Thursday, November 17, 2022, 7:30 – 9:00 AM

Members present: Alexis Babaian, Holly Bellebuono, Victor Capoccia, Leslie Clapp, Louise Clough, Betsy Edge, Beth Folcarelli, Alan Hirshberg, Sarah Kuh, Lewis Laskaris, Bob Laskowski, Marina Lent, Karen MacPhail, Lisa Nagy, Chantale Patterson, Dan Pesch, Susan Pratt, Kathleen Samways, Joyce Stiles Tucker, Cindy Trish, Mary Jane Williams, Jim Wolff, Guests present: Lila Fischer, Mary Holmes, Cathy Wozniak,

**Call meeting to order / Approval of October 20 meeting minutes:** Mary Jane Williams called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM. The October minutes were moved, seconded, and approved.

**Dementia Training** – Mary Holmes, the Supervisor of the Supportive Day Program at the Center for Living, gave a little background on the Dementia Friends movement and named the many groups on the Vineyard where she has provided training. The training is usually one hour, and she welcomes requests from anyone who wants to take advantage of it. The goal of the training is to help everyone in a community understand five key messages about dementia, how it affects people, and how we each can make a difference in the lives of people living with the disease. She listed the ten early signs of dementia:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life.

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems.

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at

leisure.

4. Confusion with time or place.

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial

relationships.

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing.

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.

8. Decreased or poor judgment.

9. Withdrawal from work or social activities.

10. Changes in mood and personality

She talked about communication and gave some conversation tips, then listed five key messages:

1. Dementia is not a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia.
2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain. The most common is Alzheimer’s.
3. Dementia is not just about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.
4. It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia. Symptoms may be mild for a long time. Everyone can feel joy, comfort and a sense of belonging with support.
5. There’s more to the person than the dementia. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.

Mary ended with a list programs and services available at the Center for Living, including contact information. *Note that Mary’s presentation was sent out to Council members after the meeting and is considered part of the meeting minutes.*

Leslie Clapp said that she learned that the Dementia Friends training is being done is high schools and would like Council members to help get the word out in the community. Lisa Nagy said that COVID has been shown to cause dementia, as does indoor air quality – the key is to pick up memory loss early and advise people how to not become demented. Bob Laskowski asked Mary if there was practicing or role playing as part of her hour-long training sessions. Mary agreed that that would be a good idea.

**Healthy Aging Update** – Cindy Trish, Executive Director of Healthy Aging Martha’s Vineyard, started by saying the Council member Paddy Moore started Healthy Aging ten years ago. It was a grass roots organization then, and has evolved to become a planning, advocacy and community building organization with a mission to ensure there is the infrastructure and services in place to support our growing Older Adult population. She described the Coalitions in place, and the numbers of agencies or members participating in each. The Coalitions are: Older Adult Transportation, Falls Prevention, Advance Care Planning, and Older Adult Digital Equity. A five-year Community Plan has been developed with six key priorities. An example of one of the priorities- Ensure that the essential services Older Adults need and the workforce necessary to provide them are in place – is assisting with the development of the new Green House model nursing home. She also described the Age and Dementia Friendly Certification. The Island received Age-Friendly certification by the World Health Organization/AARP about five years ago, and when it was time to re-apply this year, they added on / received Dementia-Friendly designation. The designation as both Age and Dementia Friendly creates opportunities for partnerships with regional and national organizations as well as access to additional funding.

The Falls Prevention Coalition’s mission is awareness, education, and empowerment to help older adults prevent falls. Coming out of the work of the Falls Prevention Coalition, was the Home Safety Modification Pilot Program. The program is referral based (from COAs, MVH, MVC4L, Elder Services etc.) and includes conducting a home assessment for minor home safety renovations (i.e., grab bars, stair railings, improved lighting, pull-out shelves etc.), matching the participant with a willing contractor to conduct the renovations, and providing a post-renovation assessment of the project. The program has been funded by grants from Martha’s Vineyard Hospital and the Martha’s Vineyard Savings Bank Charitable Fund, as well as donations. Over 80% of the participants qualified to have 100% of the costs covered. A new pilot program out of the Falls Prevention Coalition is the evidence-based program “A Matter of Balance.” This program is specifically designed to reduce the fear of falling and improve activity levels among Aging Adults and addresses an existing service gap in supporting those who have fallen and are restricting their activities as a result. Funding was provided to train instructors, and the first eight-week session was just completed at the Edgartown Council on Aging.

The Older Adult Transportation Coalition implemented 4 pilot programs for alternative transportation options for Aging Adults including: GoGoGrandparents on-demand rides (on-island), MVC4L adult supportive day program (on-island), COA Shopping Shuttle transportation (on-island) and Shuttle (including escorts) for islanders who are having cataract surgery (off-island).

