As we gather with family and friends during this holiday season, we are grateful for our homes, time together and the support we gain from one another.

WMEC’s work is to support people at home all through the year. We work with caregivers and community partners to bring care into your home so that you can manage your health and well-being. For many consumers, it is a combination of services and supports that regularly are provided in one's home. Assistance with meals, meal preparation, cleaning, laundry, and personal care is so important to maintain stability and routine if you can't complete all of these things on your own.

Often after a health event, hospitalization or stay at a nursing home, a change in condition has occurred and services need to be adjusted, increased or modified. People wish to be able to continue to stay at home despite circumstances changing. WMEC Case Managers and Registered Nurses help consumers manage these changes over time, whether they are just getting started with services or reassessing what is needed. Home care comes to you which assists many people in our communities and thousands of people across the state. WMEC works with people of all income levels and backgrounds. While many individuals who use services are on a fixed income, many have resources and contribute at various levels to their care. Our care partners follow standards of care and their staff are trained and dedicated to quality.

Sometimes other arrangements are better suited to provide care and support. Adult Foster Care supports older adults or people with disabilities in the home of a family member who is their primary caregiver or in the home of a host family. In either case, the emphasis is on family care. Case Management and Nursing staff assess the person's needs and the care plan is carried out by the family caregiver. Care is provided at home with a private room, provision of meals and transportation to appointments along with personal care and household tasks provided to the person by the caregiver. For those who are the caregivers, it's a win-win situation. They are compensated for caring for a loved one which is helpful if caregiving does not allow them to work outside the home. For non-related caregivers, they are able to use their skills and talents to provide care by opening their home to someone needing care and support. Often this family care model is joined with other services like Adult Day Health or other day programs so the person remains engaged in the community and caregivers get a break from 24/7 caregiving.

Our Call Center staff are available to answer questions and help you navigate resources for in home and community support. Whether you are an elder, an adult with disabilities or a chronic condition, or a parent/guardian of a child with special needs, contact WMEC to explore in home supports and services: 413-538-9020 We are here for you 365!
Share the Love with Seniors this Year!

Did you know that across the country, one in four seniors lives alone in isolation and one in seven seniors might not know from where their next meal is coming? This is why WestMass ElderCare provides thousands of older adults in our community with nutritious meals and friendly visits they need to remain safely in their own homes.

This year, to support our Meals on Wheels Program, we are partnering with Subaru of America through their “Share the Love” campaign. This national fundraising effort raises millions of dollars to support local Meals on Wheels programs across the country.

HERE’S HOW IT WORKS: Now through January 2, for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased, Subaru will donate $250 to the customer’s choice of participating charities (Meals on Wheels is one of four national participating charities).

Through this event, as a participating member of Meals on Wheels of America, WMEC will receive a share of the donation from Subaru vehicles sold at participating Subaru Retailers.

You might not be in the market to purchase a new car, but if you are, please look into the Subaru Share the Love Event (http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove) to learn more.

If you’re not shopping for a new vehicle, you can still help “share the love” by spreading the word to your family and friends by sharing this article and WMEC’s Facebook posts about the campaign.

By participating in “Share the Love” this holiday season, you ensure that our senior neighbors are well nourished and not forgotten. We’re incredibly grateful to Subaru of America for supporting WMEC and the seniors we serve!

Volunteer Spotlight

Dianna Sibley donates her skills and time to keep seniors warm and well-fed.

As a driver for WMEC’s Meals on Wheels program, Dianna Sibley always noticed little ways to help the seniors she brought meals to. “People couldn’t reach down to pick up the notes we left them, so I made them baskets to put on their doors where they could reach them more easily,” shared Dianna.

Thinking of others comes naturally for Dianna, who served as a WMEC Driver for several years before moving to Tennessee in the early 2000’s. But she never stopped thinking about how to help the seniors on her route back in Massachusetts, and quickly found a new way to help – even long distance!

For more than 10 years, Dianna has been knitting blankets, hats and mittens for WMEC Meals on Wheels consumers, and bringing them north with her when she visited her daughter over the holidays.

WMEC Drivers deliver her knitted items to consumers on their meal routes who could use them. “These folks’ day to day lives are hard and they have a lot of needs,” says Dianna, who has recently moved back to the area to be closer to family. “I’m glad I can help them stay comfortable and safe.”

WMEC is so grateful to Dianna for her big heart and busy hands! Thanks to her, over 45 WMEC meal consumers will receive warm blankets, hats and mittens this year.

Changing Seasons is a quarterly update of WestMass ElderCare’s services and activities with useful information for local elders, persons with disabilities, their families and people who care about the well-being of our elder population. Since 1974, WestMass ElderCare has served Belchertown, Chicopee, Granby, Holyoke, Ludlow, South Hadley, Ware and surrounding communities by providing a wide range of services to help our consumers maintain their independence in the community.
Meals On Wheels Helps Feed Elders’ Furry Friends

WMEC is also partnering with Meals on Wheels of America to bring needed nourishment to our seniors’ pet relatives. Thanks to a grant received by MOWAA, we have a supply of pet food to deliver to home-delivered meal clients who face hardships meeting the expense of feeding their pet each month.

“Seniors who receive home delivered meals often live on fixed incomes, and when money is tight, they often feed their pet before they feed themselves,” said Lisa Lovell, WMEC’s Nutrition Director. “This grant from MOWAA gives our seniors the peace of mind of knowing that they don’t have to make this difficult choice.”

One of our grateful clients remarked about their pet food delivery: “I cried when my driver asked me and delivered it. I’m on food stamps and disabled and need help with dog food because food stamps doesn’t cover it. So grateful!”

WMEC Annual Luncheon: Celebrating 45 Years of Service

On Monday November 4, WestMass ElderCare’s Board of Directors, staff, and community partners gathered at the Delaney House in Holyoke for its Annual Meeting Luncheon.

Although a cause to celebrate every year, this year’s event was especially so, as we commemorated WMEC’s 45 years of service to the community. Among the items featured at this year’s program, WMEC saluted outgoing Board President Jim Bell, and welcomed a new slate of officers. Helene Florio will serve as WMEC’s next board president, while David Thibault, Patrice Patla, and Dorothy Moreau were voted in as Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Executive Director Roseann Martoccia presented the annual Tillie Kubik Award to Rachel E. Tierney, a retired psychiatric clinical nurse specialist who is a tireless advocate for the Alzheimer’s Association and a member of the Dementia Friendly Communities Coalition. The event also featured a keynote by Consultant Alyssa Wright, who spoke about “Embracing an Abundance Mindset.”

To cap off the event, several WMEC staff members were honored with longevity of service awards.

Interested in Receiving Our Newsletter by Email?

WestMass ElderCare is offering Changing Season’s Newsletter via email. If you would like to receive our newsletter sent to your email address (instead of a paper copy mailed to your home/office), please provide us with your email. Please put “Newsletter” in the subject line and send to: newsletter@wmeldercare.org

(Please note: It is the policy of WestMass ElderCare to protect email addresses provided to us. We will not share your email with other individuals or organizations).
Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of $______________________

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• Money Management/Bill Pay
• Nursing Home Selection and Screening
• Options Counseling
• Personal Care Assistance
• Rainbow Supper Club
• SHINE (health insurance counseling)
• Transportation Support
• Volunteer Opportunities & Internships

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES OUR MISSION POSSIBLE!

If you do not want to receive future fundraising requests supporting WestMass ElderCare please call us at 413-538-9020 to have yourself removed from our mailing list.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!