

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON AGING

The Weston Council on Aging serves Weston residents 60 years of age and older. Our mission is to foster a caring concern within the community for seniors; encourage community wide support of and participation in senior affairs; advocate for seniors and their families; serve as an information and referral center; develop and offer programs of interest to Weston seniors and to effect programs in conjunction with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Older Americans Act. Our annual report for 2007 will highlight our progress in fulfilling this mission.

#### Overview

The Council on Aging is comprised of three full time staff positions, a part-time nurse and a part-time volunteer coordinator. Staff includes Eileen Bogle as Director and Candace Steingisser as Social Outreach Worker. Sandra Coburn, Leila Hewitt and Frances Kelly share the Administrative Assistant position. Leila also works as our Volunteer Coordinator, a new part-time position funded by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Theresa Levinson and Jean Masland shared the nurse position in 2007. We are sorry that Jean resigned in November. Jane Brown, Public Health Nurse, will be collaborating with Theresa a few hours each week starting in January 2008.

One hundred eighty four volunteers support the Council on Aging in many critical ways. Positions include front desk volunteers, home delivered meals drivers, Keep Well Clinic volunteers, dining programs volunteers, friendly visitors, newsletter volunteers, office support, trip volunteers, school volunteers, class instructors and leaders, walking group leaders and SHINE counselors. Volunteers and staff coordinate many integral programs such as FISH transportation, the Rotary Fix-it program, the Senior Work program, and income tax preparation assistance. In 2007, more than 7833 volunteer hours were documented, an increase of 12% from 2006.

The Council on Aging Board is dedicated to the accomplishment of our mission. Board and staff collaboration produced a brochure that was mailed to Weston households in the fall of 2007. The Community Connection Committee of the COA Board undertook an assessment of the relationship between the community at large and the Council on Aging. Focus groups were convened with knowledgeable groups and individuals. The findings of this study provide a framework for future planning. One outcome is the development of a survey that will be mailed to Weston residents, 60 years of age and older, to establish a baseline of information about transportation needs. Results will be incorporated into a transportation plan for the future.

We are very grateful for the support of the Friends of the Council on Aging whose generosity supports the mailing of our monthly newsletter, and the delivery of COA programs while serving as a resource for living healthy and active lives. In 2007, the Friends were involved with fundraising efforts to support the costs of a replacement Friendship Bus.

#### Information, Referral and Outreach

Our busiest components are information, referral and social service outreach. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Council on Aging responded to 5857 requests for information. Requests for information comprise several categories: general requests for information about programs and community resources and more detailed inquiries relating to strategies for remaining independent in one's home. These matters are referred to our social worker, Candace Steingisser, a licensed

independent clinical social worker with a background in counseling and geriatric care management. In Massachusetts, elder care and caregiver services are delivered through a complex mix of non-profit and for-profit agencies and organizations. Our social worker is most frequently the first step in helping individuals and families assess needs and finding services. In 2007, 749 residents and their families benefited from her knowledge and expertise. Also benefiting from Candy's expertise are graduate level social work students placed at the COA.

Outreach to residents has another component that focuses on support to caregivers. Our volunteer support group specialists, Shirley Earle and Emily Hutchinson, facilitate two groups each month for caregivers of Alzheimer's and related dementia individuals.

Our outreach efforts also include monthly meetings with the Police and Fire Departments along with the Housing Managers of Brook School Apartments and Merriam Village. The goals of this collaboration are: to identify seniors "at risk" and to discuss emergency preparedness for Weston residents. Our Collaborative has completed 400 surveys to assess risk in the event of an emergency. With the help of the Town's GIS Coordinator we developed an online customizable form that organizes survey data.

Health insurance concerns remained an issue in 2007. We hosted several information sessions on health plan options. Nancy Baer retired after many years of dedicated service as Weston's SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) counselor. Gwen Bronson and Joanne Pratt have come on board to provide continued assistance to Weston seniors and their families with this complex insurance system.

