



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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“Every year should teach you something valuable; whether you get the lesson is up to you. Every year brings you closer to expressing your whole and healed self.”

– Oprah Winfrey –



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

Looking back on 2025, I am happy to report that it was another very busy and productive year for FONS, thanks to the efforts of our Board of Directors, whom I would like to recognize in my annual letter.

FONS is extremely fortunate to have a Board of Directors comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds, experience, talents, and strengths.

Due to the dedication, commitment, and continuous efforts of our Board, FONS has been able to continue its mission of providing advocacy and services to our Newtown senior population. Our 2025 accomplishments speak for themselves.

I thank the entire Board for their service this year and look forward to working with them in 2026.

FONS was born on May 10, 2016, when a group of individuals met to focus on two important ideas: First, that more could be done for, and by, the growing senior population. And second, that the needs of seniors could best be met by working collaboratively with other organizations, and by being creative about filling the gaps.

As we approach our 10-year anniversary in 2026, I look at how far we've come and wonder how far we can go.

Sincerely,
John S. Boccuzzi, Sr.
President



FONS 2025 FINANCIAL UPDATE

The financial position of FONS is healthy and growing. As of 12/31/2025, we have a cash balance in excess of \$21,000, of which about \$8,800 is restricted funds from grants received, which are required to be spent on specific programs. Our 2025 donation program, with a goal of \$4,000 in donations, was both met and exceeded, thanks to our generous community member donations.

On our website, we continue to offer a convenient way for donors to make charitable contributions, as well as to purchase tickets for FONS events. We hope that you will consider using this platform in support of our organization.

FONS' strong financial position is entirely due to the financial support of our donors!

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**“Do not grow old, no matter how long you live.
Never cease to stand like curious children before
the Great Mystery into which we were born.”**

– Albert Einstein –



FONS 2026 GOALS

SERVICE

1. **FONS Chore Services**, including HomeFit. Increase individuals served by 50%.
2. **FONS Newtown Rides**. Increase ridership by 100%. Work with **Newtown Easy Transit** to establish a coordinated, sustainable service for FY 2026-27 and beyond.
3. **FONS Outreach Program**. Serve 100 individuals during the 2026 calendar year.
4. Continue working cooperatively with **Newtown Human Services**, the **Commission on Aging**, the **Newtown Senior Center** and others serving the senior community to provide and support senior services and programs.

SOCIAL / EVENTS

1. Host monthly **FONS Socials** with 30 to 50 participants.
2. **Hold Spring Annual Membership Meeting** and two other social events with over 100 participants.
3. **Hold FONS 10 Year Anniversary Celebration**.
4. Support Newtown cultural events.

ADVOCACY

1. Continue the *Timeless Newtown Embracing Every Generation* program focusing on intergenerational programming
2. Advocate with town for livable community domains and continue to monitor progress.
3. Exert advocacy by bringing needs, issues and opportunities to Town Officials, elected and appointed Town Bodies particularly in the areas of Transportation and Housing.
 - a. Transportation services useful to seniors including public transportation, ride services, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
 - b. Advocate for more and broader housing options in Newtown
4. Seek to understand what is important to Newtown seniors through discussion forums, surveys and other means.

OPERATIONS

1. Structure a cadre of FONS Volunteers (“army”).
2. Increase fund-raising and grant writing efforts to enable expansion of programs and goals.
3. Upgrade financial structure, processes and technology.
4. Continue enhancement of the FONS governance documents, organization structure and leadership succession plan.



2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....

SERVICE

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The **FONS Outreach Program** was launched in November with the goal of providing joy to seniors in the Newtown community who live alone, are recently widowed, and/or are otherwise isolated or in need of assistance. In November, volunteers delivered chrysanthemums, Thanksgiving cards, and FONS information packets to **34 seniors**. In December, volunteers delivered poinsettia plants, holiday cards, and Newtown Bee calendars to **90 seniors** residing in nursing homes; **30 fruit baskets**, holiday cards and Newtown Bee calendars were delivered to individual senior residences



CHORE SERVICES PROGRAM

Over **100 calls** were received from seniors requesting assistance. Calls included requests for referrals to trustworthy businesses and contractors, as well as requests from out-of-state relatives seeking either help for senior relatives, or information to share with relatives. Our volunteers were able to assist with the replacement of batteries in fire/CO detectors, installation/removal of window air conditioner units, changing window/door screens, repairing loose and unstable furniture/fixtures, light landscaping, and even helping to organize living space. If materials are needed to help with repairs, **FONS Chore Services** can also assist with purchasing these items depending on the homeowner's financial situation.

FONS Chore Services was able to assist a senior family who was without heat on a bitter December day. Professional services were arranged immediately, the furnace was examined that evening, and parts were replaced by noon the next day, ensuring the family had heat.

NEWTOWN RIDES PROGRAM

The **Newtown Rides Program** provides Newtown homebound age 55+ seniors with free rides to Newtown locations and businesses during the hours of 9:30 am – 2:30 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Currently, **Newtown Rides** has **35 active drivers** eager to take our senior population anywhere in Newtown that they would like to go - banking, shopping, pharmacy, post office, library, hair or nail salons, or a visit to the Community Center, Senior Center, physical therapy, doctor, or dentist.

