

2014 Annual Report
Community Services Department

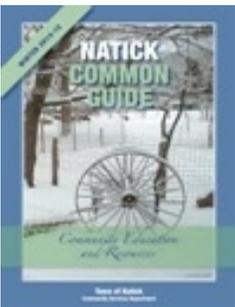
Comprised of Recreation and Parks, Council on Aging, Veteran's Services, Human Services and the Natick Community Organic Farm, the Community Services Department is charged with responding to the needs, interests and quality of life issues for all who call Natick home. Together, we seek to elicit the priority needs and interests of residents and respond to those priorities through well conceived program development, efficient service delivery and thoughtful trusteeship of the array of public facilities and resources under our purview.



The new Community-Senior Center continues to expand its reach in the community. This past year the department has focused on enhancing educational/cultural programming for working adults through partnerships with MassBay Community College and other professional instructors. Recent statistics reveal that an average of 500 people of all ages are utilizing this new facility each day, seven days a week.

1037 individual user groups reserved space at the center in 2014, representing a wide array of social, cultural, civic, educational, and community organizations.

The Department is pleased to oversee many of the town's most treasured public spaces from our many parks to the town common; the town beach to our Organic Farm. With the help and support of many town departments, we help to ensure that many of Natick's most popular public events run smoothly including: Natick Days, Concerts on the Common, Natick's Farmer's Market, our many Veteran's dedications and parades, and various holiday celebrations in partnership with many dedicated community organizations and individuals.



In response to our community's request for more comprehensive information about what's happening in town, the department developed the Natick Common Guide this year. The quarterly publication catalogues educational, cultural, and recreational programming available to residents and, as well, provides a detailed listing of important resource information. The Guide is mailed to every household each quarter.

Thousands of residents of all ages and abilities benefitted from hundreds of classes, workshops, summer camps, clubs, special events, advocacy and supportive services offered by the dedicated and professional staffs that comprise the department.



Community Gardens at JJ Lane Park

This year the department was delighted to offer the community access to 26 beautiful community garden plots at the newly renovated John J. Lane Park.

Throughout the summer gardeners and visitors alike enjoyed watching an amazing array of organically grown vegetables and flowers mature.

Grant/Foundation Support

The Department works hard to identify non-tax dollars to support its programs and services, this year totaling some \$223,000; all of which contributed to the quantity and quality of services offered to our residents.



The department is extremely fortunate to work with some 1,100 volunteers across our divisions who, together, provided in excess of 50,900 hours of service to our community. Whether serving as mentors, teachers, coaches, drivers, friendly visitors, camp assistants, farmers, board and commission members, friends, crafters or advocates, each individual helped to ensure our vast array of programs reached as many residents as possible.

The Department plays a vitally important role in Natick; to help strengthen the fabric of the community through partnerships, collaborations, communication and service delivery. The dedicated professionals that comprise this department work hard every day to ensure our services are on target, accessible and of high quality. I consider it an honor to work with this remarkable team.

Respectfully submitted,

Jemma Lambert, Director
Community Services Department

Natick Community Organic Farm
2014 Annual Report

NCOF's year began with a fresh coat of paint in the workshop and designation as a stand-alone division of Natick's Department of Community Services. The Farm's educational programs continue to grow and prosper. The Farm's first full year of its Mentoring Teens through Agriculture apprentice program gave five teens comprehensive year-round, hands-on mentored farm training. The teens built a rolling dibbler, ran their own market garden, raised meat chickens from hatchlings through processing, and assisted in the delivery of many baby farm animals. Forest Gnomes (NCOF's outdoor, forest-based, Waldkindergarten program for preschool-aged children) garnered national and international attention in outdoor educational circles. More than 20 high school students from Natick and surrounding towns opted to perform their community service at the Farm.

