



The Senior Spirit

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AMHERST SENIOR CENTER/COUNCIL ON AGING

~~ **SPECIAL RESOURCES EDITION** ~~

April 2020

Hello dear friends!

I hope you are staying safe, healthy and informed! We are here to help you! Although the Senior Center is closed, **all staff continue to work** and can be reached by phone and email. Our number is **413-259-3060**.

Since the most vulnerable population with COVID-19 are those over age 60 and above, we continue to advise you to **err on the side of caution**

- * wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds
- * stay away from large social gatherings
- * practice social distance
- * wipe frequently touched surfaces with disinfectant
- * visits with grandchildren are ill-advised
- * defer non-essential appointments

These social restrictions are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to protect your health. The odd paradox is we are wired for connection, yet we are being asked not to do something which is central to being human. Unlike the past, the heroism this crisis calls for is non-action – stay home!

We realize the landscape of community is shifting daily and you may feel disoriented, but information is power and we want to arm you with as much information as possible to strengthen your resilience in a time of uncertainty. We encourage using delivery services to support continued social distancing. For the most up to date information on COVID-19, the best resource is the Town Website www.TownofAmherst.gov

For medical updates, consult the Centers for Disease Control website: www.cdc.gov. Our webpage for the Senior Center has much of the information contained here.

We continue to update our website as things change daily. We know many do not have internet. This newsletter, though not a substitute for real time information as the situation evolves, will help. This week I was relieved to see seniors adjusting the rhythm of their daily life and staying home.

Remember, there are still things you can do:

- Relationships are not cancelled
- Conversations are not cancelled
- Reading is not cancelled
- Music is not cancelled
- Love is not cancelled
- Nature is not cancelled
- Dancing is not cancelled
- Art is not cancelled

Let's lean into the good stuff that remains and has gotten us through hard times before! And, show our Senior Spirit!

Warmly, Mary Beth

Behavioral Health Resources

If you have a mental health provider you may be able to meet with your counselor, therapist or psychiatrist by phone. Many insurance companies, including Medicare will be covering tele-health visits. Call your provider for additional information.

24/7 Crisis Line

Behavioral Health Network (413) 733-6661
Service is available to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis regardless of age or insurance.

National Alliance on Mental Health Help Line

Monday-Friday 10 AM - 6PM
(800) 950-6264

National Distress Hotline

(800)-985-5990

24/7 call line for emotional support for anyone experiencing distress or other mental health concerns

Online resources

CDC Information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

PBS article

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/why-your-mental-health-may-be-suffering-in-the-covid-19-pandemic>

N.A.M.I Information and Resources

<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2020/COVID-19-and-Mental-Illness-NAMI-Releases-Important/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf?lang=en-US>

BROWN BAG & BLUE BAG

Brown Bag Program (W.Mass Food Bank) - Bags of food pre-selected by food bank. Delivered first Thursday of the month. Bags will be delivered to senior housing lobbies including Ann Whalen, Chestnut Court and Clark House. Building staff will call you to pick-up your bag. Non-housing residents call the senior center 259-3060 to plan your pick-up. New applicants call the food bank at 413-247-9738.

Blue Bag (Amherst Survival Center) Bags of groceries ordered by senior delivered third Wednesday of the month. Bags will be delivered to senior housing lobbies including Ann Whalen, Chestnut Court and Clark House. Building staff will call you to pick-up your bag. Please give your food order forms to your building's office staff. We will not be reusing any bags at this time. Non-housing residents, call the senior center at 259-3060 to arrange pick-up. New applicants call 549-3968.

Medication Delivery Options for Seniors



CVS offers home delivery for some medication orders. Controlled substances and medications requiring refrigeration cannot be delivered. Sign up online at www.CVS.com Free delivery is being offered until May 10, 2020 according to the website.

Louis and Clark provides home delivery. There is no charge for the delivery. Call (413) 781-2996 option #7 and enter the extension 302 when prompted. You can also sign up online at www.medibubble.com Check with your **Part D Medicare** provider to see if home delivery is an option. The number is on your Part D card.

Stop & Shop does not offer home delivery for medication.

Amherst Pharmacy offers medication delivery for a fee. (413) 253-0387.

If you need additional advice on options for home delivery of medications, please call or email Michele Chmura LICSW, Social Worker, Amherst Senior Center (413) 259-3038 or chmuram@amherstma.gov.

