

# HUMAN SERVICES

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Arlington Department of Health and Human Services is the agency that oversees the Health Department, Council on Aging, Arlington Youth Consultation Center, and the Veteran's Services Office. The agency also coordinates the activities of the following boards: Board of Health, Board of Youth Services, Council on Aging, Disability Commission, and the Human Rights Commission. Additionally, the agency works with the Food Pantry, Fair Housing, Widows Trust Fund Commission, Youth Health and Safety Coalition, and the Health and Human Services Charitable Corporation.

The mission of the Department of Health and Human Services is to provide a safety net for Arlington residents experiencing difficulties in their lives and also to promote a healthy environment for all residents.

During 2008, the Department of Health and Human Services continued to collect donations from generous residents, businesses, and agencies to provide support for the assistance funds, which serves needy residents, such as the fuel assistance fund, food pantry, and general assistance funds.

### **Arlington Food Pantry**

In 2008, the Arlington Food Pantry provided food to over 340 people in over 150 Arlington families twice per month. The late Marjory Johnson, who passed away in 2008, served as a co-coordinator of the Arlington Food Pantry with her husband Warren for over 16 years. The Board of Selectmen recognized the accomplishments of the late Marge Johnson during the November 24<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting and presented a proclamation to Marge's husband Warren Johnson. Mr. Johnson presented a donation to the Food Pantry in the amount of \$1,000 in Marge's honor. The Board of Selectmen named Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> as Marjory Johnson Community Service Day. The Board of Selectmen stated that there is no higher value than caring about others. Marge dedicated her life to serving others, December 12<sup>th</sup> was a successful day where community groups volunteered many hours of service to host food drives and conduct volunteer work in the community. In 2008, the Department raised over \$56,000 to fund food for the Arlington food pantry. One hundred percent of the donations raised by the department goes to purchase food for Arlington residents in need.

### **Arlington Fuel Assistance**

The Board of Youth Services and the Council on Aging jointly raised over \$38,000 for the Arlington Fuel Assistance fund during 2008. Large donors included the Calvary Methodist Church, Confraternity Society of Saint Vincent DePaul, Arlington Police Patrolman's Association, and Arlmount Fuel, which donated home heating oil at cost. Over 50 Arlington families received assistance.



*L-R in photo: Officer Bryan Gallagher, Christine Sharkey, Director of Health and Human Services, Officer Ronald Kerr.*

The Arlington Patrolman's Association donated \$2,500 to the Arlington Fuel Assistance Fund in 2008.

## ARLINGTON YOUTH HEALTH AND SAFETY COALITION

The Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition (AYHSC), a coalition of agencies and organizations including the schools, police, health department, local and state government, youth, parents, and the business community was established in 2006 after a highly publicized youth tragedy related to substance abuse. The coalition is managed out of the Health Department office and is focused on youth substance abuse prevention. The coalition worked over the past two years to conduct a community needs assessment and to develop a strategic plan to address youth substance use across disciplines in a more coordinated fashion. The coalition applied for, and was awarded, a federal grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The coalition intends to use the funding to implement evidence-based strategies across Town to decrease substance use and abuse among youth. The grant award, \$125,000 per year for five years. The Town will be able to apply for a second round of funding for an additional five years for a total of \$1,250,000. The coalition administered a Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2007 and held a community forum in 2008 presenting and discussing the results with community members. The Youth Diversion Program was fully implemented in 2008.

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## HEALTH DEPARTMENT



The Health Department office is located at 27 Maple Street in the Arlington Multipurpose Senior Center, located behind Town Hall. The Board of Health is required by state laws and regulations to perform many important and crucial duties relative to the protection of public health and safety, the control of disease, the promotion of safe and sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from damage and pollution. These mandated requirements are conducted by staff in the Health Department.

### Environmental Health Permitting and Inspections

Staff annually permit, and regularly inspect, restaurants, tobacco retailers, tanning establishments, body art establishments, pools, the ice-skating rink, and the bathing beach. Inspectors from the department also follow up on numerous resident complaints related to any health issue within the community ranging from trash and dumpster complaints to housing code violations. The environmental health division is comprised of one full time and one part time inspector. One additional part time inspector position was eliminated in June from the Department due to budget cuts. The Department also contracts with a private contractor to conduct a portion of mandated food establishment inspections. Other environmental health activities in 2008 included: monitoring microcystis algae at Spy Pond, goose control, mosquito control, and needle and prescription drug collection.

