

# BOSTON SENIORITY

City of Boston  
Issue 10

Age Strong Commission  
December, 2025

Mayor Michelle Wu  
Vol. 49



BOSTON FIRE  
DEPARTMENT  
COMMISSIONER  
PAUL BURKE  
INTERVIEW P.10

MAYOR'S LETTER  
P. 3

UPCOMING EVENTS  
P. 31



CITY of BOSTON



FREE PUBLICATION



AGE+ | Age Strong  
Commission



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## BOSTON SENIORITY MAGAZINE

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**STAY CONNECTED  
WITH THE AGE  
STRONG COMMISSION!**



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## MAYOR'S LETTER DECEMBER 2025 Hello Boston!

As the weather gets colder, we're finding ways to come together and find warmth. Before we get into the thick of the snowy season, I hope to see you at one of our farmers markets, a holiday lighting celebration, or a stop on the Mayor's Trolley Tour.

When you're ready to warm up indoors, settle in with a holiday read recommended by the Boston Public Library. And we know the shorter, darker days can be challenging—so in this issue, we're sharing tips for managing seasonal depression.

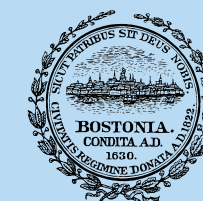
We'll introduce you to Boston Fire Commissioner Paul Burke, who has served our Fire Department for more than three decades. Chief Burke and the entire BFD team work every day to keep our neighborhoods safe—and in this issue, you'll learn more about how they do their jobs so well.

You'll also find information about our 100 Age-Friendly Businesses, certified by Age Strong as committed to serving older adults; and the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, which provides vital support to our residents.

You can learn how to use AT&T Holiday Connections to make free calls—worldwide—to loved ones this season. And finally, read about our Senior Civic Academy graduates, who spent the fall learning how to advocate for their communities.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season,

Mayor Michelle Wu



*Michelle Wu*

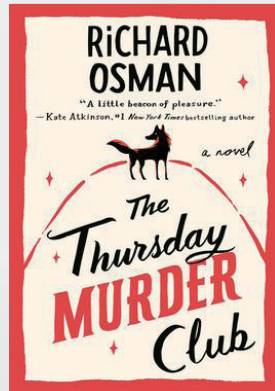


## ► BOOKS

### BPL BOOK PICKS

Source: Boston Public Library

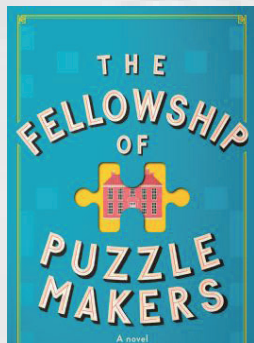
Check out these cozy titles to bundle up with this winter!



#### **The Thursday Murder Club** by Richard Osman

For the cozy mystery fan. In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely

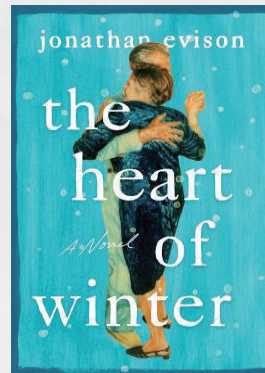
friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves The Thursday Murder Club.



#### **The Fellowship of Puzzle Makers** by Samuel Burr

Clayton Stumper might be in his twenties, but he dresses like

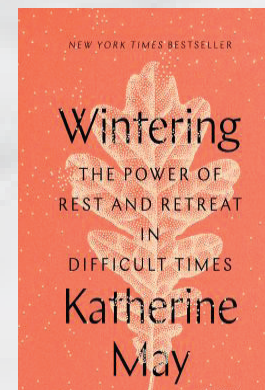
your grandpa and fusses like your aunt. Abandoned at birth on the steps of the Fellowship of Puzzle Makers, he was raised by a group of eccentric enigmatologists and now finds himself among the last survivors of a fading institution.



