

Council on Aging Annual Report: 2014

The Sudbury Council on Aging (COA) is a nine member board whose members help to guide the planning and policy making of the Sudbury Senior Center and who advocate for the needs of Sudbury residents who are 60 years of age and older. The Sudbury COA is cognizant of the fact that the number of residents in that age group has been growing for many years and will continue to grow as a proportion of the general population of Sudbury. The latest Town Census report indicates that there are 3,609 residents who are 60 years of age and older representing 20% of the total population of Sudbury.

2014 COA Strategic Plan

In December 2014, the Sudbury Council on Aging reviewed and updated the COA strategic plan initially drafted in 2012 (also updated in 2013). The results of the session are in a report entitled: Sudbury COA Strategic Plan FY2015.

The COA Strategic Plan's six objectives are as follows:

1. Get a permanent means-tested senior tax exemption approved by the state legislature before expiration of the current pilot legislation.
2. Continue and expand transportation services for Sudbury seniors and residents with disabilities while conducting a needs assessment and develop a long-term (5 – 10 yr.) action plan.
3. Maintain an active role in advocating for the space needs of seniors in the next 3-5 years, and for design and construction of a multi-generational Community Center.
4. Create a plan of action to improve the online and social media face of the Senior Center, Friends, and the Council on Aging and present the plan to the Friends of Sudbury Seniors group.
5. Continue to maintain strong working relationships with all relevant town boards to ensure COA input where appropriate.
6. Continue to advocate for affordable senior housing in Sudbury.

Town/COA Award

The Town of Sudbury and the Sudbury COA, along with the leadership of former COA Chair David Levington and Sudbury resident Ralph Tyler, were recognized by the Massachusetts Municipal Association and Mass. Council on Aging Association for the Sudbury Means-Tested Senior Tax Exemption pilot legislation that offers older residents

who pay a large proportion of their income in property taxes to receive a property tax exemption.

The Sudbury Senior Center

With the policy guidance of the Council on Aging, the Sudbury Senior Center serves the social, recreational, health and educational needs of people aged 60 and older in the community. This is accomplished through a variety of programs, activities and services. In FY 2014 (fiscal year), approximately 1,900 individuals 60 and over and 156 people younger than age 60 participated in a Senior Center program, activity or service.

While programs and activities are most visible at the Senior Center, many services are delivered in other settings. The wheelchair-accessible “Sudbury COA Connection” van provides door-to-door service to residents over 60 and younger residents with disabilities. Our Information Specialist provides information, assistance and consultation to seniors and their families. Hot meals are delivered Monday through Friday to seniors who are eligible. Our Volunteer Coordinator oversees a number of programs that help people in their homes including: the Fix-it program, Friendly Visitor program, Grocery Shopping program, Medical Equipment Loan Closet, Sand Bucket delivery, the Lawn Cleanup program, the Mercury Recovery program, the Lockbox and Space Heater programs and the FISH (Friends in Service Helping) volunteer medical transportation program.

The Property Tax Work-off Program matches seniors and veterans with a needed skill with Town Departments who need help, thereby providing the seniors and veterans with a property tax credit.

Special Focus Activities:

Property tax relief: The Council on Aging continues to advocate for property tax relief measures to ensure that Sudbury remains affordable for older residents.

This year the COA continued to help to educate seniors about the new Means-Tested Senior Tax Exemption, which was approved by the Town electorate in December 2012. Cynthia Gerry, Town Assessor, provided a presentation on the means-tested Senior Tax Exemption in June 2014 at the Senior Center. COA members volunteered to provide assistance to seniors wishing to complete the application, along with two volunteers from the Senior Center’s AARP Tax Assistance team.

Transportation: The Senior Center Director continues to serve as Sudbury’s representative to the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority (MWRTA), with the aim of improving public transportation for seniors and other Sudbury residents. The MWRTA assumes the costs of running the “COA Connection” van, including the van drivers’ salaries, benefits, van insurance, and other expenses, while maintaining the van service for seniors and people with disabilities. In FY 2014, the van provided 2,107 one-way rides to 44 ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents aged 65 and over and 1,892 one-way rides to 15 residents under 65 with a disability.

The MWRTA continued to fund two Van Drivers, one is full-time and the other is a part-time Van Driver.

Healthy Living Programs:

The Senior Center continues to offer the valuable Stanford University researched “Healthy Aging” programs that are proven to improve health outcomes. We offered a “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” workshop in March and April 2014. Our Information Specialist, Anne Manning was instrumental in not only getting this workshop off the ground but also acting a co-leader for the workshop. BayPath Elder Services Healthy Aging Program Manager Silvia Bodie also helped to launch the workshop and co-lead it. 14 people participated in the workshop. The evaluations included many positive comments. As a follow-up to this workshop, Anne also planned a Caregiver’s Luncheon with Pleasantries Adult Day Care which drew in 16 caregivers who received a nourishing lunch and a chance to share information and relieve stress.

