



East Lyme Senior Center ANNUAL REPORT FY20/21

The East Lyme Senior Center is located within the Community Center Complex, housed off of Society Road. It is a designated Focal Point - as approved by Senior Resources Area Agency of Aging for the Area Plan of 2017 – 2021.

The Senior Center continues to explore funding sources and applied for and received the CT Department of Transportation State Matching Grant for Elderly & Disabled Responsive Transportation for the 11th year in a row. The awarding of these grant funds allows East Lyme residents to have a mode of transportation (which includes wheelchair accessible vehicles) to their medical appointments located within southern New London County. The Senior Center applied for and received funding from the Federal Transit Administration 5310 Grant to replace an aging Senior Center bus. That vehicle was be put into operation in March 2021.

The Senior Center applied for another 5310 Grant in the summer of 2021 to replace an aging vehicle and will hear in January of 2022 if the application was accepted.

In our continued commitment to communicate with the Town's older adults, the Senior Center has a Facebook page; a site on the Town of East Lyme website at ww.eltownhall.com and participates in a regional senior center website: www.seniorcenterct.org. The Senior Center also maintains an email distribution list to forward information to any interested party. Anyone can be added to this email list by contacting the Senior Center office.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation of the Senior Center was dramatically affected. On March 13th, 2020, the Senior Center essentially, with a few exceptions, ended any indoor programming for the rest of the fiscal year. To counter this elimination of indoor programming, classes were presented on Zoom or weather permitting, held outside. Transportation service was curtailed for the rest of the fiscal year. On the following pages are the programs and services provided by the East Lyme Senior Center from 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020.

The following are members of Commission on Aging Board:

Mr. John Whritner, Chair Ms. Marge Caste, Vice-Chair
Ms. Ilene Harris, Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Joseph Palazzo Ms. Joan Bengtson
Ms. Barbara Smith Mr. Michael Bekech
Ms. Roseanne Hardy, Ex-Officio

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, regular monthly meetings were halted from March 2020 until September 2020. The September 2020 meeting was held via Zoom. In October 2020, in-person Board Meetings resumed. Everyone was in masks and maintained socially distant.

The following are staff members of the East Lyme Senior Center:

Ms. Cathy Wilson, Senior Center Director
Ms. Candy Heikkinen, Program Coordinator - hired October 2020
Ms. Jane Bowen Senior Center Associate
Ms. Roxanne Kormos, Bus Driver
Mr. John Hallissey, Bus Driver
Ms. Melissa Victor, Bus Driver
Mr. Joseph Savoie, Bus Driver

The East Lyme Senior Center and the Commission on Aging Board are fully committed to serving every older adult in East Lyme by providing support and assistance. Any concerns or comments are welcome at both the Commission on Aging Board Meetings and the Commission on Aging Office located within the East Lyme Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

John Whritner
Chairman, Commission on Aging Board

Cathy J. Wilson
Senior Center Director

NUTRITION/FOOD PROGRAMS

Senior Nutrition Program

Total # of Meals Served		12,230	↓6.5%
Congregate Site Clients	# of meals served	1,644	↓13.3%
Homebound Clients	# of meals served	10,586	↓2.9%



TRANSPORTATION

Senior Center Vehicles Usage			
# of Clients Served for the Year	88		↓4.3%
Total Mileage for the Year	20,069		↓5.1%
Average Monthly Mileage	1,672		
Total # of Riders	1021		↓56.2%
Average Monthly Ridership	85		
Total # of Rides	1906		↓55.2%
Average Monthly Rides	159		



Senior Center transportation stopped as of mid-March, 2020 and did not resume until August of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the vehicles were used to deliver Meals on Wheels, Monday through Friday, during the above referenced time period. Additionally, the Senior Center used the vehicles to pick up and deliver Farms to Families food boxes for the community.

