



ANNUAL REPORT

BROOKLINE SENIOR CENTER

2022



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The Brookline Council on Aging is a resource for residents over 60. Our mission is providing social services that allow people to remain independent. We operate the Senior Center five days a week with some evening and weekend programs.

<http://www.BrooklineSeniorCenter.org>

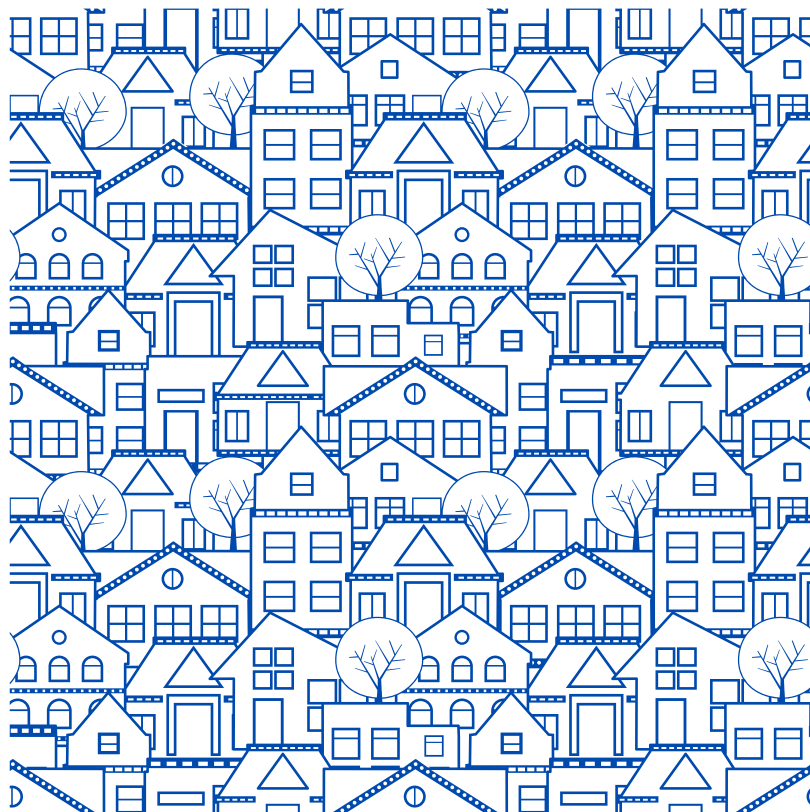
SERVICES

- Case management, mental health support
 - Clutter consult/ Hoarding Task Force
 - Home care: meal prep, errands, cleaning, shopping
 - Income tax prep, job search, computer skills, property tax work-off
 - Health: blood pressure, podiatry, hearing, flu clinic, Reiki
 - VIBRANT assistive program for visually impaired
 - Legal clinic
 - Advocacy
 - Transportation: medical transportation, bus, van, TRIPPS, rides to eye appointments, ride sharing
 - SHINE counseling for Medicare, SNAP food stamps, fuel assistance
 - Food pantry, food commodity program, daily lunch
 - Fitness center
 - Medical equipment loans
 - Memory café
 - Support groups: bereavement, Alzheimer's, mindfulness
 - Monthly Newsletter, Elder Resource Guide
 - Educational and recreational programming
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ONE OF 25 BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN U.S.

As you may have heard, Brookline has been named by Fortune magazine as one of the 25 best communities in the country for families to live, and the only one in Massachusetts. Fortune particularly highlighted services for older adults, and credited much of this to The Brookline Senior Center. I want to send my heartfelt thank you's to the tireless staff of the Brookline Senior Center, to the able leadership of the Director, to the Board of Directors, The Council on Aging, and the Brookline Community Aging Network, all of whom contribute to our success. And thank you to the citizens of Brookline, and those who contribute their volunteer time and their dollars to help our older adults stay connected and vital to this community.





THE VIRUS CONTINUES

The COVID-19 pandemic continued its grip on the nation and Town.

