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atHome

Helping Seniors Live Independently



By Deanna Mullins, Member Service Coordinator

If you have had the pleasure of speaking with or meeting John Dolan you have undoubtedly found him to be an incredibly friendly and uplifting gentleman.

John grew up in Newark, NJ and his wife, Carol, was from St. Louis, MO. Carol did not want to stay in NJ and John did not want to move out west, so they were looking for some place else to settle and raise their family. They were invited by Carol's college art professor to spend a weekend in Plymouth, NH. John says it was culture shock – people would say, "Hello, how are you?" and John would look around and think "who are they talking to?" This was so unlike the big city he was raised in. On the way home, Carol asked him "what do you think?" and John answered, "We're going to live here!" John found out about a job through their professor

friend and he was thrilled to eventually be hired as the executive director of the Sharon Arts Center.

John remembers the first time he drove to Keene and how he told his wife he was a nervous wreck because he wasn't used to the traffic! She laughed and said, "Traffic? You drove in New York and New Jersey all your life!" In recent years, due to health issues, John had to give up driving and he was introduced to Monadnock at Home by an occupational therapist. At the time, John had someone helping him out at home and only needed assistance getting to medical appointments.

Circumstances changed, and John found himself needing more help and he thought, "Who do I call? Monadnock at Home!" His first concern was getting groceries into the house. John was familiar with the Hannaford-

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John Dolan *Continued from page 1*

to-Go program when MaH suggested that option to him. MaH connected John with volunteer Karen Wisner, who picks up John's grocery order and delivers it to him each week. The first time John went to place his online order it was accidentally placed for the wrong day and when Karen went to the store there was no order. Karen went back and asked John what essentials he needed to carry him through and picked those items up for him. John so appreciated that kindness and thinks that "Karen is terrific! I feel badly that I can't go out and help her carry bags in, but I guess if I could do that I wouldn't need her help!" He counts it as a blessing to have the peace of mind of getting his groceries and the added bonus of getting to know Karen.

John says, "Because of my need for transportation, I got to meet some really nice people!" One of those nice people is MaH volunteer Owen Houghton, who shares, "John has been a delight to drive for haircuts. He is a fellow optimist who lifts my spirits with what could be 'art appreciation' - good for the soul. When I ask 'how are you?' he replies: 'You know that song, count your blessings, one by one? ...I can't count that high!'" He came to the Monadnock area from the city and never looked back. Raising a



MaH volunteer Karen Wisner delivers groceries to member, John Dolan.

"I have always enjoyed the chance of lifting someone's spirit with a smile and a small gesture! I always enjoy talking to John! He is always extremely appreciative and I admire him because he keeps on no matter how tough things might seem – he always has hope!" *Karen Wisner, Volunteer*



OUR MISSION

The Mission of Monadnock at Home is to provide seniors of the Monadnock Region with the support and practical means to live and thrive in their homes and communities.

family here and promoting the arts as Executive Director of Sharon Arts Center has been part of the blessings contributing to his positivity."

After a lifetime of doing things for himself, helping his family, working – it was an adjustment for John when he found himself needing to ask for help. "When I found myself needing a carpenter and plumber, I called you (MaH) and felt relief that you had someone reliable and trustworthy to recommend. I still have a lot of things on my to do list - small stuff - that I

used to do myself, but I can't now. When I got sick, all of a sudden, I couldn't do stuff, and that was tough to adjust to, but I feel much better having Monadnock at Home as a resource – you are a big help!" John says, when he picks up the phone to call MaH with a request, he always thinks to himself, "I'm not worried because I know Deanna will be able to help!" As we finished our chat, John told me that he counts Monadnock at Home as one of his blessings, and John – the feeling is mutual!

Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director



It's March and spring is close! We have had some very cold weather this winter and a few sizable snowstorms. We so appreciate our volunteer storm check-in callers who diligently check in on their list of members with each storm. Check out the "2021 Highlights" article in this issue to read the many more wonderful ways our volunteers

provide support to our members.

Also, in this issue of *At Home*, MaH member Marcia Patten talks about what led her and her husband, Roland, to join Monadnock at Home. When member John Dolan sat down to talk with Deanna, he also shared what brought him to make that first call to MaH. I am grateful to both of them for sharing.

Whether your reason for joining MaH is similar to one of these stories or vastly different, the support MaH provides

is very individualized. We take time to get to know every member and determine how we can best provide you with support so you can remain in your own home for as long as possible – Age in Place.

