

Topsfield Council on Aging

SENIOR SCOOP

JULY / AUGUST 2020

Topsfield Council on Aging Mission Statement:

To design, implement and promote programs and services to support the independence, health and well-being of Topsfield residents who are sixty years of age and older or disabled adults.

Town Hall

8 West Common Street, 2nd Floor-OPEN FOR ESSENTIAL APPTS

Days/Office Hours: SEE UPDATES ON WEBSITE FOR TOWN HALL/COA HOURS

Office Phone: (978) 887-1523

RSVPs: CALL (978) 887-6866 OR EMAIL topsfieldMAcoa@gmail.com

Cancellations due to inclement weather or other unusual circumstances will be announced as early as possible on Facebook and on the COA page of the town website: <https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/topsfield-council-aging>



Friends of the Topsfield Council on Aging



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY
Safer at Home
mass.gov/saferathome

As noted in this month's message from the Board of Health, Gov. Baker's *Safer at Home* Advisory remains in effect. Though Massachusetts, along with other nearby states, successfully flattened the curve, we will not fully control COVID-19 until scientists develop and mass produce an effective vaccine. Here in Topsfield we are fortunate to feel *Safer at Home*.

If for any reason you, a family member, a neighbor, or a friend do not feel safe at home in Topsfield, please contact us so that we can assist.

Throughout this public health crisis, we have been working with families to ensure that the most vulnerable population receives the services needed to weather this storm and adapt to their own changing needs.

As the country, state, and town work through the phases of reopening, those who are at-risk, must remain vigilant...staying at home, minimizing exposure to those who could be carrying the coronavirus, avoiding busy places, washing hands, and wearing face coverings.

But home isn't such a bad place if you take advantage of all that Topsfield COA and other town organizations have to offer. Our robust programming has been restored and we are even adding new experiences. Join us for *The Supper Club* on Wednesday evenings to engage with social people and participate in fun activities such as "Name that Tune." Board Member, Joan Chiffer, created this wonderful activity to fill a niche and because it's 5 o'clock in Topsfield!

To sign up for any of our activities, EMAIL topsfieldMAcoa@gmail.com or CALL (978) 887-6866. Joining a Zoom meeting with friends new and old is as simple as clicking on a link.

Even during a pandemic, most of your needs can be met right here in Topsfield. Town employees have continued to serve you and essential businesses downtown have been meeting your needs throughout while many more are now reopening according to MA DPH guidelines. Top Cupboard Food Pantry is now operating on a grab 'n go model according to their regular schedule (see calendar). To those turning 70+ the Friends of the Topsfield COA are sending birthday cards that include COA contact info along with a reminder that we are always here for all. Our Dementia Friendly Topsfield Task Force has been working diligently to provide information for care partners who find themselves at home with loved ones for whom day programs not currently available. Our Intergenerational Team continues to seek opportunities to blend age groups to enhance the lives of generations throughout Topsfield. And our beloved library is executing their impressive reopening plan.

Working together and supporting each other Topsfield will get through the Pandemic of 2020. Thanks to the creativity of many devoted employees, and especially our Town Clerk Beth Willis, we successfully held our Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election, to position us well through June 30, 2021.

Paula Burke, Beth Wideberg, Greg Young, Ed Blum, and Maggie Chiffer

Virtual Programming

RSVP

*EMAIL (preferred): topsfieldMAcoa@gmail.com

CALL: (978) 887-6866

*Please see dedicated RSVP email addresses (below) to join Dance Out Dementia & The Supper Club

Speaking of TED

Ideas worth spreading

Participate in lively discussions about thought-provoking TED Talks.

Most Mondays 10:00-11:00 A.M.

Technology Tips!

Some Mondays at 11:00 A.M.

July 20th: "Mastering Zoom"

August 3rd: "Intergenerational Edition"

August 24th: "Navigating a Pandemic with Online Resources...telehealth, shopping, blogging, podcasts"

Monday Movies

JULY 27th: TBD

AUGUST 17th:


Some Mondays at 1:00 P.M.

Restorative Yoga

Perfect for all levels!

Most Mondays 3:00 - 4:00 PM

Virtual Tours with Chrysa

Tour museums & attractions around the world from the comfort of your couch! 

Most Tuesdays at 10:00 A.M.



Coffee & Conversation

Enjoy an easy exchange with specialists in a variety of fields.

Most Wednesdays 10:00 -11:00 A.M.