SOCIAL WORK RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Many of these seniors are depressed and anxious and are coping with a plethora of life stressors including **COVID, divorce, medical issues, cognitive decline, hoarding, and isolation/loneliness**. Some of the social worker cases include:

- Providing weekly therapy to a client who initially came to the Senior Center to pick up a COVID testing kit. I was Social Worker of the Day, and the client broke down in tears describing her anxieties and social isolation around COVID. Since that time, with the help of therapy, this client's anxious and depressive symptoms have been significantly reduced, and she has been able to laugh, play, and enjoy her life with family and friends.
- Working with two financially stable elderly men presenting with cognitive decline; both are very proud, and reluctant to admit frailty and plan for their future
- Working with two very frail elderly homebound women; therapy has helped these clients feel supported and less isolated amidst COVID-19.
- One of our social workers led a weekly Resilience support group that dealt with various strategies for promoting resilience including connection, wellness, healthy thinking, and meaning.





VULNERABLE OLDER ADULTS HIT BY THE PANDEMIC

Prioritized populations of the COA include: **Women, Older Adults of Color , Older Adults Who Are Not Proficient in English, LGBTQIA+, Oldest and Frailest Residents, Older Adults Living in Public Housing, Older Adults Who Are Financially Insecure.** These populations are victims of a broken system. They are more likely to experience declining health at an earlier age, face higher rates of social isolation, and live near or below poverty. COVID-19 shone a bright light on these longstanding inequities and market failures that we have fought since our inception.

H.E.L.P

celebrated its **35th** anniversary as a homemaker service that finds trained workers to assist with meal preparation, errands, cleaning and companionship. This year there was an increased focus on clutter and hoarding issues.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers make our work possible. The Volunteer Appreciation event was held in April.



360 volunteers teach classes along with staffing the food insecurity programs and reception. They are also board members and advisors.

Valerie Graf was hired as the new Volunteer Coordinator in March. BrooklineCAN (Brookline Community Aging Network)



BrooklineCAN

BrooklineCAN promotes services and activities that make Brookline an even better place to age gracefully. <http://www.BrooklineCan.org> The Age Friendly Business campaign recognizes merchants who are hospitable to older people. Thanks to a grant from Jewish Family & Children's Services (JF&CS), the web site listing of over 100 businesses was updated. BrooklineCAN offered several virtual forums on coping with COVID-19, as well as the annual Candidate's Forum.

BUDGET

The Town provides less than 70% of the operating budget. The Council, with help from its nonprofit, the Brookline Multi-Service Senior Center Corporation, supplements the balance with federal, state and private grants along with donations and proceeds from the Annual Benefit. **The state continues funding the COA at \$12 per elder.**

- The COA's FY23 budget of \$1,010,140 is approximately one-quarter of 1% of the town's total budget.
 - Salary portion of the budget is \$873,281-currently funding 12 F/T and 4 P/T positions Level-funded budget FY22:-restored the COVID-19 cuts-added a much-needed custodial position.
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ARPA

ARPA funding is focusing on our VULNERABLE POPULATION:

FOOD INSECURITY(requested \$195,808.00 /received \$100,000.00)

Transportation Access(req\$394,824.00 /rec \$359,824.00)

TECHNOLOGY(req\$57,968.00 /rec \$57,968.00)

Total Requested: \$648,600 - Total Received: \$517,792

THANKS TO STATE SENATOR CYNTHIA CREEM: \$65K to help with senior employment. This grant will fund the REAP Coordinator position and offer a variety of paid stipends for retired people looking for work.

THANKS TO STATE REPTOMMY VITOLO: \$100K for transportation, food, social work, and technology. This grant will allow us to make the P/T position F/T and will cover some of the costs that were cut from the Town's ARPA request.

We are so grateful for our state delegation for their advocacy on behalf of older adults.

