May is Older American’s Month, the theme for 2021 is “Communities of Strength”. Older adults have built resilience and strength over their lives through successes, failures, joys, and difficulties. This past year, has been extremely difficult. You know, you have experienced it. You have shown great strength. Our community has helped get through these hard times in many ways. With the vaccine, we are able to start connecting, being able to see your grandchildren again and engage with others building strong connections. Connecting with others is one of the most important ways to nurture yourself. It plays a vital role in our health and well-being, and in that of our community. The Council has purchased 10 iPads for borrowing as a way to engage with others. Please contact us if you are interested.

In honor of Older American’s Month, we have some special meals happening sponsored by SeniorCare. The special day’s menu is provided in this newsletter as a Grab and Go luncheon. During this month, we will celebrate National Senior Health and Fitness Day with a walking event. We hope you will take part. For those of you who like a challenge, we have a walking challenge for you beginning in May and ending in September. It could possibly earn our Senior Center some funding. Let’s show other parts of Massachusetts how many people walk in town for exercise. We encourage you to sign up and join.

The Rockport Board of Health held four Covid Vaccine Clinics for Rockport Seniors. Barbara Arnold is pictured below with Carol Palazolla from Element Care who handed out gift bags to people after they received their vaccine. Selectman Ruth George is about to give Victor Pallazola his vaccine.
Memorial Gifts Made to “Friends of the Rockport COA”

Barbara Anderson
Mary Ball & Amnon Goldman
Chester & Ellen Clark
In Memory of Elio DiBerardino
George Calvi
In Memory of Evelyn Makkonen
Russell & Karen Anderson

Benefits Checkup

Benefits Checkup is an online tool that screens your eligibility for over 2,500 federal, state and private benefits programs that are available. These programs include medications, health care, income assistance, food, nutrition, housing and utilities, tax relief & more, such as food stamps and fuel assistance. You can apply for many of the programs online or you can print the application form.

Go to www.benefitscheckup.org to begin the process. When you put in your information, this program will let you know what programs you would be eligible for.

Walk for Exercise

Wednesday, May 26th is the 28th Annual Senior Health & Fitness Day. Since we still are not open, let’s meet at the Senior Center parking lot at 9:30AM and go for a walk together. You will have some exercise and socialize too. Call to register, 978-546-2573.

We can discuss possibly starting a walking group a couple days a week if there is enough interest.

FEMA Covid-19 Death Assistance

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought overwhelming grief to many families. FEMA is dedicated to helping ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the virus. Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA will provide financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020. They are working with stakeholder groups to get their input on ways we can best provide this assistance, and to enlist their help with outreach to families and communities. FEMA will begin to implement COVID-19 funeral assistance in April. Additional guidance is being finalized and will be released to potential applicants and community partners as soon as possible. In the meantime, people who have COVID-19 funeral expenses are encouraged to keep and gather documentation.

To be eligible for funeral assistance, you must meet these conditions: The death must have occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia, the death certificate must indicate the death was attributed to COVID-19 and the applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020. In April, FEMA will begin accepting applications. If you had COVID-19 funeral expenses, we encourage you to keep and gather documentation. Types of information should include: An official death certificate that attributes the death directly or indirectly to COVID-19 and shows that the death occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. Funeral expenses documents (receipts, funeral home contract, etc.) that includes the applicant’s name, the deceased person’s name, the amount of funeral expenses, and the dates the funeral expenses happened. Proof of funds received from other sources specifically for use toward funeral costs. We are not able to duplicate benefits received from burial or funeral insurance, financial assistance received from voluntary agencies, government agencies, or other sources. If you are eligible for funeral assistance you will receive a check by mail, or funds by direct deposit, depending on which option you choose when you apply for assistance.
Meals on Wheels
Home delivered meals are available to any Rockport senior who feels it would be helpful to them. If you would like to be added to the program, please call SeniorCare, 978-281-1750 and ask for Information & Referral.

Try a Grab & Go Lunch
SeniorCare is providing take out lunches to the Rockport seniors. Seniors (age 60+) drive to the senior centers parking lot and can pick up a lunch, Monday through Friday. Seniors must make a reservation at least 24 hours in advance or sooner to reserve a meal by calling Michelle, 978- 546-5027. Pick up time is 11AM. At this time, no one is allowed inside the building. Please wait by the side door. All participants should wear a mask and be prepared to observe appropriate social distancing. Call if you would like a monthly menu sent to you or email pbertolino@rockportma.gov.

