



### Inside:



Drivers  
Make Meals  
Special



Transport  
Partnership  
Program



Forty  
Years of  
Caring

## Finding Connections Across Generations

*New Springwell Care Advisor Natalie Lara offers her view on the work, the people she has met, the impact she is making, and why it matters.*



Springwell depends on our Care Advisors – those who pull together, manage, and monitor in-home services – to support thousands of older adults every year. For many, their role at Springwell is their first job following college, but not all come to the role from a social work background. Natalie Lara came to the position as a recent graduate with a politics major and a background working in the dining room of a retirement community, which she loved. The role may help her decide whether she wants to attend law school in the future to prepare for work in public policy or continue in a social work focused career.

Natalie started work at Springwell in June, and by July she was managing her own caseload. “It’s a lot of information to take in, but there is also lots of guidance and reassurance. At some point, you jump in and learn by doing. I felt supported, so I was excited to start doing home visits. My supervisor, Amanda, is very caring and reminds me that she is there to help.”

“My first home visit was with a couple in Watertown. I let them know that I was a new Care Advisor, and they were very patient with me. I love talking with people, hearing their stories, and learning from them. They have lived longer than me, and I value learning from their life experience. I try to be attentive to their body language as well as their words. Sometimes people throw a lot at me, but I try to remember that they may just need to talk.”

Natalie shares the most important perspective for a care advisor, “You must be empathetic. The role is helping to advocate so people can stay living in their homes. Challenges of aging happen to everyone – it happens to our parents and will happen to us one day too. Being patient and understanding is key to being helpful. The work is challenging but rewarding. With COVID-19, it feels especially important to reassure the older adults I visit that they aren’t forgotten....We see you; we hear you.”

“In just a few short months, I can see the positive impact of my work, yet I wish I could do more. My personal goal is to focus on what I can do to help and keep managing my work one task and one day at a time. I am growing in my role as a care advisor, and I find the possibilities of what this job may lead to very exciting.”

You can learn more about the Springwell Home Care Program, as well as jobs at Springwell on our website at [www.springwell.com](http://www.springwell.com).



Natalie (r) with her supervisor, Amanda Duffy (l)



# Springwell Needs Home-Delivered Meals Drivers

*more than a meal*



Alec (left) has been a staff driver for nearly eleven years and brings a daily meal and a smile to Mary (center). Linda (right) signed up to volunteer during the height of the pandemic and is still doing regular shifts to help her neighbors.

What does a warm, nutritious meal mean to you? It makes your taste buds happy, fills your growling stomach, and may be a time when you gather with family or friends to socialize around the table. As children, many of us thought these meals magically appeared, but as adults we know the work that goes into planning meals, grocery shopping, bringing the groceries home, and preparing food. For some older adults in our community, getting a meal on the table is challenging. For those on fixed incomes, budgets are tight. For those with illness or disabilities, grocery shopping and cooking may be overwhelming or impossible. But for seniors enrolled in Springwell's Home-Delivered Meals Program, when their driver arrives at the door each day with a nutritious meal, lunch becomes a magical experience again.

The Home Delivered Meals Program provides seniors with a nutritious lunch delivered to their door by a friendly driver up to 5 days per week. The lunch contains at least 1/3 of the daily Recommended Dietary Allowance of nutrients, and a variety of menus are available to meet special dietary needs. The program is open to anyone who is age 60 or older and has a physical, emotional, or cognitive impairment and/or has inadequate facilities to prepare nutritionally adequate meals. Springwell's program also provides meals to those who are unable to attend a community dining site and/or lack a support system to assist with meal preparation.

A Home Delivered Meals driver isn't just someone who gets a meal from one place to another. They play a key role in reducing isolation. For some older adults who are home bound and live alone, the driver may be the only person they see on many days. Drivers provide a daily check-in on well-being and can also provide important contact information to seniors who might not otherwise have a way to learn about supports that are available.

Home Delivered Meals drivers are vital to the success of the service, and they are often people who are looking to give back to their community. In a world where so many things can be automated, the delivery of a nutritious meal still needs the human touch of a person bringing it to the door with a cheerful greeting. Recent retirees who want to keep busy, earn a little extra income, and stay connected find this part-time job is ideal. Parents and caregivers of school age children also like working as drivers because the hours are during the school day. Springwell delivers nearly 1,000 meals daily, and more drivers are always needed to make sure each older adult who needs a meal receives one.

*what can you do?*

You can help alleviate food insecurity and isolation for older adults in our shared communities! If you know someone who would benefit from home delivered meals, or if you would like to help by becoming a part-time staff or volunteer driver, or you know someone who would be interested in this job, you can learn more on our website at [www.springwell.com](http://www.springwell.com) or call us at 617-926-4100.

