



News Across the Table

Our Neighbors' Table, March 2022 / Edition 20

Letter from the Executive Director

For the last 2 years, it seems change is the only thing we can rely on. Health protocols, work opportunities, politics, school policies. It has evolved daily as we have all adjusted to this pandemic that turned our world upside down exactly 2 years ago. But we hope that ONT has been able to provide you with some consistency and reliability so that food is not something you have to worry about or go without. Last year, we collected a lot of feedback from you to help us ensure our markets and meals were meeting your needs. In the coming months, we are working on a plan to be able to re-open the markets and the dining room safely while maintaining curbside and delivery services that have proven helpful to you. We will likely ask you for more feedback to make sure we are making the right choices. In the meantime, know that we are here, we are constant, and the support you get from ONT is something you can rely on.

May the spring sun shine warmly on your cheeks!

Lyndsey Haight

Community Resource Spotlight



Income Tax Help & Information

The Federal Tax Deadline is April 18, 2022. The Massachusetts Tax Deadline is April 19, 2022. Below are some resources for help with filing and information about why it's important to file this year even if you may not be required to file a tax return.

My Free Taxes - Myfreetaxes.com a product supported by United Way, helps people file their taxes for free while getting the assistance they need. The site has no income limit or age restrictions and supports unlimited state returns. It is free for all filers, with no option for paid add-ons or fees.

VITA - The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$57,000 or less, including persons with disabilities, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. The VITA site in our area is at **Community Teamwork** in Lowell. Call 978-941-3702.

Find Your Funds - If you do not usually file income taxes because your income is low, you may be missing out on a refund from the new tax credits that were part of the 2021 American Rescue Plan. Federal payments could include any missed **Stimulus Payments**, the **Earned Income Tax Credit**, and the expanded **Child Tax Credit**. You can learn more about these and apply for funds at **findyourfunds.org**. Find Your Funds has info about the following:

- **Child tax credits** - Did you get monthly money from the IRS in 2021 for your kids (\$250 or \$300 per month per child)? You need to sign up again in 2022 to get the rest of your money. You can have no income or low income to get this money. You can apply today, even if you don't usually file taxes or haven't filed in the last few

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SNAP Update

The USDA has informed DTA that they will be allowed to continue the SNAP COVID supplements for 30 days beyond the end of the federal COVID state of emergency declaration. The current declaration expires in April, so this means the COVID supplements will continue through the May supplement which will be put on EBT cards on June 2nd. As the latest COVID surge winds down, it's possible the state of emergency will not be extended, so it's important to make sure you are claiming all the SNAP deductions you are eligible for to maximize your SNAP benefits before the supplements end. Below are some of these deductions.

Medical Expenses - SNAP recipients who are age 60+ or disabled (on SSDI, SSI, MassHealth Disability status, or EAEDC) can submit proof of out-of-pocket medical expenses totaling \$35 per month or more to claim a standard Medical Expenses Deduction. Medical expenses can include over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, medical supplies, eyeglasses, and more..

Child or Adult Dependent Care Costs - If you pay for childcare or an adult care program so that you can work, look for work, or attend school, you can self-declare these expenses with DTA to get the deduction. DTA may ask for verification of expenses if the information they get seems questionable. Eligible costs include transportation if you are driving the person to the provider. Costs count even if you are behind on payments to the provider.

Child Support Paid - If you have a court order or other legal written agreement directing you to pay child support, you can submit a copy of the order and proof of your payments to claim this deduction. Informal child support arrangements do not qualify. If your child support payments are deducted from your Unemployment benefits or benefits you get from the Social Security Administration, you do not need to provide proof as DTA have this information when they verify these benefits.

Not sure if you are getting these deductions or need more information?

Contact Tress at ONT for help at 978-388-1907 or tress@ourneighborstable.org.

Apply for SNAP with ONT by phone!

