



City of Somerville

March 2021

Council on Aging News

Interim Executive Director

Ashley Speliotis, LICSW
aspeliotis@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2310

Staff

Connie Lorenti ▪
Admin/Fiscal Assistant
clorenti@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2319

Natasha Naim ▪
LICSW Social Worker
nnaim@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2317

Chris Kowaleski ▪
Health & Wellness Coordinator
ckowaleski@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2315

Debby Higgins ▪
Outreach Coordinator
dhiggins@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2321

Maureen Cuff Bastardi ▪
Program Coordinator
mbastardi@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2335

Mary Marshall ▪
Nutritionist
headtofitness10@yahoo.com
617-625-6600 ext. 2316

Josephine Raczkowski ▪
Administrative Assistant
jraczkowski@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2300

Judy Calvey ▪
Holland Street and
Ralph & Jenny Director
jcalvey@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2300



Hello Friends,

March is a month filled with possibilities as we welcome spring and say goodbye to winter. It is also a month where physical changes become more apparent. From seeing more green spruce up, to an increase in daylight hours, the changes are all around us. Sometimes, even the smallest of changes can have a huge impact on our moods, perspectives and mental health.

This month, as you observe these changes outside, consider what small changes you can make for yourself as well. The Somerville Council on Aging is here to help you foster positive changes in your life. The health and wellness, nutrition and social work team put out daily tips each morning consisting of small, simple changes we can make to improve our physical and mental health. Perhaps you caught our daily tips on deep breathing. Pausing each day to take a few deep breaths can help reduce stress, release tension and lessen anxiety. Or maybe you saw the daily tip on the importance of stretching and how you can begin your day with a good stretch even from your bed. If you haven't received our tips, simply contact us to have our tips emailed to you daily, or follow us on Facebook.

Focusing on simple changes also creates excitement to share a brand new program beginning on Zoom in March. The Ageless Grace program consists of simple movements that activate all five functions of the brain—memory, analytical, strategic and kinesthetic learning, creativity and imagination to create overall improvements to our health and well-being. We hope you can join us on Tuesday mornings and throughout the month of March as we all make small changes, together!

Ashley





Social Work Corner with Natasha Naim

Making Happiness: How small acts can boost your mood.

Many people think that increased happiness will come with buying new things or making huge life changes. But, happiness can increase with small changes to our thinking and behaviors. With a few simple modifications, you can increase your happiness.

Free your mind from worries

Worries and fear are some of the biggest blockers of happiness. When our minds are filled with concern, it's hard to be happy. If thoughts like these preoccupy your time, consider getting them out by writing them down on a piece of paper. Worries block our ability to be in the moment and to feel the pleasure of the present.

Looking good can make your feel good

With the increased time spent time inside and away from our friends and other outside engagements, it may be easier to stay in our pajamas or to wear the same comfy outfit every day. Sometimes boosting our mood can be as simple as changing our clothes. You don't have to go anywhere to look your best. Dressing up in a fun and vibrant outfit can make you feel better and improve your mood.

Add a soundtrack to your life

Sometimes the easiest way to boost happiness is to listen to music. Consider playing songs that are fun and get you on your feet. Nothing makes chores easier than having a soundtrack in the background. Don't be afraid to dance along at home and break out some old dance moves. When you're at home, you can truly dance like no one is watching.

Be spontaneous

Having the same routine can become boring and can leave you in a rut. Our brains are wired to respond to new things with interest. Create your own fun by trying a new recipes or finally reading that book you received as a gift. Or better yet, try a program at the Somerville Council on Aging. If you are interested in one of our programs, please let us know and we can sign you up.

To RSVP to the following programs please call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600 ext. 2317 or e-mail her at nnaim@somervillema.gov

Mental Health Awareness

Tuesday, March 9th from 11:30-12:30 the Somerville Council on Aging, in partnership with Roberta Robinson, from Cambridge Health Alliance, will be continuing our Mental Health Awareness series. Every month Roberta discusses new and interesting topics in regards to mental health.

