

Essex Senior Echo

January 2024

Happy New Year! I hope you have had a wonderful holiday season and carry that spirit through to 2024! As always, with the New Year comes the opportunity for looking ahead ~ how we can be better, how we can do better ~ and that includes things here at the Senior Center. The New Year brings opportunity to offer new and creative ideas while continuing to build our Essex community. In particular, I am excited to be offering a "Remember When - Essex" program designed to spark conversation and share special Essex memories.

Please consider participating in this special program.

In this month's newsletter you'll find some new programs and events that I hope will be engaging and fun! In addition, the newsletter will continue to provide an array of information about Social Services, Around Town happenings, Special Trips and Events, and Community Support. Please let us know what you would like to see in the newsletter ~ and at the Senior Center ~ for 2024!

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year ~ Tess

Inclement Weather Policy:

If Manchester-Essex Schools have a delayed opening or are closed due to inclement weather, the Essex Senior Center will be closed.

Transportation cancellations are determined by CATA.

Please call 978-283-1886

COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

Senior Care, Inc: 978-281-1750 Offers Information and referral services, Meals on Wheels, Home-based Services, Money Management, and other services designed to help people stay at home. seniorcareinc.org

Essex Housing Authority: 978-768-6821

Veteran's Services: 978-356-3915

Protective Services: 800-922-2275 Call 24/7 to report abuse or neglect

Energy Assistance: 978-256-6650 ACTION, Inc.

Used Medical Equipment: Masonic Hall, Ipswich 978-356-9716
Essex COA 978-768-7932

Essex Police (non-emergency) 978-768-6200

Essex Fire (non-emergency) 978-768-6363

Essex Senior Center
17 Pickering St.
Essex MA 01929
978-768-7932

Hours of Operation:

Monday thru
Thursday
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Fridays
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Board Officers:

Chairperson -

Kay L. Joseph

Vice Chairperson -

Diane Polley

Treasurer - Open

Secretary - Ann Buckley

Board Members at

Large

Nancy Frieden

Ralph Hawley

Sue Lufkin

Susan Parady

Curt Siebert

Mary Wilhelm

Council on Aging Staff:

Interim Director: Tess Leary
tleary@essexma.org

Follow us on Facebook!



Medicare Advantage Annual Enrollment

Did you miss Open Enrollment and you have a Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO/PPO)? If so, Medicare has expanded the time that you have to make a change. You have from January 1—March 31 to make changes to your Advantage Plan.

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Massachusetts Health Connector

Are you under 65, and purchase your health insurance through Health Connector? Your open enrollment period ends on January 23!

For more information visit:
www.mahealthconnector.org

Medicare Savings Programs

The Medicare Savings Programs (also known as the MassHealth Buy-In) help eligible Medicare beneficiaries pay for their deductibles, co-insurance, and premiums.

If eligible, you will automatically qualify for Extra Help, a program that helps pay for your prescription drugs under Medicare. If your income and assets are at or below the following amounts, you may qualify.

Income:

\$2734 (individual) \$3698 (couple)

Assets:

\$18,180 (individual) \$27,260 (couple)

Schedule an appointment with our SHINE Counselors, or contact Mass Health Customer Service at 1-800-841-2900

Property Tax Resources

Circuit Breaker Tax Credit: As a Senior Citizen, you may be eligible to claim a refundable credit on your personal state income tax return, whether you own or rent your home (Public housing residents are not eligible). Your refund is determined based on a comparison of 10% of your income and your property taxes, or 25% of your rent. The maximum credit amount for tax year 2022 is \$1,200. You must fill out the Massachusetts Form 1.

Property Tax Exemptions: For a complete list of eligibility criteria, please speak to Tess at the COA, or Brenda at the Assessor's office. In addition to the Assessor's Office, applications are available at the Senior Center.

- Blind Exemption (37A) \$500.00 Current Mass. Commission for the Blind Cert. req'd.
- Senior Exemption: (17C) \$175.00 Age 70 or older. No income limit. Asset limits apply.
- Senior Exemption: (41C) \$500.00 Income and asset limits apply.
- Veteran's Exemption: Clauses 22, 22A-F \$400 to full exemption. The applicant must have a 10% or greater service connected disability. Exemption amount is dependent on disability rating.

