



WOONSOCKET SENIOR CENTER

84 Social Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895

401-766-3734
agingwellinc.org

OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

MAYORAL DEBATE

Thursday, October 22 at 6:00 PM, 84 Social Street



CHRISTOPHER BEAUCHAMP
Mayor



DANIEL GENDRON
Council President

Submit Questions at agingwellinc.org/debate

For the second straight election, Aging Well Inc. is partnering with the League of Women Voters to host a mayoral debate, moderated by Dr. Joseph Cammarano of Providence College. Two years ago Mayor Beauchamp and John Ward had a spirited discussion of the issues in this building, and we are hoping for the same again.

You are invited to ask the questions. A debate is one of the few chances to hear both candidates answer the same question in the same room. Send your question online or in writing by Tuesday, October 13 at noon. The evening is open to the public, seating is first come first served, and off-street parking is available but limited. Please visit agingwellinc.org/debate to ask a question and for more details.

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Scan to open the app

or visit agingwellinc.org



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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SOMETIMES THE HARDEST THING TO ADMIT

One of the things this work has taught me is that a person is almost never as simple as the piece of their life we happen to be looking at. And sometimes a good person gets caught up in something that has grown more powerful than they are willing to admit, or able to.

When someone's choices start to land on other people, an organization still has to set a boundary and look after everyone who depends on it. Compassion does not mean pretending there are no consequences. Accountability does not mean we stop seeing the person.

The line between have and have not is thin, and the difference can be a name fortuitously ending up at the top of a list. Any of us are a few bad bounces from the outside looking in.

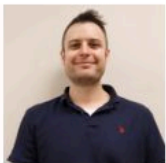
A person is not the worst thing that ever happened to them. People still answer for what they do, and this place still has to look after its seniors and staff even when we care deeply about the person.

And a hard chapter does not have to be the last one. People change. A comeback is possible. I believe that, and not because consequences do not matter. Because they do. We hold people to account precisely because we think they are capable of better, not because we have decided they are finished.

Working with older adults has driven that home for me more than anything else I have done. We spend our days with people who have lived long enough to know that a life does not run in a straight line.

So I hope we can be a place with room for both accountability and grace. Sometimes a person needs a boundary. Sometimes a person needs consequences. And sometimes, eventually, a person needs a door that can be opened again. If that day comes, I would like ours to be the door that opens. I would like us to understand everyone who comes through our doors, because one day any of us could be the one who needs understanding. – Ryan

MEET THE TEAM



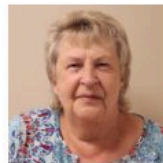
Ryan MacLeod
Executive Director



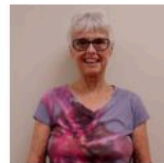
Chris Curtis
Finance Manager



Stephen Healey
Congregate Meals Dir.



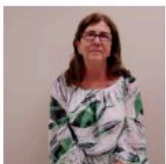
Marie Piette
Congregate Meals



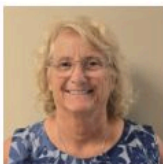
Susan Jameson, PT
Director of Wellness



Donna Narodowy
Dir. of Senior & Comm.



Jane Dubois
Receptionist



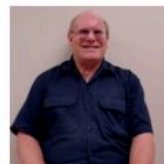
Nancy Miller
Receptionist



Guy Boulay
MIAA Counselor



Jeanne Theroux
Meals on Wheels



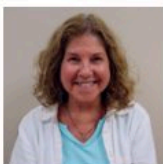
James Forcier
Maintenance



Debra Frigon
Finance Assistant



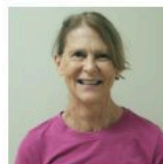
Jane Allard
Facilitator



Diane Westerman
Facilitator



Steve Westerman
Fitness Instructor



Elaine Olivier
Fitness Instructor



Fran Golombiewski
Dance & Fitness

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OCTOBER AT 84 SOCIAL STREET

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EVERY WEEKDAY

8:30
AM

Coffee & Conversation

Free coffee and unstructured conversation every weekday morning. A great way to start the day with friends and neighbors.

9:30
AM

Morning Exercise

Different class every morning. See the activity calendar or app for today's pick. All levels welcome, free with your \$18 membership.

10:30
AM

Wellness Activity

A new wellness class every day. Choir, Pilates, Brain Games, Write for Delight, and more. Check the calendar or app for today's pick.

