have been practicing all year.**



This Month's Important Events

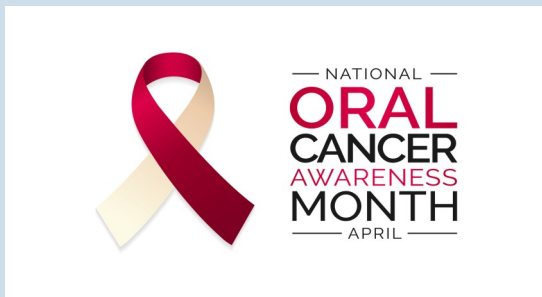
Stress Awareness Month



Parkinson's Awareness Month



Oral Cancer Awareness Month



Autism 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 need transportation, please call to book a trip in advance. A minimum of 4 business days is required to book. Monthly Grocery Shop for April is on

Tues. 04/09/24 10:00am. Call to Register! Limited!

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,

We've made it to spring!

My District Legislative Director, Janice Phillips will have office hours at the Merrimac Senior

Center each month. April Office hours will be on Wed 04/10/24 from 10am-11am.

It has been an interesting month on Beacon Hill. I was proud the Senate unanimously passed the Healthy Youth Act and EARLY ED Act, both of which will provide support to students and parents across the Commonwealth.

I was also grateful to join my colleagues in celebrating the unveiling of the bust of Frederick Douglass and portrait of Abigail Adams in the Senate Chamber. Douglass and Adams were great leaders by any measure, and it is only right they now stand as permanent fixtures in the Massachusetts State House.

Closer to home, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of small business owners. Small businesses are the backbone of our community, and it was a pleasure connecting with these folks to learn more about the struggles and successes they are finding as business owners in our state. As the Senate Chair of the Economic Development Committee, I am grateful for these constructive conversations that will inform the legislature's version of the Governor's Economic Development bill that I will be drafting with the help of my House Co-Chair.

On a more solemn note, the Senate gathered this month to honor the life and legacy of my predecessor, former State Senator Sue Tucker, who passed away in November. Sue was a true trailblazer and served her community with dignity and grace. In her hometown of Andover, the Tucker Family Field stands as permanent recognition of her contributions to the town. She will truly be missed.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if my team can ever be helpful. Connect with me by emailing me at barry.finegold@masenate.gov or by calling my office at 617-722-1612.

Yours in Service,

Barry

Dear Veterans & Families:



March 1st has brought about some positive changes for Veterans and Non-Veterans.

Beginning March 5, 2024, VA Healthcare is making all Veterans who meet the basic service and discharge requirements and were exposed to toxins while serving our country eligible to enroll directly in VA health care. This expansion of care means that all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care. Additionally, Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll. Some Veterans use VA Healthcare as their primary Health plan, however there are many of us that use VA Healthcare as a secondary insurance. Either way you will have access to great healthcare, which can save you money, provide additional services and even if you don't need this care today, you might need it tomorrow, or the next day, or 30 years from now. It is quick and easy to apply, and once you are in, you have access for life. If you want to apply for VA Healthcare, contact the Veteran Services Office @ 978-388-8136.

Effective March 1st, the **Massachusetts Medicare Savings Plan (MSP)** has increased the income limits and has done away with the asset limits for the program. The Medicare Savings Plans are not insurance plans. They are programs that help eliminate or lower your Medicare premiums and other healthcare costs, including prescriptions. It is easy to apply! It takes just 5 minutes, and you could save thousands of dollars! These programs are run by the MassHealth Agency, but you do NOT need to be on a MassHealth Insurance plan to apply. If you are single, have gross monthly income of \$2,824 or less and you are paying the monthly Medicare premium from your Social Security then you qualify. A married couple having a gross income of \$3,833 or less will also qualify. Once accepted for the MSP, you will no longer pay the Medicare premium, Massachusetts will now pay this premium. You do not need to be a Veteran to qualify for the Medicare Savings Plan. If you want to apply for a MSP, Veterans please contact the Veteran Service Office, all others should contact your local Council on Aging for an application.



SENIOR CENTER STAFF

Exec. Director: Brienne R. Walsh

Program Coordinator & Trips: 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: Jon Behrens

Senior Aide & Van Driver : Vacancy

Custodian/Van Driver: Wayne Jones

Food & Nutrition Director: Eileen Murray, CDM, CFPP

Food Pantry Coordinator (Volunteer): Candie Benjamin

Volunteer Receptionists: Kathy Egmont, Bill Gaylaro, Julie Gilchrist

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 Gaylaro, 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

Transportation Jon Behrens
jbehrens@townofmerrimac.com

Danielle Cataldo, RN, MSN

Nursing Services: nurse@townofmerrimac.com

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