Property Tax Deferral: You may defer up to 50% of your property taxes if you are over age 65 and have an income less than \$20,000. Interest rates do apply and the taxes are due when you are no longer eligible for the deferral, sell the home, or pass away.





REAL ID



DEADLINE
May 7, 2025

The REAL ID deadline has been extended.

Starting on May 7, 2025 in order to fly or enter a federal facility you will need a REAL ID. Please contact Tess for assistance in starting your online application, scheduling an RMV appointment, and gathering the required documents.

Does your Insurance Company have a Fitness Benefit? Did you know that some health insurance programs have member benefits that include reimbursement of gym memberships, and fitness classes? This can include fitness classes offered by your local COA!



SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICE HOURS:

Jessie Palm, Regional Social Worker

Eastern Essex Regional Public Health Coalition

Mondays 9:30 AM at the Essex COA

Wednesdays 9 AM - 1 PM T.O.H.P Library
or by appointment

Brian DesRosiers, Esq. LL.M

Attorney DesRosiers is an Elder Law Specialist who will be at the Essex Senior Center every 3rd Wednesday of the month, from 9:30AM - 10:30AM, to answer your questions. Appointments are preferred; drop-ins are welcome.

**Forget me not when I am gone, In hearts and prayers I will live on
Be strong, be brave and dry your tears, Remember all our happy years
~Author Unknown**

In Memory of the following Essex residents:

Jean Appelfofft
Arthur Bernier
Deborah Bickford
Wanda Brooks
David Doane
Adrienne Doucette
Robert Fraga
Dennis Gannett
Warren Heath

George Lane
Evelyn Macintyre
Bonnie Malcolm-Brown
Charlotte Mansfield
Sylvia Martin
Donald McPhail
Gerald Muise
Ellen Niely
Henry Peabody

Constance Perrigo
Robert Plesnevich
Barry Richards
Paul Schafer
Doris Sculley
Anthony Taliadoros
Mary Warner
James Witham
Gordon Wright



Computer & Technology Assistance

Do you have questions about your computer, tablet, phone, etc? We have opportunities to get help!

Drop-in with Curt Wednesdays 1:00-3:00pm

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

JANUARY 22
10:30 A.M.



ESSEX SENIOR
CENTER

Are you caring for a loved one with a chronic medical condition or dementia?

LICSW Jessie Perrigo Palm will be hosting a monthly support group at the Senior Center.

Please take care of yourself and join us.



Games



Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 PM

Scrabble, Boggle, Cribbage, Backgammon,

Board Games and More!



Join us, or make plans with a friend and come play ANY TIME!



CALLING ALL CRIBBAGE PLAYERS!

Come and play at the Senior Center - and bring your friends! We have a "Games" Day on Wednesdays from 1:00-3:00 BUT you can come and play Cribbage or other games ANYTIME!



Guest Chef



Tuesday, January 16

1:00-2:00 PM

Bob Phipps (Common Crow chef) will be whipping up some Jumbalaya! Free to participants ~ advance registration is required.

NEW

Fitness Fun with Gil

Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m

Start your day with Gil and focus on strength, stamina, and stretching... energize yourself and leave feeling good!



\$5 DONATION SUGGESTED



BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, January 30 ~ 1:00 PM

"American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins

Join us for lively conversation! Copies of the book are available due to the generosity of the Friends.

Essex Eats

WILL RETURN IN
MARCH 2024





Ongoing Activities and Programs



COA FITNESS PROGRAMS

BALANCE IN MOTION:
Tuesdays 10:00 AM
Fridays 10:00 AM

\$5 Donation Requested

MONDAY GROOVE (Video)

Mondays 9:30 AM Get your dancing shoes on and join this fun, energetic dance class! No Instructor.

FITNESS FUN WITH GIL
Wednesdays 10:00 AM

\$5 Donation Requested

CAPE ANN VIRTUAL SENIOR CENTER

Tune into Channel 67 for a number of fitness programs sponsored by the Cape Ann Councils on Aging and the Friends of the ECOA.



