



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Albright, Humphrey, Ryan, Baker, Wright, and Greenberg

Council on Aging: Julie Norstrand

City Staff: Jayne Colino, Director of Senior Services; Julie Joy, Senior Services Volunteer Coordinator; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#48-20 Request for a discussion regarding Senior Services outreach

COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT AND GREENBERG requesting a discussion with the Department of Senior Services regarding outreach and services to the growing number of Newton residents who are 85 and older yet living alone. Discussion should focus on the City's efforts to provide a program; whether through current programs or proposed alternatives.

Action: **Programs and Services Held 8-0**

Notes: The Committee was joined for this item by Jayne Colino, Director of Senior Services, Julie Joy, Senior Services Volunteer Coordinator, Friendship Works staff members Kara Jeter and Julie Burkley, Janet Seckel-Cerotti, the Executive Director of Friendship Works, and Julie Norstrand from the Council on Aging, who presented to the Committee on this item. Ms. Colino introduced the item, explaining that a budget resolution was passed in FY 2019 to dedicate resources to outreach to the isolated senior population. Their presentation is attached to this report. Ms. Jeter explained that Friendship Works is a metro Boston-based organization dedicated to working against senior social isolation and loneliness. Ms. Jeter spends 10 hours per week organizing Friendship Works activities in Newton. Since the passing of the budget resolution, this initiative has evolved to be a key part of Newton's strategic planning. Originally intended to focus just on social isolation and loneliness, this item has grown to address the specific concerns of the senior community as they relate to COVID-19.

Explained by Ms. Jeter through her PowerPoint, the effects of loneliness and isolation on the elderly constitute a public health crisis and are comparable to the effects of smoking and obesity. Additionally, loneliness and isolation also contribute to a greater risk of dementia and cognitive decline, as well as susceptibility to abuse and other long-term illnesses. Friendship Works uses a volunteer matching process to coordinate friendly visits to reach out to those seniors in need of it. The ongoing COVID crisis has not changed this process as a whole except for requiring it to go more virtual. Many matches are

made and partnerships end for a variety of reasons, such as moving away, change of health, or the passing of the senior.

Ms. Jeter also shared success stories of Friendship Works partnerships to show how volunteers help their seniors continue living active lives, with some relating to the COVID crisis. These included stories of a volunteer who went out of her way to get some extra of the senior's favorite food when the COVID crisis began, another who is working with their senior to advocate for additional driving tests for seniors, and another volunteer who fixed their senior's television set at the beginning of the crisis to make their days less lonely. The presentation concluded by offering resources to get involved and contact information with Friendship Works.

Questions, answers, and comments are as follows:

What has changed with these programs since COVID-19 hit?

A: Operations continue as normal, except that now they must continue primarily in a virtual setting.

Are there efforts to make sure seniors have access to communications technology and know how to use it so that they can keep up with virtual distance?

A: Since the outbreak forced procedures to change at such a rapid pace, this has been a difficult change to implement. Many seniors do not have access to the technology, and it is also harder for them to learn how to use it. Volunteers are addressing this as best as they can.

What happened to the old iPads the School Department used to use? Could those be utilized in this?

How much more capacity does the program have?

A: Friendship Works is doing as much as it can right now and the time for making matches has decreased since home visits are not possible presently. However, the program would need additional resources in order to effectively create more matches.

How much and what kind of outreach do you do to find seniors?

A: Lonely and isolated seniors have been identified using the census to see who lives alone. The last few weeks, calls have been made to them to check in on them and to see if they need anything. The seniors are also asked if they would like a callback. Out of the thousands of phone calls made, about five percent wanted more contact. Food and other supplies are also delivered. For general outreach, Senior Services relies on its newsletter, its Listserv, its Facebook page, in person programming, and word of mouth references. The Council on Aging has also done specific outreach on loneliness, such as handing out material at the library and talking with the public. Its goal is to both raise awareness and give people ideas on what they can do about it. The Council on Aging also hopes to host a forum at the Library about senior loneliness in June.

