

## Spring for Independence Success, Despite Cancellation Due to COVID-19! The Cast of Beatlemania Raises Over \$146K

Mystic Valley Elder Services' (MVES) annual fundraiser *Spring For Independence* to help older adults and adults with disabilities was unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event, in its fourteenth year, was to be held on April 4 at the Greater Boston Stage Company in Stoneham. Despite this year's benefit performance of The Cast of Beatlemania being cancelled, more than \$146,000 was raised for MVES' programs due to the generosity of its dedicated sponsors.

"Our sponsors have collectively helped us raise these funds to benefit our neighbors in need. In these challenging times, we are especially grateful that their support will provide critical economic resources that will meet urgent program necessities," said Jenny Vanasse, Director of Development at MVES.

The annual theater event has grown from a fundraiser into a true community event, with typically more than 300 patrons turning out for the performance. More than 100 businesses and individuals sponsored the event, including Lead Sponsors John and Wendy Pereira and StonehamBank, Principal Sponsor Agero, and Diamond Sponsor The Piccolo Family Charitable Foundation, Inc.

"StonehamBank and the Pereiras have been outstanding supporters of our agency for many years," said Dan O'Leary,



Daniel O'Leary, Chief Executive Officer of MVES, accepts a Lead Sponsor check from Stoneham Bank's Chief Executive Officer Edward Doherty for the Spring For Independence fundraising event.

Chief Executive Officer of MVES. "Each year, we hold this large fundraising event and I'm excited to say, despite these difficult times, we reached our fundraising goal. The proceeds will provide critical assistance for older adults in need."

StonehamBank's Chief Executive Officer Edward Doherty said, "With a history like MVES' that is so deeply rooted in our community, we are committed to doing our part to encourage positivity to those around us by sponsoring the theater event."

## COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Response Fund

In March, Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) established the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Response Fund so MVES consumers will continue to receive critical assistance such as food, personal care and other essential items on either a short-term or one-time basis.

To support the Mystic Valley Elder Services COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Response Fund, you can donate online by visiting [www.mves.org](http://www.mves.org) or by sending a check to the attention of Mystic Valley Elder Services, 300 Commercial St, #19, Malden, MA 02148. For more information on the fund, please email [development@mves.org](mailto:development@mves.org).

### Now accepting in-kind gifts of:

- \$25 grocery or pharmacy cards
- Canned soup, tuna, chicken or fruit
- Individual oatmeal packages
- Juice packs
- Shelf-stable pudding
- Peanut butter and Jelly
- Mac & cheese
- New bath towels & full size sheets

Celebrating 45 Years of giving older adults their independence, Mystic Valley Elder Services is a non-profit agency that provides essential home- and community-based care and resources to older adults, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers who reside in Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Stoneham, Wakefield and Winthrop, regardless of their income level. Agency services include coordination of home care, transportation, Meals on Wheels, and information and referrals. For more information and to learn more about our programs, please call (781) 324-7705 or visit [www.mves.org](http://www.mves.org).

# 45 YEARS Mystic Valley Elder Services Insider

AN EXCLUSIVE DONOR BULLETIN ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR

## Jon E. Norton Leading a Life of Giving to Community

"Older adults want to be happy living in their own home. I give to Mystic Valley Elder Services because people want to be at home when they receive care!" exclaimed Jon E. Norton.



Jon E. Norton

Mr. Norton has served on the Mystic Valley Elder Services Board of

Directors for the past two decades. He is a firm believer in the importance of care options and personal choice for older adults and adults living with disabilities. "Home care is very, very important. Getting the right help and good help makes it possible for people to stay in their homes as they grow older," shares Mr. Norton.

The City of Everett has always been "home" to Mr. Norton. He was raised in Everett and made certain that his mother, as she grew older, could remain in Everett in an accessible condominium with the care she needed until her death.