11:30
AM

Lunch

Sit down with friends in the Dining Room. Hot and cold lunch options daily for adults 60+. Reserve your meal 48 hours ahead at agingwellinc.org or by phone. Suggested \$3 donation.

12:30
PM

Afternoon Activities

There's always something happening in the afternoon at 84 Social Street. Check the calendar or app for today's lineup.

MEMBERSHIP

\$18 per year

That works out to \$1.50 a month.

WHO CAN JOIN

Anyone 55 or older who wants to be here. No residency requirement.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Almost everything is included:

- Daily Exercise Classes
- La Placita Space
- Access to La Bodega & La Farmacia
- Outdoor recreation: pickleball, shuffleboard, gardening, and more

*Optional activities have small fees, always clearly labeled.

ALL AT 84 SOCIAL STREET



Bingo

Every Monday and Thursday!



Daily Exercise

Group exercise every morning.



Daily Lunch

\$3 suggested donation.



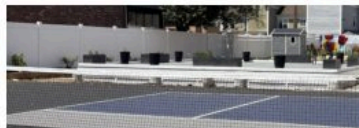
La Placita

Bilingual. All are Welcome!



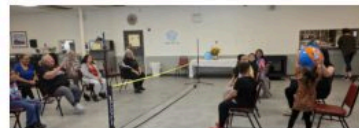
Zumba & Line Dancing

Various dance classes available.



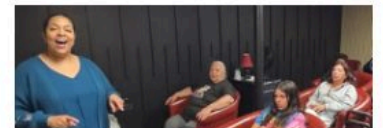
Pickleball

Included with \$18 membership.



Chair Volleyball

Play seated. Just for fun.



Choir

All singing abilities welcome!



La Bodega & La Farmacia

Free for members. Rules apply.



Puzzles & Brain Games

Keep your mind sharp.



Sewing & Crafts

Groups and Individual Projects.



Pool (billiards)

Free with membership.



Indoor & Outdoor Garden

Year Round Gardening.



Meditation

Be mindful with Diane.



Reiki & Reflexology

\$10 Reiki. \$25 Reflexology.



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Scott McGee, Team Leader

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Aging Well, Inc (Woonsocket Senior Center), Woonsocket, RI

06-5460

OCTOBER MENU

Page 06

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
ABOUT THE MENU - Adults 60+. Reserve your meal 48 hours ahead by phone or at agingwellinc.org. Choose #1 or #2. - Suggested \$3 contribution. Confidential. Not a bill. - Your lunch contributions help us sustain the program. - No one is denied a meal for inability to contribute. - May contain nuts, seeds, beans, wheat bran, allergens. - Funded by Older Americans Act (ACL & RI OHA).			01 #1 Meatloaf w/gravy Creamy red lentil soup Mashed potatoes Honey glazed carrots Marble cake #2 Greek salad w/chicken	02 #1 Chicken Cacciatore Navy bean soup Italian vegetables Cauliflower rice Sliced pears #2 Corned beef & Swiss
05 #1 Shepards pie Chicken soup Mashed potatoes Chocolate chip cookie #2 Ham & cheese on wheat	06 #1 Mediterranean chicken Creamy vegetable soup Sautéed Greek vegetables Lemon potatoes Tropical fruit #2 Seafood salad plate	07 #1 Italian pork chop w/peppers Mushroom barley soup Green & yellow squash Brown rice pilaf Sliced cantaloupe #2 Spinach salad w/chicken	08 #1 Beef Bourguignon (stewed beef) Cream of broccoli soup Cauliflower mashed potatoes Green beans Cake #2 Egg salad sandwich	09 #1 Creamy Tuscan chicken Lentil soup Brussels sprouts Roasted sweet potatoes Sliced pears #2 Greek salad w/chicken
12 Closed for Columbus Day Closed in observance of Columbus Day. The center reopens Tuesday, October 13 at 8:00 AM.	13 #1 Sausage & pepper sandwich Corn chowder 3 bean salad Cauliflower "potato" salad Pudding #2 Turkey & cheese on wheat	14 #1 Marry me chicken Vegetable soup Mashed potatoes Roasted green vegetables Sliced pears #2 Chicken salad sandwich	15 #1 Salisbury steak w/gravy Tomato spinach & basil soup Italian style zucchini Sweet potatoes Cake #2 Spinach salad w/chicken	16 #1 Fish tacos Chicken soup Rice pilaf Cole slaw Watermelon #2 Italian grinder
19 #1 Sloppy joe Tuscan vegetable soup Sweet potatoes Prince Edward vegetables Tropical fruit #2 Ham & Swiss sandwich	20 #1 Lemon chicken w/artichokes Vegetable barley soup Broccoli cauliflower mix Rice pilaf Sliced peaches #2 Egg salad on rye	21 #1 Pork chops Chicken escarole soup Bok choy Baby carrots Cookie #2 Cobb salad	22 #1 Pot roast w/gravy Minestrone soup Mashed potatoes Buttered corn Cake #2 Greek salad w/chicken	23 #1 Pub burger w/cheese Cabbage soup Greek cucumber salad Chips Fresh fruit #2 Seafood sandwich
26 #1 Roasted chicken w/gravy Wild rice soup Roasted potato Italian green beans Fresh fruit #2 Ham & cheese on rye	27 #1 Meatball sandwich Navy bean soup Carrot sticks w/green beans Chips Cookie #2 Tossed salad w/chicken	28 #1 Baked pasta w/mini meatballs & sausage Split pea soup Roasted vegetables Fruit cocktail #2 Tuna salad sandwich	29 #1 Pork tenderloin w/honey garlic Kale & sausage soup Rice pilaf Mashed cauliflower Yellow cake #2 Seafood salad plate	30 #1 Moroccan chicken Chicken noodle soup Roasted broccoli w/cheese Sweet potato Fruit cocktail #2 Roast beef sandwich