#### **The Heart of Winter** by Johnathan Evison

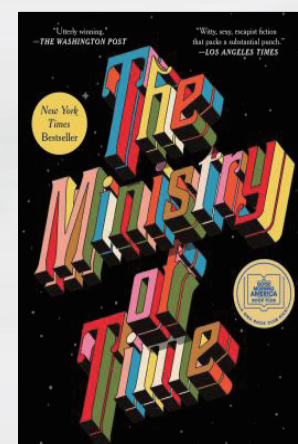
A heartwarming novel about a married couple in their eighties, flashing back to tell the story of their lives across

their courtship, marriage, children, and long-standing, opposites-attract love.



#### **Wintering** by Katherine May

An intimate, revelatory book exploring the ways we can care for and repair ourselves when life knocks us down.



#### **The Ministry of Time** by Kaliane Bradley

A recently established government ministry is gathering "expats" from across history to establish

whether time travel is feasible--for the body, but also for the fabric of space-time.



For more titles or BPL info, visit [bpl.org](http://bpl.org) or call 617-536-5400.

## ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS WITHOUT SCAMS

By Sophia Wang, Age Strong Staff

**The holidays are a time for celebration and giving but it is also a prime time for scammers to take advantage of our generosity.** Stay alert, and remember: never share your personal information to websites or people you don't know.

### **Gift Card Scams**

Scammers can replace the film strip on the back of gift cards to capture the PIN, then wait for a victim to load money onto the card. They can also ask you to send them gift cards for goods. **Avoid buying gift cards from kiosks. Instead, buy them from behind a counter or directly from a legitimate website.**

### **Grandparents Scams**

Scams targeting grandparents spike during the holidays. Scammers will impersonate family members and contact an older adult, claiming they are in trouble and need money, or they pretend to be a lawyer representing a family member. **If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately, and reach out to the family member directly to verify the situation before taking action.**

### **Charity Scams**

Scammers will pretend to be known charities or use similar sounding charity names to trick you. Before giving, verify the charity through trusted resources like **the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, Charity Navigator, Charity Watch or Guide Star.**

### **Online Shopping Scams**

Fake websites and ads increase during the holidays, often offering extremely low prices. These are most likely scams trying to steal your financial information. **Only shop from legitimate sources you know and trust.**

### **Phishing Attempts**

Scammers send "phishing" emails pretending to be real companies offering "giveaways" or "free gift cards," as well as texts with bad links for non-payment or overpayment. **Do not click on any links in your emails or texts that look suspicious.**

If you think you've been scammed, report to the police, and the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov).

Source: Boston Police Department



# CITY SAFETY: BOSTON'S FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Ami Bennitt, Age Strong Staff



We continue our series introducing you to Boston's public safety departments, this month featuring the Boston Fire Department (BFD). We spoke with BFD Commissioner Paul Burke about the department's work and its commitment to keeping residents safe.

Commissioner Burke is from Roslindale, where he's lived most of his life. He attended Boston Public Schools, UMass Boston, and later earned a master's degree in homeland security from the Naval Postgraduate School. Since joining the department as a firefighter, he has been promoted several times, holding every rank at BFD, before

being appointed Commissioner. BFD employs 1,550 sworn firefighters, who take an oath when hired and with each promotion. They are supported by 150 civilian staff. The department is broken up into many divisions that work together to protect the city.

- Engine Company, which respond to fire and rescue calls
- Fire Prevention which handles property inspections, permits, licenses, and certificates and educates the public on fire safety and prevention
- Ladder Company opens entry and exit points during a fire, preparing for Engine Company
- Rescue Company which handles

- medical emergencies, hazardous material incidents, and terrorist attacks
- Safety and Special Operations which handles multi-building fires, major airport, ship or subway accidents
- Special Operations Command which researches new equipment, technology, and protocols
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness which partners with Emergency Management in strategizing response to any emergency
- Training and Personnel divisions serve the department by keeping staff up to date on advancements, technologies, and strategies—and track rates of injury, cancer, and other medical issues.