So, when asked to serve on the Mystic Valley Elder Services Board by Mayor David Ragucci of Everett in 2000, Mr. Norton readily agreed. He continues to generously give his time and donations to this day. "I want to know what I can do to help people. I think my role as a Board Member and as a donor can ensure that older adults will get the care they need and be taken care of the right way."

Mr. Norton is someone who has led a life of giving to others. He influenced the lives of many 4th, 5th and 6th graders through his 35-year career as a public elementary school teacher first in the city of Burlington and then

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## Social Isolation Hits Close to Home; Pandemic Heightens Concerns MVES to Launch Social Engagement Services Program

Social isolation, also known as the Loneliness Epidemic, is a prevalent concern for the nearly 290,000 older adults living in the state of Massachusetts. A 2020 report from the US Department of Health and Human Services states that 28 percent of elders live alone in the community. Now, with the coronavirus pandemic changing people's day-to-day lives and the ways in which they interact with others, our society must realize that isolation among residents ages 65 and up is at an all-time high.

In their many interactions with seniors, Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) care managers and nurses, along with Meals on Wheels drivers have discovered that loneliness and isolation is a prevalent condition. The recent report mentioned above states that loneliness can increase inflammation, heart disease, memory disorders, mental health conditions and higher death rates. Factors that add to isolation include the inevitable losses of spouse, family members, and friends over time. In addition, physical limitations and a lack of transportation reduce seniors' mobility outside the home.

"Seniors are at a huge risk for social isolation," says Susan Doherty, RN from MVES. "There can be many reasons for social isolation and not just during this pandemic. Some older adults might not have family, might be estranged from their family, might not be as technologically savvy as younger folks, and might rely

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## Letter from The Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,

These past few months were some of the most challenging of my 45-year-career in Aging Services. Over a few short weeks this spring, Mystic Valley Elder Services transformed nearly everything about how we deliver programs and services to community-dwelling older adults. Yet through all the changes and upheaval, one “True North” remained for me – our mission – making it possible for older adults and adults living with disabilities to live with dignity and independence. You and your generosity helped preserve that mission through some of the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. And you and your continued support give me hope that much better days lay ahead for us all.

If there were ever a time that the generations need to embrace each other, it is now. Paraphrasing the words of Ken Dychtwald, a renowned Gerontologist, ‘those of us in our later years need to provide a steadying force and sense of reassurance to younger generations who have never faced a national time of strife of these epic proportions. And younger generations can teach older adults to regain their sense of curiosity, openness, and willingness to learn and embrace new ideas and technologies.’ We have entered a new normal in elder care. We will likely all need to learn and gain a broader acceptance of technology and digitally delivered health care when it makes sense and as long as quality care can be ensured.

In this issue, you will read about a troubling concern that already existed but has been worsened by the Pandemic. Social isolation creates despair and loneliness for too many older adults. You can help us respond to this growing epidemic of isolation. Your generosity will make it possible for Mystic Valley Elder Services to recruit, screen, train and provide ongoing support to a Corp of Social Engagement Volunteers. You will make very personalized, life-changing ongoing support possible for isolated older adults who live in one of our 11 communities served. In short, you will create and preserve a better quality of life for your neighbors.

Thank you again for your concern and your generosity.



Sincerely,

**Daniel J. O'Leary**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Jon E. Norton Leading a Life of Giving to Community

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Melrose. This was followed by his career of public service for the City of Everett, serving as Chairman of the Conservation Commission for many years. He continues to serve on this commission having proudly never missed a meeting. He also served as Everett's City Recycling Coordinator for years.

When asked about the future, Mr. Norton shared that he believes donors know that Mystic Valley Elder Services does important work that must continue. He also shared that legacy giving is definitely very important for donors to consider.

## Forever Caring MVES Independence Legacy Society

The Independence Legacy Society is a giving society that honors and celebrates people who intend to include Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) in their will or estate plan or other form of planned gift.

