

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON AGING

About the Council

The Wellesley Council on Aging (COA) founded in 1972, is a Town Department that serves residents 60 years or older and their families. The COA is funded through local taxes, state, federal, and local grants, and private contributions. The COA is composed of an eleven-member volunteer Board of Directors appointed by the Board of Selectmen. COA board members for fiscal year 2013 were: Susan Kagan Lange (Chair), Mary Dummer (Vice Chair), Diane Lapon (Treasurer), Sr. Alice McCourt (Secretary), Mary Bowers, Sandra Budson, Linda Cohen, William Murphy, Sheila Nugent, John Schuler, and Joellen Toussaint. Stanley Hodges, Joanne Kilsdonk, Miguel Lessing, Andrew Pernokas, Dianne Sullivan, Eleanor Sullivan and Harriet Warshaw served as Associate Members. The COA's professional staff consists of a full-time Director of Senior Services, a full-time Health and Social Services Administrator (Outreach Worker), a full-time Program and Office Assistant, a part-time Senior Activities Coordinator, a part-time Volunteer Drivers Program Coordinator and a Transportation Options Coordinator (funded by a Title III (federal) grant from Springwell and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs through 9/30/13. During March, April and May, a Social Work intern from Bridgewater State University joined the team and performed a variety of duties for the department.

Council Services

The COA provides an abundance of information and referral; outreach services; and in home assessments. Services include subsidized transportation, a bi-monthly newsletter, financial assistance through the Almira N. Simons Fund, participation in the AARP Tax Counseling Program for Elders, SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) health benefits counseling, and the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) Fuel Assistance program. Two staff members also serve as representatives of the Salvation Army, helping to provide assistance to residents age 18+ who are experiencing financial hardship. The COA, in conjunction with the Board of Assessor's, manages the Senior Work Corps program, where eligible senior citizens volunteer their time in a town department in exchange for a deduction on their property taxes. In FY 2013, 18 senior citizens qualified for the program and 16 senior citizens participated in this program. Participants served as volunteers at The Recreation Department, Natural Resources Commission, Human Resources Department, Recycling and Disposal Facility, Wellesley Free Library, DPW and COA. A total of 1,104.75 hours were contributed by the senior volunteers and the total credit to participants was \$8,838.00.

Programs July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

The COA is pleased to offer a variety of social, educational, recreational and cultural programs. There is particular emphasis on health and wellness activities and programs. Many types of fitness programs were offered such as: Weekly Walking Groups; Yoga; Balance and Flexibility; Better Bones (strengthening course); and Tai Chi. New this year: The COA partnered with Nehoiden Golf Course at Wellesley College for our first ever 9-hole golf tournament. The event was a huge success and individuals who had never participated in COA programs joined in the fun. A second

tournament, equally successful, was held in June and there are plans to continue this partnership with tournaments twice per year. Another new initiative this year was the Evening and Weekend Lecture Series, which featured a distinguished group of presenters who spoke on a wide variety of topics such as “Secrets to Healthy Living” with Dr. Richard Dupee, one of the foremost geriatricians in the United States and “Perspectives on Women and Public Policy” with Victoria A. Budson, founding Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. The series was a partnership between the COA and the Wellesley Free Library and the partnership for the series will continue in FY 14. The COA also offered programs in Opera Appreciation; Fine Arts (i.e. watercolor and acrylic painting); Language classes (German, Spanish, and Conversational French); and Cribbage. Several long-standing groups continue to meet at the COA: Bridge; Book Discussion Group; Community Service Bears (who meet weekly to make teddy bears for needy children); Bingo; Movies; and Mah Jong. The COA offers day trips once per month. Day trip participants enjoyed an outing to the Boston Holiday Pops, Peabody Essex Museum, and Blithewold Mansion. COA trips are always very well attended and enjoyed by all.

The COA also offered a wide variety of seminars on various topics of interest. Topics included: “Crime Prevention”; “How to Avoid Identity Theft”; and “Fire Safety”. In May, the COA hosted the 2nd annual evening event “50’s Frolic” with the Dixie Diehards jazz band. Our 78 guests enjoyed refreshments graciously donated by Waterstone at Wellesley and a number of volunteers (many from the key club) helped with all of the planning, organizing and logistics. A number of local businesses sponsored the event with monetary donations to the COA. The COA looks forward to the 3rd annual event in May 2014.

The COA offered several intergenerational programs during the year. These included computer tutoring for senior citizens (tutors were Babson College students and seniors met with the students at the Babson campus); Wii Bowling with volunteers from the Wellesley Hills Junior Women’s Club; Cookie Decorating with Schofield Daisy Troop 88070; a variety of craft projects with youth groups; Digital Camera Workshops (led by a student from Wellesley High School); Musical Jamming sessions (led by two Wellesley High School seniors); several concerts that were given by Wellesley’s younger residents.

Senior Transportation

The COA continued to offer transportation to senior citizens through The Volunteer Drivers Program (VDP). In FY 2013, 91 passengers requested rides and 34 volunteers provided rides. Passengers took 1,195 trips to 104 different destinations, which covered 7,877 miles. Volunteer drivers spent 671 hours driving. The VDP is managed by a coordinator and 3 schedulers. The Wellesley Council on Aging bus service provided 4,674 rides for medical appointments, shopping, and social engagements. The bus service is available to Wellesley residents age 60+ for a mere \$1.00 each way and there is a free group grocery shopping trip every Wednesday. There are also trips 1 x month to shopping destinations such as the Natick Mall. The COA received a second year of Title III grant funding from Springwell and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The grant cycle is October 1, 2012-September 30, 2013. Grant funds were used to pay wages to

our Transportation Options Coordinator (8 hours/week). The Coordinator is responsible for educating seniors and caregivers about transportation resources. This is done through home visits, office and telephone consultations and group presentations. The Transportation Options Coordinator had contact with 461 individuals during the grant cycle.