To expand opportunities for Boston residents, BFD launched a Teen Academy two years ago, providing summer jobs to 60 teens annually to learn about becoming a firefighter. "They're encouraged to then become a Cadet and potentially apply to BFD," Burke explains.

The Fire Prevention Division is most in contact with Boston

residents, including older adults age 55+. "We're happy to help seniors any way we can," Burke says. "Our team visits senior centers to educate folks about fire safety and prevention." The division also inspect homes as they are sold and bought, identify and correct unsafe conditions before they lead to fires. "We enforce local and state fire codes to make sure Boston residents and business owners are safe."

When asked what advice he'd give to Boston's older residents, Commissioner Burke says, "don't hesitate to call 911. We're here to help. We have the fastest response time, 4 minutes to every incident. We'll help anyone. You're never burdening us. It's our job to keep everyone safe in Boston. If you want more information on fire prevention, call and we'll send staff out to educate folks. We're here for everyone."

To connect with BFD's Prevention division, call (617) 343-3628. To learn more about fire prevention and safety tips, visit [boston.gov/departments/fire-prevention/fire-safety-tips-your-home](https://boston.gov/departments/fire-prevention/fire-safety-tips-your-home).



## AGE STRONG PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: THE MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED

By Jordan Rich, Age Strong Staff

**The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) was founded in 1903 and is one of the oldest blindness organizations in the country.** Approximately 82% of individuals MABVI serves are 60 and older. Age Strong connected with MABVI Deputy Director, Cynthia Canham, to learn more about the organization and the services it provides.

### **What programs and services does MABVI offer to older adults?**

MABVI's services are primarily focused on helping older adults adjust to vision loss and continue to do the things they love to do. The organization supports individuals with low vision or blindness maintain independence by offering in-home vision rehabilitation training provided by occupational therapists; low vision peer support groups to help people learn new skills and cope with the fears and frustrations of vision loss; counseling to help with personal adjustment to vision loss; training to use devices that have programs

to match people with volunteers who lend their sight to help with clerical work or shopping. MABVI also helps older adults find eye doctors who specialize in low vision exams that focus on learning to use their remaining sight.

### **How do older adults enroll?**

Call MABVI at 888-613-2777 or fill out the contact form on our website. All services are open to the public. Support group members must be 55 and over. MABVI bills insurance for vision rehab and can help get a doctor's referral. All other programs are free.

### **How has the Age Strong grant funding allowed MABVI to increase the services and support it provides to older adults?**

Age Strong funding has been critical for MABVI. It has kept our services free and helped us expand our technology training program and adjustment counseling into the city of Boston.

### **Are programs and services culturally inclusive or provided in multiple languages?**

We have Spanish-speaking staff and we use a medical

interpreter phone line to support access for other languages. We host a Spanish-speaking support group and our flyers are available in multiple languages.

### **December 3rd is International Day for Disabilities. What is something you wish more people understood about blindness?**

Blindness doesn't have to mean the end of a full life. People with blindness or low vision do all kinds of things, they just use adaptive strategies, tools, and training.

### **Are there any major barriers to providing services to the older adults in your area?**

The biggest barrier we face is people not knowing about our services. We rely on the community to spread the word about our programs and encourage their friends and family members to reach out.

### **How do you encourage older adults to participate or accept support?**

Many people who lose their vision have never met another person like them. MABVI offers a wonderful community of people who provide and participate in services, many who're blind or have low vision themselves. Our support groups are led by older blind adults. Our tech training

and adjustment counseling are provided by people with lived experience of blindness. So it's not only about learning new skills, it's about the chance to connect with a community of people who are thriving after vision loss.