Tai-Chi

Improve balance, strength, flexibility & well-being

Most Wednesdays 11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

The Supper Club-NEW!

Enjoy good times with friends, new & old, as we participate in casual conversation & guided activities (e.g. "Complete the Phrase")

Most Wednesdays 5:00-5:40 PM

To participate...

EMAIL: TopsfieldSupperClub@gmail.com

4th Annual Intergenerational Week Activities

8/3 @ 10 AM *Speaking of TED*
@ 11 AM *Technology Tips*

8/4 @ 10 AM Virtual Tour w/ Chrysa

8/5 @ 10 AM *Coffee & Conversation*

8/6 @ 10 AM Book Club
1 PM *Silver Screenings w/ Vinny*

IG BOOK CLUB

8/3 *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You I'm Sorry*
by Erik Bachman



"A story about life and death (among three generations) and one of the most important human rights: the right to be different."

Thursday, August 6th at 10:00 A.M.

ArtVenture

Find your inner artist, musician, photographer, dancer...

Some Thursdays at 1:00 P.M.



Dance Out Dementia

To participate...

EMAIL: DanceOutDementia@gmail.com

Most Thursdays 3:00-3:45 P.M.

Topsfield COA Has Shifted to VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING!

Topsfield COA's conversion to VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING has gone smoothly. More than one hundred people are regularly participating. We are working diligently to make this available to all. Even if you have never used technology before, we may be able to help you get online to participate in our programs, take advantage of the many free offerings now available online, and interact safely with members of your family near and far.

Contact Us / RSVP

EMAIL (preferred): topsfieldMAcoa@gmail.com*
CALL: (978) 887-6866

*Please note that Dance Out Dementia and The Supper Club participants should email the addresses listed separately in those designated boxes on the Virtual Programming page to RSVP.

STEP 1: Determine which activities you wish to participate in.

STEP 2: Email topsfieldMAcoa@gmail.com (or designated emails for Dance Out Dementia and The Supper Club) to receive invitations for those (and more) events.

STEP 3: Follow steps below to participate.

How to join a Zoom meeting/event if you are using GOOGLE CHROME or FIREFOX:

- 1) You will receive an individual invitation for each event/activity you wish to join.
- 2) Open the email and click on the **BLUE LINK**
- 3) If you are asked, "Do you want to allow this page to open "zoom.us <http://zoom.us/>"?," click **ALLOW**
- 4) Enter your name and click **JOIN**
- 5) Click **JOIN WITH AUDIO**
- 6) Click **JOIN WITH VIDEO**

General Reminders:

- 1) Adjust the volume on your device to the maximum level.
- 2) Be sure the camera on your device is not blocked.
- 3) If using an iPhone or iPad, download the free Zoom app.

Technical assistance is available!

Dementia Friendly Topsfield

In response to the closure of dementia day care centers due to COVID-19, the DFT Task Force has created a Virtual Resource Guide for dementia care partners. Using the guide will allow care partners the opportunity to more easily structure daily activities for their loved ones living with dementia. The Guide provides a myriad of resources including online activities, classes, virtual tours, live webcams, skill development, and more. In addition, we have included information about digital apps that have been specifically created for those living with dementia to help people live more independently for a longer period of time. There are apps that provide daily reminders, provide pertinent information, or feature brain games, puzzles, and training. Our comprehensive Virtual Resource Guide also includes a link that provides practical advice about home layouts and designs that can make daily life easier. To access the guide, go to <https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/council-aging> and click the Dementia Friendly Topsfield tab.

On July 22nd at 10:00 a.m., members of the DFT Task Force will join the COA's Coffee and Conversation to show attendees how to make the best use of the guide. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the Guide, please fill out our contact form, the link to which is located in the "Looking Ahead" section of our Guide. PLEASE NOTE that the Virtual Guide is a wonderful resource for ALL COA members interested in expanding their online horizons.

NEW VIRTUAL PROGRAM: The Supper Club

COA Board Member (and Maggie's Mom!) Joan Chiffer has created a new virtual program for the COA titled, The Supper Club. The Supper Club will be held virtually on Wednesday evenings at 5:00 pm. To receive the Zoom link, send an email to: TopsfieldSupperClub@gmail.com

What is the Supper Club? The Supper Club is a virtual place to gather with friends (and friends you haven't met yet) every Wednesday night to share a meal (if you want to) while having enriching conversations, playing games, sharing laughter, and enjoying each other's company. At its heart, The Supper Club is hospitality; the reception and entertainment of guests or strangers with generosity and kindness. Inspired by her own Mom, who lives alone, it is Joan's hope that The Supper Club will do its part to lessen the isolation that everyone is feeling as a result of COVID-19.

