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THE GOOD LIFE

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Beacons of Hope Around Us Help to Light Our Way

*By John O'Farrell,**Associate Director of Marketing and Development*

John O'Farrell

The other night I came across one of the great wonders of the summertime season. The flight of a firefly! I haven't seen fireflies in my backyard in quite some time, so you can imagine my surprise when I spotted one last week. I am amazed at the simple beauty

of a firefly as it seems to aimlessly fly across fields and numerous backyards upon its nightly journey. I have often considered them to be a sign of good luck and hope. As their intermittent light goes on and off like a beacon in the night, it offers a peaceful reassurance that you are not alone in the darkness.

The same holds true for lighthouses. These towering architectural masterpieces are such a captivating sight to see from both land and sea. From land it gives us a sign that the coast is not that far away, but also provides the opportunity to gain a higher perspective on the world around us. From the sea, lighthouses back in the day, before technological navigation, allowed sailors to know precisely where they were as each lighthouse was painted in its very own unique color scheme and design to allow sailors to pinpoint their progress along their voyage. By night, lighthouses provide unique sequences of light to let sailors know their position along the coast as they traverse the rough ocean waters.

Birthdays also help us to navigate our own life's journey by allowing us to mark these important milestones in our lives and take note of all that we have accomplished over the last year. These points on a map help us chart the direction of our lives, as each year provides us with valuable data along the way, indicating what adjustments we should consider in helping to keep us on course. As LifePath marks the completion of its own 50th Anniversary, our core mission remains the same as we look towards the next 50 years.

Fireworks, too, help us to celebrate the many wonderful occasions and milestones in our lives and help to illuminate the night sky so that we can see through the darkness, while obtaining a clearer viewpoint in strategizing our next steps toward a better future. A better future! What a powerful phrase that is. Looking positively to the future allows us to move forward in our actions to not only improve our current position on the map, but to enjoy the journey along the way each and every day.

Beacons of hope such as these are a great reminder that sometimes all we need is a little help to shed some light on the larger picture. In the process, we discover potential solutions together that you may not have known existed when faced with the overwhelming challenges of caring for a loved one and trying to balance all that life throws in your direction, alone. LifePath is all about working together with individuals and families throughout our local communities in the Franklin County and North Quabbin region, helping to connect programs and available

resources in supporting your unique circumstances.

Through programs such as our Community Engagement Center and Age-Friendly Dementia Care programs, to our Meals on Wheels and SHINE programs, LifePath continues to make a profound difference, influencing positive change by helping to support one of our community's most vulnerable populations. The ability to make that special connection is displayed time and time again by our dedicated volunteers and staff, through the countless interactions with those we serve, delivering compassionate and supportive care every step of the way.

In addition, we also help to open an invaluable dialogue between generations, helping to build bridges through conversations, and providing an important opportunity to learn and share from one another along life's journey in the process. It all comes down to making that connection and, in turn, making a positive difference in the world around us.

There are so many wonderful things that LifePath has been able to accomplish over our 50-year history. It is hard to narrow down the list, however I would like to focus on two of them in particular for a moment. The first is LifePath's strong ability to connect people to the right programs and services to support their loved ones, and the second is being able to convey the importance of companionship and partnership, especially during this trying time.

Taking the time to reassure people that they are not alone in their challenges, we partner together to help navigate their current circumstances, doing our best to be a guiding light in establishing potential next steps. The ability to provide comprehensive support, tailored to meet each individual's unique circumstances, while building trust and peace of mind with older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers, is what we do. But, we can't do

it alone. We need your help to keep our programs going. Please consider volunteering with LifePath for an enriching and rewarding experience today. For more information, please visit our website at <https://lifepathma.org/support-our-mission/volunteer/>.

As we celebrate the conclusion of LifePath's 50th Anniversary, as well as our Nation's 249th birthday this weekend, so begins the countdown of recognizing all the significant events that took place back in 1775, especially here in New England, helping to lay the groundwork in our road to declaring independence. During those times, whether it was lighted lanterns in a church steeple, patriots perched on the masts of tall ships keeping watch over the harbors, or forts perched on hillsides and mountain tops overlooking the rivers, utilizing elevated vantage points helped to provide that strategic advantage to address incoming challenges on a regular basis.

The same premise holds true today, as our local communities work together to solve overwhelming complexities. Only through collaborative and creative partnerships can we gain higher ground that allows us to view the challenges from above as opposed to trying to see through the maelstrom. And, as our collaborations grow and people join together in addressing these trying times, we will create stronger communities rooted in continuing to best serve the needs of local residents, while striving to build a better tomorrow.

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