



New Living Well/Ending Well Series in Partnership with the Boston Public Library

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By Barbara Roop

Nearly 20 years ago, neighbors who wanted to take control of their futures began sharing their ideas about how to stay in the neighborhoods and homes they loved. The result was Beacon Hill Village. Its success started a quiet revolution in how to think positively about aging. It also showed how important our daily choices – as individuals and as members of a community – can be to our health and happiness.

The Living Well/Ending Well series grew out of that revolution. It is a work in progress with a constant goal: to empower Village members to make informed choices about living today and planning for tomorrow. Its lectures and small group conversations combine expert knowledge presentations with opportunities for members to discuss them and share their experiences.

Initially, three Village members, Betsy Peterson and Karen Garvin of Beacon Hill and Murray Frank of the South End, teamed up to find a way to help Village members think about their futures, get needed information, and share their experiences. The first thought was to start a book group. They soon realized they could do much more. Betsy had recently led a series of conversations on “Tough Topics” – issues like end of life planning, downsizing, and communicating your wishes to families, friends and doctors. The team thought these were a valuable start and got to work on a new series.

Joan Bragen of Back Bay, Elizabeth Cook of Downtown Waterfront, Mary Fruen of the Fenway, and Stephen Roop of Beacon Hill joined the team with new ideas and contacts. Kate Sciacca, RN, MSN joined to run wellness programs on topics from nutrition to skin care. In 2016, the Living Well Ending Well Committee was formally constituted with Karen Garvin as chair. The first LWEW series began that fall.

Each year, the LWEW series has become richer and more varied. The Committee began searching for larger venues more convenient to the many Village members who live far beyond

Beacon Hill so its expert speakers could reach larger audiences. With Murray Frank's assistance, that search has come to a successful conclusion: the 2019-2020 series will be offered in partnership with the Boston Public Library at the Central Library, Copley Square.

On September 17 at 2:00, Dr. Fadi Ramadan from Tufts Medical Center kicks off the ten-lecture series at the BPL's Commonwealth Salon with "The Aging Brain: When to Worry." On October 15 at 2:00, Kathleen McInnis-Dittrich, PhD will update us on Medicare changes and Medigap options in time for open enrollment in November. In the following months through June 2020, the series addresses a range of topics: Fall Prevention, The Gift of Information: Wills and Beyond, Palliative Care, Macular Degeneration, Advances in Cancer Treatment, and Housing Options. The lecture series will wrap up in June 2020 with a presentation from Ashton Applewhite, the author of *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*.

Kate Sciacca, RN, MSN, will kick off the small group conversations with Kidney Health, September 9 at 5:30 at Beacon House. We expect to schedule twenty-one small group conversations through June 2020. They will, for the most part, expand on the lecture series in a setting that invites members to discuss, question, and share their experiences. Some will be hands-on workshops. Most will be scheduled at both the BPL and Beacon House thanks to our partnership with the BPL and the generosity of our small group leaders.

Many thanks to the LWEW Committee for this landmark achievement: Joan Bragen, Murray Frank, Mary Fruen, Karen Garvin, Betsy Peterson, Barbara Roop (chair), Stephen Roop, and Kate Sciacca. New committee members are always welcome.

Join us. Learning together, whether from experts or each other, empowers us to age well.