### Permits issued by the Board of Health 2006-2008

PERMIT ISSUED	2006	2007	2008
Food	203	220	230
Tobacco	30	30	31
Massage Therapist	71	95	70*
Massage Establishment	30	47	40*
Waste Hauler	12	13	13
Funeral Director	7	6	6
Tanning Establishment	2	2	2
Public Pool	7	8	8
Public Beach	1	1	1
Ice rink	1	1	1
Body Art Establishment	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>403</b>

### Inspections conducted by the Board of Health 2006-2008

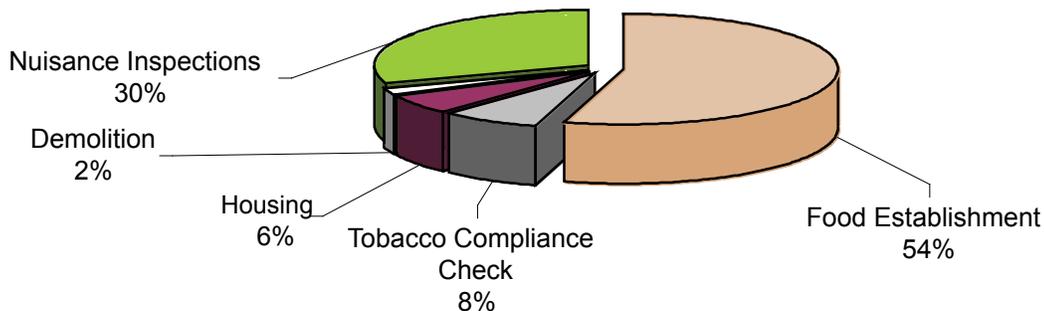
INSPECTION TYPE	2006	2007	2008
Food Establishment	203	359	449
Tobacco Compliance Check	30	60	62
Housing		52	48
Massage Establishment*	30	80	0*
Demolition Inspection		24	16
Nuisance Inspection		300	250
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>875</b>	<b>825</b>

\*The Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure assumed responsibility of licensing and inspecting massage therapy establishments in 2008.

### Food Protection

In 2008, the department conducted 449 food inspections within four risk-based categories. The department assigns each establishment in Town that serves food to a risk-based category. A food establishment that sells packaged food, such as a convenience store, is considered low risk and is assigned to a category one

### Environmental Health Inspections 2008



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and is inspected one time per year. A food establishment that serves food to a fragile population, such as a nursing home, is considered a high risk and would be placed in a category four and is inspected four times per year. The Department investigated nineteen food complaints, held six administrative hearings to discuss food safety, and had ten establishment closures. In addition, twelve new food establishments were opened in 2008.



*The health inspectors permitted and inspected vendors at the Farmer's Market*

### Types of Food Permits issued in 2008

Type of Food Permit	Number issued
Food Establishment Permits	180
Mobile Food Permits	8*
Residential Kitchen Permits	6
Farmers Market Permits	12
Temporary Event Food Permit	24

*\*Of the total number of mobile food permits issued, 4 permits were revoked for non-compliance of department standards.*

### Housing

The Department conducted forty-eight inspections of rental housing units in 2008 in accordance with 105 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 410.000, Massachusetts Housing Code. When a housing inspection is requested by a resident, an inspector conducts an inspection and may cite a landlord for violations of the housing code. The landlord is then ordered to repair violations. Violations documented in 2008 included, improper heating, cross metering of electricity, chronic dampness, leaking sewage pipes and plumbing fixtures, improper asbestos removal, structural integrity, insect and rodent infestations, and many more.

The Department condemned one house for uninhabitable conditions due to a lack of running water and electricity. The Department also worked closely with the Council on Aging and Minuteman Senior Services to assist the residents of the properties with alternate hous-

ing and services.

The condition of collecting excessive debris and belongings is called hoarding. The Department inspectors attended training in 2008 on how to address residents with hoarding tendencies. Many hoarding units that are inspected are unsafe due to the amount of debris and the danger to first responders as well as the occupant and general public. Additionally, materials that are close to heating units or stoves could catch fire. Studies show that 1-2% of the general population has hoarding tendencies. The Department is planning to work with other Town departments in 2009 to develop a more coordinated response to handling hoarding cases. Although only one home was condemned in 2008, the Department was involved in four cases in which the properties were observed in "hoarding" type conditions.