In March, with help from hundreds of community volunteers, NCOF hung 600 taps, collected 8,900 gallons of sap and made 230 gallons of maple syrup. Over 700 people participated in sugaring tours, including every fourth grader attending Natick's



During the winter months, NCOF harvested eight to ten pounds of mesclun per week from the Farm's passive solar greenhouses. And Lynda Simkins, NCOF Director, celebrated her 34th year of working at the Farm. In April, the shearing of our five sheep was witnessed by nearly 420 children, and NCOF Inc. signed a signed 30-year lease with Town of Natick, giving the organization long-term stability



Natick residents came out in force to support the Farm's four charity runners in the 2014 Boston

In summer, the Farm converted the pasture directly behind the outdoor market stand into a production field. Forty years of naturally composted animal manure produced some tremendous, high-quality certified-organic produce and cut flowers, which were sold through the Farm's Youth-run Route 16 stand, the barn-side stand, and the Natick and Newton Farmers' Markets. The Farm launched a new vegetable and cut-flower CSA (community supported agriculture) share program, increased its number of business participants in its weekly flower arrangement delivery program, and marketed produce to several area restaurants, stores, and schools, including Walnut Hill.

In October, the Wellesley College Club hosted the Farm's 13th Harvest Dinner for the fifth time, providing a sumptuous meal of Farm-grown and other all-local food that culminated with warm, homemade donuts. In November, NCOF provided fresh NCOF turkey to 150 families just in time for Thanksgiving, and sold out of bacon and sausage in less than three hours.

NCOF's Goals for 2015

- Implement a new, custom online registration software
- Market NCOF products at the Natick Winter Farmers' Market once a month
- Solicit community support for NCOF's six runners in 2015 Boston Marathon
- Recruit new Board members
- Celebrate NCOF's 40th anniversary and the barn's 200th birthday

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Simkins
Director, Natick Community Organic Farm

Recreation and Parks Commission
2014 Annual Report

The Natick Recreation & Parks Division had another busy year in 2014 with new programs, new projects, enhanced facilities and the kick off of some great initiatives.

We had another great year of programming. As you will see in the chart below, our number of offerings continue to increase. We have partnered with a number of community groups to assist them in initiating new community programming including the TOPSoccer program sponsored by the Natick Soccer Club. We will continue to work with this group to assist them in recruiting and training volunteers so they will have many successful seasons.

Class	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Adult	25	24	73	50
Preschool	57	63	64	62
Special Needs	41	46	58	83
Youth	169	161	164	167
Total Offerings	292	294	359	362

The division oversees 29 parks/facilities throughout the town and benefitted from the generosity of 652 volunteers who worked a total of 28,239 hours. We coordinated and oversaw 23 community events that were offered at little or no cost to the residents of Natick.

We are pleased to offer a myriad of unique family oriented special events each year. Some events include, Natick Days, the Spooktacular, Concerts on the Common, Family Performing Arts Series, Holiday Lighting, the Mini Triathlon, the Mother Son Challenge, Flashlight Egg Hunt, Fun with the Bunny, and the Mile Swim all of which continue to grow in popularity and size. We value and appreciate the generous donations from the local businesses and non-profit organizations as well as the tremendous effort we receive from our many volunteers.

The Natick Recreation & Parks Division continues to work closely with various 501(c)3 organizations to help reduce costs for participants. These organizations include the Natick Basketball Association, the Parent's Association for the Handicapped, Friends of Natick Drama Workshop, The Natick Center Associates, and the Supporters of Sassamon Trace Golf Course, Corp. The organizations

commitment to provide support for programs and events is instrumental in helping us reach all residents of the Natick community.

The division continues to work closely with the department's Human Services division and Natick Service Council to ensure those in need are able to fully participate in our programs. There is growing number of residents requesting financial support.

There have been a number of projects started and a few completed in 2014. We installed energy efficient lighting at Memorial School's Softball Field in the spring. This greatly reduced energy costs at the field while improving the field lighting, making for safer playing conditions for the participants. We have completed almost all of the work at John J. Lane Park. We will be installing fitness equipment in the early spring of 2015 to complete all phases of the project and are planning a grand opening of the park in early April 2015. The Cole North Field project kicked off in late November and we are looking forward to opening that improved facility in late spring 2015.

The Division has begun work on a field and park study. The LFNR Supervisor, NHS Athletic Director and Recreation & Park Director will work collaboratively to see this project through. We are looking forward to better identifying the needs of the community and working to transform these natural resources into enhanced community gathering spaces for the residents. We will be working closely with various boards, committees and groups throughout the project. There will be several public meetings where we will encourage residents to come and share their thoughts and ideas.

In closing, the Natick Recreation & Parks Commissioners wish to extend an invitation to the general public to attend our commission meetings the first Monday evening of each month.