#### Intergenerational Programs

This program continues to succeed in linking students and older residents. Led by members of the intergenerational committee of the Board, programs impact students from grades K-12. Accomplishments include: first grade reading program at both elementary schools with 14 senior volunteers helping emerging readers; third grade oral histories as Weston's older residents discussed third grade in another generation; knitting with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders with members of Project Linus; and intergenerational day in May with seniors in the classrooms at the middle school. New this year, were visits by Second Grade students to the Brook School Apartments.

The high school intergenerational club and Council on Aging hosted carwashes at Brook School Apartments, monthly baking at the Community Center, and Bingo at Merriam Village. In November, Weston High School and the COA honored World War II Veterans as part of our Veterans Day celebration. This first time event was a wonderful tribute to our veterans.

In the winter of 2006, Weston High School student Keith Weisberg initiated a supplemental snow shoveling program for seniors. Now a junior, he remains committed to this program and recruited high student volunteers who shoveled in the winter of 2007. This program is continuing through the winter of 2008.

Soups On!, a community service project initiated by Girl Scout Troop Leaders, brought delicious homemade soups once a month on Wednesdays. Soups, breads and desserts were a mid-day gathering point for many. This tradition continues with a new group of scouts. Residents and the chefs at Norumbega Point have also joined with us to provide soup once a month.

The outstanding collaboration with organizations such as the Country Garden Club, the WCCA, the Scouts, and the Weston Community League contributes to a positive community environment for Weston's residents.

#### Health, Nutrition and Wellness

The Council on Aging nurses oversee the many aspects of our health and wellness programs. Our Friday morning Keep Well Clinics offer blood pressure, hearing and vision screenings. In 2007, 796 screenings were provided. Our nurses work with our social worker to assist in assessment and care management recommendations. In the fall of 2007, we hosted two Regis College nursing students whose community service project was organized by Theresa Levinson.

Nurse responsibilities also include the coordination of our Health Education Lecture Series. In 2007, we presented 20 lectures on topics including: cardiac issues, knee replacement, shoulder issues, bladder concerns, feet, insomnia, gums and teeth, hearing loss, stroke, transfat, and Alzheimer's disease.

The medical equipment loan closet is another valuable community resource that continues to be very popular. In 2007, utilization increased by 15 %.

Complementing Soups On! and intergenerational baking, there are three nutrition- related programs. On Mondays, Springwell hosts a dining program at Brook School Apartments and on Fridays the Food Services program of Weston Public Schools, provides a Friday lunch. Our Friday lunch program combines guest speakers, a lecture and the Keep Well Clinic. The third program benefits older persons in need of in-home support of home delivered meals provided by Springwell five days per week. Delivered by our wonderful and dedicated volunteers, the program is also supported by community groups who provide festive holiday decorations, paper white bulbs and delicious baked goods.

The Land Sake Farm produce donation program of fresh vegetables is a welcome weekly event during the summer months. And last, but not least, is the food pantry that is available to Weston residents. We are very grateful for the many donors who support the pantry throughout the year.

#### Fitness

The COA fitness programs target aerobic fitness, balance, strength and flexibility training. Using modalities of yoga, tai chi, walking and line dancing, hundreds of Weston residents participate in our various classes. With funding from Springwell, we added a fitness class two days per week for older adults new to exercise or looking to achieve personal goals of healthier aging. The walking group, led by Rebecca Rosen Horn, walks twice a week in the fall and spring using trails around town as well as more challenging excursions to state parks and Castle Island.

#### Education and Community Service

We planned and coordinated a wide array of exciting, stimulating instructional classes, programs and lectures. Selections include computer tutor, Spanish, art and watercolor, classes on EBay, and bridge lessons. The Short Story group shared dozens of stories and Susan Brennan, director of the Library read and discussed 8 books during the year. The Project Linus afghan knitting group met twice each month to share knitting expertise. In the first six years of operation, knitters donated 1016 afghans to area hospitals. In 2007, we offered several new classes on topics such as calligraphy and sudoku. More than 650 participated in these programs with new programs being planned for 2008.

