



# The Centerpiece

## For Active Senior Living

Serving the Community since 1974

Oct. 2024

Newsletter Volume 44 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](http://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:*

*The cooler weather has arrived! Pumpkins, hot cider, and fall festivals are all a wonderful part of this*

*season! We have some great programs lined up for this month! Join us for Men's Breakfast, our Fall Foliage Trip, our new Barber Shop with Trevor Cox and our Annual Flu Clinic. Be sure to call to register for these programs and much more!*

*Our Annual Craft Fair promises to be better than ever, stop by on Sat.10/19/24 from 9-2 to start your holiday shopping! We still have a couple of tables left and are always seeking volunteers for the day of! Call Sandy for more details!*

*Finally, if you are in need of help with your yearly Fuel Assistance application or want to see if you qualify for the program, please call and schedule an appointment with me!*

*Be sure to read all the pages thoroughly and check out the inserts for all the details on this month's programs!*

*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, Festival of Trees, Flu Clinic, Veteran's Luncheon, Red Sox Trophy Day, more!







## 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 10/17/2024

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, graduation 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 10/14/2024 in observation of Indigenous Peoples/ Columbus Day**

**We will reopen on Tuesday 10/15/24 at 8:30am.**

## Van/NEET Rides-Ordering Meals Fall Foliage Trip

### 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](mailto: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!

## FOLIAGE VAN TRIP

Tuesday Oct 15, 2024 9:00am-4:00pm

Scenic Kancamagus Highway Foliage Road Trip With Lunch stop on your own. Limited to 14 seats!

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED \$7.00 @ SIGN UP!





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

## Red Sox Trophy Visit

Thursday 11/14/24

**FREE EVENT!**

12pm-1:30pm

Join us for a hot dog lunch and see the Red Sox World Series Trophy! Take your picture with a piece of history!

**Seating is limited!**

**Advanced Registration is Required**



## Active Events to Keep your Mind Engaged !

Gerry Shyavitz, Attorney

Estate Planning Q& A

Coffee Hour

Friday 10/11/24

10am

Please sign up in advance so we have enough refreshments!

Legal Clinic Jason Ebacher, Esq

Thursday Oct.10th 2024

10-11am, by appointment only.

See the Calendar insert for Games schedule!

## BINGO

**Bingo is in Session!**

**Mondays**

**October 7,21,28**

**Upstairs Activity Room**

**Beverages Welcome, Snack Provided**

**Limited to 20 Players.**



*Upcoming Special Events-See Inserts for more details!*

Whittier Tech-Poet's Inn-Holiday Buffet Luncheon

Thursday 12/05/24 -\$19 per person(includes tax & tip)

Bus Departs at 11am-Cost of Bus\$4

Join us for a lovely meal, multiple choices, call today!

RSVP Required by 11/21/24

Foot Clinic -Every other month, Appointments Required!

Tuesday 11/12/24 9-3pm w/Marie Anderson NP of Jolie Pieds

Limited Slots! Call Danielle for details !



**Exercise & Wellness Classes**

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

**Tuesdays: Meditation & Yoga w/Bianca \$7-**

**Bianca is on Maternity Leave until the end of 2024! Congratulations to Bianca!**

**Wednesdays: Meditation w/Nancy at 10am \$5**

**Beginning 08/14/24-NEW CLASS!**

**Join Merrimac resident, Nancy Masia, BS, Human Services, Certified Meditation & Reiki I&II for an infusion of calm, relaxation and wellness.**

**Thursdays:**

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

**No class with Pam on 10/28 & 10/31**

**Fridays: The 3B's with Brian! \$5/class!**

**Advanced Registration Preferred!**



## TRIPS & TRAVEL

### MERRIMAC SENIOR CENTER ADVENTURES

#### FALL TRIPS & TRAVEL

VAN TRIP Tuesday 10/29/24 at 1:30pm

Bus is \$5/per person

Join us to visit Neat Repeats, a fun thrift shopping experience in Groveland!

Free Refreshments Provided!

Call Denise for more info! Limited Seating!