I am looking forward to talking about Aging in Place and MaH's role in supporting individuals to do so at two upcoming public sessions on March 23rd and April 7th. Current Monadnock at Home members are welcome to attend. In fact, I am interested in a few MaH members attending and sharing their experience with others. Reach out to us if interested. Further details on the sessions can be found in this issue.

In addition to the Aging in Place sessions, we have an exciting line up of programs this spring. Once the nicer weather is upon us, we will be announcing some additional in-person programming.

Wishing you good health as we continue to navigate the ever-changing pandemic and we are looking forward to seeing you on Zoom and in-person later this spring and summer.

Medicare Coverage For COVID-19 Tests

By Sandy King, MaH Volunteer

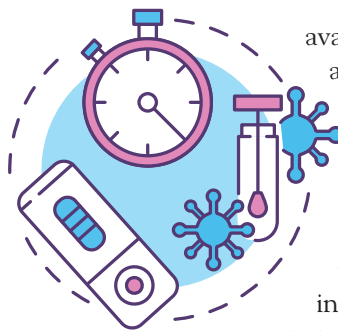
Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's probably not too much of a stretch to assume that most of us have had a least one test to see if we were positive for the disease. Personally, I've had three tests within the past few months: one PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test that was conducted at Rite Aid in Peterborough and then sent to a lab and two rapid, at-home tests.

I decided to have a PCR test in December when I was ill with head cold symptoms. The rapid tests I took weeks later were in response to being in close proximity to someone else who had subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. In all cases it was important for me to know if I had COVID-19 so I could exercise the proper isolation protocol and not infect others. In the end, I'm happy to say that I was negative in all three instances.

In general, a PCR test is more accurate than a rapid test and usually takes 2-7

days to receive the results. You may decide to have a PCR test on your own or it can be ordered by your physician to rule out COVID-19. If the test is ordered by a health care professional Medicare covers the cost. In addition, Medicare will also pay for a PCR test without a physician order once per year.

Now let's consider rapid tests which can be performed at home and produce results in less than 30 minutes. Rapid tests are so handy in quickly determining if you have COVID-19 even if you aren't exhibiting any symptoms. I know of families and friends who've requested that participants self-test prior to a gathering to ensure safety for all. This is especially true for folks who may have traveled by public transportation to get to the event. Fortunately, rapid tests are now readily



available at most drug stores and even the NH liquor stores! But, who pays for them?

First of all, if you haven't taken advantage of the federal government's offer to provide every household in the US with four free rapid tests, you should do so. Simply go to covidtests.gov or call 1-800-232-0233 to order your free tests, which are supposed to ship in 7-12 days.

As of this writing (February 26, 2022) Medicare does not pay for the rapid, at-home tests but will begin covering them sometime in the spring. Once announced, Medicare recipients will be able to go to a network of pharmacies and healthcare facilities to obtain up to eight free, rapid COVID-19 tests per month. We'll plan to watch for the announcement and promise to keep you posted!

Aging in Place at Home, with Extra Peace of Mind

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director

Ninety percent of people say they plan to remain living in their current home for life. The key word here is “plan.” However, I suspect many of these people have not actually formulated a plan to remain living in their home for as long as they wish.

According to dictionary.com, “A home tells a story and expresses a person or family’s interests. To create a home requires an emotional connection and sense of belonging, not physical things.” If you were to ask yourself WHY you desire to stay in your home, your thoughts would not just be of the physical structure, but the affections, emotions, and history that has been made and grown there. It is no wonder, so many of us desire to stay surrounded by all that our home gives us beyond shelter. But alas, if we want to fulfill the desire to age in our home, we must make this decision, not just with the emotional desire, but with careful planning and strategic adjustments to the home.

Ideally, you will start your aging in

place plan early in life and then revisit it as you grow older. Think about making SMART goals that lead to your vision to live, thrive and be happy in your home and community for as long as possible. Consider the following areas when setting your goals; finances, housing/location, health and wellness, social connections and enrichment, and available support. Perform an assessment in each of these areas. Determine in what areas you are satisfied and what areas concern you and show you could use extra support.

Some example questions to ask yourself are: Can I afford to stay in my home for X years? If I suddenly need home care, who would I turn to and how much would that cost? What if something were to happen to my spouse — would I know how to access our finances? Do I have a network of friends to socialize with? What do I do when the little things around the house become hard to do on my own? How do I use technology to stay in contact with grandkids? Will

my home still be safe and accessible as my needs change?

