

# HARWICH COUNCIL ON AGING



Our mission is to support and advocate for older adults, their families, and caregivers.

Located at the Harwich Community Center | 100 Oak Street, Harwich MA 02645

Open Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM



## JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026

### HOW TO BE HAPPY IN DIFFICULT TIMES

**Monday, February 9 • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Robert Rivest, creator and founder of Wellbeing Laughter, will share inspirational stories, humorous tales and practical tools on cultivating happiness even on our darkest days. Robert teaches us how to develop a "happiness practice" and a healthy mindset that can carry us through the ups and downs of life. Robert is a talented mindfulness & stress relief educator, an engaging corporate wellness presenter, a comic mime artist and a gifted laughter yoga master trainer. His mission is to use mindfulness, laughter and the performing arts to bring greater health, happiness, and joy to individuals and organizations around the world. **Registration is required;** call anytime. **Cost: \$5**

### MOVEMENT ARTS SHOWCASE

**Tuesday, January 13 • 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Join us for a joyful afternoon of movement, creativity, and community! Movement Arts Cape Cod (MACC) is excited to present a special showcase featuring three talented Cape Cod artists, performing exclusively for the Harwich COA. Expect engaging performances, uplifting energy, and a chance to celebrate the moving arts together. Sponsored by the Harwich Cultural Council. **Registration requested;** call anytime.



### LEGACY FILM SCHOOL

**Thursdays, January 15 - February 26 • 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

Learn the art of visual storytelling and documentary filmmaking in this 7-session course. With the help of the talented crew at Cape Media Center, you will write, film, and edit a story from your life. Share the final product with your family so that future generations can hear about your life in your own words. Classes meet at Cape Media Center's studio: 17 Shad Hole Road, Dennis Port. **Registration required;** call anytime.



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#### Are your belongings taking over your home?

Join us for this 16-week "Buried in Treasures" workshop for help with compulsive acquiring, saving, and hoarding

Please note, this is a 2 hour per week, 16 week commitment



#### This Workshop Includes:

- Free copy of the Buried in Treasures book
- Support from others with similar struggles
- Decluttering strategies for your home
- Skills to achieve your long term goals

Meets Mondays,  
Jan 26 - May 18  
2-4 PM

at Brooks Free Library

For more info, or to  
sign up, call  
508-430-7550



Sponsored by the Town of Harwich Health Department,  
Council on Aging & Brooks Free Library



508-430-7550



HarwichCOA.com



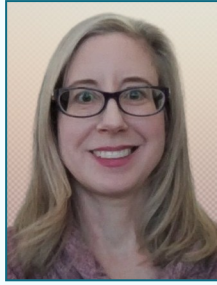
coa@harwich-ma.gov



/HarwichCOA

## DIRECTOR'S DIALOGUE

Feeling the winter blues? Many people experience lower energy during the winter months, or may even find that their moods darken along with the days. Reduced sunlight can disrupt the body's internal clock and lower levels of serotonin and melatonin, which play roles in mood and sleep regulation. If you experience severe or persistent changes in your mood, thoughts, or habits, consider talking to your doctor about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Even without SAD, winter can feel long.



To boost your mood and energy during these cold, dark days, you can make a few small lifestyle adjustments. Light therapy—using a specially designed bright light box each morning—can help regulate circadian rhythms and improve mood. Regular exercise, spending time outdoors when possible, and maintaining consistent sleep routines are also beneficial. Those with SAD may find talk therapy or medication helpful.

Staying socially engaged can also be a powerful buffer against the isolation and low mood that accompany the winter blues. Regular interaction with friends, family, or supportive communities provides emotional connection, which helps counter feelings of loneliness and withdrawal. Social activities—whether casual conversations, shared hobbies, or structured group events—can also offer positive distractions from negative thought patterns and boost motivation.

Engaging with others can additionally reinforce healthy routines that support overall wellbeing. Commitments like meeting a friend for a walk or attending a class encourage movement, exposure to daylight, and a consistent schedule. Social engagement also provides opportunities for others to notice changes in mood and offer support, helping you stay connected, accountable, and encouraged as you navigate seasonal challenges.

Of course, we have many programs to help you feel your best and provide opportunities for connection. To really focus on bringing more positivity into your daily life, consider joining us for one or more of these activities: How to Be Happy in Difficult Times (p.1), Mindfulness Classes (p.2), Cooking with Balance (p.3), the Care-giver Workshop led by Elder Services (p.4), or our Valentine's Day party (p.5). We hope to see you soon!

*Julie Groom*

Julie Groom, COA Director

## PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Registration for programs is either required, requested, or drop-in and will state such in each program description. Programs generally may be registered for via phone or in-person. All programs are open to Harwich residents and non-residents unless stated otherwise, however, we do prioritize Harwich residents for our most popular programs. We accept same-day registration and will also accept drop-ins for any program as long as space allows.

**For programs that list a specific day in which registration opens, registration will always open at 9AM on the stated day and is taken by voicemail only.** Our COA is fortunate to have robust membership, though this does mean that many of our most popular programs reach capacity quickly. We therefore take sign ups for these programs only by voicemail so that we can track the timestamp of your message and fill the class in the order calls were received. Please leave a message with your contact info and the program you are registering for. We regret that voicemails left prior to 9AM cannot be honored. Please leave only one message; leaving duplicate messages delays our ability to return calls. Fitness program participants are required by the Town of Harwich to complete a liability waiver and list emergency contacts.

**FOR PROGRAM REGISTRATION, PLEASE CALL  
508-430-7550 x1**

## WINTER WEATHER POLICY

If Monomoy Public Schools are closed, all Harwich COA programs—including transportation and lunch—will be canceled, but the COA office will still be staffed and available to assist you by phone and email. If Harwich Town Hall is closed, the COA will also be closed. We will make every effort to contact people who have signed up for appointments or services to share closure information. However, in inclement weather, it is best to call to confirm that the COA is open or to check the Town website or local news for closure updates.



To ensure the safety of our riders and drivers, there may be times the Cranberry Coach van does not operate due to winter weather conditions, even if other COA programs are not impacted. Scheduled riders will be contacted if we have to cancel your ride due to weather.

## BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT SENIOR LIVING

**Thursday, January 8 • 10:00 - 11:30 AM**

This session, presented by Oasis Senior Advisors, will help seniors and their family learn all about senior living options, including: how independent living differs from assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing; when is the



right time to make a move; how to find just the right community for themselves or a loved-one; what will it cost; and how is it paid for? **Registration required**; call anytime.

## INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS

**Thursday, January 8 • 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Join us to share some peaceful moments. Anyone who can breathe can learn the practice of mindfulness. This program by Adam Liss will start with a short presentation explaining how we react to stress. We will then learn how mindfulness can soften our natural reactivity by engaging in simple mindfulness practices everyone can do. If you enjoy this class and want to deepen your practice, sign up for the 6-week class (below). **Registration requested**; call anytime.



## MINDFULNESS CLASS (\$78/6 weeks)

**Thursdays, Jan 22 - Feb 26 • 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Join us for "Peaceful Moments in Stressful Times", a carefully constructed six-week mindfulness class. During this series of six 1.5 hour classes, we'll work with a variety of practices including mindfulness meditation, mindful eating, mindful walking and awareness of emotions. The training is offered in a step-by-step fashion that everyone can follow, helping people to develop a practice to move forward on their own. As with learning any new and valuable skill, commitment to the class is needed to get results. Participants will be expected to attend the entire series, and to practice at home for the duration of the class. Guided mindfulness practices will be supplied, downloadable onto mobile phones (technical assistance will be available as needed). Led by Adam Liss, a Barnstable resident since 1977. Adam trained at the Stress Reduction Clinic and Center for Mindfulness and has offered classes for more than twenty years. **Registration required**; call anytime.

