

April Newsletter



Dear Healthy Aging Readers,

Our days are getting longer, the sun is shining brighter, and the promise of warm weather and summertime fun is looming. We've made it through a tough winter with many community members stepping up to help each other. Read on to learn more about the power of community engagement and the opportunities that exist to make a difference here on Martha's Vineyard.

Here at HAMV we continue to make progress on addressing the needs of Older Adults in a spirit of collaboration with the agencies who serve Older Adults, our community leaders, regional and state elected officials as well as engaged consumer activists. Recent data from the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute reveals that in 2025 39% of Martha's Vineyard year-round residents were 60+ and that by 2030, 10% of the island will be 80+. This demographic shift makes our mission even more important and urgent, and raising awareness of the contributions of our Older Adults to our island community continues to be a priority.

Best,

Cindy



Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard Welcomes Lauren Bagnall as Associate Director

Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard is delighted to announce the appointment of Lauren Bagnall as our new Associate Director. A lifelong Martha's Vineyard resident, Lauren brings a deep connection to the Island community along with a strong professional background in health and well-being.

Lauren most recently served as a Well-Being Specialist at Emory University, where she focused on the social determinants of health and helped individuals build healthier, more fulfilling lives. Her work centered on strengthening the conditions that allow people and communities to thrive, an approach she now brings back home to Martha's Vineyard.

Raised on the Island, Lauren is passionate about giving back to the community that shaped her. In her new role, she will help lead initiatives that support older adults, strengthen community connections, and advance the organization's mission of making Martha's Vineyard a place where people can age well with dignity, opportunity, and support.

"My work has always been about showing up for people, listening, building connections, and making sure everyone feels supported and valued," said Bagnall. "Being able to do that here on Martha's Vineyard, the place that raised me, is a responsibility and privilege I care deeply about."

Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard looks forward to the leadership, energy, and dedication Lauren brings as the organization continues its work to make the Island an aging-friendly community for all.



April Spotlight: Combating Loneliness Through Community on Martha's Vineyard

Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard (HAMV) celebrates the power of connection during National Volunteer Month. In recognition of National Volunteer Month and Stress Awareness Month, HAMV is shining a light on the critical role of community connection in supporting older adults across the island.

On Martha's Vineyard, where neighbors who look out for one another, foster connection within our community. This is especially essential for older adults, caregivers, and individuals living with memory challenges. Social isolation can have serious impacts on mental, emotional, and physical health, making community-based programs more important than ever.

HAMV's MV Connect program helps bridge that gap by providing transportation, and meaningful human connection for older adults who may otherwise have limited opportunities to engage with others.

Dedicated volunteer driver Randall Weis shared his experience:

"When you drive for MV Connect, it is easy to look at it as a taxi or ride service—but it's so much more. Living on an island, you get to know your neighbors and want to help those in need for a variety of reasons. After a few rides, I saw that many who use MV Connect have limited contact outside of their home, and the socialization and conversations we share provide a bonus to both riders and drivers. Helping my fellow Islanders is important to me, and I only wish I had more time to devote to this cause. It's gratifying work, and you can tell your riders just how much they appreciate the support. Some days, you get back so much more than you give—it's more than just a ride."



Sign Up Today to Become a MV Connect Driver



HAMV is currently seeking volunteer drivers to join the MV Connect program. Volunteers can choose the date and time that they are available to drive, and mileage reimbursement is available for those using their personal vehicles.

This April, HAMV encourages community members to consider how small acts, like offering a ride, can make a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults across Martha's Vineyard.

To learn more or to become a volunteer driver, please contact Diane Abbot at Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard. healthyagingdiane@gmail.com, 508-560-4514

Looking for other opportunities to volunteer?

Find your next volunteer opportunity with one of our partners.

- MV Nonprofit Collaborative, <https://mvnonprofits.org/volunteerandjobboard>
- Vineyard Volunteers, <https://www.vineyardvolunteers.com/>

Advance Care Planning Day is April 16: Conversations That Connect

Advance Care Planning Day is also an opportunity to bring families and caregivers together. Having supportive conversations about future healthcare wishes can strengthen relationships and reduce stress.

Consider:

- Talking with loved ones about personal values and goals
- Identifying a healthcare proxy or decision-maker
- Documenting wishes and sharing them with family
- Revisiting plans during family gatherings



To learn more and access resources visit www.hamv.org/advance-care-planning To



Upcoming Community Events: Reduce Isolation and Give Back

April is Stress Awareness Month, a timely reminder of how important it is to care for our mental and emotional well-being while staying connected to those around us. One of the most effective ways to reduce stress and loneliness is through meaningful human connection.

There are many simple, impactful ways to nurture connection in our daily lives:

- Create opportunities for conversation by attending local events, joining group programs, or simply reaching out to a neighbor or friend.
- Participate in community gatherings to build a sense of belonging and shared purpose.
- Support caregivers by encouraging wellness breaks and respite opportunities; they need care, too.
- Get outdoors with others when possible—fresh air and shared experiences can boost mood and reduce stress.
- Establish routine check-ins with loved ones, whether through a quick call, visit, or shared meal.



MV CENTER FOR LIVING
Dementia & Caregiver Support

Benefit Walk

for Dementia & Caregiver Services on MV

Rain date
May 17th

Sat, May 16th at 10AM

Walk from Nomans to Jaws Bridge & back for a celebration! Day-of registration available at Nomans.

Suggested Donation: **\$30**

Scan to register:



Thanks to our sponsors!

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mvcenter4living.org 508-939-9440

Join us for **Martha's Vineyard Center for Living's Benefits Walk for Demetia and Caregivers** to connect, give back, and support one another.

<https://form-renderer-app.donorperfect.io/give/marthas-vineyard-center-for-living/walk-26>

