

# SENIOR CONNECTION

Information for Seniors & Caregivers

## STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROBERT DWYER, PH. D.

JOHN BELDING

JUDY CROTEAU

JENNIFER FINI

NICOLE JIMINO

PEGGY LANDS

EILEEN O'BRIEN

CATHY PICKERING

JANE WHEARLEY

FRONT OFFICE VOLUNTEER

JACKIE SPROUL

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

AGENCY ON AGING (CMAA)

360 WEST BOYLSTON ST.

WEST BOYLSTON MA 01583

CALL: VOICE/TDD

(508) 852-5539

(800) 244-3032

FAX: (508) 852-5425

E-MAIL US AT CMAAGING@

SENIORCONNECTION.ORG

WEB SITE:

WWW.SENIORCONNECTION.ORG

WINTER 2009/2010

## Thoughts at 35



By Robert P. Dwyer, Ph.D.,  
Executive Director

Well, as so often happens with events that CMAA schedules, Mother Nature decided that our 35th Anniversary Celebration needed to find another day and time to happen. New England weather can be unpredictable and very tricky as it was on December 9. So, our 35th Anniversary Celebration will be rescheduled, and we will announce that when things are more certain.

In the meantime, I would still like to reflect on a few things related to the anniversary, and what I think it means. It was the fall of 1974, and then Secretary of the Commonwealth John F X Davoren of Milford officially recognized a new non-profit organization known as Region II Area Agency on Aging. A few volunteers worked to organize the agency, and offer some small grants under the Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA). Thus began over three decades of searching out the needs of seniors in Central Massachusetts. Now known as Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, the organization with a staff of 9 and many

invaluable volunteers, funds \$2.5 million dollars of federal funds for a myriad of services in the 61 cities and towns in our planning and service area. With an incredible Information and Referral service (SeniorConnection) and website ([www.SeniorConnection.org](http://www.SeniorConnection.org)) tens of thousands of seniors and caregivers reap the benefits of CMAA's work. 20 years ago, under the supervision of Executive Director Cathy Fellenz, CMAA moved from quarters in Holden to our current home in West Boylston. Here, the agency has seen growth and expansion, with innovation and service at its heart.

Since the year 2000, outreach to caregivers has increased exponentially, with our website leading the way with its Connection for Caregivers. As well, the Central Mass Family Caregivers Program, offered in collaboration with Elder Services of Worcester, Tri Valley, and Montachusett Home Care, has become a valuable addition to our work in the region.

New to the system is the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) of Central Massachusetts. This ADRC is another collaboration between CMAA, the above mentioned ASAPs, and the Center for Living and Working. Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging continually looks for ways to expand our outreach, and touch elders and caregivers, as well as professionals in the region, with the latest information and possibilities for living.

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In celebrating these 35 years of service, I want to thank all staff members, past and present, Board of Directors and Advisory Council members from over the years, all of our volunteers, cooperating agencies and grantees, and friends that work alongside CMAA to be sure that seniors and caregivers have the information and services necessary for a safe and secure life in our region. It is our privilege to work with and for you, and our hope that we will continue to do so for another 35 years or more.

I would be remiss, as all of this “thankfulness” is being expressed, if I didn’t offer a very special “Thank You” to our longest serving employee, John Belding. This December, John celebrates 20 years of serving CMAA and our consumers. His skills, breadth of knowledge, and deep appreciation for the work we do, cannot be duplicated. John, from the bottom of our hearts, a huge dose of gratitude, with a wish that you will be with us for another two decades!

Happy Holidays to one and all!

### **CMAA Welcomes Our New Bookkeeper, Cindy Margadonna**



Cindy has extensive experience in the accounting field, including working in social services. Cindy was financial assistant to the Comptroller at Family Services of Central Mass and has also worked for Home Staff LLC in Worcester.

She resides in Leicester with her husband and is currently engaged in a tax preparation course.

## **HAVE STATE BUDGET CUTS AFFECTED SERVICES FUNDED BY CMAA?**

One question we often get at here at CMAA is, “Has the state cut your budget?” In a word, the answer is “No.” Yet, the answer really isn’t that simple either.

The fact is that the money that CMAA grants to various agencies and programs comes to us from Title III of the Federal Older Americans Act (OAA). This means that CMAA’s funding is dependent upon the budget approved by Congress, and then allocated to the States, and then to Area Agencies on Aging. Since the Federal budget continues to at least level fund the OAA, the allocations to CMAA have also remained level and stable.

There are, however, two other pieces to this puzzle. First, level funding does mean some stability, but it also means that OAA funding here in Massachusetts at least is not keeping up with the cost of living. This translates to a cut in funding, since services cost more to provide but the funding for services remains mostly the same.