COA ACTIVITIES

Afternoon Games Wednesdays 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Arts & Crafts Tuesdays 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Book Club Tuesday ~ January 30 1:00 PM

Guest Chef ~ Tuesday, January 16 ~ 1:00 PM
Bob Phipps, Common Crow, will whip up a batch of Jumbalaya!

Computer Help ~ Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 PM
Curt will help solve your tech problems!

Elder Law Assistance - Atty. Brian DesRosiers,
Wednesday, January 17 ~ 9:30-10:30 AM

Grab & Go Meals Mondays & Thursdays NOON

Mobile Market Friday, January 5 and 19 10:30AM

COA Board Mtg Tuesday, January 9 6:00 PM

Friends Mtg Tuesday, January 9 3:00 PM

Ladies Brunch Tuesday, January 23 11:00AM

Men's Coffee/Donuts Wednesday Jan 10 9:30AM

Monthly Cookie Delivery will return in March

COA SERVICES

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES Individual assistance with a variety of topics, including, but not limited to SNAP benefits, Caregiver Support, Transportation, Housing, Social Security, etc.

SHINE Counseling Individual counseling about Medicare, prescription coverage, supplemental and Medicare Advantage plans, etc.

RMV and Me: The Essex COA is partnered with the RMV to assist Essex residents with various online transactions such as license and registration renewals.

SHREDDING: Stop by and use the Essex COA shredder, an individual machine which shreds 10 pages at a time.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOANS Mon-Fri 9-1 The Senior Center has a variety of medical equipment available at no cost. Please remember to complete the Release Form before taking any equipment.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES: 3rd Thursday, 10:30 MaryAnn Nay, Assistant to Senator Bruce Tarr, comes to the Senior Center to address any issues you may have and want to bring to Sen Tarr's attention. No appointment needed.

VETS SERVICE OFFICE HOURS: Office phone: 978-356-6699; Steve Bohn, VSO and Tony Ochoa, Assistant for Veterans Services

SNAP APPLICATIONS: The Essex COA can provide assistance with applying for SNAP/food stamp benefits.



Bowling

Knock 'em down, spin
'em around!

Cape Ann Lanes
Wednesday, January 31

11:00 am

Shoe rental is \$3.50 per person
Transportation available via
CATA - departs Memorial Park at
10:30, \$4 Roundtrip fare.

Join us ~ let us know you're
coming ~ and let's go bowling!



**Cape Ann Cinema
and Pizza! \$5.00**

Thursday, January 25
"Elvis"

starring Austin Butler and Tom Hanks

Academy Award Best Picture nominee

Movie and pizza start at 11:00 AM

CATA departs Memorial Park 10:30 AM

\$4 Roundtrip fare.

Advance registration is required.

Watercolor Class

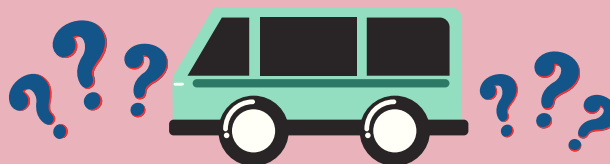
Thursday, January 18

1:00 - 3:00 PM

\$10 per person

We are thrilled to once again
offer this special workshop with
Watercolorist, Marion Hall, a
member of the Rockport and
North Shore Art Associations and
the New England Watercolor
Society with a studio in
Manchester.

Class is limited to 15 People
Advance Registration required.



MYSTERY RIDE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

JOIN US FOR AN ADVENTURE,
A SCENIC RIDE, AND A SWEET TREAT!

PLEASE ARRIVE AT MEMORIAL PARK
AT 12:15 PM

THE VAN LEAVES AT 12:30 PM

TRANSPORTATION IS PROVIDED BY
CATA ~ \$4 ROUND TRIP

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

Remember When... Essex

Tuesday, January 23

1:00 PM

Please join us to talk and share stories about the people and places of
Essex. We are excited to offer this special program and can't wait to
hear your reminiscences! Diane Polley will lead the group.



Mobile Market

On the first and third Fridays of each month, the COA hosts a Mobile Market for Essex seniors.

These markets are open to all Essex seniors, regardless of income, and are sponsored by Acord Food Pantry and The Open Door.

