

HUMAN SERVICES

SENIOR SERVICES DIVISION / COUNCIL ON AGING

The mission of the Senior Services Division and the Council on Aging is to promote quality of life for Concord's seniors (age 60 and older) by helping them to maintain their dignity, self-esteem, personal independence and their roles as full participants in the life of the community. The COA strives to fulfill this mission by providing opportunities for seniors to enhance their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being.

According to the January 2020 Town Census, there are 5060 Concord residents over the age of 60 and representing 32% of the total population of Concord. The percentage is up from 22.5% in 2006. The 2010 Federal census showed that the state average was roughly 16%.

The following is a sampling of service statistics for FY 2020: 2094 seniors were active at the COA. 167 new seniors began participating for the first time. 200 seniors used the van service and received 6699 rides. 896 seniors were assisted by Outreach/Social Services, 169 seniors participated in a fitness class and 2556 meals were served at the COA to 268 seniors.

Coronavirus Impact

On March 12, 2020, the COA closed its doors at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center to the public due to the worldwide pandemic and they remain closed as of this writing. The staff, however, continued to work, first from home, then on teams in the office and eventually back in the office 4 days a week and working from home one day a week. We quickly learned how to use zoom and got the licenses we needed. The staff converted every possible program onto the virtual platform and we continued to hire entertainers and speakers. Additionally, we began offering drive through meals and giveaways several times a week. Our goal was to help Concord seniors still feel connected to the COA and to each other and to be sure that they continued to feel cared for and remembered during this time

of isolation. Our social service team started making calls on a regular basis to "check in" on seniors to be sure that they had access to appropriate support services during the stay at home mandate. All told, the team made over 800 calls in the first two months of the shut down and are continuing with that calling schedule on a periodic basis. Our van service, while initially discontinued began operating again during the end of the summer with no more than two riders at a time, for medical appointments only, with sanitization between riders. Throughout the pandemic, we continued to loan out durable medical equipment with proper sanitization taking place. We also installed a video doorbell and drop boxes so that materials could be left at the office as necessary. We created an "interview room" for seniors who needed to be seen in person. The room has pexi-glass installed between the employee and the senior and is thoroughly sanitized between uses. The COA also continued to produce a monthly newsletter throughout the pandemic that described the programming and drive through activities and provided important pandemic information. We are grateful to the many volunteers who stepped forward during this challenging time to offer to shop for seniors who needed groceries delivered and to the volunteers who drove them to appointments outside of the COA service area. The COA staff certainly looks forward to the day when we can re-open our doors and slowly move back to our normal programming schedule.

Outreach and Social Services

Our professional staff provides advice, assessment, consultation, and referrals to seniors and their support network (family, friends and neighbors) while adhering to strict standards of confidentiality. Their extensive and specialized knowledge of resources helps to assist seniors to live independently as long as possible. Strong working relationships with various town departments, hospitals, home health care agencies, aging service access points, housing authorities, and businesses provide the best comprehensive service.

Wellness and Fitness

The COA offers a wide diversity of program and

fitness opportunities such as Aerobics, Tai Chi, Yoga, and Strength and Flexibility that contribute to the overall health of Concord seniors. We offer regular health clinics and screenings as well as a variety of speakers on an assortment of health topics. We continue to offer the free loan of durable medical equipment and 266 seniors borrowed 698 pieces of equipment this past year. Our geriatric health nurse is available for seniors who have complicated medical situations who need extra support and advice.

Social, Recreational and Educational Opportunities

Because the opportunity to interact with peers, stay intellectually active, and feel valued and needed by the community is key to emotional and physical health, we offer day trips, speaker's series, movies, parties, computer tutoring, discussion groups, craft workshops, book groups, cooking classes, games, music classes, and guided walks just to name a few. We make an effort to film our presentations for public broadcast so that our homebound residents can benefit from the information. We continue to produce a 12 page monthly newsletter that details the many choices of activities to engage in and explains the services that we offer. Seniors that opt to receive the newsletter may do so by e-mail or postal mail delivery.

Transportation

Our vans provide weekday local transportation for seniors who no longer drive or who have a temporary limitation. We offer transportation daily Monday through Friday and offer two vans every day in order to meet demand. In addition to providing transportation around town to medical appointments, banks, pharmacies, grocery stores, hospitals, etc we continue to provide transportation to the Annual Town meeting and to vote on Election Day. (see note under Coronavirus Impact on how transportation was affected during part of this year)

Lockboxes and File of Life

The COA continues to offer the installation of a lock box on the residence of any senior who requests it. This box, installed by a COA volunteer allows the resident to place a key to their home inside in case of emergencies. Only the Fire/

Ambulance Service and the COA have master keys. In the case of any emergency, the locked home can be entered without breaking a door or window. The COA also continues to encourage the use of "File of Life", which is a red plastic folder for the refrigerator and the wallet with important medical information in case of emergency. The COA provides these free of charge to all Concord seniors.

Additional Support Services

The COA offers these additional services thanks to cooperative arrangements with other agencies businesses and churches: "Ask the Lawyer" program which provides seniors with a free 30 minute consultation with an attorney, SHINE (Serving the Health and Information Needs of Everyone) counselors to help seniors with issues related to their health insurance, "Ask a Pharmacist", AARP tax return assistance program, fall clean up days, flower delivery to home bound seniors and the delivery of buckets of sand for winter. We continue to offer a very successful Caregiver Support group.

Social Media

The COA Facebook page provides an opportunity for seniors to follow the activities of the COA and to read important and relevant tips on successful aging. We encourage readers to like our page and share our story with your family and friends.

Volunteers and Public Relations

Volunteers greatly enhance and support the work of the staff and thanks to their efforts and talents; we are able to offer a rich mixture of programming. We are always looking for new volunteers for a variety of possibilities and encourage residents to step forward and see where they can help. For everyone's protection, we needed to discontinue the use of most volunteers during the pandemic, but certainly look forward to welcoming everyone back when safe to do so.

Financial Support

In addition to receiving funding from the Town's General Fund, the COA is grateful to the following funding sources for their commitment to Concord seniors and the financial support of our work:

Concord-Carlisle Community Chest

Grant allocations provide partial funding for the

following positions: Volunteer Coordinator, Social Service Supervisor and Outreach Coordinator.

Executive Office of Elder Affairs

The Formula Grant, based on the number of seniors in our community, provides full or partial funding for the following positions: Geriatric Health Nurse, Outreach Coordinator, and Activity Coordinators.

Harvey Wheeler Treasure Chest Gift Shop

Thanks to the many residents who donate quality goods for re-sale, the patrons who shop there and the many dedicated volunteers, proceeds are used to support many COA programs. While the gift shop had to close when the building closed, we are happy to announce that the gift shop now has an online presence!

COA Gift Account

We are grateful to the many people who chose to make a donation to the COA gift account. Most offerings at the COA are free of charge, but with the assistance of the gift account, we are able to provide scholarships or partial assistance for the cost of an event or trip to folks who could not otherwise afford to attend something they are interested in. The gift account also helps with program and building expenses that are not otherwise covered with in the budget.

COA Board

The COA Board, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Director, consists of nine full members appointed for three year terms and two associate members appointed for one year terms by the Town Manager. Members of the COA Board serve as liaisons to the following committees: Disability, Housing, Concord After Sixty, and Minuteman Senior Services.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

2020 was a busy year for the Commission in spite of and because of the pandemic. The year began with an emergency preparedness seminar provided by the Mass Office on Disabilities which gave every participant a red backpack filled with emergency supplies such as a solar powered flashlight/phone

charger, first aid supplies, and personal hygiene supplies.

A huge focus throughout the year was the parking for the new library addition. We met many times with the Library Corporation, design team, and Historic Districts Commission. Although the specific design members wanted was not approved, there will be two accessible parking spaces for the addition, and this meets the requirements of the ADA.

The Commission also met several times with a group of people who have hearing disabilities. This group is requesting that the Town install better hearing enhancement equipment to enable them and others to participate more fully in town meetings. We are continuing to support them as we enter 2021, and there is reason for optimism that these needs will be met.

As the pandemic raged across our country, the Commission worked to determine the particular needs that people with disabilities might have related to the pandemic and resources such as food pantries were promoted. After members became aware of concerns of people with disabilities wishing to use the newly completed Concord section of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, we urged the Town to post signage telling people that they must wear a face mask while using the trail. These signs were posted, and many people honored the request.

Stemming from concerns that handicapped parking spaces were being used by others who did not need the access, we developed some windshield cards that members and others could use to put on cars parking illegally in handicapped parking spaces. The Commission felt that a friendly reminder might be a soft approach to people who just didn't think parking there for a short time would be a problem. We also developed cards to post on windshields of cars parked fully or partly on the sidewalk, making it impossible for anyone using a mobility device, or parents with strollers or wagons, to use the sidewalk.

