

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Notes from the Volunteer Resource Center	1
Say hello to... Linda Zevitas	2
9/11/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance	3
The Year in Review	3
The Volunteer Handbook – A Tool for You	4
It's All About You!	4



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## **Notes from the Volunteer Resource Center**

Happy New Year, everyone! I wish you all a very happy, very healthy 2012! Come March I will be celebrating my first year as Volunteer Resource Center Manager. I want to thank you all for making it a very rewarding year. I hope it has been for you as well.

For those of you who have served this organization long and faithfully, I'm sure you've seen the real and positive impact you have on the lives of seniors. I hope you feel appreciated - because you certainly are! For those of you who started during this past year, I want to personally thank you for answering our call, whether you saw the announcement in the newspaper, heard it on a radio station, noticed it in a church bulletin, or on a flier posted in a library. Our need for volunteers ebbs and flows. This past year we had some serious needs. But I'm happy to say that once the word was out in the community – you responded, strongly and steadily and with enthusiasm.

Thanks to our volunteers, the Ombudsman Program now has the highest number of volunteers in its history. Many new volunteers joined the Money Management Program after reading an article done by the American Association of Retired Persons. And out of seven towns that were in dire need of Meals-On-Wheels and Senior Dining assistance, you helped us meet our needs in Dennis, Harwich, Wellfleet, and Yarmouth. If you enjoy your volunteering experience, we might ask that you share its rewards with friends, family, and neighbors, as we are still looking for help in Bourne, Falmouth, and Martha's Vineyard. But most importantly, we want to say thank you. Thank you for taking the time to make a difference in someone's life. Throughout the year the gift that we most appreciate is the gift of you.

Cindy Cullen,  
Volunteer Resource Center Manager

## **Nutrition ID Badges**

Many new volunteers who are delivering Meals-On-Wheels or assisting at Senior Dining Centers ask about the ID badges mentioned on pages 7 and 9 of the Volunteer Handbook. These badges are available from the Nutrition Site Coordinator at each nutrition site. The badges identify volunteers as either a Meals-On-Wheels or a Senior Dining Center volunteer who serves Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands.

## Say hello to...Linda Zevitas



Walking through the halls of the South Dennis Office, you might encounter Linda Zevitas, a woman with a warm smile and a savvy demeanor. Linda works as the Nutrition Program Manager. Her position is an important one; it's her job to ensure that the Nutrition Program runs efficiently and that it meets state and federal

standards. When the program operates well, more money is available to help more people in need. To help her with her efforts, she relies on site coordinators from 17 nutrition sites across the Cape and on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, who report to site supervisors, and four Nutrition Care Managers, who visit consumers. She's been in the position over five years, but she has served with this organization for 10 years. The main goal of the Nutrition Program is to provide seniors with one nutritious meal a day and an opportunity to socialize, whether it's with the driver who delivers a meal and a safety check or people at a nutrition site. The secondary goal of the program is to offer healthier food that people like, which might encourage them to make healthier food choices on their own. Sometimes serving healthy food that people like involves trial and error. Linda is there every step of the way, contacting suppliers and tracking improvement.

I sat down with Linda and invited her to share some information about the Nutrition Program with our volunteers. First she wanted to say, "Our volunteers are absolutely critical. They are the lifeblood of the program. They are the ones who see consumers on a daily basis. And we have surveys that show consumers love them for it." Because of budget constraints, the only way that the organization can meet the needs of seniors in the area is through volunteers. The Nutrition Program always runs at a deficit; the meals cost more money than they bring in. The organization tries to offset the deficit with fundraising. This past year, the Meals-On-Wheel Program benefitted from the THANKSgivingx365 Fund Drive, Seaside LeMans, and ESCCI's first annual golf tournament. When the Meals-On-Wheels Program has an influx of funds, agency money which subsidizes the program can go elsewhere and assist other programs such as Money Management, Ombudsmen, and Mature Workers.

Linda says many volunteers often wonder who is eligible for the Meals-On-Wheels Program. She explains, "People have to be age 60 or over, and, for physical or mental reasons, they are unable to cook a meal themselves." This particular program is not based on financial need, only on the inability to shop, prepare, and cook a meal. Anyone can refer a person for Meals-On-Wheels. The person just has to call Elder Services Information and Referral line at 800-244-4630. The I&R Specialist will ask the caller a few questions, then the potential consumer's information will go to a Nutrition Care Manager, who will go to the home and make an assessment, asking questions such as "Do you have a stove? Do you have a microwave? Do you have anyone in the house or nearby who can help you?" Every six months, the Nutrition Care Manager will re-visit the consumer and re-assess the situation.

As a Meals-On-Wheels driver, if you ever wondered about changes in your route, Linda has the answer, "We work hard to make sure that our drivers are only delivering for about an hour and a half. We've calculated the driver's ideal route to serve about 15 consumers, so we often have to adjust the route as more people come on the program." Consumers are told that drivers will deliver their meals between 10 a.m. and noon but they never know if they will receive their meals first or last. Each driver can determine the best order of his or her route.

Along with the Meals-On-Wheels and Senior Dining Programs, the Nutrition Program offers fresh vegetables through USDA grants. Low income consumers over 60 can either use coupons at farmers' markets, or, if consumers are homebound, they can receive a bag of vegetables at harvest time in the fall.