In 2025, the program provided **156 FREE rides** and looks forward to doubling that number in 2026.

COLLABORATION

FONS maintained a strong working relationship with the Newtown Senior Center, Newtown Human Services, and the Commission on Aging. FONS sponsored a table at the first ever International Cultural Festival, the Lions Club Duck Race, the Newtown Arts Festival, and the Newtown Health Fair, marched in the Labor Day Parade, decorated/donated a tree for the Festival of Trees, and participated in both the July and December Salvation Army Kettle Bell Drives.

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, the C. H. Booth Library, and other service groups. This collaboration fosters a livable community for all of Newtown.

OPERATIONS

FONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The FONS Advisory Council reviews and makes suggestions on goals and objectives for the year and provides impartial reactions to ideas and projects suggested by the Board. The Council is also another way for the FONS Board of Directors to interface with the general public, civic leaders, and local business representatives.

PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP

FONS engaged Pro Bono Partnership, a 501 (c) (3) organization providing legal services to small nonprofit organizations, to conduct a review of FONS' policies and procedures. In 2025, Pro Bono reviewed and updated the FONS Bylaws and created a Conflict-Of-Interest policy.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

FONS continued its robust communications strategy through weekly emails to over **1,100 recipients** (an increase of over 250 from 2024!) announcing activities of interest to seniors in Newtown, sponsored by FONS and other organizations. These include volunteer opportunities and town wide special events.

FONS continued its monthly birthday mailing to those celebrating age 65 during the year. Along with a birthday card, recipients received an informational flyer on FONS. In 2025, over **420 birthday cards** were mailed.

The FONS Sunshine Committee sent cards and messages of support to seniors experiencing medical issues, family losses, or celebrating a special anniversary or event.

ACTIVITIES

The FONS Social Committee organized monthly dinner socials at local restaurants, on the last Wednesday of each month.

The FONS Events Committee organized excursions to local vineyards, breweries, theaters, and events at Edmond Town Hall, including performances at the Newtown Little Theater, the Summer Soiree at Aquila's Nest Vineyards and the Oktoberfest at NewSylum Brewing Company.

The FONS Senior Salon Program distributed **120 coupons** for free haircuts to seniors, performed by students at Ricci's Academy in Newtown.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

With the theme "Flavors of Newtown", FONS hosted its second successful Membership Meeting at the Newtown Community Center. The meeting included presentations by FONS Board members on the FONS mission and goals, a slideshow on the FONS organization, an interactive audience Q&A session, and a survey on issues important to our senior population. The 100 members who attended enjoyed a buffet consisting of a variety of dishes from a number of very generous Newtown restaurants as well as a raffle drawing.

ADVOCACY

FONS ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

To continue FONS's advocacy mission, input from Newtown seniors is collected in part through monthly Roundtable discussions. They are held at the Senior Center on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Typically, the Roundtable starts with a brief pre-survey of attendees on the session's topic followed by brief presentations from subject matter experts and then white board discussion. The tabulations of the pre-survey, and discussion highlights are posted on the FONS website. 2025 topics included: Community Health, The Newtown Bee, Roles of Elected Boards and Commissions, and Main Street Streetscape.

TIMELESS NEWTOWN

FONS launched a **One Town One Read** program featuring the book *Ageism Unmasked*, by Dr. Tracy Gendron, a nationally recognized gerontology expert, offering activities, panel discussions, workshops, and other events, culminating in an author presentation at the Edmond Town Hall. The program was intended to promote an intergenerational mindset that would reverse ageist stereotypes. Almost **1,000 free** copies of the book were distributed to Newtown residents, and approximately **100** attended the author presentation/book signing.



Funding for the program was provided by: Anne Rothstein, Caraluzzi's Newtown Market, Connecticut Humanities, Friends of the C.H. Booth Library, Jeniam Foundation, and the Newtown Commission on Aging.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

With funding provided through a grant from the Grassroots Foundation, FONS introduced a Nutrition Program at the Newtown Senior Center, which includes a series of events on the importance of good nutrition, including presentations on healthy eating habits, meal planning, and recipes, plus healthy lunches.

AGE WELL COLLABORATIVE

Newtown participated in the Connecticut Age Well Collaborative's *Daring Dialogue* program, which offered a community workshop on the topic of aging, and as part of the project, several Newtown citizens (including two FONS Board Members) were approached to be part of a photographic promotion. Posters were created to show older adults from Newtown who are active community members. The posters will be displayed in various locations in Newtown.

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 C.H. Booth Library
 Connecticut Humanities**
 Cover Two Café*
 Cronin Family*
 Friends of the C.H. Booth Library**
 Full Bloom Catering*
 Gino's Pizza*

Grassroots Fund**
 Hilltop Kitchen*
 Jeniam Foundation**
 Maplewood at Newtown
 Mexcla Restaurant*
 Middle Gate School PTA*
 My Place*
 Newtown Commission on Aging**
 Newtown Community Center
 Newtown High School
 Basketball Team
 Newtown High School
 Football Team
 Newtown Parks & Recreation

Newtown Savings Bank
 Newtown Senior Center
 Newtown Youth & Family Services
 Old Glory Days Adult Day Care
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 Stone Bridge Center for Health
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 The Ranch Pub*
 Trinity Mechanical Services
 Waterbury Symphony Orchestra



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