Scituate Council on Aging Board of Directors Meeting

Scituate Senior Center, 333 First Parish Road

February 10, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

In attendance: J.D. Miller, Chair; Susan Drevitch Kelly, Vice-Chair; Linda Hayes, Senior Center Director; Marie Fricker, Board member; Laurie Brady, Board member; Deirdra Dwyer, Board Member; Pat Carleton, Board member; Leslie James, Board member, and FOSS liaison Elaine Schembari.

The meeting began with a report from staff guest Jill Johnston, the recently-hired office administrator for the Senior Center. Jill is responsible for data entry, backup for other staff, and has a direct line to the reception area. Among a myriad of other tasks, she oversees lunch reservations, maintains rosters, and records the payments for all center programs.

“She is, in effect, the ‘Jill of All Trades,’ said Linda Hayes, thanking her for her hard work and dedication to the seniors of Scituate.

**Report from the Director**

Linda stated that the volume of guests at the senior center continues to grow, particularly in the fitness and exercise program area. But numbers of participants across the board have dipped slightly in January, possibly due to weather conditions or the “snowbird” syndrome of residents leaving for the winter months.

Neil Sullivan, an exercise physiologist who had worked at Spaulding Rehabilitation Center and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has been hired to administer fitness programs. Linda said the intent was for Neil to replace the senior center’s Joint Efforts class at 9:30 a.m. on Mondays. He will offer low impact, gentle exercise for older individuals with arthritis, aching joints, hip and knee replacements or other low mobility conditions.

Linda is hoping Neil will develop a class that would appeal more to men and contain more active/strength building and circuit training.

The lunch program continues to thrive with most seats taken at every meal. Linda reported that the kitchen crew (assistants, servers and dishwashers) has become a “well-oiled machine” of dedicated volunteers and staff. A part-time food service worker has been hired as an assistant to the Chef.

Approximately 50 people are served lunch each day, with about 35 people signing up for Tuesday soup and sandwich. On Fridays, seniors enjoy the option to take out soup and sandwiches and other leftover goodies from the week. Lunch has also become part of the bi-monthly grief support group led by Susan Kelly, of Bob Jackman’s weekly history classes and after the monthly art lectures, Art for the Mind.

**Upcoming Special Events**

A Valentines Day Sock Hop is scheduled to take place at the center on February 14 at 1 p.m.

Players in the game room are marking their calendars for February 25 at 10 a.m. for the center’s Pool Tournament.

The walls of the center will be adorned with the artwork of Gates Middle School students in March, followed by an exhibit from Scituate High School artists in April. A reception for the first exhibit is planned for March 22.

As spring is in the air, a new Garden Series will be hosted by Sally Rossi Ormon, a retired educator from Holly Hill Farm.

A new Café Talk is also being planned on the topic of Mental Health Matters – How can we take care of our mental health as we age?

Outreach coordinator Erin LaMonte is developing a targeted “Outreach” branch of the center’s volunteer program to help seniors with rides around town, light chores, and friendly visits.

New accessories to the center will include a commemorative plaque thanking those who helped in making the building a reality, a directory, and a bulletin board.

Linda reported that the center was open on the day after the January storm to serve as a warming station, but very few residents in town lost power in their homes.

She also mentioned that there has been a surge of interest in the Senior Tax Work-off program, which had been mentioned on WATD. The volunteer program has been increased to 30 participants.

The senior center’s state-of-the-art new van (bedecked in shamrocks) will be driving in the town’s upcoming St. Patrick’s Day Parade. A St. Patrick’s Day luncheon on March 17 will feature a traditional boiled dinner.

Linda presented a transportation report, prepared by Lillian Cruz, detailing how many rides were provided in the winter months. January showed an increase in in-town medical appointments, but a decrease in COA out-of-town medical appointments. Local ridership remains up, but the number of clients stays steady at 48-50. There were 219 total rides provided in January and 18 contracted out to SSCAC.

Among the most widely attended activities at the senior center in January were the Men’s Breakfasts, Balance for Life, Lift Your Spirits; Art for Your Mind; Chair Yoga with Elizabeth; Bob Jackman’s classes; Zumba; Hand Foot Card Game; Line Dancing, Spanish class; and the ever-popular daily lunch program.

Seniors are currently booking appointments with the AARP tax preparation volunteers who visit the center on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Report from FOSS Liaison Elaine Schembari**

Elaine Schembari reported that FOSS has elected a new treasurer, Andrea Stafford. The group is currently planning an interesting event – “An Afternoon with Julia Child.” It is a theater production from the North Shore, and will be held at the senior center on April 12 at 1:00 p.m. FOSS will provide the pastries, and the center will offer the coffee and tea. Tickets are $10, and attendance is limited to 70 people.

“It’s so awesome that we can now plan these functions and have them right here,” said Elaine, who will now serve as the Vice-President of FOSS.

Linda and J.D. Miller both mentioned grant opportunities that are available from the Scituate Education Foundation, the Rotary Club and the AARP Community Challenge Group.

Anyone with an idea that could translate into an opportunity for the center, should notify Linda, as she expects to apply for a Cultural Council Grant in October.

The February meeting ended with a surprise for Board members, who were presented with handmade Valentine cards from fifth grade students at the Wampatuck School. Kudos to the children for making our day.

The next meeting of the Scituate Council on Aging will take place at the Senior Center on Thursday, March 10, 2022.