Our Neighbors' Table is a SNAP Outreach Partner. We can help you apply for SNAP (food stamps) by phone. **Call Tress at 978-388-1907, ext. 18** to apply, help with an open SNAP case, or to answer your questions about SNAP.



Call Tress Ricker
978-388-1907
Ext 18

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. The SNAP logo is a service mark of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA does not endorse any goods, services, or enterprises.

Our Neighbors' Table Grocery Market & Community Meal Locations & Hours

Wednesday Night Community Meal: Main Street Congregational Church Vestry Hall, 145 Main Street, Amesbury, MA
Wednesday 4:00 pm—6:00 pm

Newburyport Market: Newburyport Senior Center,
331 High St., Newburyport. Thursdays, 10:00am - 11:30 am

Amesbury Market: 194 Main St., Amesbury
Wednesdays: 10:00am - 1:00pm and 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Thursdays: 12:00pm - 3:00pm and 4:00pm - 6:00pm
Fridays: 9:00am - 12:00pm and 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Saturdays: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Salisbury Market: Salisbury Senior Center. 43 Lafayette Road, Salisbury. (Serving Salisbury residents only)
Wednesdays, 1:00 pm—3:00 pm. & Fridays, 11:00 am—1:00 pm.

Heritage Towers & Vale Amesbury. (Serving residents of Heritage Towers & Heritage Vale only) 1st & 3rd Wednesday 9:30 am - 10:30 am

Powwow Villa: Amesbury. (Serving residents of Powwow Villa only.)
1st and 3rd Wednesday 10:30 am-11:30 am

Grocery orders can be placed online or by phone until 3pm the day before pick-up. Order groceries at: ourneighborstable.org/getfood

Our Neighbors' Table

194 Main Street, Amesbury, MA 01913

978-388-1907

www.ourneighborstable.org

Para ler esta newsletter em portugues, visite o site www.ourneighborstable.org/guestnewsletter para fazer o download do pdf com a versão traduzida.

Market News

Please let us know if there are any items you would like to see more often or can never order enough of! While we have a cap on many of our items, it's generally because folks tend to order more food when they can't see how much they're getting. When we first transitioned to curbside pickup there were many orders that took up 4 to 5 carts! The guests would generally be surprised by the amount of food, and send a lot of it back. However, the intention of limiting items is never meant to prevent shoppers from getting what is needed. If you aren't getting enough food from ONT, please feel free to call our office (978-388-1907) and ask for Hannah.



Heather's Recipe: UPSIDE-DOWN PIZZA CASSEROLE

Only 4 Ingredients & Easy to make!

PREP TIME: 20 Minutes

COOK TIME: 15 Minutes

SERVES: 5

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1 15 ounce can Italian-style tomato sauce
- 1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 10 count package of refrigerated ready to bake biscuits

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. In a large skillet cook beef until no longer pink, stirring frequently. Drain off fat.
3. Stir in tomato sauce; heat through.
4. Transfer mixture to a 2-quart rectangular baking dish and sprinkle mixture with cheese.
5. Flatten each biscuit with your hands then arrange the biscuits on top of the cheese.
6. Bake in the preheated oven about 15 minutes or until biscuits are golden.



Heather Paterson is ONT's Meal Manager. Her delicious recipes are made into meals and **available free for takeout every Wednesday from 4pm to 6pm at Main Street Congregational Church, 145 Main St., Amesbury.**

Safety / Emergency Community Hotline Numbers

Domestic Violence: Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, **978-388-1888**, 24/7

Elder Abuse (over age 60): Elder Protective Services, **800-792-5200**, 24/7

Suicide Prevention: National Suicide Prevention Hotline, **800-273-8255**, 24/7

Disabled Abuse: Disabled Person's Protection Commission, **800-426-9009**, 24/7

Child Abuse: Child Abuse Emergency Hotline, **800-792-5200**
M-F: 5pm-9am, all day weekends & holidays

