



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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“Aging is not
‘lost youth’
but a new stage of
opportunity and
strength.”

– Betty Friedan –



MISSION: The mission of the Friends Of Newtown Seniors Inc (FONS) is to provide advocacy and services to Newtown seniors (those 55+ who reside in Newtown). This will be accomplished in two complementary ways: through new initiatives conceived and developed by its Board of Directors and by partnering with various non-profit, for-profit, governmental, political, and religious organizations serving the Newtown senior population.



MEMBERSHIP: Membership in FONS is free to anyone interested in advancing the interests of seniors in the community, through volunteerism, financial support or contribution as a resource specialist.

Join our email list at our website: FriendsOfNewtownSeniors.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the close of 2023, FONS completes another productive and successful year of serving Newtown. Our monthly social events continue to attract a wide circle of Newtown residents and some out-of-town guests. We strive to broaden our scope of special activities and the reach of our service programs.

As we enter our ninth year of providing advocacy and support to our senior population, we hope you will join us in our efforts and help us communicate our message of empowerment.

We have established goals for 2024, and most critical of those are our support for physical and mental wellness in cooperation with the Newtown Health Alliance, and our transportation initiative in cooperation with the Commission On Aging, Newtown Human Services, and state and local officials. We look forward to seeing you at our events and hearing from you if you have concerns or suggestions.

Sincerely,
John S. Boccuzzi, Sr.
President



2024 GOALS

1. Follow up with local, state, and regional authorities on transportation options:
 - a. Assess results of the transportation survey to determine the transportation needs of seniors and work with legislative and municipal officials to address them, including holding public information and listening sessions.
 - b. Continue to advocate for bus loops connecting Newtown to area towns.
 - c. Continue to advocate for funding by Newtown for van services to the Senior Center, shopping, and entertainment.
2. Support the work of the newly formed Newtown Health Alliance in reviewing local resources for coordinated physical and mental health assessments and treatment options.
3. Pursue grant funds and develop fundraising strategies.
4. Advocate for additional housing and transportation options for Newtown seniors, as well as implementing the AARP HomeFit Program in the FONS Chore Services Program.
5. Continue working cooperatively with Newtown Human Services (NHS), the Commission On Aging (COA), and the Newtown Senior Center (NSC) to provide and support senior services and programs. Continue hosting and supporting events hosted by others serving the senior community.
6. Fill vacant executive team positions and continue building volunteer participation on Committees. Implement a succession plan to ensure continuity of operations.



ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Social gatherings monthly at local restaurants
- Livable Community Plan implementation and review
- Chore Services – providing a range of services
- Outreach to those requesting information and support
- Free or reduced-fee salon services at Ricci's Salon
- Cards and messages of support sent, as needed
- Expand transportation and health initiatives
- Support for increased housing options



Photos courtesy of Shannon Hicks, The Newtown Bee, & FONS Board Members

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COMMUNICATION

FONS continued its robust communications strategy through weekly emails to over 750 recipients announcing activities of interest to seniors in Newtown, sponsored by FONS and other organizations. These include volunteer opportunities and town-wide special events. The FONS Sunshine Committee sent approximately 120 cards and messages of support to seniors experiencing medical issues, family losses, or celebrating a special anniversary or event. FONS also kept close contact with other organizations to partner with them on activities relevant to seniors, such as presentations on implementation of AARP's HomeFit Program.

ADVOCACY

FONS focuses its advocacy activities primarily on affordable senior housing initiatives and expansion of transportation options. The outcome of the process of designating the Fairfield Hills (FFH) campus as a historic property will play a vital role in the development of housing on the campus, and FONS continues to closely monitor the situation.

FONS supported NSC in obtaining grant funds for a 10-passenger van for the Senior Center, and subsequently lobbied the Newtown Board of Selectmen for use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to procure a second van. A transportation survey conducted by FONS was presented to CT state legislators for review as support for a possible state-funded bus route for Newtown.

FONS organized visits to New Canaan health facilities, by Newtown municipal, corporate and private parties, resulting in the formation of the Newtown Health Alliance. The Alliance will review the possibilities for leveraging existing Newtown resources to promote Senior health and fitness.



FONS was a leader in developing Newtown's long-range Livable Community Plan, which in 2023 was approved and published on the AARP website, and available at Newtown/AARP Livable Communities Map (<https://livablemap.aarp.org/member/newtown-ct>).

