



The Essex Senior Echo

December 2020

We finally made it to December. This year has been a particularly long and bumpy road for so many of us. Normally this time of year, we look forward to gathering and reconnecting with family and friends. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 epidemic is worsening. Federal, state and local officials are urging us to reconsider the small household gatherings that appear to be a source of spread. It's hard. There are many things we look forward to during the holidays, but we need to be resilient, and to find ways to reinvent old traditions in order to keep our friends, families, and communities safe.

One of the highlights of each year at the Essex Senior Center is the Annual Holiday Party, sponsored by the Friends of the Council on Aging. This year, the Friends have done a remarkable job in reinventing this great event. Instead of us gathering together to enjoy a meal together, we will be offering a curb-side pickup. We are working with Studios 1623 to provide some holiday programming. It won't be the same, but we are excited. Meals will be provided by a number of restaurants here in town. We are proud to be able to help support some of our local favorites!

We have a good number of take-home activities available, and have some (virtual) group events we hope you will participate in. We are also excited to let you know that we are hard at work with our neighboring Cape Ann communities, Senior Care Inc., and Studios 1623 for what looks to be an amazing partnership next year! We will have more information coming soon. In the meantime, may the Holiday Season bring happiness and joy to you and your family in unexpected ways. We miss you and hope to see you in 2021.

Kristin and Tess



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**And a big thank you
to all of our many
volunteers!**

Medicare Updates

Important Health Care Enrollment Dates:

Medicare Annual Open Enrollment Period: October 15 - December 7

Federal Retirees Annual Enrollment Period: November 9—December 14

Massachusetts Health Connector (NOT for Medicare Beneficiaries) November 1—January 15

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment—January 1—March 31 (for Medicare Advantage members as of 1/1/2021)

Shine Appointments

There's only a few days left of the Medicare Open Enrollment, please be sure to check your Prescription Coverage for next year. We frequently hear that people are happy with their plan and it worked well in 2020 or previous years. Remember that the plans may change year over year. These changes can involve premiums, copayments, covered medications, preferred pharmacies, and deductibles! (*Increase greater than \$2*)

<u>Company</u>	<u>Plan Name</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Aetna Medicare (SILVERSCRIPT):	SILVERSCRIPT Smart RX	(NEW)	\$7.20
	SILVERSCRIPT Choice	33.10	\$32.90
	SILVERSCRIPT Plus	89.80	\$72.00
Blue Cross Blue Shield	Blue RX Value Plus	42.50	50.50
	Blue RX Premier	128.00	135.00
Cigna Healthspring	RX-Secure Essential	22.20	24.00
	RX Secure	32.70	36.50
	RX Secure-Xtra	48.30	40.90
Elixir Insurance (Formerly Envision RX Plus)	RX Elixir Secure	(NEW)	14.30
	Elixir RX Plus	14.20	34.40
Express Scripts	Saver	24.10	27.40
	Value	37.00	32.80
	Choice	84.80	76.40
Humana	Value RX	13.20	17.20
	Basic	35.10	35.10
	Premier	62.30	65.40
Mutual of Omaha	RX Value	24.10	25.10
	RX Plus	49.30	87.10
United HealthCare (AARP)	Saver Plus	32.50	31.90
	RX Walgreens	36.20	37.90
	MedicareRX Preferred	77.60	86.00
Wellcare	Wellness RX	13.30	14.40
	Value Script	15.70	16.20
	Medicare RX Select	21.90	26.40
	Classic	31.90	31.00
	RX Saver	35.10	35.70
	RX Value Plus	70.30	74.40

***Denotes plan participates in the Insulin Savings Program. This program allows programs to cap insulin copayments at a maximum of \$35.00 throughout the deductible, initial coverage, and coverage gap periods. Plans must choose to participate. Depending on your medication needs, plans offering the insulin savings program may not be your least expensive plan. Please check with a SHINE counselor or on medicare.gov.*

Social Services

FUEL ASSISTANCE - ACTION INC.

180 East Main Street, Gloucester 978-281-3900

Did you know that as many as 1 in 3 families living in Cape Ann may be eligible for fuel assistance? Action Inc.'s Fuel Assistance program is designed to help you pay your energy bills. This free, no-cost program is available to anyone who meets eligibility guidelines. All you have to do is apply.