Sue Shea, Chair & Jon Marshall, Director of Recreation & Parks

Members: Jessica Ordway -Vice Chair, Mike Fair - Clerk

Richard Cugini, Seth Levine, David Ordway, Mark St. Hilaire, Wayne Szretter, and Greg Tutuny

Youth Advisory Board 2014 Annual Report

The Mission of the Youth Advisory Board is to enable youth to participate as partners to improve the quality of life for young adults in our community. The Natick Youth Advisory Board serves in an advisory role to the Board of Selectmen.

In 2014, the Youth Advisory Board was able to accomplish its first major project; a Youth Needs Assessment survey. The survey focused on identifying the interests and service/program gaps as articulated by the teen population in Natick. The survey was sent to High School students and past recreation teen volunteers. The survey continues to be distributed to other youth in hopes to gain further responses. The Youth Advisory Board plans to use the data from the survey to run a series of Focus Groups in early 2015 to further explore areas of interest and ways the town can better serve its teens.

The Youth Advisory Board will additionally be focusing on recruitment of new voting members to help with future projects. Outreach has been made to several sources and continuing efforts to gain more momentum will be made through 2015.

For more information about the board please contact the board's advisory Aaron Friedman at afriedman@natickma.org or 508 647-6530.

Submitted By: Aaron Friedman, Recreation & Parks Division, Board Advisor

Human Services Division 2014 Report

The Human Services Division's central focus is that of providing a safety net for Natick residents of all ages through the provision of information and referral, supportive case management, and by actively working to strengthen the interrelationships among area service providers. This year staff provided case management services to 553 Natick residents which included assistance to 121 people for \$72,114 in home heating assistance. 1,212 individuals were provided information and referral during that same period.

Our case managers also assisted residents with:

- Applications for public benefits
- Referrals for home care services, counseling services, housing, veterans' services, legal services
- Provided assistance with long term care options and assisted living and nursing home placements and discharges
- Referred low-income clients to charitable organizations such as the Natick Service Council, Natick Rotary Embrace a Family, A Place to Turn, the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul.
- Provision of Farmer's Market coupons to 30 elders through the Baypath Elder Services' Nutrition Program , referred 29 residents for home delivered Thanksgiving meals through the Curtis family Eagles All American Grill and 38 holiday dinners through the Council on Aging .

Staff work collaboratively with a number of community organizations in the interest of Natick residents including:

- Adult Protective Services
- Natick's Board of Health and Fire Department regarding several complex hoarding cases. Together we successfully reduced safety risks and averted evictions and condemnations for all of these families
- Parmenter Home Care and Hospice to provide a monthly bereavement group, facilitated by trained volunteers
- Natick Medical Reserve Corp and Natick Housing Authority on a snow shoveling initiative for elder and disabled residents which will launch this year at Cedar Gardens.

Our Outreach Case Manager provides Information and Referral for the department and also serves as the secretary of the Executive Board of Natick Together for Youth and is on the NTY Research and Evaluation sub-committee. Our Social Work Coordinator continues to facilitate the Natick Community

Support Team meetings which meets quarterly and is comprised of various town departments and community social service agencies and, as well, facilitates the Metrowest Outreach Workers group meetings.

Council on Aging 2014 Annual Report

The mission of the Council on Aging is to advocate for and provide support systems focused on promoting independence, improving quality of life and preparation for life changes for those aging in our community. Services are available and accessible to all residents of the town of Natick through a multi-purpose Community-Senior Center.

Overview

The Council on Aging provides a myriad of activities and support services to meet the educational, social, health and wellness needs of elders, families, and individuals with disabilities living in the community. Alone and in partnership with community organizations and town departments, the Council on Aging focuses on empowering Natick residents of all incomes and abilities to make informed decisions, to remain actively engaged in their community, and to maintain health, vitality and independence.

The Council on Aging continues to meet the needs of an expanding senior cohort. Opportunities at the Community-Senior Center continue to grow and span the interests of seniors as young as 60 to those nearing 100 years of age, in addition to adults caring for aging family members. This year 3,335 individuals attended 1 or more Council on Aging Program. This represents a 12.5% increase as compared to last year.

Our robust level of programming is made possible due to the contribution of our corps of volunteers. 19,251 hours of service was provided by 250+ volunteers, equivalent to \$423,522 of service to the Town of Natick. Volunteer service ranged from teaching classes and facilitating support groups, to delivering hot meals to home bound seniors; from filling clerical and reception functions to driving elders to medical appointments; and from counseling elders and caregivers about health insurance options and assisting with tax preparation to assisting with seasonal household chores.

