

# HUMAN SERVICES

## COUNCIL ON AGING



*Standing from left: Ginger Quarles, Director; Pam Hanson, Chair; Arthur Alcares, Raymond Snay. Seated from left: Meryl Schwartz, Sharyn Lenhart, Jan Kenneally, Phebe Downey*

The mission of the Council on Aging is to promote a good quality of life for Concord's seniors (age 60 and older) by helping them to maintain their dignity, self-esteem, personal independence and their roles as full participants in the life of the community. The COA strives to fulfill this mission by providing opportunities for seniors to enhance their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being.

According to the January 2014 Town Census, there are 4453 Concord residents over the age of 60 and this represents approximately nearly 29% of the total population of Concord. The number of seniors is expected to continue to rise for many years to come.

### *FY14 Statistics*

The following is a sampling of service statistics for FY14: 1150 seniors were active at the COA this past year. 67% were female and 33% were male. 247 seniors used the van service and received 6582 rides. 367 seniors used Outreach/Social Services and received 3521 units of service/contacts, which included 422 home visits, 360 office consultations and 2384 phone consultations. 1024 seniors subscribe to the newsletter by mail and 525 subscribe to the e-mail version. 228 seniors participated in 4402 fitness/exercise classes. 275 seniors participated in health screenings. 445 seniors have participated in educational programming. 234 seniors have attended a meal and 4021 meals were served.

### *Outreach/Social Services*

Our professional staff provides consultation, assessment, advice and referrals to seniors and their families, friends and neighbors. Their extensive knowledge of resources helps assist seniors to live independently as long as possible. The staff adheres to strict standards of confidentiality in all of their work. Strong working relationships with various Town Departments, hospitals, home health care agencies, aging services access points, housing authorities, and businesses provide the best comprehensive service. We offer grief support groups, a caregiver support group and this past year we added a Mood support group.

### *Wellness and Fitness*

The COA offers a wide diversity of program and fitness opportunities that contribute to the overall health of Concord seniors. We offer regular clinics (blood pressure, podiatry, blood sugar) and screenings (hearing and vision) as well as a variety of speakers on a myriad of health topics. We offer the free loan of durable medical equipment and our nurse is available for individual consultation as needed. The following fitness opportunities were offered: Aerobics, Tai Chi, Strength and Flexibility, Yoga and a Walking Group.

### *Social, Recreational and Educational Opportunities*

We continue to provide opportunities to interact with peers, and stay intellectually active through a well-rounded and comprehensive program. We offer day trips, speaker's series, movies, parties, bingo, computer tutoring, discussion groups, craft workshops, book groups, games, music classes, memoir writing, and a drama club just to name a few. We produce a monthly newsletter that is filled with many choices of activities to engage in.

### *COA Transportation*

The COA vans provide weekday local transportation for seniors who no longer drive. The van takes individuals to medical appointments, shopping, and other errand driven destinations. We also provide transportation to the Annual Town Meeting for seniors wishing to attend. We are now offering an extra van 2 days a week in order to meet increasing demand. This year we retired two older vans and purchased a new wheelchair lift equipped van thanks to a grant from the Concord Friends of the Aging.

### *Additional Support Services*

The COA offers a monthly “Ask the Lawyer” program. We have trained SHINE counselors to help seniors with issues related to their health insurance. AARP offers a tax return assistance program. Our volunteer coordinator organizes fall clean up days and the delivery of buckets of sand for winter. There is also a volunteer seamstress available for mending and hemming.

### *COA Volunteers*

The COA has a robust volunteer program. Volunteers greatly enhance and support the work of the staff and we would happily welcome additional interested individuals.

### *Additional Financial Support*

The COA is especially grateful to the following funding sources for their strong commitment and financial support of our work:

Concord-Carlisle Community Chest: Funding is providing for full or partial funding for the following positions: Volunteer Coordinator, Social Service Coordinator and Outreach Coordinator.

Concord Friends of the Aging: Funding is granted for many programs and events throughout the year as well as funding for the distribution of the monthly newsletter. Additionally, as noted above, the Friends purchased a new van for the COA this year.

Executive Office of Elder Affairs: The Formula Grant, based on the number of seniors in our community provides partial or full funding for the following positions: Wellness Coordinator; Outreach Coordinator; Activity Coordinators.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES COORDINATOR**

Aileen Buford  
Community Services Coordinator

The Community Services Coordinator position was established in 2005 by the Town of Concord in collaboration with the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest with the purpose of assisting Concord and Carlisle residents, under the age of 60, in accessing information on a broad range of local, privately-funded and State-funded services including financial, food and fuel assistance. The position was originally a part-time position, funded completely by a grant from the Concord Carlisle Community Chest.

Due to an increased need for services, the CSC position was increased to 30 hours in 2013 and to 40 hours in July

of 2014. Beginning in 2014, the Town of Concord contributed 25% of the funding of the position while the Concord Carlisle Community Chest contributed 75%. This increase in hours has allowed for more face-to-face time with residents as well as more involvement and collaboration with community agency programs.

The Community Services Coordinator continues to aid individuals and families in accessing needed services on a variety of fronts. Referrals made to Concord and Carlisle residents over the course of the year have increased with 1,720 assistance-related contacts from July 1, 2013-July 1, 2014 as compared to 650 in 2013. During the July 1, 2013- July 1, 2014 time period there were 144 new contacts utilizing the CSC services for the first time. Referrals were made to food assistance programs, home mortgage counseling programs, job assistance agencies, mental health services, Concord Cares, fuel assistance programs, lower-income legal services, disability advocacy, low cost health care options, holiday assistance, temporary/emergency housing, financial assistance, tax relief assistance, after-school and summer camp scholarships.



*Sampling of gifts donated through the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest and Youth Services' 2014 Holiday Gift Drive*

The Community Services Coordinator collaborates with community agencies that provide assistance to Concord and Carlisle families. The CSC assists with the Gaining Ground Farm's Food for Families program which served 51 households who were referred by the CSC in 2014 as compared to the 37 households in 2013. During the 2014 Christmas season the CSC nominated 22 families for assistance from the Silent Fund program as compared to 13 families in 2013. During the 2014 holiday season \$4,975.00 in gift card donations was collected from Town of Concord employees and residents. Also, several thousands of dollars in gifts and toys were donated through