

COUNCIL ON AGING - ANNUAL REPORT

The Hudson Council on Aging respectfully submits its Annual Report for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009.

The Council on Aging is a nine member Board appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Board maintains an office at the Hudson Senior Center at 29 Church Street. Duties of the Board who meet the first Wednesday of the month include supervision of the building, activities held and the programs instituted for the elderly in Hudson. There are approximately 3,000 elderly (60+) in our community and all are encouraged to participate and avail themselves of services available. It is the mission of the Council on Aging to evaluate, promote and encourage new and existing activities and services that enhance the quality of life for elders in the Town of Hudson.

The Hudson Senior Center started its renovation and addition project in December 2008. The Selectman and Mr. Blazar, Executive Assistant, graciously invited the senior center staff to move to Town Hall during the renovation period. We did have some concerns that our move would have a negative impact on senior attendance, but fortunately, that has not been the case. Our Social Service Department had another outstanding year with a 125% increase in Hudson seniors being served thanks to the hard work and dedication of Renee Grenier and Ana Salomao.

Some highlights of FY09 would include our second annual "Health Information Forum" presented entirely in Portuguese. Over 70 Portuguese seniors attended this event. Topics presented included Depression, Voices against Violence, Medicare and low income subsidy programs, Diabetes and Bone Density Screening. Breakfast, lunch & entertainment were part of this free event. This event was sponsored by Metro West Health Care Foundation and SHINE program.

We received an incentive grant from Executive Office of Elder Affairs for a program addressing the barriers that prevent seniors from accessing mental health resources in the community. This was a collaborative effort that included the Hudson Senior Center, MA Association of Older Americans and Advocates Community counseling. This event was well attended by 90 people. The program addressed the issues of stigma associated with mental health and stressed the importance of early detection and seeking help for depression.

A Hudson resident, Rose Pichler RN and Janice Long were trained in the Stanford University's Chronic Disease Self Management program and successfully taught (3) six week classes. We marveled at the change in peoples attitudes while taking this class. Learning how to better manage ones life with a chronic illness has a positive impact on the quality of ones life. We are happy to be part of this program.

Our new overnight trips are organized by Marie Esteves, Administrative Secretary, and have been well received by the community. Marie manages all her responsibilities with the utmost respect and kindness to all who call or come to our center.

We would like to thank Hudson High School for the use of their computer lab. John Greelis and George Champaigne successfully taught two semesters of Computer I, II and Advanced computer classes. The computer lab offered the hands on training necessary to accomplish the goals of the class. Approximately 80 seniors participated in this educational opportunity.

There has been revitalization with the Hudson Friend's Organization. We have seen a dramatic increase in the attendance of the Friend's meetings, resulting in more seniors getting involved with activities and fund raising for our new senior center. People are really working together and seeing the positive results of their work.

We have gone through a lot of changes this past year. However, with the continued positive attitude of staff and seniors, a new sense of spirit, and a strong sense of team work is evident. We would like to thank our Hudson Town Hall employees who kindly gave up their space and offices for the senior center staff and "Friends".

STAFF

Our Senior Center has a remarkable staff consisting of; a Director, Administrative Secretary, Social Service Advocate (Outreach), and Bus Driver, all full time and funded by the Town of Hudson. We have added a part time Bi-Lingual Social Service Advocate who works 14 hours a week serving our Portuguese population. The success of this new position is seen by the significant increase in Portuguese seniors utilizing our center, something we are very proud of. This position is paid by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs State Formula Grant. Our center also has a nutrition site manager who oversees the Meals on Wheels Programs funded by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and BayPath Elder Services.

SERVICES

SOCIAL SERVICE ADVOCATE/OUTREACH: Health insurance, prescription drug plans, Medicare, public and private benefits continue to be a quandary for many seniors. The Director and both Social Service Advocates are SHINE Certified, (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) and are capable and willing to help anyone who calls for assistance. In addition, home visits are made and needs assessments are formulated as staff work to help the elder remain in their own homes. Community Case management along with SHINE appointments increased another 125% from last year, serving 1717 duplicated / 894 unduplicated case management and health insurance appointments for FY 2009. **FUEL ASSISTANCE:** Applications for this program are taken in the Senior Center for **all age groups in our community**. We experienced a 44% increase from last year in fuel assistance applications. **FOOD STAMP APPLICATIONS:** Applications for this program increased 141% in FY09.

TRANSPORTATION: We have two vehicles. One is an 8 passenger van with a wheelchair lift, and a 14 passenger van; a very generous gift from the late Gertrude Spinney. Any Senior (55+) needing transportation for medical appointments, shopping, banking, etc between Hudson and Marlboro may call the center the day before to schedule your appointment. We also provide transportation for seniors to visit loved ones in nearby nursing homes.

NUTRITION PROGRAM: Our Meals on Wheels program was moved to the First United Methodist Church in December of 2008. We would like to thank them for housing this most important senior program during our renovation period. This outstanding program, overseen by a site nutrition manager and many wonderful volunteers, delivered 11,071 meals to seniors confined to their homes, and 918 meals were served between the Senior Center and the First United Methodist Church in Hudson.

TAX WORK OFF PROGRAM: Money was appropriated at Town Meeting to the help elderly pay real estate taxes. Seniors work 100 hours in various town departments to earn a maximum of \$500 to help pay taxes.

This past year we have seen significant growth in other areas as well. Through our community education programs, fitness/exercise, professional services, recreation/socialization programs, support services, volunteer opportunities and wellness programs we served 1376 individual people, a 16% increase for a grand total of 19,270 duplicated visits or participation in the programs/events mentioned above.

FRIENDS OF THE HUDSON SENIOR CENTER, INC.

Through fundraising events, raffles, and donations, the "Friends" pay for postage, some renovations, and special meals/events. In FY09 the Friends have been very active and successful in raising money for our Senior Center Building Project.

The Board Members of the Council on Aging are most grateful to the "Friends of the Hudson Senior Center" who have provided financial support and encouragement over the past 29 years. Their hard work continues to support the senior center staff in their efforts to serve the Hudson senior population in the best way possible. We are fortunate to have them.

The Council on Aging wishes to "Thank" not only the Board of Selectmen, Executive Assistant and Finance Committee for their continued support each year, but also the Town of Hudson for supporting the Senior Center Renovation and Addition Project.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald White, Chairman
Mary Saaristo, Vice Chair
Nina Smith, Treasurer
Melissa Esteves, Secretary
Glenna Karvoski

Ralph Barry
Anthony Monteiro
Justin Provencher
Dorothy McDonald

Janice Long, Director