*An apartment where the occupant had collected an excessive amount of debris.*

### Emergency Preparedness

The Department continued to work with the public health emergency preparedness region 4b, which includes all of the health departments in the communities surrounding the City of Boston. In December, the Towns of Arlington, Belmont, Brookline, Watertown, and the City of Newton came together to offer a flu clinic to the public in the Town of Belmont, to test a multi-community response to a large-scale public clinic. This is the group's sixth regional clinic and in 2008, the group utilized the Medical Reserve Corps as well as tested plans for special needs populations. The results from the emergency clinics have become a model for other groups of communities as they plan for vaccinating residents.

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## Arlington Medical Reserve Corps



The Medical Reserve Core (MRC) is made up of Arlington residents who have signed up to be a volunteer to help assist the Town of Arlington in the event of an emergency. The group of volunteers is made up of medical and non-medical professionals. The Health Department practices their emergency plans every year during Town and regional flu shot clinics. During these exercises the Health Department calls upon MRC volunteers to help assist in running, planning and operating the flu clinics. Additionally, region 4b provides free emergency preparedness training to all MRC volunteers.



*Medical Reserve Corps volunteer vaccinates resident at flu shot clinic.*

## Communicable Diseases Monitored by the Public Health Nurse.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE	# of cases 2006	# of cases 2007	# of cases 2008
Babesiosis	0	1	0
Campylobacter Enteritis	12	11	6
Chicken pox	13	0	5
Cryptosporidiosis	0	0	1
Cyclospora	0	0	0
Dengue Fever	0	0	0
Ecoli	2	0	0
Enterovirus	1	0	0
Giardia	10	11	5
Haemophilis Influenzae	0	1	0
Hepatitis A	0	1	0
Hepatitis B	17	12	2*
Hepatitis C	0	11	6*
Legionellosis	3	1	0
Lyme Disease	15	19	11
Listeriosis	0	0	0
Malaria	0	0	0
Measles	1	0	0
Meningitis	1	2 viral	0
Norovirus	0	1	4
Pertussis	32	15	3
Salmonella	9	6	12
Shigatoxin	0	0	0
Shigellosis	1	1	3
Strep pneumonia invasive	6	6	4
Group A strep	2	1	1
Group B strep	3	1	2
Tuberculosis	1	3	4
Tuberculosis contacts	*	4	25
West Nile Virus	1	1	0
Yersiniosis	0	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>96</b>

\* chronic

## Public Health Nursing

### Communicable Disease Surveillance

To protect the community against the spread of contagious illnesses, a rigorous communicable disease tracking system is in place. Arlington joined the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in 2008 in conducting online disease reporting through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiology Network (MAVEN). State law requires that doctors, hospitals and laboratories report contagious diseases including diseases such as tuberculosis, whooping cough, and salmonella. When a doctor diagnoses a resident with a contagious disease, the public health nurse conducts an investigation to determine if further control measures are needed. The illness is then recorded and reviewed to identify and respond to any possible disease outbreaks. The new online reporting system will streamline disease investigation and will assist the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with early detection of contagious disease trends. During 2008, ninety-six communicable diseases were monitored.

Other efforts for disease prevention during 2008 included immunization clinics such as flu vaccine clinics in the fall where over 1,600 residents were vaccinated. The Department vaccinated Town employees and school nurses vaccinated school staff using vaccine purchased through a grant provided by Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare. Blue Cross Blue Shield provided two nurses to assist with an employee clinic at the Town employee health fair held in Town Hall. The Department conducted 15 flu clinics, including the first ever *Vote and Vaccinate* clinic. Clinics were held at senior housing buildings, the Senior Center, and at Saint Camilla's Church.

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Flu Prevention Clinic Overview	
Number of flu shot clinics held in 2008	15
Number of Residents vaccinated at 2008 flu clinics	1600
Number of administrative volunteers that assisted	49
Number of Nurse volunteers that assisted	27



*Diane Coste training student nurses.*

Public Health Nurse, Diane Coste trains student nurses from the University of Massachusetts. They are trained on the use of safety syringes which are used in all public health flu shot clinics across Massachusetts. The Council on Aging hosts 12 nursing students each semester that work with the Geriatric Nurse and the Public Health Nurse to provide health clinics, screenings and visits to the Town's neediest elders.

## BOARD OF HEALTH

The three member Board of Health meets on a regular basis. During meetings, environmental health concerns are addressed and public hearings and policy review is performed. In 2008 the Board of Health met six times and conducted four housing code hearings, six food code hearings the food code hearings resulted in closure of one food establishment for fourteen days and granting of one variance, and three tobacco sales violation hearings. The Board of Health indefinitely suspended the Funeral Director permit of one Funeral Director after hearing evidence presented that the Director forged a death certificate.