**Cost: \$78/6 week class; scholarships available**

## COOKING WITH BALANCE

Discover a new way to nourish yourself with Chef Linda Kelley's Cooking with Balance, a 6-month seasonal wellness cooking series designed for older adults who want to feel healthier, energized, and confident in the kitchen. In this hands-on program, you'll learn how to create simple, delicious meals that support digestion, boost energy, and bring ease back into everyday cooking. Each month, we explore seasonal ingredients, gentle Ayurvedic principles, flavor-building techniques, and practical skills you can use immediately at home.



Participants will experience monthly hands-on cooking; seasonal, accessible ingredients; spice education for flavor & wellness; tools for confidence, creativity, and everyday balance. You will take home recipes and guides, a personalized spice blend, practical meal templates, and a mini-recipe book at the conclusion of the series. The first two sessions are described below. **Registration required**.

**Session 1: Monday, January 12 • 1:00 - 2:00 PM**

This first session will be primarily discussion-based. Chef Linda will present nutrition fundamentals and get to know the group members' goals, abilities, and restrictions. Class meets at the COA.

**Session 2: Thursday, February 19 • 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

In February, Chef Linda will hold the first hands-on cooking demonstration. Join her in creating a delicious, seasonal meal. Class meets at 204 Sisson Road, Harwich.

## HEART HEALTH

**Wednesday, January 14 • 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

Cardiovascular Nurse Crystal Perna, BSN is back by your request, volunteering her time to teach us the importance of a healthy blood pressure. She'll identify what's considered a poor blood pressure, the causes of, the effects of (if left untreated), how to assess your blood pressure and most importantly, how to gain control and discuss the prevention of high blood pressure. This is a wonderful presentation you won't want to miss! Space will be limited please call ahead and reserve your spot. **Registration requested**; call anytime.



## IPHONE 102 (\$20)

**Thursday, January 15 • 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

In this class we will start with the basics of the iPad/iPhone. Buttons, control center, settings, changing the home screen, adding and removing apps, customizing the widgets, Find My and much, much more. Anyone attending will learn more than they knew before they came in. Confidence when using your devices is necessary. Come in and learn! Please make sure you bring your charged device(s) with you! **Registration required and opens Tuesday, January 6.** Maximum of 10 participants to allow sufficient time with each student. **Cost: \$20, scholarships available**

## PIZZA & PROXIES

**Friday, January 16 • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Join us for this thoughtful and informative dialogue facilitated by Town Nurse Sue Jusell about the importance of



having a Health Care Proxy. Learn how it is used, obtain a copy of a blank form, have help filling it out accurately, and learn how to make sure it is honored.

Enjoy some fresh delicious pizza from a favorite local shop while you talk! Sue will also touch on Living Wills, the Five Wishes Form, and the MOLST Form—to dive even deeper, attend the session with Broad Reach Hospice on Jan 20 (see below). **Registration required;** call anytime.

## UNDERSTANDING ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

**Tuesday, January 20 • 1:00 - 2:00 PM**

Advanced Directives...just what are they? And why are they important to us? SO many acronyms...DNR, MOLST, HCP, POA...what do they really mean? This topic is an important one for **all** of us, whether we are actively dealing with a serious illness or not, or caring for aging loved ones. Join Broad Reach Hospice Program Administrator Jamie Nunes, RN, for a conversation on Advanced Directives, with plenty of time for questions and conversation. Jamie is passionate about the benefits of hospice and has devoted the last 20 years of her career to hospice care. Leave feeling confident you'll be prepared when the time comes. **Registration required.**



BROAD REACH  
HEALTHCARE

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Thursday, January 22 • 10:00 - 11:30 AM**

While we would all like to think that debt collectors, creditors, credit reporting agencies, and businesses will always take actions that are on the right side of the law, we find time and again that this is not always the case. As a result,



innocent consumers may find themselves in the middle of complex legal situations and in desperate need of help. Attorney Kevin Crick at Rights Protection Law Group, PLLC will speak about different rights consumers have regarding their vehicles, identity theft, fraudulent electronic transactions and charges, and more. Rights Protection Law Group works to protect consumers and individuals from predatory practices that violate people's legal rights. **Registration required;** call anytime.

## CAREGIVER WORKSHOP

**Monday, January 26 • 9:30 - 11:30 AM**

Calling all family & friend caregivers! Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and a light snack while you connect with other caregivers. Explore caregiver topics, tips & strategies, learn about Elder Service's Programs and easy self-care strategies. Register today! Please contact Laura Cheesman at **508-258-2476** or [laura.cheesman@escci.org](mailto:laura.cheesman@escci.org). Also check out page 8 for information about ongoing support groups.



Elder Services  
of Cape Cod and the Islands

## CARDIO CHATS

**Thursday, January 29 • 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

Interested in having more insight into cardiovascular disease risk factors? Join us for a 30-minute one-on-one discussion on how you can integrate more healthy habits into your day in order to improve quality of life and help reduce cardiovascular disease risk. Leave the session with practical health and wellness resources as well as a worksheet on important biomarkers to look at centered around cardiovascular disease. This clinic is by appointment only - please call the **VNA's Public Health and Wellness division** to confirm your spot at **(508) 957- 7423**.



VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION  
OF CAPE COD  
Member Cape Cod Healthcare

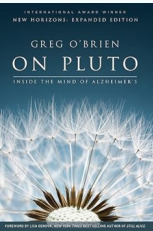
**SEE PAGE 2 FOR PROGRAM REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS**

## BEYOND THE BOOK: LOCAL AUTHOR SERIES

### *On Pluto: Inside the Mind of Alzheimer's*

**Monday, January 26 • 1:00 - 2:00 PM**

Local author **Greg O'Brien** joins us to discuss his book, *On Pluto*, an international award winner and the first book written by an investigative reporter embedded inside the mind of Alzheimer's. *On Pluto* chronicles the progression of Greg's own disease and his journey, bringing a unique perspective and hopeful vision to

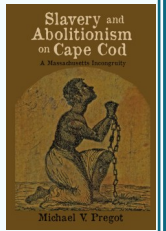


those who suffer from Alzheimer's as well as their caretakers. This is a book about living with Alzheimer's, not dying with it. It is a book about hope, faith, and humor—prescriptions far more powerful than the conventional medication available today to fight this disease. His story is naked, wrenching, and soul searching for a generation and their loved ones about to cross the threshold of this death in slow motion.

### *Slavery and Abolitionism on the Cape*

**Thursday, February 12 • 10:00 - 11:30 AM**

Local author **Michael Pregot** joins us for a special talk in honor of Black History Month. From the era of the Puritans, right through to the end of the Revolutionary War, Boston was a central hub for the slave trade. After Massachusetts legally prohibited its practice in 1780, sea captains still engaged in a variety of ways within its continuance. The commonwealth's maritime industry became quite divided with some captains fighting for the cause of abolitionism while other captains wished only to initiate a very slow demise of a profitable endeavor. Pregot's book discusses religious views, political platforms, economic factors, and social movements existing during the pre-Civil War period. Profiles of notable Black slaves living in Massachusetts are shared, highlighting contributions made to the overall growth of our commonwealth and country.



*Registration is requested for each event. Call the COA anytime to sign up.*

## BEGINNERS MAH JONGG CLASS (\$105)

**February 4, 5, & 6 • 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

This course introduces you to the basic rules and strategies of American Mah Jongg, a game of both skill and luck. You



will learn the American style of Mah Jongg which was standardized in 1937 by the National Mah Jongg League in New York. This class will cover the fundamentals: the history, the tiles, terminology, rules, and play. Two instructors will be available to

allow for more one-on-one instruction. The class session will run for three 2-hour sessions to allow for a more immersive experience (you must attend all 3 sessions). To participate, you'll need a National Mah Jongg League 2025 card, which is included in the cost of the class. Minimum of 8 to hold class; maximum class size of 12. **Registration required;** to sign up call Instructor Donna Todd Rivers at 413-441-9492 or email her at dtr8957@aol.com.

**ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OUR PROGRAMS; PLEASE ASK THE COA FRONT DESK**

## BACK IQ

**Tuesday, February 17 • 1:00 - 2:30 PM**

Local chiropractor Dr. Greg Wright has spent years studying the etiology (causes) of back pain. He'll be here to talk with us about the different types, causes, prevention, and management of these conditions. He will touch on falls prevention, overall balance improvement, and demonstrate how to safely get up off the floor should a fall occur. Bring your questions! **Registration requested;** call anytime.

## VOLUNTEER SOCIAL - AFTERNOON TEA

**Wednesday, February 18 • 2:00 - 3:00 PM**

Enjoy tea and pastries with your fellow volunteers! We know that many of our volunteers work off-site doing independent work. This event provides an opportunity to network and socialize with all of the wonderful people involved with the COA who you might otherwise never meet. We also welcome those interested in learning more about volunteering. **Please call the COA to RSVP.**



## AARP TAX-AIDE PROGRAM

The Harwich Council on Aging is thankful to partner again with AARP to assist you with preparing and filing your federal and state income tax returns.



AARP Tax Aide is the largest free, volunteer-based tax assistance and preparation program in the United States and is offered in conjunction with the IRS. This service is primarily for low to moderate income individuals and families. You do not have to be an AARP member to obtain tax assistance from this program.

Tax Aide volunteers are trained and certified by the IRS every year. They must pass an IRS exam and a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check. Generally your return is filed the same day as completed.



Tax assistance is available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays by appointment only. The Harwich COA will be scheduling appointments for Harwich residents only.

While you will schedule your appointment with us, your appointment will take place at the **Harwich Cultural Arts Municipal Building, "The 204" (204 Sisson Rd, Harwich).**

Appointments begin February 3 and run through April 15. The Harwich COA will provide transportation on the Cranberry Coach van to one set of appointments per week.

**We will begin making tax appointments on Wednesday, January 14 at 9:00 AM (please see program registration instructions on page 2).** In your message, please let us know if you will accept an appointment in the first 3 weeks of February. We will fill these appointments first and then return the remaining calls in the order received.

As in past years, you will be required to pick up a tax packet at the Harwich COA prior to your appointment. You must bring your *completed* packet plus all required tax documents to your appointment. Without these documents, your tax return cannot be completed. If you do not pick up your packet at least one week before your appointment, we will have to cancel your appointment.

Please note, this program follows our Winter Weather Policy described on page 2. If Monomoy Schools are closed, appointments are canceled. We'll do our best to reschedule but unfortunately cannot guarantee a make-up time.



## DOWNSIZING &amp; DECLUTTERING

**Thursday, February 26 • 10:00 - 11:30 AM**

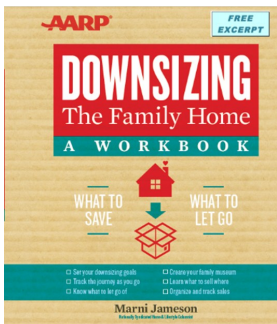
You can't take it with you! Having too much stuff can impede people from enjoying their lives, relocating, or getting health care into their homes. Having too much stuff can impact people of all ages and at any time in their lives. This engaging presentation explores why stuff is so important for some people and helps you start thinking about your stuff in different ways. You will come away with practical, easy

-to-follow tips on decluttering and organizing your home and your lives. Learn how to get started, stay organized, reach your goals, and have some fun doing it!

Attendees will receive an extensive list of Downsizing & Decluttering resources compiled by AARP to help you get the job done, and an excerpt from AARP's Downsizing the Family Home Workshop to help make the job a bit easier.

**Registration required;** call anytime.

*Note: For additional support, check out the Buried in Treasures group, advertised on page 1.*



**SEE PAGE 2 FOR PROGRAM  
REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS**



## BIG SCREEN MOVIE DAYS

Come in out of the cold and enjoy a movie, with popcorn & snacks.  
Call the COA to reserve your seat!

### Current Hits

Friday, January 16 at 1:00 PM

"Eleanor the Great"  
(2025): Drama  
Rated PG-13

June Squibb stars as Eleanor Morgenstein, a sharp, spirited 94-year-old who relocates from Florida to New York after the death of her closest friend. Struggling with grief, loneliness, and the upheaval of moving in with her daughter and grandson, Eleanor searches for a sense of purpose in a city that once felt like home.

Her life shifts when she becomes involved with a local Jewish community center, where she encounters people whose stories resonate deeply with the loss she's grappling with. As Eleanor forms new connections including a meaningful friendship with a young journalism student, the movie explores themes of aging, memory, identity, and the human need to feel seen and valued.



Thursday, February 19 at 1:00 PM

"Under the Stars"  
(2020): Romance/Comedy  
Rated PG-13

Under the Stars follows Ian (Alex Pettyfer), a romance novelist stuck in a stale relationship and struggling with writer's block, who escapes to the sun-soaked countryside of Puglia, Italy, hoping the change of scenery will revive his creativity. Staying at a rustic farmhouse run by a gentleman named Giacomo (Andy Garcia) and his lively daughter Arianna (Eva De Dominici), Ian is joined by his free-spirited Aunt Audrey (Toni Collette), whose spontaneity helps nudge him out of his emotional rut. Immersed in the warmth of Italian rural life: long meals, close-knit community, and slow, quiet days, Ian gradually reconnects with his instincts as a writer and begins to rediscover parts of himself he thought were lost. As his relationships with the people around him deepen, especially with Arianna, Ian experiences a gentle personal awakening that rekindles both his creative spark and his capacity for love.



### Classics

Friday, January 30 at 1:00 PM

"Singin' in the Rain"  
(1952): Musical/Comedy  
Rated G

Singin' in the Rain is a classic Hollywood musical set during the late 1920s, when silent films are being replaced by "talkies." The story follows Don Lockwood, a popular silent-film star, and his comedic partner Cosmo Brown as they navigate this turbulent transition. Trouble arises when Don's glamorous but talentless co-star Lina Lamont struggles with speaking roles. To save their new talking picture, Don and Cosmo transform it into a musical and bring in Kathy Selden, an aspiring actress with a beautiful singing voice, to dub over Lina's lines. As Don and Kathy fall in love, Lina schemes to keep Kathy hidden to protect her own stardom. The plot culminates in Lina's deception being exposed and Kathy's talent finally being recognized. Celebrated for its energetic choreography, memorable songs, and Gene Kelly's iconic rain-soaked dance number, the film remains a joyful tribute to Hollywood's golden age.



Thursday, February 26 at 1:00 PM

"Roman Holiday"  
(1953): Romance/Comedy  
Rated G

Roman Holiday follows Princess Ann, a sheltered young royal overwhelmed by her official duties during a European tour. Longing for freedom, she slips away from her guardians while in Rome and ends up falling asleep on a city bench. She's found by Joe Bradley, an American reporter who initially has no idea she's a princess. After realizing her identity, Joe decides to spend the next day with her, hoping to secretly write an exclusive story. Joe and his photographer friend accompany Ann as she experiences Rome like an ordinary person—riding a Vespa, visiting iconic sites, and savoring the joy of anonymity.



## SCRAPBOOKING (\$10)

**Mondays, Ongoing • 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Bring your photos and mementos and turn them into a timeless treasure! We provide all standard supplies, including a small scrapbook, for a one-time fee of \$10. Spend an afternoon getting creative while you get to know some new friends. **If you are new to the group, please call to register for the program before your first visit.** You are then free to drop in as often or as little as you'd like. **No meetings: Jan 19 & 26, Feb 16 & 23**

## CRAFT WORKSHOP

**Fridays, Jan 23 & Feb 27 • 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Come play with us! All supplies are provided, but you are also welcome to bring any special materials that you'd like to use. Capacity: 12 people/session. **Registration is required and opens January 5 and February 2 respectively.**

In **January**, Albert Groom & Laurie Moore will help you create a sailor's valentine. Bring any small shells you have. In **February**, Kim Bathrick will bring supplies to help you create beaded jewelry that rivals gift shop finds.

