



A rural community of neighbors
helping aging adults lead independent
and engaged lives at home.

**Leverett + New Salem +
Shutesbury + Wendell**

1-413-345-6894

pr@villageneighbors.org
www.villageneighbors.org

Village Neighbors

Working Together to Create Community!

March / April 2022, Issue 18

*Village Neighbors is a community volunteer-run organization, part of the Village-to-Village national network, with **FREE Membership for anyone over 60 in our 4 Towns: Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell.***

FREE MEMBER SERVICES INCLUDE: **Helping Hands-** easy fix-its, grocery deliveries, garden help, household tasks, meal prep, move furniture, organize household items, pet care, plant care, shoveling, wood stacking; **Member Well Being-** check in call, errands, friendly visits, walks, information organization and referrals, post hospital help, respite for Care Givers; **Tech Support-** electronics, TV, computer, phone, tablets; and **Transportation**

Contact membership@villageneighbors.org
or call **413-345-6894** to learn more

Spring Is On Its Way, But It's Not Here Yet...

Volunteers from your town are available to help with shoveling and yard prep for spring plantings! They can bring their own tools and maintain safe social distancing protocols.



**Give us a call, 1-413-345-6894 or email
servicerequests@villageneighbors.org**

VN Rides Available

Village Neighbors' fully vaccinated drivers are available for rides, with both driver and member observing COVID masking, distancing and ventilation protocols.

If you have put off needed dental, medical or



therapy visits; or need a ride for shopping, a personal visit or to an event, call VN to make a request at **413-345-6894** or email servicerequests@villageneighbors.org.

Member Creative Corner

Are you interested in sharing your art or talent with other Village Neighbors?

Let's get to know one of our village neighbors, even if only one or two at a time. Get in touch if you'd like to be spotlighted with something you are creating or doing.

Martha Favre is a member/volunteer. She is a nurse practitioner recently retired from running the Student Health Services at Fitchburg State University for 21 years, where she spent 80% of her time seeing patients, and is eager to volunteer in our Village Neighborhood. She is enjoying her participation when not busy making a quilt for her new grandson, working on her garden, reading and pursuing her interest in photography. She hopes you enjoy these photos of lambs and sheep at **Intervale farm**. In her photography, she aims to try to capture a moment in day-to-day activity, noticing the simple things in life including these, ***a sign that Spring might be on the way.***



VN is accepting submissions of your **creative projects** for publication in our newsletter. Because of space limitations, we will only be able to print one piece

per newsletter, but we will be adding a **gallery** to the **VN website** this year, and additional submissions will be highlighted there.
For more information, please contact **Dina Polizzi**, dina@dinapolizzi.com

Community News

Age-Friendly Survey

Completed Survey Must Be Received by March 11th

The Age-Friendly Communities Initiative is launching a regional survey in Franklin County and the North Quabbin. The initiative is a collaboration led by LifePath with FRCOG and participating Councils on Aging and Senior Centers. Through this survey, we are trying to understand what needs to improve for our region to become a great place for people to grow older. The information collected through this process will be used to create an Age-Friendly Action Plan and to apply for grants to improve conditions for older people in our towns.

If you live in New Salem, Shutesbury or Wendell, ***Village Neighbors will be mailing a copy of this survey to your home.*** Please complete it and mail back in the **self-addressed stamped envelope** before **March 11th**.

Leverett members can pick up a copy of the survey at the **Leverett Town Hall, Leverett Library** or the **Village Co-op** and return the completed survey to the same locations. Or you can call **Margie McGinnis**, Leverett town administrator, **413-548-9699** and she can mail you a copy.

The time you invest in completing this will make a difference in the programs and services available to everyone over 60 in our four towns.

If you have questions about this or need assistance in completing the survey, please contact

Nour Elkhataby Strauch

Age-Friendly Program Manager at LifePath

nelkhatabystrauch@lifepathma.org / 413-829-9274

or Meg Ryan, RN,

Regional Public Health Nurse at FRCOG

mryan@frcog.org / 413 774-3167 x 158

Thank you!

Sand For Seniors

A Note from Kristin Burgess, Acting Chief - Shutesbury Police Dept.