2014 Highlights

- Units of service provided: 37,791 Outreach/Advocacy; 2,165 Professional Services; 62,375 Support Services; 34,366 Wellness; 16,310 Recreation & Socialization
- SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) health benefits counseling began offering Saturday appointments
- Tax preparation and SHINE appointments for homebound residents started
- 1,078 parking tags issued
- 1,992 taxi vouchers distributed
- Bridges Together - an intergenerational program with Ben-Hem School initiated
- Collaborative Programming with Recreation & Parks, Veteran Services, Natick Community Organic Farm, Assessor's Office, Natick Fire Department, Morse Institute Library, and Natick School Department continues
- Part-time professional receptionist (grant funded) added, providing improved and customer service

Partnerships

- Friends of the Natick Senior Center for underwriting the cost of mailing the Sentinel **Newsletter, operating the Lincoln Café, and supporting seasonal special events and programs.**
- MetroWest Medical Center for sponsoring the Aging Mastery Program.
- Collaborated with Olin College to match engineering students with Natick residents to develop solutions to manage everyday difficulties.
- Coordinated with Dana Farber to bring mobile mammography to the Community-Senior Center.
- Mutual One Bank, Natick Visiting Nurse Association, Natick Rotary, Bay Path Elder Services, Whitney Place Assisted Living Residences, Mary Ann Morse Health Care, many local business owners, doctors and medical professionals, local agencies and individuals who have supported our programs and services with their professional expertise and generosity.

We work to be responsive to the needs of our community and appreciate your support and suggestions as we plan for the future. The Council on Aging Board meeting is held on the first Monday of every month at the Community-Senior Center at 7PM. The meetings are open to everyone. Please feel free to bring any issues, concerns or recommendations that you may have to a meeting or visit the Council on Aging office Monday - Friday during normal business hours.

On behalf of the wonderful team of professionals here at the Council on Aging, I wish you a happy and healthy 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Veterans' Services
2014 Annual Report

Veterans' Services is responsible for addressing the unmet needs of Natick Veterans and their dependents. Through our advocacy we help to ensure that our service men and women access the support, benefits and services they need.

A central role this office plays is to assist our Veterans with filing for and receiving state and/or federal benefits due them. Our efforts result in the acquisition of cash and/or medical awards which in the case of the state, are reimbursed in a cost-sharing agreement with the Town in which the state pays 75% and the town 25%. Without this important partnership the Town of Natick would be obligated to cover 100% of those costs. The following outlines a three year history with regard to the acquisition of Chapter 115 (state funds) on behalf of Natick Veterans and their dependents:

Year	Medical	Cash
2012	\$81,627	\$88,259
2013	\$99,950	\$73,971
2014	\$120,400	\$107,100

This office also processes VA claims directly with the VA. This has brought to date the total in lifetime awards \$2,092,168.00 to our veterans and dependents. 2014 brought \$640,516.00 to our veterans and dependents. There have been 60 new VA cases in the year 2014; the highest year to date. We have settled to date 90 claims and have processed 234 claims to date.

Additional Services:

Our office provides a range of additional services to Veterans and dependents including the following:

- Medical Referrals
- Educational benefits
- Job search/Unemployment benefits
- Emergency funds
- Counseling
- Assistance with applications and additional benefits programs
- Military records

In addition this office attends to the following:

- Serve as the Burial Officer to help bury indigent veterans and their dependents
- Serve as the Grave Registration Officer to ensure that all graves of veterans are properly decorated with a flag and geranium over the Memorial Day period
- Conduct parades and ceremonies
- Act as the liaison between the veteran groups and the Town of Natick
- Commission on Disability acting as the ADA Compliance Officer



Edward Jolley, President of the Natick Veterans' Council from 2004 until 2014 and our longest sitting President passed away in October, 2014. A true leader, Ed would want to be remembered as a team player.

Ed's proudest moment was bringing the Vietnam Moving Wall to Natick. Ed was also very proud of the many square dedications completed during his time as President.

Thank you Ed Jolley and Semper Fi

We are looking forward to a great year to come and thank all those in Town Government and the residents of Natick for their continued support.

Paul E. Carew
Director of Veteran Services, Natick Community Services Department