IRS TAX INFORMATION

The Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service are providing special payment relief to individuals and businesses in response to the COVID-19 Outbreak. The filing deadline for tax returns remains April 15, 2020. The IRS urges taxpayers who are owed a refund to file as quickly as possible. For those who can't file by the April 15, 2020 deadline, the IRS reminds individual taxpayers that everyone is eligible to request a six-month extension to file their return.

AMHERST SENIOR CENTER IS CLOSED until APRIL 3

WE REMAIN WORKING AND ARE STILL PROVIDING:

Home delivered meals & Take out lunch
Blue bag and brown bag food distribution
Social work consultations— housing, nutrition, insurance

Nurse health consultations

Bread and Produce—stay tuned for logistics for community distribution on website—delivery sites at selected community school lunch distribution locations for seniors in extended families and community apartment complexes

Online yoga classes -see our Facebook page "TOWN OF AMHERST SENIOR CENTER"

Suspended: SHINE, AARP tax service, foot care & social space

MEAL AND GROCERY DELIVERY OPTIONS

FREE COLD LUNCH PICK UP: Pick up a FREE to-go cold lunch at the Senior Center provided by Highland Valley Elder Services. Available to ALL seniors. Call Donna Hancock 2 days in advance to reserve a meal at (413) 259-3164.

HOME DELIVERED LUNCH: Contact Highland Valley Elder Services (413) 586-2000 for meals on wheels if unable to prepare a meal yourself and no one to assist preparing a meal. *If a senior is ill or quarantined, call 586-2000 option 2 for Intake for 3 week delivery plan.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH TO GO: Pick up a to-go combination breakfast & lunch Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday 11-3 at the Amherst Survival Center. Food Pantry open daily 11-3.

PEA POD AT STOP & SHOP: Home delivery services for groceries and frozen meals. Delivery fees vary. Order online through peapod.com. **NEW STOP & SHOP SENIOR SHOPPING HOURS 6 am-7:30 am

ATKINS FARM: Delivers groceries to your home Monday through Saturday. Call 413-253-9528 8am – 4pm or online at atkinsfarm.com. Home delivery requires 48 hours notice and will be delivered to your curb. Minimum order of \$25 required with a \$10 delivery fee in Amherst. Service reps help seniors shop over phone.

SCHWAN'S HOME DELIVERED MEALS: Delivers large variety of single serving meals sold in "4 meal packets". [Vegan and heart healthy options are available.](#) Delivered frozen by a Schwan's truck or UPS to your doorstep.

INSTACART MEAL DELIVERY: Online grocery orders. First delivery is free. 5% service fee for orders. Minimum fee is \$2. Delivers groceries from Big Y, Target, Aldi and CVS. www.instacart.com

MOM'S MEALS: Provides shipped frozen customized meals to your doorstep. www.momsmeals.com

MASS FOOD DELIVERY: Groceries from local farms <https://massfooddelivery.com/>

DELANEY'S MARKET / LOG CABIN / DELANEY'S CABIN: Fresh individually packaged meals every day able to distribute in refrigerated vehicles to your location. Contact 413-438-0887 or view menu at www.delaneysmarket.com

PREPARED MEALS: Traders Joes, Whole Foods, Target, Big Y, Stop & Shop & Atkins Farm all have a large variety of fresh and frozen prepared meals for a helper to pick up at the store.

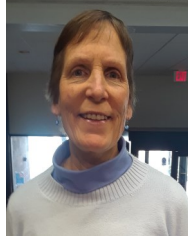
DOOR DASH provides delivery of food from your favorite restaurant. www.doordash.com

SENIOR SHOPPING HOURS

Be sure to check with the stores you shop in, most are having senior shopping hours early morning. For example, Stop & Shop, Big Y, Target, Wal-Mart, Whole Foods.

NURSE HEALTH ADVICE PHONE LINE

**Karen Ranen, M.S., R.N.,
C.D.E.**



Hello everyone! I am a resident of Amherst and have been for over 30 years with my husband Dave. I began my nursing career as a visiting nurse on Long Island, NY. I have had a rich clinical background practicing at Massachusetts General Hospital, Noble Hospital, University Health Services, Amherst Survival Center and School Nursing. I am a Certified Diabetes Nurse Educator, and am working toward certification in Holistic Nursing. Most recently, I have been a nurse volunteer at the blood pressure clinic at the Senior Center. I very much look forward to meeting you! ~~

Karen is available part-time for phone consultations at **413-259-3257** or by email at ranenk@amherstma.gov for Amherst seniors providing information and referral resources on a priority basis.

