

SENIOR NEWSLETTER MARCH 2014
MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY/SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES
EASTON SENIOR CENTER ALISON WITHERBEE 203-268-1137
MONDAY – FRIDAY Hours: 9 A.M. TO 2 P.M.
OUTREACH PAM HEALY 203 261-0289

Dear New Friends,

I would like to introduce myself to you. My name is Alison Witherbee, and I have been hired as the new Municipal Agent for the Aging by the Town of Easton. Most of you know that Katie Tressler, after many months of soul searching and thoughtful consideration, has decided to retire. I know that I have big shoes to fill and I, along with many of you, wish her every happiness in this exciting next chapter in her life! I moved to Easton with my husband 11 years ago and we have two daughters, one at Helen Keller Middle School and the other attends Samuel Staples Elementary School. I have been a social worker for the past 14 years working at Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent's working primarily with the older adult population. I am so excited to be working for the seniors of our community (it has always been a dream of mine to bike to work!).

I believe that Puxatawny Phil, the Groundhog, got it right (*unfortunately*) when he saw his shadow and predicted a longer winter. The snow and ice continue to challenge all of us and please be safe when and if you have to venture out of your home. I think that as the snow melts and the spring like temperatures appear I will meet many of you in person. Until then, please call the office **203-268-1137** or email me at awitherbee@eastonct.gov and as always The Commission on Aging, Pam Healy (our Outreach Worker), the EMS, Police Department, Clergy and Canine Control are all supports ready to help!

I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Alison Witherbee

Message from Firefighter Lucy: "After any ice snow/storm – clear snow and ice away from all the doors and windows you may have to use for emergency escape. Most people only clear one way into their home – if there is a medical emergency or fire, that way might not be accessible to emergency responders. Make sure all furnace vents, (especially side vents), are cleared of snow to prevent carbon monoxide, (CO2), from entering your home. Check the tailpipe of your automobile to make sure it has not been clogged by snow. Generators should be placed at a safe distance from the house." **Thank you, Lucy.** (Be careful shoveling if over fifty)!!!

WINTER FALL PREVENTION

- ☺ Always listen to weather bulletins and prevent falls by not going out in harsh and hazardous conditions.
- ☺ Strengthen your legs. Strong muscles will help steady yourself if you slip. Exercise your legs daily.
- ☺ Bring your cell phone with you when you leave the house. If you do fall, it can be hard to get up so **please** call - (911 is for a true emergency; 203-268-4111 (non-emergency Easton Police Dispatcher).
- ☺ Wear the proper footwear – (I was guilty here) – such as shoes or boots that have good traction/anti-slip soles or you can buy ice grippers for your shoes – "grippers" are a great help to prevent slipping on ice.
- ☺ Wear gloves and do not put your hands in your pockets. If you slip, you will need your arms to restore balance. If you fall, your arms will help you to break your fall and land more safely.
- ☺ Hold on to a railing when using stairs that are outdoors.
- ☺ Keep a shovel and salt in your home, walkways, steps, and driveways – should be well lit and kept clear of snow and ice.
- ☺ Do not rush! (Guilty as charged)! Keep in mind that being a little late is better than rushing and causing a fall. Slow down. Pay attention and plan ahead.
- ☺ Bend your knees and take small careful steps instead of large ones.
- ☺ Do not carry large loads while walking on snow or ice. If you need to carry something and you feel yourself falling – toss your load so that you can break your fall with your arms.
- ☺ Always dry your shoes well on a mat or carpet right after entering a building – (shoes get slippery)!
- ☺ Be careful of ice that can be hidden under a light dusting of snow – how many times do we tell family?!
- ☺ Have a plan when you are going out, ask yourself, "Self, if I fall here, what would I do?"

🍀 **Happy St. Patrick's Day** - March 17th – (National Irish-American Month–designated by Congress in 1995).

March is: *National Multiple Sclerosis Awareness & Education Month.* Did you know that MS is most commonly diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50 years of age? Every week over 200 people are diagnosed with MS, and over 2.1 million people live with this disease worldwide. Currently there is no cure for MS, though treatment options have advanced significantly over the last decade, allowing for a better quality of life.

Common symptoms of MS include: Visual Disturbances; Balance/Walking difficulties; Debilitating fatigue; Weakness; Numbness of extremities; Bladder dysfunction; Tremors. (These symptoms can also relate to other medical problems – so do not panic – instead, have a conversation with your MD – and remember the usual age of onset is fairly young).

www.nationalmssociety.org

March is also: *National:* Nutrition/Peanut/Women's History/Red Cross/Social Worker's Month.

