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Editor: Naomi Shore
Designer: Garrow Throop
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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

Welcome to the fall issue of Connections.

This has been a very productive summer and fall at Newton at Home.

Newton at Home is now serving more than 135 members. We continue to define and develop innovative ways to support adults “aging in community” in their condos, apartments, and retirement communities as well as in private homes. New members continue to join every month.

We fulfill 85 percent of member requests for direct services with our dedicated volunteers, including transportation, handyman tasks, home companions, walking buddies, gardening, sewing repairs, de-cluttering, and computer tutors. In the months of July and August, transportation requests to the airport, day surgery and physician visits, and cultural and educational events increased by a third. And close to a third of our members do volunteer work themselves and truly are neighbors helping neighbors. Please read the article on page 3 on Volunteerism to learn

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Annual Meeting Planned for December 4th

Join us in celebrating Newton's newest village – ours!

Newton at Home members, their guests, and all Newton residents are invited to celebrate the creation of Newton's newest village, ours, at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 4, at Newton North High School's cafeteria from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

By creating an organization that promotes connections among members and volunteers and enables Newton residents of all ages to help their neighbors, we have created a new kind of Newton village, every bit as real and cohesive as any of the traditional Newton enclaves.

At the Annual Meeting there will be a short formal program. It will include first-hand accounts from members and volunteers, introduced by Arlene Lowney, our Executive Director. Julie Plaut Mahoney, our

Coordinator of Volunteers, will lead a question and answer session with one of our carpentry student partners at Newton North High School and a member mentor who is working with that program. Newton at Home President Tamara Bliss will preview plans and goals for the coming year.

After the presentations, there will be lots of time to enjoy refreshments and background music and talk with “neighbors” in Newton at Home. The NAH Annual Report will be available. It describes the progress made in our first fiscal year. The report also includes a list of our donors as of June 30, 2011, the end of our fiscal year.

Please RSVP for the Annual Meeting by emailing info@newtonathome.org or calling 617-795-2560. Let us know if you need a ride or can provide one. Parking will be available.

Executive Director *(Continued)*

how you “get back much more than you give – over and over again,” to quote one volunteer.

We are planning some exciting programs coming up this fall. Day trips include: Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, MA on October 17 and a November 3rd trip to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem to view the Hudson River School of Painters exhibit. If you can be an “ambassador” and/or a driver at an upcoming event, please let me know.

While we are pleased with our ability to serve our current members, we are also deeply committed to expanding membership to individuals and households living on modest incomes. In June, the board voted to start a small reduced-fee program while seeking funding from foundations and individuals. We already have signed up several reduced-fee members

Like other villages across the country, Newton at Home depends on a combination of membership fees and donations to meet our expenses. We are beginning a major fund raising campaign to raise \$50,000 by the end of the year to help meet our operating expenses and to expand our reduced-fee membership program. Our highly qualified professional staff is essential to ensuring that we have trained volunteers, screened vendors, social programs, educational activities, and other resources critical for meeting our members’ needs.

Knowing that you and the wider community have been generous in the past, we hope you will help us continue to grow and provide services and programs that will increase our outreach and impact. We are counting on your support. Please make your check out to Newton at Home and mail it to Newton at Home, 206 Waltham Street, West Newton, MA 02465. We are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization, so your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please call me at 617-795-2560 with questions regarding our fund raising campaign and our reduced-fee membership program.

We encourage you to access our website at www.newtonathome.org or phone 617-795-2560 for more information about membership, donations, volunteering and our monthly calendar of events.

Enjoy the fall and your holidays.
Arlene Lowney, Executive Director

Maureen Grannan Named Member Services Coordinator

By Naomi Shore



Maureen Grannan, RN, MS, has been chosen as Newton at Home’s first Member Services Coordinator after serving, until recently, as a volunteer coordinator for NAH.

Maureen and her husband raised their two children in West Newton, where they have lived for 27 years. She holds degrees in nursing from Boston University and the University of Massachusetts. The majority of her nursing career was spent in oncology services administration. Maureen’s son, Ryan Grannan-Doll, is a NAH volunteer.

Members can count on Maureen’s friendly voice and demeanor as she answers calls at the office, takes requests, and matches volunteers to members’ needs, such as transportation to Logan, medical appointments, errands, and social events. When the job is completed, Maureen seeks feedback from our member on the quality and timeliness of the work and from our volunteers about their experience “in the field.” As new members join Newton at Home, Maureen visits their home to explain member services and how to access and use the Newton at Home website. She has also begun to reach out to longer-term members.

Every day brings new challenges but the recent hurricane created special needs. Maureen worked closely with volunteer Rob Ticktin and Board Member Bob Lerner to call all NAH members. They asked each member if they were prepared for the storm and if there was anything that NAH volunteers could do to help. The three also reviewed the emergency checklist with each member family. Several volunteers were dispatched throughout the city to assist members in bringing in lawn furniture and plants.

After the storm, volunteers returned to members’ homes to move things back. Several members requested help cleaning up their yards after the storm. One couple said they were very impressed with the inspiring high school student volunteer who came on Labor Day weekend to help them with yard clean up.

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Volunteering – Help others and you help yourself!

By Arlene Lowney

It was a beautiful sunny day in the fall of 1953 when I traveled by bus for over an hour from the South Bronx to reach the New York Institute for the Blind on Pelham Parkway in the North Bronx. I was impressed by the dedication of the students I worked with – and learned from – as they learned Braille and became more independent.