## CEO Notes

*here for you*



As a federally-designated Area Agency on Aging and a state-designated Aging Services Access Point, Springwell continues to coordinate with and support statewide vaccination efforts to address COVID-19. Massachusetts leads the nation in vaccine administration, especially among older adults, with 99% of individuals in MA aged 65+ having received at least one dose of a vaccine. In accordance with updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pfizer COVID-19 booster is now available to individuals 65 years of age and older. These older adults are eligible to receive their Pfizer booster shot at least 6 months after their second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

Additional information on the COVID booster, including FAQs, can be found online at [mass.gov](http://mass.gov). Locations and appointments can be made by using the Vaxfinder tool at [vaxfinder.mass.gov](http://vaxfinder.mass.gov) or by calling the COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line at 2-1-1. Springwell is available to provide assistance, especially transportation assistance, to help eligible older adults access either the booster or a first vaccination.

-Trish Smith, Springwell CEO

## Springwell's Successful Transport Partnership

*resources you need*

Springwell announced in April that it had received a \$90,000 grant from MassDevelopment aimed at a crucial need among the older adults we serve: expanding transportation service capacity. Through a partnership with a local taxi service, Alternatives Transportation, Springwell began offering a no-cost transportation option for anyone over the age of 60 in Belmont, Brookline, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley, or Weston.

The new service was greeted with excitement by seniors and senior-serving organizations, and the phones at both Springwell and Alternative started ringing immediately. Between April and July, the partnership enabled Springwell to provide more than 1,000 rides to nearly 200 older adults who were able to attend non-urgent medical appointments that were postponed due to COVID-19, get back out to the grocery store independently, take trips to social day programs and senior centers, attend cultural events, and also get urgent, non-medical tasks done such as repairs to cell phones.

Seniors expressed great appreciation both for the rides and for the quality of the services received, shared by voice messages extolling "the prompt and friendly drivers," "the quality of the van and the level of service by the drivers," and "the time everyone took to give information about the services offered."

Funds were depleted by the end of July, but transportation options for seniors remain a challenge in the greater Boston area. Springwell's Information and Consultation Specialists are available to discuss resources for limited free and low-cost transportation options and can be reached by calling 617-926-4100.



*"Transportation options for seniors remain a challenge and a priority for Springwell."*



# Ken Alpert: An Early Commitment to Caring

*making a difference*



Ken enthusiastically contributes to Springwell: at an agency event early in his tenure (left), enjoying this year's staff picnic (center), and receiving the MA Home Aide Council Cathe Madden Case Manager award in 2019 (right).

As a lifelong sports fan, Ken Alpert has always admired the iconic player Carl Yastrzemski, who made his contributions to baseball playing for just one team, the Boston Red Sox, for his entire Major League career. Ken graduated from Connecticut College with a degree in sociology, and knew he wanted to work in human services. It wasn't long after Ken joined Springwell as a Case Manager in 1981 that he realized he wanted to devote his entire career to helping older adults through Springwell. He thrived in the role and especially likes the combination of engaging with staff in the office and building relationships with older adults in their homes.

Reflecting on the first 40 years of his career, Ken notes that, "people are really nice. Over the years, my supervisors and the staff have all been excellent. The atmosphere is comfortable and supportive... and Springwell is a fun place to work." Ken adds that regular activities such as softball, picnics, and other Springwell outings have contributed to building a happy environment.

While the job title has changed from Case Manager to Care Advisor, the role and goals have remained the same. Springwell works at the intersection of health care and the social determinants of health by helping people access services and supports that make it possible for them to live independently. A Care Advisor pulls together services for an individual, monitors and manages those services, and helps family members understand the role of services. "The organization has grown and added more services so we can help more people. The goal is still to listen to what each individual wants and help them

achieve that in their aging lifestyle with services and supports that they are comfortable receiving."

Ken believes that one of the most important traits for a Care Advisor is being a good listener, and that is the quality that can help older adults accept recommended services, even when they are reluctant. As Ken says, "I like to establish a relationship with an individual by finding out more about their lives. I was speaking with a woman during a home visit and asked her if she had a favorite President. She said Franklin Roosevelt and told me why she liked him. It was fascinating. Establishing a relationship helps build trust, so that when we start talking about services, they are more receptive."

"The job can be stressful and challenging at times," shares Ken. His advice to new Care Advisors is to talk with co-workers and supervisors. "We learn from each other. It also helps to have a sense of humor."

In 2019, Ken was awarded the Cathe Madden Case Manager award from the MA Home Aide Council. At the award ceremony, he noted that, "It is an honor and a privilege to work at Springwell." For Springwell, the honor and privilege is very mutual, and we are grateful for Ken's years of service.



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## Solutions in Support of Health and Independence

Springwell is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to helping people who need long-term services and supports to remain independent and healthy in the setting of their choice. Services are made possible in part by contracts with or grants from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Federal Administration for Community Living, MassHealth, insurance providers and health care entities. Generous philanthropic support from individuals and institutions is also critical to our success.