Friday, January 5 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Friday, January 19 10:30-11:30 a.m.

For more information or to register in advance, please contact Tess Leary at the Essex COA.

Food Assistance

Making the first call to a food pantry can be hard. You are not alone. You qualify. Free & confidential.

No one should feel hunger.

The Open Door 978-283-6776

28 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester

00 Southern Heights, Ipswich

Acord Food Pantry 978-468-7424

68 Willow Street, Hamilton



Grab and Go

Mondays and Thursdays at 12 Noon, and must be picked up by 12:30.

Please register 2 business days in advance.

Mondays

Thursdays

Provided by Open Door

Provided by SeniorCare

Breakfast/Brunch

Ladies Brunch: Tuesday, January 23 11:00 AM

Please RSVP and enjoy a delicious meal!



Men's Coffee and Donuts:
Wednesday, January 11 9:00AM



SNAP BENEFITS



The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded supplemental food assistance program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance and can help you expand your healthy food budget and supports your well-being.

SNAP benefits include:

- Monthly funds on an EBT card to buy food
- \$40, \$60 or \$80 a month put back on your EBT card when you use SNAP to buy local produce via the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) - puts money back on your EBT card when you use SNAP to buy healthy, local fruits and vegetables from participating HIP farm vendors, even during the off season and the winter months.

Applying for SNAP benefits, and even finding out if you're eligible, can be intimidating. Please contact Tess Leary at the Essex COA if you are interested in completing an application or want to learn more about your options and eligibility.

COVID VACCINE INFORMATION

Health officials have approved a new batch of COVID-19 vaccines that are making their way into pharmacies and health clinics throughout the U.S.

Here's what you need to know about the new shots, from Moderna, Novavax and Pfizer-BioNTech, including who can get them and what to expect when you roll up your sleeve.

1. **The new vaccines target the XBB.1.5 variant**
2. **Almost everyone should get the new shot — especially older adults.** In addition to less robust immune defenses, older adults are also more likely to have chronic health conditions that can cause complications with COVID-19.
3. **The vaccine side effects are the same.** The CDC says ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin and antihistamines can help relieve common symptoms after your shot.
4. **You can get your COVID and flu shots at the same time.**
5. **Vaccines are still free for people with Medicare.**

CDC FLU FACT

It takes about 2 weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body to protect against flu.



#FIGHT FLU

www.cdc.gov/FightFlu

CDC FLU FACT

Adults 65+ are at **high risk** for serious flu illness. Get your flu shot and encourage your loved ones to get vaccinated.



#FIGHT FLU



January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

In the United States, approximately 120,000 are blind from glaucoma, accounting for 9% to 12% of all cases of blindness. Over 3 million Americans, and 80 million people worldwide, have glaucoma. Experts estimate that half of them don't know they have it. Regular eye examinations are critical to preserving vision.

National Blood Donor Month

The month of January is designated as National Blood Donor Month in the United States. Due to holiday celebrations, inclement weather, and cold and flu season, the winter months are often a time of reduced donations and an increased risk for blood shortages.

Help ensure that this lifesaving resource is available to patients during this time. Find a location to give blood and schedule your life-saving donation appointment!



Friends of the Essex Council on Aging

The Friends of the Essex Council on Aging is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose purpose is to financially assist the Essex Council on Aging in providing social services to residents over the age of 60 in Essex, and to do other things that necessarily render a service for the elderly residents of Essex. Please consider joining the Friends or making a donation!

MONTHLY MEETING:
2nd Tuesday of the Month
January 9 3:00 PM

Dawn Burnham, President
Gil Frieden, Vice President
Ellen Hull, Secretary
Kay Joseph, Treasurer

Essex Trash Bags Available

Tuesday, January 9 ~ 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Discounted Trash Bags are available to Essex Residents age 60 and older. Limit of one roll per household per month. Bags are sold on a first come, first-served basis. Small bags ~ \$7 Large bags ~ \$15

