



The Centerpiece

For Active Senior Living

Serving the Community since 1974

March 2024

Newsletter Volume 44 Issue 03

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:

We are welcoming Spring back this month! We have some great events coming your way! Monthly Grocery Shopping restarts on Tuesday 03/5/24. Take the pressure off of shopping and ride the van! Breakfast with the Chiefs will be on 03/07/24 and will have updates from Town Departments along with a free hot breakfast! Our big celebration this month will be with our St. Patrick's Day Luncheon. This event is FREE! Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage will be served along with Irish Folk Songs and

Stories with Tim Van Egmond. The entertainment portion of this event is generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the luncheon is sponsored by BathPlanet. Thank you to both for making this event possible! Seating is limited, be sure to call on 3/1 to reserve!

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

5:30pm-8pm March 21, 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!

Coffee&

Estate Planning

Friday 03/8/24 at 10am

Join Attorney Gerry Shyavitz for an

information filled

session on estate

planning as you age.

Free refreshments

provided !

Call to register

(978) 346-9549

Van/NEET Rides-Ordering Meals-Be A Lucky Charm!

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!

Be a Lucky Charm Volunteer to Drive

Older adults in your community need help with transportation.

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

BINGO

Bingo is in Session!

Mondays

March 4,11,18,25

Upstairs Activity Room

Beverages Welcome, Snack Provided

Limited to 20 Players.



Watercolor Class w/Bill Duke

Monday 03/04/2024

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 03/07/24 10am-11am

By Appointment , Call Ahead!



Active Events to Keep your **Mind and Body Engaged**

Monthly Craft Class with Denise

Free Craft Class-

Spring/Easter Wreath!

Tuesday 03/13/24 at 1:30pm

Advance Registration Needed!

Space is limited!

Pizza & Poetry Free Pizza!

Theme: Poetry of Irish Women

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

Tuesday 03/19/24 at 1:30pm

Advanced Registration Please!

Upcoming Special Events-See Inserts for more details!

CTI Fair Housing Lunch N Learn

Monday 03/11/24 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!

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!

Beginning Friday March 15, 2024 at 10am

\$5/class, bring your friends and get ready to practice the 3B's! Exercise your mind and your body in the same class! See the Insert for More Details!



TRIPS & TRAVEL

MERRIMAC SENIOR CENTER ADVENTURES TRIPS & TRAVEL

VAN TRIP 3/26/24 10:00am Coffee Time Bake Shop

Join us at the Salem, MA bakery specializing in the traditional Paczki Polish Donut and numerous other mouthwatering treats. Top that off with a lunch stop at the Famous Bill & Bobs Roast Beef (& more), Dine on own. *Seating is limited! Must Register! \$5.00 Bus *Ask about pre ordering your bakery selections!

Dining Out Bells & Romeos –

Join us for lunch –The Hungry Traveler in Salisbury

Leaves from COA 11:30 AM for a 12pm reservation

Tuesday 03/12/24

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!

An Announcement from the Friends of MCOA:

- * **Happy March from the Friends of the MCOA! No March or April Meeting**
March is Employee Appreciation Month! Thank you to our staff for your

***St. Patrick's Day
Luncheon!***

Thur 03/14/24

12 noon

Free Event!

Registration

Required!

***See the Insert for
Details!***

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!**

Breakfast w/Chiefs

Thurs 03/07/24

9am-FREE!



***Join us to hear
what's new in
Merrimac!
Election updates,
Spring Town Meeting
Info and More!***

***Advanced
Registration
Required,
Limited Seating!***

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

g, we will meet on Tuesday 05/07/24 1pm
commitment to our community!

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



Monthly Movies!

Last Flight Home-:A Documentary

Tues.03/12/24 at 1:30pm

Brought to the COA via GOOD DOCS

On an unremarkable suburban street, we find Eli Timoner in his final days and discover an extraordinary life, one filled with wild achievements, tragic loss and, above all, enduring love.

