



Promoting Healthy Aging in Central Vermont

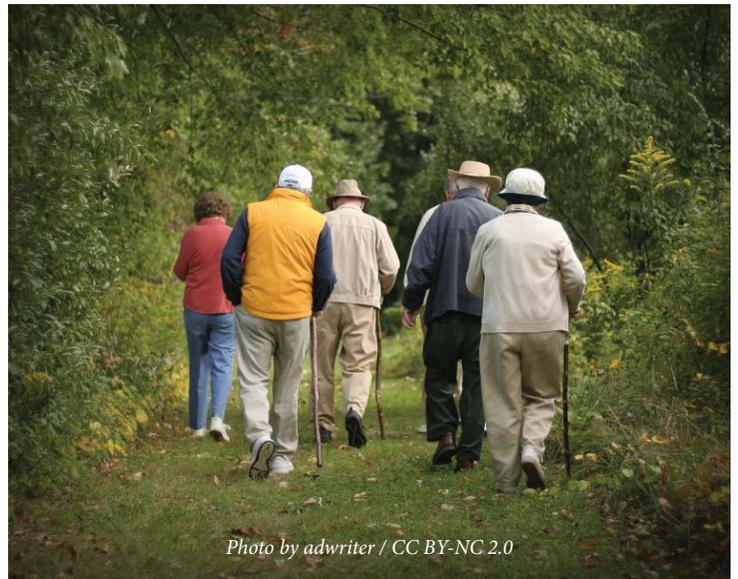
Flexible Choices for Moderate Needs

Vermont's Choices for Care: Moderate Needs program helps to support those who require assistance to help them to remain in their home, but do not need nursing home level of care. Earlier this year, the state legislature approved additional funds to create a new option within the Choices for Care program as an add-on to the services currently available through the Moderate Needs program.

It was recognized that a new approach was needed in order to increase and enhance the home care options for eligible seniors who might otherwise be unable to receive the much-needed services enabling them to stay in their homes.

Known as Flexible Choices, this option is based on the belief that individuals and those who care for them know best how to meet their specific needs remain independent. With Flexible Choices, a wider array of services can be made available to these seniors.

The program allows for a senior, family member, or trusted friend to manage Choices for Care services with a budget tailored to meet your needs. Seniors can, for example, independently hire someone to assist them with homemaker services such as cooking, cleaning or transportation. Flexible Choices also allows people to purchase equipment that may not otherwise be available, such as grab bars or railings.



The afternoon knows
what the morning
never suspected

- Robert Frost -

CVCOA's Case Managers can work with you to help determine if you or a loved one would be eligible for this program, based on your personal health and financial situation.

To learn more about the options available to you, please call the Senior HelpLine at (800) 642-5119.



Our Mission

Central Vermont Council on Aging is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports elders in leading healthy, independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their homes.

CVCOA provides assistance to Vermonters aged 60 years and over, their family and caregivers.

We serve 54 towns throughout the Central Vermont region:

Lamoille, Washington, and Orange counties (with the exception of Thetford), as well as the towns of Bethel, Hancock, Granville, Pittsfield, Rochester, Royalton, Sharon and Stockbridge.

We do not charge individuals for the services that we provide to Vermont's senior community.

Our programs and services are supported in part by your generosity.

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From the Director's Desk



Beth Stern
 Executive Director

In this newsletter, we're taking a look at wellness – and how CVCOA supports the health and well-being of seniors throughout Central Vermont. **3SquaresVT** helps seniors to get the good nutrition we all need, while **Fuel Assistance** keeps homes warm during the long Vermont winters. **Flexible Choices** allows seniors to receive in-home services and our **Case Managers** can work with those at risk of self-neglect, making sure their needs are being met.

Even though Vermont ranks high in most national health rankings, there are issues that face many seniors: food insecurity, poor health, injuries from falls, and problems with alcohol or drug abuse. However, taking care of ourselves is obviously not just a senior issue. Healthy behaviors can be learned in childhood and continue throughout our lives.

Despite being a society bombarded by health information, many of us make choices at times that can contribute to problems later in life. There are a variety of reasons why people don't pay attention to information about healthy behaviors. We tell ourselves that "it's just scare tactics." We see that "others are in worse shape." We feel that "too much is out of our control" when it comes to health.

In one interesting study, Gavin Fitzsimons, a professor at Duke University, discusses "vicarious goal fulfillment" in which simply seeing healthy menu choices at a restaurant satisfied an individual's health goal – even if the person chooses a less healthy meal.

What is CVCOA's role in supporting good choices for seniors?

Through the programs and services we provide, along with our partnerships with senior centers and other social service agencies, CVCOA helps seniors to gain access to nutritious food, make sure they have the resources to heat their homes, and coordinate home services that enable aging Vermonters to remain living within their homes and communities.