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
LA PLACITA Open to everyone - translators on site! Spanish programming on Tuesdays & Fridays: • Coffee, Cooking • Choir, Gardening • Brain Games • Creative Time	PAID EVENTS Bingo - \$1/card (\$4 for 4 cards) Night Bingo \$1 • Oct 6 Reiki \$10 • Oct 7 Halloween \$10 • Oct 29 Breakfast \$3 • Oct 27 Haircuts - \$10 All else free with \$18 membership.	LA BODEGA & LA FARMACIA Free food, household items, OTC medical supplies for members. Open Tue & Fri: 9:30am - 2:30pm Support from Elisha Project	01 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Pilates 12:15pm Bingo 02:00pm Movie	02 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Choir / Qigong 10:30am Brain Games 10:30am Garden 10:30am Jardinieria 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:30pm Chair Yoga 01:15pm Creative Time
05 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 10:30am Write for Delight 12:15pm Bingo	06 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Mini Massage 09:30am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Balance 09:30am Cocinando 10:30am Chair VB / Choir 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:15pm TJQMBB 01:15pm Creative Time 04:00pm Night Bingo	07 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Meditation 12:30pm Reiki 12:30pm Cribbage 12:30pm Crochet	08 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Pilates 12:15pm Bingo 02:00pm Movie	09 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Choir / Qigong 10:30am Brain Games 10:30am Garden 10:30am Jardinieria 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:30pm Chair Yoga 01:15pm Creative Time
12 Closed for Columbus Day Columbus Day is a federal holiday. The center is closed and no meals are served. We reopen Tuesday, October 13 at 8:00 AM.	13 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:30am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Balance 09:30am Cocinando 10:30am Chair VB / Choir 10:30am Nutrition 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:15pm TJQMBB 01:15pm Creative Time	14 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Meditation 12:30pm Cribbage 12:30pm Crochet 03:00pm Sound Bath	15 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:00am Tech Time 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Pilates 12:15pm Bingo 02:00pm Movie	16 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Choir / Qigong 10:30am Brain Games 10:30am Garden 10:30am Jardinieria 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:30pm Chair Yoga 01:15pm Creative Time
19 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:30am Flu & Covid 09:30am Keep Moving 10:30am Radiant & Strong 10:30am Write for Delight 12:15pm Bingo	20 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am SHIP Medicare 09:30am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Balance 09:30am Cocinando 10:30am Chair VB / Choir 12:00pm Tap Fun 12:15pm Gimnasia / TJQMBB 01:15pm Creative Time 01:30pm Zumba 02:30pm Line Dance	21 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Medicare 09:00am Blood Pressure 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Meditation 12:30pm Cribbage 12:30pm Crochet	22 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Pilates 12:15pm Bingo 02:00pm Adult Tap 03:00pm Barre 06:00pm Mayoral Debate	23 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Choir / Qigong 10:30am Brain Games 10:30am Garden 10:30am Jardinieria 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:30pm Chair Yoga 01:15pm Creative Time
26 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:30am Keep Moving 10:30am Radiant & Strong 10:30am Write for Delight 12:15pm Bingo	27 08:30am Breakfast 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:30am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Balance 09:30am Cocinando 10:30am Chair VB / Choir 12:00pm Tap Fun 12:15pm Gimnasia / TJQMBB 01:15pm Creative Time 01:30pm Zumba 02:30pm Line Dance	28 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Medicare 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Meditation 11:00am Senator Whitehouse 12:30pm Cribbage 12:30pm Crochet	29 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Haircuts 09:30am Get Moving 10:30am Pilates 10:30am Kids Halloween 12:15pm Bingo 02:00pm Adult Tap / Movie 03:00pm Barre 04:00pm Halloween Party	30 08:30am Coffee & Conv. 09:00am Arts/Crafts 09:30am Choir / Qigong 10:30am Brain Games 10:30am Garden 10:30am Jardinieria 12:15pm Gimnasia 12:30pm Chair Yoga 01:15pm Creative Time

