

Shutesbury Geezette

The Newsletter of the Shutesbury Council on Aging

Spring 2024

To receive email updates from your COA, please send your email address to coa@shutesbury.org. Also, let us know if you would like to receive your *Geezette* by email instead of a paper copy. Thanks!

This newsletter is produced with funding from the Mass. Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Friday, May 3: Make Friends with Your Smartphone

Last fall's *Using Your Smartphone Smarter* has inspired a new free class for Shutesbury seniors! A workshop on May 3 co-sponsored by the COA and the M.N. Spear Memorial Library will have you wading through the best apps, a deep dive into settings while staying away from the sharks. Bring your questions and share your favorite apps.

- Session 1 10-11:30 A.M. for iPhone Class size limit: 6
- Session 2 1-2:30 P.M for Android Class size limit: 6
- Place: Town Hall, Lower Level
- Presenter: Barbara Friedman
- **Register early, by April 26.** Email library.director@shutesbury.org or call 413-259-1213.

Meet Shutesbury's new Public Health Nurse

by Martha Favre

Sarah Fiske, PhD, RN, CNL is Shutesbury's new public health nurse,

a position made possible by the Valley Health Regional Collaborative and a grant from the Public Health Excellence for Shared Services.

Sarah graduated from nursing school in 2008. For more than ten years, she worked in the emergency department at Baystate Franklin Medical Center. In addition to this role, she has worked as a clinical nursing supervisor and has held several teaching positions within colleges and universities across Western Mass.

She was hired for an eight-hour position that is equally split between Shutesbury and Leverett, with the purpose of monitoring communicable diseases and initiating programs that promote health and wellness.

When asked what drew Sarah to public health, she responded that she wanted to give back to her community. As a nurse working in the ER, she saw patients under adverse situations and there was limited time for health and wellness education. This new job provides opportunities to provide services designed to improve community

Public Health, cont. on pg. 2

When emergencies strike . . .

find what you need in your "Peace of Mind" binder! See our supplement inside.

Public Health, cont. from pg. 1

health and wellness with a wider lens and possibly even limit hospital visits.

When Sarah was asked what she identified as the health needs of our town, she responded that she is still getting to know the community and looks forward to getting to know folks better. Currently, she monitors communicable diseases daily, makes referrals and advocates for community members as needed. She secures and provides resources and develops programs that will continue to positively impact Shutesbury's health and wellbeing.

Sarah has organized a bookcase, shown below, on the first floor of Town Hall with a limited supply of free emergency supplies including COVID test kits, masks, condoms and Narcan, a nasal medication used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose with instructions for use, to name a few of the supplies.



She has been partnering with Shutesbury Police Chief Kristin Burgess to identify elders who may need services or who are at risk. Sarah contacts the individual to assess their willingness to accept help and if they want assistance, she makes appropriate referrals and/or checks in on them. LifePath, an organization in Greenfield that is our Area Agency

on Aging, offers numerous services to keep people living safely at home, such as cleaning services and/or Meals on Wheels (a prepared food delivery program to the home), if folks qualify.

As a public health nurse, Sarah is responsible for contact tracing of communicable diseases within our town and entering the data into the MAVEN (Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network). This allows the Department of Public Health to better identify trends or spikes in a variety of reportable diseases. Covid and flu are common in the winter months and tick borne illnesses are common summer illnesses.

Health education plans for the spring will include resuming her November walking initiative. Sarah has pedometers available for those wanting to join and track their steps. The simple walking program is a way to help motivate folks who can walk to move more. Participants can record their steps, seek community walking and/or educational opportunities, or simply walk independently. Walking can reduce pain and fatigue and improve balance, mood and sleep. Walking with others and recording steps helps motivate folks to reach daily step goals and brings attention to community initiatives that promote health and wellness.

In addition, Sarah will work with the Council On Aging and offer educational sessions as needed. For example, tick talks and winter health and safety. A training program will be offered to instruct people on how to

Public Health, cont. on pg. 3

administer Narcan, the nasal spray antidote to opioids, in efforts to prevent overdoses and death. Community CPR courses will hopefully be offered in addition to babysitting courses and wellness clinics.