We supported two variances to the AAB, one for the School of Philosophy at Orchard House, and the other for the library. In both cases members felt that the accommodations the organization took met the

spirit of full accessibility. Finally we dealt with a few complaints about handicapped parking signage.

The Commission looks forward to 2021 and the ongoing work it will do, including review and input to the plans for the expansion of the recreation area at White Pond.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Bonny Wilbur,
Community Services Coordinator

The Community Services Coordinator (CSC) provides resources, referrals, consultation, and education to Concord and Carlisle residents. She assists residents in accessing a broad range of local, state, and federal support related to economic, social, physical and mental health needs. Services are confidential and open to all Concord and Carlisle families and residents under the age of 60.

The CSC position was established in 2005 by the Town of Concord in collaboration with the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest. Originally part-time and funded entirely by a grant from the Community Chest, the position was increased to full-time in 2014 due to a growing need for services. As the hours increased, so has the town's contribution to the funding for the position. In FY20-21, the town's General Fund contributed 80%, with 20% coming from Community Chest grant monies. The town will fund the position in its entirety beginning FY21-22.

The CSC works collaboratively with numerous town entities, in addition to serving as liaison to many state and federal agencies. Beginning in the spring, and continuing through the end of the year, many residents reached out for help in response to the unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Concord residents lost their jobs, some lost loved ones to the virus, others reached out for help in talking to their children about the "new normal." Many requested information and help in accessing federal pandemic relief programs. A large number of residents reached out for assistance for the very first time.

Thankfully, there is significant assistance available. Locally, the CSC partners with Concord's Hugh Cargill Trust Committee (which provides financial support), Concord's Silent Fund (camp scholarships as well as holiday support), Open Table (combating food insecurity), the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest (supports Concord and Carlisle residents in numerous ways, including through their When In Need Fund as well as a camp scholarship program), Gaining Ground's Food For Families Program, the Freemasons of Corinthian Lodge (significant financial support during the holidays as well as year-round assistance through their Masonic Angel Fund), Concord's Tax Relief Fund, Concord Recreation (financial assistance for childcare), and Concord Cares (assists Concord residents with the cost to keep their homes warm). The CSC also works year-round in collaboration with Concord's houses of worship and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. In addition, a number of informal neighbor-helping-neighbor groups formed in an effort to assist the most vulnerable community members.

Other nearby support organizations with which the CSC regularly collaborates include Minute Man Arc for Human Services, First Connections, Domestic Violence Services Network, Eliot Community Human Services Jail Diversion Program, Grow A Strong Family, Inc., Household Goods, Advocates, Inc., William James College Interface Referral Service, Beacon Santa, and the Salvation Army.

Many referrals were made to state and federal programs as well, including the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, the MA Department of Transitional Assistance, the Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, the MA Department of Developmental Services, the Statewide Head Injury Program, National Alliance on Mental Illness, the MA Women, Infants and Children Program, MassHealth, the MA Rehab Commission, MASSHire, as well as specific pandemic-related support programs offered through the federal government.

Annually, the CSC manages two camp scholarship programs offered by the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest and Concord's Silent Fund. Although a number of residents applied for and

were awarded scholarships for their children to attend camp, most went unused as many camps failed to open due to the pandemic.

The CSC also manages a Back-to-School Backpack Program each summer in an effort to provide new backpacks and school supplies to students from low-income families. Typically, new school supplies and backpacks are donated by Concord residents each year; however, as town offices remained closed donations could not be accepted. Nevertheless, over 25 Concord students received new backpacks and supplies from those remaining from the previous year's backpack drive.

During the holiday season, the CSC once again collaborated with the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest on a Holiday Gift Program to assist low-income families struggling to provide gifts for their children. Due to health advisories and social distancing mandates, donations of gift cards from local merchants, rather than actual toys and presents, were encouraged. This supported both low-income families as well as struggling local businesses. The response was overwhelming! Town employees, individual residents, local schools, churches, and charity organizations donated well over \$15,000 in gift cards. As in past years, the Freemasons of the Corinthian Lodge provided approximately \$5,000 in gift cards. The CSC was able to distribute gift cards to the families of over 145 children in need. In addition, the CSC once again managed Concord's Holiday Silent Fund, which provided a small cash gift to over 100 low-income households in Concord.

A number of conferences and trainings were postponed or cancelled in 2020; however, early in the year the CSC attended a multi-session symposium on "Creating and Using Protective Approaches to Enhance Youth Mental Health" offered by CHNA 15. In February, she attended a presentation on subsidized housing and the challenges of the new centralized waitlist. In early fall, the CSC participated in a training by BayPath on working sensitively with LGBTQ clients. In November, the CSC was invited by the Central Middlesex chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness to contribute to the webinar "Our Mental Health System: a Local View" hosted by

MA State Representative Dr. Tami L. Gouveia. The presentation discussed the barriers to behavioral healthcare in local communities. The CSC also participates in the Concord-Carlisle Food Security Network and meets regularly with representatives from Open Table.

The Social Services Resource Guide, produced by the Community Services Coordinator's office, was revised, rewritten, and reformatted this year by Concord resident Nicholas Owen, who worked as an intern throughout the pandemic. The Guide is available in hard copy in various locations in town, and a link can be found online at concordma.gov/community.

The Community Services Coordinator's office is located at 55 Church Street in West Concord, just a short walk from the West Concord train depot. There is ample parking available. Residents are welcome to contact Bonny Wilbur, Community Services Coordinator, by phone at 978-318-3034 or via email at bwilbur@concordma.gov for assistance.

HUGH CARGILL TRUST COMMITTEE

Robert Abraham
Elisabeth Elden
Lucy Rosborough
Judy Terry
Deena Whitfield

In 2020, the Hugh Cargill Trust Committee (HCTC) continued to implement the mission of the Trust, established over 212 years ago by Concordian Hugh Cargill. The Trust's purpose is to provide short-term emergency financial assistance to residents of the town. The Committee acts on behalf of the Select Board in receiving and reviewing requests for assistance and in distributing funds in accordance with the provisions of the Trust. Concord residents request aid by leaving a phone message at the Town House: 978-318-3100, ext. 2030. Calls are returned promptly. The Committee can also be contacted through email at hctc@concordma.gov. All requests are kept confidential.

In 2020 the HCTC was responsible for distributing financial support from the following funds: the Hugh Cargill Trust (HCT) and HCT Donors, the Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP), Concord Cares, Tax Relief Fund and the Silent Fund. The HCTC met monthly in 2020. A total of \$55,150 was received in 2020 for these funds and a total of \$99,500 was distributed from them in 2020. These generous contributions were crucial to the Committee's efforts to meet the ever-increasing needs of Concord's residents. Because of complications due to COVID-19 restrictions, donations made in December 2020 were received but not logged into the system. The breakdown for each fund follows below:

Hugh Cargill Trust

Private donors gave \$15,580 to the Hugh Cargill Trust Fund in 2020. Because of complications due to Covid-19 restrictions, donations made in December 2020 were received but not logged into the system. The Committee approved 75 grants totaling \$21,905 from this fund. Typically grants were made for the payment of rent, medical expenses, water, telephone and car insurance

CMLP Fund

The Concord Municipal Light Plant donated \$7,000 to the CMLP Fund. 24 grants totaling \$7,279 were made in 2020.

Concord Cares

The HCTC also administers funds dispersed by Concord Cares for citizens in need of emergency fuel assistance. The total funds dispersed in 2020 were \$1,004 to 4 Concord citizens. Requests are granted by the Committee plus other Concord services such as the Community Services Coordinator, the Police Dept., the Fire Dept., and the COA.

Tax Relief Fund

The HCTC has been designated by the Select Board to administer the tax-relief fund from monies raised in response to the Select Board's annual appeal. Donations to this fund totaled \$16,855 in 2020. Because of complications due to COVID-19 restrictions, donations made in December 2020 were received but not logged into the system. This past year, between 46 and 52 Concord residents received a reduction in their real estate tax bill

each quarter. The total tax relief given in 2020 was \$62,725.

Silent Fund

In 2017 the Select Board designated the HCTC to administer the Silent Fund. This fund supports summer camp tuition for worthy Concord children and also small gifts during the winter holiday season. \$12,670 was distributed by the Silent Fund in 2020.

The Committee continues to make known its existence and its mission through local communications such as the Concord Journal and the Adult & Continuing Education publications and contacts with the Community Services Coordinator, the Concord Housing Authority, the Council on Aging, the Recreation Department, the Community Chest, Open Table, local clergy, and other local groups.

In light of the current economic conditions, the Committee anticipates 2021 could be another difficult year for many residents. We welcome private donations to continue the mission of providing short-term, emergency assistance to Concord residents. Donations may be sent to: The Hugh Cargill Trust at the Town House, P.O. Box 535, Concord, MA 01742. All contributions are tax-deductible.

TAX RELIEF COMMITTEE

Eric Van Loon, Chair
Helena Long
Virginia McIntyre

In prosperous Concord, it is easy to forget that some of our fellow townspeople face significant economic challenges. Our taxes are high to support good schools and excellent town services but are a significant financial strain for some.