### Recognitions

Dr. Carole Allen, an area pediatrician who gave over twelve years of service to the Board of Health, retired from the board in December. Dr. Allen worked on developing Arlington's smoke free workplace regulations, which were among the first in the nation. As a re-

sult of Dr. Allen's work on the Board of Health, Arlington has served as a model for other communities throughout the nation for tobacco control.



*Representative Sean Garballey presents a Proclamation to Dr. Carole Allen.*

At a reception honoring Dr. Carole Allen, Representative Sean Garballey read a Proclamation from the Massachusetts General Court in honor of Dr. Carole Allen's twelve years of service to the Arlington Board of Health as well as decades of service on the community as a public health and tobacco control advocate.

### Weights and Measures

To ensure compliance with the Consumer and Merchant Protection Act, the Sealer of Weights and Measures conducts inspections of all scales, scanners, and dispensing equipment. This includes retail stores, gas stations, oil trucks, and food establishments. The Sealer responds to all consumer complaints to ensure fairness and accuracy.



*Arlmont Fuel oil truck inspected and sealed by Sealer of Weights and Measures, Joe Carabello*

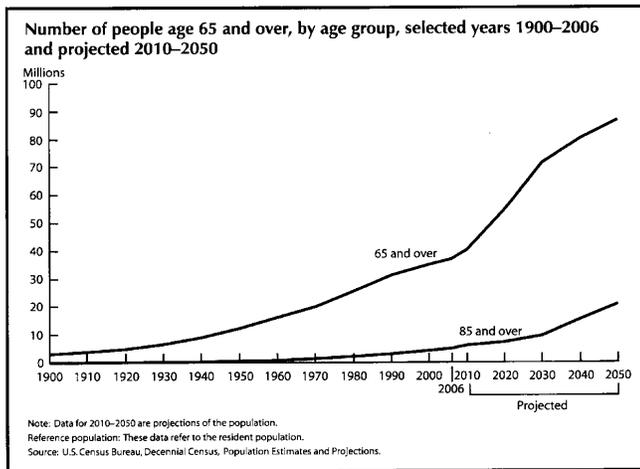
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As merchants are inspected annually, compliance with standards and accuracy of merchant measuring devices has increased steadily.

## COUNCIL ON AGING

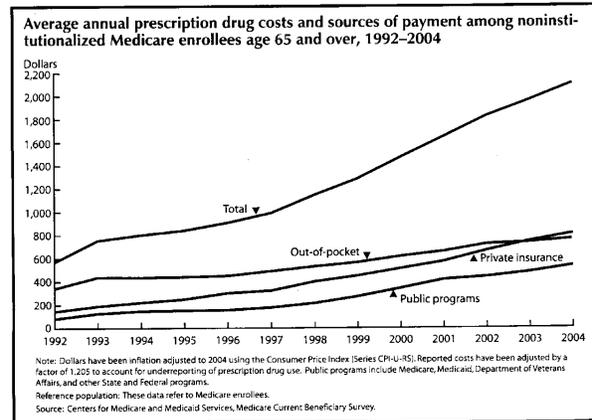
The Council on Aging (COA), a division of the Department of Human Services, provides advocacy and support services to help Arlington elders live dignified and independent lives. The Council's primary responsibilities are to identify the needs of the community's elder population; to design, promote, and implement services to address such needs; and to coordinate existing services in the community. The COA carries out locally the programs of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and coordinates with public and private agencies and providers in the area.

The elder cohort as a segment of the overall population continues to grow. Projections of the growth of this age group would put the elder Arlington population at 15,000 by the year 2030, almost double what it is presently.



As the "Baby Boomers" move into their sixties and beyond, the over-fifty-five population will increase seventy-five percent, until one in three residents is fifty-five or older. This means the demand for senior housing will remain strong and there will be increased demand for senior services and transit." (*Massachusetts Metropolitan Area Planning Council*). "Our Changing Population: Metro Future projections brief #1"

People are living longer than ever before. With greater numbers of elderly community residents, and the delivery of senior services requiring more monitoring and complex support efforts and with rising health care costs our elders are expected to turn more toward municipal services to meet their needs. This surge will be more than our current service delivery capability allows. "Older Americans 2008: Key Indicators of Well-



Being" (charts from the *Federal Agency Forum on Aging Related Statistics*)