### **Is there anything else you would like Boston Seniority Magazine readers to know about MABVI?**

We are recruiting volunteers, including bilingual volunteers! We match volunteers with visually impaired individuals in all Boston neighborhoods for help with reading mail, paying bills, grocery shopping, and other tasks. Access to eye care and low vision services is a health equity challenge in Massachusetts. We encourage readers to find eye care and to spread the word about vision loss services.

**For more information about MABVI call (888) 613-2777 or visit [mabvi.org](http://mabvi.org).**







## SENIOR CIRCUIT BREAKER TAX CREDIT

# COST SAVING BENEFITS FOR OLDER RESIDENTS

*There are resources out there to help you save money.  
Find out what you qualify for. Call Age Strong at  
617-635-4366 to speak with an advocate who can check  
your eligibility and help you apply.*

## HOME & UTILITY SAVINGS

### SENIORS SAVE PROGRAM

*helps Boston's older residents (age 60+) repair or replace failing heating systems to ensure they are safe and warm this winter.*

### SENIOR HOME REPAIR

*Boston's Home Center works with neighborhood partners to assist older homeowners access 0% interest loans for essential home repairs.*

### FUEL ASSISTANCE

*ABCD's Home Energy Assistance Program helps income eligible residents pay heating bills from November to April.*

### BOSTON WATER AND SEWER DISCOUNT

*Homeowners age 65+ or fully disabled who live in a 1-4 family residential dwelling, are eligible for a 30% discount on their monthly water, sewer, and stormwater charges.*

## HEALTH SAVINGS

### MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM (MSP)

*If your income is less than \$2954 for an individual or \$3985 for a couple, you may be able to get help to cover over \$3000 of your Medicare costs through the Medicare Savings Program.*

## PUT UP TO \$2820 IN YOUR POCKET!

The Massachusetts "Circuit Breaker" tax credit provides **tax relief for low to moderate income older adults age 65+**. This tax credit is available for renters & homeowners. Additionally, residents may apply for this income tax credit even if they owe no income taxes.



### BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY:

- Must be a Massachusetts resident or part-year resident.
- Must be age 65 or older by December 31 of the tax year.
- Must own or rent residential property in Massachusetts and occupy it as your primary residence.
- For tax year 2025, your total Massachusetts income doesn't exceed:
  - \$75,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household.
  - \$94,000 for a head of household.
  - \$112,000 for married couples filing a joint return.
- Homeowners can qualify if their property taxes & half of the water & sewer bills are more than 10% of their annual gross income.
- Renters can qualify if 25% of their rent is over 10% of their total income for the year.

### YOU ARE INELIGIBLE FOR THIS TAX CREDIT IF:

- You are married & your status is married, but filing separately.
- You are a dependent of another taxpayer.
- You receive a federal or state rent subsidy or you rent from a tax-exempt entity.
- For tax year 2025, the assessed value of your principal residence exceeds \$1,298,000.

### CONTACT THE MA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE FOR MORE INFO:

Call 617-887-6367 or visit [mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit](https://mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit).



# HOLIDAY TREE & MENORAH LIGHTINGS

## Copley Square Tree Lighting

Monday, December 1, 4pm

560 Boylston Street, Boston  
parks@boston.gov; (617) 635-4505

## Commonwealth Avenue Mall Tree Lighting

Thursday, December 4, 8pm

15 Commonwealth Avenue, Back Bay  
parks@boston.gov; (617) 635-4505

## City Hall Menorah Lighting

Monday, December 15, 4pm

City Hall, 1 City Hall Sq, Mezzanine  
Info@csboston.org, (617) 247-7100

## Seaport Menorah Lighting

Sunday, December 21, 4:30pm

60 Seaport Boulevard, Boston  
(617) 297-7282

## Boston Common Tree Lighting

Thursday, December 4, 6pm

139 Tremont Street, Boston  
parks@boston.gov; (617) 635-4505

## Copley Menorah Lighting

Sunday, December 14, 4pm

560 Boylston St., Boston  
Info@csboston.org, 617-247-7100

## State House Menorah Lighting

Wednesday, December 17, 4:30pm

State House, 24 Beacon St.,  
Grand Staircase  
Info@csboston.org, (617) 247-7100

