



The Centerpiece

For Active Senior Living

Serving the Community since 1974

Feb.2024

Newsletter Volume 44 Issue 02

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:

It sure has been a snowy winter so far! As a reminder, we operate on the same schedule as the Pentucket school district for inclement weather. If there is school, we are open! If Pentucket has a delayed opening or early closure, we will also! If we do close outside of this schedule, we will send out a closure message to the phone number we have on file for you.

Please also be sure to have your walkways and driveways clear for our lunch delivery drivers, help us keep your lunches hot and our drivers safe! I hope that the Groundhog doesn't see his shadow so we can have an early spring! Think Spring!

This month is also Black History Month. We have two screening events this month to commemorate and

celebrate Black History. We hope you will join us!

As I mentioned last month, we will have a special event each month to celebrate our 50th anniversary year! In honor of Valentine's Day, we will have a luncheon and floor show featuring comedian/magician Johnny Pizzi on Wed. 2/14/24 at 12pm. This event is just \$5! Be sure to book your seats in advance as space is

limited!

We will also be offering another Covid vaccine clinic! This clinic will be here at the Center on Friday 02/23/24.

Please look for more details in the inserts this month!

Looking forward to seeing you at our monthly events!

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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Pizza & Poetry, Monthly Craft,
Soup Sampler, Valentine's Luncheon, Anne
Bourbeau NEET Retirement Luncheon,
Covid Vaccine Clinic





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 February 16th, 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 Senior Center will be closed on Monday 02/19/24 in honor of President's Day.

We will reopen on Tuesday, 02/20/2024.

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!

Welcome New Staff Members-Clarification and Update!

Unfortunately, Kristen Mangrum was unable to join our team as the new Transportation Coordinator in January as originally planned.

Please join us in welcoming Jon Behrens to our team as of January 16th! Jon is a Merrimac resident and has a great background in transportation logistics, scheduling and customer relations!

Please feel free to call Jon at (978) 346-9549 x3105 for all your transportation needs~!



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 02/05/2024

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 02/08/24 10am-11am

By Appointment , Call Ahead!



Active Events to Keep your Mind and Body Engaged

Monthly Craft Class with Denise

Free Craft Class-

Valentine Wreath Making~

Tuesday 02/12/24 at 1:30pm

Advance Registration

Requested! Space is limited!
See Insert Pages for More!

Pizza & Poetry

Free Pizza! Love Poems Theme!

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

Tuesday 02/20/24 at 1:30pm

Advanced Registration Please!

BINGO

Bingo is in Session!

Mondays

February 5,12,26

Upstairs Activity Room

Beverages Welcome, Snack Provided

Limited to 20 Players.



Upcoming Special Events-See Inserts for more details!

Intergenerational February Vacation Movie Day! Featuring Leo!

Parents & Grandparents Bring the Kids! Wed 02/21/24 at 1:30pm-FREE!
Snacks, drinks, surprises! Dress comfy/PJ's! * This is not a drop off event*

Women's Discussion Group Thursday 02/15/24 at 1:30pm

February Foot Clinic with Barbara Ullman, RN

Tuesday Feb 6th 2024, 9-12:30pm

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



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: No Classes on Friday



**Stay tuned for new classes coming this
Spring!**

MERRIMAC SENIOR CENTER ADVENTURES TRIPS & TRAVEL

For full event details request a flyer or call the center!

Dining Out Bells & Romeos –

Join us for lunch –Mystery Lunch Outing

Leaves from COA 11:00 AM Thursday 02/15/24

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!

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:

* **Happy New Year from the Friends of the MCOA! Join us at our monthly m**

*Friends of the
Merrimac COA
Monthly Meeting*

*Tuesday
02/13/24*

At 1pm

All are Welcome!

Men's Breakfast

Thurs 02/08/24

9am

**Join us for a hot
breakfast and to talk
cars and browse a
vintage car magazine
collection with local car
enthusiast**

Terry Sweeney!



MAKING BOOKS AGAIN! PLEASE ONLY TITLES FROM 2012-PRESENT!

meetings! See the Box Below!

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



Celebrate Black History Month 2024

Monthly Movie!