In 2011, the Select Board created a Tax Relief Fund to enable more financially-comfortable residents to help financially-limited families meet their Town tax

CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMITTEE

burden. Modest subsidies help means-tested neighbors pay their real-estate taxes. Funds are administered by the Hugh Cargill Trust Committee, which provides confidential assistance to Concordians in need. Tax relief recipients, who may own only one property, which must be valued below the town mean, receive \$325 quarterly tax bill credits or \$1300 annually.

Tax relief grants made by the Hugh Cargill Committee have helped 40 to 50 Concord households in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 was challenging for many. Common circumstances faced by recipients include longtime residents whose tax bills increase with rising land values, households affected by job loss, one-income single-parent families struggling to remain in the town they and their children love, and others. The Town tax-relief measure voted at the 2017 Annual Town Meeting began in 2018 and assists seniors only. Voluntary donations to the Tax Relief Fund also continue to aid seniors who receive tax relief from that measure so long as they continue to meet an income test that includes other Town aid.

Over the first 11 years, annual contributions to the Tax Relief Fund averaged approximately \$60,000 - from an average number of 200 donor households. Our 2020 solicitation letter was mailed in November to avoid conflicting with October Community Chest fundraising.

Every three years, solicitations are made town-wide. In 2015, that larger mailing nearly doubled the number of contributors. Beginning in 2018, donations to both the Tax Relief Committee and the Hugh Cargill Trust were solicited on a single sheet of paper in a single envelop with a separate letter from each committee on either side. We continued the two-sided dual solicitation approach in 2020 in mailings to previous contributors and a limited number of new people. Donations for the current campaign will continue to be gratefully received through June 30, 2021.

The Tax Relief Committee continues to be impressed by, and grateful for, the generosity of so many Concordians for this purpose. The committee is grateful for the many caring hours of Town House support from Jeremy Romanul.

Lindsay Howard, Chair
Susan Curtin
Tara Edelman
Dennis Fiori
Laura Klein
Krysten Morganti
Pat Nelson
Kathleen Reidy
Mavourneen "Mav" Pardee

The seven-member Library Committee is appointed by the Select Board. Committee members serve for staggered three-year terms and work with the Library Director to help maintain the Library's financial stability and well-being, provide short-term and long-range planning support, support policy development and update existing policies, as needed. The Library Committee also works to: enhance patrons' experience using the Library, consider and implement new technologies to enhance services, and facilitate the work of the Library staff. The Committee continues to promote the Library's leadership in organizing active programming for all ages, drawing on in-house resources and community collaboration, and support community sustainability efforts through education and organizational practice.

While the Library Committee was unable to meet during the first months of the pandemic, the Committee quickly adjusted to the new virtual meeting format and supported the Library in its plans to reopen for in-person browsing in June. The Committee worked with the Library Director to revise the Patron Policy guidelines. While the Library was only able to open for in-person browsing for three months, we were pleased to support the Library in its efforts.

Additional highlights for the 2020 program year

Building Expansion

The Library Expansion is underway. The Committee will continue to maintain a strong interest in staying up-to-date and providing our thoughts on how the Library can best serve the community while the

Corporation continues to work toward opening the new space in the fall of 2021.

Social Justice

The Library Committee, Library Corporation, and the Friends of the CFPL worked together to develop a joint statement condemning racism and racial injustice on behalf of the Library. In this statement, the Library Committee commits to include Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals in the Library's Long-Range Plan. The Committee also pledges to engage in discussions with librarians to encourage representation of a broad range of identities in the collections, displays, and authors included in the collection. In this statement, the Library Corporation, the Friends of the Library, and the Library Committee all pledge to prioritize identifying a diverse range of candidates for their board membership.

Sustainability

In July, the Library, under the direction of the Trustees, formed a Sustainability Committee and commissioned GreenerU to create a Sustainability Plan. The goal of this committee is to develop a Sustainability Plan for the Main Library and Fowler Branch that aligns with the Town's Climate Action and Resilience Plan and is backed by broad community support. The Library Committee has assisted by supporting the Library's programming efforts during Climate Preparedness Week and several members of the library staff and Library Committee have participated in Sustainability Committee meetings and have worked with GreenerU to help develop the Sustainability Plan.

Virtual Programming

While the library buildings may have been closed for a good portion of 2020, the Library itself was never really closed. A variety of events successfully pivoted to a virtual platform including, the Concord Festival of Authors. The Keynote program featured "Why Stories Still Matter" with author Jennifer Haigh. This summer, a record 552 readers participated in the virtual summer reading program.

Participants read 2,430 books and completed 2,047 virtual activities. In addition to numerous virtual programs, the library staff has worked hard to engage the community by distributing popular

Take and Make Kits and offering puzzle exchanges.

Long-Range Plan

The Library Committee engaged a consultant at the end of 2019 to help coordinate focus groups and provide guidance for incorporating community feedback and the library expansion into the next Long-Range plan. With the feedback gathered during community focus groups, the Library Committee is now working with the Trustees and Friends of the Concord Free Public Library to incorporate their ideas into the Long-Range Plan.

Engaging with Library Staff

The Committee had the opportunity to meet the Library's three new department heads. Anke Voss (Curator), Royce McGrath (Supervisor of Children's Services), and Dorrie Karlin (Branch Librarian) were all able to attend Committee meetings and speak about their roles at the Library and share plans for their departments.

Over the year, we saw two members step down from their roles on the Library Committee. We extended our deepest gratitude to Mavourneen "Mav" Pardee and Dennis Fiori for their contributions to the Library Committee and their commitment to the Library and the Town.

We remain grateful to the Library Corporation, for continuing to have members participate in our monthly meetings. This collaboration between the Corporation and Committee ensures that the Library is best positioned to meet the needs of our community, especially with the expansion project underway. They are welcome guests and valued partners.

We are also grateful to the community members, observers, and speakers who have attended our meetings this year to ensure that the Library continues to meet the needs of our patrons and our Town. Open meetings are held on the Third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 by Zoom and when we can be in person again, in the Trustees Room at the Main Library. We welcome and encourage interested members of the community to attend.

CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Kerry Cronin, Library Director

The Concord Free Public Library's mission is to inspire lifelong learning and to actively promote personal enrichment by connecting community members to information, ideas, culture, unique historical resources and each other in a tradition of innovation and excellence.

Despite the challenges of 2020, the Concord Free Public Library remained true to its mission by quickly adapting to the circumstances of the pandemic and delivering services in innovative ways. When library buildings closed in March due to COVID-19, staff members seamlessly moved popular programs such as story times, book discussion groups, children's concerts and cookbook club to a virtual platform. These programs not only offered opportunities for education and enrichment, but also a much-needed sense of community during a time of collective isolation. The Library hosted 442 virtual programs with 4,769 attendees beginning in March. The Library's presence virtually also enabled staff to reach a broader audience, with program attendees from all over the United States and abroad.

Also noteworthy is the collaboration between the Library and the Concord Public Schools during the pandemic. Through the support of School Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter's frequent promotion of CFPL's Summer Learning Program, the Library had record participation. Overall, 552 readers read 2,430 books and completed 2,047 activities, all virtually! Thanks to our dedicated Girls Who Code volunteer facilitator, Theresa Hubshner-Younger, the club continued virtually when the schools transitioned to remote learning. The participants in Girls Who Code created many wonderful projects, some of which the library staff featured on our website.

Beginning in June the Library started offering curbside pickup service at the Main Library's Sudbury Road entrance Monday – Friday between the hours of 10:00 – 6:00 p.m. and for a shorter duration at the Fowler Branch. Combined staff members were able to fulfill 12,256 reservations.

Library colleagues found creative ways to enhance this service by completing close to 100 personalized reading recommendations for all ages, launching a thematic book bundle option for young readers, providing complementary printouts, offering an outdoor puzzle swap, and providing Take and Make craft kits for families to enjoy. Take and Make kits have also been adapted as a monthly hands-on activity for seniors, which the Council on Aging distributes courtesy of the Friends of CFPL. While Library buildings were required to close for more than half the year, services have remained open and responsive throughout the pandemic. Staff have worked incredibly hard to keep up with service and program requests, and some departments reported being busier than ever.

We are grateful for the contributions of the Friends of CFPL and Library Corporation Trustees toward the Library's success. Through the generosity of the Friends of CFPL and with the support of Board member Lara Wilson, the Library was able to offer mindfulness programs, writing workshops, and author talks, including an all virtual and very robust Concord Festival of Authors series in October. Among the program highlights included a keynote event with author Jennifer Haigh and an online lecture with Jill Lepore, recipient of the 2020 Ruth Ratner Miller Award for Excellence in American History. The Friends also hosted successful poetry readings and oversaw the installation of a book receptacle in the Stow Street parking lot to facilitate the donation of materials in support of library services.