The second piece of the puzzle is that many of the agencies and programs funded by CMAA did receive cuts in State contracts and grants. This means that many of our partners in the community are suffering the injuries and burdens that this represents. They may turn to CMAA for more funding, but with level funding for us, the potential for more funding for our grantees is slim to none.

So yes, the CMAA budget is stable, but the programs and services depend upon much more.

In this season of giving, think of CMAA and the work our Agency does. As we work to keep programs and services strong, your help will always be welcome. Your gifts of time or money--or both!--will always be welcome, especially during this season.

# CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS AGENCY ON AGING

## TITLE III PROGRAMS FOR FY 2010

Effective October 1, 2009, 27 grants in the amount of \$ 1,846,201 were awarded to 16 non-profit organizations serving elders throughout Central Massachusetts. These federal grants, authorized under the Older Americans Act, are targeted to meet the highest priority needs of persons 60 years of age and older. A volunteer allocations committee reviewed all grant applications and recommended funding for the following programs. The Advisory Council and Board of Directors approved the recommendations.

Agency	Program	Grant
Central Mass Housing Alliance	Elder Home Repair	\$54,400
Centro Las Americas Hispanic	Elders Program	\$25,306
Elder Services of Worcester	Crisis Intervention	\$23,140
	Money Management	\$8,706
	Nutrition Project	\$476,722
	Medical Transportation	\$5,000
	Guardianship Program	\$48,660
Great Brook Valley Health Center	Senior Citizen Law & Advocacy Project	\$119,806
Jewish Family Service	Ancianos Latinos Unidos	\$29,757
Legal Assistance Corp. of Cent. Mass	Medical Transportation	\$3,000
Leominster Spanish American Center	Vision Rehab for Low Vision Elders	\$9,765
MAB Community Services	Medication Management	\$11,253
MassMedLine	Crisis Intervention	\$23,480
	Volunteer Money Management	\$10,002
	Ombudsman Program (N)	\$83,906
	Ombudsman Program (C)	\$113,679
	Nutrition Project	\$312,081
Montachusett Home Care Corporation	Elder Home Repair	\$24,433
	Seniors On The Move	\$3,490
	Drop-In Center	\$7,000
Montachusett Opportunity Council	Crisis Intervention	\$26,000
	Volunteer Money Management	\$9,978
	Nutrition Project	\$325,047
	Ombudsman Program (S)	\$73,080
	Community Fall Prevention Program	\$5,815
New England Homes for the Deaf	Alzheimer's Project	\$5,859
Tri-Valley, Inc.	Osteoporosis Prevention Project	\$6,836
VNA Care Network		
VNA Greater Milford-Northbridge Area		
Worcester Elder Affairs Division		

### Save the Date ElderCare 2010

Tuesday, May 11, 2010 - 10 am -3 pm

The Manor, 42 West Boylston Street (Rte 12), West Boylston, MA

*50 Exhibiting Companies....Giveaways & Raffles.....Refreshments*

*Featuring: Health Screening, Informative Seminars, Entertainment & Workshops*

#### **Agency Sponsors:**

Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging - Elder Services of Worcester Area - Family Services of Central Massachusetts (For More Information - American Health Resources, Inc. 508-588-7700)

Central Massachusetts  
Agency on Aging  
360 West Boylston Street  
West Boylston MA 01583

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To Contact CMAA, V/TDD (508)852-5539 or (800)244-3032 FAX (508)852-5425 E-Mail [CMAAging@SeniorConnection.org](mailto:CMAAging@SeniorConnection.org)

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Winter  
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During September and October 2009 Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging undertook a survey of elder residents throughout the region to gather information on issues with which elders might need assistance.

Based on the sampling drawn from local street lists, it appears that the elder population of Central Massachusetts was approximately 144,000 as of January 1, 2009. The state estimate for 2010 is 148,000 so this seems to be a reasonably accurate figure

A sharp increase in the percentage of elders with incomes below the poverty line was noted. The preliminary figure for 2009 is 12.4% in comparison to 8.1% in the 2005 survey.

Overall, the top needs ranked by CMAA's "need index", which considers both the number of respondents with specific needs and the degree to which these needs are unmet, include the following:

Help with applying for financial assistance  
Preparing tax forms  
Home repairs  
Finding employment opportunities  
Finding volunteer opportunities

Paying property taxes  
Problems dealing with large debt  
Problems dealing with depression/loss  
Problems coping with a disability

The majority of these are related to financial circumstances and all of them show an increase in the proportion of respondents identifying the need in comparison to the 2005 survey. Clearly, the current recession has had a significant impact on elders in Central Massachusetts.