### Highlights for 2008

- The Council on Aging's Transportation Program provided over 10,000 one-way rides for Arlington seniors through the agency's lift-equipped vans and subsidized taxi vouchers.
- The Sanborn Transportation Subsidy Fund continues to serve as a vital transportation-subsidy resource for Arlington cancer victims and their families. In 2008, through various means of transport such as COA vans, taxis, ambulance service, private van services, and private drivers this fund provided more than 700 one-way rides to and from cancer-related medical appointments and treatments.
- The Sevoyan Dental Subsidy Program continues to provide critical financial support for low-income seniors who have no dental coverage; thirty-nine clients were served this year.
- By the end of 2008, eighteen Arlington seniors had received benefits from the Sevoyan Dial-a-Ride Scholarship Program, which was created to subsidize the cost of local transportation for very low-income clients. This unique subsidy program allows access to the community and its resources.
- The Sevoyan Personal Needs Program continues to provide subsidy for very low-income seniors' special needs, for the maintenance of their independence and safety, without which the client would be at risk.
- The COA's podiatry clinic, a much sought-after health resource, serves more than sixty seniors each month.
- A generous grant from Lahey Clinic to introduce seniors to the benefits of regular exercise was again given to the COA. This allowed the continuation of Aquacise, Tai Chi, and Walk the Rink programs for a fourth

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year and a unique form of Chair Pilates for seniors. Over 1,200 units of service were delivered under this grant.

- The Guardian Program, jointly sponsored by the Council on Aging and Arlington Police, is a senior safety program in which a computerized system makes daily calls to those needing regular safety monitoring.
- The COA continues to host the Minuteman Senior Services Nutrition Program at the Senior Center, where home-delivered meals are prepared and one of the two Arlington Eating Together meal sites is located.
- The Retired Men's Club Of Arlington again generously assumed all costs for the COA's annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner deliveries to the frail and homebound. Individuals and families, all volunteers, packed and delivered one hundred twenty meals this year.
- The Yamaji-Newcastle Fund provides for the annual Senior Center Volunteers' Appreciation luncheon, and for support and educational opportunities for Senior Center volunteers.
- The COA continues to serve as a field-training site for students from The University of Massachusetts School of Nursing, Salem State College School of Social Work, Harvard Divinity School, and other institutions.
- Completed a detailed assessment of needs for Arlington seniors. These results will be used to determine the future directions of our services and programs.

## Community Partnering Efforts

The agency's mission could not be accomplished without the cooperation and involvement of other organizations and agencies, both public and private. The COA continues productive working relationships with other Town agencies as well as with community organizations such as; Arlington Visiting Nurse & Community Health, Arlington Community Media, Inc, McLean Hospital, Mount Auburn Hospital, Operation A.B.L.E., Arlington Seniors Association, Lahey Clinic, Cooperative Elder Services, Inc, Park Avenue Congregational Church, Arlington ELKS, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, SCM Transportation, and many others.

## Funding

Principal funding for the agency derives from municipal, state and federal sources. The Massachusetts' Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) Formula Grant provides for more than half the salaries for two of the COA's key positions, the agency's Social Worker and the Geriatric Nurse Specialist. Federal dollars, through

the Community Development Block Grant Program, support the Council on Aging Transportation Program, the Adult Day Health Center Scholarships, and the Transportation Coordinator/Supervisor of Volunteer position.

## Volunteer Involvement

Many COA programs would not exist without the dedication and continued involvement of COA volunteers. These include the Telephone Reassurance Program, Friendly Visitor Program, Income Tax Aide, Tax Abatement Assistant, Medical Escorts, Health Benefits Counselor (S.H.I.N.E.), Blood Pressure Clinic, Podiatry Clinic, Flu and Pneumonia Clinics, Receptionist, Clerical Assistant, Attorney, Financial Planner, and other special projects throughout the year.

More than eighty individuals gave 8,000 hours of service through these COA programs. Volunteers are recognized and honored at an Annual Volunteer Luncheon that acknowledges their valuable and continuing efforts for seniors.

Performance Metrics			
	2008	2007	2006
COA Transportation (one-way rides)	10,000	10,000	10,000
Sanborn Transport (one-way rides)	700	1,350	1,476
Podiatry Clinic (visits per month)	60 mo.	80 mo.	80 mo.
Sevoyan Dental Clients Served	39	48	49
Senior Exercise (units of service)	1,200	1,200	1,000
Volunteer (Hours of Service)	8,000	8,000	8,000

## FY 2010 Objectives

- Assessment and application of needs-assessment survey results to COA programs and services.
- Develop more community involvement with police and fire services, and with local and regional service providers.
- Continue to develop outreach efforts for the Council on Aging programs and services, and to maximize the agency's ability to meet the varied needs of Arlington's elderly.

