

Winter 2010

**New Hampshire AARP Leadership to present
GCSCC's Annual Meeting Keynote Address**

We are pleased to announce that Kelly Clark, State Director for AARP New Hampshire, and Doug McNutt, Associate State Director of Advocacy, will address attendees of Grafton County Senior Citizens Council's Annual Meeting on **Monday, April 5th, 2010** at 12:30 at the Upper Valley Senior Center in Lebanon.



Kelly has served as AARP New Hampshire's State Director since May of 2007. In this role, she works to develop the state's strategic plan and advocate in the areas of Economic Security, Health and Livable Communities. With over 235,000 members in New Hampshire, the mission of AARP is to enhance the quality of life for all as they age.



Doug also joined AARP in 2007. Prior to that, he served for 15 years with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, most recently as the Bureau Chief for the Division of Elderly and Adult Services. Together, Kelly and Doug will provide us with a vision of the future based on state and federal perspectives.

You are invited to join the Upper Valley Senior Center's luncheon at 11:45. Reservations for lunch are required. Please call Marcia at (603)448-4897 by noon on March 29th to reserve a spot.

The business portion of the Annual Meeting which includes agency reports, the election of officers & board members (please see the slate on the back page of this newsletter), and the keynote address, will immediately follow lunch at approximately 12:30. Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.

2009/2010: A Year of Listening...

We begin the New Year at Grafton County Senior Citizens Council with the usual flurry of activity as our staff and volunteers prepare food, deliver meals, arrange transportation, schedule activities, answer questions, connect volunteers, provide assistance, and reach out to seniors in a variety of ways on a daily basis. All the while, however, we have *also* made it an agency priority to stop and simply listen. Beginning with a day-long Retreat held last June, the agency has been taking part in a strategic planning process, funded generously by a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. The goal of this year-long effort is to gain a deeper understanding of our clients, our communities, and the most promising directions for us to pursue in the future.

This past fall, 'listening sessions' were held at our senior centers in Lincoln, Canaan, North Haverhill, Plymouth, Orford, and at the Grafton County ServiceLink offices in Lebanon. They provided invaluable opportunities to hear from local advisory councils as well as community members and clients. Three sessions remain and I invite you to attend one, if possible: **March 2nd at noon: Newfound Area Senior Services in Bristol; March 8th at 9:00 am: Upper Valley Senior Center in Lebanon; and March 9th at 1:00 pm: Littleton Area Senior Center.** At the conclusion of the listening sessions, I will be compiling a detailed paper on our findings to be summarized in GCSCC's Annual Report which will be presented at the Annual Meeting and mailed out in April. Annual Reports may also be viewed on the agency website at www.gcsc.org.

In addition to the strategic planning process, I have been frequenting meetings in Concord, listening intently to Nick Toumpas, Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services. HHS faces difficult choices with increased demand for services and seriously diminished funding. We anticipate changes in contracting for provision of elder services in New Hampshire, though we do not yet know the specific direction the state will take. At the local level, I have been listening as well. What I am hearing from some towns (as they prepare for town meeting) is increasing pressure regarding funding for non-profits. It will be important to continue to advocate for our services in town budget deliberations.

Finally, the agency sends out surveys to clients on a quarterly basis. This allows us to gauge the quality of our services and ensure that we are listening and assessing throughout the year. A few highlights from the Fall 2009 survey include:

- Senior Center Dining:* "I am always comfortable and enjoy both Centers. The people in charge and volunteers do a great job."
- Home Delivered Meals:* "Thank you for providing a great service for my Mom."
"I am very happy with the meals...the person that delivers them and our pleasant chat."
- Transportation:* "Keep it going!" "A regular 5 day a week guy. It is perfect, he is very nice."
- In-Home Care:* "We are pleased and grateful" "[My caregiver] is great. I couldn't do without her. Her housekeeping helps me tremendously."

I thank those who contribute to our strategic planning efforts, advocate for our services at the state and local level, and provide feedback in the form of client surveys. Please be assured that your communication and feedback are valued and are critical to our mission.