Sarah is available every Tuesday from 12:30 to 4:00pm in the Senior Lounge in the lower level of Town Hall or by appointment. She can check blood pressures or blood sugar levels, offer diabetes education, discuss risk reduction and injury prevention and offer foot care referrals, to name a few of her services.

You can contact Sarah by email at sarah.fiske@greenfield-ma.gov or by phone at (413)-531-0657. The Council On Aging looks forward to collaborating with her on future health education programs.

An interview with Nan Mead, our Foot Clinic Nurse

by Susan Millinger

Nan Mead has had a lot of variety in her life -- in where she's lived, her education, her jobs and her sports.

She's worked for FootCare by Nurses, which provides an RN, Certified Foot Care Specialist to tend the feet of Shutesbury's seniors, for two years come March 2024. She finds working as a foot care nurse very rewarding. Many people, Nan says, suffer needlessly with foot issues without a professional checking and tending their feet. It feeds her soul to be able to help them. She checks for wounds and pressure injuries, cuts toenails, files down calluses and corns, provides range of motion and

release of lower extremities using olive oil, provides guidance on how to attend to feet between visits, makes sure that shoes are appropriate and that they are properly laced! All of these things promote healthy feet, decrease pain, improve balance, and help prevent falls.

Nan may have special interest in feet and shoes because she has become an ultrarunner in the last third of her life. (Ultrarunning, for those like this interviewer who didn't know about it, is the sport of long distance running.) When she was the school nurse at the Swift River School, where she worked for 17 years, she started a running club with the help of a grant from Tufts University. The goal for each participant was to run a hundred miles in the school year. Nan had no running experience, but thought it would be valuable exercise for the school community. Staff, parents and students started running together. Nan fell in love with running, and reports that it changed her life. She is not a fast runner, but runs with joy and gratitude. She enjoys running in local races, ran the Boston Marathon last year, and plans to run the New York City Marathon next November in celebration of her 60th birthday.

She loved school nursing, but after a year and a half of working during the pandemic the stress had gotten to her, and taken away the best part of her job — actually seeing the children. So she decided to move on. She tried a job in a recovery center, but found it not to be the right match.

Foot Care, cont. on pg. 4

Foot Care, cont. from pg. 3

Then she learned about FootCare by Nurses, and was hooked.

Nan works part time and covers the Wendell and Shutesbury clinics, and also does home visits in Orange and Athol. She spends the third Wednesday of each month in Shutesbury, seeing up to seven clients. Most clients here see her every other month, for about three-quarters of an hour. Shutesbury's Foot Clinic since the pandemic involves home visits, so Nan travels around our town.

Nan has lived in Wendell for 22 years. She said she has lived all over the Valley since moving here in 1984 to attend college. She was born in Rochester, New York, the last of eight children. In the 1970s, her family moved to Bermuda, which is still her "happy place," and she enjoys visiting her sister, who still lives there, as often as possible.

Nan started her college career at Hampshire College and found it not the right match, so after taking a year off and working at her sister's farm in VA, moved back to Massachusetts and transferred to UMass where she eventually obtained two degrees: the first in Home Economics and the second in Nursing. Her path to nursing started with a job as a home health aide working around the valley. She really enjoyed helping clients in the community, and eventually realized she should get her nursing degree. Nan was always more interested in public, community-based health care, and was hired by the Holyoke VNA after doing an internship there while at UMass. After a year she decided it was a good

time in her life to do something adventurous and decided to join the Peace Corps and was sent to Niger. There Nan found herself mostly working with children, providing basic health and hygiene lessons often focused on food and water safety, and vaccination initiatives.

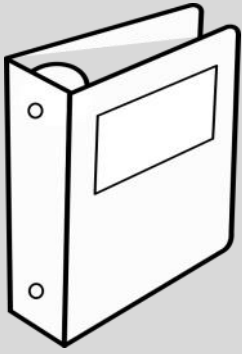
When she returned to the States Nan wanted to continue working with children and discovered school nursing. She initially worked at the Leverett School, and then after taking two years off to be with her new baby boy, she was hired at the Swift River School. This worked out perfectly as it was where her son would eventually attend school.