FEATURED THIS MONTH

A Visit from Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Wednesday, October 28 · 11:00 AM · Main Hall · Everyone welcome

Senator Whitehouse is visiting 84 Social Street. Come in like you would on any Wednesday and say hello.

COME SAY HELLO

- No RSVP, no sign-up
- Come and go as you like

Aging Well Inc. does not endorse candidates or parties. Every candidate and every elected official is welcome on the same terms.

MINI MASSAGE

Tue 10/6, 9:00am

Chair massage with Sarah in the Wellness Room. Free for members, in fifteen minute slots. Sign up in the office in advance, and walk-ins are welcome if a slot is open.

NIGHT BINGO

Tue 10/6, 4:00pm · \$1 a card

Our evening bingo in the Main Hall. Cards are \$1 each, or \$4 for the whole night, which gets you into all four games. Food and drinks are available to buy.

REIKI

Wed 10/7, 12:30pm · \$10

Reiki with Kim Garneau, this month in the Meditation Room. Gentle hands-on energy work. \$10 a session. Sign up in advance at the office.

NUTRITION

Tue 10/13, 10:30am

In the Pool Room.

SOUND BATH

Wed 10/14, 3:00pm

In the Main Hall.

TECH TIME

Thu 10/15, 9:00am

ATEL Tech Time, run with the ATEL program at the RI Department of Human Services. Bring a question, or just come to learn something new on your phone or tablet. Free, and no experience needed.

FLU & COVID CLINIC

Mon 10/19, 9:30am

Free flu and COVID vaccines here at the center, provided by Asthenis, 9:30 to 11:00. Sign up in advance by calling 401-766-3734.

SHIP COUNSELING

Tue 10/20, 9:00am

Free private appointments with Guy on Medicare Part D, Advantage Plans, and personal fraud or abuse concerns. Call 401-766-3734 to book a time.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Wed 10/21 & 10/28, 9:00am

Medicare's open enrollment runs October 15 through December 7. Guy is in the back office both Wednesdays from 9:00 to 1:45, in 45 minute appointments. Call 401-766-3734 to book a time.

BLOOD PRESSURES

Wed 10/21, 9:00am

Have your blood pressure taken.

MAYORAL DEBATE

Thu 10/22, 6:00pm

Mayor Christopher Beauchamp debates Council President Daniel Gendron, here in the Main Hall. Aging Well is hosting with the League of Women Voters, and Dr. Joseph Cammarano of Providence College will moderate. The questions come from you: submit yours at agingwellinc.org/debate or in writing by Tuesday, October 13 at noon.

BREAKFAST CLUB

Tue 10/27, 8:30am · \$3

Start your morning with good food and good company. Breakfast is made right in our kitchen by Steve and Marie, using simple, familiar favorites. \$3 suggested donation. Sign up in the office in advance.

CHILDREN'S HALLOWEEN PARTY

Thu 10/29, 10:30am

Our Halloween party with the children from Harris School, in the Main Hall. Free and open to all members.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

Thu 10/29, 4:00pm · \$10

Our evening Halloween party in the Main Hall. \$10.

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Weekdays, 8:30am

Start your day with free coffee and easy conversation in the Main Hall. Walk, chat, or simply settle in, however you like to begin.

