



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

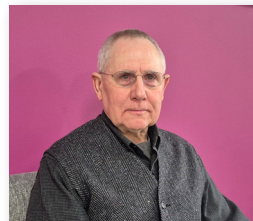
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## “I Know Them All By Name”

*Meal deliveries bring meaningful & lifesaving connections to both sides of the door*

Among those over the age of 60, 43% report feeling lonely, and 24% are considered socially isolated; at the same time, more than 90% of older adults want to remain in their current homes as they age.

Springwell works closely with thousands of older adults each year to help address both of these challenges that can come with aging.

Janet has lived in her Natick home for 65 years, after coming from West Virginia for work. She and her husband, Milt, raised their children here and hosted family gatherings, living a full life. As her children grew up, they married and had children of their own; Milt died in 2013; and the large



family gatherings that everyone loves have moved to her children’s homes. Janet remains strongly connected to her family, but she also spends many hours alone in a home that she loves and doesn’t want to leave, despite being a social person.

In recent years, Janet had a dwindling appetite and some health and mobility challenges that raised concerns about her ability to continue living on her own. Meals on Wheels was the answer she and her family were looking for on many different fronts. By receiving a nutritious meal delivered by a friendly volunteer, Janet was able to get extra nutritious food to address her low appetite and a daily wellness check that made everyone more comfortable with her living at home alone. Janet says that she likes the food – especially when there is spinach on the menu – which helps with her appetite.

And, a few years ago, a wellness check helped to save Janet’s life. One Sunday evening, during a regular call with one of her children, Janet mentioned not feeling quite right. By morning, she was quite ill and was unable to answer the door to receive her meal, causing the driver to implement the program’s “no answer” protocol. Springwell staff called one of Janet’s daughters, who

immediately went to Janet’s home. By that time, Janet was nearing sepsis, and she was taken to the hospital where she made a full recovery. Janet’s children now check-in with their mother every morning themselves, but they also continue to be grateful to Meals on Wheels for being an added steady, daily presence in Janet’s life.

Another unexpected bonus of the Meals on Wheels Program for Janet has been developing friendships with the drivers, just one of the ways this service has helped

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# Congregate Housing Program

*support, stability*



Springwell partners with the Newton Housing Authority to provide on-site care coordination staff at the Newton Congregate Housing Program (left). Springwell's Lily Corridan (right) meets with residents like Stuart Phillips (center) weekly.

About a year ago, Stuart began the process of rebuilding his life. He moved into the Newton congregare housing site with the help of his Springwell care manager, after experiencing a series of difficult losses as well as a destabilized housing situation with a friend. The death of his beloved son to cancer at age 46 and a "TIA" or mini-stroke (which aggravated his stroke symptoms from twenty-five years ago) left him vulnerable, but Springwell services have provided a new foundation for moving forward.

As something of a hybrid between a traditional retirement or assisted living community and an independent senior housing building, congregare housing emphasizes communal living and on-site services while still providing some private living spaces for residents. The idea is to create a community where older adults can maintain or re-build independence while benefiting from shared resources and activities. Congregare housing fosters a close-knit community where residents can engage with one another. Regularly planned group activities, communal dining areas, and shared recreational spaces make it easy for residents to build meaningful connections. Stuart says it reminds him of living in the Brown University dorms back in the 1970s – the people are older and the personalities can be strong, but the sense of safety and community is what he needs right now.

Ultimately, Stuart would like to be living in his own one-bedroom apartment, but at this point in his life, he values his place in the Newton Congregate program. He has been unstoppable in his commitment to his recovery, completing physical therapy once after his stroke and again after a broken hip, but he still feels fragile. Recently, Stuart fell in the shower of the congregare housing's shared

bathroom facilities, and one of his housemates called 911, staying with him until the ambulance arrived. As Stuart says, "Right now I feel so vulnerable, it's good to have people around. If I'm not making noise, I know that people will check on me."

He also appreciates the on-site presence once a week of Springwell Care Coordinator, Lily, another key feature of the congregare program. Together, Stuart and Lily identify his current priorities and problem-solve challenges as they come up – and Lily helps Stuart compile what he is calling "Nate Notes," memories and anecdotes of his son that he will one day share with his grandchildren.

*did you know?*

Congregate housing provides shared living arrangements for older adults and people with disabilities in affordable housing locations. The Congregate Housing program includes coordinators who work with the housing providers to ensure a stable environment and foster a sense of community. Additionally, coordinators help residents to access community resources, manage issues that arise from shared living, and plan social activities.

In Congregate Housing, residents have their own private bedroom and may share the kitchen, dining, and bathroom areas with other residents.

There are currently over 40 Congregate Housing sites in Massachusetts that have the collective capacity to house approximately 500 residents.