See the Insert Flyer for More Details

Damsel

Tuesday 03/26/24 1:30pm

**Starring Millie Bobby Brown,
Angela Bassett and Robin Wright
Popcorn and Snacks Provided**





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



Happy Women's History Month! You may have known that March 8th is International Women's Day, but did you know that March is Women's History Month? If not, now you know!

Why is there a Women's History Month? "The origins of Women's History Month date back to 1978 in Santa Rosa, California, when the Education Task Force of Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women planned a "Women's History Week" celebration during the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day." This inspired other organizations to celebrate women's history week in their own way.

In 1980, President Carter proclaimed March 2-8 to be National Women's History Week, and continued to issue resolutions and proclamations every year, designating a week in March for National Women's History Week. Until 1987, when Congress passed Pub. L. 100-9, proclaiming March as Women's History Month, an initiative led by the National Women's History Project.

The purpose of designating a whole month to Women's History is to celebrate and honor the contributions women have made to history and society. There have been many achievements and contributions made, too many to list here! There is a website called Women's History Month (<https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/index.html>) where you can learn about Women's History and a guide to women's history resources at the Library of Congress.



I am proud and honored to work with such amazing and inspiring women here at the Merrimac Senior Center!

Repair Fair:

The Merrimac Senior Center is looking to host our very first Repair Fair! A repair fair is a community event where community members will volunteer their skills for other community members looking to have some of their household items fixed.

That being said.. we're looking for volunteers to offer their skills and help with repairs! If you are someone who is handy, has a certain skill set or have a general interest, please give us a call! Some examples of skills we are looking for include:

- Eyeglass repair
- Tool/knife sharpening
- Sewing/mending
- Bike repair
- Small furniture and appliance repair

If you have a skill set you'd like to offer that is not listed above, please give us a call! Stay tuned for more info!



Greeting from your Public Health Nurse!

Welcome Spring!

March is Save Your Vision Month: The American Optometric Association champions this campaign. It aims to increase awareness about good eye care and regular eye examination.

Regular eye care should be a priority similar to regular physical exams, healthy eating and physical activity. To keep your eyes healthy, get an annual comprehensive dilated eye exam. A comprehensive dilated eye exam is not the same exam you have for glasses or contact lenses. It involves an eye care professional using drops to widen, or dilate the pupils. He/she will then use a special magnifying lens to examine your eyes to check for common vision problems and eye diseases. It's the best way to find out if you need glasses or contacts, or have indications of the early stages of any eye-related diseases. Early detection and treatment can help save your vision.

Typically, age related conditions start in our 40s with needing glasses to see things that are up close, or to distinguish colors, like shades of blue, black and green. Other changes include needing more light to see well and more time to adjust to changing levels of light (e.g., going from a room that is dark to one that is brightly lit). Those changes are a normal part of aging. However, as we get older we are at a higher risk for developing age related eye conditions. Vision changes can make it difficult to perform everyday activities, such as reading, walking safely, taking medications, performing self-care and household tasks, and driving.

There are several ways you can help protect your vision: First, (as mentioned above) get regular comprehensive dilated eye exams. Also, ensure that you know your family's eye health history. It's important to know if anyone has been diagnosed with an eye disease or conditions, since some are hereditary. Eat right to protect your sight: In particular, eat plenty of dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, or collard greens, and fish that is high in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, albacore tuna, trout, and halibut. Make sure to maintain a healthy weight and monitor your blood pressure and control diabetes (if you have it). Quit smoking or never start. Wear sunglasses that block 99 percent-100 percent of ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation. Make sure to wash your hands before taking

out your contacts and clean your contact lenses properly to avoid infection.

Age related eye conditions affect different parts of the eye. If they are not caught early and treated, they can lead to loss of vision and blindness.