Our case managers also play an integral role in working with seniors who may be neglecting various aspects of their health and well-being. Along with families and other service providers, we help to create a network of support, encouraging elders to accept the services that could improve their living situation.

Your ongoing support of CVCOA helps us work with seniors to take advantage of the health and wellness programs available to them. And the next time you see both salad and French fries on the menu, just remember: it's never too late to make good choices about your health!

Beth Stern

Health - Not Hunger

3SquaresVT and You!

For Vermonters, good nutrition is very important, helping to keep you active and healthy. The health impacts of hunger make it more difficult to remain living in your home.

Unfortunately, senior hunger is a common issue. According to the Meals on Wheels Association of America, nearly 15,000 senior Vermonters struggle with hunger.

3SquaresVT is a program that helps Vermonters put healthy food on their table. It boosts your food budget and helps people living on a limited income to buy more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Many people think that if you receive 3Squares that others are going without. However, there is no limit to how many Vermonters can get help with their food budget. Everyone who is eligible can receive benefits!

12,000 Vermonters aged 60+ are part of 3SquaresVT – and 9 out of 10 of them get \$50 or more every month!



Many people are eligible and don't know it. An estimated 2/3 of all eligible seniors don't apply for benefits.

Applying for 3SquaresVT benefits can be a fairly daunting process, but our Information & Assistance staff are experienced in guiding seniors through the documentation and application process. Last year, we helped almost 300 people to apply!

To maximize your benefit, claim all the deductions you can. As an example, applying for heating fuel assistance can increase the amount of benefits you are entitled to.

People who are over 60 can claim many different medical expenses, such as health insurance premiums, drug prescriptions, equipment, and transportation.

Learn more at www.vermontfoodhelp.com. No one should have to go hungry. If you or someone you know is struggling to get enough to eat, please encourage them to apply.

Staying Warm as the Days Grow Shorter

Seasonal Fuel Assistance is a program offered through the Vermont Department for Children & Families that can help pay part of your home heating bills. It is a benefit for homeowners and renters that provides funds to purchase fuel to help keep you warm during the long Vermont winters.

Benefit amounts are based on income and average annual heating costs. In most cases, the assistance you receive will be paid directly to your fuel provider.

You may be eligible if your monthly gross household income is up to \$1,801 for an individual or \$2,426 for a couple. There are no resource limits, so your eligibility will not be affected by any balances in your bank accounts or other countable resources.

Applying for benefits is a straight-forward qualification process that our Information & Assistance staff can help you with. In addition, being eligible for fuel assistance may also help to increase other benefits that you may receive, such as 3SquaresVT.

If you need help applying, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-642-5119.



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The Signs and Challenges of Self-Neglect

In older adults, self-neglect is being seen as an increasingly prevalent problem, though it is poorly understood. The term generally describes a situation in which a person's behavior threatens their own health and safety.



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Though it affects people of any age, cases of self-neglect are increasingly common as one grows older. It is frequently the result of other conditions that make it increasingly difficult to provide care for oneself, such as dementia, depression, isolation, mental health challenges, and frailty – conditions that occur more frequently in senior populations.

Common characteristics of self-neglect include:

- Unsafe or unsanitary living conditions
- The lack of necessities like water or heat
- Poor personal hygiene
- Malnutrition
- Mismanagement of medication
- Untreated medical conditions

The common understanding of self-neglect does not include situations where the senior understands the consequences of their decisions and makes a conscious decision not to attend to aspects of their health and safety as a matter of personal choice.

Family, friends and case workers are challenged by the balance between respect for an elder's right to independent decision-making and the desire to keep them healthy and safe from harm.

One must determine if an individual has the mental capacity to make an informed choice about how they are living. Making that assessment and determining the underlying causes of a case of self-neglect can be a complex and demanding task.

Case managers are often central to working with self-neglecting individuals to develop a plan for change. Because many self-neglecting people do not want to receive help, establishing trust and a willingness to work together is generally the first step.

The case manager must then identify and enlist the support of the surrounding community. Being able to educate and involve family and community members as well as engaging service providers is crucial. When trust, a willingness to change, and support networks are in place, the case manager and elder can work to create and implement an individualized plan for change.

If you feel that an older adult in your life may be self-neglecting, please call the Senior HelpLine and bring your concern to our attention.

Interested in Guiding Senior Services in Central Vermont?

We are seeking individuals interested in serving in positions on our Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for and has authority over the overall management and performance of the Council.

Executive Director Beth Stern praises the Board of Directors as “a hard-working, passionate group of leaders interested in serving the elder communities of Vermont. Sitting on the Board of Directors allows members from throughout the Central Vermont region to serve their community and have a voice in Council policies.”