Joining is easy—just fill out a one-page Independence Legacy Society enrollment form found at [www.mves.org](http://www.mves.org) and return it to the Development Office at MVES. Contact us if you would like more information on this program and its benefits at 781-388-4802 or [development@mves.org](mailto:development@mves.org).



*Stay tuned for more information  
on our two long-running popular  
fundraisers: Bellyful of Laughs  
and Spring for Independence*



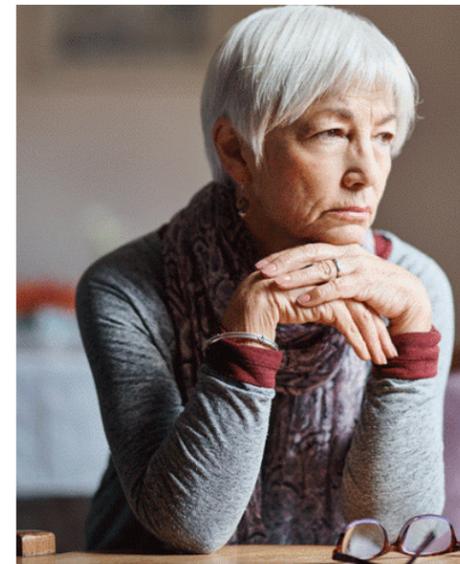
## Social Isolation Hits Close to Home; Pandemic Heightens Concerns

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on transportation or Adult Day Health in order to socialize, both of which are not running at this time.” While there are a number of resources for family caregivers impacted by the pandemic, the various crises being faced by family caregivers and their loved ones dramatically varies. This pandemic has put much more stress on caregivers who now need to shift gears to provide services and take care of loved ones in different ways, such as telephone calls, “driveway visits”, visits where the individuals are divided by a window, or using telehealth instead of home visits.

“The impact social distancing has had on the ways people memorialize their loved ones and friends is tough. Gatherings are limited or nonexistent and families coping with loss might be feeling an added layer of grief at not being able to celebrate the life of their loved one as they could have in a pre-pandemic world,” explains MVES Caregiver Support Coordinator Kathy Learned.

“It has become very evident about the high occurrence of loneliness that many older adults experience in their daily lives, and has been magnified with COVID-19's social and physical distancing,” says Patricia Hansen, RN, from MVES. “The majority of seniors and those living with disabilities are estranged from their family and friends, or have no family or friends to speak to or interact with. Most of the time their only connection to someone who cares about them is through MVES. A caring voice on the other end of the phone or a smile and wave from a Meals on Wheels driver are critical.”



## Social Engagement Services Program to be launched

Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) seeks to launch a new program this summer to provide focused intervention on the poor health and wellness outcomes linked to loneliness and social isolation, a problem that is impacting older adults in epidemic proportions. With support from donors like you, this new service can become a reality in the lives of many isolated older adults in our 11 communities served.

“After hearing from volunteers and staff in the field, our community partners, and from consumers themselves, we discovered that older adults are feeling increasingly disconnected and in need of more social support. We decided to take steps to address this problem,” says Lauren Reid, Director of Community Programs.

The Social Engagement Services program will connect with MVES consumers through supports that include the following: a **Friendly Visitor Program**, in which the consumer receives home visits that focus on in-person socialization and companionship (this will only be done safely and carefully in this time of the pandemic); a **Telephone Reassurance Program** where a volunteer calls the isolated individual and provides a social contact and friendly conversation; and/or an **Email Correspondence** for online engagement with others via technology.

“This social engagement intervention will supplement the consumer's home care services resulting in a comprehensive care plan that supports an improved quality of life and a safe independence,” explains Reid. Trained and carefully screened volunteers will provide the visits, calls and emails.

You can make a difference and play an important role to combat the effects of social isolation for isolated older adults in your community. If you would like to learn more about how to support the MVES Social Engagement Program as a volunteer, please **contact Linda Cornell at (781) 324-7705 or [lcornell@mves.org](mailto:lcornell@mves.org)**.