### Transportation

Transportation is provided in several ways. Weston FISH (Friends in Service Helping) recruits volunteers to assist with transportation to medical appointments. FISH callers and drivers worked with Cindy Mosher, program coordinator, to provide 330 rides for 60 Weston seniors, an increase of 2% from the prior year. Transportation within Weston and adjoining communities is provided with subsidized taxi coupons. 587 rides were provided. Our Friendship Bus provided weekly shopping trips to grocery stores and pharmacies as well as transportation to the symphony and theater. COA trips have traveled to New York City, Block Island, Providence, Lake Winnepesaukee, the New England quilt museum, and the Institute of Contemporary Art. The participation for our 2007 trips had increased by 58%.

### Appreciation

It is through the dedicated and generous efforts of the many individuals and community groups that we were able to continue to expand and strengthen the Weston Council on Aging in 2007. Through this collaboration, we now better respond to the needs of Weston seniors. With this care and support, we will continue to make the Council on Aging, a significant resource for the Weston community.

## **REPORT OF THE ELDERLY HOUSING COMMITTEE**

Brook School Apartment rentals continue at full capacity, with a substantial waiting list of prospective renters. As of the end of December 2007, there are 104 people waiting for the subsidized apartments (representing a two to three-year waiting list) and 38 waiting for market value apartments. In 2006, a victim of the Katrina disaster moved into a market value apartment, fully subsidized by FEMA for one year; she has since moved to permanent out of state housing. The need for affordable housing for the elderly and disabled remains greater than the available supply.

On August 31, Connie Davis retired after nine years as Manager. We wish to welcome Sara Dosamantes as the new Manager. The Committee also welcomes its newest member, Susan Klumpp.

Various capital initiatives such as a keyless entry system, new roof and generator upgrades will be underway. Thank you to the Country Garden Club for maintaining the beautiful flowerpots in the central courtyard area. The second phase of the landscaping initiative, which includes new plantings and fine tuning of the irrigation system, will further enhance the visual appeal of the property and will continue in the spring.

## **REPORT OF THE EAST MIDDLESEX CONTROL PROJECT**

The East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project conducts a program in Weston consisting of mosquito surveillance, larval and adult mosquito control, ditch maintenance and public education.

The risk of mosquito borne disease remained a concern as 5 residents in eastern and central Massachusetts contracted West Nile Virus. Due to dry conditions during the summer, the risk for EEE was low. The area experienced moderate mosquito populations from late spring through mid July and low populations for the remainder of the season.

The adult mosquito surveillance program used traps to collect mosquitoes from 4 Weston locations. Between June and September, information was used from 10 mosquito trap collections. Selected trap collections were tested for EEE and West Nile Virus by the Mass. Dept. of Public Health.

The larval mosquito control program relies on the larvicides *Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis* (Bti) and *Bacillus sphaericus*, which are classified by the EPA as relatively non-toxic. An April helicopter application of Bti controlled mosquito larvae at 250 wetland acres. Field crews using portable sprayers applied Bti in the spring and the summer to 8.5 wetland acres when high densities of mosquito larvae were found breeding in stagnant water. During the summer, Project personnel applied *Bacillus sphaericus* to control *Culex* mosquito larvae at 1,266 roadside catchbasins.

To control adult mosquitoes, Sumithrin was applied to 461 acres at night by truck mounted aerosol sprayers when survey traps indicated high populations of mosquitoes. Advance notification of the spray program was done through notices in the Town Crier, the Project's web site and via a recorded telephone message at (781) 893-5759.

