

GROWING OLDER AND WISER IN BROOKLINE

“I ALWAYS GOT A SENSE OF PLEASURE THROUGH HELPING OTHERS” – SOCIAL WORKER OLGA SLIWA RETIRES AFTER 24 YEARS IN BROOKLINE

Miriam Rosalyn Diamond, Council on Aging Communications Specialist

Olga dedicated her career to supporting people. Her immigrant family – especially their mother – demonstrated a “strong sense of helping” others in the Buffalo, New York community. This influenced Olga, who volunteered in a care facility during high school and studied Social Work at the University of Buffalo. Upon graduation, she worked in a skilled nursing facility as Activities Director and Reality Orientation Instructor for residents experiencing dementia.

After relocating to Boston, Olga worked at Springwell, then Mount Auburn Hospital. She attained her Master’s degree in Social Work at Simmons University. In January 2001, after taking time off to raise a family, she joined the Brookline Council on Aging



**Social Worker
Olga Sliwa retired in
March after 24 years
at Brookline’s
Council on Aging.**

In that position she provided outreach, conducted psychosocial evaluations, assessed individual needs and resources while offering clinical support for those navigating major life changes. Olga has supervised professionals as well as graduate students. “It’s been a wonderful, wonderful experience” she says. “A lot of my role has been supportive. Meeting with people to explore what their fears are, how to negotiate next steps, helping people remain in their homes as long as possible, helping with recertifications for health insurance and housing.” She has been inspired by “seniors who are active, engaged...pursuing the passions they have – whether poetry or art... even having the radio on and dancing to music... the little things to remind you of joy in life.”

She is pleased that the Council on Aging assists residents with medical care, housing, and transportation resources - including rides to the Senior Center and medical appointments. She envisions greater numbers of participants in large group activities and field trips through the Senior Center and town Recreation Department. She also anticipates more people utilizing volunteers and students to learn and navigate technology as agencies (such as Social Security) expect individuals to access information electronically.

In retirement, Olga is looking forward to spending time on her favorite activities such as walking in the woods with her husband and dog, gardening, and reading. She also plans to visit Newfoundland and explore its UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE



The Senior Center is hosting the American Red Cross for a Blood Drive on **Monday, April 28 from 9:00 am-2:00 pm**. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: SCBrookline. When you register, you will have to select your time and donation type (“blood” or “Power Red”).