



2023-2024 Annual Report to our Towns

Message to Our Seniors: You're Why We're Here!

2023 Summary

In 2023, more seniors than ever took advantage of the dozens of weekly programs and activities we offer. As many newcomers discovered, it's easy to participate just by showing up! No experience is necessary, there's no membership fee, and it's available to all seniors free or with optional fees. Also, there is no physical "center." Everything we do takes place in spaces made available in our town facilities, libraries, schools and churches.

We've also begun to focus on community support activities that help seniors with different needs. The foot clinic we coordinate with the great support of Richmond Family Medicine and volunteer registered nurses is one example, and we're exploring others for 2024.

Simply stated, the Community Senior Center is woven into our towns' fabric, and provides extensive and diverse recreational, wellness and learning opportunities for seniors in our towns. And we're here for all of you!

Here's why participation continues to grow.

Over 500 area seniors participated in our activities and programs in 2023. We ask about their diverse interests and abilities, then identify others with those interests, find a volunteer who's enthusiastic about leading each new activity, and provide what's necessary to make it work.

The key is to offer what seniors want. And that opens our door to a growing number of seniors with interests that vary from needle arts to indoor ice skating.

Turning ideas into activities and programs

These are some of entries on our weekly newsletter activities and programs calendar that expands as seniors introduce new ideas:

- Script reading, with members taking on roles in the cast.
- Needle arts, where participants learn and share ideas.
- Pickleball outdoors when weather permits, and indoors when it doesn't.
- Socializing over coffee and conversation somewhere in each town.
- Planting, tending and harvesting at our Friendship Garden.
- Indoor ice skating, bowling, and softball like you've never experienced.
- On-line presentations by noted authors and historians.
- Popular card and table games.
- French and Spanish conversation.
- An on-line group that shares interesting life stories.
- A memoir writing class, and sessions to sharpen skills in writing anything seniors choose.
- Hiking, kayaking, and casual walks at locations throughout the county.
- Wellness activities including Bone Builders and on-line weight-loss support.
- For the musically inclined, group sing-a-longs and learning to play the ukulele.

Who does all this?

Over 50 volunteers lead and coordinate activities and programs! They arrange schedules, facilities and equipment, coordinate transportation and communicate with participants. Some new-comers also volunteer to lead activities they recommend. Each leader ensures that first-timers get enough instruction to “learn the ropes.”

What else does it take to make it all happen?

Our weekly newsletter now goes to almost 900 email addresses. It describes current activities and programs and community events, and is loaded with articles and photos from senior contributors. The CSC website also tells people all about us. It includes our newsletters, videos of past programs, and our community service initiatives.

Our cadre of volunteers also includes professionals who donate their time and expertise in such areas as accounting, communications and financial planning.

How do we fund it all?

We’re proud of the many people whose donations let us realize the budget required to fund our activities and programs, and most importantly, to help provide a healthier, more enriching lifestyle for so many seniors. It also allows us to keep fees optional for activities such as bowling that have an associated cost.

We do it all without tapping into town tax revenues. We also appreciate the significant support our towns and local churches give us by providing the spaces we need. It’s a much better approach than having to support the cost of our own “bricks and mortar.”

What’s new for 2024?

Three new members will add their skills to the CSC Board of Directors. We welcome the experience and energy that Debra Herbst and Jess Handrik of Bolton and Darryl Smith of Richmond bring to help build on what we do.

Another new initiative involves CSC volunteers who will bring activities to seniors in their homes. Similarly, we’ll continue our on-line programming started during the COVID isolation era that gives seniors at-home access to certain activities and to presentations by noteworthy speakers.

Looking ahead, we’ll explore more ways we can serve seniors including those who can’t attend activities in person. Once again, our volunteers, donors, towns and local organizations continue to make it all possible. Thank you!