



2020 ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

This year was a different kind of year to say the least with the arrival of COVID-19 in March 2020. Cares' services and programs like those of many other non-profit organizations were significantly affected. With the coronavirus some services were modified as less requests were received, some services were modified, and others – especially community programs – were postponed or cancelled. Some volunteers took a leave of absence until the virus concern gets resolved. Fortunately, the most active program, Rides, had enough drivers to allow medical appointment rides to continue. This report covers what happened in Cares in COVID time and during the previous eight months.

As always, the Cares Board is grateful to our volunteers and generous donors who make possible the programs Cares provides the community. Volunteers in particular need to be singled out. Without question they are the backbone of Cares. Cares volunteers include residents who help a neighbor one or more times when asked by Cares to help out. Cares, as an all-volunteer organization, wouldn't exist without supportive volunteers.

We're grateful, too, to the Dummerston Congregational Church, Dummerston Community Center, and Evening Star Grange for space for Board meetings and some of our programs.

MESSAGE LINE: 802-257-5800. This telephone line, heretofore called only Helpline, now has two uses. First, it is a non-emergency telephone service that allows a resident to call and request help or information. A volunteer monitors messages daily and when help is sought, he contacts the appropriate Cares volunteer to handle the request; this person makes an effort to respond to the caller within 24 hours. During the year there were an average of 8 calls for help per month. The second use of the Line is for people who want to register for one of Cares' programs like yoga or t'ai chi classes.

Volunteer Coordinator, Shawn Bracebridge

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS had mixed success with the onset of COVID-19. The **Gentle Yoga** class, led by Judy Carpenter, continued the entire year with classes at the Congregational Church and then, when COVID appeared, they were done by Zoom. Beginners and intermediate **Wu T'ai Chi** classes, led by John Hury, were held throughout the year at the Grange, then the Community Center, and, finally, on the lawn outside the Congregational Church when weather warmed up in the spring. An 8-week **15 Form T'ai Chi** class, led by Lesley Fishelman, began in late fall at the Grange and then moved to the Congregational Church.

The program on **Digital Media and Kids** held in March 2019 was followed up with a teachers' workshop on the subject in January 2020. This was led by Lesley Fishelman. A spring community program at the school on the subject, featuring the film *Screenagers*, planned for March 2020, was

postponed because of the virus.

A **discussion group on the book *The Gift of Aging***, was led by Claire Halverson in late summer and early fall of 2019.

Food insecurity needs came to Cares' attention in the latter half of the year. There was promotion of the supplemental food that's available at the Putney Foodshelf for Dummerston residents and the possibility of a Food4Kids program at the school got the Board's attention. Conversations about the latter began with the school's principal, nurse and others. Visits were made to the Putney Central School and Guilford school to learn how their Food4Kids programs operate. Another thing that was done was the contribution of some money to help with the purchase of snacks for some kids.

The virus caused the cancellation of the **Hikes and Walks program** planned for Spring 2020 and two **Seated Dance programs** scheduled for April were postponed until April 2021. Another postponement was a series of four **workshops on Chronic Pain Management** that were to be held in June 2020.

RIDES continued to be the most utilized of Cares' programs. Volunteer drivers were available for transportation to medical appointments both locally and in the wider area. Our drivers also helped with occasional local errands like grocery shopping. Requests for rides lessened when the virus appeared. The availability of drivers also decreased. During this year 13 drivers drove 3,016 miles to provide 79 rides for 12 residents.

Volunteers: Akara Draper, Coordinator; Catie G. Berg, Shawn Bracebridge, Vicki Budasi, Susan Daigler, Connie & Norris Evans, Lesley Fishelman, Gurudharm Khalsa, Linda Evans, Susan Read Smith, Lew Teich, Roger Turner

FRIENDLY VISITORS matches volunteers with housebound neighbors or senior home residents for informal social visits. This service is available to any resident who has limited mobility due to temporary or long-term injury, illness, a chronic condition, or some other situation. This year one friendly visit was made and in addition, when the coronavirus appeared, friendly telephone calls were made to more than 20 residents,

Volunteers: Bill Schmidt, Acting Coordinator, Catie G. Berg, Lisa Blake, Connie Evans, Pam McFadden, Judy Morton

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND LOAN PROGRAM provides durable medical equipment to residents recovering from injury or illness and other situations where such equipment is needed. This year 14 residents received 29 pieces of equipment such as a shower chair, walker, wheelchair, and raised toilet seat among many other items.

