



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Shawn P. Middleton
Director of Communications
(781) 324-7705 ext. 320
C: (978) 337-7659
smiddleton@mves.org

**Mystic Valley Elder Services Seeks Volunteers
for Social Engagement and Money Management Programs**

(Malden, MA)— Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) is seeking volunteers for its Social Engagement and Money Management Programs. Both programs are vital to MVES' consumers by supporting independence and fostering compassion.

The **Social Engagement Program** is designed to help improve the health and well-being of isolated older adults in the community by providing meaningful social connection—whether it be through regular visits (when safe to do so), telephone calls, or email.

Not only has the COVID-19 coronavirus placed older adults and adults living with disabilities at very high risk of serious illness or death, but it has also made them more susceptible to social isolation and loneliness. Many older adults already live with a deep sense of disconnection from their community but the pandemic and related social distancing measures have made their sense of social isolation much worse.

There are three different options for program participants. Volunteers may choose one that is best for them, or could be involved in two, or all three. Options include a **Telephone Reassurance Program**, where a volunteer calls the isolated individual and provides a social contact and friendly conversation; an **Email Correspondence**, for online engagement with others via technology; and a **Friendly Visitor Program**, in which the consumer receives home visits (when safe to do so) that focus on in-person socialization and companionship

As part of the program, volunteers will be paired up with consumers who are participants in MVES' home care program. Volunteers in all parts of this program will receive training and ongoing support. Considering that the goal of this program is to offer meaningful connections, we do ask that volunteers commit to a minimum of 1 year of service. Our expectation is that everyone would begin by being matched with just one person, however, if you are interested, we could potentially match you with up to 5 individuals looking for someone to connect with.

The Massachusetts **Money Management Program** from Mystic Valley Elder Services exists to make sure that seniors and adults with disabilities can keep track of their bills, translate confusing financial statements into plain language, and make timely payments. This program can help manage debt. And this program is completely free.

Volunteers in our Money Management Program are trained to be an assistant who can help organize and read financial statements, keep bills in order, assist with writing checks, and create and keep a budget to help make ends meet. During these uneasy times, the program has adapted to meet the various needs of consumers, while also protecting them and our volunteers. Each consumer will require a different level of service and interaction to ensure effective service. While some can be served through telephone and virtual means, others will need some contact through safe drop offs or modified visits. All volunteers will be given detailed information and will have the ability to determine the level of service they are able to provide during this time.

Current volunteer needs include the roles of **Bill Payers**, who help low-income older adults and adults living with disabilities by assisting with bill-paying tasks including paying monthly bills and maintaining the check register; **Representative Payees**, who provide on-going direct service to low-income consumers who have been designated by the Social Security Administration as incapable of handling their financial affairs; and **Cash Distribution Specialists**, who provide support to the Money Management team by working with program recipients who need a weekly allotment of cash but are unable to access funds on their own.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering for these programs, please contact Leah Mulrenan at (781) 388-2375 or lmulrenan@mves.org.

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About Mystic Valley Elder Services

Celebrating 45 Years of supporting older adults to live independently and with dignity, Mystic Valley Elder Services is a non-profit agency located in Malden, Mass., 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 but are not limited to: coordination of home care services, transportation, Meals on Wheels, and information and referrals. For more information, please call (781) 324-7705 or visit www.mves.org.