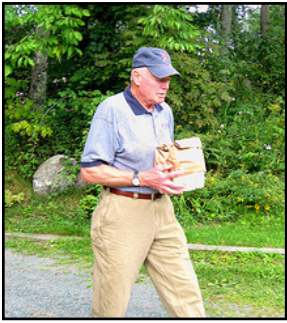
Sincerely,



Roberta Berner
Executive Director

Agency Highlights

GCSCC Featured on NHPR's Giving Matters series



Last fall, GCSCC was selected to participate in *Giving Matters*, a radio series produced jointly by New Hampshire Public Radio and The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. The purpose of the series is to highlight the important work of non-profits in New Hampshire and inspire and motivate individuals to become more involved with non-profit organizations in their communities. The spot featured commentary from Dick Jaeger (shown at left), our Board President and longtime volunteer driver, as he picked up meals at the Mascoma Area Senior Center and delivered them to homebound residents in the rural towns of Canaan, Enfield, and Orange.

To listen to the archived audio clip and view the accompanying photos, please visit NHPR's website at the following address: <http://www.nhpr.org/node/27926>

R.S.V.P. & The Volunteer Center Organizes Day of Service

An intergenerational group of volunteers gathered at two locations on Civil Rights Day to assemble sand shakers to give to volunteers who deliver meals to homebound adults. This effort was part of a national Day of Service to honor the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. While activities differed across the country, RSVP chose this specific project on the recommendation of GCSCC's Safety Committee. As a result, 295 sand shakers were distributed to each of Grafton County Senior Citizens Council's eight centers. Through the centers, the Council delivers more than 141,000 meals a year to 1,000 seniors and adults in need. Pictured at right are volunteers Darrell Ingalls and Leigh Fredricks.



ServiceLink Kicks Off Caregiver Program

On Friday, November 13th, ServiceLink Resource Center held a luncheon at the Common Man Restaurant in Plymouth to formally kick-off *Caregiver Connections*, a project funded by the Harry & Jeannette Weinberg Foundation with additional support from the New Hampshire Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services. This multi-year program builds upon *Transitions in Caregiving* currently in place in Grafton County and the Monadnock Region. The goal of the program (now spread over four regions including the Monadnock Region, Grafton, Coos, and Sullivan Counties) is to improve access to support for family members and friends who provide the majority of care for chronically ill and disabled adults. Caregivers will receive one-on-one counseling, assessment, and access to respite grants. A significant program aim is to build volunteer capacity by raising awareness and providing outreach and training, with the ultimate goal of connecting volunteers and caregivers for respite opportunities. For information about *Caregiver Connections*, please contact ServiceLink at 1-866-634-9412 or www.servicelink.org.

GCSCC Executive Director Honored by Grafton County



Roberta Berner, Executive Director of GCSCC, was recently honored at a reception of the Grafton County Commissioners held at their offices in North Haverhill. Every year, each of the three Commissioners nominates an individual who has made a large impact within the County and dedicates the Annual Report in his or her honor. Michael Cryans, the District I commissioner (pictured with Roberta at left), nominated Roberta, saying "Grafton County and its senior citizens are very fortunate to have Roberta as their advocate..."

Funding Update

Challenges remain in the area of agency funding: At the recommendation of an agency-wide deficit reduction committee, cut-backs have been made in mileage reimbursement for staff and volunteers and several additional items are under consideration. But, there are some bright spots as well: the agency averted an unexpected budgetary expense when Advance Transit loaned us a para-transit bus in the Upper Valley to take the place of a van on loan to seniors in the Lincoln/Woodstock area. Our Annual Fund which fell short last year has been highly successful to date, having raised over \$30,000 in four months (with a goal of \$75,000 for the fiscal year).

Perhaps the biggest adjustment for the agency, however, has been the dramatic increase in services and the resulting cost, of in-home care and homemaker services. Last year, by unanimous decision of the Board of Directors, GCSCC agreed to serve approximately 50 new clients in both northern and southern Grafton County whose services were being discontinued by two home health care agencies. These programs serve frail and vulnerable adults, many of whom are state-designated adult protective service clients. Without GCSCC's agreement to assume these programs, elders would have been left without services and many would have been in imminent need of institutionalization, at great cost, and in spite of their wish to remain living in their own home and communities.