GET & KEEP MOVING

Mon + Wed + Thu, 9:30am

Gentle, full-body movement with Steve Westerman in the Main Hall on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Build strength and flexibility at a comfortable pace, at every level.

RADIANT & STRONG

Mondays, 10:30am

Build strength and steadiness with Elaine Olivier in the Main Hall. Controlled movements and good form help you feel strong and confident in everyday life.

WRITE FOR DELIGHT

Mondays, 10:30am

A welcoming writing group with Jane Allard in the Sewing Room where everyone has a voice. Journal, story, or poem, whatever you enjoy. No experience needed, just bring your imagination.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Tue + Fri, 9:00am / 9:30am

Open craft time in the Craft Room on Tuesdays and Fridays. Work on a group piece or bring your own project, with supplies on hand.

BALANCE & FLEX

Tuesdays, 9:30am

Gentle work on posture, stability, and everyday mobility with Steve Westerman. Safe for all levels, with a focus on controlled movement and breathing.

CHAIR VOLLEYBALL

Tuesdays, 10:30am

Low impact, high laughter with Susan Jameson in the Main Hall. Played from chairs with a soft ball, so everyone can join in.

TAI JI QUAN

Tue + Fri, 12:15pm

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance, in the Tap Room. Slow, gentle forms shown to improve balance and prevent falls. Beginners are always welcome.

MEDITATION

Wednesdays, 10:30am

Take a midweek pause with Diane Westerman in the calm of the Beach Room. Guided practices to ease stress and quiet the mind.

CRIBBAGE FOR FUN

Wednesdays, 12:30pm

Friendly cribbage after lunch in the Pool Room. New or experienced, a warm group is ready to deal you in.

CROCHET GROUP

Wednesdays, 12:30pm

Crochet and needlework with Irene Gledhill in the Craft Room. Bring a project or start a new one with help.

AGELESS PILATES

Thursdays, 10:30am

A gentle Pilates class on the mat or in a chair, focused on core strength, posture, and flexibility. Move at your own pace with modifications for every fitness level.

MOVIE MATINEE

Thursdays, 2:00pm

A free afternoon movie every Thursday in the Main Hall. Settle in with popcorn and enjoy the show.

QIGONG

Fridays, 9:30am

Slow, flowing movement and mindful breathing with Patricia in the Pool Room. Supports balance, circulation, and a sense of calm.

BRAIN GAMES

Fridays, 10:30am

Puzzles, wordplay, and memory challenges with Susan Jameson in the Pool Room. A lighthearted but real workout for the mind.

GARDEN GROUP

Fridays, 10:30am

Gardening and outdoor time in El Jardin, Fridays at 10:30. Dig in year-round at any level of experience.

CHAIR YOGA

Fridays, 12:30pm

Stretch, strengthen, and breathe, all from a chair, with Robin in the Pool Room. Improve flexibility, posture, and calm without getting on the floor.



FOUR GAMES EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY IN OCTOBER

ESSENTIALS FOR NEW PLAYERS

- Come early to grab your favorite spot in the hall.
- Game 1 starts between 12:20 and 12:30pm.
- Cards \$1 each. Pack of 4 for \$4. \$400 prize pool.
- Buy all of your cards at once before Game 1.
- Daubers free at the door. \$1.50 for your own.
- New number every 17 seconds, previewed on one of our four big screens!
- Wait for the official call before shouting Bingo.
- Volunteer callers run every game.
- Bring a friend (55+). New players welcome every week.

	\$12	\$16	\$22	\$50
GAME 1				
GAME 2				
GAME 3				
GAME 4				



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LIHEAP
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Our Dual Special Needs plan network includes Brown University Health

uhcdualplans.com




Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract and a contract with the State Medicaid Program. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare. Other providers are available in our network.

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PARTICIPANT CONTRIBUTIONS

Page 12

DONALD'S CORNER

Another service that has been offered at the Senior Center is Judy's haircuts. Just haircuts, no hairdressing or dyeing of hair. Judy comes in on Mondays and Thursdays. She gave me a haircut last month. She's nice and she's friendly. There are a few advantages of getting a haircut at the Senior Center. You will be seeing only one person for the haircut. You can tell her how you want your haircut done and would not have to repeat the instructions every single time as compared to going somewhere else. Also, you would not have to travel to the other place for a haircut. You would just get the haircut right at the Senior Center. The price is also good, just \$10.00 for a haircut. So come and try a haircut with Judy the barber. By appt. or walk-ins are welcome. To make an appt. call her at (401) 309-5566. Must be a member of Aging Well.

