



SEEKONK HUMAN SERVICES

Union Urier



540 Arcade Avenue ~ Seekonk, MA ~ 508-336-8772

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8:30am - 4:30pm

Wednesday 8:30am - 5:30pm * Friday 8:30am - 12:00pm

December 2024

Holiday Hours

Closing at 12:00pm Tuesday, December 24, 2024

Closed Wednesday December 25, 2024

Closing at 12:00pm on Tues., December 31, 2024

Closed Wednesday, January 1, 2025

Recycling Presentation "What's In, What's Out"

Monday, December 2, 2024 at 2:00pm

Come to this free and fun event to learn more about where our trash and recycling really goes. Why is it important to recycle? What really should go in your bin? Learn about "What's In, What's Out" and learn about other recycling programs for batteries, mattresses, textiles, and other miscellaneous items. You're guaranteed to learn something new! Christine Zadykovich, Recycling Coordinator, with the Recycling Committee, will give a 1-hour trash talk. All participants in the program will be entered to win a free set of reusable mesh produce bags, plus lots of other fun giveaways, to inspire you to reduce, reuse, and recycle. **Preregistration is required.**



Holiday Party

Singer, Lady D

Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 11:30am

A Rhode Island native, Lady D loves to perform locally for all. Lady D is a multi-genre vocalist (jazz standards, Motown, Do-Wop, Disco, Smooth R&B, and Pop). She is known for singing in local restaurants in RI and MA. Come join as she sings holiday songs for all who attend this activity. Lunch will be chicken salad sandwiches, with pasta salad, chips, and dessert. The cost for lunch will be \$7 for residents and \$10 for non-residents. **Preregistration is required.**

Overview of Legal Services

Monday, January 6, 2025

10am - 12pm appointment only

Brandon Walecka, Esq., LL.M from Walecka Law will be providing office hours by appointment. The mini-consultations will center around elder law topics such as probate, questions regarding making a will (other power of attorney, health care proxy, etc.) , trusts (irrevocable and revocable), Medicaid/MassHealth rules and eligibility, tax planning, and special needs planning. These consults are focused on elder law and estate planning. To schedule your 15 minute consultation call the office at 508-336-8772. **CAN ONLY DO MASSACHUSETTS. Preregistration is required and opens December 16th.**



WALECKA LAW, P.C.
ESTATE AND ELDER LAW

Holiday Bells

Monday, December 9, 2024 at 2:00pm

Join us to celebrate the holiday as we welcome the Southcoast Bell Ringers! The Southcoast Bell Ringers will be bringing holiday cheer with their performance. This group of performers will be playing holiday songs that will bring a smile to your face! **Preregistration is required.**

Christmas Carols

Wednesday, December 11, 2024 @ 1:00pm

Come join us for a special event. This year we're having a group of children perform Christmas Carols for us. This should bring you happiness and joy to listen to these children perform for you. There will be light refreshments served for all who attend. **Preregistration is required.**



Arts & Crafts

1st & 3rd Friday from 9:30am - 11:30am

The fee for residents is \$5 and non-residents is \$10.

December 6, 2024 - Christmas Wreath Decorating

January 3, 2025 & January 17, 2025 -

Personalize Your Mugs

**Contact the office for more information.
Preregistration is required with payment.
Projects are subject to change.**

Holiday Assistance Programs

Christmas is for Kids and Holiday Help

The holidays are filled with happiness, friends and family. Children especially look forward to the fun and presents. Seekonk Human Services works with community members to bring joy to children, one present at a time.

If you are a Seekonk parent, or know a Seekonk parent who is in need of gift assistance for their child/children please call Seekonk Human Services to inquire about more information. Intakes and applications are available at our office. All families utilizing this program will remain anonymous to donors.

All applications are due by **Wednesday, December 4, 2024**. For anyone who would like to sponsor a child or family, please contact our office via phone at 508-336-8772.

Sponsor a Senior

Seekonk Human Services will work with community members to help bring a personal touch to senior citizens. The goal is to provide seniors with outside contact and gifts to let them know they are not forgotten and alone.

The holiday season should be a time of joy with your loved ones. However, for some, that isn't the case. Often times, the holidays are geared towards children and families, and those who are on their own tend to get left out. Human Services will be collecting donated gifts and items to provide to those seniors who might not have close family, have a fixed income or both. Included items may consist of slippers, clothing items, hygiene products, reading materials, card games, word puzzles, gift cards and Seekonk trash bags. Please feel free to think outside the box. Homemade items such as blankets, scarves, hats and cards are great options.

