



springwell

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source

News for Older Adults, Caregivers, & Partners in Supporting Health & Independence

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Community Choices: A vital resource

Christopher Corrigan, author, advocate for teachers, and geology enthusiast, is grateful for Springwell and a program that makes aging at home possible

At 73, Christopher Corrigan's life, living alone trying to manage many health challenges, looks very different from what it was like just four years ago. Some things remain the same, though. In his Framingham apartment, his collection of rocks and books highlights his enthusiasm for geology and literature. As the younger brother of Christa McAuliffe, one of the teachers who died in the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger accident, Christopher spent years advocating for teachers in memory of his sister. He has been an active member of the Framingham community, and for much of his career he

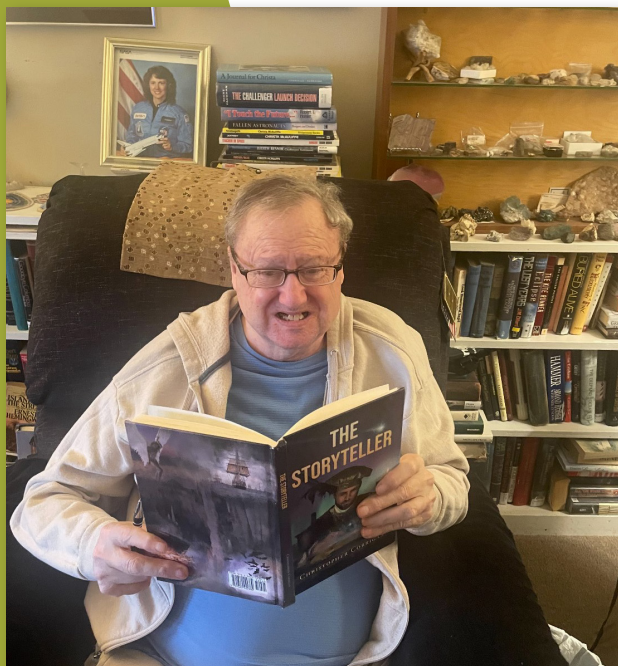
worked as an inventory manager at Framingham State University. He shares his life with his long-term girlfriend, Aurora.

However, as happens to some people as they age, in 2021 Christopher faced an unexpected and rapid decline in health that caused him to fall repeatedly and sustain injuries. He now requires in-home care around the clock to stay safe. His Social Security income was not sufficient to afford the help he needed. Aurora made career sacrifices to cut back on work and care for him. She also personally paid for expensive aides to assist Christopher while she was at work. They knew this arrangement was not sustainable and worried about what would happen to Christopher.

Fortunately, Christopher and Aurora learned about Springwell. Christopher's Springwell case manager, Evan Wilson (see inside), helped them navigate potentially helpful programs and services. Evan helped Christopher apply for MassHealth Standard and the Frail Elder waiver. As a result, Christopher qualified for the Community Choices Program and can now stay in his home safely. He receives around-the-clock services on weekdays so that Aurora

can work full-time and care for him on weekends. Without these state and federally funded benefits and Springwell, Christopher would have to go to a nursing home. Aging at home is the first choice for most older adults in our communities, and Springwell's mission is to help people like Christopher age safely at home if that is their wish.

To learn more about the services Springwell can offer to help support the challenges that come with aging, visit our website at www.springwell.com or call 617-926-4100.



Getting Out and About

community outreach



Meetings with staff at Springwell’s twenty-two Councils on Aging and Senior Centers have helped strengthen our working relationships throughout our service area. Larry Poirier, Outreach Manager (center left) recently held a joint meeting with Julia Schneiderman (left) and Kim Carson (center right) from Hopkinton, as well as Cynthia Listewnik (right) of Holliston.



A top priority at Springwell since our 2022 merger has been getting better acquainted with key organizations in the twenty-two communities we now serve. By better understanding how services for older adults are delivered in each town, we are learning who we can partner with to help support healthy aging and how to enrich those partnerships. Larry Poirier, Springwell’s Outreach Manager, calls himself the “boots on the ground” in this work. “Building relationships leads to partnerships to find solutions to the problems our community faces. We work together for the sake of the people we serve,” shares Poirier.

Cynthia Listewnik, MSW, Outreach Coordinator for the Town of Holliston Senior Center, says she often contacts Springwell to connect people with resources and has found everyone very responsive and helpful. She started working closely with Poirier last summer after he visited the Center and provided an overview of Springwell services and resources. Listewnik began attending the regular meetings of Outreach Coordinators led by Donlyn Cannella, Director of Community Services at Springwell. “I appreciate being part of these conversations to address the needs we are seeing in the community,” she noted.

Listewnik and Poirier are also working together to recruit local volunteers to serve as Friendly Visitors in Holliston. Listewnik shared, “Holliston’s

older adults are part of the nationwide epidemic of loneliness. If we can get people to re-engage through Springwell’s Friendly Visitor program, they will be healthier and happier.” The two have also worked together to bring Springwell’s Pathways program for LGBTQIA+ older adults to Holliston. These are two examples of the types of partnerships Springwell is striving for in each of our twenty-two communities.

“As the relationships with our community partners develop, there will continue to be more areas where we can work together for the sake of the older adults and families living in our shared communities,” concluded Poirier.

did you know?

There are Springwell programs that can help with some of the key issues associated with aging well on your own terms, including:

- Assessing, placing, and managing in-home services
- Supporting family caregivers
- Making your goals known
- Managing finances
- Planning for desired end of life care

If you would like to speak with an Assessment Specialist, call Springwell at 617-926-4100 and ask to speak with the Information and Referral Department.