GRANTS

- Community Development Block Grants support subsidized transportation options including rideshare. We received funding from the COVID-19 CARES Act to address critical needs of grocery shopping and food insecurity.
- One family foundation underwrites the Drawing for Pleasure class, another supports monthly birthday parties, and a third pays for the Volunteer Recognition.
- After receiving a grant from the Mass Department of Transportation in June 2021, The TRIPPS Program of the Brookline Council on Aging produced a series of three instructional videos (with an introduction by our own resident Governor, Mike Dukakis!)



on using technology to access transportation. In partnership with the Brookline Interactive Group these videos show how to use ridehail (Uber/Lyft) apps, Transit (the public transit app), and the Google Maps app. All materials developed plus supporting written guides can be found here: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/2372/Transportation-Resources-Guides>. The videos and materials provided featured our local community volunteers and other transportation advocates. The TRIPPS Program also oversees the COA subsidized transportation programs including free medical transportation and low cost rides on Lyft and GoGo. For more information, visit: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/1502/Transportation-Services> or contact Maria Foster at (617)730-2644 or mfoster@brooklinema.gov.



- Grants from ITN America provide free rides to eye appointments
 - The Alzheimer's Respite program, championed by State Senator Cynthia Creem receives earmarked funding from the state budget to provide families with much needed respite for those struggling with caring for loved ones at home.
 - This year Senator Creem also provided an earmark for the Brookline Restaurant Program. The COA partnered with the Brookline Chamber of Commerce and Brookline Food Pantry to purchase and provide delicious restaurant meals from local businesses.
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FUNDRAISING

Our main focus for fundraising has been transportation, which gets most of its support from the Autumn Benefit.

This year COVID-19 derailed in-person events but not the community's support.

We had a successful Autumn Benefit "No-Gala."

We published the Second Edition of Ask a Geriatrician- the popular compilation of expert up-to-date health advice for people 60+by Dr. Suzanne Salamon.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In June we reopened the Senior Center for programming. We continued to offer a mix of both online and in-person programming. The public expressed a desire to maintain a hybrid model. Virtual Computer One-on-One Assistance Weekly Zoom Exercise Classes ,Mei Mei's Stir Fry Cooking Demonstration, Memory Connections, Café Virtual Programming, Brookline Bees, French Conversation, Book Discussion Groups, Living Our Values, Current Events, Dance Party, Online Mindfulness Practice, Zumba, Let Your Yoga Dance, Dance fitness/Yoga dance combo, Spanish Immersion Music Class Chess programming, Opening to Grief: Finding your Way from Loss to Peace, Medicare Wellness Webinars with Blue Cross Blue Shield, Identity Theft and Fraud Prevention, How Seniors Can Continue to Live Fulfilled Happy Lives Despite the Challenges of Aging and COVID-19 with Katherine Esty, Coping with the Holidays During COVID-19, Short Story Craft Along Kits with the Brookline Public Library, Spirituality and Mental Health Discussion Series, Thanksgiving Lunch, BrooklineCAN Online Election Forum "The Bubbe Diaries" Talk with Paula Span"Ducks on Parade" Talk Intersectionality in the LGBTQ Community Pastels Workshop with Greg Maichack ArtMatters Brookline Historical Society Death Café Pickleball Chinese Lunar New Year, Alternative Transportation Options and Exploring Driver Retirement with the RMV, Let's Talk Transportation



COA BOARD

The Council on Aging continued to provide both in-person and remote meetings.

- New Associate Member of the Council in Enid Leiber.
- Sherry Lee became a Citizen Member of the Council.
- Yolanda Rodriguez continues as Chair of the Council with Judith Chasin as Vice-Chair.

THE LEGENDARY AGNES ROGERS

Our legendary and beloved Agnes Rogers passed away peacefully on July 29, 2022, surrounded by her loving family. Agnes was in her 103rd year, and a lifelong Brookline resident. She was a longtime advocate for tenant's rights at public housing, and a champion for older adults. One of her greatest efforts was fighting for the building of the Brookline Senior Center. Agnes was cherished for her political skill, and ability to read a room and respond with vigor. She will be fondly remembered for her high heels and dancing at any opportunity.



Our success is due to the dedication of staff, volunteers and our board. We are grateful to everyone who helps us make Brookline a desirable place to live. We look forward to enriching our services and invite the community to get involve.