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A publication of

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THE GOOD LIFE

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A New Way to Connect: Join the Senior Dining Club at Mahar

*By Lynne Feldman, MBA,
Associate Executive Director*



Lynne Feldman

Starting Sept. 15, older adults in our community will have a new place to gather, enjoy a delicious meal, and connect with friends. The Senior Dining Club at Mahar offers people aged 60 and older the opportunity to enjoy

a hot, nutritious lunch in a welcoming setting at Ralph C. Mahar Regional School in Orange. The program is a partnership between LifePath, Ralph C. Mahar Regional School, and the Orange Council on Aging. It is funded through the Older Americans Act Title III Program, as administered by the Administration for Community Living and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Aging and Independence (AGE).

Enjoy a Fresh, Nutritious Lunch

Dining Club guests can enjoy the hot meal of the day along with the salad bar, all prepared by the Mahar nutrition team. The staff takes pride in serving delicious, nutritious meals made with locally grown produce whenever possible. Guests will move through the cafeteria line just like students and staff. While the complimentary program includes the daily entrée and salad bar, additional cafeteria favorites such as sandwiches and pizza are available for purchase, if desired. After picking up lunch, guests can dine in a designated senior dining area. Created by Mahar's home economics students, the space features comfortable tables and chairs, tablecloths, and welcoming décor.

Program Details

Where:

Ralph C. Mahar Regional School
507 South Main Street
Orange, MA 01364
Main Cafeteria

When:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 12–1 p.m.
Beginning September 15, 2026 (except major holidays)

Who Can Attend:

Adults aged 60 and older and their spouse of any age.

Cost:

There is no charge for the meal. A voluntary donation of \$3.50 per meal is appreciated but not required.

Registration:

No advance registration is necessary. Guests will be asked to sign in and provide some basic personal information upon arrival.

Easy Access for Everyone

Parking is available curbside along both sides of the access road near the cafeteria entrance. The site is fully accessible, with no steps, elevators, or steep inclines. Need a ride? Transportation to and from the Dining Club is available through the Orange Council on Aging. Please contact the Council on Aging (978-544-3481) at least two days before you plan to attend to arrange transportation.

Menu

To see what's being served, contact the Orange Council on Aging or visit the Mahar Food Services webpage (<https://u73.rcmahar.org/food-services>), where the current menu is posted in the gray box on the right side of the page. Recent menus include:

- Chicken Alfredo with Whole Wheat Elbows & Local Roasted Broccoli, Local Fresh Cucumber Wheels, Fruit Cup & Fresh Apple Slices
- BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich on a Whole Wheat Bun with Seasoned Roasted Potato Wedges, Fresh Local Garden Side Salad, a Fruit Cup & Fresh Melon
- Chicken & Vegetable Dumplings served with Sautéed Local Baby Bok Choy, a Homemade Cool Corn & Edamame Salad, a Fruit Cup & Fresh Orange Wedges
- Hamburger or Cheeseburger on a Whole Wheat Bun served with Local Lettuce & Tomato, Homemade Magenta Root Slaw made with Local Beets, 100% Fruit Popsicle & Fresh Melon

More Than Just a Meal

The Senior Dining Club is about more than enjoying a healthy lunch. It's an opportunity to spend time with neighbors, meet new friends, and become part of the Mahar community in a comfortable, welcoming environment. Whether you stop by once a week or make it part of your regular routine, you'll find good food and friendly faces waiting for you.

We hope you'll join us this September and experience the Senior Dining Club at Mahar!

The Power of Kindness: Athol Kindness Connection Goes Live

*By Lynne Feldman, MBA,
Associate Executive Director*

As I stood at the launch of the Athol Kindness Connection, the new Village project, I was inspired to witness the beginning of something very special and I was honored to be invited to speak at this wonderful celebration.

The Changing Landscape of Family Care

Families headed by the Greatest Generation, begun before 1945, were much larger than families begun later. Family size has decreased significantly over the years, from 6-7 children per family in the early 20th century to an average of just over two today. This shift has resulted in a growing elderly population with fewer younger family members to care for them. In our area, many young adult family members have left to pursue other opportunities, leaving behind an aging population that requires support. The old model of care, where adult children would care for their elderly parents, no longer works as it used to.

The Role of Social Services and Villages

Social services organizations like LifePath can provide essential support, including home-delivered meals, home care services, and care coordination. The Senior Center offers information, social activities, and exercise programs. However, these services cannot replace the companionship, emotional support, and practical help that a good nephew or daughter-in-law can provide.



Members of the Athol Kindness
Connection Board.

This is where neighbor-to-neighbor programs, also known as Villages, come in. Villages like the Athol Kindness Connection provide a platform for community members to help their neighbors in a way that is safer, easier, and more socially acceptable.

The Launch of the Athol Kindness Connection

Today, the Athol Kindness Connection becomes the 10th Village to launch in Western Mass, which has taken the lead in Village coverage in the state. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the volunteers and board members who have made this possible.

A Call to Action

As part of LifePath's Age and Dementia-Friendly project, I have been working to communicate the value of Villages in solving difficult problems like transportation. Our area's legislators have taken notice, and we have secured an earmark of \$10,000 per Village to support their work. However, more advocacy is needed to ensure consistent, long-term funding for these vital programs. I want to congratulate and thank everyone who has invested so much time and effort to make this day happen. I encourage every able-bodied Athol resident with a little bit of free time to sign on as a volunteer at www.atholkindnessconnection.org, to be ready to help out when needed. Also, please be sure to share your support of this program with friends, neighbors, and our elected leaders. This is a gamechanger for our community, and a vehicle for Athol to become a kinder, better place to age.

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