Karen's services are made possible due to the enduring generosity of an annual donation established by Joseph and Dorothy Gavin, without whose support, this tremendous resource would not be possible. Thank you Dorothy for over 20 years of supporting seniors' health by funding the Joseph and Dorothy Gavin Senior Health Services.

PVTA Service Update: Starting Monday, March 23, 2020, PVTA will begin operating on a Modified Saturday Schedule in the Springfield and Northampton Service Areas. Service will follow a Saturday Schedule, Monday – Saturday with modified service hours of 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. Routes that usually operate Monday – Friday only, may have service during the week with modified hours of 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. Sundays will continue to operate on a Sunday Service Schedule. Please click [Service Adjustments](#) for the UMass Service Area schedule changes and detailed route information for entire system. Van service will follow the Modified Saturday Schedule.

HEALTH CARE PROXY

Health care can require difficult decisions. In the event you are unable to communicate your medical choices, you need to designate a person to do so. In Massachusetts that person is named in a Health Care Proxy. It is a best practice to complete this form while you are well and have time to discuss your wishes for your care with that person.

Baystate Health's website has downloadable forms you can complete at home. Download the form at: www.baystatehealth.org/patients/

If you have questions about completing a health care proxy, please contact Mary Beth at (413) 259-3114.

Durable Medical Equipment



The durable medical equipment loan program is suspended due to risk of exposure to COVID-19. **Stavros** in partnership with Reequipment loans durable medical equipment for FREE and will deliver for a donation fee.

Types of equipment loaned are wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, and bath chairs. View their website at: www.stavros.org or telephone **413-256-0473 x233**

MENTAL HEALTH CARE PACKAGE



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis. Talking to people you trust can help.

- (1) Reach out to family and friends. Close the social distance by signing up to **make or receive Phone-a-Neighbor friendly phone calls! Call 259-3060** or our website: www.amherstma.gov/seniorcenter
- (2) Maintain a healthy lifestyle including proper nutrition, sleep, exercise and social contact by phone or email
- (3) Don't use smoking or drinking or other drugs to deal with your emotions. If you feel overwhelmed call a counsellor or our social work staff for referral: 259-3060. If you are in distress, call the **National Disaster Distress Helpline- 24/7** emotional support and crisis counseling for anyone experiencing distress or other mental health concerns. **Call (1-800-985-5990) or text (TalkWithUs to 66746)**. Calls are answered by trained counselors who will listen to your concerns, explore coping and other available supports, and offer referrals to community resources for follow-up care and support.
- (4) Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you spend watching or listening to media coverage you perceive as upsetting
- (5) Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.
- (6) Ask for help when you need it! Do you need supplies, deliveries, services? Can you volunteer to provide them? Sign up on our website under **RECEIVE SUPPORT/ VOLUNTEER SUPPORT** on our webpage: www.amherstma.gov/seniorcenter We will match a need with a volunteer to provide services, deliveries, and supplies. Sign up with AMHERST NEIGHBORS at amherstneighbors01002@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Grandkids home from college? High school kids in neighborhood bored?

We need volunteers to:

Deliver noontime Meals

Prepare bags of food for delivery

Run errands for seniors

Make friendly phone calls

FRIENDS OF THE AMHERST SENIOR CENTER
70 BOLTWOOD WALK
AMHERST, MA 01002

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AMHERST, MA
PERMIT NO. 64

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Amherst Senior Center Staff 413-259-3060

Mary Beth Ogulewicz, JD; LCSW, Director Senior Services
413-259-3114

Jennifer Reynolds, Administrative Assistant
413-259-3159

Donna Hancock, Lunch Site Coordinator
413-259-3164

Helen MacMellon, LCSW, Program Director/ Social Worker
413-259-3062

Michele Chmura, LICSW, Social Worker– Outreach
413-259-3038

Karen Ranen, MS, RN, CDE, Senior Center Nurse
413-259-3257

DONATE

We know this crisis will last a while.
Please donate to our special fund for
seniors needs during this crisis:

Please make check payable to

**“Amherst Senior Center
Gift Account”**

and mail to:

Amherst Senior Center
70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, MA 01002

Name

Address

Town

State _____ ZIP _____