

**SHARON ADULT CENTER / COUNCIL ON AGING  
ANNUAL TOWN REPORT FOR 2010**

**FULL-TIME STAFF:** Norma Simons Fitzgerald, LICSW, Executive Director;  
Nancy Weiner, Office Manager

**PART-TIME STAFF:** Susan Edinger, LICSW, Social Services & Volunteer Coordinator; Marsha Books, Program Coordinator; Drivers: Clinton Sutton, bus;  
Bruce McDuff, van

**OFFICE VOLUNTEERS:** Lenore Watts, Jacqueline Weiler, Marjorie Sinman, Rose Kanter, Joan Romanowicz, Frances Kanofsky, Marjorie Asnes, Doris Edwards, Loretta Landolfi, Annette Marks, Eleanor Schwartz, Barbara Golner, Shirley Lezberg,  
Vic Esterman

**SHINE COUNSELOR:** Marilyn Stewart

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**COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD**

Marilyn Stewart, Chair  
Mildred Berman  
Faye Berzon  
Elliot Feldman  
Arnold Kublin

Hy Lamb  
Robert Maidman  
Sheila Pally  
Lillian Savage  
Rita Edelston, Alternate

Sidney Rosenthal, Liaison, Disabilities Commission  
Louise O'Brien, Liaison, Friends of the Sharon COA

**Mission**

*Whereas:*

Medical and technological advances have enabled people to live longer, and,

*Whereas:*

Living longer should bring enriching and rewarding experiences,

The Sharon Council on Aging mission is to enhance the quality of life for its constituency.

**Purpose**

The Sharon Council on Aging is organized to:

1. educate the community about aging
2. promote the independence of elders
3. advocate before local government and within the community for the needs of elders
4. design, advocate, and/or implement services to meet these needs and coordinate existing services
5. identify existing resources, build coalitions within the larger community, and make appropriate referrals
6. cooperate with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Area Agency on Aging

## **Highlights of 2010**

As 2010 comes to an end, we celebrate three full years in the Community Center and 40 years (in September 2010) as an established Council on Aging! An Open House was held in the Adult Center in September to mark the Council's anniversary. We also had a chance to reminisce and consider the changes that have taken place over the years. We now have a full-fledged and very active center that is one of the major focal points in town. We have a myriad of programs, services, and special events, and our attendance continues to increase with new, diverse, and often younger adults (boomers, etc.) "testing the waters" here and deciding it's "safe to swim!" A recent remark made by one of those boomers, "I turned 60, got The VIEW [monthly newsletter] and was so impressed with everything [that I decided] I had to sign up for some of the great programs ... I can't believe how much is going on here...and the best thing of all is that you call it an 'Adult Center' now!"

The community owes many thanks to all who made the center, the COA, *and* the Friends of the COA (our right arm) possible! They are too many to name at this point, but we do want to say thanks so much this year to COA board members Lillian Savage and Hy Lamb who resigned after years of service to COA Advisory Board and the community as well as Sid Rosenthal, liaison to the COA and Chair of the Commission on Disabilities. Eddie Berger, though having moved out of town, plans to continue to serve on the Executive Committee of the FSCOA as he has since its inception, and wife Dorris who attended the meetings for years and also provided years of service to HESSCO Elder Services, (regional agency). We also are forever grateful to the Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging who provide support for our vital programs and for the senior citizens of Sharon.

