

## 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 2006 will highlight our progress in fulfilling this mission.

#### Overview

The Council on Aging is comprised of three full time staff and a part-time nurse position. Staff includes Eileen Bogle as COA Director. Candace Steingisser is the Social Outreach Worker. Frances Kelly and Yvonne Posa have shared the Administrative Assistant position. At this time, we are in the midst of a search to replace Yvonne Posa. Theresa Levinson and Jean Masland share the nurse position. One hundred seventy five individual volunteers support the Council on Aging in many critical ways. Positions include front desk volunteers, friendly visitors, home delivered meals drivers, newsletter volunteers, office support, trip volunteers, class instructors, group facilitators, and SHINE counselors. Volunteers and staff coordinate many integral community resources. Programs such as FISH transportation, the Rotary Fix-It program, the Senior Work program, income tax preparation assistance, financial and fuel assistance, podiatry and telephone reassurance are options available to Weston seniors. In 2006, more than 6900 volunteer hours were documented.

The Council on Aging Board is dedicated to the accomplishment of our mission. Staff and Board collaboration produced some significant successes. A brochure describing the Council on Aging has been developed. Pending final revisions and printing, the brochure will be available for distribution in early 2007. We implemented a new and improved participant database tracking system that is most helpful in producing monthly and annual statistics. Our transportation programs were also reviewed with the goal of future improvements to this much needed service.

We are very grateful for the support of the Friends of the Council whose generosity supports the mailing of our monthly newsletter and the delivery of COA programs while serving as a resource for residents to live healthy and active lives. We also wish to acknowledge our appreciation to all the community groups whose generosity is invaluable.

#### Information, Referral and Outreach

Our busiest component is our information, referral and social service outreach. In Fiscal Year 2006, the Council on Aging responded to 5,535 requests for information. Requests for information comprise several categories: general requests for information about programs and community resources and more detailed inquires 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. As in 2005, nearly 700 residents and their families benefited from her knowledge and expertise. In addition, we are hosting a student from Simmons School of Social work who is doing her internship at the COA under Candace's supervision.

Outreach to residents has another component. To focus on support to caregivers, our support group specialists, Shirley Earle and Emily Hutchinson, facilitate two groups each month for caregivers of seniors with Alzheimer's and related dementia. February 2006 marked the 12<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of these groups in Weston. As noted by Shirley Earle, the groups provide support and an opportunity to manage difficult changes in their lives.

We also know from recent census data, that 23% of the Weston community is 60 years of age and older. In collaboration with the Police and Fire Departments, we began meeting to discuss emergency preparedness for seniors living in town. We initiated a survey to assess risk in the event of an emergency and to help Fire and Police know who might need assistance. This survey also provides a structured approach to outreach to Weston residents who may be unfamiliar with services provided by the Council on Aging.

Changes in health insurance coverage were a critical issue in 2006. We hosted several information sessions on the many health plan options. Not surprisingly, the SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) program experienced a surge of activity as our volunteer counselor, Nancy Baer, worked with hundreds of seniors to provide health care plan information, assistance and counseling.

#### Intergenerational Programs

This program continues to succeed in linking students and older residents. Led by members of the COA Board, intergenerational programs impact Weston pre-school to high school students. Accomplishments include: classroom visits for pre-kindergarten children; an expansion of the first grade reading program to both Weston elementary schools with 14 volunteers helping emerging readers; third graders experienced another great year of oral histories as seniors discussed what third grade was like for them in another generation; middle school students learned to knit from members of the Project Linus Knitting group; and in May, seniors headed to the classrooms for the first annual Intergenerational Day at Weston Middle School. This event included classroom visits and musical performances. The high school intergenerational club maintained its successful contacts with the Council on Aging with gatherings at Brook School Apartment, monthly baking at the Community Center and several shared book group discussions at Merriam Village.

Additionally we have outstanding cooperation with countless organizations such as the Country Garden Club, the Scouts, WCCA, and the Weston Community League

In the winter of 2006 we worked with a Weston High school student to offer a supplemental snow shoveling program for Weston seniors. To achieve his Eagle Scout badge, this industrious student recruited and organized student shovelers. We are very pleased that this snow shoveling for seniors will continue in the winter of 2007.