***Dining Out Bells & Romeos –No Trip for October 2024***

***Check out the Fall Foliage Trip on Pg. 4! Stay tuned for Nov.2024 !***

Bus Leaves from COA promptly at 11am

*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 October from the Friends of the MCOA!**
- \* **Join us on 10/19/24 from 9-2pm for the Annual Craft Fair!!**



**Join us for**

**The Barbershop!**

**Wed.10/16/24**

**1pm-3pm**

**With Professional  
Barber Trevor Cox!**

**\$15/cash per cut !**

**Snacks while you wait!**

**Advanced Registration  
Required!**

**Veteran's Luncheon**

**Thursday 11/07/24**

**12pm**

**Free to Merrimac  
Veterans**

**Join us for a delicious  
3 course luncheon!**

**Registration Required**

**By 11/1/24.**

**(978) 346-9549**

**Men's Breakfast**

**Thursday**

**October 10,2024**

**9:30am**

**Bring your appetite!**

**FREE!!!**

**Hot breakfast w/coffee  
and juice!**

**Advanced Registration  
Required!**



**BCBS Medicare  
Presentation  
w/Heather Hurd**

**Wed.10/23/24**

**11am**

**Refreshments**

**Served!**

**RSVP !**



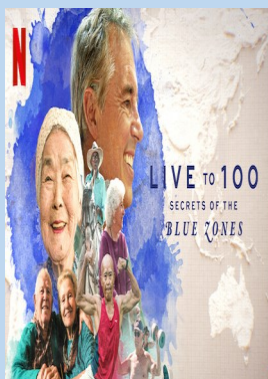
**WHEELCHAIRS, TRANSFER CHAIRS, KNEE SCOOTERS AND ROLLATORS UNTIL NOTICE WHILE WE INVENTORY OUR MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SHED!**



***Please Note: We are accepting food pantry donations! Please call if it is a large dropoff!***

## Monthly Movies!

**Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones: A Documentary**  
**Tuesday 10/08/24**



**1:30pm**



## Wicked Little Letters

Starring Olivia Colman

**Tues 10/29/24 at 1:30pm**

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



## Outreach & Human Services



### **Food Assistance:**

Our Neighbor's Table: 978-388-1907  
Pettengill House Food Pantry: 978-463-8801  
Community Action, Amesbury: 978-388-2570  
Newbury Food Pantry: 978-358-1077

### **Transportation:**

Northern Essex Elder Transport Inc (NEET): 978-388-7474  
Merrimack Valley Transit (MEVA): 978-469-6878  
MassHealth PT-1: 1-800-841-2900

### **Financial assistance:**

St Vincent's De Paul - 978-346-8604  
Pettengill House - 978-463-8801  
Community Action, Haverhill - 978-373-1971  
Community Action, Amesbury - 978-388-2570  
Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program  
mortgage/rent/utility assistance

### **Utility Assistance:**

Merrimack Light Department has a few options for payment plans  
Fuel Assistance through Community Action, Haverhill 978-373-1971  
MA Good Neighbor Energy Fund - 800-334-3047  
Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program - Community Teamwork Inc (CTI), Lowell 978-459-0551

### **MassHealth Applications:**

Anna Jaques Hospital  
Pettengill House 978-463-8801  
Marielys Perez at Community Action Inc, Haverhill - 978-989-1291

### **Financial assistance:**

St Vincent's De Paul - 978-346-8604  
Pettengill House - 978-463-8801  
Community Action, Haverhill - 978-373-1971  
Community Action, Amesbury - 978-388-2570  
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### **MassHealth Applications:**

Anna Jaques Hospital  
Pettengill House 978-463-8801  
Marielys Perez at Community Action Inc, Haverhill - 978-989-1291

### **Housing Assistance:**

Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Programs (CHAMP) - contact your local housing authority  
Fair Housing Program at CTI, 978-654-5637  
CTI Section 8 Housing Search: Ja'net Jusino 978-373-1971, ext. 341,  
[jjusino@communityactioninc.org](mailto:jjusino@communityactioninc.org)  
Emergency Shelter - 866-584-0653  
Pharmacy Outreach Program - 866-633-1617

Assists with questions on prescriptions, lowering costs and evaluating insurance plans to find the right prescription

### Greeting from your Public Health Nurse!

I can't believe it is already October! Fall is a wonderful time of year to enjoy the cooler air and to spend time outside. However, along with falling leaves and pumpkins, this time of year also marks the beginning of respiratory virus season.

The 3 main viruses that we are thinking about during this time of year remain the same – COVID, Influenza (flu) and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Fortunately, we have vaccines for each of these viruses that can provide protection from severe disease and can help prevent hospitalizations.