Harriet

Starring Cynthia Erivo, Leslie Odom, Jr.

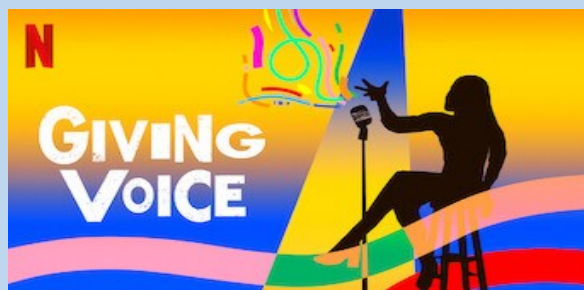
Tues. 02/06/24 at 1:30pm

Popcorn and Snacks Provided



Giving Voice –A Documentary

Tuesday 02/27/24 1:30pm



Back by Popular Demand!

Our 2nd Annual Soup Sampler– Free(Dine In)

Thursday 02/22/24 at 12pm

Join us for homemade soups, an array of breads, cheeses, crackers and more!

Be ready to vote for your favorite! \$5/person

Advanced Registration Required!

Community Outreach Column with Bridget Batcheller, MSW



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



. Happy Black History Month!

Black History Month was created by Carter G Woodson, after traveling to Chicago for a 50th anniversary emancipation celebration. He was so inspired by all of the exhibits displaying African American progress, that he started the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH). He went on to create Negro History Week in February of 1926, 11 years after the formation of the ASNLH. Most people think he chose February because it was both President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass' birthday, two individuals that played a prominent role in Black history and symbolize freedom. However, February was chosen for reasons of tradition and reform; the traditions of commemorating these two individuals through study of Black history and reformation of the way people celebrated Black history through these two individuals. Carter Woodson felt like history was made by the people, not necessarily by important figures. He wanted the Black community to focus on the many individuals who also contributed to the progress of African Americans. Negro History Week became so popular that it soon permeated into every aspect of life for African Americans. Schools were teaching Black history alongside US History and college students were creating their own version of Negro History Week, turning it into Negro History Month. In 1986, the US Congress designated Black History Month in February, with the purpose being to bring awareness to the struggle for freedom and equality.

Every year, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) dedicates a theme for Black History Month. At first, a theme was created to focus the attention of the public. Over the years, the themes have also provided a chance to reflect on how the people of African descent in the United States view themselves, as well as the influence of social movements on racial ideologies, and the aspirations of the Black community. This year's theme of 2024 is African American and the Arts. I am going to share what the ASALH has written on their page regarding African American art:

“African American art is infused with African, Caribbean, and the Black American lived experiences. Artistic and cultural movements such as the New Negro, Black Arts, Black Renaissance, hip-hop, and Afrofuturism, have been led by people of African descent and set the standard for popular trends around the world. For centuries, Western intellectuals denied or minimized the contributions of people of African descent to the arts as well as history, even as their artistry in many genres was mimicked and/or stolen.

The suffering of those in bondage gave birth to the spirituals, the nation's first contribution to music. Blues musicians such as Robert Johnson, McKinley 'Muddy Waters' Morganfield and Riley "BB" B. King created and nurtured a style of music that became the bedrock for gospel, soul, and other still popular (and evolving) forms of music. Black contributions to literature include works by poets like Phillis Wheatley, essays, autobiographies, and novels by writers such as David Walker and Maria Stewart.

In the 1920s and 30s, the rise of the Black Renaissance and New Negro Movement brought the Black Arts to an international stage. Members Of

the armed forces, such as James Reese Europe, and artists such as Langston Hughes, Josephine Baker and Lois Mailou Jones brought Black culture and Black American aesthetics internationally, and Black culture began its ascent to becoming a dominant cultural movement to the world. In addition to the Harlem Renaissance, today we recognize that cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New Orleans also were home to many Black artists.

The 1960s continued this thread through the cultural evolution known as the Black Arts Movement, where artists covered issues such as pride in one's heritage and established art galleries and museum exhibitions to show their own work, as well as publications such as Black Art. This period brought us artists such as Alvin Ailey, Judith Jamison, Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni and Sonia Sanchez. The movement would not have been as impactful without the influences from the broader Black world, especially the Negritude movement and the writings of Frantz Fanon.

