

Graduates “SHINING” a Light on Medicare Options

By Janis Merrell, Editor of *The Good Life*

On June 23, eight people celebrated their graduation from the SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) program at LifePath’s office in Greenfield. As newly-certified SHINE counselors, they will work in their own communities to provide free and unbiased health insurance information, education, and assistance services to Medicare beneficiaries and adults with disabilities. Lorraine York-Edberg, SHINE Regional Program Director, conducted the intensive 60-hour training.

SHINE graduate Martha Jamison, who will be volunteering in Amherst, recalled calling Lorraine herself two years ago to find out



L. to R., front row: SHINE Graduates Marla Zlotnik, Martha Jamison, Kate DiSanto, Meg Ryan, Priscilla Phelps;
 L. to R., back row: SHINE Graduates Chad Hunter, Walter Valentin, Teddy Doucette.
 (Unable to attend: SHINE Graduate Ashley C. Fraga, CDP, Outreach Coordinator at the Easthampton Council on Aging and Enrichment Center.)

about her Medicare options as she knew she was ready to retire. Martha explained, “When you sign up for Medicare yourself, you realize how complicated it is.”

Priscilla Phelps said a SHINE counselor pointed her in the right direction when she knew she was going to have hip surgery. At the time, the SHINE counselor asked her if she would be interested in getting involved. She will now be a SHINE counselor herself, volunteering at LifePath’s office in Greenfield.

Other 2023 graduates decided to become SHINE counselors because it helped them

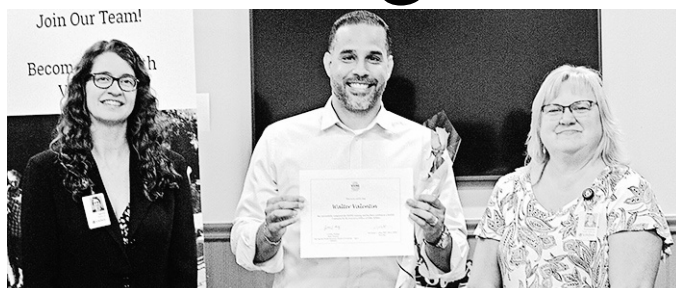
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serve their community members better in their professional roles. Walter Valentin’s manager at Baystate Noble Hospital in Westfield suggested he become a SHINE counselor, and Walter, knowing there was a need for it, wanted to help.

Teddy Doucette, Outreach Coordinator for the Shelburne, Ashfield, and Buckland area, who will be working out of the Senior Center in Shelburne Falls, said he wants to “make it as easy as possible for everybody in the region to travel as little as possible to obtain the resources they need,” while graduate Kate DiSanto’s goal is “to become a resource to Southamptton and surrounding communities,” in her role as the Outreach Worker/Volunteer Coordinator at the Southamptton Senior Center.”

Chad Hunter, Health Access Supervisor at the Hilltown Community Health Center, wanted to “provide another resource to our clients to help out the communities we serve.”

Meg Ryan, FRCOG (Franklin Regional Council of Governments) Public Health RN for the Cooperative Public Health Service that includes 15 towns, said, “One of my



L. to R.: Lynne Feldman, Director of Community Services, LifePath; Walter Valentin, SHINE Graduate; Lorraine York-Edberg, SHINE Regional Program Director.

roles is to help provide vaccinations. It’s clear that people have a lot of questions about insurance and I want to be able to accurately answer them.”

Lorraine York-Edberg expressed her appreciation for the new graduates, saying, “I am excited to have this incredible class of SHINE counselors join our group! They bring a vast amount of knowledge in many areas and will be a great asset to the growth of our SHINE Program at LifePath.”

If you have questions about Medicare options, you can consult with SHINE counselors over the phone or in person at some senior centers and other locations. To reach a trained and certified counselor in your area, contact the Regional Office at 1-800-498-4232 or 413-773-5555 or contact your local Council on Aging. If you’re interested in becoming a SHINE counselor, contact Lorraine York-Edberg, Western Massachusetts Regional Director of the SHINE Program, via email at lyork-edberg@lifepathma.org or call 413-773-5555 x2275 or 978-544-2259 x2275.

Get \$50 Worth of Farmer’s Market Coupons for Free!



Craving some fresh zucchini or ripe blueberries? LifePath will be distributing 625 free farmer’s market coupon booklets, worth \$50 per person (up from \$25 per person in previous years). One of these coupon booklets could be yours! The coupons are part of a program from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, designed to help older adults get fresh fruits and vegetables and to help local farmers sell more produce. In order to be eligible for the coupon booklet, you must be at least 60 years old and reside in Franklin County or the North Quabbin area, and earn \$2,248 per month or less as an individual, or \$3,041 per month or less as a couple. For each additional family member, please add \$793 per month to the income limit. You will need to sign your name to attest that

you meet the criteria to receive a coupon booklet. You do not need to attend a senior center or participate in any other programs to be eligible.

Please note that no cash can be given as change, so you may want to bring small bills and coins so you can pay the difference instead of using only part of the value of an additional coupon. Coupons will only be accepted by participating farmers at farmer’s markets or farm stands in Massachusetts. Each person receiving a booklet will also be given a list of the markets that are in the program. Please check with each vendor to find out if they accept the coupons. The coupons do not expire until October 31, 2023. Each person can only receive one coupon booklet per year. You can use your coupons to buy fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut herbs, and honey. Other types of items for sale at the markets cannot be purchased with the coupons.

Coupon booklets will be available on **August 3** at the following locations, at the times specified:

Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 5th St., Turners Falls – 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Erving Senior Community Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Northfield Senior Center, 69 Main St., Northfield – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

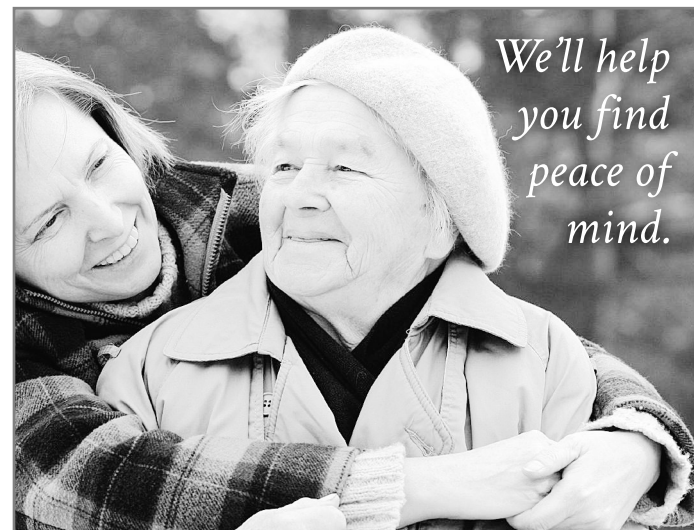
Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway St., South Deerfield – 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Bernardston Senior Center, 20 Church St., Bernardston – 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Greenfield Senior Center, 35 Pleasant St., Greenfield – 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

In order to be eligible for the coupon booklet, you must be at least 60 years old and reside in Franklin County or the North Quabbin area, and earn \$2,248 per month or less as an individual, or \$3,041 per month or less as a couple.

Come visit to pick up your coupon booklet for \$50 worth of free, local produce! If you have any questions, please contact Jane Severance, LifePath’s Nutrition Program Director, at 413-773-5555 x2271 or 978-544-2259 x2271, or via email at jseverance@lifepathma.org.



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