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## BOARD OF YOUTH SERVICES

The Board of Youth Services continued its dedication to a caring community in 2008, overseeing the functions of the Arlington Youth Consultation Center (AYCC), the Alcohol and Drug Education Program, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs that support children and youth, and other youth serving programs.

The members of the Board are appointed by the Town Manager with the approval of the Selectmen. The eleven members of the Board meet monthly throughout the academic year. The Board makes a great effort to stay well informed on all aspects of the community that impact youth.

Board members represent a broad cross section of the community. There are strong connections to the Arlington Public Schools, the Boys and Girls Club, the Arlington Food Pantry, churches, youth recreation programs, police, and charitable groups. Six long standing members retired this year. As members, Eugene Lucarelli, Dave McKenna, Larry Greco, Elaine Shea, Mary Deyst and Dorothy Williams left the board, new members: Robert Bongiorno, Mary Decourcey, Maryann Andrew, Kevin Flood, Lori Talanian, and Joan Axelrod Lehrich joined the board.



*2008 Board of Youth Services members: (L-R back row): Robert Bongiorno, Joan Robbio, Elizabeth Oppedisano, MaryAnn Andrew, Joan Axelrod Lehrich, Leon Cantor, (L-R front row): Donna Dolan, Lynn Horgan, Lori Talanian, Carlene Newell. Missing from photo: Jeannette Mills, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Mary Decourcey, Kevin Flood*

In 2008 members continued to volunteer additional time as group leaders for women who are victims of domestic violence, as advocates for youth, and as part of Arlington's Holiday Help to Families programs. The 2008 Emergency Fuel Assistance fundraiser enabled

the continuation of the program. Dozens of Arlington families are again being helped during the cold months of the year to ensure they do not go without heat and electricity. The Board has also responded to such needs as camp scholarships, parent education programs, and sponsorship of the annual Martin Luther King, Jr., remembrance.

During the past two years the Board of Youth Services has undertaken a review of its mission, accomplishments, and future emphasis. Following a one-day retreat and planning during regular meetings, the Board is initiating a community wide needs assessment. This will reach out to a broad cross section of residents to get feedback on current youth services and identify areas where needs are underserved.

The Board of Youth Services is proud to be an integral part of what makes Arlington a safe, fair-minded and engaged community.

## ARLINGTON YOUTH CONSULTATION CENTER

The Arlington Youth Consultation Center (AYCC) is a fully licensed Massachusetts Department of Public Health mental health counseling facility that provides counseling to Arlington youth and families. AYCC continued to provide therapy services, referral services, and psychopharmacological services to Arlington children, adolescents and their families in 2008. Approximately 920 people were helped in 2008. These numbers reflect mental health services both at the AYCC clinic setting and in the Arlington Public Schools.

In 2008, the agency received funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Bureau of Substance Abuse Services to provide the much-needed counseling to youth and families.

Beginning in 2005 AYCC provided counseling to Special Education students within the schools. Much of this service was provided by graduate interns placed for training at AYCC. In the first part of 2006, a pilot project, using one graduate intern, was started at Brackett School. Based on the success of these efforts AYCC was asked to recruit, train, and supervise additional graduate interns to be placed in all the elementary schools for the start of school in September. A great deal of time and effort was put into interviewing interns, finding additional supervisors, and developing a training model. AYCC began the 2006-2007 school year with a total of 23 graduate interns supervised by existing staff and four consulting supervisors hired just to work with school based interns. The same level of staff and service continued for the 2007-2008 school year. Graduate interns represent seven different masters and doctoral graduate programs. A total of thirty graduate students received training at AYCC during 2008. They provided

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a total of more than 14,000 hours of in kind service.

In the elementary schools AYCC provided the majority of the total counseling service, both to Special Education students and the general school population. This model was expanded to the Ottoson Middle School for the 2008-2009 school year. At the Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School AYCC provided counseling to alternative programs and to individual Special Education students.

The work of the staff and interns in the schools focuses on improving the overall adjustment and performance of students. Much of this was done in the context of social skills or friendship groups. The problems that arise cover a wide range of concerns: depression, peer problems, academic struggles, anxiety, ADHD, and learning disabilities. The dedication and hard work of all involved have made for another successful year. The long-standing relationship between the School Department and AYCC has made this partnership possible.