What are the criteria for making a match? How are things like language, ethnicity, and LGBT identities considered?

A: Outreach to LGBT seniors has been identified as an area of focus with dedicated staff working specifically on this. While LGBT identity is one thing that is considered, the primary factors are schedule availability, followed by location, and then by interests.

How do you find seniors who want a volunteer match?

A: The goal is 12-15 matches per year and already Friendship Works is closing in on capacity in Newton. Ms. Jeter said that she would need more time per week in order to organize and manage more matches. Most referrals come from the Senior Center. There is no targeted individual letter writing, but rather traditional methods of broad outreach.

How do you recruit volunteers? How would you make use of increased funding?

A: Most volunteers come through the Newton Senior Center; others come from other volunteer sites that recruit from around the Boston area. There are also flyers and brochures used as part of the programming. More funding would allow this initiative to do more of everything.

Sandwich Boards could also be used as a simple, yet effective way to draw in more volunteers.

Councilor Greenberg moved hold which carried 8-0.

#239-20 Allocate \$500,000 to control the spread of COVID-19

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to allocate five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to a non-lapsing account dedicated to the City's efforts to control the spread of COVID-19; additionally re-classify the previously approved \$250,000 to the same account and allow the administration to disburse these funds to support compensation, supplies, or other accounts as necessary.

Programs & Services voted as follows:

#239-20(1) \$250,000 – Approved 6-0-2 (Councilors Krintzman and Noel abstaining) on 04/22/20

Action: #239-20(2) \$250,000 - Held 8-0 on 04/22/20

Notes: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer, addressed the Committee on this item. He spoke about the recent approval of over \$250,000 in both the Finance and Programs and Services Committees to address COVID-19 and that much of that funding has already been spent, leading to the docketing of this new item which seeks \$500,000 as a precaution for what is likely to be a long-term problem. Any of these funds which are unspent would be able to be repurposed through free cash for other uses. Mr. Yeo also mentioned that the second federal stimulus includes no money for the local level to underscore the need for this funding.

Questions, answers, and comments are as follows:

Is there a particular purpose for this funding or is it just being requested in anticipation? And where is the money coming from?

A: This funding would be coming from free cash and since there are many potential costs which would need to be covered, its mandate is broad. The administration is airing on the side of caution and has a team to keep careful track of this money for future reimbursement from the state and federal level.

Should Newton have an expanded policy on masking to reduce the spread of COVID-19 from asymptomatic people? While the Massachusetts Attorney General has said that municipal governments lack the authority to mandate masking, other nearby communities such as Framingham and Brookline are attempting to issue these mandates.

A: Consultation with the Law Department and the Health Department has agreed with the Attorney General that the City lacks the power to mandate masks and can only recommend them.

Would this \$500,000 go towards covering departments' revenue shortfalls?

A: No. Funds released from free cash may only be used for specific expenditures, not to cover shortfalls.

Is there an idea of what these expenses look like?

A: Mostly they would be PPE for city staff, food and programming required by the School Department, and overtime for staff who have been performing contact tracing.

Has the administration already gone through the other \$250,000 which was already approved?

A: The administration is about halfway through using this money and is aware of the potential to spend more of this over the next six months. The hope is to set this money aside separately from budget allocations.

Is there at least a basic accounting of how this money will be spent?

A: Not yet as planning even six months out is too unpredictable under the current conditions. The hope is to get reimbursed for most of these expenses.

Will the administration continue to keep the Council informed on how it spends the funds and how it is reimbursed through state and federal grants?

Is there a way to put an expense spreadsheet put together?

A: A full spreadsheet will not be able to be prepared as long as precise figures on costs are unknown, but a monthly status report to the Council could be possible.

Is there any precedent for the Council to approve \$700,000 without a concrete expenditure plan?

A: This is an unusual emergency situation in which the administration will need to be able to spend quickly in order to address it. Examples of similar executive mandates on high amounts of funding include 9/11 and large-scale natural disasters.