CEO Notes

payment sources



Medicare and Medicaid are the two types of government-run health insurance programs that allow those in need to access healthcare, but it’s important to understand the difference between the two. Medicare is federal health insurance primarily for people 65 or older. Medicare-related bills are paid from two trust funds held by the U.S. Treasury. Different sources (including payroll taxes and funds that Congress authorizes) fund the trust funds. People with Medicare also pay part of the costs through monthly premiums for medical and drug coverage, deductibles, and coinsurance.

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps cover medical costs for some people with limited income and resources. The federal government has general rules that all state Medicaid programs must follow, but each state runs its own program. In Massachusetts, Medicaid is called MassHealth. MassHealth offers benefits that Medicare doesn’t normally cover, like nursing home care and personal care services such as those offered by Springwell. People with MassHealth usually don’t pay anything for covered medical expenses but may owe a small co-payment for some items or services.

-Trish Smith, Springwell CEO

Evan Wilson: Case Manager of the Year

service excellence

Last November, Springwell staff attended the Massachusetts Home Care Aide Council’s annual celebration and learned that Evan Wilson, a Care Manager Team Leader at Springwell, was nominated for and won their Case Manager of the Year Award for 2024.

For the older adults and families who work with Evan every day, like Christopher and Aurora (see front page), this award would not come as a surprise. For Evan, it is a validation of a career move he made a few years ago to try to have a more hands-on positive impact in his community. While his previous career managing a retail grocery store might not seem like a natural conduit to his work as a Springwell Care Manager, for Evan, it was a daily window into the commonality of the human experience and the struggles we all eventually face.

Evan grew up in Wrentham and is a proud Massachusetts native with an interest in all the ways the Commonwealth has put in place programs to help our most vulnerable residents, including the founding of the Aging Service Access Point network in the 1970s. Evan joined Springwell in the summer of 2022 and concurrently went back to school to pursue a social work degree, which he plans on finishing soon. Eventually, he hopes to become a Home Care Supervisor.

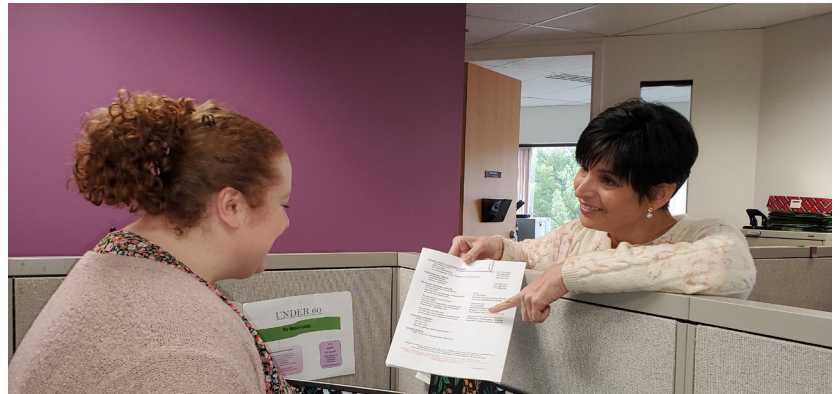
Evan loves working with older adults, bringing a sense of respect and curiosity to each new person who joins his caseload. According to Evan, “I came to this job to help people who are struggling - I feel a sense of connection and an obligation to help. I get to talk to people in all walks of life every day. The stories and the story-telling are my favorite part.”



“It is a privilege to help people plan for the outcome that is important to them.”

Springwell's Information & Referral Department

our front door



Members of Springwell's I&R team (left to right): supervisor Jeanne Shapiro and I&R Specialists Lynn Nigro, Caitlin Craig, & Patricia Foglia take a collaborative approach to finding resources and solving the problems that come up for callers.

"We welcome calls from anyone seeking information about aging or caregiving," shares Jeanne Shapiro, Information & Referral Supervisor. The Information & Referral (I&R) team assists thousands of individuals and families, as well as other community professionals each year. They provide expert information, navigational support, and referrals to helpful and necessary services. The I&R team is Springwell's front door, the place to start whether you have a need or a question, or you are just overwhelmed by the challenges of aging.

The team's seven I&R Specialists complete forty hours of ongoing education annually to keep up to date on relevant resources and information. They compile and maintain up-to-date information on services and resources, and they manage all Springwell referrals for home care services, home-delivered meals, caregiver support, money management, nursing home placement screenings, and more.

The "information" part of I&R means providing information in multiple categories based on the situation. Many callers are looking for solutions to common problems that arise with aging, like the need for in-home services or meals. Others seek help with a specific need such as understanding their Medicare plan options, learning about MassHealth programs, connecting with an ombudsman, or accessing a list of transportation options for their town. About 75% of calls come from individuals and family members; the rest come from professionals including health care providers, social workers, and senior center or housing authority staff. Services and resources may be private or state or federally funded. Lynn Nigro, I&R Specialist, states that

their goal is to "increase awareness and decrease misconceptions" about available help for challenges related to aging.

Our I&R Specialists listen attentively and ask clarifying questions to understand each caller's unique situation. "I recently took a call that was very typical. A woman was concerned about her uncle with advancing dementia who lives alone. She didn't know where to get help for her uncle as his needs evolve," notes Patricia Foglia, I&R Specialist. "First, I asked about the overall situation. Is there an adequate informal support system now or is more needed? I talked about setting up a health care proxy, how to apply for public benefits and manage her uncle's assets. I told her about home care for current needs and about choices if her uncle needs a different living situation later. She was relieved to learn about these care services and resources. I sent her more information about all the topics and told her to call back if she has additional questions."

Springwell welcomes everyone at their front door. I&R specialists are ready to respond to phone calls, answer email sent through the web portal, or schedule an in-person meeting at offices in Waltham or Marlborough. What questions do you have?



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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 Aging & Independence, 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.