If you are a Monadnock at Home member, then you’ve already thought through many of these questions and realized that Monadnock at Home is here to address these issues, big and small, as they arise. Even if Monadnock at Home is already supporting you, make sure you take time to reassess your situation periodically and reach out to us! We are here to take many of these worries away. Our caring group of volunteers and vetted providers have been helping MaH members for nearly 12 years and are more than happy to help you live and thrive in your home and community.

To delve deeper into the steps needed to prepare to age in place and to learn more about how Monadnock at Home can help, sign up to attend one of our informational sessions on March 23rd or April 7th. Call 603-371-0809 or go to monadnockathome.org for more information.

Aging in Place at Home Free Informational Session

This free informational session is for older adults (age 62+) who live independently at home but could use assistance around the home or are seeking stronger community connections. We will talk about the challenges you may be facing at home and how with a bit of planning you will be set up to age in place successfully. Choose which date works for you, March 23rd at 10am or April 7th at 1pm. These sessions will be held at the Peterborough Library. Space is limited to allow for social distancing. A Zoom option is available for those who may not be comfortable meeting in-person. Call 603-371-0809, email msc@monadnockathome.org, or go to monadnockathome.org to sign up.

Discovering the Benefits of MaH

By Marcia Patten, MaH Member

Suddenly, I was on the floor of my living room, unable to move my left leg. Little did I know at the time that this fall was the first “step” toward joining Monadnock at Home.

After four days in the hospital, I was able to go home, but only because my husband, Roland, was able to take care of me. For a month I made incremental steps toward normalcy, but it was slow.

Then, when Roland fell on the ice and fractured his left wrist, we unexpectedly needed help. Grocery shopping, shoveling snow, a ride to the doctor’s office, and a run to the recycling center were on the list of the impossible.

I had been thinking of joining Monadnock at Home and the crisis led me to sign up right away. MaH responded quickly and Roland and I were relieved to feel we had people we could count on to help.

Little did we know those people were already in our lives – a neighbor who offered to drive me to the doctor, a friend who brought his children to shovel snow and made a dump run, and my sister, who went to the grocery store and the pharmacy. And I should

mention those kind souls who supplied us with ready-cooked meals.

That was in 2019. In the ensuing three years we’ve remained MaH members, but never made time to engage with the other members. As we continued on with our busy lives, our wounds healed for the most part and our sense of independence was restored.

We can cope with many challenges, but we have not been wildly successful in dealing with our computers since upgrading two years ago. Things got worse and worse until, after two years, it became a crisis. That week I got a mailing from MaH listing the ways they can help their members. Bingo! It said someone would be able to help with my computer. Just one phone

call and Deanna Mullins, member services coordinator, found someone who bravely visited my cluttered office (we were both vaxxed, boosted, and masked) and left a little more than an hour later after having cured my biggest computer problem. I was just elated!

Now I’m making a list of smaller computer problems I have and am planning to request another visit from an MaH computer guru. We look forward to meeting other members of MaH as we participate in programs or find ourselves in need of assistance once again. With Monadnock at Home we are able to follow the wisdom of the old saying, “Hope for the best and be prepared for the worst.”



Marcia Patten, MaH Member

A native of Peterborough, Marcia spent 37 years working for the Peterborough newspapers as a reporter and editor. After her retirement she spent 10 years as chair of the Peterborough Library Trustees during the rebuilding of the town library.

A special thank you
to Mayfair Farm for your
donation of homemade soups
again this year! They are very
much appreciated!



Monthly Coffee Hour



The MaH Member Coffee Group continues to meet inside for the colder months. The Coffee Group meets at the Jaffrey Civic Center, 40 Main St., Jaffrey. The location may change once the warmer weather arrives.

The group meets at 10 am on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Members sit, spread apart in a large circle inside the large gallery space on the first floor. We welcome any vaccinated MaH members to join the group. This is a great way to meet new people, especially for many of our new members! If you have questions or would like to receive updates regarding location changes, please contact MaH at 603-371-0809.

2021 Highlights

In 2021 Monadnock at Home volunteers spent nearly 1,500 hours helping support our members!

Let's look at some of the highlights!