The Library Corporation Trustees generously donated funds toward the purchase of multiple sets of tables and chairs at both locations to support the utilization of the Library's grounds. This addition has been a boon for services, as visitors have been able to gather for socially distanced meetings, enjoy a quick snack or beverage and benefit from the Library's Wi/Fi service. The availability of this furniture also enabled library staff to maximize the outdoor space for safe activities such as StoryWalks and the annual fall scarecrow festival.

The Trustees broke ground on the building expansion project in September and have worked

CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY CORPORATION

collaboratively with the Library staff on the planning for the expanded facility slated to reopen in the fall of 2021. The Trustees commissioned the organization GreenerU to work with stakeholders to create a Sustainability Plan, which positions CFPL as a community leader both in sustainable practice and in the development of programs to promote these values to others. It has been rewarding to participate in developing services for a post-pandemic time.

We congratulate long-serving staff members Karen Ahearn and Fayth Chamberland who both retired in 2020 after serving a collective 78 years in children's services. CFPL also saw the departure of Branch Librarian Stephanie Rivera, who relocated to the Midwest with her family. We were saddened by the death of weekend custodian Warner Wood, who attended to both buildings with such dedication for decades. During 2020, we were pleased to welcome two new supervisors, Dorothy "Dorrie" Karlin, Fowler Branch Librarian, and Royce McGrath, Supervisor of Children's Services.

My sincere thanks to our very talented and dedicated colleagues who have performed extraordinary work during difficult circumstances. Thanks also to the Library Committee, Library Corporation, and Friends of CFPL whose generous contributions make the success of the Concord Free Public Library possible.

Sherry F. Litwack, President
O. Mario Favorito, Vice President
Richard D. Briggs, Jr., Treasurer
Lowell S. Smith, Clerk
Jeffrey W. Adams
Cristina Coletta Blau
John W. Boynton IV
Diana W. Clymer
Pamela Gannon
Erika Prahl



*Concord Free Public Library Corporation Board Members.
Left to Right - Top row: Sherry Litwack, Pam Gannon, Jeff Adams, Left to Right - Middle row: Mario Favorito, Rick Briggs, Di Clymer, Left to Right - Bottom row: Erika Prahl, Cristina Blau, John Boynton, Sandy Smith (not pictured)*

The Concord Free Public Library Corporation is a Massachusetts charitable corporation created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1873 for the purpose of forming and maintaining a public library in Concord, which it undertakes to do in collaboration with the Town and the Library Committee. For more information on how the Library works, go to the Library's website: concordlibrary.org/about/how-we-work

This year we updated the Town/Library Agreement which represents and defines the public/private partnership that began in 1873 when the Library was founded. Working with the Town Manager and Select Board Chair as well as input from the Select Board, Library Committee, and citizens we made

several improvements to ensure a continued successful partnership. The primary responsibility of the Trustees is to preserve, maintain, protect, improve, and enhance the buildings and grounds of the Main Library in Concord Center and the Fowler Branch in West Concord as well as to preserve, protect, develop, interpret, and share the Special Collections. In FY 2019-2020 the Corporation contributed over \$600,000 to the Library, including more than \$140,000 to supplement the Town Budget for library books and materials. The majority of these funds come from the Annual Fund and income from the Corporation's Endowment. Funding for large projects, such as a major expansion, are raised through a capital campaign.

We welcomed new Trustee, Erika Prah. Erika's experience as Director of Equity and Inclusion at the Middlesex School will help us to incorporate diversity into many areas of the Library including Special Collections, programs, exhibitions, and Board Development.

Seven years ago, we reported that the Corporation purchased the Heywood-Benjamin house next door to the Main Library at 151 Main Street. After an extensive planning process that involved Library staff, Library Committee, Friends of the Library, Select Board, and many community groups and citizens, we were excited to finally break ground on October 14th, 2020. The building project is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. The additional and newly-envisioned spaces will expand services and programs to meet the current and future needs of the community as reflected in the Library's long-range plan, including enhancements and improvements in children's and teen services, technology, sustainability, meeting and collaborative work spaces, program space, social gathering spaces, and Special Collections. For a detailed timeline of Town and community engagement, architectural plans, and building committee reports, see <https://cfplcorp.org>

We have raised over \$9,000,000 toward the \$11,000,000 campaign goal. This includes \$500,000 from Community Preservation Act for accessibility in a historic building, \$550,000 for FFE's (furniture, fixtures, equipment) and \$150,000 for energy efficient systems from the Town's capital budget as

voted at Town Meetings in 2018 and 2019 as well as over \$1,000,000 from the community phase of the campaign. The support of more than 1000 donors shows wide-spread community support and excitement for the project. Campaign updates are available on the Library's website:

<https://concordlibrary.org/give/the-campaign-1>

While the Corporation is responsible for raising the funds for the project through donations and grants, we continued to work closely with Town officials and managers on costs to the Town, including utilities and staff needs. To support the Town's 2030 Zero Net Energy goal, we engaged the consultant GreenerU to help us create a comprehensive sustainability plan for all Library buildings. See details on Sustainability initiative at <https://cfplcorp.org>

The William Munroe Special Collections continues to be an outstanding resource not only for the community but also for researchers from around the world. Our digitized collections and virtual programs have been particularly valuable while the Library has been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlights of Special Collections activities include a comprehensive inventory of the Art Collection and community outreach with the virtual series: Concord Stories.

<https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/concord-stories-from-special-collections>

To learn more about Special Collections, go to: <http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/scoll.html>

As Trustees of the Williams Scholarship Fund, made possible by a bequest from Charles H. S. Williams, we continue to award grants to several college students pursuing studies in the arts. However, this year many college students deferred their studies because of the pandemic. Their grants will be carried over to when they are ready to return to school. This year's recipients included continuing scholarships for Elanna Honan (Visual Arts), Helen Wargelin (Music), Thomas Kim (Visual Arts), and Rebecca Pasley (Music), as well as Honorable Mention to Elaine Kuchar (Music) and Madeline Mueller (Music). Unfortunately, we could not hold our annual salon to highlight and celebrate the talents of these scholars since the Library was closed due the pandemic. But, we look forward to renewing

this wonderful event as soon as we are able.

This past year has been not like any other. However, we have come away with a renewed appreciation of the Library as a cultural community center offering a wide-range of virtual, digital and on-line services, programs, and exhibits. Especially appreciated were the café tables and chairs on the front lawn of the Main Library where people could safely meet, read, and work. Even under these extraordinary circumstances, the Library is always open and free to all.

THE FRIENDS OF THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Friends of the Concord Free Public Library is a nonprofit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization that supports the library and promotes its vital role in our community.

As 2020 began, the Board of the Friends looked forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary with our community. While the celebrations have been postponed, we reflect with gratitude upon the programming that became possible through the adaptability of our community locally and beyond.

Most recently the Concord Festival of Authors, chaired by the Friends and co-hosted with partner organizations in Concord, finished what can only be described as a hugely successful online festival, in spite and partially because of being hosted virtually. Community engagement came not only from Concord, but also across the country and world. Over 200 people attended the kickoff event, the Friend's annual Ruth Ratner Miller Memorial Award for Excellence in American History, presented to Dr. Jill Lepore. The plaudits poured into our email box throughout the festival from as far away as Canada and Australia. One patron wrote, "I loved hearing Jill LePore's talk as she was awarded the (much deserved) Ruth Ratner Miller award... now that I live in western Massachusetts, it was a special treat to be with you tonight—the silver lining of the COVID crisis, I suppose."

Our Poetry Series, thus far featuring black poets Tommye Blount and Nathan McClain, Jeffrey Harrison, and Matthew Lippman, brought engaging conversation this Fall, with further programming scheduled through the winter months. Nearly 50 people thoughtfully participated in a Q&A session at the beginning of October.

The Friends' Authors Series featured short story writer, Ron Maclean; Concord wellness expert, Jonathan Glass; and debut novelist, Rishi Reddi.

As part of our continued commitment to the condemnation of racism in all forms, our partnership with Concord-Carlisle Adult & Community Education continues into 2021 to bring important dialogue around Unconscious Bias to your local Zoom session. We additionally helped to fund the "What is Racism" program by Wee the People, reaching nearly 30 children.

In lieu of our twice-annual book sales, we have partnered with our online bookseller to provide donation bins for patrons. Our community has been very generous with donations since the bins arrived in August. A portion of all proceeds from books collected and sold from these bins goes back into library programming.

This summer we partnered with our new Children's Librarian, Royce McGrath and the studious young readers who participated in the Summer Reading Program to provide a \$200 donation to Gaining Ground's Read for Seed program.

Friday Flicks at Fowler, now in its 26th year featured films about Germany, German films and German people. These included *The Counterfeiters* (Austria/Germany 2007), *Wings of Desire* (West Germany/France 1987), *Immortal Beloved* (USA/UK 1994), and *The Blue Angel* (Germany 1930, B&W). This coming winter we are looking for ways to bring the film series to our patrons safely while still providing opportunity for enjoyment and discussion.