Could the approval be conditioned on bi-weekly or monthly progress reports? A committee member answered that reports cannot be conditioned of the funding, but a resolution can be passed conveying this request to the Finance Committee and the full Council.

Some members of the Committee expressed concern at approving \$500,000 without an expenditure list and with nearly half of the previous allocation remaining.

Councilor Albright moved to split the funding item into #239-20(1) and #239-20(2) with each having \$250,000. The motion carried 8-0. This split also carried a resolution for the Finance Committee, asking it to request bi-weekly or other periodic updates from the City Comptroller on how the funding is being spent after it votes on the item on April 27. This resolution is included in this report.

Councilor Albright moved to approve #239-20(1) and the motion carried 6-0-2 (Councilors Noel and Krintzman abstained).

Councilor Albright moved to hold #239-20(2) which carried 8-0.

#179-20 Reappointment of Ted Kuklinski to the Off-Leash Dog Task Force

COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the reappointment of TED KUKLINSKI, 24 Henshaw Terrace, West Newton, as a member of the OFF-LEASH DOG TASK FORCE for a term to expire on December 31, 2021. (60 days: 05/15/20)

Action: Programs and Services Approved 8-0

Notes: Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

#180-20 Reappointment of Mary Lee Belleville to the Off-Leash Dog Task Force

COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the reappointment of MARY LEE BELLEVILLE, 136 Warren Street #1, Newton Centre, as a member of the OFF-LEASH DOG TASK FORCE for a term to expire on December 31, 2021. (60 days: 05/15/20)

Action: Programs and Services Approved 8-0

Notes: Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

#181-20 Reappointment of Amy Koel to the Off-Leash Dog Task Force

COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the reappointment of AMY KOEL, 70 Waverley Avenue, Newton, as a member of the OFF-LEASH DOG TASK FORCE for a term to expire on December 31, 2021. (60 days: 05/15/20)

Action: Programs and Services Approved 8-0

Notes: Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

- #216-20 Reappointment of Lee McIntyre as a member of the Off-Leash Dog Task Force**
PRESIDENT ALBRIGHT requesting the reappointment of Lee McIntyre, 607 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, as a member of the OFF-LEASH DOG TASK FORCE for a term to expire on December 31, 2021. (60 days: 06/05/2020)
- Action:** **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**
- Notes:** Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.
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- #182-20 Reappointment of James Harper to the Farm Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing JAMES HARPER, 59 Westminster Road, Newton Center, as a member of the FARM COMMISSION for a term to expire on March 31, 2023. (60 days: 05/15/20)
- Action:** **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**
- Notes:** Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.
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- #183-20 Reappointment of Vaunita Schnell to the Farm Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing VAUNITA SCHNELL. 68 Stearns Street, Newton Center, as a member of the FARM COMMISSION for a term to expire on March 31, 2023. (60 days: 05/15/20)
- Action:** **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**
- Notes:** Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

#214-20 Reappointment of William Dietrich as a member of the Biosafety Committee
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the reappointment of William Dietrich, 28 Osbourne Path, Newton, to the BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE for a term to expire on May 4, 2023. (60 days: 06/05/2020)

Action: **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**

Notes: Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

#215-20 Reappointment of Gary du Moulin as a member of the Biosafety Committee
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the reappointment of Gary du Moulin, 24 Myerson Lane, Newton Centre, to the BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE for a term to expire on May 4, 2023. (60 days: 06/05/2020)

Action: **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**

Notes: Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair

Newton Program & Services Committee Presentation – Isolation and Loneliness Program

Newton Senior Center in Collaboration with FriendshipWorks

KARA JETER, JAYNE COLINO & JULIE JOY

APRIL 22, 2020



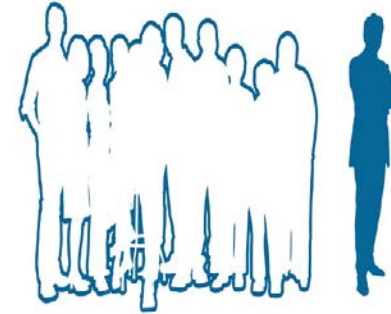


“To reduce social isolation, enhance quality of life and preserve the dignity of older adults in the Greater Boston area”



