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Newton at Home has been organized to enable Newton residents to age at home comfortably, independently, and with peace of mind through a membership-based organization that offers access to comprehensive practical services and fosters social support and a sense of community.

For more information call 617-795-2560 or go to <http://newtonathome.org>

Letter from our Executive Director

Greetings,

This spring brings us our first birthday, officially on April 21st. Even while we are revving up to celebrate in style with a proper birthday party, we rejoice daily that we are steadily adding new members and also because so many of our initial members are now renewing their membership.



Since many members joined Newton at Home in 2011 during the few

months leading up to our opening, those memberships are now coming due. In great numbers, they are renewing and letting us know that they appreciate what we have brought into their lives.

We have scheduled our first birthday celebration for Wednesday, May 9, in the Nordic Hall at the Scandinavian Living Center. We are inviting members, volunteers and donors and encourage each of you to bring a prospective member, volunteer, or donor to the event.

Invitations will be sent in April.

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Programming Full Steam Ahead

By Naomi Shore

With the appointment of Judy Simson as part-time Program Coordinator and the creation of a new Program Planning Committee in January, Newton at Home moved into 2012 with tremendous energy focused on expanding our social and cultural activities. The many events on our calendars for the past few months certainly bear witness to their success. And according to Judy and committee members, there is much more to come!

Bob Read, a Programming Planning Committee member, says, "Our hope is that the variety of social groups and cultural events will offer an opportunity for every member to participate in something he or she is interested in. We feel it is a major part of our mission to make our village of Newton at Home a real village where people know each other."

Judy comes to her position after working as a marketing manager for two publishing companies and an online college. Her duties at another company included conference event management for IT companies. In addition, during the past year Judy served as a volunteer in the office and on the NAH Marketing and Communications Committee.

Under Judy's leadership, the seven-member committee has utilized its' members natural interests. Those involved in music are looking at concerts and opera. Those interested in art are planning trips to local museums and special exhibits. Those who like theater are arranging trips and tickets to plays. Those interested in organizing affinity groups will be sending email surveys to members asking them to update their interest in possible activities such as gardening, book clubs, political and current

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Executive Director (Cont'd)

I am pleased to report that we reached an all-time high in service requests, 106, in the “short” month of February. As usual, we were able to fulfill about 98 percent of these requests through the efforts of our amazing volunteers.

We recently found a new way to recruit more volunteers. We asked the city-wide PTO to put information about us in one of their email blasts. We received replies from several mothers who are happy to respond to requests while their children are in school. In addition, we got replies from parents who want to make helping an NAH member a family service activity.

For example, we have a mother and two children, who, together, are cooking a meal for a member every other Wednesday and then spending time with that member for conversation. This delights us in two ways: we are able to provide a service and companionship for that member; and we are developing another inter-generational activity, that is an important part of our mission. Having the PTO members respond so generously makes another Newton institution part of our “village” as well.

As we continue to move forward, we are increasing our outreach to educate NAH members about the many ways they can use our services. (See Notes from the Field, page 4.) And, we have hired Judy Simson as part-time Program and Events Coordinator to expand our social programming and activities and have formed a new and very energetic Program Planning Committee. (See Programming Full Steam Ahead on page 1).

Sincerely,

Maureen Grannan, *Executive Director*

Programming (Cont'd)

events discussions, and sporting events, including college games.

Because the committee members are very knowledgeable in their chosen fields, they are looking at upcoming opportunities with keen eyes. For example Christine Kodis, who arranged events at the Goethe Institute in Boston during her professional life, plans to explore the possibility of advanced ticket sales to the Metropolitan Opera’s simulcasts in HD shown in selected theatres in Massachusetts. Christine says these tickets sell out immediately, even the pre-sales. She is also talking about an unusual presentation of Haydn’s Creation by Emmanuel Music in May.

Bob Pill knows that there are over 70 theaters in the Boston area. For some time, he has run a course in musical theater for the Brandeis Lifelong Learning Institute. “I think most of our members have enjoyed good plays and musicals,” says Bob. He is hoping to arrange theater outings that will engage a lot more members. Both he and Christine emphasized that they would love to get feedback from members on what would appeal to them.

Judy suggests that besides responding to the email surveys, people call her when she is in the NAH office on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and tell her about their preferences. She and the committee are also looking for feedback after an event takes place. She adds that this is an amazing committee, whose members “are all very committed. They are very concerned about meeting the needs of NAH members.”

Anyone interested in joining the committee or planning an event or group meeting can also call her at 617-795-2560 or email her at: programcoord@newtonathome.org.



Save the Date, Wednesday, May 9th
Newton at Home's

First Birthday Party
at the Scandinavian Living Center

Volunteer Spotlight

By Naomi Shore

Our volunteers, who are currently responding to about 98 percent of our service requests and help us staff our office and our committees, come from all ages and backgrounds. In this issue, we are delighted to highlight both a retired office manager and a college student.