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

FONS maintained a strong working relationship with the NSC and NHS and in 2023 increased interactions with the COA. FONS sponsored a table at the Lions Club Duck Race and the Newtown Health Fair, marched in the Labor Day Parade, and donated a decorative holiday sleigh for the Festival of Trees. FONS also co-sponsored a local authors' program with the C.H. Booth Library.

Partnering with these and other groups has bolstered its efforts to promote overall awareness and improvement of services for Newtown seniors. In addition to these organizations, FONS supports and promotes the activities of the Newtown Historical Society, Newtown Youth & Family Services, Newtown Non-Profit Council, and other service groups. This collaboration fosters a livable community for all of Newtown.

ACTION

FONS CHORE SERVICES PROGRAM

FONS Chore Services Program responded to 96 calls for assistance from seniors in the community. Calls included requests for referrals regarding plumbers, electricians, roofers, landscapers, handymen for painting, dump runs, step repairs, installation/removal of air conditioners and storm windows and doors, sheetrock, mailbox repairs, rides to doctors' appointments, help with the moving of furniture and light bulb replacement. Numerous calls were received asking about FONS' services and other services available such as Meals On Wheels and the Hart Bus. Chore Services also assisted in the relighting of a furnace, the repair of a well pump struck by lightning, as well as making a connection for a senior needing an air conditioner with a family wanting to donate one.

Partnering with Boy Scout Troop 370 and JB Grounds and Lawn Care LLC, FONS was able to provide lawn clean up services for five seniors.



FONS SENIOR SALON PROGRAM

FONS and Dan Riccio, the owner of Ricci's Salon, established a program for seniors to receive free or reduced-fee hair and grooming services (haircuts, wash/blow dry, color or mini foil, manicures) through Ricci's Salon. Coupons for 90 free haircuts were distributed to seniors. Services are offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and are performed by students at Ricci's Academy, supervised by professionals.

AARP HOMEFIT PROGRAM

FONS launched a community wide outreach program to share our concerns about safety in the home for all town residents. FONS led presentations at the Senior Center and Community Center on the implementation of the AARP HomeFit Program. FONS purchased File of Life magnets that are available at the Senior Center and Community Center for any senior wanting one.

OUTREACH

The FONS Outreach Committee organized visits to senior shut-ins and those with disabilities. FONS "adopted" seven seniors for the holiday season and provided them with gifts and holiday cheer.

The FONS Social and Events Committees sponsored monthly dinners and other special events to provide seniors with opportunities for social interaction.

**"The longer I live,
the more beautiful life becomes."**

– Frank Lloyd Wright –

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LOCAL PARTNERS, SPONSORS & DONORS

LOCAL PARTNERS & SPONSORS

- Boy Scout Troop 370
- C.H.Booth Library
- JB Grounds and Lawn Care LLC
- Jeniam Foundation
- Maplewood of Newtown
- Newtown Commission On Aging
- Newtown Community Center
- Newtown Human Services
- Newtown Parks & Recreation
- Newtown Savings Bank
- Newtown Senior Center
- Newtown Youth & Family Services
- Old Glory Days Adult Day Care
- Ricci's Salon
- Second Company Governor's Horse Guard
- The Newtown Bee

DONORS

- Jo Anderson
- LaVerne and Calvin Blackwell
- Mitch Bolinsky
- Ellen Daly
- Robert Davenport
- Natalie DeFrancisci
- Annmarie and Edward Durkin
- Elizabeth and Thomas Eaton
- Patricia Hirsch
- Denise Kaiser and Gregory Dworkin

- Douglas Lord
- Valerie and David Maresca
- Frank and Yvonne Monette
- Vernice Murphy Louis Picchione
- Fran and Eugene Siegel
- Ned and Katherine Simpson
- Ellen Whalen
- David and Eleanor Zolov



FONS 2023 FINANCIAL UPDATE

2023 was truly a year that exceeded expectations. Increases in member donations, fundraising efforts including the shredding event, new grants, and the expansion of our community partner relationships allowed FONS to offer new and innovative programs to our Newtown seniors. We were able to introduce the Senior Salon Program and the AARP HomeFit Program, provide “File of Life” magnets to our senior population, expand our “Adopt-A-Senior” program, and provide home clean up services to seniors, all in addition to the continuing services provided through our Chore Services Program. We were also able to donate funds to the Senior Center for additional programs.

Our sincere thanks to our members, community partners, local supporters, the FONS Board of Directors, and all who give so much of their time and funds to advance our Mission of providing advocacy and services to Newtown seniors.