Mother’s Day Grab & Go Lunch
Thursday, May 6th. Parmesan crusted chicken, glazed carrots, scallion whipped potatoes, multigrain bread and strawberry shortcake with whipped cream for dessert. Call to reserve, 978-546-5027. Pick up between 11-11:30AM.

Older American Lunch Specials
In honor of Older American Month in May, there are two Grab & Go Lunch specials listed below. These are sponsored by SeniorCare and the Rockport Council on Aging. Call to reserve, 978-546-5027. Pick up between 11-11:30AM.

Boxed Lunch Grab & Go Lunch
Wednesday, May 19th. A boxed lunch with a chicken salad sandwich, a side salad and dessert.

Traveling Chef Grab & Go Lunch
Thursday, May 27th. Cobb Salad, Romaine lettuce, chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, diced chicken, hard boiled egg, bacon, blue cheese salad dressing and pita bread and strawberry shortcake for dessert.

Masks
We received a donation of masks from the United States Office of Health & Human Services. If anyone is in need of a mask, call the Senior Center and we will make arrangements for you to get them or pick them up here.

Attorney Advice and Estate Planning
The first Thursday of each month, Troy Sullivan, an estate planning and probate attorney will discuss your legal concerns by phone appointment only. He can help guide you in the right direction. 15 minute consults, 9:30-11AM. Call the Senior Center for an appointment, 978-546-2573.

Open Door Food Pickup at Senior Center
The COA, along with the Open Door and SeniorCare will have groceries available for pickup outside the Senior Center on Wednesday, May 5th and June 2nd at 10AM. This income eligible, 60+ program offers free, fresh fruits and vegetables, plus an assortment of canned goods. Senior Housing is excluded since this is available at your site. Call to sign up, 978-546-2573.

Need Groceries?
Open Door offers free curbside, no contact pick up of groceries including milk, produce, meat, fish, eggs, cheese, dry and canned goods along with diapers and pet food. Diet specific DASH and Diabetic bags also available. Open Monday through Friday 10AM.-5PM at 28 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester. People living in The Open Door service area may come any day, once a week. Grocery delivery available Monday through Friday call by noon. (978) 283-6776.

Need Meals?
Free Meals may be picked up at The Open Door, 28 Emerson Avenue in Gloucester, Monday through Friday after 3pm. Friday also provides extra food for the weekend. Meal delivery available Monday through Friday call by noon. (978) 283-6776.

Need SNAP?
Need help applying for SNAP (Food Stamps)? The Open Door can help. Call 978 283 6776 x266.
Arthritis Exercise Class on Zoom
Wednesday, 1PM
Join Carol Palazolla from Element Care’s for her Arthritis Exercise Class and enjoy exercises specifically for people with arthritis. Learn gentle activities to help increase joint flexibility, range of motion, overall stamina and to help maintain muscle strength. You can attend virtually from your computer, tablet or cellphone. Register in advance, https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcpdeqtqjwtG9SxJW1u_LayDXAY1kLzaJyL

Loneliness and Social Isolation
Everyone needs social connections to survive and thrive. The number of older adults is growing, and many are socially isolated and feel lonely. The coronavirus outbreak brought even more challenges due to health considerations and need to practice physical distancing. There are things you can do to help protect yourself or a loved one from the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation. Try exercising, eating healthy, getting enough sleep and pursuing activities you enjoy to help manage stress and stay as mentally and physically healthy as possible. It is also important to stay active and connect with others. People who engage in meaningful, productive activities that they enjoy with others feel a sense of purpose and tend to live longer. Some suggestions to stay connected are to find an activity that you enjoy, schedule time each day to stay in touch with family, friends, and neighbors in person by email, social media or a phone call. Sending cards or letters is another good way to keep up friendships.

National Institute on Aging Tips
Eating a healthy diet and exercising often can help control health issues associated with aging, like high blood pressure and diabetes. National Institute on Aging shares tips to help you achieve and maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine.

- Try to be physically active for at least 30 minutes on most or all days of the week.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose foods that are low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.
- Pick whole grains and lean sources of protein and dairy products.
- Practice all four types of exercise-endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility.