## GAMES, GAMES & MORE GAMES

These are weekly groups that gather to play a variety of games. There is no sign up, no lessons, just come down to play. All levels of play are welcome.

### MAH JONGG

**Tuesdays • 1:00 - 4:00 PM**

### RUMMIKUB

**Tuesdays • 1:00 - 3:00 PM**



### MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES

**Wednesdays • 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

### CRIBBAGE

**Fridays • 1:00 - 3:00 PM**



## CAREGIVER CONNECTIONS

**Every Monday • 10:00 - 11:00 AM**

Are you a family caregiver? We look forward to meeting you! The Family Caregiver Support program advocates for caregivers. It facilitates connections to resources, services, supports, education, and community. This is a free program



**Elder Services**  
of Cape Cod and the Islands

for those who are caring for someone age 60 or older, are a grandparent age 55+ caring for

a child, are age 55+ and caring for a person with a disability, or for those caring for someone of any age with dementia.

**Registration is requested, but drop ins welcome; call Laura Cheesman of Elder Services at 508-258-2476.**

*\*Also check out the Caregiver Workshop on page 4!*

## DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP with CONCURRENT COMPANION GROUP

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays**

**Jan 7 & 21 / Feb 4 & 18 • 2:00 - 3:30 PM**

The Alzheimer's Family Support Center hosts a caregiver's support group on-site at the Harwich COA. This support group, facilitated by a social worker, is open to anyone who provides caregiving to a loved one with dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, or any other form of cognitive impairment. While the caregivers meet, your loved ones will be engaged in activities in a companion group that is run by experienced staff.



Alzheimer's Family Support Center  
Until there's a cure, there's community.

Join us and take time to fill your cup with self-care. There is no commitment to attend all sessions; come and go as works for your family. **Registration requested, but drop ins welcome; call the AFSC office in Brewster at 508-896-5170.**

## BIRTHDAY PARTY

**Tuesdays, Jan 13 & Feb 24 • 2:00 - 3:00 PM**

We welcome you to come celebrate your special day with us at our new birthday party events! We'll serve cake, sing, and learn fun facts about your birth month. January babies should join us on January 13; February babies on February 24. Open to everyone who wants to help us celebrate. **RSVP required.**





## UKULELE CLASSES

**Mondays, January 5 - February 23 (6 Weeks)**

Long-time instructor Cathy Hatch offers ukulele classes, held in 6-week sessions. **Registration is required**; call the COA anytime. **Cost: \$50/6 week session.**

### **BEGINNER 2** **1:00 - 2:00 PM**

This is a class for people who can play the basic chord progressions. You will learn songs that you can play with the Cape Cod Ukulele Club.

### **BEGINNER 1** **2:00 - 3:00 PM**

This is a class for people who have taken the "Absolute Beginner" class and can play the basic chord progressions. You will be working on chord progressions and strumming.

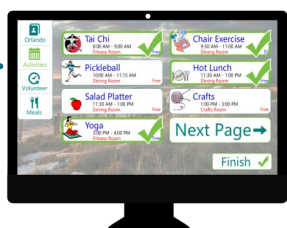
### **ABSOLUTE BEGINNER** **3:00 - 4:00 PM**

Found a ukulele in your closet or just want to jump into something new? Then this is your class! This class is for people who are new to ukulele. Learn how to tune the instrument, how to play the basic 8 chords (C, F, G, D7, Am, Em, Dm, and G7), and work on beginner strumming with easy songs.

#### **DO YOU HAVE A 'MY SENIOR CENTER' CARD?**

Please be sure to swipe your key tag at the front desk for every activity or program you participate in. If you do not have a card or have misplaced it, please ask the COA front desk to set one up for you. It only takes a minute! By checking in each time you visit, you are helping us keep track of attendance, which in turn helps the COA (and Town leaders) know which programs are popular. It also helps to strengthen our applications for various grants, which helps us offer more free programs for you!

**SEE PAGE 2  
FOR PROGRAM  
REGISTRATION  
INSTRUCTIONS**



## MEAL PROGRAMS

### **BREAKFASTS**

Enjoy a breakfast feast prepared by Town Chef Linda St. Pierre accompanied by a brief presentation from a community partner. Seating is limited, so you must call ahead to reserve your spot. **Registration required as space is limited.**



**To register, please call the COA or sign up in person starting January 5.** "Last call" is 3pm the Wednesday before the breakfast.

**January Speaker:** Behavioral Health Innovators

**February Speaker:** Brooks Free Library

### **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

*Held on the 2nd Friday*

**January 9 & February 13 • 9:30 - 10:30 AM**

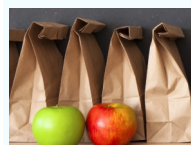
### **WOMEN'S BREAKFAST**

*Held on the 4th Friday*

**January 23 & February 27 • 9:30 - 10:30 AM**

### **LUNCH**

Lunch is available Monday - Friday, 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM.



We offer the option to dine onsite (Tu-Fri) or take your meal as a "grab & go" (Mon-Fri). One meal per person please. We have a capacity of 70 meals total each day.

**REGISTRATION:** Advance registration is required. Please note that some dates fill up well in advance, so reserving your spot as early as possible is recommended! Clients with documented Health Needs or Financial Needs will be prioritized for Grab & Go Meals. Registration for **January lunches** opened **December 15** and registration for **February lunches** opens on **Thursday, January 15**, starting at 11:30 AM.

**ATTENDANCE:** Diners must be seated by 11:40 AM, and Grab & Go meals must be picked up by 12:30 PM. Cancellation and no-show policies apply.

**PAYMENT:** The suggested voluntary donation per meal is **\$4 for Harwich residents** and **\$5 for non-residents.**

**Menus and a full description of program policies are available in the office or by mail/email.**

## BALANCE BOOSTERS Tues • 10:00-10:45 | Tues • 11:15-12:00 | Thurs • 12:15-1:00 PM NO COST

Next session: Tuesdays, February 10 - March 17 | Thursdays, February 12 - March 19

Maintain balance and flexibility with 45 minutes of strengthening and stretching while safely seated in a chair using your own body and simple implements, which are supplied. This FREE class is adapted from an evidence-based program that is shown to improve balance and reduce falls. **Registration is required and opens Tuesday, January 27 for all classes.** You may only register for ONE of the three options. Capacity: 25



## CHAIR YOGA Fridays • 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM OR 12:00 - 1:00 PM NO COST

Session 1: January 9 - 30 | Session 2: February 6 - 27

4-week sessions

Lindsay Guinan leads a gentle chair yoga class suitable for all fitness levels. Chair yoga has many benefits, including increased flexibility, improved muscle strength, better balance and coordination, lower stress, reduced pain, and even better sleep. **Registration is required and opens Monday, Jan 5 for Session 1 and Friday, Jan 30 for Session 2.** Capacity: 30

## JILL'S SEATED EXERCISE CLASS Mondays • 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM \$8/class

Session 1: January 5 - 26 | Session 2: February 2 - 23

Monthly sessions

Join Jill Brown, Certified Personal Trainer, for a low impact **seated** exercise class that includes balance work, stretching, strength training, cardiovascular exercise, yoga, and meditation all in one! All fitness levels are welcome. **Registration is required and opens Monday, Dec 29 for Session 1 and on Monday, Jan 26 for Session 2.** Capacity: 30