Action Inc. also will work with you to determine your eligibility for any discounts on your gas, oil, electricity, and phone or utility bills.

Call today [978-281-3900](tel:978-281-3900) to see if you qualify.

Income Eligibility Guidelines

Household Size	Income
1	\$39,105
2	\$51,137
3	\$63,169

Even if you aren't participating in Fuel Assistance, you still may be eligible for discounted Natural Gas/Electric rates! Call [978-281-3900](tel:978-281-3900) to see if you qualify.

National Grid applications are available at the COA or at actioninc.org

Assistance is available November 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021

LIFELINE



Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone service, broadband Internet service, OR bundled voice-broadband packages purchased from participating wireline or wireless providers. Lifeline provides up to a \$9.25 monthly discount on service for eligible low income subscribers. The discount helps ensure that low-income consumers can afford 21st century broadband and the access it provides to jobs, healthcare, and educational resources.

You can use Lifeline for either phone OR internet, but not both.

To participate in the Lifeline program, consumers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) or participate in certain federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or certain Tribal Programs.

You can see if you are eligible by reviewing the information available at lifelinesupport.org

Essex Updates

First Annual 2020 Winter Lights Display Celebration!

Over 150 places will be lit up throughout Cape Ann to help celebrate the joys of the season. A map will be available at [DiscoverGloucester.com](https://www.discovergloucester.com) – highlighting participating locations in Rockport, Gloucester, Essex and Manchester. Printed keepsake brochures are available from local businesses. Celebrate the season safely with enchanting exploration and glimmering light displays throughout the coastal communities of Cape Ann, transforming the region into a winter wonderland. **NOW THROUGH JANUARY 1ST, 4:00-10:00 PM DAILY**



ESSEX TREE LIGHTING

MEMORY TREE

6:30 PM

ON

THURSDAY, DECMEBER 3RD, MARTIN STREET

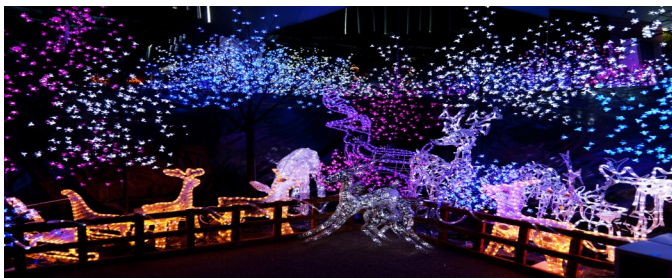
LIGHT UP ESSEX!

This year has brought new challenges so Light Up Essex has new ideas to celebrate our community!

The Kids Creation Contest: A new and exciting contest for our younger fans! Children will be submitting wreath decorations for a chance to win a ride with Santa during the Holiday Parade! Ends Dec. 19

Merchant Light Fight: This year's Merchant Light Fight is all about helping out and promoting the fabulous, generous merchants of Essex! Ends Jan. 3

Residential Light Fight: This year's Residential Light Fight contest is meant to encourage creativity, originality and nostalgia as voters follow a map of Light Fight entrants throughout the town. Ends Jan. 3



SANTA CLAUS IS COMIN' TO TOWN!

ESSEX HOLIDAY PARADE

SUNDAY, DECMEBER 20TH, 2:00 PM

With the help of the Essex Youth Commission, the Essex PTO, Essex Safety departments, and the Essex merchants group, Light Up Essex has put together a Holiday Parade that will hopefully satisfy the tradition that has been postponed for this year – and maybe even become a tradition unto itself. Keep your eyes out for Santa and a cast of holiday characters, as well as the winner of the Light Up Essex is Kids' Creation Contest!! **We ask that the public helps to socially distance along the causeway and [the parade route](#).** The Essex Holiday Parade will begin on Martin Street, down the causeway onto Southern Avenue, left onto School Street and then a left on Grove Street. From Grove Street, the parade will then head back toward the causeway via Eastern Ave, proceeding down John Wise Avenue, left onto Western Avenue with a left at the corner of Western Avenue and Martin Street until returning to the fire station on Martin Street.