Recently the Nutrition Program received a grant from Tufts Health Plan Foundation to educate people on healthy eating. Participants are welcome to attend six sessions which will be offered at six different times during 2012 in various locations across the Cape. The "Healthy Eating" Program is for people who want to learn more about how nutrition and lifestyle changes can promote better health. The first workshop begins on February 16th and will meet every Thursday for six weeks at the South Dennis Office. Linda would love for you to attend! Space is limited, and you must register – so give her a call at 508-394-4630, ext. 401.

By Cindy Cullen

## 9/11/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance

On the 10th anniversary of the attacks on 9/11, the website 911day.org invited Americans to set aside time on or around September 11th to help others in need, thereby paying tribute to those who lost their lives on that day and those who rose to serve during the crisis. The website offered to record the hours dedicated by volunteers. After totaling the results Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands was pleased to report to 911day.org that volunteers of both Elder Services and Elder Services' Senior Service Corps (which places volunteers ages 55 and over in other organizations serving a local need) gave 1,178.5 hours of service during the month of September. The efforts of our volunteers joined with the efforts of others across the country and translated into the single largest expression

of charitable service in American history. As always, our volunteers met the needs of people in our community. They delivered Meals-On-Wheels to homebound seniors; packed ready-to-heat meals in coolers; spooned out food and washed dishes at Senior Dining sites; advocated for elders in nursing and rest homes; helped organize seniors' finances; satisfied the needs of outside groups like the Housing Assistance Corporation, Habitat for Humanity, and the Red Cross; and cleaned up Monomoy Island off Chatham in memory of Jeff Palazzo, an NYFD firefighter and former Coast Guardsman assigned to the Chatham station who lost his life in one of the Towers on 9/11. We extend our gratitude to our volunteers for making this amazing national accomplishment possible!

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## The Year in Review

I hope that your holidays were festive and bright and that good fortune and happiness follows you throughout the New Year!

The year 2011 was busy and productive at Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands – much if it due to the hard work and dedication of our many volunteers. In 2011, over 203,000 meals were delivered to our consumers in their homes and an additional 47,000 meals were served at our Senior Dining Centers. Our Long Term Care Ombudsmen made almost 1,100 visits to nursing and rest homes to meet with residents and advocate for their care and Money Management volunteers assisted nearly 260 consumers, in their home, with bill paying and checkbook reconciliation. All of these efforts helped to keep the elders in our community safe and independent.

In other Elder Service activities for 2011 we were grateful to be one of the recipients of the Seaside LeMans race, organized and funded by the Davenport Company to benefit non-profits. This fundraiser helped to support the Meals-on-Wheels program. We also held our inaugural "Fore Meals-on-Wheels" golf tournament at The Club at Yarmouthport. This event, on a beautiful fall day, was a huge success and we are already planning for 2012.

Our new Options Counseling program was up and running in early 2011 and it has helped elders and anyone 18 and older with a disability with finding resources and making

informed choices as they plan for their long term care needs. Our Home Care program provided supportive services to over 3,500 individuals to help them remain in their homes, Protective Services responded to over 1,000 reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation and worked closely with these clients to find ways to keep them safe and well. Our Senior Service Corps matched nearly 550 volunteers aged 55 and older with other community groups in need of support in such areas as environmental protection, tutoring children, and providing transportation. And our Information and Referral Department was never at rest – answering over 6,000 calls in 2011!

This is just a small sample of all that we do at Elder Services. There are many ways that an elder, caregiver, family member, or concerned neighbor can find the help that they need. Please check out our website [www.escci.org](http://www.escci.org) to learn more about what we have to offer (and maybe find some new areas that you would like to explore as a volunteer).

Again, we could not accomplish all that we do without your help and it is always greatly appreciated.

Pat Hart,  
Director of Community Services



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**4 • THE VOLUNTEER RESOURCE** **WINTER/SPRING 2012**

### **The Volunteer Handbook – A Tool for You**

The Volunteer Handbook was developed by Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands in 2006. It has undergone revisions since then, but the handbook still serves its original purpose: it's an easy, hands-on guide which will help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer.

The Volunteer Handbook is a brief version of the Volunteer Resource Center's policies and procedures manual. Please keep it handy and consult it during the course of your service. The Handbook addresses such topics as confidentiality, dress code, incident reporting, and much more. New volunteers are mailed Volunteer Handbooks in their Welcome Packets. If you ever feel that the Volunteer Handbook does not cover an item or situation, please let us know. We want your volunteer experience to be as positive and fulfilling as it can be. If you have misplaced your handbook, or began your service prior to its publication, feel free to contact the Volunteer Resource Center for a copy.

### **It's All About You!**

Every year our Volunteer Recognition Committee meets to plan the celebration of National Volunteer Week, which is held during the third week in April. This year's events will take place between Sunday, April 15th and Saturday, April 21st. As some of you might recall last year's theme was, "We're wild about you – a garden of thanks for all you do!" Gifts and treats included a "garden in a cup" and snacks like biscotti, crisps, and more.

Since it really is all about you, we welcome your suggestions and comments about past years' efforts. You can e-mail Cindy Cullen, Chairman of the Volunteer Recognition Committee, at [cindy.cullen@escci.org](mailto:cindy.cullen@escci.org). We'll add your considerations into the planning process. It's our goal to express your value to us in a tangible way.