## JILL'S SENIOR WORKOUT

Wednesdays & Fridays • 9:15 - 10:15 AM

\$70/16 classes

Weds. January 7 - Fri. February 27

Payment window: 12/17 - 1/7

8-week sessions

Jill Brown, Certified Personal Trainer, teaches a total body workout fusing stretching, toning, calisthenics, and movement exercises. No floor work in this session. **NEW participants must register, complete required paperwork, and provide payment by Tuesday, January 6 at 3PM; stop by the COA Mon-Fri between 10AM - 3PM to complete paperwork and obtain a scan card.** Participants who wish to continue from one session to the next do not need to sign up; please drop off your payment by Wednesday, January 7 (end of day). *Because of required Accounting procedures, we regret that we are unable to offer exceptions to these dates.*



## QI GONG

Wednesdays • 10:00 - 11:00 AM

NO COST

Session 1: January 7 - 28 | Session 2: February 4 - 25

Monthly sessions

Practiced for the same reasons as Tai Chi, Qi Gong is a more simplified method of cultivating our life-force energy to improve health and overall well-being. Rather than learning a sequence of postures, Qi Gong is done mostly in a stationary position, either standing or sitting. Prior experience is not required and there is no ongoing commitment to attend. Each class is unique and uplifting. Drawing from centuries of Traditional Chinese Medicine wisdom, our instructor, A. Jay Zahn will help you learn to improve and maintain good health and vitality. **Registration required. Please register directly with the instructor, A. Jay Zahn by emailing [capecodtaichisociety@gmail.com](mailto:capecodtaichisociety@gmail.com).** If you do not use email, call our office and we will pass along your contact info. Capacity: 15



## TAI CHI: BEGINNER

**Tuesdays & Fridays, Ongoing • 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM**

**\$18/class**

Come learn the many benefits of Tai Chi. Recent studies show Tai Chi practice can help lower blood pressure, improve balance, help with stress reduction, and more. Classes are fun and energetic, incorporating stretching warm-ups, breathing exercises, and an exploration of Traditional Chinese Medicine concepts for healing and vitality. Start your Tai Chi experience with our instructor A.Jay Zahn who has been practicing for over 40 years and teaching at the Harwich COA since 2020. This class is open to anyone with previous Tai Chi experience. **For more info, contact [capecodtaichisociety@gmail.com](mailto:capecodtaichisociety@gmail.com)**

## TAI CHI: ADVANCED

**Tuesdays & Fridays, Ongoing • 10:00 - 11:00 AM**

**\$18/class**

This class focuses on practicing the 24 Posture Yang Style Tai Chi Form. Classes include basic warm-up exercises, QiGong practice, and insights into traditional Chinese Medicine for healing, vitality, and longevity. Tai Chi practice can help improve balance, hand-eye coordination, and lower stress. Our instructor A. Jay Zahn, is a long time practitioner.

**For more information, contact [capecodtaichisociety@gmail.com](mailto:capecodtaichisociety@gmail.com)**

## HEARING CLINIC

**Thursdays, January 15 & February 19 • 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Schedule an appointment to see Susanne Powers, licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist with over 14 years' experience. Services provided include a visual inspection of both ears, hearing screening, hearing aid maintenance and check-up, and consultation for anything involving hearing. **Call the COA to schedule your FREE appointment.**

## FOOT CARE CLINIC

**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

**Wednesdays • 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**January 7, 21, 28 and February 4, 11, 18, 25**

Certified podiatry providers Janet Tinney and Autumn Knight offer a general assessment of your feet and will trim, file, clean, and reduce thickening of nails, and smooth corns and calluses. Call the COA to schedule.

**Cost: \$50/clinic**



## WELLNESS & BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC with TOWN NURSE

**BY APPOINTMENT, AT COA:**

**Every Wednesday • 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**WALK IN, AT TOWN HALL:**

**1st Thursdays • 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM**

Meet with the Town Nurse to have your blood pressure taken, ask health related questions, or discuss your health needs. Call the COA for a FREE appointment.



## CARDIO CHATS

**Thursday, January 29 • 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

Interested in having more insight into cardiovascular disease risk factors? Consider a 30-minute one-on-one discussion on how you can integrate more healthy habits into your day in order to improve quality of life and help reduce cardiovascular disease risk. Leave the session with practical health and wellness resources as well as a worksheet on important biomarkers to look at centered around cardiovascular disease. This clinic is by appointment only - please call the **VNA's Public Health and Wellness division** to confirm your spot at **(508) 957- 7423**.



## GROCERY ASSISTANCE

The COA can pick up and deliver groceries from the Family Pantry at no cost. The Family Pantry offers a full range of groceries, including perishables such as milk, eggs, meats, bread, and produce. All Harwich seniors are eligible. Deliveries take place on Tuesday afternoons. **Orders accepted Fridays 12-3:30PM and Mondays 9AM-2PM. Call 508-430-7550 x1 to order.**



## PHARMACY ASSISTANCE

COA staff will pick up and deliver your Rx if: (1) The Rx is filled at CVS, Shaw's/Osco, or Stop & Shop in Harwich, and (2) No copay is due at time of pick up. (Some pharmacies collect payment over the phone.) Call the COA to request service.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

**Wednesdays, February 18 • 12:30 - 4:00 PM**

Do you have a legal question? Schedule a FREE half-hour consultation with attorney Michael Lavender, who specializes in elder law. Call the COA to schedule your appointment.



**Tuesday, January 13 • 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Low and moderate-income seniors are invited to schedule a FREE half-hour consultation with an elder law attorney from South Coastal Counties Legal Services. For an appointment, contact Heather Pearce at **774-487-3250**.

## HOMELESS PREVENTION COUNCIL

A caseworker from HPC is available to meet at the Harwich Council on Aging on **Tuesday afternoons from 12:30 - 2:00 PM**. They can assist with housing applications, applying for SNAP benefits, fuel assistance, and other personalized case management support. This is a walk in service—no appointment required.



## NOTARY PUBLIC

Free notary public services for those age 60+ by appointment. Call the COA to schedule.



## UTILITY BILLS

Discounted rates are available from Eversource and National Grid for residents who receive SNAP, MassHealth, SSI, EADC, Health Safety Net, or Veterans Disability benefits. Call COA Social Worker Saranya for info: **508-430-7550 x3**.

## REAL ESTATE TAXES

Qualified residents may be eligible to lower their tax bill via exemption programs. Income and asset limits apply. Applications for FY26 are available now. Contact the Assessor's office for a list of available exemptions: **508-430-7503**.

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT

See page 8 for our current support group offerings for caregivers, and page 18 for a listing of local respite programs.

## SIGHT LOSS SERVICES SUPPORT GROUP

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesdays, January 6 & February 3 • 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Peer meetings for those with vision loss and blindness. Speakers and experts give presentations, and the group discusses coping techniques and medical advances. Free transportation available. **RSVP to Sight Loss Services at 508-394-3904.**

## SHINE (MEDICARE) COUNSELING

SHINE provides free health insurance information and counseling to all MA residents with Medicare. Learn more about your plan options and receive help signing up for a more cost-effective plan. Available by appointment; call the COA.

## SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Our Social Services Coordinator Saranya Hayward, MSW is available to help Harwich residents age 60+ and their family and caregivers with a variety of services, including but not limited to: referrals to homecare agencies and assisted living communities, referrals to Elder Services and help navigating their service offerings, consultation regarding aging at home, SNAP applications, Fuel Assistance applications, referrals to local emergency financial assistance programs, enrollment in the Brown Bag grocery delivery program, and referrals to many other agencies and services. Call Saranya at **508-430-7550 x3**.

## VETERAN'S ASSISTANCE

A Veterans Service Officer is available at the Harwich office on a part-time basis to assist Veterans and surviving spouses with claims, VA healthcare, VA pensions, MGL Chapter 115 low income benefits, and more. Call **508-778-8740 (Hyannis)** or **508-430-7510 (Harwich)** to schedule an appointment or learn the office's current drop-in hours.

## DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

**Loans:** Durable medical equipment is available for loan to Harwich residents (canes, walkers, commodes, shower seats, wheelchairs, etc). Loans to non-Harwich residents are limited to items we have in abundance & is subject to a \$25 deposit.

**Donations & Returns:** Please only donate or return equipment that is clean and in good condition (e.g., no rust). Packages of urinary incontinence supplies must be unopened. Note that our ability to accept donations and returns is dependent upon our storage space. **There may be periods when we have to decline donations and returns.** Further, we cannot accept any equipment that requires power, nor non-durable medical supplies (e.g., bandages, medications) other than un-opened incontinence products. **You can drop in Monday-Friday 9AM-3PM, though we recommend calling ahead.**

## PEER TECH SUPPORT

Senior volunteers are ready to assist Harwich residents age 60+ with a variety of devices (phone/tablet/PC, Mac) either in the COA office or at home. **Available by appointment; call the COA to schedule.**

## TECH SUPPORT BY CAPE COD TECH

Seniors at Cape Cod Technical High School are available onsite at the COA to help troubleshoot your device needs. Available by appointment only; call the COA to schedule.



## TABLET LOAN PROGRAM

The COA now has a few tablets that you can use to browse the internet, check your email, or even just play games. Harwich residents can use these on-site at the COA or reserve a tablet to borrow for 3 days (72 hours). A deposit of \$25 is required. You can also schedule a time to use a tablet and a private room in order to conduct a virtual doctor or therapy appointment. No internet at home? Borrow a wifi hotspot from Brooks Free Library.

Please note that we do not have the staff capacity to provide technical assistance for use of the tablets. If you need a tutorial, consider arranging an appointment with a Peer Tech Support Volunteer, described above. You can reserve a tablet for use during the sessions. **For more info or to schedule a session, call the COA.**

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



**We have a dedicated team of certified SHINE counselors:** Beth Jospeh, Cyndi Kreisher, Donna LaPage, Ethel Debakker, and Ralph Ferrigno make up this extraordinary team. The SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) Program provides Medicare education, counseling, and cost comparisons to anyone on Medicare.

Our appreciation for our SHINE Counselors grows every year. As volunteers, their only reward is helping seniors understand what health insurance options are available to them. What commitment and passion it takes to be a SHINE counselor! They are so knowledgeable; they stay up to date with the latest regulations by attending classes and meetings regularly. They each spend hours every week conducting many, many appointments helping others. During Open Enrollment their flexibility and the number of hours they gave was amazing. Collectively they have served 158 of our members during Open Enrollment alone, not to mention the ongoing need for Medicare counseling throughout the rest of the year.

Our volunteers are vital to health insurance success for many, and they respond with kindness every time. When asked why they invest so much a couple of their responses were "It's so nice to be able to help", or "I just love it". Their spirit, warmth and patience when supporting others is commendable and so appreciated by our senior community.

**Thank you to our wonderful SHINE counselors, Beth, Cydni, Donna, Ethel and Ralph for all the things you do for the Council on Aging!**

## CURRENT VOLUNTEER NEEDS

The Council on Aging is always seeking new volunteers. We ask for a 6 month minimum commitment for most of our roles. To find out more about our current opportunities, contact Rosa Wright at [rosa.wright@harwich-ma.gov](mailto:rosa.wright@harwich-ma.gov) or 508-430-7550 ext 5.

**Peer Technology Assistant:** You'll work 1:1 with an older adult who struggles with technology, helping them work through a specific minor problem and teaching them along the way. Shifts: Approx 1 hour 2x month, on your schedule.

**Craft Workshop Facilitator:** At our monthly craft workshops, facilitators lead participants through the process of making, creating, and/or decorating a project that can be completed by someone with a beginner skillset. Choose from our project ideas or bring one of your own. Supplies provided. Shifts: 4th Fridays, 2-3 hours, 1-2 times a year.

**Friendly Visitor:** Friendly Visitors are matched with an older adult client for a meaningful 1:1 companion home visit with them for an hour each week. Our outreach coordinator will do an interview and try to match clients based on similarities in interests, ideas and experiences. Shifts: Approximately 1 hour each week, according to your own schedule.

**Medical Driver:** Transport seniors to doctor's appointments in your own vehicle. Small stipend (\$5-\$20) provided to offset the cost of gas and vehicle maintenance. Application process and car inspection required. Shifts: Volunteer for 1 or 2 appointments per month that work for your schedule.

## VOLUNTEER SOCIAL - AFTERNOON TEA

**Wednesday, February 18 • 2:00 - 3:00 PM**

Enjoy tea and pastries with your fellow volunteers! We know that many of our volunteers work off-site doing independent work. This event provides an opportunity to network and socialize with all of the wonderful people involved with the COA who you might otherwise never meet.



We also welcome those who have been thinking about joining our volunteer team—this is a great way to learn more. **Registration is requested; please call the COA at 508-430-7550 x1 to RSVP.**





**Susan Jusell, RN - Town Nurse**  
**508-430-7550 x2**

We've had some very mild winters. Hopefully that will also be the case this year! We offer free transportation, so if the weather is poor, we'll pick you up for one of Linda's wonderful lunches and various activities. Please don't stay home! Put your mittens on and come out and join us, we really want see you!

I'd like to tell you about two important programs coming up. Crystal Perna, a nurse and busy mom of two, is also working towards her nurse practitioners license with clinical expertise in cardiology; she will share her passion for better health with us on January 15<sup>th</sup>. She has a wonderful presentation planned, with handouts, to discuss what you need to know about your cardiovascular health and hypertension, including causes and effects if left untreated, but most importantly, how to manage it. Join us with a can-do attitude and leave with a plan to get yourself started on a healthier journey for 2026! The medical community identified modifiable risk factors 80 years ago, but with the American lifestyle, it's still hard to control. Together we'll discuss ways to address risk factors because of smoking, high blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Do you have back pain or concerns about getting up off the floor in the event of a fall? We'll have Dr. Greg Wright coming in to talk with us about back pain, and he's also going to show us how to get up off the floor safely and discuss when to call 911. He wants to share with us how to have a healthy strong back and how to manage the different types of back pain that so many people struggle with. He'll discuss the etiology of back pain and identify the reasons and differences of upper back versus lower back discomfort. He's very personable and has left an extra half hour for questions and answers. Please call to let us know you're planning on attending.

I hope to see more of all of you this winter. I'll challenge you to pick one new activity in January or February and join us here to help improve your emotional and physical well-being. Please call for a blood pressure appointment on a Wednesday or stop in to see me the first Thursday of each month at Town Hall between 9:30 and 10:30. I wish you all a very happy and healthy new year!



**Saranya Hayward, MSW**  
**508-430-7550 x3**

I am hoping it is not too late for me to say Happy New Year. Wishing everyone happiness, laughter, good health, and being surrounded with positiveness with good friends and loving families. As I would say "A New Year is always a new beginning of many good things". It has been a little over a year since I have been working for the COA. I am very fortunate to be working and serving our older adult population and being part of this community. I think it doesn't matter where you work or which work setting you are in—if you are kind to each other, it will make a big difference in one person's life.

I went to the Massachusetts Councils on Aging conference in October and attended many educational sessions, including one on having productive end-of-life conversations. It was very informative, and I learned about how important it is to be brave and start a conversation with your loved one or friends about end-of-life decisions. I think it is common to be fearful or anxious when you find out that your loved one is approaching end-of-life. When or if you are facing such a situation, what will you do? I learned from the session that it is not about when you will leave this world or how long you have left, but rather about how you can plan and be prepared to make your loved one comfortable if it happens. Planning is key!