Fall or Autumn is here. The leaves will be turning colors so let's enjoy the different colors. Time for Autumnfest once again. Hope you enjoy Autumnfest if you go.

Until next month, see you at the Senior Center.

LOVED ME THROUGH IT

by Laurie Bartlett

You hugged me through it
Listened with compassion
Held me firm
When I was collapsing
Picked me up
From dark despair
Gave of yourself
Just by being there
Dropped everything
To hold my hand
To hear me out
And understand
Patched my heart
With soothing words
Helped to mend
My broken world
I won't forget
Dark shadows lit
With all your heart
You loved me through it

CANCER

by Pauline Riel

Contend with you we will,
we won't let you win.
Answers are not there,
of why and who.
Never lose hope.
We have to believe
there is a reason.
Celebrate every minute
of every day.
Everyone is praying
and hoping for a cure.
Remember to lean on family
and friends. TRUST in God
and don't give up.

FRACTURED HAIKUS

by Melvyn B. Gendron

Looking back on ourselves,
We discover our
Adventures,
Dark secrets,
And laughable times.
Our joy!
It is our life
In mind pictures.

The birds sing for me.
Such a delightful choir.
I am their only audience
I think,
Yet they perform
With overwhelming joy.

If I keep busy
And have things to do,
I miss no one.

To break bread
With someone
With bad table manners
Is not an option,
Though I am not welcome
At many tables.

I hear tiny footsteps
And childish chatter
They're here!
The kids upstairs
Bringing boundless joy.

CELEBRATING THIS MONTH

Happy Birthday, October!

OCTOBER 2

Zaida Diaz
Beatria Gonzalez
Burzin Sethna
Linda Theriault

OCTOBER 3

Kim Bielat
Luis Romero

OCTOBER 5

Richard Gamache
Brian Renaud

OCTOBER 6

Karen Gilly-Schacht
Janice Paul

OCTOBER 7

Normand St. George

OCTOBER 8

Laura Bartlette
Donna Patenaude

OCTOBER 10

Kristen Jarret

OCTOBER 11

Elias Cruz Jr.

OCTOBER 12

Robert Thurber

OCTOBER 16

Kate Epp
Barbara Lafferty

OCTOBER 17

Donna Palreiro

OCTOBER 18

Claire Briere

OCTOBER 19

Jeannine Giguere-Gagnon
Donna Guilbault

OCTOBER 20

Donna Wheaton

OCTOBER 21

Robin Berard
James Gagnon
Carol Guilmain
Joni Padula

OCTOBER 24

Scott Youman Sr.

OCTOBER 29

Wilfredo Castillo

How We Fight

On rules, second chances, and why we keep trying

Every day before lunch at Aging Well, we say a prayer.

“Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

For some people at our tables, those words carry a lifetime of meaning. For others, they may simply be a familiar tradition. And for some, perhaps, it is just a moment to pause before we eat. I think all of those are okay.

You can believe that God is blessing the food. You can believe it is a gift from the people who grew it, prepared it and served it. Or you can simply be grateful that today you have a meal and people around you to share it with.

For a few seconds, we stop. And maybe that is more important than we realize.

Because it is very easy to look around at the world right now and conclude that something has gone terribly wrong. We see war. We see cruelty. We see homeless veterans in the richest country in the history of the world. We see people who seem to have forgotten how to listen to one another. And thanks to our phones, we have an almost unlimited ability to see all of it, all day, every day.

I don't think we should pretend that everything is fine. But I also don't think cynicism is the same thing as wisdom.

I keep thinking about a scene in one of my favorite movies, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. Ke Huy Quan plays the character I want to tell you about.

His name is Waymond Wang, and he spends much of the movie seeming almost comically nice. He is gentle. He's optimistic. He tries to make people laugh. He sees possibilities where other people see problems. His wife, Evelyn, doesn't always understand him. In a chaotic and violent world, his kindness can look ridiculous.

Then Waymond explains himself. He knows the world is cruel. He isn't naive. He says that when he chooses to see the good side of things, it isn't because he doesn't understand reality. It is because he does. And when the world is terrible, he still doesn't see kindness as surrender.

