

FROM:
BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK
(WWW.BROOKLINECAN.ORG)

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**BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK TO BE LAUNCHED
APRIL 1ST**

Enables older residents to remain a vital part of the community

The Brookline Community Aging Network, known as BrooklineCAN, will have its official launch on April 1. The town-wide initiative is designed to help older residents remain in their homes and be fully engaged in the life of the community.

The group's website, www.brooklinecan.org, will go "live" on April 1. At the same time, Brookline-CAN will display an exhibit in the window of the Brookline Bank at 1340 Beacon Street, Coolidge Corner.

The new organization, which is open to people of all ages, is in the midst of a drive to increase its membership. To date 150 people have become charter members. The membership fee is \$25 per year.

Membership benefits will include discounts from town businesses and information about preferred contractors and service providers.

Brookline-CAN is the outgrowth of a year-long planning effort involving a group of Brookline residents and the town's Senior Center. Three community meetings were held to solicit public input, and several committees were formed to work on various aspects of Brookline-CAN. The group's Steering Committee is co-chaired by Ruthann Dobek, director of the Brookline Senior Center, and Frank Caro, a Brookline resident who was formerly director of the Gerontology Center at UMass Boston.

"We know that older people want to remain in their homes." Dobek said. "And we know older people want to be part of the community. We see Brookline-CAN as the connection between these two objectives."

Frank Caro said, "Brookline-CAN is member-driven. Older people in Brookline want to continue to control their own lives. Brookline-CAN

provides them with a voice in designing supports that will be available when needed."

Throughout the country communities are creating special organizations called "villages" to help people remain in their homes as they grow older. Brookline is creating its own "village" – but with a unique Brookline twist. The Brookline model builds and expands upon the abundant social, cultural, and educational programs already available through the Senior Center and other organizations, both public and private.

Dobek said, "This village model is one that provides the potential for community building. For instance, we see the possibility of strengthening the inter-generational programs we already have through which Brookline High students shop weekly for elderly residents. We envision connections that can work the other way around, with older people mentoring or tutoring young people.

Said Caro: "Because of its well-educated population, and its housing, transportation, and support services, Brookline is already an excellent place to live for people of all ages. Brookline-CAN is striving to make our town even more livable. Brookline-CAN will call attention to Brookline's strengths and advocate for improvements in parks, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and housing.

History

Brookline-CAN's roots date back to a collaborative effort between the town's Council on Aging and the Jewish Family and Children's Service (JF&CS) during 2007-2010. The demonstration project – Aging Well at Home – focused on a neighborhood in North Brookline and tested a model approach to supporting older residents' desire to continue living in their homes. Funded in part by the Weinberg Foundation, the program offered help with household tasks, fostered connections among residents, and provided education programs.

In 2010, JF&CS joined a gathering at the home of Frank and Carol Caro in Brookline's Crowninshield Road area to discuss the creation of a neighborhood support system that would help them to remain in their homes as they grew older.

Shortly thereafter, the group invited Ruthann Dobek to offer her perspective as director of both the Council on Aging and the Brookline Senior Center. Upon learning of the multitude of services and offerings available from the Senior Center, the group concluded that the best way

to pursue their objective was to combine forces with the Center. JF&CS continues to be a key participant in Brookline-CAN.

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2 Sidebars (see below)

~ **Why Join**

~ **Three Goals**

W H Y J O I N ?

INFORMATION SHARING

Best plumbers, electricians, handymen, etc.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

At local businesses and restaurants

SERVICES TO OVER-60s

Shopping, cooking, driving, dog walking
(Some service charges may apply.)

REGULAR BULLETINS

On services, classes, performances

EDUCATIONAL FORUMS

Programs on successful independent living

VOLUNTEER NETWORK

Opportunities for all to give and receive

<http://www.brooklinecan.org>

Three Goals of Brookline Community Aging Network

* Enables older residents to stay in their homes and remain fully engaged in the life of the community.

* Builds intergenerational networks.

* Makes our town an even better place for all.

Annual Membership Fee \$25