

The Shoreline

October 2021

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.
Choices for a life-long journey



Get online with free computer, training program



Want to get online but need a computer or related training? Our new program provides individuals with a free tablet computer, training, and internet services through a partnership with [Fidelity House](#) of Haverhill.

The Digital Access Program is designed to bridge the digital divide between those who can access the online world and those who cannot. Participants receive a tablet

computer, a data package if needed, and in-person training about using the computer and the internet—free of charge. This program is made possible with funding from the NiSource Charitable Foundation Fund for Merrimack Valley and The George C. Wadleigh Foundation, Inc.

The program is open to anyone, regardless of age or skill level, who wants digital training. Residents of Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover—the communities affected by the 2018 Columbia Gas explosion—are especially encouraged to apply.

Training is customized to fit individuals and their needs, varying from internet basics to social media or learning about advanced features of Zoom. If participants need a data plan/wi-fi access, the program pays those fees for up to one year. If, after six months, they are using the tablet to engage successfully online, it becomes theirs at no cost.

To learn more or apply for the program, contact Community Outreach Program Manager Nandi Munson at nmunson@esmv.org or call 978-946-1380.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Join
our
Team

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 NORTH SHORE
ELDER SERVICES

VIRTUAL
HIRING
EVENT

WE'RE HIRING!

**Virtual Hiring Event
Wednesday, November 3
10 a.m. to 12 noon.**

**Sign up now for a
15-minute interview
with our recruiters.**

Interested in having a job that makes a difference, at an innovative agency that helps your community? [Sign up today via Eventbrite](#) to schedule a 15-minute interview with a member of our recruiting team.

These interviews will take place via Zoom on Wednesday, November 3 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Register now to reserve your interview time slot.

Find out about a variety of positions available in case management, nursing, human services, administration, and more. Applicants who are bilingual in Spanish or Khmer are encouraged to apply.

Sign up for help with Medicare Open Enrollment



Are you turning 65? Over 65 and considering retirement? Sign up now for a free Medicare information session, and explore your healthcare options and learn what you need to know about Medicare.

Sessions are still available. At the Zoom session, you will learn about:

- The enrollment process and the timeline for Medicare-related plans
- Navigating your way through the complex Medicare health insurance system
- Medicare options and what may be best for you

- How to compare your costs and benefit options
- Medicare Savings Programs to assist with Medicare costs and premiums

A SHINE counselor will be available for a Q & A session immediately following the seminar. [Registration is required by following this link.](#) You will receive a confirmation email with link to join the meeting.

Turn to Healthy IDEAS for help with depression

Many of us feel we are experiencing difficult times. Sometimes we have days when it seems things get to us and inspiration and motivation dry up. But when people have depression, it interferes with their daily life and normal functioning.

October is National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month, when we seek to raise awareness about depression—how this is a common but serious illness that is also highly treatable.



In her latest "Ask Joan" column, Elder Services' CEO Joan Hatem-Roy talks about our Healthy Living Center of Excellence's free program, Healthy IDEAS, which is designed to aid older adults confronting this issue. Healthy IDEAS stands for Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors, and is an evidence-based program that integrates depression awareness and management into the care management services consumers are receiving.

[Click here](#) to learn more about depression treatment and Healthy IDEAS.

Comfort pets provide companionship to adults



Bernadette Cary, 87, at left, lives at the Sutton Home for Women in Peabody, with her stuffed dog, "Puppy." It looks like a typical plush toy: golden, roughly a foot high, with an expression that suggests affection or anticipation. Then, abruptly, the dog comes "alive." It opens its mouth to reveal a pink tongue and pants, wiggles, and murmurs with contentment in response to being patted.

The dog is an electronic comfort pet, a highly interactive robot that turns toward the sound of a human voice and even emits a gentle heartbeat.

The pet, manufactured by Joy for All, was presented to Bernadette through Elder

Services' Home Care program. Taking the form of a dog or a cat, comfort pets simulate the movements, sounds, and reactions of an actual animal. These products are highly effective in soothing those with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, people like Bernadette.

Electronic comfort pets are an option for eligible consumers receiving our Home Care services. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs introduced the comfort pet program in January of this year, in part to address older adults' loneliness and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Home Care program plans to expand the program, and the pets have been used in our Family Caregiver program as well. [Read the rest of the story and learn more.](#)

Employees honored during Years of Service event

Today, we took time to celebrate and thank our amazing staff during our annual Years of Service ceremony.

During this occasion, we recognized everyone's hard work and highlighted the milestone anniversaries of more than 50 long-serving employees.

"Congratulations for your years of service, and all of your individual contributions to our exceptional organization," said Elder Services' Board President Michael Rurak. "I also want to take this opportunity to personally thank everyone for making this organization so successful and resilient."

Chief Executive Office Joan Hatem-Roy and members of our leadership team gave heartfelt tributes to our honorees. [View the full list here.](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

November-December: There is still time to register! If clutter is affecting your home, work, or relationships, we can help. **The DeClutterer's Group**, run by the North Shore Center for Hoarding and Cluttering, is holding two 8-week sessions, beginning Tuesdays, on November 2, and Wednesdays, on November 3. For more information, contact Karen Sullivan, 978-624-2257 or ksullivan@nselder.org

Now through November 4: [A Matter of Balance Workshop, 1- 3 p.m.](#) - Designed to help older adults at risk of falling. Participants learn techniques to increase strength, balance, and flexibility and gain the confidence they need to stay active. For more information, contact Molly at 978-651-3033 or mgerbutavich@esmv.org. To register, call 978-946-1211 or [register online](#)

Now through December 29: Are you turning 65? Over 65 and considering retirement? Explore your Medicare options during one of [SHINE's virtual Introduction to Medicare Informational Sessions](#) and learn about your options from trained SHINE volunteers. Sessions are Mondays, at 10-11:30 a.m., and Wednesdays from 6-7:30 p.m. Registration is required.

Elder Services helps more than 40,000 individuals across 28 cities and towns every year. Please consider [making an online donation](#) to support our programs.

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore

**Website: esmv.org
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