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.

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?

Table of Contents
Volunteer of the Year............................... Page 2
All The Lonely People Film.......................... Page 2
Julie Washburn Recognized........................ Page 2
Yolanda Rodriguez: Board Volunteer............. Page 2
Brookline Bazaar................................. Page 3
Frank Caro Featured............................... Page 3
Live Independently As You Age..................... Page 3
Letter from the Director............................ Page 3
Town Administrator Moving On.................... Page 3
Brookline Older Adults Assessment........... Page 4
Tax-deductible Contribution..................... Page 4
Thanks to Brookline Country Club............... Page 4

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

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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 and amazingly—with good humor.

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.

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.
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.

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

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.

What’s Happening? You can find the Center’s monthly Senior News & Events on our home page at brooklineseniorcenter.org
Brookline Older Adult Community Health Needs Assessment

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](https://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](http://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](mailto:rdobek@brooklinema.gov)