

Silver Threads

A column created especially for people spending their golden years in Falmouth, written by these same senior citizens.

“People, people who need people...”

By Kay Paine and Mary Fran Buckley

When planning this September Silver Thread, we hoped it might help to create interest in Neighborhood Falmouth’s big October 6 meeting, when Neighborhood Falmouth invites everyone to come and hear about the benefits of being a member or volunteer. In the August Silver Thread, Jackie Webster wrote a nice piece on how our local organization fits into the national picture of “Villages” that service a growing population of older people who want to remain in their own homes. (If you missed it, you can find it at www.neighborhood.org).

This month we hope to show how Neighborhood Falmouth fits in with some other town wide organizations that provide help and services to Falmouth seniors (and other citizens as well). So here is an introduction to 3 such agencies: The Falmouth Public Library, Falmouth Human Services, and the Council on Aging (which we experience mostly through the Senior Center).

The library is much more than it was when we were young--- and may seem intimidating to someone who hasn’t been using it for many years. With growing living costs and falling incomes, it pays to invest some effort in learning how to borrow books and DVD’s for free.

The library system is one of the town’s great treasures --a beautiful main building in downtown Falmouth supported by active branches in East and North Falmouth, and complemented by privately supported public libraries in West Falmouth and Woods Hole. The library website, www.falmouthpubliclibrary.org , provides times and days each facility is open, as well as information on current happenings and services. Each library has countless activities for all ages: lectures, art shows, reading groups to name just a few. And there is one service we were amazed to learn about—Homebound Delivery! If you love to read but can no longer get out and about, the Falmouth Public Library offers “book delivery for those who cannot get to the library due to a long- or short-term disability.” Contact Laura Wool, the Homebound Librarian at 508-457-2555, extension 2910, for further information and to schedule a delivery to your home. Every three weeks the library will deliver books of your choosing, or provide a selection that is based on your reading interests. If you have a computer, it will pay to learn how to use CLAMS (Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing), www.clamsnet.org . CLAMS is easy and convenient to use, once you know how. You can access any material that’s in any library in the CLAMS network, and that’s all the libraries on the Cape and Islands, and some more off Cape. For help in getting started, contact the library at 508-457-2555.

Falmouth Human Services, based in a building in Town Hall Square, is available to all residents. Since 1975, when Town Meeting voted a nine-member Human Services

Committee and two staff persons, their purpose has been “to assess the human service needs of residents and to provide free counseling to residents and families who might be experiencing problems in daily living.” Priority is given to those who are uninsured or who cannot afford their insurance company’s co-pay. Clinical assessment and counseling services for elders and their families are available by appointment at the Falmouth Senior Center. For more information, contact Falmouth Human Services, 508-548-0533, or e-mail falhuman@falmouthhumanservices.org.

One of the “jewels” in Falmouth’s crown is the **Senior Center** at 300 Dillingham Avenue. Any senior can join, call 508-540-0196, or stop by the center. You can receive a monthly newsletter that will inform you of upcoming activities and events. In addition to numerous activities (cribbage, bridge, poker, scrabble, chess, mah jong, a book club, painting and sewing, a variety of exercise classes), there are interesting day trips (in September and October alone: Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods, the Turkey Train around Lake Winnepesaukee, a musical at the Providence Performing Arts Center, and a tour of the special exhibits at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem). The Senior Center offers support groups and medical assistance in the form of foot care, blood pressure clinics and free hearing aid cleaning and testing, assistance with Medicare options and open enrollment, and extra help with prescriptions through the Shine Program, which serves the health information needs of elders. The Senior Center Bus will take you to your doctor or the hospital for appointments, for shopping, or for activities at the Senior Center. Call the Center (508-540-0196) to make a reservation, two days ahead for routine rides, two weeks ahead for medical appointments.

Neighborhood Falmouth, in operation since April, 2009, helps seniors remain in their homes, through providing light home maintenance, transportation, assistance with electronic items, emergency pet care, home monitoring, daily telephone check-ins, and social activities, to name a few. A phone call to the office initiates the providing of services and information, with follow through until a solution is available. Children of members, especially those living out-of-town, find the ease of mind in knowing their parents have Neighborhood Falmouth as a resource is a great benefit of membership. A non-profit, membership organization, Neighborhood Falmouth depends heavily on a solid volunteer corps, and donations and grant monies to supplement membership dues. An introduction to the organization will be presented at a town-wide meeting on October 6, 10: AM to noon, at the John Wesley Methodist Church, corner of Gifford and Jones, Falmouth.

Neighborhood Falmouth is a nonprofit, membership organization, operating since 2009 to help Falmouth seniors live safely and comfortably in their own homes. For more information on joining, volunteering, and donating, call 508-564-7543; or visit www.neighborhoodfalmouth.org.