Volunteers: Heidi Fischer, Coordinator; Phil Hamm, Bill Schmidt

CHORES CORPS volunteers help with simple home repairs and maintenance, occasional yard work, and other chores around the house. This work is done for residents who cannot do what is needed themselves or afford to pay someone to do it. This year four residents were helped.

Volunteers: Bill Schmidt, Acting Coordinator, Norris Evans, June Levinson, Pam McFadden, Lew Sorenson, Lew Teich

EMERGENCY FUEL ASSISTANCE for winter home heating is available to qualified residents. This program works cooperatively with State and SEVCA fuel assistance programs, the Windham County Heat Fund, and the Congregational Church's Wood Pantry. This year fuel assistance was provided to two residents.

Volunteer Coordinator, Bill Schmidt

SUNSHINE BASKETS are given residents who can use some extra sunshine in their life, those who are recovering from illness, surgery or a medical treatment, an especially stressful experience, or grief over the passing of a family member, close friend, or pet. In instances where there is the death of a loved one, condolence flowers are given. On Valentine's Day, baskets are given to people deserving special recognition.

This year 41 residents were given sunshine baskets, condolence flowers, and/or Valentine baskets.

Volunteers: Akara Draper, Pam McFadden and Catie G. Berg, coordinators; Heidi Fischer, Linnie Jones, Norris and Connie Evans

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Cares' primary outreach with the community is in the services and programs provided residents. Those who benefit from what Cares offers know Cares first-hand.

Cares also wants everyone in Dummerston to know about its services and programs. To this end Cares has a website www.dummerstoncares.org that is kept up to date with information about Cares and Cares' programs. Articles about Cares appear regularly in Views of Dummerston. There also was a Cares information table at Town Meeting.

Supporters of Cares – beneficiaries, volunteers, donors, and partners in related organizations and agencies – are considered Friends of Cares. There are now over 250 Friends. Friends receive occasional newsletters and notices of Cares programs and activities. Anyone who wants to be a Friend of Cares should speak to a board member, call the Cares Message Line (257-5800), or email Cares at info@dummerstoncares.org.

Cares has an ongoing need for volunteers to carry out its programs and services. To volunteer speak to a board member or contact Cares by phone or email as noted above.

LOOKING AHEAD

What Cares' services does in the coming year will be dependent in some measure on what happens with the coronavirus. At some point, hopefully, the virus will go its way and concern about it wane. At this time Cares' programs and services will return to their full strength and capacity with available and active volunteers to carry them out. This includes the resumption and holding of community programs that were canceled or postponed.

It's expected that food insecurity issues and programs will continue to receive attention and some of Cares services may be adapted to new needs that arise.

DONORS

Donors this year were Clifford Adler, Bedichek & Jim Greenwood, Nancy Chamerlin, Susan Daigler, Calvin Farwell, Charles & Eleanor Fish, Lesley Fishelman, Catherine T. Gormley, Marcy Hermansader, Margaret Lyons, Carolyn Mayo-Brown, Mary C. Mewes, Steve Mindel, Paul & Jody Normandeau, Ellen O'Beirne, Roderick D. Reay, Usha Rikhye, Gene Rostov, Donna Saunders, Bill & Mary Lou Schmidt, Daniel Snow, Song-Vogt Foundation, Gail & Lew Sorenson, Bob & Muriel Taylor, Stephan Tavella, Nicholas Thorndike, Town of Dummerston, Elizabeth Kobler Williams, and Hugh Worden.

In-Kind donations were received from Catie G. Berg, Shawn Bracebridge, Judy Carpenter, Susan Daigler, Akara Draper, Connie & Norris Evans, Linda Evans, Heidi Fischer, Lesley Fishelman, John Hury, Linnie Jones, Gurudharm Khalsa, Cindy Levine, Sharon Morrison, Bill Schmidt, Susan Read Smith, Lew Teich, and Roger Turner.

2019-20 Dummerston Cares Board

Catie G. Berg, Secretary June 257-2007
Rev. Shawn Bracebridge 689-0573
Susan Daigler, Treasurer, Secretary July--May 257-4200
Akara Draper, Vice President 258-9890
Lesley Fishelman Sept, - Feb.
Heidi Fischer 257-0730
Cindy Levine 843-222-4965
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