He sees it as how he fights.

I love that idea. Because there is a difference between being naive about the world and refusing to let the worst parts of the world determine who you are.

We have a small store downstairs, La Bodega and La Farmacia, where people can find things they need. It exists because having fewer resources should not mean having fewer choices, fewer opportunities or less dignity.

There were some instances of people taking more than their fair share. No one set out to take

advantage of anyone. We had a system meant to reward our volunteers, which is a good instinct, and over time it stretched further than it was ever designed to go. People did what they understood the rules to be. If the rules were not clear enough, that is ours to fix.

So we need rules, and we need them clear enough that no one has to guess.

But then comes the harder question. What do we do next?

The easy answer is to go looking for someone to blame. To say, “Fine. If people can't follow the rules, then no one gets anything.” I understand that reaction. But I don't think it is the answer, and I don't think it is what happened here.

No one here is a villain. We will make the rules plain, fix what we built, and go on together.

Because it is easy to believe in generosity when everyone behaves perfectly. The real test comes when someone makes it difficult.

If you are a person of faith, the teachings of Jesus set a demanding standard. The New Testament returns again and again to caring for people who are hungry, poor, vulnerable or considered outsiders. He tells his followers to love their enemies and to welcome the stranger. And I think the underlying idea extends beyond religion.

How We Fight - Continued

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It is easy to say that we believe in kindness. It is much harder to practice it when someone has annoyed us. That is when the words have to become actions.

And I want to be clear about something: kindness does not mean having no boundaries. We can say, "That is more than the rule allows." We can hold people accountable. We can even say that something someone did was unacceptable.

And we can do all of that without deciding that someone is unacceptable. Those are not the same thing, and the difference is most of what I believe about this place.

Because every one of us has been the person who screwed up. Maybe not in exactly the same way. Maybe our mistakes were private. Maybe they didn't affect anyone else. Maybe someone was kind enough to give us another chance before anyone else found out. But we have all been selfish. We have all been impatient. We have all failed to live up to the person we would like to be. Including me.

So I don't think Aging Well should be a place where we pretend people are perfect. I think it should be a place where we practice being better.

Because Aging Well cannot simply be another place where people come to eat lunch, play cards, exercise and pass the afternoon. If that's all we are, then we're just another building.

I want Aging Well to be a small example of the possibility of a better world. Not a perfect world. A better one. A place where we can

disagree without hating each other. Where we can help someone without first asking whether they earned it. Where we can recognize that people are complicated. Where we can give someone another chance. Where we can sit down together and share a meal.

But there is another temptation we have to resist. And that is the temptation to stop trying.

Something goes wrong at the store? Fine. Get rid of the store. Someone doesn't follow the rules? Fine. Don't offer the program. People complain about a new idea? Fine. Don't try another one. Eventually you arrive at a very comfortable place. You do things exactly the way they have always been done, and no one can criticize you for changing something. No one is better off, either.

I have written this before and I still believe it. The only way I can guarantee that everyone gets exactly the same amount of stuff is for that amount to be zero.

Zero is easy. Zero is perfectly fair. No one gets more than anyone else, no one can complain, because there is nothing left to run.

None of this is to excuse bad behavior. When someone does something wrong, we deal with it.

But think about what the incentives actually look like. Every instinct toward self-preservation, every instinct to avoid criticism, points the same direction: do nothing. Don't open the store. Don't change the program. Don't try the new idea. Nothing new means nothing to explain and nothing to answer for. Doing nothing would be the easiest version of this job by a mile.

I am not going to do that because that just isn't who I am. I would rather work in a place where better is possible, even when better turns out to be imperfect. And I would rather live in one too.

The incentives only make sense if the goal is to help people. And that is what La Bodega and La Farmacia are for. To help people. We don't always get it right, but we do try.

Aging Well today looks very different than it did a few years ago. We've tried new things. Some have worked beautifully. Some have probably made people scratch their heads. That's okay. Nothing worth building works perfectly the first time.

Every change creates questions. Every improvement creates someone who preferred the old way. And every organization that actually tries to improve is going to experience criticism. That's not necessarily evidence that something is wrong. Sometimes it's evidence that something is happening.

Familiar things feel safe. We know how they work. We know what to expect. When someone changes a familiar thing, even with the best intentions, it can feel like something is being taken away. But there is a difference between respecting what has worked and believing that nothing should ever change.