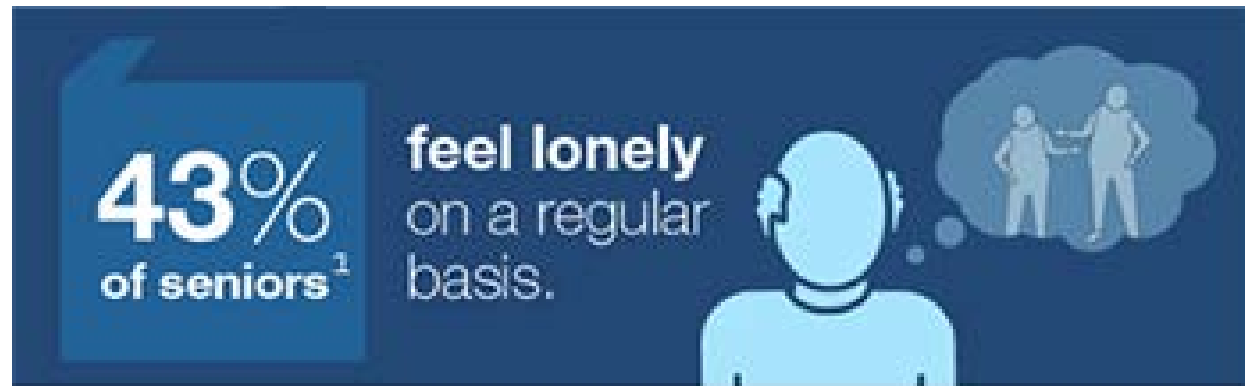


Social isolation is the objective term where you can count the number of people one comes into contact with



Loneliness is the subjective term for the feeling of being alone

Social Isolation and Loneliness



Effects of being lonely and / or isolated

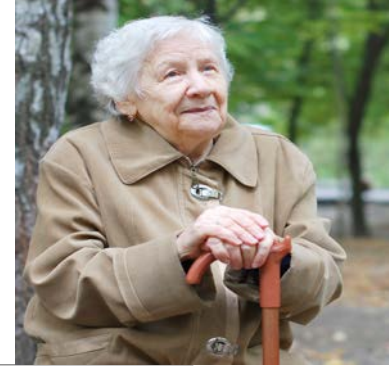
- Negatively affects physical & mental health.
- Contributes to cognitive decline & risk of dementia.
- Makes elderly more vulnerable to abuse.
- Linked to long-term illness
- Major risk factor for depression





Friendly Visiting





Matching Process

VOLUNTEER

- Volunteer Interview (Often referred from NSC)
- Interview
- CORI background check
- Reference Check (2)
- Friendly Visiting Training
- Match!
- Check in regularly



RECIPIENT

- Talk to referral source (Often referred from NSC)
- Obtain permission to call
- Intake (currently by phone, normally in person)
- Match!
- Check in regularly