GCSCC took quick action, hiring a new coordinator for the program (who then hired and trained caregivers for clients extending from Piermont to Lincoln) and applied for a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF). **We are proud to report that the agency received a grant of \$25,000 from NHCF in December.** The grant provides critical short-term support for this costly program and will help us leverage long-term private support, particularly in the northern part of Grafton County. Plans are underway to raise awareness and much-needed funds, particularly from the business community.

With the support of NHCF, we are launching **GCSCC's Elder Care Fund** in the northern part of Grafton County. If the agency is able to raise \$25,000 during the next calendar year, we will have the opportunity to apply for an additional \$25,000 from NHCF.

Once again, GCSCC is fortunate to be the recipient of another local challenge grant from the Rhode Island-based **Feinstein Foundation**. For the 13th consecutive year, Alan Shawn Feinstein will divide \$1 million among anti-hunger agencies nationwide using it as a spur to raise funds between March 1 and April 30, 2010. GCSCC is eligible for this grant because of the agency's nutrition programs including home-delivered meals, congregate meals, and food pantries which operate out of several senior centers. In 2009, GCSCC served 220,000 meals, an impressive number which represents a critical source of nutrition for a high proportion of New Hampshire's elders.

We hope you will consider participating in either of these challenge grants by sending your contribution to us in the envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, Inc. is a private nonprofit organization that was incorporated in 1972. It is supported by government grants and contracts, contributions from local towns and Grafton County, contributions from participants, bequests, private grants, charitable donations, and United Way.

GCSCC's mission is to develop, strengthen, and provide programs and services that support the health, dignity, and independence of older adults and adults with disabilities living in our communities. GCSCC achieves its purpose through programs and services offered at senior centers and other locations throughout Grafton County.

What's happening at the Senior Centers??

Horse Meadow Senior Center—Giving new credence to the expression “Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth”, Center Director Deb Foster reports that over \$300 has been raised from the sale of raffle tickets for a fully-grown pig!

Linwood Area Senior Services—After an outpouring of community support, particularly from the local Rotary, Linwood’s replacement bus was put into service in the late Fall. In addition to weekly community luncheons, special events such as a monthly Afternoon Tea and ‘Elvis Day’ successfully drew new participants to the Center.

Littleton Area Senior Center—A very generous individual donation to purchase new chairs for the dining room has spurred additional fundraising activities for a new ‘table fund’. The Center puts these items to constant daily use and relies on them for large and festive gatherings such as their Thanksgiving Dinner which served 185 seniors and their Christmas luncheon which served 150 guests. An inaugural road race sponsored by Riverglen House attracted 120 participants and raised \$1,600 for wellness activities at the center.

Mascoma Area Senior Center—A new and brightly colored sign hangs outside the center advertising daily activities as well as upcoming events. The Center reports two recent successful fundraisers: A dinner held in the fall (with all food and labor donated by local businesses and volunteers) raised over \$1,000 to be used for local services; and the printing of a 2010 calendar titled ‘Volunteers in Action’ featuring photos of Mascoma’s talented volunteers taken by the Center’s Outreach Worker Gail Emmons Shaw. Funds raised from calendar sales were used to build much-needed shelving for the Center’s Food Pantry. The calendar’s April photo (below) shows volunteer leaders and participants from an RSVP Bone Builders exercise class held twice weekly at the Center.



Newfound Area Senior Services—Center Staff, Advisory Council Members, and local seniors are making great progress toward efforts to raise matching funds for a replacement bus. So far, with proceeds from a quilt raffle, private donations, and a grant from the Agnes M. Lindsay Trust, the center is well on its way to meet its fundraising goal.

Orford Area Senior Services—Through such activities as a flu-shot clinic, a safety presentation by the Orford Police Department, and karaoke entertainment to accompany the weekly community meal, the Center continues to provide social, educational, and nutritional services to area seniors.