Activities

In-person Events:

The Essex Senior Center will not be offering any in-person events. The outdoor tent is now removed for the winter. The building will continue to be closed to the general public. If you need to meet with Kristin or Tess, individual appointments may be offered on an individual, as needed basis. If you are scheduled for an individual appointment, or if you are volunteering to help with meals, groceries or other programs, please keep in mind the following: If you can answer yes to the following questions, you are asked to stay home:

In the last 14 days have you:

- * Tested positive for COVID19
- * Traveled outside of Massachusetts designated safe states (mass.gov)

- * Been in close contact with someone who tested positive
- * Had a fever, or exhibited any other COVID19 symptoms, Or such as cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, fatigue, congestion

ESSEX COA ACTIVITIES

via ZOOM

Tuesdays 10:30 A.M.

"Balance Class with Dianna Daly" ~



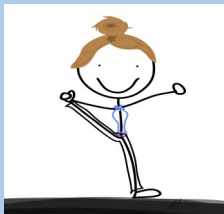
Dianna will get you grooving to fabulous music while you perform a variety of

Fall Prevention and Strengthening Exercises. Appropriate for all fitness levels.

ZOOM ID 396 136 822

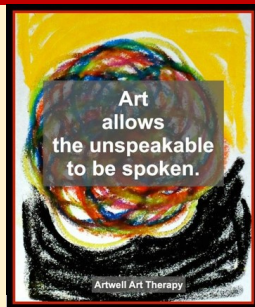
Password: 01929

Fridays 10:30



"Yoga with Dianna Daly" ~ Modified yoga stretching and exercises designed to develop mind and body.

ZOOM ID: 396 136 822 PW: 01929



Expressive Art Therapy with Linda:

Hope. Finding Light in the Darkness

Tuesday, December 1

What is Expressive Therapy?

Expressive Therapy is psychotherapy using the arts as psychodynamic tools such as art, music, drama, movement, storytelling and writing. It crosses all races, cultures, ages and genders. For those who cannot speak of their grief, emotional problems, trauma and despair this form of therapy gives them safety and relief. The therapist acts as a silent witness to a child, a family, or an adult's life experiences and provides insight and support.

Please RSVP to receive materials and the zoom information!

ACTIVITIES TO GO!

RSVP to Pick-up Activity kits on Thursday afternoons, or call us for other arrangements. Available items:

- Snowman Ornament Kit
- Gnome Ornament Kit
- Rhinestone Painting Kit
- Puzzle Books
- Coloring Kits

Meals

FRIDAY GROCERIES

We continue to work with our community partners at Open Door and Acord Food Pantries to provide grocery options for you.

The Friday Grocery Distribution is scheduled for the following dates:

December 4, 18, **Thursday 30

Please call the COA by Tuesday to register. Groceries can be picked-up at NOON at the COA and delivery is available if needed.

Please consider going to Acord and Open Door during our non-delivery weeks.

Grab and Go Meals

- THURSDAY, DEC 3: Stuffed Pepper with Rustic Tomato Sauce, Au Gratin Potatoes, Scali bread
- MONDAY, DEC 7: Beef Stew, Mashed Potatoes w/Chives, Whole Wheat Dinner Roll
- THURSDAY, DEC 10: Hot Dog with Mustard/Relish, Baked Beans, Carrots, Mandarin Oranges
- MONDAY, DEC 14: Ribecue with Honey BBQ Sauce, Potato Wedges, Scandanavian Veggies, Pineapple
- THURSDAY, DEC 17 ——— HOLIDAY PARTY——— No Lunch Pick-up Today
- MONDAY, DEC 21: Chicken Scampi with Extra Sauce, Rotini, Broccoli, Oatmeal Bread
- THURSDAY, DEC 24: Broccoli Stuffed Cbicken w/Supreme Sauce, Red Bliss Potato, Roasted Tomatoes, Yogurt
- MONDAY, DEC 28: Boneless Chicken w/Pesto Sauce, Rice Pilaf, Carrots, Cantaloupe
- THURSDAY, DEC 31: Beef Burgundy, Whipped Potatoes, Green Beans, Chocolate Pudding

Transportation

Individual Trips:

Provided by Beauport Ambulance Services

978-281-6955

Mon - Fri 8 AM - 4 PM: *Essex, Ipswich, Rockport, Gloucester, Manchester, Hamilton, Wenham, Beverly, Danvers, Peabody*

CATA Shopping Trips:

Provided by Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA)