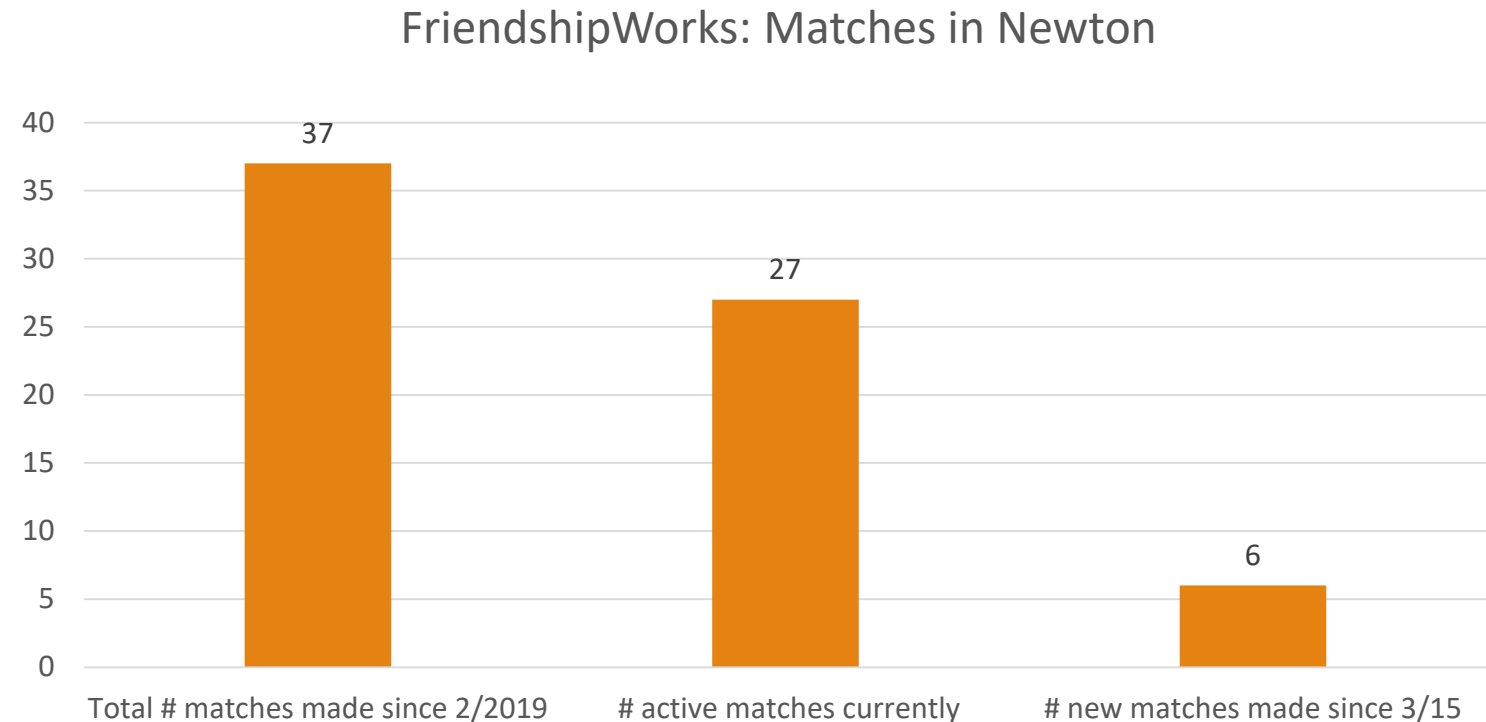


Newton Specific Data

- 37 Matches Made
- 27 Active Matches
- 6 Matches made since 3/15

Why do matches end?