Advice from Your Public Servants



Please be aware of fraudulent requests for information over the telephone, email, and internet. The Topsfield Police Department has received a serious increase of reports involving fraud. We want to do our best to assist the citizens of Topsfield with identifying these scammers before it is too late. The best thing to do if someone is requesting your information over the phone is to hang up and call the police. We will then assist you in determining if the call is legitimate. If someone is requesting your information through email or over the internet, pause and call us before moving forward.

Things to consider...

No legitimate agency or company will ever accept store bought cards such as, Google Play, Apple, Visa, etc. as any form of payment. If a requester asks you to purchase any form of credit card, it is a **SCAM. NEVER PURCHASE STORE BOUGHT CREDIT CARDS AND PROVIDE A REQUESTER THE NUMBERS!**

No legitimate agency will call you with disturbing news such as, "You will be put in jail" "We will garnish your wages", etc. "if you do not pay the agency money right away." This is also a **SCAM! NEVER MAKE ANY PAYMENT IN FEAR. HANG UP AND CALL THE POLICE!**

Also, please be aware of potential scams in times of crisis, such as the Pandemic of **COVID-19**.

Unfortunately, criminals will take advantage of these situations and use it for their personal gain. An example of this may be the request of donations to help victims of the Coronavirus or people who may be out of jobs due to the shutdown of many businesses. Also, please be aware of fraudulent websites relating to COVID-19 that may steal your information. Always refer to official government websites, such as www.mass.gov, for information.

The Topsfield Police Department is here to assist you. **DO NOT** let these criminals put you in fear. Hang up, pause, take a breath and call us right away. We are in this together!

Any questions regarding fraud &/or scams, contact Detective Brendan Gahagan:

Phone: (978) 887-6533 (x338)

Email: bgahagan@topsfieldpolice.com

Tips from the Topsfield Board of Health

The Board of Health would like to remind residents that the COVID-19 pandemic is still a serious public health threat and The Governor's *Safer At Home Advisory* is still in effect. As businesses start to reopen and restrictions are lifted, residents are urged to continue taking precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. Stay at least six feet away from others, wear a face covering in public, wash hands often with soap and water and stay home and call your doctor if you feel sick. Until there is a vaccine, COVID-19 will remain an active disease in our country.

With tick and mosquito season upon us, the Board of Health recommends that residents take precautions to avoid bites. To prevent tick bites, use repellent according to manufacturer instructions, avoid areas thick with brush, tuck pantlegs into socks, toss clothes worn outdoors into a hot dryer and check your body thoroughly after doing yard work. Deer ticks are the size of a pinhead, so be aware of any unusual bumps. To prevent mosquito bites, use repellent according to manufacturer instructions, avoid exposure at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active, wear long sleeves and long pants if out during these hours and rid your yard of any standing water that could serve as a mosquito breeding ground.

The Board of Health wishes you a safe and happy summer!

-Health Agent Wendy Hansbury & the Topsfield Board of Health

Advice from Your Public Servants



Emergency Management Coordinator

COVID 19 has changed the way we do a lot of our regular activities. Stay at Home became Safer at Home and we are spending more and more time at home. It is more important than ever that we pay attention to our home safety. One step that we can take to be safer in our homes includes decreasing clutter. We lose flexibility and mobility as we get older and removing clutter and removing scatter rugs can make it easier for us to move safely. Railings and grab bars make it easier to get around as does well-lit hallways and night lights. Vision changes make it more difficult to see and adding light helps improve safety. The bathroom is the most dangerous room in the house. Shower seats and shower rails make it much easier and safer for a senior to take a shower or bath without falling, and non-slip mats placed in the tub contribute to staying balanced. Medic Alert Systems are one of the most popular methods of monitoring senior safety at home and allow responders to be notified of a problem immediately so the senior is not left for an extended period of time. These systems are generally monitored by certified operators who understand medical conditions, and are prepared to initiate a fast response. Usually a medic alert system will include a feature which allows for two-way communication, so the situation can be explained and understood, and some have a broad range of effectiveness which covers both the home and the yard, for cases where an event happens outside. Many also have GPS cellular capability, which pinpoints the position of the wearer, and some even have a fall detection feature which is activated automatically – potentially when a senior might lose consciousness or become otherwise unresponsive.