And now here she is, Shutesbury's current FootCare nurse. If you haven't had the pleasant experience of having your feet cared for, you might want to become another participant in our Foot Clinic. You will enjoy having your feet taken care of, and you will enjoy a visit from the very congenial Nan.

Nan with a medal for completing the Bermuda Triangle Half Marathon Challenge.

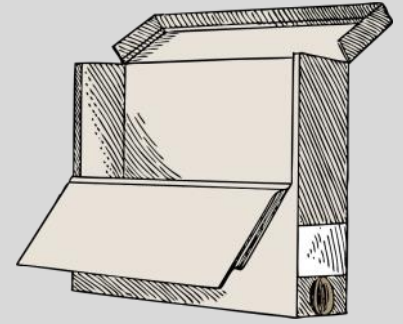


Although the COA's monthly Foot Clinics in the Senior Lounge at Town Hall remain on hold, **appointments in your home** with Nan Mead can be scheduled by phoning Foot-Care By Nurses, LLC, 413-367-8369. Let them know you are part of the Shutesbury COA's foot care program. The COA suggests clients donate toward the visit's cost; state grant funds will cover the balance.



Create your own “Peace of Mind Binder”

by Martha Favre



Emergencies can happen at any time, and it is best to be prepared. Creating a “Peace of Mind Binder” that contains important financial, legal, and medical documents will greatly aid family members or caregivers in assisting you if the need arises.

Inform your family of the binder/book’s location and update it routinely as information may change.

Many family members may have no idea whom they need to contact in the event of an emergency or death and this binder, notebook, folder or a cardboard box will simplify their work during a stressful time.

Creating this binder will also encourage you to organize the important papers you may have scattered in various locations within your home.

The information contained within the binder can hopefully be reviewed with family members and their questions can be answered by you prior to an emergency.

Here is a list of suggested items you can include in this binder.

Contacts

List of relatives and close friends, including their addresses, phone numbers and emails.

Financial Section

Bank(s) Account information -- bank name, location, account numbers. You might consider adding a relative to your account so they can access the account in an emergency and pay your monthly bills if you are unable to do so. You might also want to add a family member to have access to a Safety Deposit Box.

Life insurance policy(ices), company names(s), account number(s), password(s)

List of investments - company name(s), account number(s), password(s)

List of payments (with related passwords) that are automatically withdrawn from your accounts monthly, for example house insurance, home heating, phone, internet.

Password Manager is a computer program that stores your passwords for web applications. Smartphones have a built-in password manager and there are a number of these programs that can be purchased online.

Health information

Health insurance(s), copies of insurance cards

Names of physician(s), specialty, location, phone number(s)

List of medications, and your local pharmacy location or mail-away pharmacy

* * *

Many of the following forms you may have already completed at your doctor's office, and they may already be a part of your medical record.

Health Care Proxy

This simple document, legally valid in Massachusetts, allows you ("the principal") to name someone ("an agent") to make health care decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make or communicate those decisions.

This could be the result of a coma, a serious illness or any condition that would make it impossible for you to participate in your medical treatment decisions. The proxy must be signed by two witnesses who are not being designated as the agent.

It is important that you ("the principal") have a frank discussion with your "agent" so they fully understand what your medical wishes are so they can make the best possible decisions for you.

I listed two options of the same document. The first link offers nine discussion questions that may assist you in this process, plus the Health Care Proxy document. The second link provides the document and instructions to complete it.