Spam Text Messaging and Phishing
Scammers send fake text messages to your cell phones to trick you into giving them your personal information such as your password, account number, or Social Security number. If they get that information, they could gain access to your email, bank, or other accounts. They could sell your information to other scammers. The scammers use a variety of ever-changing stories to try to trick you. They may promise free prizes, gift cards, or coupons for a low or no interest credit card. Scammers also send fake messages that say they have information about your account or a transaction. The scammers may say they’ve noticed some suspicious activity on your account, claim there’s a problem with your payment information, send you a fake invoice and tell you to contact them. The messages might ask you to give some personal information, like how much money you make, how much you owe, or your bank account, credit card, or Social Security number to claim your gift or pursue the offer. They may tell you to click on a link to learn more about the issue. Some links may take you to a spoofed website that looks real but isn’t. If you log in, the scammers can then steal your user name and password. You should develop a habit of pausing before clicking on texts. Surveys show we are more likely to read and react to a text message than an email. Don’t click on links from suspicious texts; it may result in loading malicious software onto your device that will harvest your credentials, or sending you to a website that will do the same. If you have reason to believe the text may be legitimate, reach out to the sender, the IRS, UPS, Amazon or whomever at a number or web address you know to be legitimate. Don’t call the number in the text. When it comes to fraud, vigilance is our number one weapon.
Seniors On The Go Bus

**Wednesdays** Grocery Shopping @ Market Basket
Pickups from your home start at 8:10AM
Return home starts at 9:50AM

**Thursdays** Grocery Shopping @ Stop& Shop, Market Basket & Shaws
Pickups from your home start at 10:10AM
Return home starts at 11:50AM

**Fridays** Fisherman’s Wharf & The Open Door Food Pantry
Enjoy a stop to purchase fresh, local seafood at Fisherman’s Wharf. At The Open Door, you will be provided a grocery bag prefilled with perishable and non-perishable items

Reserve your FREE Seat on our ADA compliant bus by calling CATA, 978-283-7916. Please reserve your seat by 1PM the day prior to any trip.

CATA Schedule
Dial-A-Ride, Monday through Friday, service is offered from Rockport to Gloucester. Pick up in Rockport starts around 9AM and the latest pickup to return home is 2PM. If it is an appointment, the appointment should not be scheduled before 9:30AM.

Tuesdays are the Grocery Shoppers Shuttle, pickups start at 11:15AM and return at 1:15PM. They will take you to either Eastern Avenue Shaw's, Stop & Shop or Market Basket.

Dialysis service is offered to the Beverly Dialysis Clinic on Monday through Saturday for customers with first or second shift treatment times. Call CATA, 978-283-7916 for more information.

Vaccine Transportation
CATA Van Service is available for local vaccination transportation. CATA is waving the normal application process for seniors. If a senior needs a ride to and from a local vaccination clinic, you do not need to be pre-registered with CATA. They will take your information over the phone and then make an appointment. Call 978-283-7916.

Senior Care has volunteers that will take you to local vaccine appointments. Call 978-281-1750.

Walk Massachusetts Challenge
Lace up your sneakers, the Walk Massachusetts Challenge is back! This year features more walking options and more prizes. With five goals, there is a challenge for everyone, from walking 65 days to walking 692,000 steps. 10 lucky winners will win a $50.00 Visa gift card, 25 people win a $25.00 Amazon gift card, and 50 people will win a $10.00 Dunkin gift card. The first 500 people who participate will receive a handy reflective wrist band and sports pack, perfect for carrying your water bottle, keys and phone.

For each person who completes the challenge, the COA gets entered into a drawing to win up to $1000.00 for future programing!

Individuals sign up at [www.mcoaonline.com/walkma](http://www.mcoaonline.com/walkma)
The program will run from May 1st to September 30th.
You choose the challenge from 5 different levels. Walking for days, time, miles or steps. There is something for everyone!
There is an online tracking form or use our printable walk journal.
At the end of the challenge, they submit their journal online or mail it to Lynn.
For each completion, the COA is entered to win and so are you!
1623 Studios

The local Senior Centers have programs on cable television channel. Tune into Channel 12 or 67 from 1623 Studios to participate in locally taught yoga and fitness classes for older adults from the comfort of your home. Programming schedules varies.

The Rockport COA would like to thank Addison Gilbert Hospital for sponsoring the printing of our newsletter

Donations
We welcome all donations. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation in memory or in honor of someone, or a bequest, please make checks payable to the Friends of Rockport COA.

Name ____________________________ $_____._____
Address ____________________________Town________________
State_____ Zip_________

Please circle: In Memory or in Honor of _________________________________
_________________________________________________________________