

# HUMAN SERVICES

## COUNCIL ON AGING



*Council on Aging Board standing from left: Ray Snay, Chair; Ginger Quarles, Director; Jill Colpak, Kate Henchman, Sharyn Lenhart. Seated from left: Phebe Downey, Janet Kenneally, Margaret Hoag. Not pictured: Murry Nicolson, Meryl Schwartz*

Ginger Quarles, Director.

### COUNCIL ON AGING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The expected increase in the senior population as the baby boomers age is well documented in the literature and in the media. Cities and Towns across America will be working hard and to come up with creative ideas on how best to provide quality care and services as the number of seniors continues to increase. Most communities not only want their longtime residents to be able to age in place for as long as they desire to do so, they also understand the value of having seniors remain in their communities. Seniors provide desirable diversity to the population, they have contributed to the history of the Town, and they provide wisdom and guidance to the upcoming generation.

According to the 2012 Town Census, there are 4,358 Concord residents over the age of 60 and this represents 28% of the total population of Concord.

The mission of the Council on Aging is to promote a good quality of life for Concord's seniors 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.

## COUNSELING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Our social work and outreach staff provide consultation, assessment and advice to seniors living in Concord as well as to concerned neighbors, friends and relatives of Concord seniors. Their extensive knowledge of resources helps leverage additional care and services that assist seniors to live independently as long as possible. We continue to offer support groups, assist with the application process for federal fuel assistance, encourage participation in our Lock Box program, and use the File of Life for their homes and wallets to assist emergency responders.

The outreach and social work staff adhere to strict standards of confidentiality on all of their work.

The COA continues to enhance our working relationships with various Town departments, hospitals, home health care agencies, aging services access points, housing authorities, banks and businesses. As a result, these departments and organizations are a major source of referrals to the COA of seniors in need of assistance and support.

### WELLNESS AND FITNESS

The COA continues to offer a wide variety of program and fitness opportunities that contribute to the overall health of Concord seniors. Examples include: Aerobics, Stretch and Flexibility, Senior Yoga and Chair Yoga, Tai Chi, Chi Gong and a walking group.

We offer regular blood pressure clinics, podiatry clinics, blood sugar clinics, hearing screenings and flu clinics. A wide variety of speakers on a myriad of health topics are brought in. We offer the Safe Meds at Home program where seniors receive individual assistance with medication management.

The COA maintains an inventory of durable medical equipment that is loaned out free of charge.

Our nurse is available for individual consultation as needed.

### SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Providing opportunities to interact with peers, meet new friends, stay intellectually active and enjoy life

are key components in delivering a well-rounded and comprehensive program. The COA provides multiple meal occasions throughout the year where seniors can get a nutritious meal and enjoy the company of others. Additional offerings include: book discussion, bridge, coffee and conversation, billiards, cribbage, genealogy, ping pong, music makers, quilting, international current events, canasta, drama club, bingo, COA cinema, mah-jong, memoir writing group, men's Monday morning group. We offer educational classes on computer use, cell phones, Facebook, Skype and Digital Photography and scanning. We maintain an honor system lending library and a fully equipped computer lab.

### **COA TRANSPORTATION**

COA vans provide local transportation for seniors Monday – Friday from 8:40 AM to 4:00 PM. The van takes individuals to medical appointments, the grocery store, the pharmacy, the hairdresser or the bank, just to name a few destinations. Additionally, the van provides transportation to COA-sponsored activities. This service enables many Concord seniors to live more active and independent lives.

### **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 assistance program. Our volunteer coordinator organizes fall clean up days and the delivery of buckets of sand for winter. There is even a volunteer seamstress available for mending and hemming.

### **COA VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are vital to the day-to-day function of the COA. Without their assistance, it would not be possible to provide as many services as we do. We are always looking for individuals who would like to give of their time.

### **ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

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

The Formula Grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs provides partial funding for the following posi-

tions: Wellness Coordinator; Outreach Coordinator; Activity Coordinator. Generous funding from the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest provides partial or full funding for the following positions: Volunteer Coordinator, Social Service Coordinator and Outreach Coordinator.

The Concord Friends of the Aging is a private non-profit organization that raises funds in order to support the programs and activities of the COA. Examples of events or equipment that the Friends partially or fully funded include: Annual COA Christmas party, File of Life, computer equipment, ice cream social, lunch and learn programs, nursing supplies, annual BBQ, and the annual Veteran's breakfast. Over the years, they have also supplied the Town with the vans to support the transportation needs of seniors.

### **HARVEY WHEELER COMMUNITY CENTER**

The Harvey Wheeler Community Center serves as the home for the Council on Aging. The building is also used by the Recreation Department for their preschool and after school care programs. Additionally, Harvey Wheeler is used extensively during the evenings and on the weekends by many different Town departments, not-for-profit groups and private groups and individuals. Every 6 weeks we offer a rotating exhibit of the works of various Concord artists in our main hallway.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES COORDINATOR**

Aileen Buford

Community Services Coordinator

The Community Services Coordinator position was established in 2005 by the Town of Concord. Primarily funded by a grant from the Community Chest, the purpose of the less-than 20 hour a week position is to assist Concord and Carlisle residents, 60 years and under, in accessing information on a broad range of local, privately funded and State services including financial and fuel assistance programs.

The Community Services Coordinator continues to aid individuals and families in accessing needed services on a variety of fronts. Referrals made on behalf of Concord and Carlisle residents over the course of the year went from 606 to approximately 650 in 2012.