<https://www.massmed.org/Patient-Care/Health-Topics/Health-Care-Proxies-and-End-of-Life-Care/Health-Care-Proxy-Information-and-Forms/>

<https://www.honoringchoicesmass.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/09.16-Health-Care-Proxy-Instructions-Document.pdf>

Health Care Directive or Advance Directive

Also known as a Personal Directive or Living Will, this document states your wishes regarding end-of-life medical care, including the treatment you do or do not want. This is not a legally binding document in Massachusetts, but it informs your Health Care Agent of your wishes.

https://www.umass.edu/uhs/sites/default/files/2024-03/180-127%20advance_directive.pdf?1710968647

Medical Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)

This is a medical order form that relays instructions between health professionals about a patient's care. MOLST is based on your preference to accept or refuse medical treatment, including treatments that might extend life. The MOLST must be signed by your health care provider (physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant), with copies given to your health care professional and your health care agent.

Print original Massachusetts MOLST forms on bright or fluorescent pink paper for maximum visibility.

"Astrobrights Pulsar Pink" is the color highly recommended for the original MOLST forms and post them on the refrigerator. EMTs and our

Shutesbury Fire Department First Responders are trained to look for the bright pink MOLST form before initiating life sustaining treatment with patients.

<https://molst-ma.org/sites/molst-ma.org/files/MOLST%20Form%20and%20Instructions%208.10.13%20FINAL.pdf>

Power of Attorney (POA)

There are four different types of power of attorney (POA) recognized in Massachusetts, each with a specific purpose. These documents allow you, the “principal,” to appoint an “agent” to act on your behalf, manage your financial, personal affairs and act for you in the event you become incapacitated or can’t speak for yourself. Choose an individual whom you can trust to act in your best interest. You can consult an attorney for the specific type of power of attorney that is best suited to your needs. There are several sites on the internet that offer samples of the different types of POA for a fee, such as The American Bar Association website (americanbar.org).

Once you have created the form and had it notarized, store the POA in the Peace of Mind Binder and give a copy to your agent. If you have given your agent the power to conduct transactions with your property, file a copy of the POA with the Registry of Deeds in the county where the property resides. This will allow the Registry of Deeds to recognize your agent’s authority if they need to sell or mortgage your property for you.

General Power of Attorney

A general power of attorney provides broad powers to your agent to manage your affairs. This document allows your agent to pay your bills, file your taxes, sell or mortgage your home or sign legal documents on your behalf. It terminates upon you becoming incapacitated or dying.

Limited Power of Attorney

As suggested in the title, this document has limited power and a limited timeframe. It grants legal authority to perform a particular action on your behalf, such as selling property or conducting a financial transaction. It would also include a start and termination date.

Durable Power of Attorney

This is a document used to grant someone the authority to act on your behalf, such as tending to your finances or maintaining your property. It will remain in effect if you become temporarily or permanently incapacitated, unlike the other 3 types of POA.

Springing Power of Attorney

As the name implies, this POA “springs” into effect if you become incapacitated. The level of incapacitation needs to be clearly defined to avoid family members having to need to go to court for a legal determination of incapacitation.

Legal Information

Your legal counsel or attorney, with address and phone number.

Copy of your Last Will and Testament and or Trust Document.

End-of-Life Wishes

Pre-existing funeral arrangements – name, address, phone number of funeral home. Any additional wishes to be included in the arrangements.

Burial Information

The Shutesbury Cemetery Commission offers traditional and natural burial plots. Plots are available in all three town cemeteries for residents.

Natural burial plots are limited to the West Cemetery (on Leverett Road).

Questions should be addressed to the Cemetery Commissioner at cemetery@shutesbury.org.

Two more tools toward Peace of Mind in Shutesbury

Join CodeRED

Along with emergency and critical messages, the **CodeRED** notification system releases important but non-emergency information such as road closures and changes to the trash collection schedule and other services.

- Registration for this notification service is customized, allowing you to choose which alerts to receive, as well as your preferred channel.
- You can select several different methods including landline, cell phone, email, text message, TTY, or a combination of any.
- Keep track of alerts with the **CodeRED Mobile App**, which notifies smartphone holders of real-time alerts in the area. Similar to the

online registration, users choose which notifications they'd like to receive via the app.

To create a “managed account” to update contact information at any time, join notification groups, and download the **CodeRED Mobile App** for your phone, click: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/bfcb3e0416b6> .