Having working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors can warn you of impending fire or problems with carbon monoxide. They should be tested regularly and the batteries need to be changed at least yearly. To avoid spills and burns, pot handles should not be left pointing outward on stoves. When using the stove top, you should stay with the item that you are cooking to minimize the chance of forgetting what is cooking and causing a fire. Microwave ovens are a safer option, removing burns as a potential hazard. Most seniors take medication, with several taking multiple doses a day. It's important that there is a clear system for marking and dispensing medications so that a senior does not become confused about whether certain drugs have already been taken or on which days they need to be taken. A compartmentalized pill box can help with easy identification, but an automatic medication dispenser is even better, eliminating many potential medication mistakes.

There are a lot of changes that we can make to our homes to make them safer. If you would like, members of the Topsfield Fire Department are happy to walk through your home with you to identify safety measures that you could take to remain Safer at Home.

Contact us at (978) 887-5148

-Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Jen Collins-Brown

This website featured in the Dementia Friendly section of the Topsfield COA website offers helpful suggestions:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/dementia/a-dementia-friendly-home/>

Town Administrator Tidings

Six months ago, I embarked upon a new journey as your new Town Administrator. It has been both an honor and a privilege to serve this community, and to do so with transparency and with an unwavering dedication to hard work and success.

From the start, my focus has been to learn as much as I can about Topsfield and about the people who define this incredible community. I have been greatly impressed by the commitment of our citizens. Those who volunteer on local boards and commissions, those who serve our schools and youth organizations, the local business owners and the everyday neighbors, always willing to lend a hand, truly exemplify what it means to give back to a community. This town undoubtedly has a long history of committed individuals, dedicating their lives to making Topsfield a better place now and for generations to come. I recognize the work we are engaged in today would not be possible if not for the diligence of those who came before us.

I am grateful for your goodwill, support, productive collaboration and tireless efforts to make Topsfield a great place to live, work and explore. I have been touched by the warm welcome I have received from the community and I am excited and confident that together we will do great things for Topsfield. I look forward to continuing our efforts in the years to come.

-Topsfield Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian

July

RSVP (978) 887-6866

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
		1
<i>No programming this week</i>	<i>No programming this week</i>	<i>No programming this week</i>
6	7	8
<i>No programming this week</i>	<i>No programming this week</i>	<i>No programming this week</i>
13	14	15
10:00 Speaking of TED 3:00 NO RESTORATIVE YOGA	10:00 Virtual Tour with Chrysa 4:00 COA Board Meeting	10:00 Coffee & Conversation: "The Supper Club Trailer" 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club NEW! 6:00 Salem State Series FREE!
20	21	22
10:00 Speaking of TED 11:00 TECHNOLOGY TIPS 3:00 Restorative Yoga	10:00 Virtual Tour with Chrysa	10:00 Coffee & Conversation: "DFT Task Force Updates" 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club
27	28	29
10:00 Speaking of TED 1:00 Movie Monday TBD 3:00 Restorative Yoga	10:00 Virtual Tour with Chrysa	10:00 Coffee & Conversation: with Zillie 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club

2020

RSVP (978) 887-6866

Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
<p style="text-align: right;">2</p> <p><i>Town Hall Closed</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">3</p> <p><i>Town Hall Closed</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">4/5</p> <p><u>Saturday</u></p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Sunday</u></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">9</p> <p><i>No programming this week</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10</p> <p><i>Town Hall Closed</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">11/12</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> 9 - 10 AM Food Pantry-TR</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Sunday</u></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>1:00 ArtVenture: Silver Screenings with Vinny</p> <p>3:00 Dance Out Dementia</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p><i>Town Hall Closed</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">18/19</p> <p><u>Saturday</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Sunday</u></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p>1:00 SeniorCare, Inc. Updates</p> <p>3:00 Dance Out Dementia</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p><i>Town Hall Closed</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25/26</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> 9 - 10 AM Food Pantry-TR</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Sunday</u></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>1:00 ArtVenture: Sing-Along</p> <p>3:00 Dance Out Dementia</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">31</p> <p><i>Town Hall Closed</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">August 1/2</p>