#### Health, Nutrition and Wellness

The Council on Aging nurses oversee the many aspects of our health related programs. Our Friday morning Keep Well Clinic offers blood pressure screening along with hearing screenings and other preventive screenings. In FY 2006, 824 screenings were provided. Our nurses work collaboratively with our social worker to assist in assessment and care management decisions. This collaboration also involves monthly meetings with the town departments including Police, Fire and the Board of Health.

Responsibilities also include the coordination of our Health Education Program. In 2006 presentations covered topics on healthy diets, polypharmacy, sleep issues, stroke prevention, grand-parenting, heart disease, orthopedic concerns, and mental fitness.

The medical equipment loan closet is another valuable community resource as in the past year has utilization increased by 12 percent.

Our Monday lunch program sponsored by Springwell at Brook School Apartments is an important community program along with the Friday lunch at the COA. The collaboration with

the Weston Public Schools to provide the Friday lunch has been very successful. Delicious lunches and engaging speakers create a lively Friday of Keep Well Clinics, education and food.

For older persons in need of in-home support, home delivered meals provided by Springwell are available five days per week. Delivered by our wonderful and dedicated volunteers, the program is also supported by community groups who provide baked goods and festive holiday decorations.

The health component at the COA includes access to a registered dietician twice each month to discuss concerns about diet and nutrition. The Land Sake Farm donation program of fresh vegetables is a welcome weekly event during the summer harvest months. And last but not least, is the food pantry available to Weston residents during COA hours. We are very grateful to the many donors who support the pantry throughout the year.

#### Fitness

The many COA fitness programs include aerobic fitness, balance, strength and flexibility training, yoga, tai chi and line dancing. A goal for 2006 was achieved with the launch of the Weston walking group. Supported by many volunteers, the group walks twice a week around local Weston trails, for walkers at varied levels. More than 300 residents attended our various classes.

#### Education and Community Service

We planned and coordinated a wide array of exciting, stimulating instructional classes, programs and lectures. Selections include bridge, legal concerns, health insurance, computer technology, digital photography, Spanish, watercolor, and community resources. The monthly book group, initiated by Susan Brennan, Director of the Library, read and discussed 10 books during the year. The weekly Short Story Group shared dozens of stories. The Project Linus afghan knitting group met twice each month to share knitting projects. In the first five years of operation, knitters donated 840 afghans to area hospitals. More than 600 people participated in our various programs

#### 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 are critical Weston volunteers. Coordinated by Cindy Mosher, volunteers made 324 trips for 55 Weston Seniors. Transportation within Weston and adjoining communities is provided with subsidized taxi coupons. 824 rides were provided. Our Friendship Bus provides weekly shopping trips to grocery stores and pharmacies as well as transportation to Boston symphony and theater events. COA trips offer the opportunity to travel to area events such as "White Christmas", the Flower Show, BSO Rehearsal, Mass MOCA, Charles River Museum, Forbes Museum and Adams House in Quincy, etc.

#### Appreciation:

It is through the dedicated efforts of the many individuals and groups who donate their time and energy that COA programs expanded and strengthened in 2006. We are very appreciative of these collaborations in serving the needs of Weston seniors. It is this caring and support that has given us a strong foundation upon which to build in the future.

## 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 2006, there are 102 people waiting for the subsidized apartments (representing a two-year waiting list) and 30 waiting for market value apartments to become available. In 2006 a victim of the Katrina disaster moved into a market value apartment, fully subsidized by FEMA for one year. The need for affordable housing for the elderly and disabled remains greater than the available supply.

Anne Bennett has joined the staff as a part time employee specializing in resident/applicant income certifications. Her cheerful and efficient presence is a welcome addition to the Brook School family. The Committee welcomes its newest member, Ted E. Kirchner, whose valuable participation has already made its mark.

The first phase of a landscaping initiative is underway, with new plantings enhancing the visual appeal of the campus. Kudos to the Country Garden Club for the planting and maintaining of the beautiful new flowerpots in the central courtyard area. Residents and visitors alike delight in the seasonal plantings, which the Garden Club has provided for years.

## REPORT OF THE EAST MIDDLESEX MOSQUITO 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 the primary concern as 5 residents in eastern Massachusetts contracted EEE including 2 fatally and 3 residents contracted West Nile Virus. Mosquito populations peaked in mid summer following the emergence of floodwater mosquitoes after heavy rains in May and early June.