Book Club

Friday, March 19th from 10:00 am -11:00 am

Do you love books and want to discuss your love of reading with others? Consider joining book club. Book club is now meeting online via Zoom. This month's book will be *Everything is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer

Caregiver Check-In

Are you a caregiver for a loved one and want to connect with other caregivers? Would you like to discuss the joys and challenges of caregiving? The Somerville Council on Aging is hosting a monthly check-in via Zoom for caregivers. Our next check-in will take place on ***Tuesday, March 23rd from 11:30-12:30.***

Brown Box Distribution, March 25th

Many of us are facing food insecurities due to COVID-19. If you find yourself in need, please reach out to us! The COA can assist with applications for food stamps, our Brown Box shelf-stable food program, or connect you with a food pantry.

District Attorney Marian Ryan will discuss the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic including the increase in scams that target the elderly and other vulnerable populations.

Discussion will also focus on the lasting impacts of isolation and provide advice on how to mitigate feelings of loneliness.

Tuesday, March 16th at 11:00 am Virtual Meeting

Please contact *Sheryl Ball* at sball@acton-ma.gov for questions or help with registration for this event.



One question that we are asked frequently is about proper storage and disposal of prescribed medications. It's important to make sure we are keeping any medications safely locked up at home and making sure others don't potentially have access to them, especially youth. Expired or unused prescription medications should always be disposed of safely, and this doesn't mean flushing them down the toilet!

Here are some tips for safe disposal:

Both pill bottles and needles/sharps can be dropped off at the safe disposal kiosks in the lobby of the Somerville Public Safety Building at 220 Washington Street, 24/7.

For pill bottles, leave the name of the medication but make sure to remove your personal information, such as your name and date of birth.

For needles/sharps, please drop them off in a safe container, like a closed coffee can or laundry detergent bottle.

Have liquid medications? No problem! Pour the liquid into a zip lock bag, mix with non-edible materials like coffee grinds or cat litter, seal it, and then dispose of it in your regular trash.

Make sure to keep the questions coming! Please send any to kvaughan@somervillema.gov

Matthew Mitchell, LSW, Prevention Services Manager

Kira Vaughan, LMHC, Substance Use Prevention Coordinator

Nutrition with Mary Marshall



Eggs are healthy, or are they?

We are probably more embracing of eggs within a heart-healthy dietary pattern than we were 20 years ago, but eggs are still a source of dietary cholesterol. For healthy individuals, eating an egg a day is a reasonable thing to do. Research has shown that most of the cholesterol in our body is made by our liver. The liver is stimulated to make cholesterol primarily by saturated fat and trans-fat in our diet, rather than dietary cholesterol. A large egg contains little saturated fat-about 1.5 grams (g). And research has confirmed that eggs also contain many healthy nutrients: lutein and zeaxanthin, which are good for the eyes; choline, which is good for the brain and nerves; and various vitamins (A, B, and D). In fact, just one large egg contains 270 international units (IU) of vitamin A and 41 IU of vitamin D. One large egg also contains about 6 g of protein and 72 calories.

For most people, an egg a day does not increase your risk of a heart attack, stroke, or any other type of cardiovascular disease. No more than three eggs per week is wise if you have diabetes, are at high risk for heart disease from other causes (such as smoking), or already have heart disease. The evidence that cholesterol in one egg a day is safe for most people comes from huge studies also conducted at Harvard Medical School, that have followed hundreds of thousands of people over decades. The participants regularly report what they eat and all of the medical conditions that they develop. It is these studies that do not find higher rates of heart attacks, strokes, or other cardiovascular diseases in people who eat up to one egg per day.

Everyone's situation is different; if a person's diet contains little other cholesterol, eggs may be considered less dangerous. For someone who's decided to go vegetarian, and they're not eating red meat, maybe the only source of cholesterol would be in an egg, those individuals could probably include eggs a little bit more in their diet.