All seniors utilizing this program will remain anonymous. If you are a Seekonk senior or know a Seekonk senior in need of some holiday cheer, please call Human Services at 508-336-8772. For anyone who would like to sponsor a senior, please contact our office via phone at 508-336-8772.

Women's Lunch

**Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 11:30am at
The Old Grist Mill Tavern
390 Fall River Avenue, Seekonk, MA**

This group meets the first Wednesday of the month at 11:30am. Everything is Dutch treat. If you are interested in joining for good food and good conversation, while supporting our local restaurants, please call the office to sign up.

Podiatry Clinic

**Wednesday, December 4, 2024
10:00am - 2:00pm**

Dr. Lechan provides monthly podiatry clinics. An appointment is required. Items needed are insurance cards with your primary doctor's name, date of last doctor's visit, summary of last visit, and list of medications.

*Please check with your insurance regarding co-pays.
Call our office to make an appointment.

Blood Pressure & Glucose Clinic

**Wednesday, December 18, 2024
9:00am - 11:00am**

Seekonk Human Services continues to work with the Seekonk Fire Department to provide free monthly blood pressure & glucose screenings. **Walk-ins welcome!**

Gingerbread House - Creating and Decorating

**Friday, December 20, 2024
9:30am - 11:30am**

Join us for a Gingerbread House making session.

The fee for residents is \$5 and non-residents is \$10.

**Preregistration is required
with payment by December 16.**



Tuesday Luncheon Tuesday's at 12:00pm

Seekonk Human Services has partnered with The Hamilton Diner to offer weekly lunches! We look forward to this partnership and to continue to offer these luncheons for our community. Lunches will cost \$5 for residents and \$6 for non residents. The menu will be available at the office and on Facebook.

Nutritional Meals To Go

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays

Bristol Elder Services provides nutritional meals for lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to go. Meals come completely cooked and prepackaged. Meals need to be ordered the day before by 9:30am. Suggested donation of \$2.25 per meal which will be due at the time of pickup. The December menu is available at our office and on our Facebook page.



Do Not Leave Health Care Decisions to Chance

By: Brandon C. Walecka, Esq.

Walecka Law, P.C.

774-203-9003

Brandon@WaleckaLaw.com

The information contained in this article is not intended to make you an expert on estate planning nor is this article intended to replace the need for the advice of a professional. Rather, this article is simply intended to provide a basic understanding of why estate planning is important for everybody and a basic understanding of some of the more common estate planning tools. This article does not constitute legal advice.

New Changes to SSI In-Kind Support and Maintenance Rules Starting September 30, 2024

As of September 30, 2024, food no longer is considered "In-Kind Support and Maintenance" (ISM) under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) rules.

SSI Background and the Impact of ISM

SSI supports individuals with limited income and resources who are disabled, blind, or over 65, with a maximum monthly benefit of \$943 for an individual and \$1,415 for a couple (in 2024). ISM has traditionally affected the benefit amount if someone else provided food or shelter, as the value of these contributions would reduce monthly payments.

Updated Definition of ISM

Previously, ISM covered direct assistance with both food and shelter. If an SSI recipient lived rent-free or someone else paid for their meals, they would see a reduction in their benefits. Now, with food excluded from ISM, only outside help with shelter will reduce benefits. Shelter expenses still include items such as rent, mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities, and similar costs, per the Social Security Administration (SSA).

Can Supplemental Needs Trusts Now Cover Groceries? Previously, SSI rules prevented using funds from a Supplemental Needs Trust to pay for food for an SSI recipient without risking a reduction in benefits. However, with this new change, food is no longer treated as ISM for SSI purposes. This means that trust funds can now be used for a beneficiary's groceries or meals without affecting their SSI benefits.

Why the Change? The SSA has aimed to make the SSI program fairer and easier to navigate. Removing food from ISM simplifies the reporting process for SSI recipients and their families, addressing common issues around food insecurity among this vulnerable population. Previously, complex ISM rules often led to confusion and unintentional benefit reductions.

Now, trustees of Supplemental Needs Trusts can pay for a beneficiary's food without the risk of misreporting or causing benefit cuts. For SSI recipients and their families, these changes should make the application and reporting process clearer and help ensure appropriate benefit levels.