In the fall of 2008 AYCC sponsored its ninth annual Sand Tray Therapy Conference. More than forty clinicians from around New England attended this two-day event. The first day featured Judith Kneen, well-known trainer and therapist. The second day gave participants the opportunity to practice and learn techniques of sand tray therapy. In March, 2009, the Sand Tray Conference will feature Dr. Gisela Schubach de Domenico, PhD, developer of Sandtray-Worldplay techniques.



*Arlington Youth Consultation Center is housed within the historic Whittemore Robbins House located at 630R Massachusetts Avenue.*

## VETERANS' SERVICES

The Department of Veterans' Services is designed to aid and assist Arlington veterans and their families as provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) and the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). All eligible veterans and their eligible dependents can seek counseling and assistance with applications for federal and state benefits, financial aid, medical care, educational/vocational benefits, and burial benefits.

As a result of interviewing over forty veterans and/or their dependents, eleven new clients receive benefits under Chapter 115 with a total of sixty-one clients receiving benefits over the course of the year. Twelve veterans were awarded the Welcome Home bonus for service in the military since 9/11. Two Vietnam veterans and one World War II veteran were advised of their entitlement to a bonus for their service and were given the appropriate form to redeem them. Four widows of veterans were assisted in receiving their benefits as the surviving spouse of a veteran either Killed in Action or receiving 100% service-connected disabilities from the VA and also an annuity form DVS.

After consulting with over a hundred veterans and/or veteran dependents, sixteen claims were submitted to the VA for service-connected compensation and/or pension, eleven have been awarded. Requests for treatment at the VA medical centers by fifty-one veterans have been referred and eighteen burial benefits have been awarded eligible veterans. Markers for all veterans buried in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery were ordered and to date eight unmarked graves of veterans have been identified and authenticated, and markers have been ordered.

Performance Metrics			
	2008	2007	2006
Receiver of Benefits (Chapter 115)	61	55	56
Disability/Pension Claims Submitted	16	21	27
Inpatient/Outpatient Care Requests/Referrals	51	47	45
Veteran Burial Benefits	18	24	28

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On Veterans' Day, the corner of Wachusett Avenue and Park Avenue was dedicated to the seven Corbett brothers who served the country during World War II and Korea. The family lived not far away on Wachusett Avenue and the corner is now named "Corbett Square" Dennis Corbett, Vietnam veteran and Arlington Police Officer, requested the dedication to honor his father and uncles.



Veterans' Services is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and participating in the Memorial Day Parade and the Veterans' Day Parade. For Memorial Day, the office is responsible for decorating the over 5,500 veterans' graves at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and St. Paul's Cemetery with flags and assuring the maintenance of the veterans' lots. Disabled American Veterans Chapter 49 assists by decorating the graves at St. Paul's. The file for the Veterans' Honor Roll located at Monument Park in Arlington Center, which will be refurbished at the conclusion of War on Terrorism, is continuously being updated with veterans from all wars. This office also serves as Secretary/Treasurer of the Patriots' Day Parade Committee and President of the Combined Veterans' Council of Arlington.

The office of the Department of Veterans' Services, located in Town Hall Annex, is continuing to purge old files and improve computerization, while reaching out to advertise veterans' benefits and advocate for volunteer opportunities at Bedford VA Medical Center.

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Arlington Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was created by Town Meeting in 1993 to advance issues related to the fair and equal treatment of individuals and to create a mechanism for addressing complaints arising out of these issues. The mission of the AHRC is to work individually and collaboratively with other groups in our community to celebrate the ever-changing tapestry of our Town, and to emphasize, through educational outreach, the danger of intolerance at every level. The Town Manager, School Committee, and the Town Moderator have appointing authority for thirteen members of the commission.

### 2008 Highlights/Activities

The AHRC began the year by electing Nick Minton as chairperson. Vita Cohen was elected to serve as vice chair.

Early in the year, the AHRC contributed to the Town's Martin Luther King Birthday Celebration, continued its *Arlington Dialogue* series this year by hosting three events and welcomed many guests to its monthly Citizens Open Forum.

In February, the Commission hosted a community dialogue on *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care Access*. A dialogue on *Armenian Genocide* was sponsored in April. In December a panel discussed the problem of bullying. The panel consisted of an elementary school principal, middle school guidance counselors, the School Resource Officer, and a speaker from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State College. Professional Development Points were offered and the dialogue occurred between teachers, principals, Town officials, and parents.