The Senior Center was also fortunate to utilize the State Formula Grant to subsidize our “Tai Chi for Healthy Living” classes which are based on some of the principles of the Stanford “Healthy Aging” workshops. Twenty-six different individuals participated in this class over the year.

Space Limitations: Having enough appropriate space to offer all of our programs continues to be a challenge at the Senior Center. Many of our programs and services rely on shared space with the Park and Recreation Department. At times, Park and Recreation programs are running during the day and our programs need to move to less appropriate space and/or if not, we sometimes have to cancel. We have been fortunate to occasionally move some of our fitness programming to local church space. However, it can be challenging to move the legal clinic, or a meeting to other space. For the most part, we manage but do curtail some of our programming in order to keep space conflicts to a minimum.

Highlights of Activities and Programs for 2014:

Veterans: The Senior Center, in collaboration with the Sudbury Military Support Network, hosted the fourth annual Veterans’ Appreciation luncheon on Wednesday, November 5, 2014. The Senior Center was honored to have the Reverend Father Erikson, Brigadier General, U. S. Navy, of the Our Lady of Fatima Church, as our guest speaker. Longfellow’s Wayside Inn sponsored the luncheon with a delicious hot meal. Ninety-five people attended this year’s Veterans’ luncheon.



Figure 1 - Veterans assemble for the 2014 Veterans Luncheon at the Fairbank Gym.

Lifelong learning classes: One of the greatest strengths of the Sudbury Senior Center is its focus on continued intellectual development throughout the life span. Two hundred (200) individuals took part in various lifelong learning classes, including: Alexander the Great series, America and Iraq, Global Civilizations, Music Appreciation and more.

Intergenerational Activities:

The Senior Center seeks to foster relationships between younger and older generations as they each have much to offer each other. The successful “Teen Tech” program continued this year: twice each month, volunteer students from Lincoln-Sudbury High School (LSRHS) visited the Senior Center to provide technical assistance to seniors with their technical devices (cell phones, ipads, laptops). Forty-five older adults took advantage of our local high school students’ expertise with tech gadgets, cell phones, laptops and social networking during the year.

In addition, the COA collaboration with teacher James Raffel at LSRHS continued in spring, when three retired Sudbury entrepreneurs from the Senior Center shared their personal business stories and provided feedback for L-S students in history teacher James Raffel’s Economics & Finance class during May and June.

The award winning Bridges Together intergenerational program has been ongoing in each 4th grade classroom in Sudbury for over 20 years. This program brings older adult volunteers from the community into the classrooms to collaborate with children, forming friendships and increasing understanding while working on a curriculum that fits into the Mass. school standards. This program engaged approximately 132 older adults with approximately 384 4th grade students in 2014.

Health and Safety information and screenings: The Senior Center has a special focus on information and programs to maintain the health of Sudbury seniors and give them the tools they need to maintain their well being as they move into their later years.

A sampling of the health and safety talks this year includes: Memory Screening, Tick Talk, Stroke Awareness, All about Rehab, Healthy Snacking, Happy Feet, Ask the Pharmacist and more. 162 seniors took part in Health and Safety informational programming. In addition, 132 individuals took advantage of free blood pressure and diabetes screenings, offered weekly at the Senior Center.

The Senior Center also collaborates with the SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) volunteer counseling program to offer assistance to seniors who would like help in assessing their Medicare health insurance choices. 108 individuals visited our SHINE Counselors for health insurance and Medicare counseling this year.

Physical Activity: In recognition of the important role physical fitness plays in successful aging, the Senior Center offered several opportunities for seniors to exercise. The Fit for the Future aerobics class continued to be offered 3 times each week, the Yoga class meets twice each week, while the Tap Dancers, the Better Bones strength class, and a new Zumba aerobics/dance class meet once each week. In addition, during the fall and spring the Board of Health Nurse supervises a Walking club. Combined, 284 individuals participated in Fitness programs this year.

Socialization/Recreation: To provide seniors with a chance to meet others and socialize, the Senior Center hosts card games, including bridge and bridge lessons, canasta and cribbage; and offers bingo, movies and special luncheons and entertainments, often in conjunction with holidays such as Christmas, Independence Day, and St. Patrick’s Day. With the assistance of two special volunteer chefs, the Senior Center is

also able to offer a Men's Breakfast, twice a year. Forty-nine men attended the Men's Breakfasts this year.

Other events that offer a chance to socialize and enjoy the arts were: pianist Jeffrey Moore, Guitar and Song with Peg Espinola, and Flutist Mana Washio. Altogether, approximately 543 individual seniors participated in recreational/entertainment programs.