The FDA approved and authorized the 2024-2025 COVID vaccines on August 22, 2024. The COVID vaccine has been updated to reflect the most commonly circulating variants. The CDC recommends that everyone ages 6 months and older get an updated vaccine to help protect from severe disease, hospitalization, and death. It is especially important to get your 2024–2025 COVID vaccine if you are ages 65 and older, are at high risk for severe COVID, or have never received the vaccine. Vaccine protection decreases over time, so it is important to stay up to date with your COVID vaccine.

To review, the CDC released updated guidance last spring for people who test positive for COVID. The new guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks from a variety of respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID, flu, and RSV. They recommend that when people get sick with a respiratory virus, they stay home and away from others. For people with COVID and flu, treatment is available that can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness. If you develop symptoms of a respiratory virus, it is important to test yourself so that you can get treatment and protect others in your community from getting sick. The recommendations suggest returning 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.

Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take additional prevention strategies for the next 5 days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing hygiene practices and wearing a well-fitting mask. Free at home COVID test kits are available at the Merrimac Senior Center and at

Town Hall. Please stop by to grab a box!

Next up is the flu vaccine. Influenza (flu) is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes death. It is recommended that everyone ages



6 months and older receive a yearly flu vaccine because immune protection from vaccination declines over time. Also, similar to covid, the flu viruses are constantly changing. Vaccines are updated to protect against the viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming flu season. Getting vaccinated by September/October is ideal, though vaccination is recommended for as long as the flu is circulating during the season. Thank you to those who came to the flu vaccine clinic held at the Merrimac Senior Center on October 4th!

Lastly, we will review RSV and RSV vaccine. Respiratory syncytial virus, (RSV) is a common respiratory virus that infects the lungs, but can also affect the nose and throat. RSV does not usually cause severe illness in healthy adults and children. However, adults ages 75 and older, adults with chronic heart/lung disease, adults with weakened immune systems and those living in nursing homes/long-term care facilities are at greatest risk for severe disease.

CDC recommends an RSV vaccine if you are ages 75 or older or if you are ages 60-74 and have a risk factor for severe RSV disease. RSV vaccine is not currently an annual vaccine, meaning older adults do not need to get a dose every RSV season. That means if you have already gotten an RSV vaccine, you do not need to get another one at this time. Eligible adults can get an RSV vaccine at any time, but the best time to get vaccinated is in late summer and early fall. This timing ensures you're protected by the time RSV starts to spread in your community and ensures you get maximum protection during the winter months.

Be Well!

Information From: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm>  
s\_cid=SEM.MS:PAI:RG\_AO\_MS\_TM\_A18\_F-FLU-GetVaccinated- <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/>



**Blood Pressure Clinics**

**October 2024**

**Wednesday Oct.2nd**

**Wednesday Oct.16th**

**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

**August 16th-September 15th**

**Supporting Nutrition Program**

**Food Pantry & Programming**

Friends of the Merrimac COA

DAVID HEATING AND

COOLING, INC.

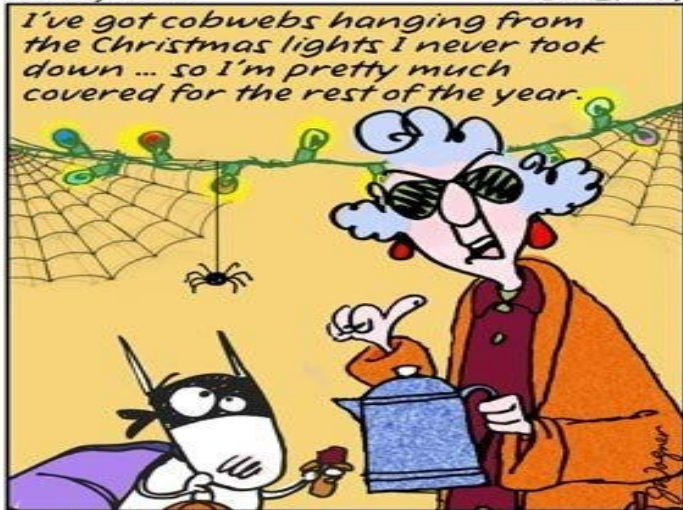
Joe Fantini and Fantini Baking Co.