While these changes mark an important shift in how SSI benefits are calculated, understanding and navigating SSA rules and requirements remains complex. Consulting a qualified attorney who specializes in special needs planning can be invaluable. An experienced professional can help interpret new regulations, ensure compliance with reporting requirements, and guide trustees in making decisions that support the well-being of SSI recipients without compromising their benefits. Seeking expert advice can provide peace of mind and help maximize the financial support available to those who need it most.

Telephone Reassurance Program

Our office will make a telephone call to an individual's home at approximately the same time each day Monday through Friday (during our operating business hours only). This program is designed to connect people in need with ongoing, caring human contact and conversation. If we do not receive an answer, we will call back shortly after. If we do not receive an answer the second time, Public Safety will be called to check on the individual's status. The Telephone Reassurance Program provides peace of mind for the individual and their loved ones. This program is designed for senior citizens, disabled persons and shut-ins living in Seekonk who may be at risk of loneliness, social isolation, illness or injury. If you, or anyone you know is interested in this program, please call Nicole at Human Services at 508-336-8772.

The center is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8:30am - 4:30pm, Wednesday 8:30am - 5:30pm and Friday 8:30am - 12:00pm. Come and enjoy the activities and companionship at your center. **Join our email list!** Things are changing quickly these days and we want to be able to get the word out to you quickly. Please give us a call and give us your email address. We want to share fun activities, links to Zoom and virtual programs. * NOTE: *Seekonk Human Services is primarily an informational and referral agency. We try to help you directly or by introducing you to a network of federal, state, or local support services. Seekonk Human Services offers legal, financial, recreational, medical screenings, and other activities/services by volunteers or nominally paid practitioners. Participation in these services/activities is with the understanding that Seekonk Human Services, Town of Seekonk, or its employees do not assume any legal or other responsibility for advice of services rendered by such volunteers or nominal cost practitioners.

December 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 10:00am Movement & Meditation 10:30am Cornhole 11:00am Canasta 1:00pm Strength & Cardio** 2:00pm Oil Painting 2:00pm Recycling Presentation	3 9:00am Drums Alive**** 10:00am Water Colors* 12:00pm Tuesday Luncheon 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	4 8:45am Stability & Balance** 9:30am Drums Alive** 10:00am Podiatry Clinic 11:30am Women's Lunch 1:00pm Mahjong 3:00pm Adult Coloring	5 9:00am Mat Exercise 10:00am Movement & Meditation 11:00am Cribbage 1:00pm BINGO 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	6 9:15am Dance Cardio 9:30am Arts & Crafts*** 10:30am Tai Chi**
9 10:00am Movement & Meditation 10:30am Cornhole 11:00am Canasta 1:00pm Strength & Cardio** 2:00pm Oil Painting 2:00pm Holiday Bells	10 9:00am Drums Alive**** 10:00am Water Colors* 12:00pm Tuesday Luncheon 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	11 8:45am Stability & Balance** 9:30am Drums Alive** 1:00pm Christmas Carols 1:00pm Mahjong 3:00pm Adult Coloring	12 9:00am Mat Exercise 10:00am Movement & Meditation 11:00am Cribbage 1:00pm BINGO 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	13 9:15am Dance Cardio**** 10:30am Tai Chi** TRIP: Christmas in Newport, RI 9:00am - 6:00pm
16 10:00am Movement & Meditation 10:30am Cornhole 11:00am Canasta 1:00pm Strength & Cardio** 2:00pm Oil Painting	17 9:00am Drums Alive**** 10:00am Water Colors* 12:00pm Tuesday Luncheon 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	18 8:45am Stability & Balance** 9:30am Drums Alive** 11:30am Holiday Party 1:00pm Mahjong 3:00pm Adult Coloring	19 9:00am Mat Exercise 10:00am Movement & Meditation 11:00am Cribbage 1:00pm BINGO 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	20 9:15am Dance Cardio** 9:30am Gingerbread House Creating and Decorating 10:30am Tai Chi**
23 10:00am Movement & Meditation 10:30am Cornhole 11:00am Canasta 1:00pm Strength & Cardio**** 2:00pm Oil Painting	24 9:00am Drums Alive**** CLOSING AT 12:00PM	25 CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY	26 9:00am Mat Exercise 10:00am Movement & Meditation 11:00am Cribbage 1:00pm BINGO 1:00pm Pitch (Hi-Lo Jack)	27 9:15am Dance Cardio**** 10:30am Tai Chi**
30 10:00am Movement & Meditation 10:30am Cornhole 11:00am Canasta 1:00pm Strength & Cardio**** 2:00pm Oil Painting	31 9:00am Drums Alive**** 10:00am Water Colors* CLOSING AT 12:00PM		Preregistration is required for all activities. Activities are subject to change without notice.	*Water Colors Residents \$3/Non-Residents \$5 Paid one month at a time **Fitness Class Non-Residents \$2 ***Arts & Crafts Residents \$5/Non-Residents \$10 ****Prerecorded Fitness Class