The adult mosquito surveillance program used traps to collect mosquitoes from as many as 4 Weston locations per night. Between May and September, information was used from 15 mosquito trap collections from 5 different nights. 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) in wetlands and *Bacillus sphaericus* in catchbasins. 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 21 wetland acres when high densities of mosquito larvae were found breeding in stagnant water. During the summer, Project personnel applied larvicides to control *Culex* mosquito larvae at 1,241 roadside catchbasins.

To control adult mosquitoes, Sumithrin was applied to 938 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 Weston Town Crier, on the Project web site and via a recorded telephone message at 781- 893-5759.

The Project used an excavator to remove sand and sediment from waterways including 1,278 linear feet at Rockport Rd., 498 linear feet by Golden Ball Rd., 290 linear feet at Deerpath Lane and 154 linear feet near the Cambridge School.

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 Koch, 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 Koch, Health Agent M. Elizabeth Nolan Peter Taylor, PE  
Lisbeth C. Zeytoonjian

**Animal Inspectors - Appointed by Board of Health:** David Poirier, Wendy Diotalevi, Beth Koch

### Introduction

The Board of Health 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 Board of Health 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, lead, 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.

### Public Health

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 Site Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, 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 2300 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.

The BOH provides vaccines to physicians through the state funded vaccine program by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to insure vaccine availability for the members of our community. This year the BOH provided 16,729 doses of vaccine valued at more than \$410,000.

Two flu clinics were held in the fall of the 2006 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.

Nick Guerina, M.D.	Will Cochran, M.D.	Jane Brown, RN
Paula Giamo	Ross Giamo	Nancy Johnston
Johanna Harrison	Ruddy Ruggles	Sandra Ashley
Arnold Barnes		

In 2006 Weston participated in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health West Nile Virus surveillance program. 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 seven 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.

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

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
Septic System Permits	130	106	142
Septic System Plan Reviews	201	221	265
Septic System Inspections/meetings	430	590	1047
Title V Inspection Reports/Reviews	258	164	376
Soil/Percolation Tests Witnessed	492	498	620
Septic System Installer's Licenses	52	56	40
Septic System Installer's Exams	4	10	2
Septic System Pumper/Hauler Permits	45	22	12
Renovation/Addition Permits	187	192	177
Renovation/Addition Permit Review/Meetings	285	300	259
Environmental Investigations	25	36	19
Well Permits/Review/Inspection	18	39	4
Communicable Disease Investigations	54	79	51
Emergency Preparedness Meetings	114	76	27
Community Health and Wellness Meetings/Trainings	102	57	26
Food Service Permits	54	48	48
Food Service Inspections	104	92	97
Camp Permits	13	9	8
Camp Inspections	36	25	15
Commercial/Residential Pool, Hot Tub, Beach Permits	25	26	19
Commercial/Residential Pool, Hot Tub, Beach Inspections	39	31	19
Body Work Permits	3	5	5
Housing Complaint Investigations/Court	23	4	51
Administration Meetings	32	43	18
Training Meetings	39	48	42
Burial Permits	76	115	105
Port-a-John Permits	97	69	45
Phone Calls	6627	6000+	6800
Research	3164	3057	3062
Dumpster Permit	48	13	*
Total Revenue for Calendar Year	\$171,602	\$161,136	\$162,350

\* Totals unavailable

## **REPORT OF THE HOUSING NEEDS COMMITTEE**

The Housing Needs Committee reviews proposals for affordable housing presented to Weston. The Committee meets with developers and neighbors, and provides input to the Selectmen.

Recently the Housing Needs Committee met with the Weston Affordable Housing Foundation, Inc. (WAHFI), on a proposal to have an affordable house built on land on Church Street, which was donated to WAHFI. The proposal presented was to have Highland Real Estate construct an affordable, single family house, as specified in the development agreement between the Town and Highland Meadows, on the land at 45 Church Street. The Housing Needs Committee forwarded a favorable recommendation to the Selectmen on this proposal.

Member Gene Castillo and Chairman Edward Lashman resigned from the Board. The Town thanks them for their years of service.

The Selectmen appointed Peter Yozell as member of the Board. The Board currently has one vacancy, and has not voted on a new Chair.