Dial a Ride Medical Transport (Grant Funded)

# of Clients Registered for the Service	172	↑182%
# of Clients Served for the Year	47	↑24%
# of Trips Taxi/Livery Rides	451	↑9%
# of Trips Caregiver Mileage Reimbursement Portion	22	↓79%
 Total East Lyme Trips (Taxi & Caregiver)	 473	 ↓8.6%

The Dial-a-Ride grant is comprised of 2 sections: mileage reimbursement for a person who provides a medical ride for an enrolled client and the actual provision of rides to medical appointment for enrolled clients. To streamline the registration process, the client is no longer asked to annually complete a registration form so the # of clients registered for the service shows an increase. COVID-19 did affect the ability of this transit service but once it came back on-line, it was able to help clients get to medical appointments that had been postponed due to the pandemic.

ENRICHMENT/FUN PROGRAMS

BINGO - via Zoom Jan 2021 - in person May 2021
Bird Watching Club - via Zoom January 2021
Chair Yoga - via Zoom Jan 2021 – in person May 2021
Craft Classes – Take & Make projects starting in Dec 2020 - in person May 2021
Drawing Class - viz Zoom Jan 2021 - in person May 2021
FitDance - at McCook's Point Park Sep 2020 - via Zoom Nov 2020 - in person May 2021
Guitar Jam session - via Zoom Jan 2020
Hiking Programs - Sep/Oct 2020 and Apr/May/June 2021
Music Lessons – Advanced Beginner Ukulele - via Zoom Oct 2020
Music Lessons - Beginner Ukulele - via Zoom March 2021
Music Lessons – Advanced Beginner Guitar - via Zoom Oct 2020
Painting Group - via Zoom Jan 2020
Pickleball - in person May 2021
Ping Pong - in person May 2021
Quilting – Daytime and Evening - in person May 2021
Scene & Acting Class - via Zoom Nov 2020
Stitch Happens - via Zoom March 2021 - in person May 2021
Tai Chi - via Zoom Jan 2020 - in person May 2021
Trivia - via Zoom
Senior Fitness - via Zoom Nov 2020 - in person May 2021
Strength Training - via Zoom Nov 2020 - in person May 2021
Yoga - at Bridebrook Park Sep 2020 - via Zoom Nov 2020 - in person May 2021



Beginning in October 2020, Grab-n-Go meals were offered monthly. For the most part, they were sponsored by the Senior Center but the Niantic Lions sponsored a Grab-n-Go meal in Nov 2020. In December 2020, the Senior Center participated in the Niantic Light Parade held at McCook's Point Park and won 1st Prize.

Throughout the fiscal year, a variety of Zoom programs were offered ranging from musical performances, educational sessions, travel series, etc.

ENRICHMENT TRIPS

No fun trips were held during the time period Jul20 through Jun21.

DAY/OVERNIGHT TRIPS

All day trips and short overnight trips scheduled for Jul20 through Jun21 were either cancelled or re-scheduled for later in 2021 or in 2022.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

All trips scheduled for Jul20 through Jun21 were either cancelled or re-scheduled for later in 2021 or in 2022.

In October 2020, the Senior Center hired a new Program Coordinator, Candy Heikkinen. Candy created and offered a variety of programs on-line to help combat the social isolation felt by the older adults in our community. Additionally, she worked with the Center's instructors to help them get *their* programs operating on-line once the option of outdoor programming was no longer viable. However, there were many programs that were not conducive to an on-line environment. Perhaps even more significant, it was apparent that most participants of the Senior Center programs prefer the in-person experience. There were people who did not have the correct technology hardware to participate - there were people who did not have the computer skills to participate - and there were a great deal of people who simply did not like this method of interaction.

For the majority of the FY20/21, any program offered by the Senior Center was at no cost. In May of 2021, programs began to be offered in-person but with a Zoom option. At this time, fees were instituted. The Senior Center felt it was more important to try and engage the older adult community than to collect fees.

The Senior Center did purchase a Zoom account and will continue to have that resource available.

The requirement of wearing a mask indoors has fluctuated and the Senior Center has followed the guidelines of Ledge Light Health District. The requirement of wearing a mask while on a Senior Center vehicle went into effect in July of 2020 and remained in effect for the entire fiscal year.