What can you plan? First, you can make sure that you understand how important it is to have Health Care Proxy (HCP) and a Power of Attorney (POA) in place, in case someday you can't make your own decisions due to declining medical or cognitive function. Secondly, who is the person that could help you to make healthcare or financial decisions? Thirdly, you could talk to your family about following your wishes when it comes to end-of-life decisions. Next, you could start a conversation with your primary care physician and their medical professional team regarding appropriate treatment. Lastly, you could also try to find out who your main support network is, either family, friends, or caregivers. We have many supports and services in our community. We have two upcoming sessions on Advanced Directives to help you work through some of these topics. **See page 4** (Pizza & Proxies with Town Nurse Sue Jusell and Understanding Advanced Directives with Broad Reach Hospice). Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to know more about services.

# Friends of The Harwich Council on Aging

100 Oak Street, Harwich MA 02645  
508-432-5050  
FriendsofHarwichCOA@gmail.com



## A Message from the Friends'

Dear Friends, Donors, and Members:

At our Annual Meeting on November 12 and the following Board Meeting, the Board decided to change our dues structure and donations, as you can see at the bottom of this page. Annual dues will be \$15.00 and couple dues will be \$25.00. We'll continue to honor everyone who has committed to a life membership. You'll also notice that we've established levels for donations, Bronze \$100, Silver \$250, Gold \$500 and Platinum \$1000. We appreciate whatever you can give. As you know, we support many endeavors of the Council on Aging. Your donations support individuals with personal safety and support for food. The Friends are also interested in digital equity, i.e., bringing our older adults online so they can participate in social media, video calls with loved ones and exploring the digital world safely. As all too many of us know, dementia is affecting many and the Friends are supporting respite care and education to both care for loved ones affected by dementia as well as learning how to slow or prevent the onset. Programs that engage older adults via enrichment and outreach help increase their socialization. This has multiple benefits toward improving health and reducing risks of dementia.

In addition to the form at the bottom of this letter, we'll also be contacting many of you by mail to request donations, and you might receive two requests. We understand that some of you have already made donations which are very much appreciated. If you happen to receive another request from us, please ignore it, we are trying to reach many people and may ask some folks twice. Our apologies if that happens to be you.

## Best wishes for the Holiday Season!

**Bob Hamilton on behalf of the Board of the Friends of the Harwich Council on Aging**

### FY 26 FRIENDS OF HARWICH COA MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues are \$15 per person or \$25 per couple

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Town/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL: \$15\_\_\_\_ ANNUAL COUPLE: \$25\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation: \$\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor Of / In Memory Of: \_\_\_\_\_

Bronze: \$100 Silver: \$250 Gold: \$500 Platinum: \$1,000

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Harwich COA  
Mail to: FHCOA, 100 Oak St., Harwich, MA 02645

## BROOKS FREE LIBRARY NEWS

## Two New Monthly Programs in 2026

Brooks Free Library (BFL) is excited about two new monthly programs that will be starting in 2026 at the library in the Thornton Meeting Room. Birding by Ear will begin in January and will take place on the second Tuesday of each month from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. Together we will learn to identify birds by their songs, calls, and non-vocal sounds. The incentive for offering this program was two-fold. In October of 2025, BFL hosted a program titled Birding by Ear with Mass Audubon. Brooke Shellman, a Teacher Naturalist at the Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was the guest speaker. The program was very well-attended, indicating an enormous interest in this topic. The library was also motivated to offer the monthly Birding by Ear program following the success of the first national Blind Birders Bird-a-thon that was held in May of 2025. This bird-a-thon was sponsored by Birdability, a non-profit that works to ensure the birding community and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, safe, and accessible for everybody. Several Cape Cod residents participated in this bird-a-thon, and it is hoped that even more will take part in the Blind Birder Bird-a-thon that is planned for May of 2026. If you love birds, join us at BFL on the following dates: January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8. (The calendar is online at <https://brooksfreelibrary.libcal.com/calendar>.)

Assistive Technology for People with Vision Loss will begin in March and will take place at BFL on the third Tuesday of each month from 1:00 to 2:00. A different technology that can be used by individuals who are blind or have low vision will be demonstrated on each of the following dates: March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, and December 15. Technologies to be covered include various apps, devices, and software, as well as some services specifically for use by people with vision loss. In early 2026, the technologies that will be demonstrated will be listed by month on the library's event calendar which can be found at <https://brooksfreelibrary.libcal.com/calendar>. Opportunities for one-on-one training on certain technologies that are demonstrated will be available to people with vision loss through the library's Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library (VITAL) program.

These two monthly programs are free and open to all. Pre-registration is not required. For more information contact Carla Burke at 508-430-7562, extension 5 or email [cburke@clamsnet.org](mailto:cburke@clamsnet.org).

Gavin Williams is a staff librarian at Brooks Free Library, 739 Main Street, Harwich.

## HARWICH COMMUNITY CENTER

## BUILDING CLOSED

Thursday, January 1 & Friday, January 2: New Year's Holiday

Monday, January 19: Martin Luther King, Jr Day

Monday, February 23: President's Day

*Select Events are listed below. For a full list of happenings, visit the Community Center website or pick up their newsletter.*

## JANUARY EVENTS

- **KD Quilters:** Jan 5<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:45AM-3:30PM
- **Garden Club Meeting:** Jan 6<sup>th</sup>, 1PM-3PM
- **Red Cross Blood Drive:** Jan 7, 12PM-4:30PM (*Appt Req*)
- **Women's Club Meeting:** Jan 8<sup>th</sup>, 1PM-4PM
- **Pasta Dinner:** Jan 8<sup>th</sup>, 5PM-6:30PM
- **"Try it" Zumba with Alissa:** Jan 10<sup>th</sup> @ 9AM (*free!*)
- **Conservation Trust Winter Talks:** Jan 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, 1-2:30
- **Newcomers Club Monthly Mtg:** Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, 9AM-11AM
- **"Try it" Knitting Class:** Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, 5PM-6:30PM (*free!*)
- **Cranberry Rug Hookers:** Jan 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:30PM-1:30PM
- **Harwich Artists Demo:** Jan 17<sup>th</sup>, 2PM-4PM
- **"Try it" Adult Improv:** Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, 6PM-7PM (*free!*)
- **Community Talent Show:** Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>, @ 6PM
- **Women's Club Book Club:** Jan 26<sup>th</sup>, 2PM-3PM
- **Volunteer Fair:** Jan 29<sup>th</sup>, 3PM-6PM

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

- **KD Quilters:** Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:45AM-3:30PM
- **Garden Club Meeting:** Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1PM-3PM
- **Pasta Dinner:** Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 5:30PM-7PM
- **Harwich Republicans:** Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 5PM-6:30PM
- **Master Gardeners "Backyard Horticulture":** Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 1PM-5PM
- **Harwich Democrats:** Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, 10-11AM
- **Conservation Trust Winter Talks:** Feb 7 & 28, 1-2:30PM
- **Duck Decorating Contest:** Feb 10<sup>th</sup> – Feb 20<sup>th</sup>
- **Women's Club Meeting:** Feb 12<sup>th</sup>, 1PM-4PM
- **Cape Cod Quilter's Guild:** Feb 12<sup>th</sup>, 4:30PM-8:30PM
- **Duck Scavenger Hunt:** Feb 18<sup>th</sup>, 9AM-4PM
- **Music Bingo:** Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, 6PM-8PM
- **Best Friends Dance:** Feb 20<sup>th</sup>, 6PM-8PM
- **Cranberry Rug Hookers:** Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 9:30PM-1:30PM
- **Harwich Artists Demo:** Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 2PM-4PM
- **Master Gardeners Annual Mtg:** Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, 8AM-12PM
- **Women's Club Book Club:** Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2PM-3PM



## ROCK HARBOR RESPITE

ROCK HARBOR RESPITE is a regional adult supportive day-care program for older adults in need of social engagement and those living with physical disabilities and cognitive changes. The program offers a structured day which includes news and conversation, fitness, and engaging activities to promote optimal social, emotional, and physical wellness.