Volunteer Profile: Lisa Hayes



Lisa Hayes came to Our Neighbors' Table at a crucial time in our growth as an organization. She started in 2019 as a reception volunteer and while she was in the office, saw that some of the data entry processes could be streamlined with a bit of Excel expertise. After Lisa completed that project, ONT Executive Director, Lyndsey Haight, and Program Director, Lori Townsend, found out about Lisa's professional background in supply chain

management. They asked if she could help automate and review the ONT inventory system. Lisa became an integral part of automating food procurement, budgeting, and shifting ONT programs to the SmartChoice online ordering system at the start of the pandemic. This made huge strides in ONT's ability to organize and efficiently distribute food through our Warehouse and Market, and to be able to pivot quickly to a curbside model when Covid-19 ceased in-person shopping.

"Lisa came in with a "can do" attitude, knowledge at a level far above our own, and was able to work with us to listen to what our needs are. She thoughtfully developed systems that responded to our needs and supplied the expertise, leadership, learning and tools to implement the systems," Lori said of Lisa's impact, "The time, energy and patience she has devoted to ONT have resulted in some colossal improvements to our operations - things that no one else could do - that have been an essential contribution to our ability to provide for our guests and accomplish our mission."

Lisa says she loves "being able to help ONT achieve their mission while working with staff members as a volunteer consultant." We're so thankful that Lisa chose to donate her time and expertise to ONT! Lisa received a bachelor's in Elementary Education from the University of New Hampshire, and a Master's in business from UMass Lowell. She retired as a global supply chain manager in 2016 after many years of supply chain work that frequently took her to different parts of Mexico to oversee operations and is currently teaching Supply Chain Management and Six Sigma classes in the Graduate program at Southern New Hampshire University. Lisa has lived in the area for her whole life and currently lives in Merrimac. In her free time, Lisa likes to do remodeling projects, gardening, taking her dog, Casper, for walks, and handcrafting for numerous charitable organizations.



MVRTA bus serves ONT's Amesbury Market location

The Merrimac Valley Regional Transit Authority has made a change to their Route 51 Haverhill-Amesbury bus route so that it brings the bus to ONT's Amesbury Market location and main office at 194 Main Street. Although there is no designated bus stop at ONT, passengers can flag the bus for a ride or ask the driver to drop them off at ONT. There is usually approximately 30 minutes between an inbound and outbound bus. We suggest our guests using this transportation keep in mind that there is currently no waiting space inside ONT, so you may have to wait outside on Main Street for a little while after picking up your groceries for the bus to come back around.

The MVRTA is also going fare-free on all local fixed routes and EZ Trans paratransit services starting March 1, 2022 for at least a 2-year period. Fares will still be collected on the Boston Commuter bus and Ring & Ride services.

Community Resource Spotlight Continued Income Tax Help & Information

(continued from Page 1) years. New rules have made more people eligible for this money! If you did not get the monthly child tax credit in 2021 but have a qualifying child, you can still get the credit when you file your 2021 tax refund, even if you had no income or very little income - up to \$3,600 per child!

- **Low income college students** who worked in 2021 and are homeless, former foster youth, or 24+ can get the Earned Income Tax Credit - up to \$1,953 for a single person.
- **Older adults 65+ who worked in 2021** can get the Earned Income Tax Credit - up to \$1,953 for a single person!

Northeast Legal Aid Low Income Taxpayer Clinic: Do you owe taxes or have problems with the IRS or Massachusetts Department of Revenue? The new Low Income Taxpayer Clinic assists low-income taxpayers who have a controversy with the IRS. NLA will provide assistance to eligible individuals who have been notified by the IRS that they owe taxes, are under audit, have filed a petition with the U.S. Tax Court, and individuals who need help obtaining other relief from a tax obligation or an IRS collection effort. NLA does not generally assist in tax return preparation. All legal assistance is provided free of charge to clients. Contact the LITC intake line at: **978-458-1465** Hours: 9:00 AM—1:00 PM. For more info, see northeastlegalaid.org/low-income-taxpayer-clinic