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Creative Solutions Make Caregiving Easier

Evelyn and Ray, longtime residents of Newton, have been married for 36 years. About four years ago, Evelyn noticed subtle differences in Ray that turned out to be the onset of dementia. Recently retired, Ray had worked until he was 80. He and Evelyn were active in their community and longtime supporters of many organizations that help others. As Ray's condition worsened in 2020, Evelyn lost most of her income in the restaurant business due to COVID-19. Suddenly, they needed help themselves.

A therapist who helped Evelyn cope with stress pointed her to Springwell. According to Evelyn, "You often can't see clearly when you are going through a difficult situation, and I didn't know where to turn. I

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"When I reached out to Springwell, they first assessed our needs, and then I quickly received calls from coordinators of several programs that would prove helpful for us. Since Ray can't be left alone, a Springwell Care Advisor helped get Ray enrolled in Adult Day Care. I was initially frustrated when we thought that Ray was set to go to one program, but transportation was not available. Neither of us can drive anymore. Springwell helped us find another program that provides transportation. A SHINE (Serving the Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselor guided me with a review of our insurance and financial situation. We have also benefited from programs for rental assistance – without which we would literally be homeless – and transportation for medical appointments."

"Dementia is a journey that does not go in the direction that we want. I don't have my husband in the same way anymore. I've stopped telling him about my worries and challenges because he can't do anything to help. I am trying to learn to go with the flow." As his caregiver, Evelyn needs support, too, and receives it from Carly, the Springwell Caregiver Support Specialist (in a phone consultation with a colleague, left). "Carly is compassionate, kind and understanding, and she has helped me in practical ways, such as getting a bracelet for Ray that identifies him and notes that he has dementia in case he wanders away. She helped us with a "File for Life" that provides Ray's medical information and with an alarm that alerts me if Ray tries to leave the house. I appreciate Springwell and am grateful for the assistance as I navigate very difficult times. I know they are there for me when I need support."

If you know someone who could benefit from Springwell's programs, please call us at 617-926-4100 and ask for Information & Consultation or visit www.springwell.com.

Healthy Waltham: Bridging the Digital Divide



Springwell's Donlyn Cannella, meets with Betsy Leutz and Laura San Juan of Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging (left) to discuss the "Welcome to the Digital Age" series of workshops (center & right) funded with Older American Act funds.

As an Area Agency on Aging, Springwell develops an Area Plan on Aging every 4 years. In 2020, Springwell's area planning process started with a needs assessment that included large and small virtual public gatherings, focus groups, and surveys. Older adults, caregivers, and professionals participated, allowing Springwell to gather a wide range of views. One of the newly identified issues this year was a need for better access to digital technology and training in the use of technology to reduce social isolation for older adults. With this need and others identified, Springwell put out a request for grant proposals to meet the identified needs. Healthy Waltham had uncovered a similar need for digital technology in working with older adults during the pandemic and responded with a grant request for a well-designed program to meet the need in Waltham.

Healthy Waltham and Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging have long worked together to provide in-person programs and events for older adults. In 2020, along with many others, they shifted to virtual events but realized that many older adults in the community weren't able to participate due to the lack of a computer and/or internet connection. Devoted volunteers Laura San Juan and Betsy Leutz spearheaded the group's effort to respond with a new program to solve this lack of access and changed the lives of many older adults in Waltham.

With support for laptops and internet connectivity from Tech Goes Home Boston and a grant from Springwell for training lined up, they got to work. While following pandemic precautions, volunteers went door to door seeking those who were interested. Low-income applicants had to show a desire for learning the skills, a plan for using the

technology, and a commitment to the 16-hour virtual training class. They delivered the computers and hot spots in parking lots and showed users the basics from 6 feet apart outside. Bilingual instruction in Spanish and English was offered. The first virtual course taught 24 older adults ranging in age from mid 60s to late 80s.

Participants report being delighted to get in touch with family and friends, order groceries online, make medical appointments online, and shop online. The group learned how to create documents and greeting cards. The social connections combatted loneliness. One man in his mid-60s reports that since he can't do physical work anymore, he is glad to have computer skills on his resume so that he can get a job doing data entry. Another participant loved the course so much that she got two friends to sign up the next time it was offered and brought them to the Senior Center herself because they didn't know where to go.

Betsy and Laura share that they are happy to be "helping people who weren't feeling connected in Waltham. Now that COVID numbers are lower, we are meeting at the Senior Center, and this helps people feel more connected. They feel welcome and see there are more resources for them as well." Betsy adds, "this is the most rewarding volunteer work I have ever done. It changes peoples lives." Springwell is honored to support this valuable training course with grant funding.

did you know?

Springwell's latest Area Plan on Aging was published in September of 2021 and can be found on our website, along with more information about the planning process, and the complete list of grantee organizations helping us to meet the needs identified by the communities we serve. Learn more at www.springwell.com under the "About Us" tab.