Note: Fitness programs are paid through grant funds from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA). Seekonk residents are strongly urged to make a donation towards fitness programs to help offset the cost.



Veteran's Corner

PACT Act and your VA Benefits

The PACT Act is a law that expands VA healthcare and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law provides generations of veterans—and their survivors with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

What's the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history.

The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- ✦ Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for veterans with toxic exposures and veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras

- ✦ Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures

- ✦ Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation

- ✦ Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every veteran enrolled in VA health care

Help improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you're a veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

Am I eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act?

You're eligible to enroll now—without needing to apply for disability benefits first—if you meet the basic service and discharge requirements and any of these descriptions are true for you:

- ✦ You served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11, **or**

- ✦ You deployed in support of the Global War on Terror, **or**

- ✦ You were exposed to toxins or other hazards during military service at home or abroad

Specific toxins and hazards include burn pits, sand and dust, particulates, oil well or sulfur fires, chemicals, radiation, warfare agents, depleted uranium, herbicides, and other occupational hazards.

Note: Even if none of these descriptions are true for you, you may still be eligible for VA health care based on your service. I can answer any of your questions regarding the PACT Act and assist you in filing a claim or applying for VA Healthcare.

James LaFlame, Seekonk Veterans Services Officer, Office: 508-336-2940, Email: jlaflame@seekonk-ma.gov



Parks & Recreation by Erica Harris-Grimes

For the December newsletter I started thinking about what the winter season brings and what I could highlight. With a season full of many delightful pieces to it, I landed on gingerbread houses. I learned about some of the competitions and exhibitions that are out there all over the USA. Gingerbread houses seemed to have started in the 1600s, which was a few centuries after gingerbread made its debut. "Early German settlers brought this lebkuchenhaeusle- ginger bread house- tradition to the Americas." (1) writes Barbara Rolek for *The Spruce*. It is thought that gingerbread houses did not always have to do with the holidays, some believe they may have more to do with the Hansel and Gretel story, and then were adapted to be used around the holidays. Now there are festivals and competitions all around the world. In Disney World, Orlando, Florida there are usually a number of them on display through out the park. One of the biggest ones is right in the lobby of the Grand Floridian Resort and Spa. It has been known to use 1,050 lbs. of Honey, 140 pints of egg whites, 600 lbs. of powdered sugar, 700 lbs. of chocolate, 800 lbs. of flour and 35lbs. of spices to make the life size house happen. (2) While the gingerbread house in the Grand Floridian resembles a house, you can see them take on any shape in different competitions. Museum of the City of New York holds a competition that highlights the 5 Boroughs of New York. The Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina is another location with an annual competition. They started their competition in 1992 and it still runs to this day. Unfortunately, the 2024 competition will not be taking place due to the Hurricanes. According to their website, they will still be sharing pictures of entries on their Facebook and Instagram pages from December 1st-12th. You can also view the 2023 winners on their website. <https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/asheville-grove-park/gingerbread> The thought and creativity put into these entries is amazing. For the Omni Grove competition, the entry must be made of at least 75% gingerbread and the whole entry must be edible. While its not the same as traveling in person, the pictures are definitely worth checking out. There are so many kits sold in stores to help anyone enjoy creating their own masterpiece at home.



1. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/un-christmassy-origin-gingerbread-houses-180967461/>
2. <https://www.mousehacking.com/blog/take-a-look-at-the-grand-floridian-gingerbread-house>

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of the way



For nearly 50 years, HopeHealth has offered comfort and hope through even the toughest health challenges.

It's our privilege to care for our patients and their loved ones at every stage of serious illness providing hospice and palliative care, dementia and Alzheimer's services as well as caregiver and grief support programs.