For more information, please contact Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Leonard Czerwonka at 413-259-1211 or firedpt@shutesbury.org.

Join “Town Announce”

Shutesbury has an email list for Town announcements. Sign up on <https://www.shutesbury.org/announcement-list>

How LifePath and FRCOG's Regional Action Plan Is Improving Our Community for Older Adults

by Gary Yuhas, MBA,
Executive Director of LifePath

Have you been or known an older adult who could not find transportation to a medical appointment? Or who needed to find an affordable place to live? How about someone (or yourself) who is having trouble getting to the grocery store, cooking meals, or feels like they could experience a fall or other medical event and no one would know? Perhaps you or someone you know is feeling too isolated? These, and many other challenges in our area, are what LifePath and Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)'s *Age- and Dementia-Friendly Franklin County and North Quabbin Regional Action Plan 2024-2028* was created to address. (You can find it on the LifePath website, lifepathma.org.)

As our communities change and age, national and state models are guiding the work of analyzing needs and setting regional priorities. FRCOG and LifePath partnered to conduct a regional needs assessment for older adults in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region. The survey's final report was issued in fall of 2022 followed by communities discussing their towns' findings and how to act on recommendations.

Based on the survey data and community conversations, LifePath and FRCOG led a steering committee and workgroups to develop the Action Plan. The plan provides an outline to

address goals organized by AARP "livability domains." Livability domains are ways to divide necessary work into segments around social drivers of health. These eight domains are Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Communication and Information, Civic Participation and Employment, Respect and Social Inclusion, Health Services and Community Supports, and Social Participation.

The incredible amount of work by the participating residents and agencies that went into creating the Plan is only the beginning. Neither LifePath, nor FRCOG, nor our area's communities can tackle these needs alone. One of the most wonderful characteristics of our area is the rich tapestry of organizations, foundations, agencies, providers and others who are all working together in ways big and small to support our residents. The domains each have their own goals, action steps, leads, prospective partners and resources, success measurements, and time frames.

LifePath is taking the lead on 12 action steps in seven of the eight domains. LifePath's action steps include increasing neighbor-to-neighbor transportation programs in communities, enhancing our HomeShare program, providing education about age-friendly building for tradespeople, supporting home safety and home repair programs, increasing intergenerational connections, increasing use of our Phone Pal program, supporting the growth of community-based Village initiatives to complement

LifePath, cont. on pg. 10

LifePath, cont. from pg. 9

senior centers, engaging residents in preventing elder abuse and encouraging its reporting, encouraging towns to implement senior tax workoff programs, assisting towns in developing and identifying resources to share information, advocating for primary care practices to provide support for patient portals and telehealth services, and increasing access to healthcare navigators and medical advocates.

This list is lengthy, daunting, and by no means exhaustive. It is also incredibly ambitious. It shows the many considerations that must be considered in our communities, and all of the work that needs to be done. Can we do it all? We know we can, with a lot of support. That support will come from our dedicated, devoted, and talented team members and volunteer corps. We will also lean on community partners, and they will lean on us. We will engage with our legislative representatives, who work tirelessly to support our communities. We will work with community leadership. And we will rely on support from individuals in our communities.

How can we be so confident that we can make a difference in all of these

domains? Because we, and others, are already doing important and essential work in many of them! The rural nature of our area has crafted, over many years, an awareness that neighbors need to care for one another.

One shining example of work already being done is our Phone Pals program. This program matches volunteers with older adults for weekly phone calls. This is a volunteer-staffed program, overseen by LifePath team members who work to match folks based on their interests.

Phone Pals is an opportunity for individuals of all ages and abilities to become volunteers. You don't even have to leave your home to provide this connection to someone in your community. Many of our volunteers report that they enjoy it just as much or more than the person receiving the service!