We continue to brainstorm ideas for offering traditional programs safely while bringing additional future programming and ways that we can benefit our community. Please contact us with ideas. We thank you for your support.

Our gifts and programs are funded through the generosity of our members, sales of donated books, and sales of Historic Concord and the Lexington Fight, a book published by the Friends by Allan French that was updated by Leslie Perrin Wilson, former curator in the Special Collections Department.

To learn more, or to join the Friends, please pick up a brochure at the Library or visit us online at the Library's website under How We Work: <http://concordlibrary.org/about/how-we-work/>

Follow us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/concordlibraryfriend
E-mail us at friends@concordlibrary.org

RECREATION COMMISSION

Casey Atkins (chair)
Paul Grasso
Jenn Lutz
Paul Boehm

The Recreation Commission is a Town Manager-appointed, volunteer Committee of Concord residents that support the Recreation Department by providing advice and guidance on topics relevant to the town's recreational pursuits. Currently, the committee consists of four volunteers; Casey Atkins (chair), Paul Grasso, Jenn Lutz, and Paul Boehm. This year, the Commission played a critical role in supporting the Department as it navigated a variety of opportunities and challenges.

Recognition of Service

Peter Hunter's term as a Commission member expired at the 2020 Town Meeting. Peter served on the Recreation Commission for an impressive 9 years often while also serving on other Town Committees including the Community Preservation Committee. Peter was the Chair of the Recreation Commission for the last four years and provided invaluable input that propelled and strengthened the Recreation Department's operations. Peter's leadership was invaluable to the Commission and the Department and we thank him for his service to the community.

Impact of COVID-19

The Commission saw a pause in service at the outbreak of the pandemic in March but was called back into action in May of 2020, meeting via zoom. May and June meetings primarily offered the Recreation Department with support surrounding COVID-19 reopening protocols as well as guidance in creative cost recovery strategies.

Awards

Since 1985, the Maureen Taggart Community Service Award has been presented annually to a high school student, public or private, who is a resident of Concord or Carlisle that has demonstrated a loving and giving spirit through voluntary service in the community. Maureen Taggart was a dedicated Concord Recreation Department

employee for many years. She was passionate about giving back to the local community and volunteered frequently. The 2020 Maureen Taggart Community Service Award was presented to Miles Inman. Miles has completed many hours of service for community organizations including an Eagle Scout project that took over 75 hours to complete. He has shown through his time and effort that community is an important part of his life and he is willing to give back to it. A main feature of this award is that the recipient has the privilege of designating a deserving organization to receive a financial grant in Maureen's name. Miles has chosen Child Fund International, an organization that provides assistance to derived, excluded and vulnerable children in over 30 countries, including the USA. It is clear that this organization and the work it does represent who Miles is as a member of our community. Congratulations, Miles!

Community Support

A huge thank you to our community sponsors and supporters that join in assuring our events, programs and initiatives continued to thrive in 2020. Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, the Silent Fund, and the Alcott School Turkey Trot all provided funding towards scholarship programs.

Additionally, the Recreation Commission and Recreation Department would like to thank other Town Departments and Committees (Facilities, Public Works, Fire, Police, Town Manager's Office, Finance, etc) that have supported our operation this year. Specifically, the Recreation Commission would like to thank the Concord Health Department and Public Health Nurse Tricia McGean for their ongoing and tireless support. The Health Department has made themselves available to the Recreation Department throughout the span of the pandemic and it is because of their ongoing assistance that our programs have sustained this extremely challenging and impactful year.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Concord Recreation Department is a leader in providing activities that enhance personal development, promote healthy life styles, and encourage community involvement. The Department stood true to its mission this year, proudly supporting and promoting community through wellness and play. 2020 undeniably was one of the most challenging years we've seen, professionally and personally and we are optimistic that there may be an end in sight. As a dedicated group of professionals, we strive to promote lasting experiences, while creating fun, unique, inclusive opportunities in excellent facilities. Concord Recreation is a self-supporting operation that strives to keep pace with a growing community to deliver the highest quality customer focused programs, events, and services.

Concord Recreation is proud to offer the community a variety of services ranging from the Carousel Preschool, before/after school elementary school care, summer camp, youth sports, adult sports, special events, and more. Additionally, the Department oversees the management of playing field permits, playground safety, as well as the basketball and tennis court upkeep at Emerson Park and Rideout Park.

COVID-19 Impact

With the abrupt closure of Recreation programs and facilities at the end of the day on Thursday, March 12th, The Recreation Department quickly made a decision to provide refunds for all programs which were immediately impacted. The Department, with support from Human Resources and the Town Manager's Office, also decided to pay limited status and temporary status employees through Friday, March 20, 2020, at which time these employees were then furloughed. The decision to furlough part time employees led to an approximate savings of \$10,000/week. Additionally, the Recreation Director issued a spending freeze on any non-essential supplies and worked with staff to request refunds from vendors and field trip sites that were scheduled through May 4, 2020. The breakdown of refunds and approximate program losses for calendar year 2020 is outlined on the follow page:

- Refunded approximately \$140,000 for already



purchased on ongoing Recreation programs

- School Year Programs ~\$536,000 Based on actual registrations as of March 1
- Summer Camps ~\$224,000 Based on difference between 2019 and 2020
- Additional programs ~\$61,000 Based on difference between 2019 and 2020 (Visitor Center, White Pond, Rec Programs, Sports)

Safe Reopening of Facilities and Recreation Programs

Following State orders and guidelines, the Recreation Department began to safely and slowly reopen for business in June. The Assistant Recreation Director worked hard to create reopening plans for offices following Town of Concord, CDC and State reopening guidelines. Full time staff returned to the office and worked tirelessly to prepare for a safe summer of camp and programs in June. White Pond Beach opened to members on June 20th, followed by the first day of summer camp on June 29th. The Department worked closely with Town Manager's Office and local Board of Health (BOH) over the course of the summer to assure the safety and wellbeing of our staff as well as our participants. We want to thank all of the hard working Recreation employees, full time and part time, who committed to making our reopening a success. Hours of planning, preparing, and ongoing diligence contributed to a very successful summer with no positive cases of COVID-19 in any of our programs. At the end of the summer, the Recreation Department shifted gears and made plans to reopen the Carousel Preschool, the Before School Care Program, AfterSchool Care program and a new

program called Recreation Extended Classroom (REC). Situated at all three elementary schools, the REC program supports nearly 70 students per school as they connect remotely with their teachers on a daily basis. Additionally, the Recreation Department created another remote learning program for children of Town Employees and Concord Carlisle Public School employees.

Recreation Department Highlights: 2020

- Transitioned to a new registration software, MYREC after two years of preparation and training. (January 2020)
- 432 people attended the Shamrock Ball on March 7th, just prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. (March 2020)
- Concord Recreation facilitated a drive through community event to disseminate Easter eggs that would have been collected by children at the Department's Annual Egg Hunt. (April 2020)
- Congratulated long time staff member, Patti Doherty, on her retirement. (May 2020)
- Developed and activated a plan to safely open White Pond with COVID-19 restrictions and policies in place (June 2020).
- Developed and activated a plan to safely operate summer camp with COVID-19 restrictions and policies in place. One of very few programs in the area that chose to open (June 2020).
- On boarded two new full time Recreation Supervisors, Emily Madison and DJ Fimiani. (September 2020)
- Started remote learning programs at Elementary Schools (September 2020)
- Facilitated a drive thru trick-or-treating event for nearly 140 vehicles (October 2020)
- Celebrated Veteran's Day with Carousel Preschool students greeting veterans as they did their drive through breakfast at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center's Council on Aging (November 2020)
- Reintroduced adult and youth program allowed by state reopening guidelines to include pickleball, youth basketball clinics, virtual cooking programs, small group Legos, and other approved activities (September-December 2020)

Department-Wide Financial Assistance

Concord Recreation wants to assure that all community members have access to participate in programming, regardless of their ability to pay. It will continue to be a priority of the Department to assure that no one is excluded for financial reasons. It is important to note that school year program financial assistance packages are typically awarded and allocated for 10 months but due to the COVID-19 shut down, assistance was only needed for 7 months, September-March as March payments were prorated. Additionally, many families chose to not participate in summer camp so the amount of financial assistance allocated for summer 2020 was significantly less. These factors account for a significantly less amount of financial assistance being allocated in 2020.

Employees

The success of the Recreation Department could not be achieved without the enormous commitment and dedication from our 200+ part time and full time employees. This year was a challenging year and our employees have shined. Their ability to be flexible, diligent, patient and understanding this year has allowed us to provide services to hundreds of families and thousands of individuals. Furthermore, our team celebrated the career of Patti Doherty, Assistant Childcare Manager and Carousel Preschool Teacher, who retired in May after over 25 years of service.