## Boston Common

## Menorah Lighting

Time and location to  
be announced

(617) 297-7282

## MAYOR'S ENCHANTED TROLLEY TOUR



### Saturday, December 6

11 a.m. | Hastings Lot, West Roxbury

12 p.m. | Wolcott Square, Readville

1 p.m. | Mattapan Square

2 p.m. | Hyde Square, Jamaica Plain

3 p.m. | J.P. Monument, Jamaica Plain

3:45 p.m. | Brigham Circle, Mission Hill

4:30 p.m. | Bolling Building, Roxbury

5:45 p.m. | Blackstone Square, South End

6:45 p.m. | Oak Square, Brighton

### Sunday, December 7

12 p.m. | Codman Square, Dorchester

1 p.m. | Adams Corner, Dorchester

2 p.m. | M Street Park, South Boston

3 p.m. | Beach Street and Harrison Ave,  
Chinatown

4 p.m. | Paul Revere Mall, North End

5 p.m. | Winthrop Square (the Training Field),  
Charlestown

6:15 p.m. | Maverick Square, East Boston

Learn more at [boston.gov/enchanted-trolley](https://boston.gov/enchanted-trolley)



# City of Boston

## Winter Farmers Markets & Farmstands '25 -'26

### Back Bay

#### Copley Square Farmers Market

227 Dartmouth Street, 02116  
5/16/25 - 11/25/25  
Tuesday and Friday  
11am - 6pm

### Hyde Park

#### We Grow Microgreens Farmstand

21 Norton Street, 02136  
5/21/25 - 11/19/25  
Wednesday  
2pm - 5pm

### Mission Hill

#### Mission Hill Farmers Market

Hanlon Square  
725 Huntington Avenue, 02120  
5/8/25 - 11/19/25  
Thursday  
11am - 6pm

### Roslindale

#### Roslindale Farmers Market

4236A Washington Street, 02131  
6/7/25 - 11/22/25  
Saturday  
9am - 1:30pm

#### Roslindale Winter Market

10 Birch Street, 02131  
1/6/2026 - 3/29/26  
Sunday  
10am - 1pm

### Brighton

#### Brighton Winter Farmers Market

PSF Community Center  
640 Washington Street, 02135  
1/25/26 - 4/6/26  
Sunday (bi-weekly)  
1:30pm - 4:30pm

### Jamaica Plain

#### JP Centre St Farmers Market (Tuesday)

Bank of America Parking Lot  
677 Centre Street, 02130  
6/17/25 - 11/18/25  
Tuesday  
12pm - 5pm

#### JP Centre St Farmers Market (Saturday)

Bank of America Parking Lot  
677 Centre Street, 02130  
1/4/25 - 12/27/25  
Saturday  
12pm - 3pm

### South Boston

#### South Boston Farmers Market

446 West Broadway, 02127  
6/2/25 - 11/17/25  
Monday  
11am - 5pm

### Dorchester

#### Dorchester Winter Farmers Market

6 Norfolk Street, 02124  
1/24/26 - 3/15/26  
Saturday  
11am - 2pm

### Mattapan

#### Urban Farming Institute Farmstand

487 Norfolk Street, 02126  
6/27/25 - 11/21/25  
Friday  
1pm - 5pm

### Roxbury

#### Roxbury Crossing Farmers Market

1400 Tremont Street, 02120  
4/28/25 - 12/19/25  
Tuesday and Friday  
11am - 6pm

#### The Dudley Winter Market

11 Brook Avenue, 02119  
Thursday  
11/6/25 - 1/29/26  
1pm - 5pm

**Please Note:** These dates and times are subject to change.  
Please check our website for the most recent updates.  
**UPDATED 10/30/2025**