Plymouth Regional Senior Center—On October 23rd, PRSC held an Open House to celebrate its successful second floor renovations and entryway improvements. This continues the preservation and restoration of the Boston & Maine Depot (built in 1910). The second floor provides a social gathering space, computers with internet access, an arts & crafts area, and a large conference room. The event, which drew a large crowd, provided entertainment as well as demonstrations in yoga, Tai Chi, line dancing and Bone Builders exercise classes—all currently offered at the Center.

Upper Valley Senior Center—Center Director, Jill Vahey, recently completed a weeklong workshop in *Chronic Disease Self Management*. Jill will take what she learned in this session to train additional leaders who will then sponsor workshops in various community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries, and hospitals. Participants in the workshops will learn techniques to manage their chronic health conditions in a mutually supportive environment.

This coupon entitles the bearer to
One Free Lunch
at your Senior Center

Staff Transitions

We welcome the following employees who have joined GCSCC (since publication of the summer newsletter) in the following program areas: **Adult In-Home Care:** Felicia Pero, Steven Packer, Phyllis Copeland, Shirley Bryson, Alisa Acker, Roseanne Wilson, Audrey Champagne, Frances Foster, Carol Marcott, Pauline Blish, Carol Daigle, Wanda Skrobak, Megan Thayer, and Jenni Baird. **Transportation/Bus Drivers:** Dale Stockman (Upper Valley and Mascoma); Jeffrey Norton (Littleton); Dan DeWitt (Plymouth substitute); Heidi McCaffrey (Littleton substitute); Richard Reynolds (Upper Valley substitute); and Andrew Peloquin (Littleton substitute). **Nutrition/Kitchen Staff:** Cindy Lawson, Head Cook in Plymouth; Lillian Pillsbury, Upper Valley substitute; and Patricia Stevens, Assistant Cook in Littleton. **Center Staff:** Tammi Klotz, Upper Valley Senior Center Activities Director; and Sally Mosher, Administrative Assistant at Linwood Area Senior Services. **ServiceLink Resource Center:** Heather Sands, Long-Term Care Counselor in Plymouth and Littleton; and Mary Beth Donohue, Medicare Counselor in Littleton. **RSVP & The Volunteer Center:** Lewis Greenstein, Volunteer Coordinator based at Horse Meadow Senior Center; and Cynthia Sweeney, part-time Coordinator for Sullivan County. **GCSCC Administration:** Betsy Cheney, Head Bookkeeper; and Tammy Barille, part-time Bookkeeper.

And, we wish the very best to departing employees including: Melissa Gray who worked at Linwood Area Senior Services as a cook and administrative assistant since 2005; Cyndy LaRoche, GCSCC Head Bookkeeper; and Carla Fernandes who served as Activities Coordinator for the Upper Valley Senior Center.

GCSCC Annual Meeting: Nominees for Officers & Board Members

The April 5th meeting will include election of the proposed slate of Officers and Board members. With the election of this slate, GCSCC would have Board representation from all geographic areas of the county.

1st term Board Members (to expire in 2013)

Jay Polimeno, Woodstock
Mike McKinney, Bristol
Emily Sands, Meriden

2nd Term Board Members (to expire in 2013)

Rich Crocker, Plymouth
Molly Scheu, Hanover
Jim Varnum, Etna

To fill unexpired terms:

Clark Griffiths, Lebanon (2010-2012)
Caroline Moore, Dartmouth Centers
for Health & Aging, Lebanon (2010-2011)

Nominated as GCSCC Officers

President

Jim Varnum, Etna
(2010-2012)

Vice President

to fill Jim Varnum's unexpired term
Laurel Spielberg, Hanover
(2010-2011)

Treasurer

J. Pete Moseley, Lebanon
(2009-2011)

Secretary

An extension of one year
Dr. Thomas S. Brown, Lebanon
(2010-2011)

GCSCC operates through a number of committees which are comprised of both Board and non-Board volunteers. These committees, which report to the Board on a regular basis, include Finance, Facilities, Program Planning & Evaluation, Personnel, and Marketing & Development. If you are interested in serving on a GCSCC committee, please contact us. In addition, each Senior Center has an Advisory Council that meets monthly. Last year, GCSCC relied on 944 volunteers to provide services as well as to help lead the agency. We welcome your involvement.