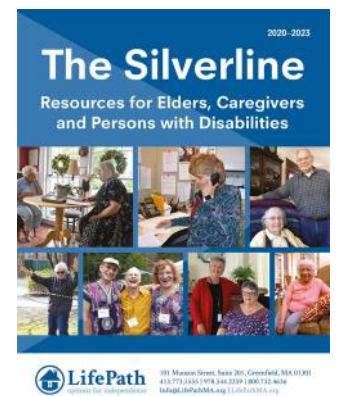
Home Safety is another active LifePath program. Home Safety provides modifications that allow individuals who wish to age in their own homes to do so more safely. This program is also overseen by a LifePath employee, who works with a team of volunteers. Volunteers of all experience levels are

LifePath, cont. on pg. 11

LifePath is Shutesbury's Agency on Aging.

Its website, lifepathma.org, is full of great information. Sign up there to have LifePath's weekly e-newsletter, *The Good Life*, delivered to your inbox. You can also access *The Silverline*, LifePath's local resource directory, on

the website to read or to download as a PDF. To request a printed copy, call LifePath's Information and Caregiver Resource Center, 413-773-5555.



LifePath, cont. from pg. 10

welcome in this program!

For those enrolled in LifePath's Home Care program, the Rides for Health program provides transportation to health-related appointments. Specially-trained volunteers assist individuals into their automobile, drive the individual to their appointment, and then drive them back home. This program is currently seeking volunteers willing to use their own cars. Training is provided and mileage is reimbursed.

Services from the Shutesbury Council on Aging

Although the COA's pre-COVID monthly Foot Clinics in the Senior Lounge at Town Hall remain on hold, **appointments in your home** can be scheduled by phoning FootCare By Nurses, LLC. Call 413-367-8369. Let them know you are part of the Shutesbury COA's foot care program. The COA suggests clients donate toward the visit's cost; state grant funds will cover the balance.

Options to our former Med-Ride service

Since the start of COVID-19, the Shutesbury COA's free transportation program to medical and dental appointments has been suspended. **Village Neighbors**, however, has an active transportation program. See page 12.

Another ride program, by **Franklin**

Regional Transit Authority, is limited to medical rides outside Franklin County. Volunteers who have completed a vetting process with the FRTA provide transportation using their own vehicles.

To schedule a ride with the FRTA, call during regular business hours 413-774-2262, or 888-301-2262, and dial 0 for a representative.

Free learning and fitness opportunities

In October, the COA and the M.N. Spear Library sponsored two learning sessions downstairs at Town Hall: *Using Your Smart Phone Smarter* by Library Consultant Barbara Freidman.

This was the COA's *first indoor gathering since the start of the pandemic!* Ten Shutesbury seniors turned out to learn more about their iPhone or Android devices. Many expressed interest in another class — and we listened!

See pg. 1 for news about another smartphone workshop on Friday, May 3! Space limited. Register soon!

As safety permits, we'd love to offer more fun indoor events. Please email coa@shutesbury.org or leave a message at 413-259-3796 if you'd be interested in additional workshops or social gatherings. Send us your ideas!

Meanwhile, visit the M. N. Spear Library website, mnspear.org, email spearlibrary@shutesbury.org, or call 413-259-1213 for information about **classes, passes and fitness programs (virtual and in-person)** funded by the library, the Friends of the Library, and the **Shutesbury Council on Aging**.



Shutesbury Council on Aging
P.O. Box #276
Shutesbury MA 01072

Prsrt Std
US Postage
PAID
Permit 183
Greenfield MA

Check out Village Neighbors!

Village Neighbors is a volunteer-run nonprofit helping people over age 60 have high-quality, independent lives in Shutesbury and adjacent towns. Membership is free.

Village Neighbors offers rides to medical appointments, grocery stores or meal sites; makes simple home repairs; and provides other free services and activities. Village Neighbors invites you to become a member or a volunteer!

Call 413-345-6894. Or e-mail:
membership@villageneighbors.org
or
volunteers@villageneighbors.org

The Shutesbury Council on Aging

Martha Favre, Chair
Susan Millinger, Secretary
Janis Gray
Jeannette Stockton

Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil,
Honorary Member

Meetings are the second Wednesday
of the month at 5:30pm on Zoom.

Phone 413-259-3796
Email coa@shutesbury.org
P.O. Box 276
Shutesbury, MA 01072