In 1973, in the Bronx, New York Black musicians (i.e. DJ Kool Here and Coke La Rock) started a new genre of music called hip-hop, which comprises five foundational elements (DJing, MCing, Graffiti, Break Dancing and Beat Boxing). Hip-hop performers also used technological equipment such as turntables, synthesizers, drum machines, and samplers to make their songs. Since then, hip-hop has continued to be a pivotal force in political, social, and cultural spaces and was a medium where issues such as racial violence in the inner city, sexism, economic disinvestment and others took the forefront. The term Afrofuturism was used approximately 30 years ago in an effort to define cultural and artistic productions (music, literature, visual arts, etc.) that imagine a future for Black people without oppressive systems, and examines how Black history and knowledge intersects with technology and science. Afrofuturist elements can be found in the music of Sun Ra, Rashan Roland Kirk, Janelle Monáe and Jimi Hendrix. Other examples include sci-fi writer Octavia Butler's novels, Marvel film Black Panther, and artists such as British-Liberian painter Lina Iris Viktor, Kenyan-born sculptor Wangechi Mutu, and Caribbean writers and artists such as Nalo Hopkinson, and Grace Jones.”

I'm sure we've all benefited from the contributions of African American art in some way and we should be sure to celebrate that, as well as the progress that African Americans have made and support their aspirations for a more just & free future.

We will be viewing a documentary this month called Giving Voice, which celebrates and discusses the accomplishments and legacy of playwright August Wilson. Please join us for this viewing, as well as our monthly movie!



Greeting from your Public Health Nurse!

February is American Heart Month – a time when the nation spotlights heart disease, which is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. Heart disease is also the leading cause of death worldwide, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). One person dies every 33 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease. The term “heart disease” refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease in the U.S. is coronary artery disease (CAD), which affects the blood flow to the heart. Approximately 1 in 20 adults age 20 and older have CAD. The decreased blood flow associated with CAD can lead to a heart attack. Early Action is critical for heart attack, so it is important to know the warning signs. Symptoms of a heart attack can include chest pain/discomfort, upper back/neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea/vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, dizziness, and shortness of breath. There are many risk factors for heart disease including medical conditions, lifestyle choices and genetics. Some of the key risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, and smoking. About half of people in the United States have at least one of these three risk factors. There are several other medical conditions and lifestyle choices that can also put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including diabetes, overweight/obesity, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use. Understanding risk factors is important. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and is often referred to as a “silent killer” because it typically does not have any symptoms. High blood pressure occurs when the pressure of the blood in your vessels is too high. If the high pressure is not controlled, it can affect your heart and other major organs of your body, including your kidneys and brain. You can lower your blood pressure with lifestyle changes or with medicine to reduce your risk for heart disease and heart attack. This is why it is so important to routinely measure your blood pressure. Blood pressure clinics are offered on the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Senior Center. I am also happy to do blood pressure at any time I am in, give me a call to schedule or just drop in! Unhealthy blood cholesterol levels are another risk factor for heart disease. Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance made by the liver or found in certain foods. Although the liver makes

enough cholesterol for your body’s needs, we often get excess cholesterol from the foods we eat. This extra cholesterol can build up in the walls of the arteries, including in the arteries of the heart. This leads to the arteries getting narrower and can decrease blood flow to the heart, brain, kidneys, and other parts of the body. High blood cholesterol usually has no symptoms. The only way to know what your cholesterol level is, is to get your cholesterol checked by your primary care provider (PCP). This is usually done during a routine physical exam. Another medical condition that can increase the risk of death from heart disease is diabetes mellitus. Diabetes causes a build-up of glucose (sugar) in the blood. Your body needs glucose for energy. Insulin is a hormone made in the pancreas that helps transform glucose from food to your body’s cells for energy. If you have diabetes, your body doesn’t make enough insulin, can’t effectively use its own insulin, or both. Talk with your doctor about ways to prevent or manage diabetes and control other risk factors. Lifestyle choices can also increase your risk for heart disease. A lack of physical activity is another lifestyle choice that can also increase the chances of having other medical conditions that are risk factors, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure levels and raise the risk for heart disease. Cigarette smoking can damage the heart and blood vessels, which increases your risk for heart conditions such as atherosclerosis and heart attack. Lastly, genetic factors play a role in high blood pressure, heart disease, and other related conditions. However, it is also likely that people with a family history of heart disease share common environments and other factors that may increase their risk. The most important thing is to speak with your PCP to determine your risk, both related to medical conditions and lifestyle choices. Know your blood pressure, make it a goal to eat a diet low in saturated fats/cholesterol and sodium and stay active and connected to others in your community!



