

BARNSTABLE COUNCIL ON AGING
Outreach Work Group

Meeting, October 8, 2021

Present: Jean Ahonen, Anna Valtsakis

Jacqueline Easter, Barnstable Adult Community Center

Discussion: Jackie reviewed Support Services programs (see attached page) active at the Center. She is the resource person for the Health Insurance Counseling/SHINE program, Fuel Assistance, Real Estate Tax Abatement, Telephone Reassurance, Mailbox Sticker, Brown Bag Food, and Silver Alert programs. Stacey Cullen is the resource person for Caregiver Support programs. Since the Adult Day Care Program has stopped due to financial considerations, programs developed under Caregiver Support such as the Respite Program will help address this community need.

The need for transportation services among seniors is great. However, due to financial considerations, the Center does not run transportation services. The SmartDart ride-hail service operated by Cape Cod RTA is available, however, some find it difficult to use. Helping to meet this transportation need among seniors in the community, a nonprofit volunteer organization - Barnstable Neighbor to Neighbor - is active in the town. In addition to driving members to appointments, stores, etc., household, technology, and social tasks are included in this group's menu. More information including membership fees is available at the website barnstableneighbor.org or in the group's printed brochure which is available at the Center.

Social isolation continues to be a problem/challenge among seniors. Current programs such as the Telephone Reassurance and Mailbox Sticker programs address this. And potential new programs such as a letter writing activity are being proposed. Jackie did mention that some senior residents choose not to participate in Center services or activities and that we need to respect their wishes.

Information about Center activities is widely distributed throughout the town through Thrive magazine (available through mail or at Center, Town Hall, libraries, churches) and E-news. Outreach areas for seniors are being actively covered by Center staff.

The Center has statistics regarding programs and a needs assessment completed in a previous recent year that are available.

Jean Ahonen
Anna Valtsakis

BARNSTABLE COUNCIL ON AGING

Outreach Work Group report for Council discussion, September 15, 2021

Meeting of September 10, 2021, 1:30 PM

present: Jean Ahonen, Lori Case, John Jope

Discussed: Proposed activity for letters to homebound elders

Purpose: To allow some social contact and community connection for those who are homebound and possibly isolated. Such regularly-sent letters have shown in other instances to be not only well-received, but eagerly anticipated by a recipient.

Method: Create a program for volunteers to write to recipients on a monthly basis, addressing their interests, and to provide a feedback opportunity to the writer if desired. Volunteers would be supervised by COA staff. Recipients would be selected through COA staff contacts.

Volunteers could be other seniors, or those interested in participating in such a program. An article in our newsletter would seek volunteer writers.

An intergenerational component could include items written by school-age children through contact with local schools, perhaps writing simple greeting cards, and enhanced with drawings, sent to homes included with Thanksgiving and Christmas meals through the BACC.

Guidelines for recipients needs, perhaps a "like/dislike" list, and guidelines for writers, would have to be established. Matching a particular writer to a particular recipient might be important.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jope

Report of Meeting for Council on Aging Board Members and Program Staff person from The Adult Community Center

Meeting 10/6/2021 3-4pm

Present: Ella R, Priscilla L, Stacey Cullen

Purpose was to provide a connection of board members to staff of the community center and to inform board members about programs that are presently happening at the center.

Some of the topics discussed were:

- Stacey has appointments to go to each of the 7 libraries monthly to meet with people in the community to help them with resources available and education about programs and services
- Care Giver support programs
- Senior programs
- Education programs for managing a senior aging in the home setting and how to ask for help

We asked Stacey if she could use help going to the libraries, or in other areas and she felt it is too early to know. She expressed concern regarding possible training needs before some goes to the libraries with her.

We asked if there are any areas that she feels should be looked at? Perhaps the people below the 70-80+ range. She is "reviewing the needs of our community and will have some more concrete thoughts later."

We felt it was a good meeting and informative about the programs at the senior center and now extended into the community via libraries.

Respectfully submitted,



Priscilla Laliberty

10/8/2021