The American Heart Association suggests one egg (or two egg whites) per day for people who eat them, as part of a healthy diet. If you are concerned about your cholesterol or are unsure whether it is safe for you to consume eggs, please consult your doctor.

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2018/08/15/are-eggs-good-for-you-or-not>

To RSVP to the below programs please call Mary Marshall at 617-625-6600 ext. 2316 or e-mail her at headtofitness10@yahoo.com

Upcoming Workshops Dates:

***Understanding the Food Label
Wednesday, March 3rd @ 10:00 am on Zoom***

***Next 6 week series of Nutrition Workshops starting March 8th
Mondays at 11:00 am or Wednesdays at 10:00 am***





Chris Kowaleski, Health and Wellness

Our online **Zoom Yoga** series continues **Tuesday, March 2nd at 10:00am**, the COA's yoga instructor Janine Duffy will be leading a 45 minute gentle yoga class live over Zoom. Each class will include gentle poses done from a chair or standing.

Zoom Jeopardy Game Night! on **Thursday, March 18th at 5:00pm**, we will be hosting an hour long Health and Wellness Jeopardy game.

If you are looking to do some gentle yoga or laugh, have fun and answer Jeopardy questions, sign up for our winter yoga series or our Jeopardy game night!

This semester, we are excited to welcome back our four Tufts Occupational Therapy students Alexis, Olivia, Anna and Daniele! They will work with community partners as part of their service learning class to gain in-person experience, and we are delighted to work with them once again. We are excited to announce that the students will be hosting a one-hour education class over Zoom for anyone who would like to learn more about occupational therapy. Occupational therapists specialize in how we use our hands and bodies to be more effective, from treating injuries to accomplishing everyday tasks with more ease. If you are interested in learning more about Occupational Therapy, or to sign up for the class, please call **Chris at 617-625-6600 ext. 2315** or email at ckowaleski@somervillema.gov

Ageless Grace Exercise Program

The Council on Aging welcomes **Maria Skinner, Instructor of the Ageless Grace Program!**

Beginning in March, Maria will host bi-monthly classes in both English and Spanish and will lead us in simple movements that activate all five functions of the brain—memory, analytical, strategic and kinesthetic learning, creativity and imagination to create overall improvements to our health and well-being. The class incorporates 21 simple exercises that can be performed from the seated or standing position so this class is great for those of all ages and abilities.

Classes will be held on **March 9th and 23rd in English** and **16th and 30th in Spanish**—all are welcome to join!

For additional information or to sign up for the above programs, contact Chris by email at ckowaleski@somervillema.gov or by phone at 617-625-6600 ext. 2315.

Music and Munch



Wednesday, March 10th & March 24th from 12:00 pm-1:00 pm

Join us online via Zoom or by phone to learn, sing-along, relax and enjoy some music while you munch.

To RSVP call Debby at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or e-mail her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

March Boxed Lunch Pick-Up

March's monthly boxed lunch pick up will be held on ***Tuesday, March 16th at the Ralph and Jenny Center.***

While we can't share lunch together we hope you are able to drive thru to pick up a lunch. ***Masks and RSVPs required; please call Connie at 617-625-6600 ext.2319 to sign up.***

Music and Movement

Thursday, March 18th from 10:30 am-11:30 am—Via Zoom or Call In

Join Steve as he plays guitar, sings and leads gentle movements. Just tapping your toe or singing along can help move your body in new ways.

Please RSVP to Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2321.

March Mask Drive Thru

***Monday, March 29th from 10:30 am-12:00 pm
Holland St Center***

The COA has masks available for Somerville residents who are 60 and over. If you are in need of a mask or may know of a friend or neighbor who may need a new mask stop by our Drive-Thru.

Virtual Bingo Day!

Tuesday, March 30th from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Join us online or via phone to play ***BINGO***.

We will supply you with the bingo cards and instructions.

Space is limited

To RSVP call Debby at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or e-mail her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