BEEDE SWIM & FITNESS CENTER

The Beede Swim and Fitness Center, managed by the Recreation Division, is an affordable community swim and fitness facility. The Beede Center is self-supporting and does not receive tax dollars. Members and program participants provide all the funding to operate the Beede Center. The Beede Center welcomes an average of 500 visitors per day and is committed to serving the needs and interests of everyone in the community including children, adults, senior citizens, and individual with disabilities.

Membership

Beede Center membership gives members' access to all the aquatics and fitness facilities at Beede, in addition a discount on any program offerings including: aquatics fitness, group exercise, personal training, and swim lessons. In addition to an Annual or Recurring membership, the Beede Center also offers a three-month membership program. As of December 31, 2020, the Beede Center has 976 active memberships.

Welcome New Beede Team Members

Two new Personal Trainers arrived at the Beede Center in 2019. Linda McGovern, a Concord resident, works with clients during weekday mornings. Nichell Latimore, also a Group Exercise instructor, works closing shifts times and performs Point of Contact responsibilities. Recent hires on the aquatics side have been new swim coaches for both the youth program Otters and adult program of Masters.

Program Offerings

The Beede Center offers a wide variety of learn-to-swim classes designed to meet a diverse range of needs and ability levels. Beede also offers a comprehensive water fitness program in deep and shallow water.

Every member receives a free equipment orientation and workout plan from one of our certified trainers. The Beede Center offers affordable personal training and body composition testing. We also offer a large variety of group classes. Beede members receive a discount on classes. Our classes are open to non-members as well. The Beede Center also

hosted many Concord Community events including the Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat, Nick Ressler Blood Mobile, Open Table Food Drive, and the CCHS Swim Boosters Masters Meet.

Swim Teams

The Beede Center is the official home to both the CCHS Patriots Swim & Dive teams, along with the Beede Centers own Concord Otters program.

Making Beede a “hub” for local swimming in the area, both programs have an extensive number of participants, CCHS: 71 and Otters: 108.

Facilities

Improvements to the Beede Center in 2020 include the following

- New Matrix treadmills
- New Mondo flooring in the Cardio Room
- Expansion of the LED light program to all rooms
- Updated HVAC units
- New energy efficient hot water tanks
- New energy efficient hot water piping
- Therapy Pool cover.

COVID-19 Impact

With the closure of Recreation programs and facilities at the end of the day on Thursday, March 12, 2020, the Beede Center quickly provided refunds and prorated refunds for all programs which were immediately impacted. The Division, with support from Human Resources and the Town Manager’s Office, decided to pay limited status and temporary status employees until Friday, March 20, 2020, at which time these employees were then furloughed at the end of day on Friday, March 20, 2020.

Approximately forty staff members creating an instant savings of approximately \$10,000 per week.

- Refunded approximately \$77,000 of pre-purchased Beede programming that needed to end
- Estimated \$467,000 in loss revenue with absence of Beede membership and programming March 12, 2020 to June 30, 2020

Beede Center administrative staff stayed active during the closure planning for reopening on July 6, 2020.

VISITOR CENTER



In April of 2020, a new branded website was launched, www.visitconcord.org and supporting materials such as a visitor guide were created. The site was built to showcase our rich offerings, including retail, lodging, cultural attractions and custom itineraries to meet the needs of all visitors. Since launch, the site has seen over 8,000 unique visitors from all over the world. The site is built with analytics to allow us to track our marketing efforts. The site is also supported by Facebook and Instagram accounts and a monthly email newsletter.

This summer, the lack of coach bus parking was addressed. With approval of the Select Board, 2 new short term parking spots were added in Concord Center. A bus information sheet is now available with parking maps showing both these short terms and long-term parking options. Buses are now able to leave passengers downtown to shop and dine during their visit. Bus drivers and passengers have already commented on how easy the new parking is for them.

The Visitor Center and public bathrooms were allowed to open in late June with restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The feedback from guests was amazing. The Visitor Center cleaning processes for the bathrooms was widely praised and staff would like to thank both the contracted cleaning company and in-house facilities staff for keeping the bathrooms open and cleaned. The visitor center saw less visitation, as was expected during a pandemic, 4000 visitors versus an annual 10,000. However, the Walking Tours exceeded our expectations. The focus on trail walking, guided tours and any outdoor activities proved to be a welcome respite from the omnipresent pandemic.

To address the needs of our local and regional visitors, we created new and engaging tours, such as a family walking tour, 3 cemeteries tour and a new African American history bike tour. We continued to run our daily history tour 7 days a week at 1pm.

This fall and winter we added winter walking tours along the Emerson Thoreau Amble, and added winter options for our popular Little Women Tour.

Our marketing efforts concentrated on local and regional tourism, knowing most of our visitors would be looking at day long trips.

We were very grateful to have some press opportunities in the Concord Journal, Visit New England and the Merrimack Valley Convention Bureau along with partnerships with Concord Together, Freedom's Way Heritage Area and Living Concord.

A tourism huddle group was created that meets on a regular basis and is made up of Retailers, Restaurateurs, Hoteliers, Attractions, and residents. The goal is to work together to make the Town shine brighter by creating partnerships and opportunities for all to succeed.

Looking to 2021 to build on the new brand, engage with more visitors and grow our partnerships, revenue streams and offerings.

PICNIC-IN-THE-PARK

Doug Ellis – Chair, Fund Raising
Peter Gilman – Booths
Johanna Ellis – Secretary
George Herbolsheimer – Treasurer
Maynard Forbes - Master of Ceremonies
Karen Ahearn – Entertainment
Jennifer Hatfield - Publicity
Ann Lang – Children's Parade
Anne Edgar – Hot Air Balloon
Michael Rudd – PA System, Posters

Sadly, the 2020 July 4th celebration was another COVID-19 victim. It is too early to predict what 2021 will bring but the committee is very anxious to resume festivities once again to celebrate our nation's independence and hopefully return to our pre-COVID lives!

The Committee encourages Concord citizens to support this annual event with financial contributions and volunteer efforts both behind the scenes or on the event day, on the committee or during the day.

We hope to see everyone again as soon as we safely can!

Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PicnicintheParkConcordMa/> for more information.



PUBLIC CEREMONIES AND CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE

Julissica Navarro-Norton (Chair)
Tom Valle
Sue McCrory
Robert Norton
David Bell



The Public Ceremonies and Celebrations Committee has the responsibility of organizing, coordinating and managing several ceremonies and celebrations sponsored by the Town of Concord. Celebrations for 2020 included: a quiet remembrance on Memorial Day and a Veterans' Day Commemoration on November 11. The committee is grateful to the many 2020 Annual Town Report Human Services – 175+ people and organizations that helped make 2020 such a touching and distinctive year.

These especially include Parade Marshall Robert Norton and State officials, various Town departments especially the Fire, Police and Public Works Departments, Honored Citizen Jonathan Keyes, local Veterans, Concord Minutemen, Concord Independent Battery, participating clergy from Concord, CCHS music volunteers, and the many others and organizations who participated in and attended the 2020 events. The committee understands the importance of upholding these valued town traditions and is very grateful.

Honored Citizen Ceremony & Reception

Not held this year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the reception would have honored Jonathan Keyes, the 2020 Concord Honored Citizen. Each year, since 1962, Concord honors a deserving citizen(s) who has demonstrated extraordinary town service and

volunteerism by being selected as Honored Citizen. A proud Concord resident for over 50 years, Jonathan has “worked tirelessly and with quiet enthusiasm” to support the efforts of various town organizations. He has proved to be an active volunteer and contributor in many capacities, including the Land Conservation Trust, the Concord Museum, the Old Manse, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association and the Fenn School.

Of the many nomination letters and messages of support received, a common theme that was evident includes his high integrity, commitment, and concern for the town and its citizens. “As a fixture at town meetings, League of Women Voters breakfasts and Land Trust meetings, Keyes continues to be a model citizen. His record of faithful service to the Town and its institutions make him deserving of the Town’s highest volunteer honor,” the Town of Concord wrote on its website.

Meriam’s Corner Exercise

Not held this year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This ceremony commemorates the assembly and actions of militia and Minuteman units that arrived at Meriam’s Corner during the British retreat from Concord on April 19th, 1775. After the Regulars’ withdrawal from the Old North Bridge, they began a retreat back to Boston. By the time the Regulars arrived at Meriam’s Corner, at half past noon, there were reported to be about 1,100 Minutemen in the area from more than a dozen towns. On that April 19th, at Meriam’s Corner, a day of relatively small but violent skirmishes blossomed into a running, 16-mile battle that became the opening salvo to the eight-year American Revolutionary war.

Patriot’s Day

Not held this year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This year’s Patriot’s Day marked the 245th anniversary of the Concord Fight and the beginning of the American Revolution. The Town’s annual parade usually takes place in the morning with a 9am step-off. The parade route covers a distance of about 3 miles over a period of approximately two hours. At least fifty units were expected to march. The parade begins at the Hunt Recreation Center on Stow Street and proceeds through Concord Center to the Old North Bridge where a brief ceremony commemorates the events and soldiers of April 19,

1775. The parade returns to the Hunt Recreation Center by way of Concord Center where each unit is officially acknowledged at the town reviewing stand.