Learn more about our services by calling (844) 671-4673 or visit HopeHealthCo.org.



10 Emory Street, Attleboro, MA 02703

Thank you!

*On behalf of the
Seekonk Town Crier
for your support
of our newsletter*



ON BLACKSTONE BOULEVARD



ON THE EAST SIDE



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IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.

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**Merry
Christmas**



**To be a sponsor
in the next
Seekonk Town Crier
Newsletter!**

**Please contact Tom Reily
508-336-6633 x 337**

Law Office of Luke P. Travis

Estate Planning

239 Winthrop Street, Rehoboth
by appointment

TEL: (508) 676-3333

FAX: (508) 678-1698

luke@bristollegal.com



Local #215



Lodge #5

SEEKONK POLICE

MASS C.O.P. Local #215 F.O.P. Lodge #5

Taunton Avenue P.O. Box 353

Seekonk, Massachusetts 02771

**To be a sponsor in
the next
Seekonk Town
Crier Newsletter!**

**Please contact
Tom Reily
508-336-6633 x 337**



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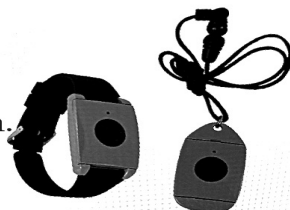
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508-336-6633 x 337**

Wheel of Fortune Game Show

Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 1:00pm

Kevin brings the excitement of "LIVE" game shows right to your doorstep! "Wheel of Fortune", the American television game show created by Merv Griffin is coming to Human Services. People play as teams, and every member of the winning team receives a prize! It will be fun! **Preregistration is required and opens December 16th.**

"Old Time Radio's Greatest Moments"

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 1:00pm

Richard King, Radio Historian, will present "Old Time Radio's Greatest Moments" at the Seekonk Senior Center. It is a multimedia show that features American radio in the 1930's to the 1950's. You will hear and see historical events and the top radio programs from its inventor beginnings, through its glory days, to the advent of TV. **Preregistration is required and opens December 16th.**

Elder Abuse Prevention Presentation

Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 11:30am

Bristol County District Attorney, Tom Quinn, is committed to preventing and prosecuting elder abuse. Come to the Human Services to hear this important prevention message on, January 22, 2025, at 11:30am. District Attorney Quinn's office will speak about identity fraud, financial exploitation, and scams, how to prevent them, and where to report them if they occur. We hope you will join us. **Preregistration is required and opens December 16th.**

Seekonk Human Services Staff **P. 508-336-8772 F. 508-336-2239**

Director

Brittney Faria, LSWA

Assistant Director

Ashley Cartwright, MBA

Outreach Caseworker

Nicole Buffington

Clerical Assistant

Kimberly Mallon

Community Liaison

Maggie Perkins

Program Assistant/Receptionist

Holly Fiola

Veterans Service Officer

James LaFlame

Parks & Recreation Coordinator

Erica Harris-Grimes

Welcome Presentation from Town Nurse Lisa

Monday January 13, 2025 at 2:00pm



Seekonk has a new Public Health Nurse, Lisa Valente, RN, CDOE. The Public Health Nurse functions under the direction of the Board of Health to provide community health care services including disease prevention, health promotion and maintenance, health education, and emergency preparedness. A longtime resident of Seekonk, Lisa has worked in acute care rehabilitation and nurse care management. She is also a Certified Diabetes Outpatient Educator. Office hours are tentatively on Mondays from 10 AM to 1 PM or by appointment. **Preregistration is required and opens December 16th.**

Healthy Aging - Lunch & Learn

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at 11:30am

The presentation will be about "Food Safety Bingo", with Bristol Elder Services Registered Dietitian, Dawn DiMarco. Dawn will be bringing an intern with her. You will be learning what is good for you to have a healthy heart. These days there is so much nutrition information going around and most nutrition advice in the media is not accurate. If you are looking for nutrition advice, always ask a registered dietitian. Lunch is pot roast, mashed potato, mixed vegetables, cake, dinner rolls, and Crystal Light. **Preregistration is required and opens December 16th.**



Human Services Council

Chairperson

Michelle Hines

Vice Chairperson

Maria Duarte

Cheryl Camara

Rick Forest

Beverly Della Grotta

Keith Perry

Josephine Veader

Council meets fourth Monday of the month
@ 3:15pm at
Seekonk Human Services
Conference Room