## EVENTS + ACTIVITIES

## DECEMBER HAPPENINGS

\* Please note events are free and are subject to change

DEC  
15

#### Bike Repair Workshop

3:30 PM - 5:30 PM

#### BPL East Boston

365 Bremen St.,  
East Boston  
(617) 569-0271

DEC  
20

#### Book Club Café

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

#### BPL Honan-Allston

300 North Harvard St.,  
Allston  
(617) 787-6313

DEC  
16

#### Bridge Club

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

#### BPL North End

25 Parmenter St.,  
North End  
(617) 227-8135

DEC  
23

#### Celebrating Agnes Moorehead

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

#### BPL South Boston

646 East Broadway,  
South Boston  
(617) 268-0180

DEC  
18

#### Cookie Swap-

6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

#### BPL Roslindale

4246 Washington St.,  
Back Bay  
(617) 323-2343

DEC  
27

#### Fiber Arts Club

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

#### BPL Jamaica Plain

30 South St.,  
Jamaica Plain  
(617) 524-2053

- ♥ Facebook: @AgeStrongBos
- ♥ Twitter: @AgeStrongBos
- ♥ Instagram: @AgeStrongBos
- ♥ Bluesky: @agestrong.boston.gov

**Do you have a story to share?**  
We want to hear from you!

**Email us at:**  
Bostonseniority@boston.gov



# AGE STRONG CELEBRATES 100 AGE FRIENDLY BUSINESSES IN BOSTON!

By Ami Bennitt, Age Strong Staff



**As a home for everyone, Boston is committed to supporting residents in every stage of life.** From improving public spaces, to building more affordable housing, to investing in Age Strong’s Age Friendly Business program, Boston continues taking meaningful steps to ensure all residents feel welcomed and supported.

In 2019, Boston’s Age Strong Commission launched its Age Friendly Business program, offering training and certification to Boston businesses. Last month,

Age Strong celebrated a major milestone by certifying Boston’s 100th Age Friendly business, Just Bookish, a new bookstore and community space in Roxbury! Older adults are the fastest growing demographic in Boston and according to Age Friendly Director Andrea Burns, “they are loyal customers, more likely to shop in person, and often at times of day when people of other ages may not. By appealing to older residents, businesses may attract more visitors.”

Age Strong’s Age and Dementia Friendly team manage and deliver the Age Friendly business training which offers communication tips and best practices. “Understanding how to interact with customers experiencing memory loss is vital to creating truly welcoming spaces,” Burns explains. “It also offers information about the older adult population of Boston and how to reduce ageism.”

Once certified, the businesses receive a certificate signed by the Mayor and Age Strong Commissioner, a decal for their door or window, and listing on the city’s website as an “Age and Dementia-Friendly Business.”

According to Burns, Boston’s older residents may want to shop at Age Friendly businesses, “because they have made the effort to learn about the older adults of Boston and how to make their spaces more welcoming and age-friendly.”

Certified businesses include all Boston Public Library branches, Brookline Bank’s Boston locations, Cooperative Bank locations, select dentists, restaurants, dry cleaners, salons, cafes, retailers, Macy’s

(Downtown Crossing), The Record Co. (Roxbury), JP Clay, Oak Square YMCA (Brighton), CVS (West Roxbury), and dozens more.

Businesses are also encouraged to consider aging related barriers. “Not everyone has smart phones,” Burns says. “It’s important to have printed copies of materials and phone numbers for folks to call, not just websites. Think about seating, public restrooms, appropriate lighting, wayfinding signage, and noise levels. But in the end, the most important aspect of an age-friendly business is one where all customers are treated with kindness and respect.”

To become an Age Friendly certified business, call Andrea Burns at (617) 635-4877. To see the list of Age Friendly businesses, visit [boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/age-friendly-businesses](https://boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/age-friendly-businesses).





# FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS



## TREE SAFETY

- Keep your tree in a sturdy base filled with water.
- Place the tree away from heat sources.
- Never use candles as decorations.
- Use only fire retardant decorations.
- Artificial trees should have a fire retardant label.
- Never leave a lit tree unattended.
- Never use a cut tree in a public place of assembly (apartment, hotel lobbies, restaurants)
- Never burn candles near evergreens on a mantelpiece or a table.
- Burning evergreens in the fireplace can be hazardous. Dry evergreens burn like tinder & flames can flare out of control sending sparks flying about a room.

## TRIMMINGS

- Keep flammables away from heat sources.
- Never burn wrappings or trees.



## LIGHTS

- Purchase UL approved lights.
- Check all indoor/outdoor lights for frayed cords, broken plugs/sockets & replace if necessary.
- Lights should not touch flammable materials.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Follow instructions when using extension cords.
- Unplug all lighting before retiring for the evening or leaving the house.



## CANDLES



- Put candles securely in non-tip candle holders.
- Never leave candles burning unattended or within the reach of small children; blow them out before you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Keep candles well away from Christmas trees, decorations, curtains & other combustibles; never put candles in windows or near exits.

More information on fire safety call 617-343-3628 or visit [boston.gov/departments/fire-prevention](https://boston.gov/departments/fire-prevention)

CITY of BOSTON

AGE+

Age Strong  
Commission



## AGE STRONG COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PART-TIME | 10 HOURS/WEEK | BOSTON RESIDENTS AGE 55+

## WE ARE HIRING!

*Waan Shaqaalays-iinaynaa!*

*Du sta kontrata pesoas pa trabadju!*

我們現在招聘

*¡Oportunidad de Empleo!*

Are you 55+ & passionate about supporting your community?

Become an Age Strong Commission Cape Verdean, Chinese, Latino, LGBTQIA+ or Somali Community Ambassador!

Use your life experience & local knowledge to connect older adults in your neighborhood to valuable resources & programs.

### WHY APPLY?

- ✓ Make a difference in your neighborhood; help older adults access services, feel heard & supported
- ✓ Flexible work schedule
- ✓ Share your strengths; use your language, culture & community connections

### WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- ✓ Meet older adults, listen to their needs & build trusted relationships
- ✓ Share about Age Strong's programs & services
- ✓ Represent Age Strong at local meetings & events

### YOU'RE A GREAT FIT IF YOU ARE:

- ✓ 55 years or older
- ✓ Are a City of Boston resident
- ✓ Friendly & community-focused
- ✓ Bilingual
- ✓ Comfortable using basic computer programs

### THREE WAYS TO APPLY:

- ✓ Visit Age Strong Community Ambassador webpage to submit an application
- ✓ Scan the QR code to fill out an application now!
- ✓ Or Email your resume to [Agestrongambassador@boston.gov](mailto:Agestrongambassador@boston.gov)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

✉ [AGEAMBASSADOR@BOSTON.GOV](mailto:AGEAMBASSADOR@BOSTON.GOV)

📞 617-635-2451



AGE+ City of Boston  
Age Strong Commission  
Mayor Michelle Wu



## MEET AGE STRONG RSVP VOLUNTEER BILL VALENTINE

By Sarah Smith, Age Strong Staff



**International Volunteer Day is December 5, a time to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of volunteers.**

Boston's Age Strong Commission offers many opportunities for older adults to engage with their community, share their skills, and continue making a positive impact.

One of those opportunities is a partnership with AmeriCorps: the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program. Also referred to as

RSVP, this program matches potential older adult volunteers with a variety of options. From helping at food pantries, preparing tax returns, facilitating opioid education and prevention workshops, delivering food to homebound older adults, and more. These opportunities highlight the depth of experience and commitment older adult volunteers bring to Boston.