# CEO Notes

*funding updates*



Massachusetts' Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) like Springwell provide essential services that help older adults and people with disabilities remain safe, healthy, and independent in their communities. A significant portion of Springwell's annual budget is made up of state and federal contracts to offer these services in our twenty-two greater Boston and MetroWest communities. Each spring, the Commonwealth budgeting process offers both opportunities and challenges in our efforts to to strengthen the community-based supports that prevent crises, reduce costly institutional care, and stabilize the aging services network. Springwell is a part of Mass Aging Access, a membership organization of ASAPs that advocates for the network and articulates our priorities in the budgeting process. This year, Mass Aging Access is focused on priorities related to our Nutrition Programs, Options and SHINE counseling, the MA Home Care Program, and the Supportive and Congregate housing programs. To view fact sheets on these legislative and budget priorities, visit our "Funding Updates - 2026" blog post at [www.springwell.com](http://www.springwell.com).

-Trish Smith, Springwell CEO

# "I Know Them All by Name"

*delivery friends*

*(continued from page 1)*

her spend her days at home when her family isn't with her. Janet has had a number of volunteer delivery drivers, currently a different one each day of the week. "I know them all by name," notes Janet, and she enjoys chatting with all of them – one is an identical twin just like two of her great grandchildren – but she really loves it when she makes a deeper connection. That happened with her Friday driver, Paige, a fellow transplant from the south. The home-delivered meal that brought them together sparked conversations about shared Southern food traditions and their shared love of community service (Janet and Milt volunteered for the Natick Service Council for years). Before long, Janet and Paige were chatting at length during each delivery.

Paige understands how much older people love visits, and she became a home-delivered meal driver for Springwell as a way to provide service to her community and to connect with people who might be lonely. She finds that the effort has enriched her life as well. Paige delivers about twelve meals every Friday, including Janet's, and enjoys the weekly check-in and chat. While her relationship with Janet is special, Paige looks forward to seeing each of the people on her route and is always excited to see a new address pop up because it is an opportunity to make yet another new friend and deepen her connection and commitment to her community. She knows how important her role is on many levels.

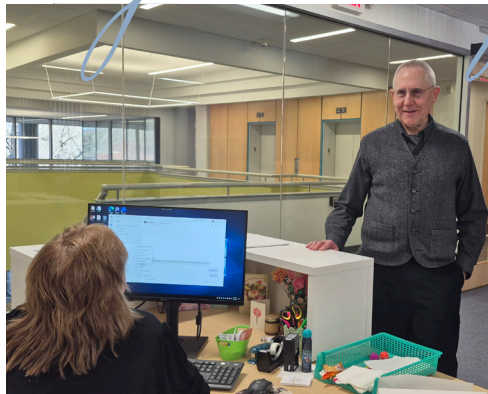
To learn more about the Home-Delivered Meals Program or becoming a volunteer, visit our website at [www.springwell.com](http://www.springwell.com).



*"Paige understands how much older people love visits, and she finds that the effort has enriched her life as well."*

# Brian Collins: Money Management Volunteer

*making a difference*



Springwell Money Management volunteer Brian Collins (left) arrives at the Springwell offices (center) for a meeting with MMP Program Manager, Sue Burns (far right), to check-in about the support services he is currently offering to a recent scam victim.

Shortly after Brian retired in 2019 from his job as a portfolio manager and family trust officer, an alert in his senior center newsletter about the volunteer Money Management Program caught his eye. He recognized that the program would fit nicely with what he did for a living and thought that it would be interesting to see what money management would be like on the other end the spectrum from the high-net-worth individuals he worked with professionally. In some ways, the work has been incredibly eye-opening, but fundamentally, his experience in working with people around the sensitive issue of money has been the common denominator in Brian's transition to serving as an MMP volunteer.

Brian has had four matches in the Money Management Program so far. While his first match was a very brief one, Brian soon had two concurrent longer-term matches: one with a 92-year old woman, "Jane," who struggled with the influence and demands of her children on her very low income; and the other with "Lyndon," a 74-year old contemporary who was a stroke survivor facing social isolation. With Jane, the problem she was facing was straightforward and financially focused, and Brian was able to help her protect her income. With Lyndon, Brian recognized both a kindred spirit and someone who was missing the opportunity for stimulating conversation. They enjoyed digressions into current events and Boston sports teams while Brian worked on physically writing checks, advocating

with the housing authority, and helping Lyndon with recertifications of his rental subsidy and MassHealth coverage.

When Brian moved in 2024, a different volunteer took over these relationships and Brian asked Sue Burns, MMP Manager, to consider matching him with a new client. According to Sue, "Matches are largely about chemistry and trust. Having an experienced and professional volunteer like Brian opens up the possibility of helping older adults with more complex financial problems." Sue matched Brian with "Betty" in early 2025, while she was in the midst of dealing with the fallout of a romance scam in which she was persuaded to buy cellphones and tablets with cellular services attached and ship them to the scammers. She lost nearly all of her modest savings to the scam, and Brian has helped her adjust her budget and prioritize the payments of essential expenses.

According to Betty, "Both Brian and Sue are absolutely wonderful. Brian is so astute. Together we decide which things I can pay for, and I listen to him because he knows his job." Brian is philosophical about his experience in the Money Management Program, saying, "It's nice to be helpful, and it keeps me stimulated and learning new things." For Sue, a volunteer like Brian is a true asset to the program – his professionalism, his knowledge-base, and his ability to work with a wide variety of clients is invaluable.

To learn more about the Money Management Program and becoming a volunteer, visit our website at [springwell.com](http://springwell.com).



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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.