An excavator was used to remove sand, sediment and debris from waterways at various sites in Weston. The following is a list of sites that includes the length of ditch that was maintained: Country School - 1,025 feet, Pine St. - 315 feet, Ridgeway Rd. by the aqueduct - 263 feet, South Ave. near the Natick line - 408 feet, South Ave. near Ridgeway Rd. - 295 feet, Weston High School - 225 feet, Weston Middle School - 613 feet, Westerly Rd. - 270 feet and the Woodland School - 330 feet. A Project crew used hand tools to remove debris at 148 feet of a ditch by South Ave. near the Natick line.

The Project's public education program is designed to develop awareness within the public and the private sectors as to their roles in mosquito control. The Project serves as a resource to residents, municipal officials and the local media on controlling mosquitoes, breeding sites and mosquito borne diseases. A web page [www.town.sudbury.ma.us/services/health/emmcpc](http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/services/health/emmcpc) provides residents with information on mosquitoes, control programs and related topics.

## REPORT OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH

**Board of Health Members** - Nicholas Guerina, MD, PhD; Peter Taylor, PE; Carl Hirsch, MD

**Public Health Director - Appointed by the Board of Health** -- Wendy Diotalevi, RS

Health Agent - Beth Ann Boles, Public Health Nurse- Jane Brown, RN

Administrative Assistant - Sharon Bonica

**Agents to Issue Burial Permits - Appointed by Board of Health**

Wendy Diotalevi, RS

Sharon Bonica

Nick Guerina, MD

Beth Ann Boles, Health Agent

M. Elizabeth Nolan

Peter Taylor, PE

Lisbeth C. Zeytoonjian

Deborah Davenport

Dianne Poole

**Animal Inspectors - Appointed by Board of Health** - David Poirier, Wendy Diotalevi, Beth Ann Boles

### Introduction

The Board of Health (BOH) is responsible for the promotion and protection of public health. This is done through education and enforcement of environmental, public, medical and mental health laws and regulations. The BOH provides enforcement of the State Sanitary Code under the

Department of Public Health and the State Environmental Code under the Department of Environmental Protection.

The State Sanitary Code includes permitting, regulating and inspecting housing, food sales and service, pools, camps, asbestos and lead abatement, surveillance and reporting of communicable disease and animal health.

The State Environmental Code includes permitting and regulating wells, septic systems, ground water and air protection. The Board is committed to providing the highest protection of the public health possible with available resources.

Under the Center for Disease Control, Department of Homeland Security and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) all Local Boards of Health have been called upon to prepare their communities for all natural and manmade disasters. The BOH is finalizing Emergency Plans that will be included in the Town's Emergency Preparedness Plan.

**Public Health**

The BOH provides vaccines to physicians through a vaccine program by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to insure vaccine availability for the members of our community. This year the BOH provided 16,635 doses of vaccine valued at more than \$430,000.

Two flu clinics were held in the fall of the 2007 flu season and over 400 doses of flu vaccine were administered to senior citizens and at risk populations of Weston. The BOH sincerely thanks the Weston Medical Reserve Corps who graciously donated their time and talents to this very successful effort.

Will Cochran, M.D.  
Johanna Harrison  
Dorothea Thomas  
Elly Pendergast

David Kominz, M.D.  
Ruddy Ruggles  
Mark Muello  
Alvin Newstadt

Robin Jones, M.D.  
Sandra Ashley  
Julie Hyde  
Paula Magnanti

In 2007 Weston participated in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health West Nile Virus surveillance program (MADHA). A total of 10 bird deaths were reported, there were no human infections identified in Weston.

The BOH is responsible for ensuring that the health and welfare of farm animals owned by the citizens of Weston meets the standards of care required by law. David Poirier, Animal Inspector, has provided the following as an inventory of the farm animals.

23 Horses	4 Ponies	1 Pigs	29 Sheep	2 Peacocks	1 Donkey
4 Llamas	20 Cattle	84 Chickens	6 Alpaca	3 Goats	

The Animal Inspector also quarantined 7 dogs during the year for animal bites.

**Mental Health**

The BOH provides mental health services to Weston's citizens through contracts with Human Relations Service in Wellesley, the Multi-Service Center in Newton and the Charles River Workshop in Needham.