## **Partners and Community**

The Adult Center and Council on Aging continues to expand its horizons and embrace as well as receive support from many community, regional, and statewide organizations. This year saw a furthering of collaborations for wellness programming supported by a generous grant from Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation and the Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging, and with programming partners including the Hockomock Area Y, Brigham and Women's /Mass General Health Care Center at Patriot's Place, Epoch Senior Healthcare of Sharon, HESSCO, Jewish Family & Children's Services, Orchard Cove, as well as regional Visiting Nurse Associations, American Red Cross, Neponset Valley Community Health Coalition's Elder Dental Program, and the LGBT Aging Project. Unique, vital, and timely programs were and continue to be offered at the Adult Center (as well as their own sites) for Sharon and neighboring residents. We also resumed our partnership with TRIAD, focusing on safety program for elders through an affiliation of the Norfolk County Sheriff's office with the Council on Aging, Fire, Police, and other departments as able to participate. The Sharon Rotary Club along with Gifts of Hope continues to work with us and provide funding for special needs. Our relationship with the Salvation Army's Social Services program continues providing some emergency support for some of Sharon's neediest as has the Friends of the Sharon COA grants and some assistance from local churches and temples including yearly donations and/or in-kind assistance from the Congregational Church and Temple Israel. As well, we continue to work with the Sharon Interfaith Action Coalition and Sharon's Cultural Pluralism network of partners, the Sharon Public Library, Recreation Dept, and the Sharon schools around special events and community service opportunities. Other community organizations such as the Sharon Garden Club and the Sharon Creative Arts Association partner with the Adult Center for a number of programs throughout the year.

## **Programs**

In addition to the many wellness programs, the Adult Center offerings were extensive and varied, ranging from Live and Learn lectures by college professors to fitness, social events, cards and games, movies, art classes, open studio hours for artists, Lakeside Gallery exhibits and special openings, computer, Skype, meditation, crafts, Zumba, Wii Bowling, Pool (billiards), Ping Pong and Bocce, Men's

Club programs, women's (Young at Heart) club, and English classes for our new American friends – just to name a “few!” We have day and evening programs and probably something for everyone. If it doesn't exist and is requested, we might just be able to provide it – we encourage people to ask, to complete surveys, and to “drop in.”

### **Outreach/Social Services/Human Services/Advocacy/Property Tax Relief**

The Adult Center and Council on Aging offers an array of services including several support groups, help with information and referrals, limited case management and counseling or crisis intervention by a social worker, legal clinics, advocacy and more. Safety programs include: Are You Okay (computerized daily telephone check), Telephone Reassurance, Friendly Visiting, Vial of Life (for EMTs), ID bracelets, Safe Return (GPS locator bracelet), Carrier Alert (post office), and more.

We assist with or refer residents for help with Property Tax Relief, providing information, fliers, newsletter articles, the Property Tax Work-off Program, and work with a regional and statewide organization (Mass. Councils on Aging) to recommend and advocate for tax relief legislation. We continue to work closely with our legislators on many elder issues and are currently planning a regional legislative breakfast for March 2011. Some statistics: At least 16,800 general information services (including phone calls) were provided! Twenty households received help with Fuel Assistance, 17 with Salvation Army vouchers, 83 received the services of a tax preparer aide at the Center through AARP; at least 70 non-elders were served. Ninety households received an abatement of up to \$1000 on their property tax bills through the Property Tax Work off Program – the maximum amount having been increased by local option following successful advocacy by our statewide professional association and the assistance of our legislators, Representative Kafka, and Senators Joyce and Timilty.

### **Volunteers**

In FY10 74 volunteers provided 16,440 hours of service estimated at \$ 246,600 to the Adult Center/Council on Aging and elders in Sharon. Their services included driving, shopping, visiting, office assistance, outreach, teaching, entertainment, tax assistance, applications for the state Circuit Breaker, SHINE Health Information Counseling, and much more. In-kind services were estimated at \$110,000.

**Grants:** The Council on Aging received a state Formula Grant, a Sharon Cultural Council Grant, funds from the Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging, including monthly postage for our newsletter mailed to an estimated 2400 households. We continued to draw off the generous grant received the previous year from the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation and the donations from local organizations mentioned already. Local vendors provided help in kind, such as Crescent Ridge Dairy, French Memories of Sharon, and Ivy's Bakery, Cobb Corner.

**Transportation:** The Center provided over 5,760 rides for medical appointments, shopping, programs and classes, parties, trips, etc.

We look forward to another exciting year and hope you will join us!