



2024-25 Annual Report to our Towns

You're Why We're Here – As More Seniors Discover Each Year.

Participation continues to grow. That's because it's fun and rewarding.

More than 500 seniors take advantage of our activities and programs, and do so as many as 1300 times in a month! We consistently offer 30 activities every week, with different things that are appropriate for each season.

Our range of activities grows with requests from seniors.

The formula for expanding on what we do is pretty simple: Ask seniors what they'd like to do or learn about, give someone an opportunity to coordinate it, and provide what they need to do it.

One new idea in 2024 was making the Sock Hop a monthly event to brighten up the fall and winter days. Death Café was another addition. We weren't sure about this one at first, but it was so popular there's a waiting list.

Some of the other diverse entries on our weekly calendar include:

- Play reading, with members taking up roles in the cast.
- Needle arts, where participants learn and share ideas.
- Pickle Ball outdoors in Huntington when weather permits, and indoors in three towns.
- Socializing at Coffee Time in all three towns.
- Planting, tending and harvesting our Friendship Garden.
- Indoor ice skating, bowling, corn hohistorians and area seniors who share travelogues.
- Card and table games.
- French and Spanish conversation.
- An on-line group that shares interesting life stories.
- A memoir writing class, and sessions to sharpen skills in writing anything seniors choose.
- Hiking throughout the area.
- Bone Builders in all three towns, Tai Chi, and on-line weight-loss support.
- Learning and playing the ukulele with Ukes 'R Us.
- Seasonal swimming at Alison's Aquatics.

New learning programs focus on interesting people, places and times.

During the spring, fall and winter months we host as many as four programs each month, presented by speakers either in person or online. Some are co-hosted with the Richmond

Historical Society. Past events included presentations by Don Stevens, Chief of Vermont's Nulhegan Abenaki, and author Jack Kelly who gave us interesting revelations from his book, *God Save Benedict Arnold*. Fascinating nature programs included *Owls of Vermont*, and travelogues on Namibia and on pre-historic architectural sites were among those presented by area seniors who visited these destinations.

Part of the fabric of our towns.

By hosting programs and activities at venues throughout our towns, the Community Senior Center has become woven into our towns' fabric. This also puts us in contact with many residents of all ages who may encourage their senior family members to explore what all those other seniors are enjoying!

You'll also find us engaged with our towns in different ways. For example, thanks to the great support of Richmond Family Medicine and volunteer registered nurses, we coordinate a foot clinic. It has become so popular that there's usually a waiting list. You might also see us at the Richmond Farmers' Market, at the July 4th festivities with our bake sale, and handing out treats at Hallowe'en. Our Ukes 'R Us ukulele band performs at senior residences and at town events and also mentors high school students, and our sing-a-long group entertains residents at Richmond Terrace.

How to we get the word out?

Our weekly newsletter now goes to over 1000 email addresses. It covers activities, programs and community events, and has articles and photos from senior contributors. The CSC website also tells people about us. It includes our weekly newsletters, videos of past programs, and our community initiatives. There's also a CSC ad on the back cover of every issue of *The Times Ink* to let those we don't reach on-line know what's available.

Over 50 volunteers make it all happen!

Over 50 volunteers lead and coordinate activities and programs! They arrange schedules, facilities and equipment, and communicate with participants to let them know where and when things are happening. Some new-comers also volunteer to lead activities they recommend. Each leader ensures that first-timers get enough instruction to "learn the ropes."

Our cadre of volunteers also includes professionals who donate their time and expertise at no cost in such areas as accounting, communications, development and financial planning.

How do we fund it all?

Our sincere thanks go to the many generous residents whose donations fund the \$30,000 budget needed provide a healthier, more enriching lifestyle for our seniors. And we do it all without tapping into town tax revenues, or charging membership fees. We also appreciate the significant support our towns and local churches give us by providing the spaces we need.

Most activities and programs are covered by our annual budget with no charge to participants. Where there are costs for an activity, as with rentals for bowling for example, the fees are reasonable -- and optional if circumstances at the moment prevent a senior from participating.

What still surprises some is that there is no physical "senior center," and that's by design. Everything takes place in spaces made available either free or for reasonable rental fees in our town facilities, libraries, schools and churches. This lets us host activities and programs in spaces that are best suited to each one. It also lets us dedicate most of our budget to enriching seniors' lifestyles, rather than to costs related to owning and maintaining a physical building.

What else is new?

We welcomed Gina Haddock to our board in 2024. The Richmond resident adds her her development expertise to the CSC, and we're fortunate to have her join our talented and energetic board members who help build on what we do.

Thanks to so many who make it all possible!

Once again, it's our volunteers, donors, towns and local organizations who provide the support and commitment necessary to make it all possible. Thank you!

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