Betty Emery

Steven Emery

Bike Rack Donation by Weekly AA Group

Crabby Road 10-27-09



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**This Month's Important Events**

**Domestic Violence Awareness Month**



**Depression Awareness Month**



**Down Syndrome Awareness Month**



**Breast Cancer 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 September is on Tues. 09/10/24 at 10:00am. Call to Register! Limited!

**Veterans Services**

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

Kevin Hunt, Veterans Services  
[KHunt@CityofNewburyport.com](mailto: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 & Veteran's Column W/ Jeremiah Murphy

### Senator

### Barry Finegold

Hi Everyone:

Happy Fall!

My District Legislative Director, Janice Phillips will have office hours at the Merrimac Senior Center each month. October office hours will be Monday 10/03/24 at 10-11am.

From seasonal festivals to state grant expos, it's been a busy start of fall in the Merrimack Valley. Andover Days, North Andover's Fall Festival, Amesbury's Chili Cook Off, and Haverhill's River Ruckus are some of my favorite celebrations of the year during my favorite season of the year. Thanks to all the dedicated community members who make these events possible!

During September, I hosted a State Grants Expo, connecting local nonprofits, community organizations, and municipal governments with representatives from twenty-five grants making state agencies. The event was a success with over 100 attendees representing over a dozen communities. We are lucky to have so many amazing organizations in our region, and connecting them with funding resources will ensure they may continue to serve their communities effectively and efficiently.

In Boston, I was grateful to be a guest on WCVB's On the Record, discussing the Economic Development bill, housing, and, of course, the Patriots. I was also pleased to have spoken at Massterlist's panel on competitiveness alongside industry leaders. The takeaway: our state has many strengths, but now is no time to rest on our laurels!

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

Yours in Service,  
Barry



### Dear Veterans & Families:



As we previously discussed in the last newsletter, Governor Healey signed into law the HERO Act on August 8, 2024. On September 10th, staff from the Veteran Services Office attended a briefing with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veteran Services (EOVS) Legal staff. One of the biggest changes in the Act is the definition of Veteran for local and state benefits received through EOVS. These benefits include the Chapter 115 financial assistance program, the Massachusetts Gold Star Annuity, access to Massachusetts Veterans Homes and Motor Vehicle fees to name a few changes. There are a number of other changes that are meant to expand the number of Veterans receiving state benefits and correct state regulations to align with current practices.

The EOVS change in the definition of Veteran will affect many Veterans that have served in the Guard or Reserves who didn't qualify for EOVS benefits in the past. Those Guard and Reserve Veterans who have a service-connected disability or completed a period of activation may now be eligible for the various EOVS Veteran benefits. If you are a Veteran of the Guard and Reserves or a widow(er) who has not remarried, you should contact the Veteran Services Office to review your eligibility.

One of the changes that did not make it into the HERO Act is the waiving of fees for a Veteran license plate; however, this change has been added to the Governor's supplemental budget. We will advise you if and when this change is approved.

We have already started planning for our Annual Veterans Day luncheon which will be held on November 8th. The luncheon is for any Veteran of any age who resides in our Veterans District, which includes the communities of Amesbury, Merrimac, Newburyport and Salisbury. As we get closer to the date we will provide more information.

As always, if you need any assistance, please contact the Amesbury Office @ 978-388-8136 or the Newburyport Office @ 978-462-2201.

**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:** vacancy

**Social Work & Outreach Intern:** Eliza Taylor

**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

**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**



**Seaglass Holiday Lunch By the Sea**  
**Tuesday Dec,3,2024 11:30am**

-Menu:  
Boneless Chicken Breast w/gravy  
-Yukon Mashed Potato Chefs Choice Veggie  
-Rolls & butter Coffee/Tea Dessert & Tax Included  
Space limited \$25/pp  
cash only due at sign-up!  
Reserve by 11/14/24; Limited Seating  
Bus-\$5.00 Departs COA at 11am

**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](mailto:bwalsh@townofmerrimac.com)

**Program Coordinator: Denise Gilman**  
[dgilman@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:dgilman@townofmerrimac.com)

**Food & Nutrition Director: Eileen Murray**  
[emurray@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:emurray@townofmerrimac.com)

**Transportation Jon Behrens**  
[jbehrens@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:jbehrens@townofmerrimac.com)

**Danielle Cataldo, RN, MSN**

**Nursing Services:** [nurse@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:nurse@townofmerrimac.com)

**SNAP Services are available by appointment! Call (978) 346-9549!**