"Easing Loneliness in Our Community" Minutes

May 19, 2025, 10-11am

Present: Laura Mooney, Mike James, Holly Rubino, Carleen Gerber, Jeremy Crisp, Missy Garvin, Mary Seidner, Ariana Eaton, Beverly Crowther

Call to Order

Laura opened the meeting with a quick recap of the library's aim to be the center of the community and to work closely with other town organizations. She proposed that the library could function as a resource and safe place. The goals of the meeting were to start to form partnerships and discuss how the library can support efforts being made.

Senior Center/Meals on Wheels

The Meals on Wheels drivers are generally good at socializing/conversations and this really helps people who may feel lonely. Volunteers are always welcome (Laura at the Estuary coordinates drivers). The Senior Center will reopen May 31, and Jeremy says there is a regular sharing of information there (such as someone who may need a ride to and from). The Senior Center offers tech courses and help for seniors (the library offers tech help as well). He would like to see this group meet on a quarterly basis to share what each organization is doing. He suggested that the library could help advertise/promote these services. The sign-up with URCommunityCares.org has been slow. Beverly suggested that the Senior Center create a video to put a new face on the center.

Lyme Ambulance/Special Needs

The ambulance will offer a workshop on resources and safety tips for "healthy senior living." Ariana is also the town's Special Needs coordinator and believes outreach is the critical piece, especially "getting paper" to less tech savvy people. Tech competency is a barrier. Could there be a dedicated phone line? She sees the library as a resource to connect people with services. Could there be something available online? A grant for funds?

Old Lyme Congregational Church

Per Carleen, there are about 100-150 people attending church every week, and the ministers keep track and check in with people who haven't attended in a while. Churches can identify those in need because of longstanding relationships. There was a parish nurse available once a month but people didn't seem to take advantage of it. Could there be a retired nurse once a month at the library? What is the status of the Visiting Nurses?

Lymes' Youth Service Bureau

LYSB provides mental health services on a sliding scale, and no one is turned away. Mary and Missy work closely with the schools, have early childhood programs for new parents, programs for parents about the impact of social media, and afterschool and summer programs. At-risk students in grades 2-8 are matched with adults. Middle school students are matched with high school students. There is a high school community service leadership group. Since Covid, there has been an increase in requests for counseling. LYSB provides a social worker for the school system.

Next steps

- Meet quarterly
- Create breakout group with short-term goals
- Find out status of visiting nurses
- Include a brief positive write-up about how people can get connected now (in tax bill mailing?)
- Reword loneliness group to something more positive (be connected/growing connections) and create mission statement and purpose.
- Write an article about this group for LOL Neighbors, LymeLine, and other town publications and include info that promotes each group ("cross-pollination")
- Proactively promote URCommunityCares.org

The next meeting will be June 16, 2025, 10-11am at the Lyme Public Library.