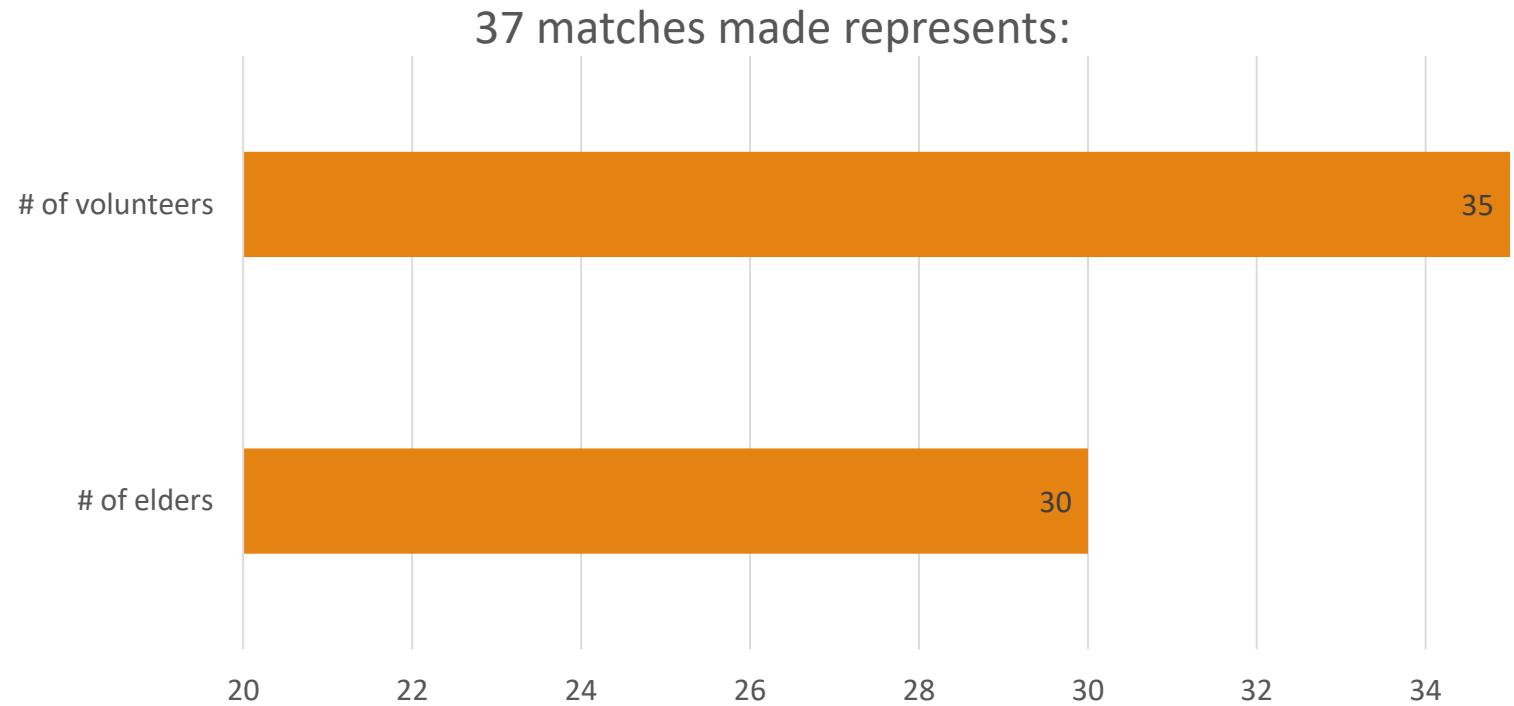
- Elder passes away, moves, or health change
- Volunteer moves or has schedule changes that prevent volunteering.