978-283-7916

- **Friday Morning Market Basket, Rowley:** Pick up 9:30 at your home. Limit 2 bags \$4.00

Senior Care RSVP Medical Transportation:

978-281-1750

Manchester Council on Aging

978-526-7500

December

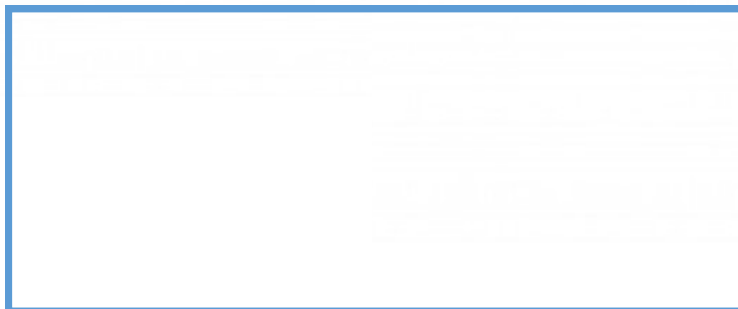
<p><i>Book Club returning in January!</i></p>	<p>1</p> <p>10:30 Balance in Motion</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p> <p>1:00 Art Therapy Class</p> <p>6:00 COA Board MTG via ZOOM/ID# 968 706 7633/PW: 01929</p>	<p>2</p> <p>ECOA Closed</p> <p>1:00 Walking Club</p>	<p>3</p> <p>12:00 Grab and Go Lunch</p> <p>12:30 Activity Kit Pick up!</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10:30 Chair Yoga</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p> <p>12:00 Grocery Pick up at COA</p>
<p>7</p> <p>12:00 Grab and Go Lunch</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:30 Balance in Motion</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p>	<p>9</p> <p>ECOA Closed</p> <p>1:00 Walking Club</p>	<p>10</p> <p>12:00 Grab and Go Lunch</p> <p>12:30 Activity Kit Pickup</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:30 Chair Yoga</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p>
<p>14</p> <p>12:00 Grab and Go Lunch</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10:30Balance in Motion</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p> <p>6:00 Friends of ECOA Board MTG</p>	<p>16</p> <p>ECOA Closed</p> <p>1:00 Walking Club</p>	<p>17</p> <p>12:30 Activity Kit Pickup</p> <p>4:00 Holiday Meal Pick-up.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>10:30 Chair Yoga</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p> <p>12:00 Grocery Pick up at COA</p>
<p>21</p> <p>12:00 Grab and Go Lunch</p>	<p>22</p> <p>10:30Balance in Motion</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p>	<p>23</p> <p>ECOA Closed</p> <p>1:00 Walking Club</p>	<p>24</p> <p>12:00 Grab and Go Lunch</p>	
<p>28</p> <p>11:30 Grab and Go Lunch</p>	<p>29</p> <p>10:30 Balance in Motion</p> <p>Zoom: 396-136-822</p> <p>PW: 01929</p>	<p>30</p> <p>ECOA Closed</p> <p>1:00 Walking Club</p> <p><i>Don't forget to RSVP for groceries and next week's Grab and Go Meals</i></p>	<p>31</p> <p>11:30 Grab and Go Lunch</p> <p>12:00 Grocery Pick up at COA</p>	



Council on Aging *Essex*

17 Pickering Street
Essex, MA 01929

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A Monthly publication from the Essex Council on Aging, and supported
in part by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

The Essex Senior Echo December 2020

We are looking for volunteers who may like to oversee some virtual events. We have a zoom account, YouTube channel, and our new easy to use party-line. We would love to see a current events group, social groups, history discussions, etc. Please reach out if you have any ideas!

Our to-go activity kits are ready and waiting for you to pick them up (or we can deliver!) Call to RSVP

Senior Care Inc, is currently in the process of conducting their Area Agency on Aging Needs Assessment. This survey is conducted every 4 years and the results are used for planning and advocacy. Because it is important to hear directly from people like you who live in the communities served by SeniorCare (Topsfield, Hamilton, Wenham, Beverly, Essex, Manchester, Gloucester, Rockport, Ipswich), we at the Essex Council on Aging are helping to get the word out. Surveys are available at the Senior Center! If you are able, please take a few minutes to complete the survey by 12/14. It's important that those of us in Essex are well represented so our needs can be addressed!