We made grocery shopping easier for you! Grocery delivery service requests increased 35% in 2021 over the previous year. This service is critical for many members, especially those with underlying medical conditions.

Our volunteers stepped up in a big way! Volunteers spent nearly 400 hours helping with in-home service requests such as trash pickup, home maintenance, and technology troubleshooting.

We gathered together! Throughout 2021 we counted nearly 200 members in attendance for all

of our programs! We were happy to see many of our members multiple times! The summer months allowed us to provide some much needed in-person programming. Members enjoyed outdoor music in the park and ice cream socials at Kimball Farm. Throughout the year, we offered more than 50 opportunities for Monadnock at Home members to gather, some in person and some via Zoom.

We started exercising our brain! We introduced a new program, Stronger Memory, designed to stimulate the brain's prefrontal cortex, which governs our ability to retrieve memories. Eight members continue to participate in this program on a regular basis.

We navigated the pandemic together! Throughout 2021, we strived to continually communicate the latest CDC guidelines and vaccination

information to our members. As you may recall, the state registration process was confusing and very hard to navigate. We are proud to say that we reached out to all of our members to assess their need for registration assistance and help them through the process.

We delivered 280 containers of soup! Mayfair Farm once again, generously donated homemade soup made from vegetables grown at the farm and then frozen in pint size containers. Eight volunteers delivered soup to 20 MaH members throughout the winter.

We are so grateful to our volunteers, community service providers, and community partners for working with us to provide support to our members!

Please Join Us for Our Upcoming Programs!

Fitness, Mobility & Balance—Let's talk about it!

March 15th 1-2pm via Zoom

Cooking Matters at Home Making Recipes Work for You!

April 12th 1-2pm via Zoom

Monthly Social Call—All you need is your phone!

Second Wednesday of each Month 11am-12pm

Memory Program

Third Thursday of each Month at 12pm via Zoom



MaH member Nancy Clarke receives soup on a chilly winter morning, from MaH volunteer, Laura.

Conversation with Author Stephanie Dray



By Cynthia Sue Martell, MaH Member



*When the heart finds its one true desire,
any separation and delay is unbearable.*

—from *America's First Daughter*

On February 22, 2022 members of Monadnock at Home were privileged to meet (via Zoom) *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author of women's historical fiction, Stephanie Dray.

Stephanie lives in Maryland with her “husband, cats and books.” Lucky for us, she is also a long-time friend of Deanna Mullins, our member services coordinator!

Two of her best-known novels (co-written with Laura Kamoie) are *America's First Daughter*, which tells the story of Thomas Jefferson's eldest daughter, Martha “Patsy” Jefferson. And *My Dear Hamilton*, which focuses on the early American statesman Alexander Hamilton's resilient wife, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton.

Stephanie graciously answered our eager questions with openness and humor. Given her prolific writing and popularity, we wondered how she manages her hectic schedule. She told us that she writes 12 hours a day for at least three days a week. Then

added she also must squeeze in “business matters” and still save a bit of time for events happening in her personal life.

Asked about her “writing process” she said one of the primary ways she

dusty alcoves of archival institutions.

Stephanie emphasized that handwritten letters and documents are indispensable. They can provide insight into the intimate details of a historical person's life and times. She shared that while exploring the contents of letters, she has made some remarkable discoveries. We found it astonishing to learn that research for even one book may require perusing thousands of individual papers pertaining to her next protagonist.

“Do you ever come to like or dislike certain historical figures you are writing about?” one member queried. She responded that she tries to look at each one with a balanced view. Relishes observing their eventual evolution as humans.

“Stephanie, did we hear that you might be working on something that could bring you to our neck of the woods?” someone inquired near the end of the group conversation. Stephanie smiled and said that after her current project (a solo novel about Frances Perkins, first ever female member of a US Cabinet) she and Laura Kamoie are going

to reteam to work on a novel based on Abigail Adams and her daughter, Nabby. This new project certainly created a sense of excited anticipation among us, as the book would be set in New England and not too far from here!



collects historical facts for use in her books entails gathering information by doing “hands-on” research. She explained this method demands that she physically sort through multitudes of boxes and bins often stored in the

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Why Become a MaH Member?

- You gain peace of mind.
- Your worries of living alone are eased.
- You become an active part of a bigger community.
- You gain the security of knowing you can get help on issues that arise -big or small.

Contact us to see how MaH can help you live and thrive in your home and community.

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