Thus began my volunteering career which has spanned more than five decades! It has been an experience of giving and of receiving, of learning and of growing, with many great benefits! I am still a volunteer today.

Volunteering is a long-standing American tradition and ethic. People of all ages, stages, and walks of life give their time and talents without any expectation of compensation. While deeply personal, volunteering is not an isolating event. Whether working at the Newton at Home office as part of a vibrant team or in the community, the importance of community outreach and teamwork are always stressed.

Data from 50 states and 198 cities provide powerful evidence of the impact of volunteering. (See www.volunteeringinamerica.gov) Over 1.5 million more volunteers served in 2009 than in 2008, the largest single-year increase since 2003. This was a period of severe economic crisis in the U.S., which strained the nation's ability to support vulnerable populations. The 2010 Volunteering in America report found that we responded to the crisis by serving more. A total of 63.4 million volunteers served nationwide in 2009, contributing 8.1 billion hours of volunteer service, equaling a dollar value of \$169 billion. Many volunteered because they were out of work and sought validation and a source of connections with others.

“We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.”

– Winston Churchill

Increasingly, research demonstrates that there's a strong correlation between volunteering and social, mental, and physical well-being. Studies show that:

- Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who don't volunteer.

- Older volunteers are most likely to receive the greatest health benefits. Volunteering gives meaning and purpose to people's lives at a time when normal life transitions and retirement are changing their social roles and they may be feeling a loss of control in significant ways.
- Volunteering and its offshoots – increased trust in others and increased social and political participation – contribute to building a sense of community.

Americans 65 and older suffer a higher rate of depression and loneliness than any other demographic group. The community building and intergenerational components of the Newton at Home program uses volunteers of all ages throughout the community. It has the potential to reduce isolation while championing the experiences and expertise of our younger and older adults. Experts tell us that a commitment of about two hours a week (one hundred hours a year) is needed for an optimal return in health.

One of our more senior volunteers, a 103 year old who resides at the Scandinavian Living Center in West Newton, calls home-bound Newton at Home members to “cheer them up.” She volunteers on a weekly basis, likes to be asked, and enjoys it immensely.

One couple who recently joined Newton at Home talked about the joy of traveling with a small group to favorite cultural events. No longer able to drive, they both felt isolated and out of touch because friends and family had moved away. These trips give them a sense of connection and opens doors to new friendships with volunteers and other Newton at Home members. A college student told me that he volunteers because, “I meet the nicest people - and - everyone has a story to tell.”

Newton at Home is a leading example of the “Village” movement that is growing in communities across the country. The “Village” concept and volunteerism are ideally suited to the city of Newton with its strong tradition of activism, dedication to optimal senior services, and a growing older population committed to maintaining control of their lives as they age in their communities and in their homes.

If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities at Newton at Home, please call Julie Plaut Mahoney, our Coordinator of Volunteers, at 617-795-2560.

Trip to Fuller Craft Museum

By Jim Wagner

On a sunny morning in August, eight members of Newton at Home stepped into a van at the Scandinavian Living Center for an enjoyable visit to the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton. The short ride was just long enough to allow our members and the van driver to get acquainted. The museum's dramatic entrance rises in the woods and extends to a large terrace on a lovely lake.

Inside, several contemporary craft exhibits included an imaginative biennial show by the National Basketry Organization, feathery etchings in glass, an eclectic collection of furniture designed by "Furniture Divas," fabric and wood creations by Kay Sekimachi and Bob Stocksdale, and the famous Mark Davis Icarus mobile, which filled one gallery. After an hour and a half of touring on our own, we enjoyed fresh salads and sandwiches in the lakeside café while chatting about the craft displays and future excursions with Newton at Home.

Other Summer Activities Roundup

Other summer activities included June and July trips to the Shalin Liu Performance Center for the 30th Annual Rockport Chamber Music festival. Everyone on the trip enjoyed the beautiful setting, the spectacular music, and the acoustics.

NAH members and guests also viewed the Dale Chihuly "Through the Looking Glass" exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts and the interesting new Art of the Americas wing. Those who could stay afterwards enjoyed a light lunch in the courtyard.

Finally, a group of members enjoyed two Pot Luck dinners and opera viewings, to include excellent renditions of Madama Butterfly and Don Pasquale, with talented casts and beautiful scenery. Check the NAH October calendar for an October 26th showing of La Boheme at 2 pm in a member's comfortable Ward St. home. Register now! Call 617-795-2560

Maureen Grannan *(Continued)*

Maureen reports that NAH members were truly grateful for this special hurricane service. One wrote a note about how much it meant to her that "someone out there cares."

Maureen works very closely with Julie Plaut Mahoney, NAH Coordinator of Volunteer Services. Julie and Maureen collaborate to maintain the right balance of volunteers. Maureen also manages the Newton at Home office and the volunteers who work there.

Please feel free to contact Maureen at 617-795-2560 with any requests or questions about services. She is at the Newton at Home office every day from 9 am until 1 pm.

Congratulations and Thank You

When Cynthia and Bob Pill celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this summer, they suggested to friends that they make a donation to Newton at Home in honor of the occasion instead of bringing them a gift. We received over 30 generous donations marking this special occasion. We thank Cynthia and Bob for linking their celebration with us and congratulate them on reaching this wonderful milestone.