**Environmental Health**

All residential properties in Weston are served by individual septic systems. Title 5 of the State Environmental Code is a set of regulations established by the State Department of Environmental Protection that sets standards for the design and construction of septic systems. The BOH is responsible for the enforcement of this Code and invests approximately 80% of its staff time in the area of environmental health enforcing Title 5 of the State Environmental Code.

Enforcement of Title 5 consists of the witnessing of percolation and deep test holes, review of septic system plans, and inspection of the installation of new septic systems and wells. Title 5 Inspections of existing septic systems and renovation projects require research of existing files to establish abutting lot and site conditions. Renovation projects are all reviewed to ensure that the proposed work is in compliance with Title 5 of the State Environmental Code.

There are several large complexes that require sewerage treatment plants. These complexes have ground water discharge permits issued through the Department of Environmental Protection. Reports are forwarded to the BOH and are reviewed to establish that the treatment plants are operating within the parameters of the permit.

The Town of Weston is one of 34 communities assigned to Emergency Preparedness Region 4A by the MDPH. The BOH has developed an Emergency Dispensing (EDS) Site Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), arranged for Mutual Aid Agreements and worked with Hospitals for emergency preparedness as part of the deliverable requirement for the CDC Public Health Grant, administered through the MDPH.

A Weston Branch of the Region 4A Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) has been established. At the present time we are 56 members strong and are part of a regional MRC that has over 3000 members from the 34 Region 4A Communities. The Weston MRC reports to the Weston Board of Health, but exists as a part of a network of local, regional, and national organizations dedicated to rapid, safe, and effective crisis response.

As stated in their mission statement the Weston Branch of the Region 4A Medical Reserve Corps exists to strengthen the town's public health infrastructure and improve emergency preparedness. It does this by arranging for the coordination, training, and mobilization of medical and non-medical volunteers to be able to support disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery, emergency medical assistance, and public health outreach.

Emergency Preparedness is a relatively new consideration, primarily mandated by the Department of Homeland Security, the Center for Disease Control, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. National standards for Public Health Emergency Preparedness have been established. Aggressive training programs have been designed and implemented and benchmarks set by these organizations. The Board of Health has invested many man hours over the past four years in planning and training to properly prepare and implement an emergency plan for the community.

**Detail of Regular Services Provided by the BOH**

\* Totals unavailable

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
Septic System Permits	87	130	106
Septic System Plan Reviews	247	201	221
Septic System Inspections/Meetings	487	430	590
Title V Inspection Reports/Reviews	143	258	164
Soil/Percolation Tests Witnessed	478	492	498
Septic System Installer's Licenses	51	52	56
Septic System Installer's Exams	6	4	10
Septic System Pumper/Hauler Permits	28	45	22
Renovation/Addition Permits	155	187	192
Renovation/Addition Permit Review/Meetings	345	285	300
Environmental Investigations	48	25	36
Well Permits/Review/Inspection	5	18	39
Communicable Disease Investigations	68	54	79
Emergency Preparedness Meetings	129	114	76
Community Health and Wellness Meetings/Trainings	96	102	57
Food Service Permits	65	54	48
Food Service Inspections	127	104	92
Camp Permits	15	13	9
Camp Inspections	44	36	25
Commercial/Residential Pool, Hot Tub, Beach Permits	25	25	26
Commercial/Residential Pool, Hot Tub, Beach Inspections	42	39	31
Body Work Permits	3	3	5
Housing Complaint Investigations/Court	17	23	4
Administration Meetings	47	32	43
Training Meetings	42	39	48
Burial Permits	103	76	115
Port-a-John Permits	81	97	69
Phone Calls	7373	6627	6000
Research	3234	3164	3057
Dumpster Permit	44	48	*
Demolition Permit	18	*	*
Livestock Permit	5	*	*
<b>Total Revenue for Calendar Year</b>	<b>\$165,191</b>	<b>\$171,602</b>	<b>\$161,136</b>