Dawn Salute

Not held this year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Dawn Salute usually is held at the Old North Bridge every year on April 19th to commemorate the opening battle of the American Revolution in 1775. Church bells toll at 5:45AM from the First Parish to sound the alarm. "Dr. Prescott" arrives at the Bridge after riding across the countryside warning towns and villages that the Regulars were on the march and their destination was Concord. Minutemen firing salutes, volleys by the Concord Independent Battery from Buttrick's Hillside and a performance by the "Old Guard" contribute significantly to the event.

Memorial Day

A quiet remembrance was observed on Memorial Day. Please look on the Committees Facebook page for pictures from the 2020 remembrance. Parades and remembrance ceremonies are usually held in West Concord at Percy A. Rideout Field and Kenneth J. Dunn Square and in Concord Center at Monument Square. Concord's proud Role of Honor was read at Monument Square. Commemorative wreaths were placed by Concord veterans at the West Concord locations as well as several monuments in the Square. The Concord Independent Battery and Concord Minutemen fired multiple times throughout the morning to commemorate the brave men and women who lost their lives in the line of service.

Veterans Day

A quiet remembrance was observed on Veterans Day. Please look on the Committees Facebook page for pictures and video commemoration from the 2020 event. Concord's Flag Retirement Ceremony is typically held each year on Veterans' Day and provides Concordians with the opportunity to retire their worn American Flags in a respectful and appropriate manner. The ceremony was established in 1965 by James Carroll, Dr. Francis McDonald, Bernard Rushe, Former Fire Department Chief Thomas Tombeno, and Clark McClevin. This group of Concord residents, and the Town at large, felt that worn, torn and/or faded flags, left in place through the fall and winter months, honored neither

our nation's colors nor our departed veterans. For the past fifty-five years, this ceremony has been conducted to remedy this situation by properly retiring flags by burning with assistance from the Concord Fire Department and participation from veterans, local officials, Concord Independent Battery, Concord Minutemen, and the Military Family Support Group. Each year, local Girl and Boy Scout troops assist the committee with properly folding the flags at Hunt Gym, a few days prior to the retirement ceremony. The committee is grateful to the years of participation from our Concord Scouts! Please note, the ceremony was not held this year due to the pandemic.

Tree Lighting

Not held this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 2020 marked the third year that the Public Ceremonies Committee assisted with the annual Tree Lighting and Parade. With additional assistance and direction from the Concord Recreation Department, the committee planned for a small parade from Hunt Gym to Monument Square, with the grand finale featuring Santa on top of a Concord fire truck. Due to the pandemic, the event was canceled.

CONCORD LOCAL CULTURAL COUNCIL

Tom Martin (Chair)
Terry Yanulavich
Betsy Levinson
Leli Sudler
Tooy Rogers

The Concord Cultural Council (CLCC), whose members are appointed by the Select Board, supports community cultural projects through its grant program. Funds are received from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) whose mission is “to promote excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in order to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and to contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.”

Individuals and organizations may apply to the CLCC for funding for projects and presentations in music, dance, visual arts, poetry, literature, drama, humanities, and scientific interpretation for all age groups. Preference is given to applicants who live or work in Concord or who offer programs, projects, or presentations that specifically benefit Concord.

Information about applying for FY 2020 grants was publicized in the Concord Journal and on the Massachusetts Cultural Council website (www.mass-culture.org/Concord)

This year the CLCC received \$6,000.00 from the MCC and \$2,000.00 from the Town Of Concord, enabling the CLCC to enrich its support of the many cultural projects requesting funding. The CLCC also has an additional \$400 from a 2019 grant applicant that was not able to complete their intended performance, bring the total funds available for granting in 2021 to \$8400.00. We received 24 Grant applications requesting \$11,755.00.

Due to the ramifications of COVID-19, the grant reimbursement process from 2019-2020 is being continued until December 2021 in order to allow the grantees time to fulfill their grant requirements that were postponed by the pandemic. The fiscal year 2021 application deadline was also moved from October 2020 to December 2020. Public Zoom

meetings were held on December 17, 2020 and January 14, 2021 and future meetings will continue with the object being to conclude the grant funding process by March 4, 2021.

Additional information on the CCC grant program is available at www.mass-culture.org/Concord

CONCORD-NANAE NETWORK JAPANESE SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP

John Cratsley, Co-Chair
Sue Curtin, Co-Chair

2020 saw a temporary suspension of our sister city relationship with Nanae due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic that has affected our town as well as Nanae, Japan.

There were no visits to either town last year, and no trips by highschool students to or from Japan. Concordian Sarah Tan continued her job in Nanae as the CIR by signing up for a third year. She helps the town government with relations with sister cities and also teaches English to Nanae townspeople. CNN continues to meet through zoom to discuss when visits to either town will become possible and maintains communications with Nanae through the internet.

PEG ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Karlen Reed, Chair
Ruth Lauer, Clerk
Vince Carlson
Scott Hopkinson
Eugene Chang
Peggy Wargelin

Court Booth, School Committee Representative
Matt Johnson, Concord Select Board Liaison
Phil Lupsiewicz, MMN Station Manager
Tim Goddard, Carlisle Ex-Officio Member

Purpose of the PAAC

The charge of the PAAC is to:

- Monitor the effectiveness of Concord's PEG access services, now provided by MMN
- Help the Select Board ensure that PEG access services conform to requirements of the Comcast / Concord franchise agreement
- Safeguard the public's interest in community television through policies promoting fairness, equal access, and non-discrimination
- Promote quality telecommunication services that reflect the interests and concerns of Concord residents
- Assist the Select Board in adapting to new technologies – from traditional local cable TV to current telecommunication services.

PAAC Recommendations to MMN on Programming Guidelines

MMN Staff members requested that the PAAC provide input on guidelines that would help with the classification and handling of various types of video program questions.

Some of questions asked were how should MMN classify videos as “public,” “education,” or “government” for placement on TV channels 8 (public), 9 (government) and 99 (education)?

The PAAC responded that MMN should keep the programs in their current categories and classify similar programs accordingly going forward. MMN has the discretion to broadcast and categorize its programming as “Public,” “Education,” or “General.” MMN should try to fill all three cable TV channels, channels 8, 9, and 99, with programming. If a specific program or situation of concern arises, MMN should refer that question to the PAAC for review and advice. The PAAC notes that classifying a program as “P” “E,” or “G” will not affect its placement on the Town's YouTube Internet channel as the YouTube channel operates with playlists and channels, not PEG categories. Playlists should continue to be updated regularly.



Left to Right Top: Karlen Reed, Court Booth, Ruth Lauer. Left to Right Middle: Matt Johnson (Select Board Liaison), Frank Breen (member of the public). Left to Right Bottom: Scott Hopkinson, Phil Lupsiewicz (MMN Station Manager)

This Report by the PEG Access Advisory Committee (PAAC) covers the PAAC's efforts from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, the PAAC meeting schedule was suspended from March to June. Despite this interlude, the PAAC supported the 2020 PEG Budget Warrant Article 22, considered draft 2020-21 goals, offered the PAAC's recommendations to MMN on programming guidelines regarding video classification as “public,” “education,” or “government,” analyzed Comcast subscribership and complaint data, celebrated the second anniversary of the founding of MMN, advocated for filling the open Education Coordinator position, and met with the Town's Comcast representative. This committee's meetings, like all Town committee meetings during the COVID-19 Pandemic, were recorded on Zoom and are accessible through MMN's YouTube channel.

Here are the classifications:

Public (TV channel 8): Local Events including programs such as tree lighting ceremony, Crucolo Cheese Parade, Minute Man National Park concert, and Town workshops on sustainability. Other types of programs include art programs, public domain cartoons and films, programs for Seniors such as from the Council on Aging, Public Service Announcements, and local programs and specials from for and about Concord.

Education (TV channel 99): Concord Carlisle Regional high school events, including CCHS sports (field hockey, soccer, football), CCHS Band; CCHS graduation and senior parade, CCHS musical performances, CCHS safety and student wellness forum, METCO programs, and Community Education programs, including A Taste of Community Ed.

Government (TV channel 9): Concord and Carlisle Town Boards and Committees, including Select Board, Finance Committee, School Committee, Town Meeting, Planning Board, public hearings, Chairs' Breakfast, and Public forums.

For more information, visit the PAAC web page: www.concordma.gov/2012/PEG-Access-Advisory-Committee

VETERANS' SERVICES

Dick Krug, Veterans Services Officer

The Veterans' Services program is mandated by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 115 and is administered under State guidelines to provide information, advice and assistance regarding benefits to veterans and their families. Every city and town in the Commonwealth is required to have a benefits program for its resident veterans and their dependents, as well as a Veterans' Services Officer. The Veterans' Services Officer must be a war-era veteran and be available to provide assistance.