March 1st: Employee Appreciation Day; 4th: Hug a GI Day; 5th: Multiple Personality Day; 9th: Get Over It Day!; 11th: Worship of Tools Day- (guys & some gals, too)!; 12th: Girl Scouts Day/Plant a Flower Day; 15th: Ides of March/"Brutus Day"; 16th: Everything You Do is Right Day; 16th: Quilting Day; 19th: Let's Laugh Day; 22nd: Goof Off Day/As Young As You Feel Day;

Please, call Pam Healy to arrange a visit. You will feel brighter, and she has valuable information about the social services programs and resources available to you. As your Easton Outreach Visitor, Pam is available to you with just a phone call: 203-261-0289.

Commission on Aging Meeting: Monday, March 17, @ 5:00 PM at the Easton Senior Center lobby.

SAVE THE DATE!: Wednesday, APRIL 16th - *National Health Care Decision Day* – Elder-Law Attorney, Sharon Cregeen - *our very own Easton-ever-helping-seniors-with-legal advice/issues* - will facilitate a hands-on workshop, so that attendees will be able to leave with signed *Advanced Directives & Health Care Representative Documents!* **This is an incredible opportunity for Easton seniors only** – more about detailed scheduling TBA in April newsletter! Mark your calendars!!! Please get this dastardly deed executed, signed, sealed, and delivered once and for all!!!!

FUEL ASSISTANCE: I continue applications **with individuals aged 60 and over** on an appointment basis.

Connecticut Energy Assistance Program 2014 State Median Income Guidelines: One person: income on or under \$22,980.; couple: income under \$32,020.00. **Renters are also eligible if they pay separately for heat.**

Contingency Heating Assistance Program: **1 person:** income - **on or under \$32,190.08;** **Couple:** Income - **on or under \$42,094.72.** **Renters who pay their own separate utility bill are eligible.**

LIQUID ASSET TEST: (checking, savings, CD's, stocks, bonds, shares, certificates of deposit, and individual retirement accounts if the accounts are in the name of a household member who is at least 59 and-one-half years old). For homeowners, the first \$10,000 in liquid assets is disregarded. Any amount over that limit, when added to the annual gross income must be below the income guidelines. (Amounts awarded this year are less than last year).

Clients must provide proof of income and assets for ALL household members who may reside with them. Call Alison to make an appointment.

Medicare Savings Program - No asset limit - **Singles:** \$2,393.58 and under – **Couples:** \$3,225.06 and under. *If you are approved*, then you will not have to pay for your Medicare B premium. You may also qualify for **Extra Help** with your prescription coverage/co pays *if:* **Singles:** \$2,053.03 monthly income and under - **Couples:** \$2,766.21 monthly income and under. The application is very simple to fill out – **these are slightly higher rates!!** – the result: more \$\$ in your pocket for those bills which seem endless. Assess the facts and if you think you qualify then please contact me.

STATE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY HOMEOWNERS AND TOTALLY DISABLED

PERSONS: Individuals currently on the program will receive a letter shortly from the Tax Assessor. **New applicants must be age 65 on or before December 31, 2013.** Individual collecting SS Disability may apply regardless of age and must provide a SS award letter and current proof of SS Disability. **Increased TOTAL income guidelines:**

At or below \$34,100 (Single), and \$41,600 (Married) - March 15 is the deadline for mailing it in - May 15 for filing with The Easton Assessor's Office. Please call that office @ 203-268-6291.

VETERANS: (HBPC) Home Based Primary Care is a VA program that provides health care to eligible veterans in their home. There may or may not be a small co-pay - depending upon income/assets. To find out more please call HBPC at VA CT Healthcare System. 1-203-932-5711 Ext. 4281 – (especially find out if you are already in the VA system)!

ALSO: (VD-HCBS) The Veterans Directed Home And Community Based Services program – supported by the above as well as the Administration on Aging, and (SWCAA), Southwestern CT Agency on Aging and Independent Living. This program “supports you as you hire employees, direct care and manage a monthly budget to meet your personal goals. The qualification is based upon the veteran's level of need from low to severe. If interested, **contact your VA case manager or SWCAA at 1-800-811-9808** to determine your eligibility.