Cataracts are a common condition in older adults and in people with diabetes. Cataracts involve a clouding of the lens of the eye. Cataract surgery is one of the most common procedures done in the U.S. and can restore vision loss in those who need it. Diabetic retinopathy is the most common condition among people with diabetes. It damages the blood vessels in the retina, usually in both eyes. Laser surgery can be performed if you have advanced stage diabetic retinopathy. Otherwise, your provider may suggest controlling your blood sugar levels, blood pressure and cholesterol. Age related macular degeneration (AMD) is another common condition in people age 60 and older. AMD gradually destroys the macula (the part of the eye that provides sharp central vision) and comes in either wet or dry forms, each of which requires different techniques to treat the condition. Glaucoma describes a group of diseases that are all caused by a build up of fluid in the eye that damages the optic nerve. Eye drops or pills are often prescribed to control glaucoma. Laser surgery is another way that can open clogged areas so that the fluid can drain from along the optic nerve. Lastly, low vision is a term used to describe those who have age related eye conditions that even with interventions such as glasses/contact lenses, medicine and surgery, everyday tasks like reading/writing, cooking, shopping and seeing the TV are still hard to do. However, help is available. There are low vision specialists that can offer a variety of services that help make the most of your remaining vision so that people can continue to enjoy friends, family and hobbies.

Be Well! Information

From: <https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/outreach-resources/outreach-materials?topic=https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/healthyvisionmonth/index.htm>





Blood Pressure Clinics

March 2024

Wednesday March 6th

Wednesday March 27th

9am-10am

**Please note the change in weeks
for March only!**



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

Jan.16th-Feb.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.

Elaine Drolet

Merrimac COA Rug Hookers

Patrick Borz

Linda Buck

Ray Doucette

Shirley Mitchell

Maryellen Russo



Thank you !

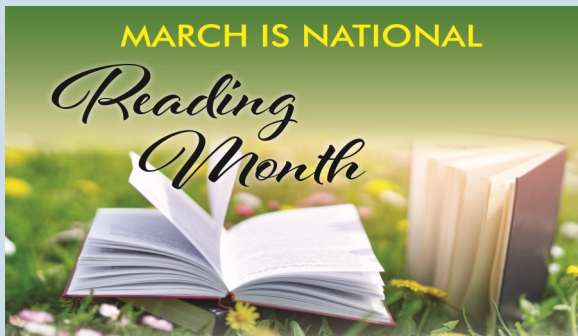


This Month's Important Events

Women's History Month



National Reading Month



Disability Awareness Month



Brain Injury Awareness Month



The Pool Room is OPEN!

The Pool Room is open! Join us!

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

Tues. 03/05/24 10:30am. 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,

Spring is almost here!

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

Center each month.

March Office hours will be on Tuesday 03/12/24 at from 10am-11am.

This month on Beacon Hill, I was grateful that many of my legislative priorities including education, cybersecurity, health care, and workforce development received favorable outcomes and will be moving forward in the legislative process!

In addition to these bills, I also filed legislation that would oversee deepfake political ads. Deepfakes, or synthetic videos made using artificial intelligence, are often made to confuse and distort truth. My bill would help Massachusetts voters continue to make informed decisions on election day. Technology has many advantages, but we need smart guardrails to ensure it is used constructively.

Closer to home, I had the opportunity to catch up with my good friend, Chris Manni, Chair of Merrimac's Select Board at Ovedia Artisan Chocolates owned by Antoinette Whitney, a Merrimac resident. It is always a joy to witness the strengths of our community in action!

On a personal note, I am so proud of my daughter who recently celebrated her senior night with the Andover High School Hockey team. Her mother and I could not be prouder of her skill and hard work, both on and off the ice.

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:

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.

Another Massachusetts Veteran program is the Chapter 115 program which is administered by your local Veteran Services office. The program provides financial assistance to Veterans, Widow/Widower of Veterans and Children of Veterans as well as Adult Children if they were disabled prior to the age of 18 years old. The monthly income limit for this program is \$2,430 for a single applicant, \$3,287 for a married applicant. There is an asset limit of \$8,400 for single and \$16,600 for a married couple.

There are many other benefits that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides to its residents, a complete listing of benefits can be found in the Secretary of States publication which can be found on-line @ www.mass.gov/doc/2021-veterans-laws-and-benefits-guide/download

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



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 Gaylardo, 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 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

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!***