August

RSVP (978) 887-6866

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
3	4	5
10:00 IG Speaking of TED (Tri-Town Council) 11:00 IG TECHNOLOGY TIPS 3:00 Restorative Yoga	10:00 IG Virtual Tour with Chrysa Invite your grandchildren!	10:00 IG Coffee & Conversation with Team Murphy (4th Graders) 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club
10	11	12
10:00 Speaking of TED 3:00 Restorative Yoga	10:00 Virtual Tour with Chrysa <i>COA Board Meeting Canceled</i>	10:00 Coffee & Conversation: “Introducing Selectboard Member Marshall Hook” 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club
17	18	19
10:00 Speaking of TED 1:00 Movie Monday TBD 3:00 Restorative Yoga	10:00 Virtual Tour with Chrysa	10:00 Coffee & Conversation: Mystery Guest 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club
24	25	26
10:00 Speaking of TED 11:00 TECHNOLOGY TIPS 3:00 Restorative Yoga	10:00 Virtual Tour with Chrysa	10:00 Coffee & Conversation: “State Primary Preview” 11:15 Tai-Chi 5:00 The Supper Club
31		

Fourth Annual Intergenerational Week August 3rd-6th

We look forward to celebrating across the generations during our Fourth Annual Intergenerational Week! A pandemic cannot hold Topsfield COA back from gathering virtually with children and young adults (ages 1-18) to participate in the COA's engaging activities. We will share our thoughts about a timely TED Talk. Chrysa will take us on a tour somewhere in the world that will appeal to all ages. Maggie and Janet will lead a Book Club discussion about "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You I'm Sorry." Vinny will present a series of You Tube videos that will stir up memories along with emotions (mostly laughter.) This not so new Topsfield Tradition will continue to bring residents of all ages together during a time when many feel isolated. Please join us!

In June, we enjoyed our final activity with Team Murphy. With the guidance of their adored teacher, Mrs. Murphy, talented Proctor school students created a wonderful presentation commemorating Flag Day. We will miss this class, but look forward to continuing our partnership with the beloved Mrs. Murphy and her next group of fourth graders. They have big shoes to fill! We hope to meet some of them during Intergenerational Week.

Take Care of Your Mental/ Emotional Health:



MESSAGE FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE TOPSFIELD COA

The Friends of the Topsfield COA are sending birthday cards to residents turning 70 and above. We are currently using donated birthday cards. If you have birthday cards you would like to donate, please place them in an envelope labeled "COA" and drop them in the Town Hall mail slot to the left of the historic front door. Each greeting card contains helpful contact info. Your Friends of Topsfield COA appreciate your ongoing support.

GIVE LOCAL

If you would like to support local organizations that have been making a difference since this public health crisis began, financial contributions are gratefully being accepted...

- **Top Cupboard Food Pantry:**
Mail checks payable to Top Cupboard / P.O. Box 98 / Topsfield, MA 01983
- **Friends of the Topsfield Council on Aging:**
Mail checks payable to Friends of the Topsfield COA / P.O. Box 173 / Topsfield
- **Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Fund:**
Provide tax relief to qualifying senior citizens/adult-disabled. Contact the Assessor's Office at (978) 887-1514.

AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING VITAL SUPPORT:

- **SeniorCare, Inc.** (978) 281-1750
www.SeniorCareInc.org
- **Food Top Cupboard** (978) 807-8775
Pantries: The Open Door (978) 283-6776 x214
ACORD (978) 468-7424
- **PACE (Element Care)** (877) 803-5564
www.elementcare.org
- **Disability Resource Center** (978) 741-0077
www.DisabilityRC.org
- **Veterans Services Officer** (978) 380-8397 OR
dick.cullinan@verizon.net

Tributes!

Over the past year, a few members cycled off of the 11 member Council on Aging Board of Directors when their terms expired or because they moved out of town:

RUTH LUCY served with enthusiasm and vigor for 6 years. She always arrived first to the meetings armed with a positive attitude and tremendous energy. Her institutional knowledge and zest for life helped guide us through a period of major structural change.

MARTHA DAVIS quietly served since 2014. Not one for fanfare, she was always encouraging and supportive and was one of the first to volunteer to serve as an ambassador as the COA transitioned to dedicated space. Her gentle spirit is truly missed.

BETTE CULLINAN served for only few years before moving out of town but she made an immediate impact as she partnered with fellow Board Member and friend, Lynne Bermudez, to bring Topsfield to the forefront of the Dementia Friendly movement in America. Bette stepped quickly into a leadership position on the Board and always set the bar high.