Eleanor Ames managed her husband's law office and worked as his legal secretary for many years. Then, she worked as a secretary in the office of Congregation Mishkan Tefila where she was the typewriter specialist. Eventually, she retired to begin her volunteer life. She came to our office over a year ago to answer our phones and do other secretarial tasks. She volunteers one morning each week.



Eleanor says she likes greeting and helping people and is happy to report that members are grateful for the help she supplies. "It's nice talking with nice people." She also loves working with Maureen Grannan, our executive director, because "she always treats everyone, including volunteers, with warmth and care." Eleanor does not use the computer. She says she is content to leave that to the more technically savvy. But wielding her pen and paper to help Newton at Home members gives her great satisfaction.

Matt LoRusso, who is from Medfield, is a senior at Boston College studying economics. He found NAH on a BC web site listing volunteer opportunities. He called and spoke to volunteer coordinator Julie Plaut Mahoney and decided she would be a great person with whom to work.



He started out in the office but has moved to doing multiple service tasks for members in their homes. He has programmed answering machines, debugged computer software, repositioned paintings and furniture, mowed lawns, and helped cultivate tomato plants. He says he keeps doing things for us "because everyone is so appreciative and thankful for my help, and they all welcome me into their homes."

Now Matt is looking for a position in financial services. During the school year, he has appreciated how flexible volunteering for NAH can be. He says he will continue volunteering while he can. He has found it good to get away from college once a week and that working with members and staff is very enjoyable.

Fessenden School/Newton at Home Reading Group

By Marguerite McDonald

This reading group was organized by Dubs Dickey, a member of Newton at Home's Board of Directors and an active volunteer. Her goal was to bring together members of Newton at Home and students in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades at the Fessenden School. A survey at the annual meeting revealed that many members were interested in reading and interacting with young students. This inter-generational reading group was organized with the hope of providing insights for both NAH members and students. The story was "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber.

Our first sight of the school was that of a tall, soft colored, beige building. The landscape with arms wide open was manicured, tidy, clean, and well organized. Not much life showing on the outside ... no sounds ... granted, it was a school day and the students were in class. The sun was out -- bright, warm, and daisy yellow.

Upon entering the school, we saw the entryway wall filled with comical pictures of the teachers dressed in colorful costumes and a stuffed bear standing guard at the door. Floors were brightly polished and there was plenty of warm honey colored woodwork. We made our way down the hallway to the library and saw the students sitting at tables talking to one another, solving some problem. It was odd to hear talking in a library.

We were invited to have lunch prepared by the school. The sight of the laden lunch table was that of glorious colors of yellow, red, blue, beige, white, brown, and green. Everything was well presented and looked very appetizing. The striking palate of colors that first struck me turned out to be delicious, as promised.

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Fessenden (Cont'd)

We were divided into two groups around tables and started to eat and listen to one of the boys read the research he had done on Thurber and the story of Walter Mitty. He sat down and all of us started to talk. Dubs presented questions given to her by a NAH member who was unable to attend. All of the NAH members and the boys spoke up. Some of us liked the story, some not.



Newton at Home member Waltrud Lampe discusses "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" over lunch with one of the Fessenden students.

I thought that the story was very sad. Do we all have day dreams? Yes, that is when many of us accidentally discover some of our best creative ideas. Does anyone have a secret? Yes, and we all wear masks too. The boys, when talking, were articulate, self-assured, and not timid about speaking up and looking us in the eye. What wonderful men they will become as adults!

The time passed quickly. We watched part of the Danny Kaye movie based on the Mitty story on a computer. Ugh! None of us liked it.

The boys quickly cleaned the tables and got everything back in order. They gave us their thanks, said their good-byes, and went off to their classes. It was nice to see such well-mannered, well-dressed and well-spoken young men.

And off, we, the adults, went to the bright sunny outside and drove home. Dubs was the one who drove me there and back. I am so fortunate to have people from Newton at Home getting me out and also doing all sorts of important things in my home that I can no longer manage myself.

Notes from the Field

Elie Kritzman, a new member and volunteer, comes into the office every Wednesday afternoon to call members we have not heard from recently. She asks if there is anything we can do for them, for example, asking someone who reported she has been ill, "Oh, do you need juice or anything else from the store? We can get it for you."

Evelyn Flynn said, "I can't believe that the president of NAH drove me to my appointment. She was wonderful and very nice."

Waltrud Lampe was delighted to have **Paul Lipsitt** drive her to the dentist. "He is a real gentleman."

Katherine Jones asked **Joe Verdone** to fix some dining room chairs, but the chairs were not fixable. Temple Emanuel was giving away chairs so Joe brought them to the Jones home for them to use.

Other comments include:

"Gee I called in a service request and 5 minutes later I got a reply!"

"I just joined a couple of weeks ago and already have had so much help and a couple of rides to the doctor. I am so happy that I joined NAH!"

"Thank you so much for sending this lovely lady Deborah for my transport to the dentist. We had a nice time together."



Newton at Home members Marguerite McDonald, center, and Kathy McCarty, right, discuss "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" with members of the Fessenden school community.