Newton Specific Data

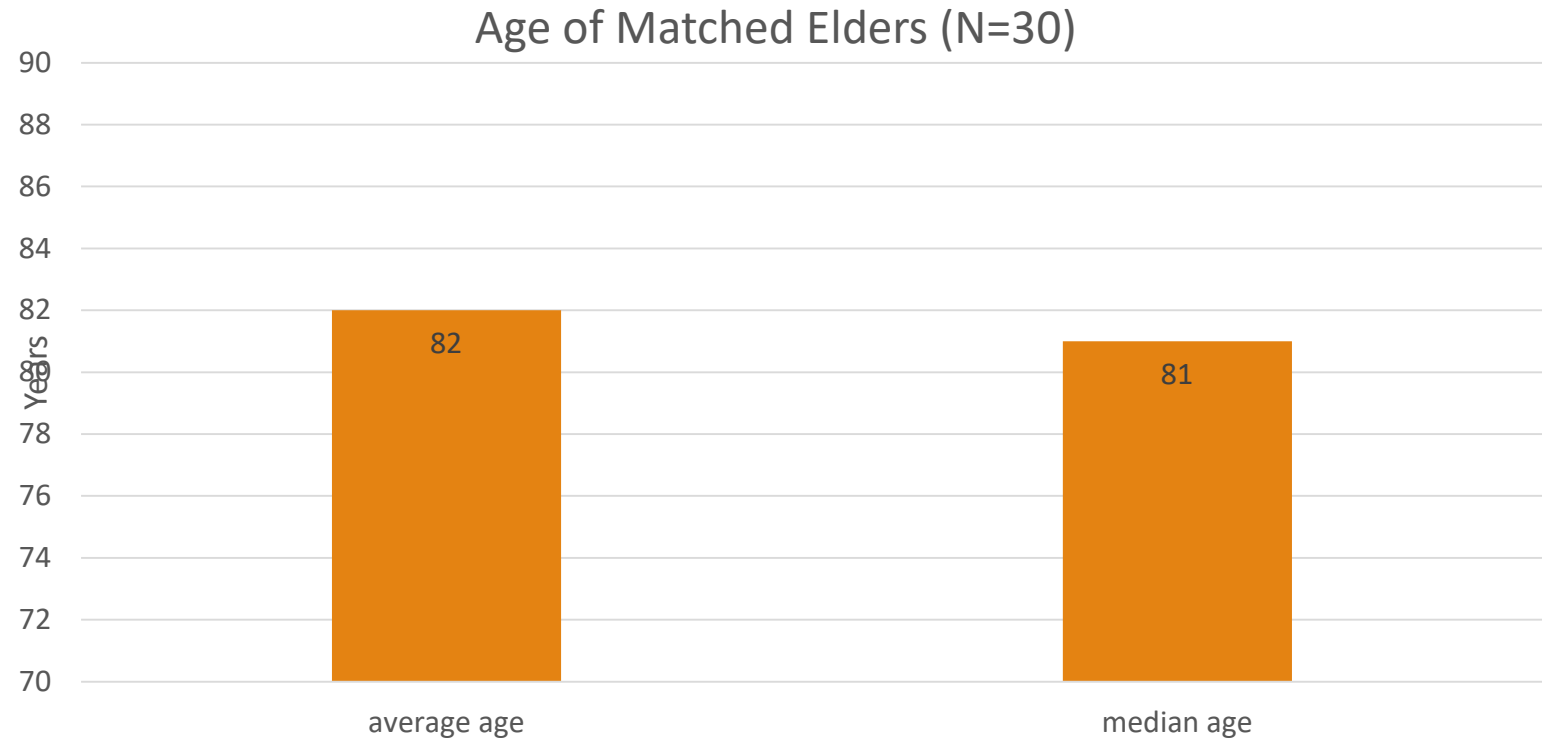
35 Volunteers
30 Elders

**Why more volunteers
than elders?**
Some elders are matched
twice.



Newton Specific Data

Average Age:
82
Median Age:
81



Newton Specific Data

Zip codes

02458: 2

02459: 7

02460: 8

02461: 1

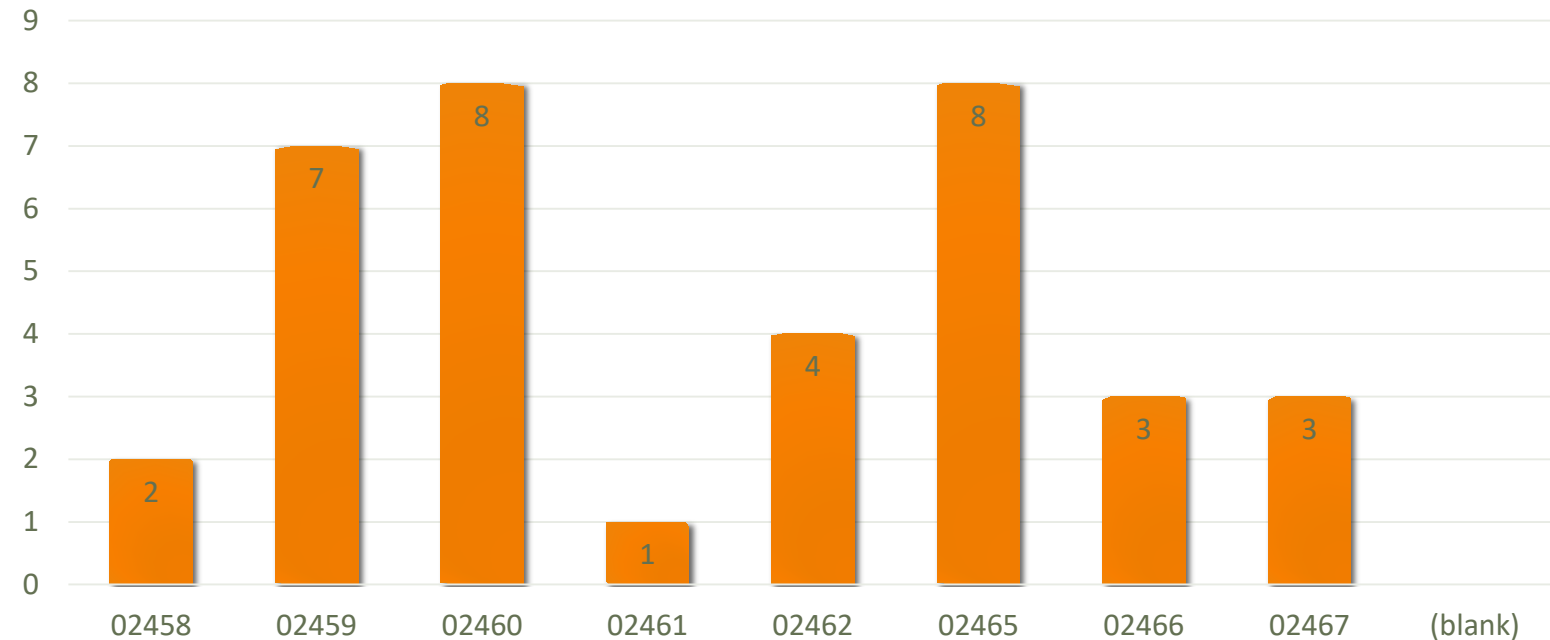
02462: 4

02465: 8

02466: 3

02467: 4

Count of Visit Recipient: Mailing Zip/Postal Code



Stories of our Matches

- Newton Tab interviewed Vicki and Shlomit.
- Match at assisted living where the older adult has low vision and hearing loss
- Volunteer fixed television in the beginning of COVID crisis



Call to Action



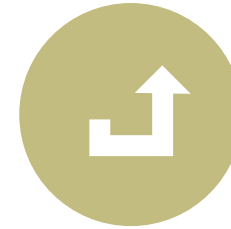
REFER AN ELDER



VOLUNTEER



SPREAD THE
WORD



SUPPORT THIS
EFFORT



WALK WITH US

VIRTUAL WALK TO END ELDER ISOLATION on May 17th
<https://friendship.securesweet.com/default.asp> OR GO TO
www.fw4elders.org



Walk to END ELDER ISOLATION

MAY 17, 2020

 FriendshipWorks

Contact Information

Julie Joy

www.newtonseniors.org

jjoy@newtonma.gov

617-796-1674

Kara Jeter

www.fw4elders.org

kjeter@fw4elders.org

617-823-7050



Memorandum

To: Finance Committee
CC: City Council
From: Chair of Programs & Services Committee
Re: Item #239-20 COVID-19 Funding Allocation
Date: April 24, 2020

At its meeting on April 22, 2020, the Programs & Services Committee discussed the following item and voted as follows:

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#239-20 Allocate \$500,000 to control the spread of COVID-19

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to allocate five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to a non-lapsing account dedicated to the City's efforts to control the spread of COVID-19; additionally re-classify the previously approved \$250,000 to the same account and allow the administration to disburse these funds to support compensation, supplies, or other accounts as necessary.

#239-20(1) \$250,000 - Approved 6-0-2 (Councilors Krintzman and Noel abstaining) on 04/22/20

#239-20(2) \$250,000 - Held 8-0 on 04/22/20

This approval carries a unanimous resolution from the Programs and Services Committee for the Finance Committee as it discusses this item on April 27, 2020 to request that the City Comptroller provide bi-weekly updates on how the funds are being spent and the status of reimbursement of those funds. If bi-weekly updates are not possible, then an otherwise periodic standard is requested.

Thank you