Be Well! From: <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm>





Blood Pressure Clinics-Jan.2024

Wednesday February 7

Wednesday February 21

9am-10am

Be sure to sign up and qualify for the Wellness Challenge!

Get those Blood Pressures Readings !



SHARPS Disposal Drop Off Site

New Containers Available for \$ 10

Disposal is free!

Public Health Nurse

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 8:30am-2:30pm

Wednesdays 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

Dec.16th-Jan.15th

(Supporting Nutrition Program & Food Pantry)

Friends of the Merrimac COA

DAVID HEATING AND

COOLING, INC.

Betty Emery

Joe Fantini and Fantini Baking Co.

Gail & David Riley

Steven Emery

Raymond & Janet Reyes



This Month's Important Events

American Heart Month



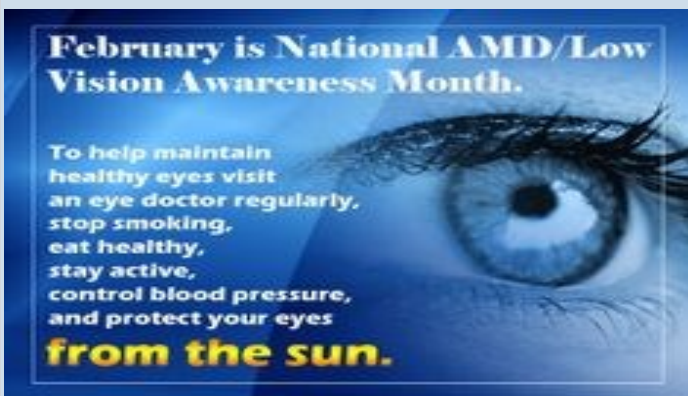
Black History Month



National Cancer Prevention Month



National AMD/Low Vision 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. We will do our best to accommodate requests. A minimum of 4 business days is required to book. Look for monthly grocery trips in March! 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,

Happy New Year, everyone!

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

Center each month.

February Office hours will be on Thursday 2/7/24 from 10am-11am.

It's the second year of the legislative session on Beacon Hill, and with some important deadlines coming up, I am anticipating favorable movement on my legislation about data privacy, health care, veterans' services, and more.

As Senate Chair of the Economic Development committee, I will be working on an Economic Development bill that invests in the people and industries that power the Commonwealth's economy.

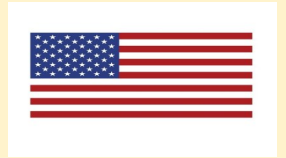
This January, I was pleased to welcome my first State House intern of the year. Jacob was born and raised in North Andover and currently attends the Eisenberg School at UMass. He did great work with the team!

Closer to home, I had the opportunity to tour police barracks in Andover and Newbury to witness firsthand how the Massachusetts State Police operate to protect our state. The men and women of the State Police are so impressive, and I am grateful for all they do to keep our communities safe.

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:

The Merrimack Valley Transit Authority (MEVA) has announced they will be starting a twice weekly, Wednesday and Friday, shuttle in January 2024 for Veterans going to the VA Bedford medical facility.

Veterans may sign up for this service and reserve a ride by calling the MEVA office @ 978-469-6878 and pressing option 3.

Jeremiah Murphy
Veterans Agent





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 : Unique Kendrick

Custodian/Van Driver: Wayne Jones

Food & Nutrition Director: Eileen Murray, CDM, CFPP

Food Pantry Coordinator (Volunteer): Candie Benjamin

Volunteer Receptionists: Kathy Egmont, Bill Gaylarido, 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 Gaylarido, 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!