Throughout the year, the Commission received comments from citizens during public participation at its meetings. Disabilities representatives and citizens spoke of the traffic signal problems along Summer Street. Representatives from the Diversity Task Force and Arlington United for Justice and Peace spoke of their goals in hopes that the ARHC would consider working in conjunction with their programs. Another open forum included a request for the Commission to consider a series of sessions to heighten awareness and to have a better understanding of Nazi Germany wartime issues and how pain and despair still shape us today. The AHRC continues to maintain records of hate crimes and incidents and works in cooperation with the Police Department in order to track the frequency and severity of such events in Arlington. In the course of this year, the Commission received two written complaints. One was found to be under our jurisdiction. An investigation occurred and a positive outcome was achieved for both parties. Chief Frederick Ryan forwarded us five police reports that were determined to pertain to human

rights violations. These included incidents of racist tagging and graffiti and verbal altercations. The Commission also consults with the Community Safety Department on their efforts to monitor potential racial profiling, by reviewing their on-going Crash Data statistics.

In an effort to increase visibility and awareness, the AHRC once again staffed a booth at Town Day in September distributing informational brochures and answering questions and also had winners of dinner gift certificates donated by five local restaurants.

In 2009, the AHRC will continue to focus its efforts on keeping Arlington a safe, welcoming community where all individuals are treated with warmth, mutual respect, and acceptance.

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

In its fifteenth year of service, the Arlington Commission on Disability has continued to provide information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to Arlington officials, residents, public and private agencies, and others to ensure that people with physical, sensory, cognitive, and other disabilities have equal access to Town facilities, services, and programs. The Commission currently has eight Commissioners with one vacancy, all volunteers. As mandated by State law, the majority of Commissioners have a physical, cognitive, or sensory disability. This mandate brings an intimate and informed understanding of disabilities to the Commission's agenda and ultimate decisions. The Commission continues to bring awareness to Arlington policy makers and residents as to the legal rights of people with disabilities, enforcing those rights, and working towards community inclusion to make Arlington a stronger Town, capitalizing on the strengths each person living here has to offer.

Coordination and implementation of the Commission's agenda and goals continues to be handled by Jack Jones, A.D.A. Coordinator. Cooperation between the Commission and the A.D.A. Coordinator is effective and efficient. The Commission continues to occupy office and meeting space in the Senior Center building at 20 Academy Street.

### 2008 Commission Activities

- For the third consecutive year reported to Town Meeting on its history and future goals.
- The Commission continued to work with the Town, Mass. Highway, and the manufacturer of the Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) on Summer Street in an attempt to have the APS work as designed. This endeavor has been extremely time consuming, and disappointing to the Commission due to the failure of the equipment.
- In order to acquaint the public with its role

and to disseminate information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible Town programs the Commission published its tenth annual Arlington Access Newsletter, submitted several columns to the Arlington Advocate, and participated in Town Day.

- Strongly supported clearing snow from curb cut ramps, sidewalks, and the Donald R. Marquis Minuteman Trail.
- Invited and hosted Town policy makers, local officials, and disability advocates in order to share our vision and needs as well as learn more from our guests.
- Received sixty two thousand in CDBG funding for curb cut ramp work.
- In order to improve pedestrian safety, the Commission continues to strongly argue against the use of bricks in sidewalks.
- The Commission has been planning and making final preparations for a Job Fair that the Commission will co-sponsor during April 2009.

### 2009 Commission Goals

The following goals will continue to revolve around the very clear parameters of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Work with the Town in developing improvements to pedestrian access along Massachusetts Avenue when plans are developed for the Mass. Avenue Corridor Project.
- Co-sponsor a Job Fair for people with disabilities at Town Hall on April 2, 2009.
- Continue to meet with Town officials and Arlington residents that are concerned about access in order to work towards full inclusion within the Town.
- Will work to improve pedestrian access and safety by installing additional curb cut ramps, monitoring snow removal from curb cut ramps, bus stops, and sidewalks.
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- Continue to work to bring the accessible pedestrian signals on Summer Street into compliance with Federal Highway Regulations.
- The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 P.M. in the conference room of the Housing and Disability Program Office located in Ste. # 203, at 20 Academy St., Arlington (the Senior Center Building). Meetings are open to the public and citizens are invited to attend to observe or voice their concerns.