The **Shutesbury Police Department** has started a program called "Sand for Seniors." The **Council on Aging** is assisting in the endeavor to reach Shutesbury seniors and make sure their needs are met during these icy times. Buckets have been generously donated by the **Hadley Home Depot**.

If you are a resident of Shutesbury and senior (or someone with a disability or just someone in need) contact the Shutesbury Police Department by phone

413-259-1279 and leave a message with your name and phone number. Please state in your message that you are calling in regards to the "**Sand for Seniors program.**" An Officer will call you back and get your information and deliver the Sand to your doorstep. At the end of the season, we will collect the buckets and store them for next year.

I am asking anyone that knows a Senior neighbor who may appreciate the help to also give them this message as some of our Seniors do not receive town announcements.

We can not wait to connect with our Seniors and anyone who just needs a little extra help.

We have a starting number of 40 donated buckets.

Call today and we will get you started!

VN Members who need sand or help with sanding can also contact **VN Services** at **1-413-345-6894** or email servicerequests@villageneighbors.org

Beneficiary Protections when Choosing Your Medicare Coverage

The **Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment** season runs from January 1st to **March 31st** each year. If you are already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan anytime between January 1st and March 31st of 2022, you are allowed to make a change to a new Medicare Advantage plan OR to drop your Medicare Advantage plan and switch to a stand-alone Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.

During this period, you may see a number of advertisements and marketing efforts highlighting the benefits that many of these plans offer. In fact, Massachusetts has several new plans being offered to Medicare beneficiaries in 2022. While many of these plans offer good coverage and many new benefits, it's extremely important that Medicare beneficiaries know the right questions to ask before making any changes to their current coverage.

Remember:

- You should ask for confirmation that all of your doctors/medical providers accept any plan BEFORE you enroll.
- You should also ask for confirmation that all of your current prescription medications are covered by any plan(s) you are offered BEFORE you enroll.
- You should ask for confirmation that your hospital(s) of choice accept the plan you are considering BEFORE you enroll.
- You have the right to turn down any solicitations for Medicare enrollment information whether in person at your home or over the phone from individuals you do not know.
- You have the right to refuse to give your personal/Medicare information to anyone who asks if you are not sure of your decision to purchase insurance
- You are not obligated to provide the names of friends or family who may

- also be seeking Medicare enrollment assistance.
- You have the right to report any misleading marketing practices to the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol at 800-892-0890

Certified **SHINE counselors** are available at **Councils on Aging** and **ASAPs** across the state, and are able to assist you in making the right Medicare coverage decisions for your personal situation. This service is free and available year-round. SHINE counselors will make sure you are able to **compare ALL of the insurance options available to you, not just a select few**. Counselors are available in person, by phone, or for a virtual appointment on the web, whichever you prefer. We encourage you to call Mass Options at **1-800-243-4636** to find a SHINE counselor near you.

Triad FREE Medical Equipment for Seniors

The **TRIAD Program of the Franklin County Sheriff's Office** is a crime-prevention and wellness initiative aimed at protecting the safety and welfare of senior citizens throughout the county.

Medical Equipment Loan Program - In an effort to keep people in their homes as long as they can safely live there, **TRIAD provides/delivers** donated medical equipment such as wheelchairs, hospital beds, commodes, canes, walkers and rollators. **All equipment is free of charge**. Call **1-413-774-4726** for more information.



Daylight Savings Time

The second Sunday in March is when Daylight Saving Time **begins** in most areas of the U.S., so in 2022 we'll "spring forward" one hour on **Sunday, March 13, 2022, at 2 a.m.** Be sure to set your clocks **ahead one hour** before bed on Saturday night!

Upcoming Events

Two More FREE Cooking Classes with Leslie Cerier, The Organic Gourmet

Come excite your palate with Leslie Cerier, "The Organic Gourmet" chef, cookbook author, and cooking teacher's inspirational presentation.

Quick Meals with Whole Real Foods

Free Zoom Class March 8 @ 6:00 -7:00 pm

VN Members & Volunteers can register for this second cooking session with Leslie, who is also a VN member, by emailing leslie@lesliecerier.com

Deadline for registering for this free class is Mar 4th. Leslie will send you a zoom link after you register for the March 8th meeting.



