



Center Connections

ADDING LIFE TO THE YEARS
Brookline Senior Center
Summer 2022

Brookline Senior Center
2022 Autumn Benefit:

Stay Tuned

President's Letter

*Celebrate
Older Americans
EVERY MONTH*

Older adults play vital, positive roles in our communities – as family members, friends, mentors, volunteers, civic leaders, members of the workforce, and more. Just as every person is unique, so too is how they age and how they choose to do it – and there is no “right” way. That’s why the theme for May’s Older Americans Month (OAM) 2022 was *Age My Way*.

See the article on p. 3 for some ways to live independently as long as possible.

Here at the Brookline Senior Center, we celebrate older Americans every month and every day. We hope you do, too.

Wishing you a safe and healthy summer.
Betsy Pollock, President

Another Unusual Year
The **ever-changing**
but **never-ending** pandemic!

Thanks to COVID, this has been another unprecedented year.

- Four times we were on the verge of restarting large public gatherings and then had to postpone them.
- Resilience has been key – and like many of you, we have had to pivot repeatedly.
- We have found new ways to stay in touch with Brookline’s older adults.

What did we do when we were closed? Well, we were never shut down, just closed to public gatherings. As “essential workers,” we always were working. **Our staff continued to provide all of our services, many virtually.** We arranged for hundreds of residents to receive their COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots through clinics at Town Hall, public housing and at the Senior Center.

Transportation to medical appointments continued throughout the pandemic. With new sanitation guidelines and physical distancing put into place, more trips were necessary for the same number of riders.

The stress of COVID on our population continues, with high levels of anxiety and depression. **Requests for our social work assistance more than doubled.**

At the beginning of COVID, we were awarded money from ARPA (American Recovery Plan) – for food insecurity. This allowed us to provide daily grab-and-go lunches, monthly food commodities and special home-delivered restaurant meals.

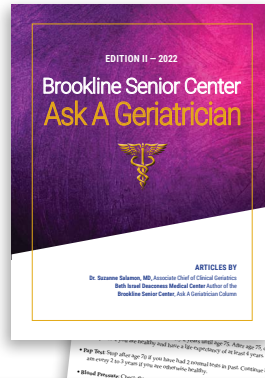
We applied for \$648,000 in Town of Brookline ARPA financing and received a total of \$517,792. The biggest variation was in food insecurity where we requested \$195,808, but only received \$100,000. We also received \$358,824 for Transportation Access, and \$57,968 for Technology.

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2021 Autumn Benefit
Thank You Sponsors & Donors
for a successful
No Gala Autumn Benefit!

Thanks to our wonderful sponsors, we were able to raise almost as much critically-needed funding as in the past. In place of sponsorship ads in a program book, all sponsors received ads in the **2022 Edition of “Ask a Geriatrician.”** This edition includes additional content not in the original version.

Be sure to pick up your complimentary copy at the Senior Center soon since the book is very popular. We encourage you to visit our sponsors as appropriate.



Thank you to our many sponsors, especially Diamond Sponsors

Beth Israel
Deaconess
Medical Center,
Michael
Merrill and
Chobee Hoy.

As we go to print, with the pandemic still threatening, plans for our Fall 2022 Autumn Benefit are still up in the air. Stay tuned.

**Thank you,
Mr. Anonymous!**

Recently, our Out to Lunch group traveled to Greg’s Restaurant in Watertown for a lovely spring meal. When they went to pay the bill, their server told them that an anonymous gentleman in the restaurant had already paid for them! That was a delightful surprise, and the lucky recipients have decided they will look for ways to pay forward his generosity. **Have you done a random act of kindness recently?**

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Volunteer of the Year George Chin



George Chin holds his certificate with new Volunteer Coordinator, Valerie Graf

On April 13th, the Brookline Senior Center held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Event, and there were many people to honor.

The people who make the AARP Tax Program possible were especially honored. **The John & Molly Dolan Volunteer of the Year Award went to George Chin, the Coordinator of the AARP Tax Program. A Community Service Award went to the twelve AARP Tax Program Volunteers.**

This program has been so important over these pandemic years and was one of the first in-person activities in 2020 that the Senior Center brought back during the pandemic. George, along with the AARP tax volunteers, worked tirelessly helping over 200 households complete their taxes.

Volunteer Honorable Mentions went to the following amazing volunteers, who helped us provide essential services to the community throughout the pandemic:

- **Marcia Goldstein** for continually helping with the 'Grab-and-Go' lunch program
- **Michael Weston** for never missing a day helping with the 'Grab-and-Go' lunches and getting the newsletter out
- **Mimi O'Connor** for her consistent help with the Food Commodity Program
- **John Seay** for his expertise in getting us set up with hybrid and Zoom meetings

Emily Rindermann, a Johnson & Wales doctoral candidate in occupational therapy, received the **Student Award** for helping the Senior Center immensely for the past several months with an array of programming and support services.

