

## **WINDSOR COA NEWS**

### **August/September 2020**

*Our mission is to serve older Windsor adults by providing opportunities and resources that advance the quality of life in a rural community.*

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs provides financial support for this COA publication.

### **Thank you, Mame!**

The Windsor COA Board has accepted, with regret, the resignation of our erudite secretary, Mame Whelihan. Mame has spent the last year faithfully documenting our meetings and adding her special talent of cutting to the chase when discussions became mired in minutia. She has added her years of experience, working with all manner of personalities, her valued insight – and often, humor – to the growth of this new board.

Mame returned to Windsor in 2012 after living a decade in North Carolina. And how glad we are that she came back to her former home on Shaw Road. She is a woman of many talents among which are participating in several aspects of the Arts and Theatre world from acting to producing (even running her own dinner theatre with Madeline!), prolifically writing articles, recounting hilarious stories of her brave and crazy pursuits, and working with special education students. Did you know that Mame has never missed a selectboard meeting? That's one for the Windsor record book!

We wish Mame a happy, healthy, well-deserved "retirement" from the COA but are hopeful that she will always grace us with her input, take us to task for any oversight of important issues and drop into our meetings whenever the spirit moves her. Thank you, Mame. We will miss you.

### **Our other Board Members**

We asked the other members of the Board why they decided to accept a seat on the COA. Here are their responses:

Pete Menard has been on the COA Board for longer than he can remember (he's guessing 20 years or more). When Art Needham was the Chairman, Pete was the Vice Chair, and when Art wasn't reappointed to the board, Pete became the Chairman, an office he held several times over the years. When asked why he has continued to serve, he replied, "Because I like to help."

Sandie Zink writes, "Volunteering to work at the monthly community luncheons and behind the library desk led me to an interest in the Council on Aging. A majority of the wonderful townsfolk with whom I shared "bread and books" were 50+ and eligible COA members. Since there were several vacancies on the COA Board, I threw my hat into the ring, not knowing what to expect or if I could bring any value. My first year has been fulfilling and a great learning experience—with lots more to look forward to."

Diane Saunders shares, "It was a simple phone call from our Town Clerk, Madeline asking if I might be interested in the COA. Seems the group was short members and was looking for younger seniors to form a new council. The hardest hurdle for me was admitting I had reached the age and was now

considered a “senior citizen!” As more people joined, I realized what an incredible group it would be to work alongside. With a background in healthcare that enabled me to work with people of all ages and abilities, I knew I would be able to bring some helpful ideas and suggestions to the table.”

Diane Pennetti tells us, “I was brought up in a home where service to others was a firm belief. Our family was always reaching out to help others. I went on to pursue an education in nursing and focused my career on Mental Health and always had a interest in working with the elder population. As a result of this interest and personal family situation, I became involved with the Alzheimer’s Association in Denver, CO and facilitated a support group for family members. Retirement left me with the time to offer any help I can to our community, and has led me to become a part of the group, and for that I am thankful.”

Sue Jacobs recalls that, like many others, she was asked by Windsor’s chief recruiter, Town Clerk, Madeline Scully. Having worked as the Dalton COA Director for many years, “I had the experience of working with other town departments as well as many other area agencies in helping to meet the needs of older Dalton residents. I’m so glad I said, “Yes!” This has been a wonderful group to work with, and get to know. And being able to help my home town is a big plus!”

**FARMER’S MARKET COUPON TIME**

If you are age 60 or older, receive food stamps or fuel assistance, or your monthly income for a single household is \$1,968 (\$23,606 annual), or \$2,658 (\$31,894 annual) for two persons, you qualify. Call Sue at 684-3191 for more information.

Sandie and Sue recently had the opportunity to attend a “virtual” conference presented by MCOA, the MA Association of Councils on Aging. The following is a recap of valuable information from one of the workshops Sandie attended.

**Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP)**

This program provides no-interest loans to seniors (and some qualified others) to improve home accessibility, allowing the recipient to remain in their home and to maintain their daily activities. It is meant for items like: ramps, roll-in showers, tub conversions, fences, accessory units, alarm systems, etc. The HMLP does NOT cover repairs and it is NOT a grant.

The amount borrowed becomes a lien to be captured when the home is sold. To qualify, there is an income cap of \$179,200, based upon state tax returns, or, if state taxes are not required of the recipient, social security or pension income. The recipient is required to find a contractor who is approved (and their bid accepted) by the MCOA. Also, the homeowner must provide documentation of need from a physician and complete an evaluation by a physical therapist or social worker.

Although this may sound like a daunting challenge, the MCOA staff is eager to help and put you at ease with the process. To get started and for more information on program requirements and other details, contact Shirley Stephens, MCOA Senior Housing Coordinator, 413-527-6425.