The Town of Harwich subsidizes the cost of attendance for our residents. The cost for Harwich residents is \$65/day. **Scholarships are available if cost is a barrier to attendance; contact Julie at the Harwich COA (508-430-7550 x4) for information.**

For more info about the program, admission guidelines, or to learn about the opportunity to schedule a complimentary trial day, contact Supportive Day Program Director, Maria Cecchi, at 508-255-6333 x19.

## DENNIS GOLDEN AGE PROGRAM

The Golden Age Program (GAP) is a Social Day Program for persons with cognitive impairment. Participants enjoy the company of friends, have fun enjoying games, crafts, field trips, music, exercise, dance, and much more. GAP meets Tuesday-Friday 9:30AM to 2:30 PM. For more info, call the Dennis Center for Active Living: 508-385-5067.

## ALZHEIMER'S FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER OF CAPE COD

AFSC provides free support to families affected by dementia. Services include support groups, consultations, care planning, phone support, education, insurance support, and social and cultural programming. The AFSC is committed to providing support through every stage of dementia-related illness, not only for family caregivers and professionals but for people living with cognitive disease, from pre-diagnosis to bereavement and all of life that happens in between. A respite center in Hyannis is also operated Monday - Friday. For assistance, call 508-896-5170.



Alzheimer's Family Support  
Center of Cape Cod

**Look for Caregiver Support Group info on page 8!**

## NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

**BROWN BAG PROGRAM:** The COA works with the Greater Boston Food Bank and the Family Pantry to distribute brown bags of food for seniors on the first Friday of the month. Bags may include fresh fruit or vegetables, meat or frozen food, and shelf stable items. All Harwich residents age 60+ are eligible for the program. **For more information, call Saranya at 508-430-7550 x3.**

**MEALS ON WHEELS:** A program of Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands. Meals are delivered to homebound seniors by volunteers. Voluntary donation of \$3 per meal. **For more info, call Elder Services at 508-394-4630.**

**S.N.A.P.:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps lower income individuals and families buy healthy, nutritious food. A SNAP household's monthly benefit depends on household size, income and expenses. **For more information, contact Saranya at 508-430-7550 x3.**

## CALEB CHASE FUND

The Caleb Chase Fund is a Town of Harwich fund intended to help Harwich residents in urgent financial need. We can help with emergency payments for rent, utilities, medical bills, child care, and a few other essential needs. Application, proof of Harwich residency, and proof of income documents required. **Contact Julie at 508-430-7550 x4 for an appointment or information on how to apply.** Please note that funds are limited, and grants are subject to the availability of funding.

## HEATING ASSISTANCE

It's not too late to apply for Fuel Assistance! This program helps pay your winter heating bills. To see if you are eligible, contact Social Services Coordinator Saranya Hayward at 508-430-7550 x3.

### COA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next meetings for the COA Board of Directors will be:

**Weds. January 21 & February 18 at 10:00 AM**

All agendas and meeting minutes will be available on the town website, via the Town Clerk, or by contacting the COA.

## CRANBERRY COACH

Transportation on our wheelchair-accessible van is available for trips to grocery stores, pharmacies, and post offices within Harwich, as well as to onsite COA programs, Brooks Free Library, and Town Hall.

- The capacity on our largest van is 14 passengers.
- You must make a reservation at least 24 hours ahead. More notice always helps!
- Riders with symptoms of respiratory illness will be asked to wear a mask.
- **Reminder: Rides are to scheduled locations only.** Drivers cannot bring you to any location not scheduled through the COA office in advance. Our transportation coordinator needs to account for every trip in our daily schedule to ensure the van runs on time.

### Cranberry Coach Weekly Schedule

Please note: Schedule is subject to change based on rides to and from COA sponsored programs.

Mon	AM - Market Basket or Hyannis shopping (see below) PM - Ocean State Job Lot & Dollar Tree in Dennis Port
Tues	AM - Shaw's PM - Family Pantry deliveries
Wed	AM - Shaw's PM - Call for availability
Thur	AM - Shaw's PM - Call for availability, schedule varies
Fri	AM - Shaws, Brown Bag, or Breakfast Programs PM - Stop & Shop or Shaw's, optional Harwich Port stops*

*\*Stops at Harwich Port CVS, Post Office, and local banks must be explicitly scheduled when arranging your ride. Thanks!*

### Monday Trip Schedule

**Market Basket:** January 5, 26 & February 9, 23

**Hyannis shopping:** January 12 & February 2



## RIDES TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Volunteer Drivers provide rides to medical appointments. Requests must be made **AT LEAST 4 BUSINESS DAYS in advance**. Call 508-430-7550 x1 to request a ride.

- Travel between **Wellfleet and Sandwich** only.
- Rides must commence and end during our regular business hours (pick ups at 8:30 or later; drop off by 4:00).
- Limit of 2 medical rides per month.
- We cannot transport anyone who has been under any form of anesthesia; rides to procedures are possible.
- Riders must be able to enter and exit a vehicle without assistance. Caregivers may accompany if needed.
- A cash donation of \$5-20 to your driver to offset the cost of gas is requested (can be waived if needed).
- Prescription delivery also available; see page 12.
- **NEW:** Limited availability of rides for residents who need wheelchair transport. Call to inquire.

## COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

**Contact CCRTA for all options below: 800-352-7155**

**DART:** Door-to-door, ride-by-appointment service that is wheelchair accessible. Fare is \$1.50/ride for seniors. To make a reservation, call the CCRTA weekdays from 8am-5pm. Booking 72 hours in advance is highly recommended.

**Smart DART:** An app based, on-demand service that is a door-to-door, ride-hail service. Download SmartDart from the app store (Apple or Android) by searching "CCRTA SmartDart". Fixed fare of \$3/ride. For travel within Harwich, with free transfer to fixed routes for longer trips.

**H2O:** CCRTA's fixed route public transportation between Orleans and Hyannis, with stops in Harwich Port and at Shaw's in Harwich. Fare is free for seniors.

**FLEX:** The CCRTA's Flex bus picks up and drops off passengers at designated stops between Harwich and Provincetown and also flexes off its route up to ¼ of a mile to serve people who have difficulty getting to a regular bus stop. Reservations are required for the off-route stops.

**Boston Hospital Transportation:** Transportation provided for medical appointments at Boston hospitals weekdays by the CCRTA, with a pick-up in Harwich. Call the CCRTA to reserve by 11am the day before.

\$30 round trip, \$15 one way



**Call the COA to schedule all rides**

**508-430-7550 x1**

**24 hours notice for Cranberry Coach**

**4 business days for Medical Rides**

HARWICH COUNCIL ON AGING  
100 Oak Street  
Harwich, MA 02645

**~ Happy New Year ~**  
***The COA wishes you a delightful 2026!***

## HARWICH COUNCIL ON AGING

### STAFF CONTACTS

**Director**.....Julie Witas, MSW, MPH  
**Town Nurse**.....Susan Jusell, RN  
**Social Services Coordinator**.....Saranya Hayward, MSW  
**Program Specialist III**.....Rosa Wright  
**Executive Assistant**.....Lauren Swift  
**Program Specialist I**.....Kate Seeley  
**Town Chef**.....Linda St. Pierre  
**Van Drivers**.....Ken Watson, Dave Leahy, Steve Gingras

### COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jen Andersen  
John Bathelt  
Angelina Chilaka  
Sheila House  
Linda Roderick  
Carol Thayer, Vice Chair  
Richard Waystack, Chair

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**FOR THOSE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS,  
A LARGE PRINT VERSION OF THE NEWSLETTER  
IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**



*The Harwich COA offers many legal, financial, medical, recreational and other services and/or activities by volunteers or nominal cost practitioners. Older adults participating in these services do so with the understanding that the Harwich COA, the Town of Harwich, or its employees do not assume any legal or other responsibility for any advice or services rendered by such volunteers or practitioners.*



508-430-7550



HarwichCOA.com



coa@harwich-ma.gov



/HarwichCOA