Want to volunteer with the Senior Center? Contact Valerie Graf at vggraf@brooklinema.gov

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE FILM: Special Screening at Coolidge Corner!



On December 9, 2021, over 600 people watched the new documentary film, *All the Lonely People* (ATLP) – either in person at the Coolidge Corner theater or virtually.

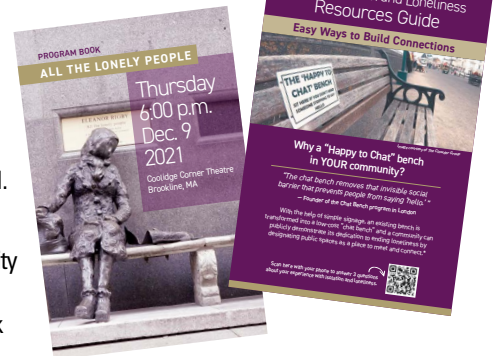
The film addresses the societal issues of loneliness and isolation, both exacerbated by the pandemic. Through poignant vignettes and stories of resilience, Director Stu Maddux and Producer Joe Applebaum show that these issues are not limited to the U.S. nor to older adults, but are universal issues around the world.

The screening was organized by the Brookline Senior Center, Goddard House and other community organizations. A post-film presentation included comments by Stu, Joe, co-chairs Ruthann Dobek

from Brookline Senior Center and Candace Cramer from Goddard House. Dr. Jeremy Nobel of The UnLonely Project bit.ly/3MGugLG and Sandra Harris, AARP MA President, also spoke.

To learn more about the film, visit allthelonelypeoplefilm.com

The LGBT Aging Project spearheaded the development of a community **Social Isolation and Loneliness Resources Guide**. To access an electronic version, go to the Senior Center website brooklineseniorcenter.org and scroll down the right-hand column.



Julie Washburn Recognized by Town of Brookline for Exemplary Public Service



"Goes above and beyond" "Always ready to help in any way she can"

Each year, during Public Service Recognition Week, the Town of Brookline

announces the person in each municipal department nominated by their colleagues for their exemplary public service. This year Julie Washburn, Supervisor of Programs and Services, received this much-deserved honor.

Here are a few of the many accolades from her colleagues:

- Julie performs an incredibly endless, demanding and stressful job accommodating our elder community here at Brookline's Senior Center. She does this graciously, professionally, and amazingly – with good humor.

- Julie's service to Brookline and our seniors has always been invaluable; however, it has become even more essential during the pandemic. Julie has adapted and maintained our services and programming through the many challenges and changes we have faced...without any expectation of praise or recognition.
- She is truly a bright light at the [Senior Center] and her presence is appreciated by all who frequent the building.
- Julie is so generous and ...helps [make] the Senior Center a warm and welcoming place!

THANK YOU, JULIE, for your outstanding service to the Brookline Senior Center, your colleagues, the Town and our entire older adult community.

Yolanda Rodriguez: Board Volunteer for our COA and Springwell

After retiring as a math teacher and department head in Wellesley, Yolanda Rodriguez, a lifelong Brookline resident, became active at the Senior Center, taking courses and eventually joining the COA Board. In that role she also became the **liaison to Springwell, our Area Agency on Aging**, and has just finished her third term on their Board. Yolanda is passionate about advocating for older adults – including for services that will help them remain in their homes as they age, if that is their preference.

A Day in the Life of



BROOKLINE BAZAAR

One of the most exciting aspects of running Brookline Bazaar – the Senior Center’s online Etsy gift shop – is discovering and researching all of the various items we offer. Each item in the shop is handmade or donated, and all proceeds from Brookline Bazaar go toward funding programming at the Center.

Brookline Bazaar (etsy.com/shop/brooklinebazaar) offers a curated collection of antique and vintage treasures and collectibles from around the globe. New items are listed each week. The shop’s customer base is just as varied as its offerings – we receive orders from locals, and from all corners of the country. Here’s a glimpse into one day of orders from Brookline Bazaar:

- From a customer in Colorado, to be part of her bridal bouquet – a midcentury Avon lucite & rhinestone ladybug!



- Going to a collector in New York, a pair of rare Depression-era uranium glass canisters.
- Overnighted to Texas to be gifted the next day, a Chinese midcentury vintage lapis lazuli perched bird carving/sculpture.

Visit Brookline Bazaar to discover treasures for yourself and others that will help support the Senior Center!

To donate items to the Brookline Bazaar, contact Jessica Milley-Gee, Coordinator, jmilleygee@brooklinema.gov



The late aging activist Frank Caro featured in Journal of Aging and Social Policy

Journal of Aging & Social Policy Dedicates Spring 2022 Issue in Memory of Aging Activist Frank Caro, Ph.D. (1936-2020)



One of Frank’s many accomplishments highlighted in the issue was his work making Brookline the first Age-Friendly community in New England. Thanks to your support, the Senior Center and BrooklineCAN continue to advance Frank’s legacy.