The Home Sharing Pilot pairs older adults who live alone (the host) with an employed Islander (the guest) who needs housing, partnering with MV Mediation to provide housing facilitation expertise to ensure a quality “match” between participants. The program is just beginning (two pioneers to date) and is looking for five to ten hosts to provide housing to single adults who are employed on the island. Employers are a third party to this program, as the goal is to provide workforce housing. Employers can refer workers, and the housing ends if/when the guest is no longer employed.

Another thing Healthy Aging does is work with organizations across the island to conduct research in engaging older adults – an example was the partnering with Howes House Building Committee, conducting six focus groups with older adults to get their perspectives on what older adults would like in a physical gathering place. Focus groups were also held with a number of agencies to see what they see as needs for older adults island wide.

Working with the Dukes County Health Council, Healthy Aging hosted the Rural Scholars (U Mass Chan medical and nursing students) to conduct research on the island and to socialize these findings across the island, informing prioritization and service development around the topic of in-home services.

Victor Capoccia said that Paddy Moore, who started Healthy Aging, will get the Spirit of the Vineyard award in early December. Cindy will send the details to Louise who will forward the information to the Council. *Note that Cindy’s presentation was sent out to Council members after the meeting and is considered part of the meeting minutes.*

**Public Health Updates** – Kathleen Samways gave a vaccine update. The COVID bus came on November 6 and close to 550 people were vaccinated, and they each received $75 gift certificates for groceries from the health agent. Health Imperatives is continuing to give COVID vaccines on Wednesday afternoons by appointment. Call 508-693-1208. The gift certificates are also available at these appointments. Flu clinics will be scheduled in three different places and at different times in order to give access to more people. They will be held the week after thanksgiving. Volunteers will be needed to administer vaccines and do administrative work. COVID vaccines at the drive up at the hospital continue to be available, based on when the hospital receives the vaccines.

Marina Lent said that the hospital is seeing extremely high levels of RSV, many in the emergency room, but very few admitted. The Flu season is starting early this year, and COVID seems to be at a plateau. We don’t know how it will play out this winter, especially with people traveling and getting together during the holidays. Concerns are capacity – not an issue at the hospital currently, and serious effects if COVID, as more and more are being identified. People should do everything they can to avoid getting COVID. The other disease of concern is Lyme Disease. It’s deer hunting season and that usually results in a spike in hunters. People should check for ticks after being outside. She also said that the hospital is more cautious about Doxycycline, and she is in agreement with this, as attention needs to be paid to antibiotic resistance when antibiotics are overused.

Betsy Edge said that they just heard from DPH they will be getting Monkeypox vaccine, and it will be available at Health Imperatives starting December first.

**Other Member Updates –**

* Cathy Wozniak announced that Hospice and Palliative Care of Martha’s Vineyard became Medicare Certified on September thirtieth. After two years of hard work, they had a survey with no deficiencies and became accredited by CHAP (Community Health Accreditation Program) at the same time. She asked that we spread the word as they are eager to grow, and she will make a more comprehensive presentation at the January Council meeting.
* Bob Laskowski – the Mental Health Work Group, discussed earlier this year, is being put together and will be discussed with the Coordinating Committee early next year. Lisa Belcastro will co-chair the group. Also: he sent out an invitation in Mary Jane’s name for a social get together since we see each other on Zoom, but not in person. The event will be at his house on December 6, and he’ll send to invite out again. His third topic is asking what we would give as gifts of health – to others and to ourselves. The responses will be the basis for a column that Victoria Haeselbarth writes for the MV Times.
* Holly Bellebuono said she had two updates from MVCET – Center for Education and Training (used to be ACE MV). They are partnering with Upper Cape Tech to provide nurse aide training, a CNA class that will begin in January or February. It’s an 8-week class, five weeks are on-line, but an RN is needed to teach the last three weeks of clinicals and labs. They are seeking an instructor for that now. The other update is that they have submitted an application to OEMS (the Office of Emergency Medical Services at the State) to become accredited to be the EMT trainer on the island. Cathy Wozniak asked how much the CNA class will cost and Holly said that they have scholarships through MV Community Foundation and MV Bank, so she doesn’t think there will be a charge. Mary Jane asked Holly if she had a syllabus for the course, because she might know someone who would be willing to teach. Holly said she’d get it from Upper Cape Tech and provide it to Mary Jane. Marina asked that Holly reach out to the Brazilian community about the EMT training as they are underrepresented in medical services on the island, and said there’s nothing better for a 19-year-old to experience being on the ambulance, get to know the doctors in the ER, get exposure to medical practice and medical knowledge, and go on from there.
* Marina said that some day in the future we should do a presentation on what is available to you if you have absolutely no money. What is available to you in this community. Go over the whole panoply of scenarios and services that we’ve been talking about.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:56 am**

**The next regular Health Council meeting will be held via zoom on December 15, at 7:30 am**

Respectfully submitted, Louise Clough, secretary