You do not have to be an elder to be a candidate to join the board. However, you must have interest and experience in senior matters and live within CVCOA's 54-town service area.

For more information, please visit www.cvcoa.org/board-of-directors.

Welcoming New CVCOA Staff

CVCOA is pleased to welcome the addition of two new staff members to our team!



Marianne Barnett

Marianne Barnett has returned to CVCOA, accepting a position as the Case Manager serving eastern Orange County – a position she held previously from 1999 until 2005.

As a Case Manager, Marianne will assist clients to access programs and benefits, solve problems, and help to make difficult decisions. In addition, Marianne supports these clients by providing information, making referrals and coordinating access to services.

Marianne is very excited to rejoin the CVCOA staff “because I so enjoy working with people in their homes and I feel that the work at CVCOA provides such a valuable service.”

Prior to her return, Marianne was employed at Granite State Independent Living in Littleton, NH as a home care coordinator and scheduler. She lives in St. Johnsbury with her husband and two sons.



Barb Asen

Barb Asen is serving as CVCOA’s Family Caregiver & Case Management Training Coordinator. In this role, Barb will be working with and providing support to families, clients, and staff on a wide range of caregiver issues.

In addition, she will be collaborating with the senior service organizations throughout Vermont to arrange state-wide elder service trainings.

About becoming a part of CVCOA, Barb says, “It has been my dream for some time to bring my personal experience and passions together with my professional path. I am grateful and excited to now be part of its excellent staff and programs.”

Prior to coming to CVCOA, Barb served in leadership roles at the Family Center of Washington County from 1989-2011, working to develop and guide family support and education services. She then worked as the Associate Director of Human Resources at Goddard College, where she also pursued graduate studies with a concentration on creative services for elders and their caregivers.

Please join us in welcoming Barb and Marianne!

Volunteer Corner

Chris Teel, former Neighbor to Neighbor AmeriCorps member, is now back and volunteering in a big way. Recently, he was able to help an older resident of Barre with some long overdue yard work.

She writes in a letter to Chris, “I felt like my house was overrun.

And in one day (less than that!) you relieved me of that burden and gave me hope I might be able to manage my yard myself again. What a gift.”



A Senior Companion since 2003, Flora Carpenter spends her days visiting seniors in her community and providing a steady hand on the way to an appointment.

She also takes the time for a friendly chat and maybe a shared meal.

This is an important part of what these Senior

Companions do every day for folks who need a little extra help to stay independent in their homes.

Flora loves what she does, and no matter what the weather, she is out there five days a week lending a helping hand.

Learn more about volunteering:
www.cvcoa.org/volunteer





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*CVCOA - Your Partner
in Healthy Aging!*

Empowering Seniors & Caregivers • Senior HelpLine 1-800-642-5119

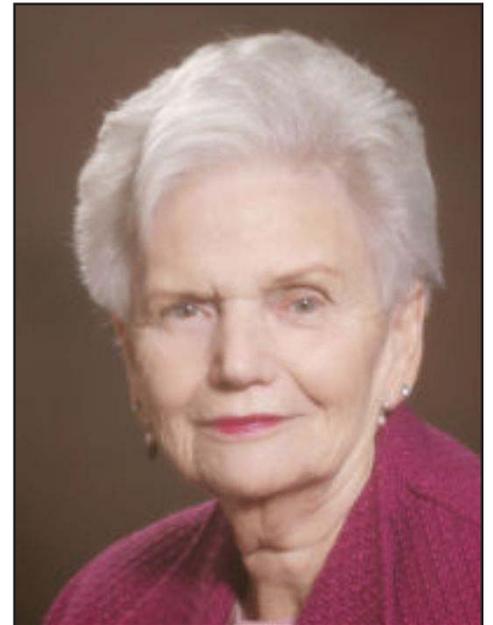
Remembering Marion Milne

Marion Milne died peacefully at her home in Washington on Aug. 11, 2014 at the age of 79.

In addition to founding a successful business, Milne Travel, Marion served in the Vermont House of Representatives from 1994 to 2000, representing the town of Washington and other towns in her district. Her support for legislation authorizing civil unions was critical to the passage of the act in the House.

Marion was tireless in her service to her beloved community of Central Vermont and gave her time and expertise to many boards and commissions throughout the region and beyond, including that of Central Vermont Council on Aging.

Recalling Marion's contributions to Central Vermont society, Executive Director Beth Stern expressed her admiration, saying: "She so impressed me with her integrity and compassion in everything she did. I will truly miss her."



Remembering Marion, our gratitude and condolences go out to the entire Milne family.

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