Heat Your Home Safely

Heating causes thousands of residential fires each year. Heating equipment is the #2 cause of home fires in Massachusetts and the #1 source of carbon monoxide (CO). • Make sure there are working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms on every level, including outside the bedrooms. • Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms monthly and change batteries twice a year, when you change the clocks. • Check the manufacturing date on the back of the alarm. Replace smoke alarms after 10 years. Replace CO alarms after 5-7 years (depending on the model). Be Careful When Using Fireplaces and Solid Fuel Stoves • Have the chimney and flue professionally inspected and cleaned every year. • Dispose of the ashes in a metal container, with a lid, away from the house, garage, and porch. If you must use a space heater, do so safely. • Do not use space heaters as your #1 heating source. • Plug a space heater directly into a wall outlet, not an extension cord or power strip. • Always turn off when going to bed or leaving the room. • Portable kerosene and propane heaters are illegal in MA. for home use. Maintain Gas/Oil Equipment • Well-maintained furnaces and water heaters are safer and more efficient.. • Have your furnace and hot water heater professionally checked every year.

Around Town

New Year, New Director at the T.O.H.P. Burnham Library!

The Library Trustees are pleased to announce that Carla Christensen will be the new Library Director beginning January 8th, 2024.

A resident of Essex since 2004, Carla has been a member of the Executive Board of the Friends of the Library as well as being elected as a Trustee of the library in May 2023.

Carla brings extensive community knowledge in addition to her experience as a teacher and in her business career in the educational publishing and software sectors. A collaborative innovator with 20 years of experience implementing and honing key communication, organization, and research skills along with managing, mentoring and inspiring teams, Carla looks forward to leading the T. O. H. P. Burnham Library into the future.

Transportation

Transportation for Essex seniors is provided through CATA for \$2.00 fare. Please call to schedule your ride by 1:00PM at least 2 BUSINESS days before your appointment.

CATA: 978-283-7916

Transportation is available Monday - Friday, to and from the following communities:

*Rockport *Gloucester *Manchester *Essex *Ipswich *Hamilton
*Wenham *Beverly *Peabody *Salem *Danvers *Rowley

Monday appointment, call by 1pm Thursday
Tuesday appointment, call by 1 pm Friday
Wednesday appointment, call by 1 pm Monday
Thursday appointment, call by 1 pm Tuesday
Friday appointment, call by 1pm Wednesday

Participation requires a one-time registration, available at the Essex Senior Center.

Alternative Transportation Options:

Senior Care Medical Transportation: 978-281-1750

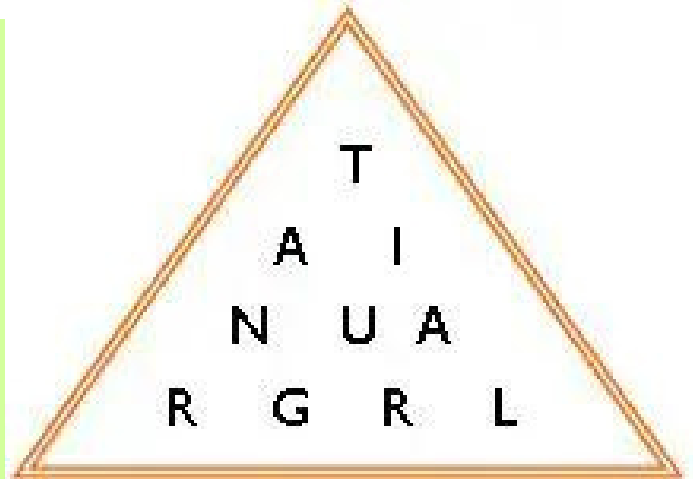
Just For Fun

Intergenerational Conversation Starter:



We know kids say the darndest things - here's a great conversation starter for your next visit with the grandkids: If you could have dinner with one person, past or present, who would you choose and why?

1. Spell 4-letter words that use one letter from each row. You may use the letters in any order. Score 1 point for each 4-letter word you form.
2. Spell one 10-letter word that begins with the top letter in the triangle and uses every letter in the triangle. Score 5 points for this word.



Council on Aging



17 Pickering St
Essex MA 01929

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



Our offices will be
closed on Monday,
January 1st but will re-
open on Tuesday,
January 2 at 9:00 AM
*Looking forward to
seeing you at the Senior
Center in 2024!*