We are living in a world with more technology, more knowledge, more possibilities and more ways to connect people than at any other point in human history. Are we really supposed to put all of that on cruise control? Are we supposed to spend the rest of our time simply maintaining what already exists because trying something new might mean someone complains?

So we have to be willing to experiment, and willing to say, "Okay, that didn't work the way we hoped. What can we do better?" That's not failure. That's how improvement works.

And it applies to all of us. Maybe we need to write the rules down plainly. Maybe we need a better system. But "something went wrong, therefore no one gets anything" is not a philosophy of community. It's surrender.

None of us gets out of this life alive. So what are we going to do with the time in between? Are we going to protect ourselves from every criticism? Or are we going to build something? Are we going to avoid every mistake? Or are we going to try? Are we going to leave everything exactly as we found it? Or are we going to leave some small part of it better than we found it?

I know which one I want. I want Aging Well to be a place where we try. Where we experiment. Where we learn. Where we hold each other accountable without giving up on each other. Where we can admit when something isn't working without deciding that trying was the mistake. Where we can change

without losing the things that matter.

And where we remember that the purpose of all of this isn't the programs themselves. It's the people. The meal isn't the point. The bingo isn't the point. The store isn't the point. The building isn't even really the point.

People are the point.

If we can make someone's life a little easier, a little healthier, a little less lonely, a little more connected, or just a little more enjoyable because we were willing to try something new, then the risk was worth taking.

People disagree about what comes next after this life. Some are certain there is something, some are certain there is not, and some are not sure. I'm not here to tell anyone what they should believe. But the one thing we can all agree on is that we are here now. We have this moment. We have these people. We have this place. So isn't it worth a try?

The world is imperfect. We are imperfect. The next idea will be imperfect. That's okay. Let's try anyway.

Let's follow the rules. Let's hold each other accountable. Let's forgive each other when we fall short. Let's keep building. And, whenever we can, let's be kind.

Because maybe the answer isn't to pretend the world is better than it is. Maybe the answer is to make our little piece of it better. One meal. One person at a time.

Every day, we gather around the same tables. We say our prayer. And then we eat together. Maybe it

reminds us that we are here, together.

I want us to leave this place a little better than we found it. Even if it isn't perfect. Especially if it isn't perfect.

I see you all, the seniors, more than I see my family. I know what kind of place I want to work at and spend my time at. But it is ultimately up to you all. The same place forever, or a place that tries to help and tries to be better every day, knowing that some of that will come with growing pains. Choose carefully.

That's how we fight.

– Ryan

People are the point.

VOTING AND THE DEBATE

Election Day

Tuesday, November 3.

Early voting

City Hall, 3rd floor, October 14 through November 2. Weekdays 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Bring a photo ID.

Ask the candidates

Submit a question for the mayoral debate at agingwellinc.org/debate, or in person at 84 Social Street, by Tuesday, October 13 at noon.

Questions about voting

vote.ri.gov, or the Board of Canvassers at 401-767-9223.

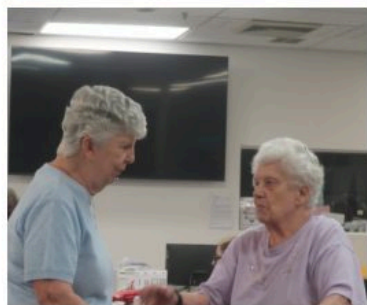
AGING WELL INC.

84 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

401-766-3734 · agingwellinc.org

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8:00am - 4:00pm

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MAKE A DONATION

Aging Well Inc. is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit that proudly operates the senior center for the City of Woonsocket. Donate at agingwellinc.org.



OCTOBER FEATURE
Medicare Open Enrollment

Open enrollment runs October 15 to December 7, and changes take effect January 1. Guy is currently accepting appointments in October and November. Call 401-766-3734.

YEAR-ROUND COUNSELING

Free private appointments with Guy on Medicare Part D, Advantage Plans, and personal fraud or abuse concerns. Call 401-766-3734.



COMMUNITY PARTNER
Woonsocket
Situation Table

A weekly partnership of local agencies. More than thirty sit at this table, among them the Woonsocket Police and Fire Departments, the Housing Authority, Thundermist Health Center and the Community Care Center.

More than 100 situations have been brought to the table so far.

Aging Well Inc. is a proud member.
woonsocketsituationtable.org