

FROM:



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For immediate release, please

BrooklineCAN's Honors Community Service at Annual Meeting
Surprise Guest Lauds Organization

The BrooklineCAN (Brookline Community Aging Network) 7th Annual Meeting and Exposition began with the introduction of a surprise guest: Alice Bonner, Secretary of Elder Affairs for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Secretary Bonner praised BrooklineCAN not only for its success but also for the organization's efforts to make Brookline a better place to live for people of all ages. She particularly noted BrooklineCAN's project to identify public bathrooms throughout the town open to anyone who might need to go. The Annual Meeting, whose theme was *The Power of Engagement*, was held Thursday, September 14, at the Brookline Senior Center.

The meeting opened with Master of Ceremonies, Roberta Winitzer, introducing Ruthann Dobek and Frank Caro, Steering Committee Co-Chairs.

Prior to the meeting, guests enjoyed refreshments and exhibits from a variety of BrooklineCAN committees and town organizations, such as Brookline's Recreation Department, Board of Selectmen, and Public Libraries. The Brookline High School Jazz Band presented a lively and appealing concert.

Keynote speaker, Judith Gonyea, Professor and Associate Dean of Research at Boston University School of Social Work, addressed *Promoting Age-friendly Communities in the Current Political Environment: Opportunities and Challenges*. She discussed how life is enriched when people are actively involved in meaningful projects and goal-directed activities and stressed how vital social engagement is. She noted that isolated elders have higher rates of some illnesses. Recent research has borne out the fact that genetic changes have been found in elders who are socially isolated.

Frank Caro, representing BrooklineCAN, presented community service awards to Erin Kinney, Manager of Engagement, of Brookline Interactive Group (BIG); Betsy Munzer, President of Brookline League of Women Voters; and Kerri Ann Tester, program manager of TRIPPS (Transportation Resource Information, Planning, & Partnership for Seniors).

Awardees were recognized for their work around engagement: encouraging volunteerism, educating and informing and promoting access to activities that encourage citizen involvement.

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Affiliated with the Brookline Senior Center, BrooklineCAN is an all-volunteer organization which enables older residents to remain independent and fully engaged in the life of the community. The organization advocates on behalf of Brookline's older residents, works with town agencies on behalf of Brookline's seniors, provides ways for members to contribute to the community, and in general acts to make Brookline an even better place to live for people of all ages.

Visit the BrooklineCAN website at <http://www.brooklineCAN.org>, or call 617-730-2777 for additional information about Brookline Community Aging Network and to request a copy of BrooklineCAN's informative monthly newsletter,

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