

# The Shoreline

September 2020

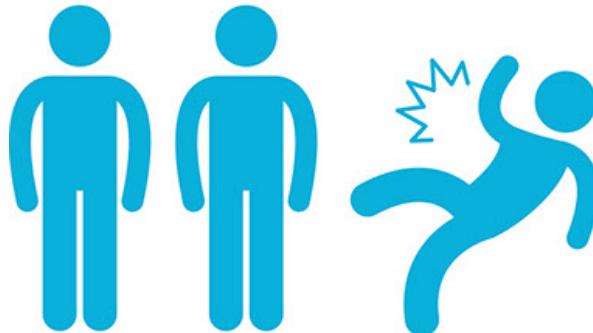


## Events & Volunteer Opportunities

### Falls Prevention Awareness Week is September 21-25

COVID-19 has changed a lot of things, but one has stayed the same: Falling is NOT a normal part of aging.

We are part of a nationwide effort this week to prevent falls. Use the [new #FallsFree online CheckUp tool](#) from the National Council on Aging to get a personalized look at your risk factors and how to address them. Then spread the word to friends and family. It's a nice way to reach out and show you care.



### Falls Prevention Goes Remote in Pilot Program

The pandemic has changed a lot of things. One thing that's still the same? Falls can be prevented.

One in four older adults falls every year, and falls are a leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries. Falls threaten seniors' safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs.

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore has launched the first-of-its kind virtual version of the popular It's a Matter of Balance (MOB) program to reduce the risk of falls.



### This Magic Moment Memory Cafe

Register today for this fun and engaging virtual series and a make new friends. Memory Cafes are a judgement free zone for those with memory loss and their caregivers. [Click here to learn more](#)

The four-week MOB remote workshop is led by trained coaches over Zoom. The program's goal is to reduce the fear of falling by emphasizing practical coping strategies and increase activity levels and confidence among older adults. Methuen resident Yvonne Paplaskas, 72, has gone through the program three times, twice in person and most recently via Zoom.

"I have a knack of falling and had fallen at work three times and three times at my previous job," Paplaskas said. "But I often fall, and I am not tripping over anything – I would just lose my balance."

Paplaskas got tips about how to get up off the floor should she fall and that is what makes the class valuable to her –



she gets solutions and different ways to think about situations.

"I took it again because I felt like I needed some reinforcements," she said. "It makes me more conscious of being more careful, and I really do enjoy it."

Virtual MOB workshops are being held this month and through October.

[Click here for more information about Matter of Balance and this pilot program.](#)

## Seeking Volunteer Drivers

You can make a difference in someone's life when you become a **Meals On Wheels driver**.

There is a critical need for volunteers to deliver these nutritious meals to home-bound seniors. This is a great way to give back and help isolated adults stay healthy.

**Interested? Email [nutrition@esmv.org](mailto:nutrition@esmv.org) or call 978-686-1422**

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## Grant Award Expands Services for Massachusetts Alzheimer's and Dementia Caretakers

With more than 138,000 older adults in Massachusetts with Alzheimer's Disease or related dementias, the need for trained caregivers has never been greater.



Thanks to a new grant award, we will be able to expand our services in caring for this population and its caregivers. We were one of only a dozen organizations in the country and the only one in the Commonwealth to receive an Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative grant from the federal Administration for Community Living. The award is for a total of \$854,147 over a three-year project period. [Learn more here.](#)

# Community Outreach & Services

## Elder Farm Markets

Recently featured in [Haverhill Life](#), our Elder Community Market Program brings fresh fruits and vegetables to senior housing sites and centers through the growing season.

The program, which operates in Haverhill, Lowell and Methuen, is just one of the ways we make sure older adults have access to nutritious food and address food insecurity issues. This year, Chris's Farm in Haverhill is supplying our produce for 350 people at eight local residential sites through October.



For more information, contact us at [978-686-1422](tel:978-686-1422) or [nutrition@esmv.org](mailto:nutrition@esmv.org)



## Thank You to All Essential Workers

During Massachusetts Emergency Preparedness Month, we say **THANK YOU** to all essential workers. We are grateful for our employees, partners, and all of those who have done so much during the pandemic and continue to perform this critical work every day.

## Avoid Medicare Scams & Fraud

Concerned about scams targeting older adults? Worried about Medicare fraud? **There is free help.** The Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program is designed to provide education and resources on how to address healthcare errors, fraud and abuse for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, family members, caregivers, and professionals. The Patrol also provides information on the latest scams targeting seniors. [Visit MA SMP to learn more.](#)



## Volunteer Spotlight: Steve Bellmont

After six months of retirement, Steve Bellmont of Lynnfield had a desire to continue contributing to a cause. He discovered our Friendly Visitor/Shopper program and thought it would be a good match for his skills and interests.

Five years later, Steve is known as the program's "step up" volunteer because Diane Kessler, the Home Care Support Coordinator, knows whenever she needs someone to step up, she can count on him.



"Steve's dedication is superb," she says. "He goes above and beyond for our seniors whenever he can and thinks nothing of it."

Friendly visitor/shoppers provide companionship and assistance to older adults who may be isolated by visiting them in their homes or participating in activities.

Over the years, Steve has worked with many seniors as a grocery shopper as well as a regular point of contact. Most of the people he works with live alone and are without family support.

"Getting old can be stressful," he says, "but it can be more so without a good support system backing you up."

Steve fondly recalls a husband and wife team he met through the program. She had health issues and was the primary caregiver for her husband, who had dementia. She hoped to find someone who could visit with him and play cribbage with her. Steve was happy to help.

"I connected immediately with him," Steve says. "I found out he had a love of jazz, and I shared that interest with him. We were able to relate to that topic and enjoyed listening to music together."

Our agency depends on volunteers like Steve to recognize any issues and keep us informed of the well-being of our seniors.

As for Steve, he recommends others get involved with volunteering. "I have met some interesting people along the way," he says. "I like to think that both the seniors and I have benefited by working together."

**To volunteer:** Call 978-651-3128 or email [volunteerprograms@esmv.org](mailto:volunteerprograms@esmv.org)

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*Elder Services helps more than 38,000 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**  
[www.esmv.org](http://www.esmv.org)  
800-892-0890 or [info@esmv.org](mailto:info@esmv.org)