*This class is available to **VN Members & Volunteers Only**
Sponsored by Village Neighbors*

The Art of the Vegetarian Stir Fry

Free Zoom Class April 21 @ 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Sponsored by The Dunbarton Library

To register call email leslie@lesliecerier.com

For complete descriptions of these classes, please visit Leslie's website
www.lesliecerier.com

National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) Zoom **DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 10TH**

March 7th – 11th is **National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW)**! This is a great time to help you understand your consumer rights and stay up to date on the latest fraud and scams.

The **Northwestern District Attorney's** Zoom meeting for **Village Neighbors** is scheduled for **Monday, March 14th at 3:00 pm**. This event is held to educate older adults, and those who work closely with older adults, about consumer fraud issues and best practices.

Your questions and request to register for the zoom can be emailed to pr@villageneighbors.org by **MARCH 10th** with subject line **NCPW**, or call **Elizabeth** at **413-374-3271**.

Lifepath Village Learning Series

Lifepath has been running a series of webinar presentations for western MA villages.

These webinars are designed to help volunteers with many important topics. There are recordings of the February workshop, and you can sign up for the remaining two Village Learning Series Program with this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkd-mtqTspGd0iw977sUu9QULjoGOpUAOb>.

Session 2 (February 8th, 2-3pm) - **Working with Older Adults: Presentations on Boundaries & Protective Services** This was recorded and can be made available

Session 3 (March 8th, 2-3pm) - **Resources: Presentations on Transportation supports (FRTA) and General Supports (LifePath)**

Session 4 (April 12th, 2-3pm) - **Age- and Dementia-Friendly Practices: Presentations on Working with People with Dementia & Reframing Aging.**

Tech Day

Got questions about tech? Curious but don't know where to start?

Good news! March 21 and 22 are technology days for you!

Older adults can drop in and receive assistance with basic tasks on their computers, tablets, or smartphones from college-age volunteers.

- Smartphones and tablets 101- getting started
- Photos - taking and sharing
- Facebook
- Skype, Zoom, or Facetime
- Adjusting/customizing device settings
- Computers 101 - getting started
- How to search the internet
- And more!

Dates, locations and contacts:

Monday, March 21, 9:30 - 11:30 A.M.

Petersham Council on Aging - 978-724-3522

Northfield Senior Center - 413-498-2901 x114

Monday, March 21, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.

Athol Senior Center - 978-249-8986

Tuesday, March 22, 9:30 - 11:30 A.M.

LifePath, **Greenfield** - 413-773-5555

South County Senior Center - 413-665-2141

Tuesday, March 22, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.

Bernardston Senior Center - 413-648-5413

Erving Senior & Community Center - 413-423-3649

No question is too basic! Bring your computer, smartphone, or tablet and join us!

Writing To Remember Workshop Begins Again in April

Writing To Remember

April 18 - May 23

Ruth Flohr's inspiring memoir writing program **Writing to Remember** will be offered again for **FREE** with the generous sponsorship by **Mass Cultural Grants** from *Leverett, Shutesbury, Wendell and New Salem*.

In this memoir writing class you will discover the inspiration and tools to effectively begin writing your life-story. This class is open to fledgling writers as well as seasoned writers.

This method includes instruction, reading memoir samples, discussion, and impromptu writing exercises with feedback. There will also be an online forum with writing resources and a platform to post your stories.

For more information or to sign up for the next round of workshops, please contact **Ruth Flohr** at **978-544-6534** or email pr@villageneighbors.org.



Fitness Classes

Shutesbury Library is currently offering four **FREE** weekly fitness classes open to everyone.

Email library.director@shutesbury.org to register.

Gentle Yoga with Jeannette

Wednesdays, 9 am on Zoom

This program is co-sponsored by the Council on Aging

Therapeutic Yoga with Dr. Kathy Sward

Thursdays, 9 am on Zoom

This program is co-sponsored by the Council on Aging

Zumba Gold with Aimee

Fridays, 10 am on Zoom

This program is co-sponsored by the Council on Aging

Strength Training with Jay

Saturdays, 8:30 am on Zoom

If you are interested in providing a seminar or activity to VN members please contact membership@villageneighbors.org. We can provide technical support to get your seminar up and running

VN News

VN Small Home Repairs Application

If you have small repairs that need attention in your home, free assistance is available from the Village Neighbors Small Home Repairs Program.