Outreach and Information and Referral services: The Senior Center Information Specialist provided information, referral and consultation to approximately 245 individuals 60 and over, as well as 46 individuals under 60 years of age. Many of the people that seek out Anne's assistance are caregivers for spouses, parents, other family members or adult children.

Volunteer and Support services: Through the efforts of our Volunteer Coordinator, (funded by the Sudbury Foundation), the Senior Center was able to coordinate the services of 220 volunteers to provide services such as FISH medical transportation, in-home fix-it, sand bucket delivery, space heater swap, friendly visiting, grocery shopping and more.

In addition to the services provided by volunteers listed above, the Volunteer Coordinator oversees volunteers to assist the Senior Center in holding luncheons, picking up donated baked goods, and delivering home delivered meals. Taking into account all volunteer services, we estimate that more than 5,059 hours were donated in 2014 with an estimated equivalent value of \$66,295.

Property Tax Work-off: The Senior Center administers the Tax Work-off program for the Town. The Tax Work-off was expanded to include veterans in 2014. This program offers participants an opportunity to work for a Town Department and earn a tax abatement the following year up to 100 hours times the minimum wage. Under the able leadership of the Senior Property Tax Work-off Coordinator Marianne Büttner, the program matched the skills of 51 participants with 50 Town jobs (some workers did not work the full 100 hours). In addition, the Veterans Tax Work-off Coordinator placed 2 veterans into 2 Town jobs. The Tax Work-off participants provided 18 Town departments about 500 hours of valuable service in the past year.

Senior Center Staffing

The Senior Center operations are funded through a combination of Town funds as well as grants along with over 200 volunteers who provide approximately 5,095 hours of service. In addition, we work closely with BayPath Elder Services which funds and staffs the lunch and home delivered meals program. Through the Tax Work-off program, the Senior Center is fortunate to have six 100-hour workers to provide services such as office reception and data entry.

In 2014, the Administrative Assistant reached a 16 year milestone with the Senior Center. We congratulate and thank Claire Wigandt for her strong work ethic, sense of humor, excellent skills and many years of service!

We also acknowledge 23 years of service by our volunteer Trips Coordinator, Carmel O'Connell, who we sadly lost this year due to cancer. Carmel was an enthusiastic,

energetic and accomplished Trips Coordinator who took care of everything! She will be greatly missed by all.

John Ryan, Chairman

Barry David, Vice Chairman

Robert May, Secretary

Robert Diefenbacher, Treasurer

Phyllis Bially

Carmine Gentile

Elizabeth Ingersoll

Alice Sapienza

Patricia Tabloski

Council on Aging Accounts with the Town of Sudbury FY14

The Town of Sudbury financially supports the Senior Center by funding salaries of the Director, Administrative Assistant, Program Coordinator, and part-time Information and Referral Specialist, and providing support for general operating expenses as well as for operating the physical plant. (See the Town Accountant’s report for details.)

The following C.O.A. accounts are not reported in the Town budget because the revenue sources are not from the Town, but are nevertheless administered through the Accounting Office. The account activities for FY 2013 are listed in the table below.

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Beginning Balance FY14</u>	<u>Revenue FY14</u>	<u>Expenditures FY14</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
1171	COA Revolving - Activities ¹	\$8,969	\$35,397	\$27,930	\$16,436
1172	Transportation ⁶	\$1,223	\$0	\$73	\$1,150
1173	MWRTA Revolving ²	\$17,764	\$79,092	\$70,000	\$26,857
1323	State Aid/Formula Grant ³	\$5,149	\$19,907	\$22,386	\$2,670
1411	COA – Federal Title III- BayPath Grant ⁶	\$489	\$600	\$666	\$423
1412	Camcorder Grant ⁷	\$160	\$0	\$0	\$160
1413	Volunteer Coordinator Grant ⁴	\$10,263	\$18,000	\$17,629	\$10,634
1951	Friends’ Gift Account ⁵	\$2,558	\$0	\$0	\$2,558

1969	LEPC/VIP Gift ⁶	\$31	\$0	\$0	\$31
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¹ Activities/Program fees are collected and instructors and class expenses are paid from this account. The Town of Sudbury does not subsidize Senior Center events or activities. Student payments pay for instructors.

² Account for collection of reimbursement from the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority for the expenses of running the Senior Center van.

³ Annual Formula Grant Funds from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs: Helps to fund the Receptionist, the Sudbury Senior Community Work Program Coordinator, Bridges Coordinators, and FISH Coordinators.

⁴ Grant from the Sudbury Foundation for the part-time Volunteer Coordinator position.

⁵ Friends' of Sudbury Seniors gift account, utilized when State Aid grant is distributed late in the year.

⁶ Account utilized to pay for programs when State Aid grant is distributed late in the year.

⁷ Dormant accounts.

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