The Town is reimbursed by the State for 75% of benefits paid under this mandated program. With the support of the Commonwealth's House, Senate and Executive Office, Massachusetts is now recognized as having one of the most comprehensive veterans' programs in the nation.

The Office of Veterans' Services, currently located at 37 Knox Trail, advocates for and provides critical services to those who have served and their loved ones. Current benefits extend to "natural disasters" where benefits may apply to a loss resulting from a hurricane, blizzard or tornado. The Veterans' Service Officer will help Veterans complete their application for Chapter 115 benefits which offers a need-based program of financial and medical assistance for Veterans and their dependents. The mission of the Veterans' Services Officer has grown to encompass the full range of VA federal benefits, rehabilitation, employment and educational opportunities, military records, tax exemptions, housing and shelter assistance, annuities, funeral assistance and care and decoration of veterans' graves. Financial assistance to qualified veterans and their dependents is provided, in accordance with State and federal regulations.

Our veteran population has dropped dramatically but from 2000 to 2020 Massachusetts has seen tens of thousands of new veterans. However, this is a very small amount returning compared to veterans that returned from WWII.



Veterans' Services Officer Dick Krug with accepting a gift of masks for Veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic

Program Implementation

The Veterans' Services Officer responds to daily calls requesting information, advice and assistance. With so many veterans and their families facing profound challenges related to their service and the current economy due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Veterans' Services Officer has become more important than ever.

The Veterans' Services Officer often helps veterans obtain assistance from veterans' organizations as well as other local, State and federal organizations, such as Concord Community Services and Social Security. The Veterans' Services Officer also has been called upon to provide transportation to and from medical appointments for veterans when there is no other transportation available.

Currently there are five individuals receiving financial assistance for qualifying Chapter 115 benefits. This number changes annually as the veteran may have moved, gained employment, change of assets or passed away.

The Veterans' Services Officer has been networking with local civic groups, senior citizen groups and area veterans' organizations as well as families of service members currently deployed. He has assisted at veterans' funerals, worked with students and presenters at Veterans' Day and Memorial Day exercises, served as a guest speaker in some high school and elementary school classes as well as for Rotary Club of Concord, the Lions Club of

Concord, Concord Deaconess, and Concord Park Assisted Living. The Office of Veterans' Services is currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the service officer can be reached via telephone and email.

2020 Concord Veteran Count – 634**
 62 - Veterans from World War II
 177 - Korea War
 258 - Vietnam War
 137 - Gulf War I and II

** Approximate numbers

For information or assistance on Veterans' Services please call 978-318-3038 or e-mail dkrug@concordma.gov.

For information about services, events, and other veterans' organizations please visit Concord's web page at concordma.gov/clerk/veterans.htm.

REGISTRAR OF VETERANS GRAVES

Harold Nichols, Registrar

There were 34 interments of United States Veterans in Concord cemeteries in 2020. The names of the Veterans, their respective wars, date of burials, and place of burial are as follows:

| <u>VETERAN'S NAME</u> | <u>PERIOD OF DUTY</u> | <u>INTERMENT DATE</u> | <u>CEMETERY</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Peter J. Durran Jr. | Peacetime | January 13, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Neil H. Gould | Peacetime | February 11, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Timothy B. Blodgett | Korea | February 22, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert D. Gage | Vietnam | February 23, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert B. Sargent | World War II | February 24, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Richard B. Sur | Vietnam | March 14, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| George S. Perry | Peacetime | April 7, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Bernard I. Tobin | World War II | April 10, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Barbara Platt | World War II | April 24, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Warner I. Wood | Vietnam | April 29, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Mary P. Theriault | Vietnam | May 4, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Maurice E. Tourison | Korea | May 5, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| William O. Glass | World War II | May 6, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Cornelius Sullivan | Vietnam | May 30, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| James Del Barrett | Peacetime | June 8, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Miriam C. O'Brien | World War II | July 17, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| William M. Nickerson | Korea | July 25, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| John Jodice | Korea | July 31, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Thomas V. D. Nield | Peacetime | August 8, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Michael Dee III | Peacetime | August 15, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| William Van Note | Peacetime | August 15, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Raymond Lawson | World War II | August 17, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| L. Sumner Hopkins | Peacetime | August 26, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| George K. Byron | Korea | September 9, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert G. Bower | Korea | September 12, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert G. Ayres | Peacetime | September 12, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| William Megin | Vietnam | September 19, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| William G. Schmidt III | Vietnam | September 30, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert Kemp | Korea | October 2, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Harold L. Goyette | Korea | October 10, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Richard L. Peterson | Peacetime | October 25, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |
| John Palma | Korea | December 3, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| Armand Pirro | Korea | November 20, 2020 | St. Bernard's |
| John M. Gerty | World War II | December 1, 2020 | Sleepy Hollow |

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE (CSEC)

Douglas Sharpe, Chair
Julie Kleyn, Clerk
Bradley Hubbard-Nelson,
Sam Lines
Karen Gibson
Jerry Frenkil
Janet Miller
Bob Shatten

Kate Hanley, Concord Sustainability Director
Terri Ackerman, Select Board Liaison

The Comprehensive Sustainability and Energy Committee (CSEC) consists of up to nine members appointed by the Town Manager with the approval of the Select Board. The Committee assists the Town to identify, design, and implement programs and projects fostering energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy generation, and to track and report on the financial and environmental impacts of such programs.

CSEC's aim is to engage residents of Concord to become more aware of the role that we all must play in the next three decades and beyond to become responsible for our energy future. We work in concert with Concord's Sustainability Director, Kate Hanley, to represent sustainability-focused practices in Concord and to volunteer with seasonal events being coordinated through her office. CSEC also works alongside the Climate Action Advisory Board (CAAB). Whereas the CAAB is involved with the evolution of new sustainability policies in Concord as they develop a resiliency strategy, the CSEC committee is engaging Concord residents in learning about and adopting new sustainable approaches and practices. Our goal is to determine what actions Concord residents can take that would have the biggest impact, and how we, as a Committee can help facilitate those actions.

In early 2020, CSEC was planning & developing some educational programming and a residential engagement fair for Spring 2020. The theme of the

event was "Your Sustainable Home", and it was to focus on actions that Concord residents can undertake to make their homes more sustainable. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event was postponed indefinitely.

In July of 2020, Sustainable Concord, the Town's climate action and resilience plan was released. The plan identifies CSEC as a partner to implement a number of priority actions, particularly in the "Built Environment" section. As the committee's charge is to advocate and engage Concord residents on sustainability, CSEC will play a critical role in implementing actions in the climate plan.

In June, CSEC resumed its meetings virtually. We shifted our previous approach of hosting events and tabling toward trying to develop virtual programming about the sustainable energy topics involved in the "Your Sustainable Home" pamphlet we had developed. After several months of effort, we determined that the video webinar development effort was beyond the scope of what our committee could achieve. The committee shifted focus and identified our role as one needing to assist the town by providing engagement and outreach to the town's Sustainable Concord plan. We see CSEC's role as a responsible town committee working alongside other town committees that are each, in part, stakeholders for delivering the plan over the next 5-10 years. Our focus is particularly outreach and engagement.

It is the committee's intent to continue identifying constructive ways to serve the town's climate goals. At the end of 2020, CSEC began the process of honing in on specific areas of advocacy and outreach. We plan to focus our efforts on moving the town and its residents toward accelerating electrification of home heating through more direct outreach to Concord's residents. The committee is still in planning stages as to the specifics and expects to transition our annual planning into a longer term, potentially 5-year plan, in concert with CAAB, CMLP, and local volunteer groups.

One first step in this engagement approach is developing content. At the end of 2020, CSEC began working on a project to create a book of Concord

resident case studies of homes that have adopted climate-friendly heat pumps as well as other related sustainable technologies including solar PV, electric vehicles, heat pump hot water heaters, weatherization, and more.

CSEC maintains liaisons with a number of town groups that have an impact on sustainable goal development: Climate Action Advisory Board, (CAAB), Concord Municipal Light and Power, (CMLP), the Concord Planning Board, and others. We also stay abreast of and review strategic planning efforts and legislation being considered in town meetings related to Concord's move to a more sustainable, more adaptable community involving climate change issues.

We have been also following the energy use patterns being planned for a range of Concord public buildings such as the Library and the new Middle School. We realize that changes in habit patterns require attention and practice and are trying to be mindful of the kinds of practices that are needed to reach net zero energy emission standards. Additionally, we follow and support efforts of MassEnergize, a local non-profit to engage people in Concord and nearby towns to make home energy improvements through the CoolerConcord.org website.

Going forward, CSEC plans to build upon the successes of past programs including the May 2019 Sustainable Landscaping Fair and community outreach campaigns including the Heat Smart Program of 2019 that resulted in increased adoption of electric heat pumps in Concord. It will be CSEC's future role to develop programs that better engage Concord residents in achieving Concord's sustainability and climate goals.