The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts has generously renewed our grant for **Small Home Repairs** again for 2022. The amazing team of volunteers who have been working to assist our members in keeping their homes safe and in good repair will be back to work this Spring. We have serviced over 62 households so far.

An application has been included with the March newsletter mailed to members' homes. When you complete it and mail it back to us, the team will contact you. ***It's as easy as that!***

If you are a member and need an application please contact **Elizabeth** at **413-374-3271** or email pr@villageneighbors.org

- Recruit and welcome new members and volunteers
- Do new member intake visits
- Conduct volunteer orientations and trainings

- Create and coordinate social activities and programs
- Develop Dementia Friendly community outreach and training

***Volunteer Orientations* are run by the **Membership/Volunteer Committee**.**

Join us at the VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION, Monday, March 14, 6:30 pm on Zoom, if you would like to experience this committee in action and find out more about what we do.

Service Committee / Call Managers

servicerequests@villageneighbors.org

- Answer requests from Members and connect them with Volunteers waiting to assist
- Assess needs and services
- Train and oversee Call Managers
- Handle vendor services
- Work with the Membership/Volunteer Committee to triage concerns for members and volunteers

Call Managers work from home to manage member requests.

Events / PR Committee

pr@villageneighbors.org

- Events
- Promotions
- Tabling at community events
- Newsletter
- Outreach and Press
- Social media
- Event Calendar

Contact the Events/PR Committee to learn about opportunities to be involved in planning our next exciting event and connecting with our community.

Fund Raising Committee

fundraising@villageneighbors.org

- Provide the money for Village Neighbors to function and grow
- Research funding
- Develop fund raising events
- Develop funding circles (sources) - donations, members, volunteers, and contributors
- Research and apply for grants
- Recruit local sponsors -banks, businesses

With Free membership, Village Neighbors counts on voluntary contributions, funding and grants to meet our income needs. Volunteers are needed to make this happen!

IT Committee

volunteers@villageneighbors.org

- Provide assistance to members with all things electronic
- Website maintenance
- Email & Zoom communications

In the 21st century, internet has become integral to daily life. IT assists members and committees to navigate the challenges.

HELP WANTED:

Looking For Vaccinated Drivers

We are eager to hear from **volunteers** who want to resume driving our members. Please contact us at **413-345-6894** or volunteers@villageneighbors.org for more information.

Contribute to the Village Neighbors Newsletter

If you are interested in contributing articles or information to the Village Neighbors newsletter, please contact the editor Dina Polizzi - dina@dinapolizzi.com. We are looking for information of interest to persons over 60 in our four towns: **Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell**. As of this mailing, **Village Neighbors News** has a mailing list of 350 and is growing with every issue.

Correction to January Newsletter

In the article about **Village Neighbors' Gift Bags 2021** in our last newsletter, I mistakenly referred to the lovely fragrant soaps included in every bag as coming from Apple Bottom Soap Co. That should have been **Apple Blossom Soap Co.** Big Ooops on my part!

Thanks again to our local artisan and vendor **Ina Peebles**, her fabulous soaps and spectacular dichroic glass jewelry (**Swift River Glass**) are also available at all our local stores: the Leverett Village Coop, New Salem General Store and the Wendell Country Store.

Dina Polizzi, Village Neighbors Newsletter Editor

Do You Wish to Discontinue Home Delivery of the VN News?

The VN bimonthly newsletter is emailed to all members and volunteers who have listed their email contact with us; it is direct mailed only to our members. If you no longer wish to receive the hard copy newsletter to your home, please let us know by emailing the VN Newsletter editor, **Dina Polizzi**, at dina@dinapolizzi.com. Please include the word "Newsletter" in your subject header.

If you have not been receiving the electronic version of the newsletter to your email, please check your "spam" or "promotions" folder, drag and drop the newsletter into your inbox and it should redirect all further newsletters to your inbox. Contact Dina if you need further assistance.

If you know of classes, events or articles of interest for our neighborhood

seniors you would like to share in the newsletter, please send this info to Dina at dina@dinapolizzi.com

Special Thanks to:



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Newsletter editing and design - [Dina Polizzi](#)