CEO Notes



March of 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the national Senior Nutrition Program. Funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA), local senior nutrition programs like Springwell's serve as hubs for older adults to access nutritious meals and other vital services that strengthen social connections and promote health and wellbeing.

To celebrate this golden anniversary, Springwell teamed up with our sister agency, BayPath Elder Services, to offer an online educational seminar on March 24th about how senior nutrition programs can help individuals aged 60+ and their families. These programs combat senior hunger and malnutrition while helping seniors stay in their homes and connected to their communities. The recorded webinar is available on our website at www.springwell.com/mealsinfo.

-Trish Smith, Springwell CEO



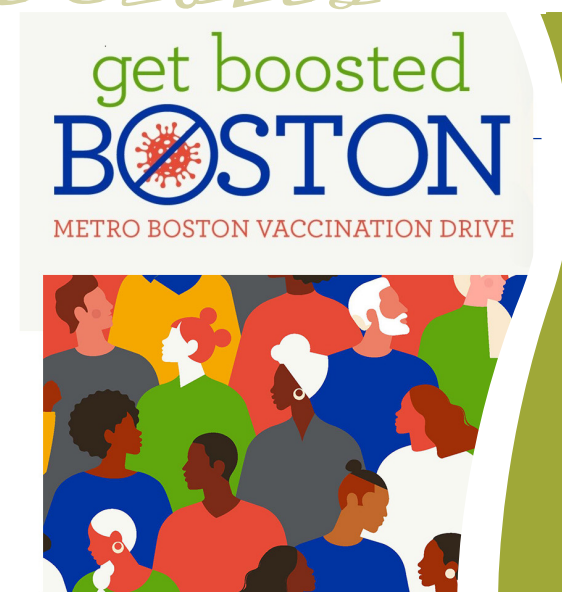
Springwell's Role in Vaccination Efforts

Springwell is joining with other area service providers in a campaign to encourage COVID-19 booster shots.

The Metro Boston Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) was recently awarded a grant from the Administration for Community Living to promote COVID-19 booster vaccinations to the populations they serve. The Metro Boston ADRC is comprised of community organizations that support older adults, persons with disabilities, and their caregivers: Boston Center for Independent Living, Minuteman Senior Services, Mystic Valley Elder Services, Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, and Springwell.

The grant-funded campaign, "Get Boosted Boston," includes direct mail, print advertisements, and online resources through a comprehensive website, GetBoostedBoston.org, all of which provide multiple options on how to make vaccine booster appointments. The information is available in multiple languages and provides links to find local appointments via Vaxfinder and pop-up mobile clinics online. If access to the internet is a problem, there is the phone alternative of calling 2-1-1, and if someone is unable to leave their home, they may call (833) 983-0485 to arrange an in-home booster.

Now that almost 1.4 million adults aged 60 and above in the Commonwealth are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination booster, this team approach to promote and facilitate access to COVID-19 vaccination and booster doses is vital to protect those they serve, as well as the overall population.



"There are multiple options on how to make a vaccine booster appointment."

Board Profile: Yolanda Rodriguez

community minded



Yolanda, at our 40th anniversary in 2017 (right) and at our CEO reception in 2019 (left), is always happy to help Springwell in whatever capacity she is asked. Board representation from across our communities is essential to Springwell's mission.

Yolanda Rodriguez, a native of Brookline and longtime Math teacher and department head in Wellesley Public Schools, thrives in retirement by learning new things. The civic-minded Rodriguez is finishing her third and final 3-year term on Springwell's Board of Directors. A number of years ago, she attended exercise classes at the Brookline Council on Aging (COA), liked the active organization, and was soon elected to the board there. Later, she became the COA representative on the Springwell Board. Rodriguez was delighted to be on the board: "Springwell is a wonderful place to be. I wasn't familiar with the organization before I joined the Council on Aging. It was an eye opener to learn about the hard work Springwell does for seniors in the community. People who work at Springwell really care."

During her time on the board, Yolanda served as both clerk and treasurer, and she contributed in a number of substantive ways to the governance of the organization, including her role in the search for a new CEO in 2019.

Her favorite role at the agency, however, was as a member of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Advisory Council. In its capacity as a federally designated AAA, Springwell coordinates and offers services that help older adults remain in their homes if that is their preference. Springwell conducts periodic assessments to evaluate the needs of this priority population and emphasizes meeting the needs of lower income, minority, socially-isolated and non-English speaking older adults. Based on the assessment results, Springwell requests proposals for grants to meet those needs. Rodriguez shares that "the council reads the proposals, rates them based on the needs, and recommends ones for final approval. Grants are awarded for amazing proposals from remarkable organizations that support the wellbeing of older adults."

"Being on the board was a wonderful opportunity for me to learn and help. I feel good about all the work Springwell does and will miss the people."



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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.