

**Minutes for Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon/Council on Aging Meeting
April 13, 2016**

Present: COA Members: Dr. Alan Balsam, Jean Doherty, Rita d'Entremont, Barbara E. Kean, Irving B. Finn, John Mulhane, Miriam Sargon, Peter Ames, Nancy Daly, Doris Toby Axelrod, Sherry Lee, Claire Lurie, Muriel Stark, Marge Harvey, Vera Sharma, Helen Lew, Roberta Winitzer, Phil Fullerton and Phyllis Bram. Staff who helped set up and serve volunteers: Ruthann Dobek, Dotty Bell, Sharon Devine, Jamie Donchin, Freddi Langerthal, Tamall Harris, Carol Malinowski, Olga Sliwa, Jim Tong, Sonia Wong, Julie Washburn, Deidre Waxman, Sue Welpton, Kerri Ann Tester and Patricia Burns as well as social work interns Katie McClean, Annie McGonagle and Sarah Foss. Volunteers: A total of 98 volunteers attended the luncheon and the COA meeting.

Slide Show: A highlight of the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon was a slide show of volunteers at previous events shown throughout the luncheon. Thanks to Julie Washburn's efforts to assemble and update the slide show which was appreciated by all present.

Luncheon: A delicious luncheon of salad, ravioli, meatballs, eggplant and cupcakes was enjoyed by all served by BSC staff and social work interns.

Welcome: Ruthann Dobek welcomed everyone to the 2016 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon and extended her thanks on behalf of the Brookline Senior Center for all the volunteers' contributions. She said that the Annual Volunteer Luncheon is the official start of Spring, no more snow and the promise of beautiful weather to come. Ruthann said that staff looked forward to this opportunity to honor our volunteers and all the staff and social work interns were pleased to be able to serve the volunteers their lunch.

Entertainment by Dr. Alan Balsam, Director of the Brookline Public Health Department: Ruthann introduced Alan and thanked him for his support of seniors' health programs and issues. Alan played his guitar and led a sing-along of old favorites in which volunteers enthusiastically participated.

Selectman's Report: Ruthann introduced Nancy Daly as an extraordinary volunteer who has been not only on the Board of Selectman, but our liaison, an advocate for elders, co-chair of the AIDS Friendly Initiative and most recently our representative dancer for Dancing With the Stars which fundraised for our Dementia Respite Program.

Nancy thanked everyone for supporting efforts to make Brookline a Senior Friendly town. She also acknowledged that the COA could not function without the volunteers as the money necessary for these paid hours would be prohibitive. She said that of all the committees she was on, she enjoyed the COA meetings the most.

Ruthann reminded everyone to let her know of anyone who might be able to benefit from the free respite care. She also said that the Respite Program would be the featured topic of the May COA meeting.

Moment of Silence: Ruthann led a moment of silence for those dedicated and caring volunteers who were ill, who were honorary volunteers who had cared for so many during their years of service or had passed during the year.

Ruthann then spoke briefly about Corinne Long whose daughter, Robin was at the luncheon. She mentioned the Out-To-Lunch group and the Flower Program as a few of her many volunteer jobs.

Robin said that she wished that she was not here as that would mean that her mother was here. She said that Corinne loved her jobs, especially the flowers. Corinne loved the BSC and everyone loved Corinne. She felt that her mother was looking down on us today and proud to see all of the other volunteers.

Ruthann said that she was happy that the BSC was instrumental in building community and strength and helping seniors remain active.

Patricia Burns, Volunteer Coordinator: Patricia noted how pleased she was to have met so many more of the volunteers since last year when she had only been in the position for a few months. Patricia's theme was WIN/WIN Volunteering at BSC. She told three stories about WIN/WIN volunteers – 1) Ruth Geller who was new to Brookline and came to BSC at the strong recommendation of her daughter and found a new community of friends while volunteering; 2) Corinne who had lived in Brookline for many years, but had been full time caregiver for her mother and whose children lived far away. When her mother died at 103, Corinne felt the need for a new community of friends and came to the BSC and volunteered and found those friends; and 3) SHOP Brookline High School volunteers. At the orientation one young man said it took about 2 hours to get the list, shop, and go over the receipt and list, but he always spent at least another hour talking. He said enthusiastically, "These seniors are so interesting! They lived the history that we read about in our classes."

Patricia gave some statistics from the 2016 survey. She also noted that the volunteer pages of the Town and BSC websites are now updated monthly and that there is a full page article about the BSC volunteers in the *fiftyplus advocate* newsletter.

Nominees for Volunteer of the Year: Julie read the names of those nominated for 2016 Volunteer of the Year Award and asked them to stand and collect their nominee certificates after the meeting. Alphabetically, they were: Rita d'Entrement, Akemi Minami, Lydia Pearl (She is an employee and not eligible), Fran Pechenic, Vera Sharma and Muriel Stark. Volunteers and staff gave rousing applause for all the nominees.

Presentation of Awards: Ruthann indicated that The John and Molly Dolan Volunteer of the Year Award is given to a nominated volunteer who exemplified sharing, giving and paying it forward. The 2016 award was presented to Muriel Stark. Ruthann outlined some of the many ways that Muriel has volunteered and most importantly her position as BSC ambassador and her "we'll get through it" attitude. In addition to the certificate of award, Muriel was also given a lovely plant and a bowl of chocolates. Ruthann then announced the Community Partner Award that was given to Trader Joe's this year. She thanked them for their weekly donation of flowers, produce and the festive Hawaiian luau event and encouraged all of us to thank them when we were in the store.

Word of Appreciation from Ruthann: Ruthann thanked all of our extraordinary senior volunteers for their dedication, time and energy on behalf of the Brookline Senior Center. She reinforced that the BSC could not provide its services and programs without them. Ruthann also mentioned that many of our volunteers supported more than one program at BSC and many also volunteered at other organizations as well.

Ruthann then asked that all of our volunteers add one more important job to their volunteering – being an ambassador for the Brookline Senior Center. She asked that we all be aware of new faces here or in our community – churches, synagogues or social networks - and welcome them to the BSC. Our volunteers know that the secret to longevity is active involvement and physical fitness.

Roberta Winitzer, COA Chair in Training: Ruthann introduced Robert as the new COA Chair-in-Training who would assume the Chair position in the Fall. Roberta said that she has been a long-time friend and colleague of Agnes Rogers and extended her welcome and thanks on behalf of Agnes who was unable to attend and herself.

COA Business Meeting:

COA Board Membership: Ruthann mentioned that we have 26 members, but are looking for new citizen members. She invited anyone interested to come to the May meeting.

Springwell: Ruthann said that Springwell is responsible for meal site delivery such as the BSC and also Meals-on-Wheels and other elder services. Springwell is also looking for another representative in addition to Yolanda Rodriguez.

Board of Selectman: Ruthann said that our budget would be formalized at the May Town Meeting. She said that our budget is secure.

Ruthann detailed the sources of funding for the BSC: 1) Town of Brookline – 70% and secure; 2) State – grant funds at the rate of \$9/senior = \$97,000 for the more than 10,000 seniors in Brookline; 3) Federal funds that are stable; and 4) private donations including events like Dancing With the Stars that are thankfully very steady.

Ruthann urged everyone to vote in the Town elections on May 3rd and to continue to check the monthly BSC Newsletter and come to events.

The next meeting will be on May 11th @ 1 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm

Respectfully submitted by Patricia Burns