Access to the Journal: tandfonline.com/toc/wasp20/34/2 For a PDF of “Engaged Scholarship in Gerontology: Frank Caro’s Lifetime Contributions” bit.ly/3blv6jW

Live Independently as You Age

Here are some things everyone can consider to live independently as long as possible:

- **Planning:** Think about what you will need and want in the future, from home and community-based services to community activities that interest you.
- **Engagement:** Remain involved and contribute to your community through volunteering, work, and/or civic participation opportunities.
- **Access:** Make home improvements and modifications, use assistive technologies, and customize supports to help you better age in place. Learn what transportation options are available.
- **Connection:** Maintain social activities and relationships to combat social isolation and stay connected to your community.

Diverse communities are strong communities. Ensuring that older adults remain involved and included in our communities for as long as possible benefits everyone. **The Brookline Council on Aging/Brookline Senior Center is your local organization committed to these goals.** We invite you to explore our resources and become active in our work. Together we can guarantee dignity and access to services for all Brookline older adults.

continued from front page

ANOTHER UNUSUAL YEAR

ARPA funds are also being used to help address the mental health needs of Brookline’s older adults. Older adults have been hardest hit by the ravages of the pandemic. We find that many have remained fearful and wary of venturing out to participate in activities. This is called social isolation, and its effects on physical and emotional health can be devastating. Even small gifts have a hugely beneficial effect on the Senior Center’s ability to reach out to isolated elders and help them safely reconnect and re-engage.

Thanks to the dedication of **Senate Majority Leader Cynthia Stone Creem and State Rep Tommy Vitolo, we also received two state ARPA funding earmarks:** \$65K for employing older adults and \$100K for transportation, social work, food and technology.

Stay tuned for the next chapter of this unusual era... We are committed to going with the flow and continuing to pivot since any effort to predict is laughable.

Letter from the Director

As we enter our third COVID year, we are so appreciative for the way our staff and volunteers have pivoted and stepped up. We are so grateful that all of the cuts from the COVID crisis have been restored. However, the municipal portion of our operating budget remains below 70% of our total expenses. For example, the Town does not allocate a penny toward our furniture or programs.

We are in desperate need to replace many of our chairs and tables, which are vintage 2001 – and have had a lot of people sitting in them over the years. *Thanks to your past generosity, the tables and chairs in two of our classrooms have been updated.* But we still are using the original chairs and tables in the coffee lounge and ballroom. Many of these chairs have been refurbished and are wearing out again.

Your generosity and support continue to sustain us through these challenging times.

With appreciation,
Ruthann Dobek

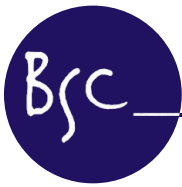
Town Administrator Moving On



Mel Kleckner, Brookline’s Town Administrator since 2010, has announced that he will be stepping down in September 2022.

“I will miss working with the Senior Center. They do great work and are effective advocates for older adults. I’ve been impressed with their success in building coalitions and bringing in outside funding.”

We wish Mel all the best as he moves to his next chapter and thank him for all that he has done for Brookline’s older adults.



ADDING LIFE TO THE YEARS Brookline Senior Center

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See page 3

For "A Day in the Life" of



HOW TO FIND AMAZING ITEMS!

Prest STD
US Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
Permit No 55181

Look Inside for your name on the list of COVID heroes

Center Connectins

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SPECIAL SUPPORTERS

Brookline Older Adult Community Health Needs Assessment *New report from*



Working with the Brookline Senior Center and Council on Aging, the Boston University School of Public Health identified community health needs and current resources of the Town of Brookline.

KEY FINDINGS:

Transportation & Built Environment: Access to safe, reliable, and accessible transportation varies between North and South Brookline. Although the town's physical infrastructure is well-maintained and provides access to green spaces, it lacks in areas of safety and accessibility for the older adult population.

Healthcare Access Limitations in medical transportation services, both in quantity and in usability of services, prohibit many older adults from reaching healthcare appointments. A lack of providers specializing in older adult needs, particularly in mental and behavioral health, further restricts access to care. High costs associated with home health care impact many older adults' ability to age in place.

Housing: There is an inadequate supply of affordable, subsidized housing options and widespread concern over rising rent prices in Brookline. For homeowners, property taxes, utilities and home maintenance costs, and lack of financial support for aging in place are burdensome. For individuals who need in-home care, affordable support is difficult to find.

Personal & Legal Rights Scammers, mainly online, pose a threat to older adults in Brookline. Conservatorship issues and maintaining personal and legal rights are of particular concern to older adults.



For the full report, go to bit.ly/3MGugLG or scan the QR code.

THANK YOU!

Brookline Senior Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent of the law. Please donate generously at brooklineseniorcenter.org Thanks for keeping Brookline's older adults connected and safe! To learn more about Legacy, Planned Giving, or Tribute opportunities, contact Ruthann Dobek at rdobek@brooklinema.gov

Thanks to Brookline Country Club



Thank you for providing the Senior Center with tickets to the Brookline Country Club US Open in June.

This gift raised \$2,000 for the Center!