Bill Valentine, 81, has been an ESOL (English for Speakers of

Other Languages) teacher and a Dorchester resident for 20 years. He started teaching ESOL in the PeaceCorps, then welcomed a chance to continue giving back as an Age Strong RSVP ESOL volunteer.

"Volunteering has always been fulfilling. With the PeaceCorps I volunteered at Mother Caroline's in Dorchester and Notre Dame Education Center in South Boston. It's an opportunity to be of use. Poets I admire write of being of use, and being an RSVP volunteer is a wonderful way to do so," Bill explains.

Bill currently teaches ESOL to students at Boston College High School in Dorchester, leading two evening classes every week. "Volunteering offers the satisfaction of working with people," he says. "A former student, who spoke no English, recently reached out to share that he's becoming a citizen, and is now almost fluent."

"Volunteering allows me to connect with people who I may not ordinarily meet. This really allowed me to hear people's stories and to connect. They even brought me

a birthday cake to celebrate with me," Bill says.

Several of Bill's students have become lasting friends. "I've been able to help students I'm still connected to in other ways. It's more than just learning English, it's about me learning who they are, their backgrounds, and why they're here. Helping others also helps me, which is a win-win."

To learn about Age Strong's RSVP Program and other volunteer opportunities, visit [bit.ly/agestrongvolunteers](https://bit.ly/agestrongvolunteers).



# AmeriCorps Seniors





## WHEN WINTER GETS YOU DOWN: UNDERSTANDING SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

By Libby Arsenault, LICSW, Age Strong Staff

As New England's Fall turns to Winter, the days get shorter, the nights stretch longer, and the bright sunshine we love seems to vanish. If you've moved to Boston from a warmer climate, or even if you've lived here your entire life, it's normal to feel down during darker seasons. Some find these seasonal changes especially hard.

### What is Seasonal Affective Disorder?

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a clinical depression that starts in late fall and usually fades in spring. You may start feeling down around November and notice your energy return as the days get brighter in March or April. The word affective means "related to mood." Only a doctor can diagnose SAD, but understanding the signs can help you know when to seek help.

### Signs to Look For

SAD is often missed in older adults. You might feel more tired than usual, crave sweets, or lose interest in activities. Maybe you don't feel like yourself—less energy, less

social, or hopeless. If this sounds familiar, don't ignore it. Talk to your doctor.

### Why It Happens

When sunlight hits us, our bodies make serotonin and vitamin D that boost mood and energy. During darker months, those levels drop. At the same time, our bodies produce more melatonin, the hormone that helps us sleep. Extra melatonin makes it harder to get up and stay alert, leaving us feeling sluggish all day.

### Ways to Feel Better

Try to get outside daily, especially in the morning, to soak up sunlight. Your doctor may suggest a light box that acts like sunlight. Exercise, healthy eating, and connecting with friends boost mood, too. If symptoms persist, medication may help the brain balance and restore energy.

For more information, call the National Institute of Health at **301-496-4000** or visit [nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder).

# Age Strong's Neighborhood PROGRAMMING



**BCYF Holland Community Center**  
Wed & Fri | 10am-1pm  
85 Olney Street, Dorchester  
(617) 635-5144

**The Elks Lodge #10**  
In partnership with Ethos  
Tues, Wed, Thurs | 9am-3pm  
1 Morrell Street, West Roxbury  
(617) 323-1125

**East Boston Senior Center**  
Monday-Friday | 8:30am-4pm  
7 Bayswater Street, East Boston  
(617) 961-3131

**Dewitt Center**  
Mon & Wed | 10:30am-3pm  
122 Dewitt Drive, Roxbury  
(617) 275-7080

**Veronica B. Smith Senior Center**  
Monday-Friday | 8:30am-4pm  
20 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Brighton  
(617) 635-6120

**Union Church**  
Tues & Thurs | 9am-1pm  
485 Columbus Avenue, South End  
(617) 536-0872

**Spontaneous Celebrations**  
Tuesdays | 9am-12:15pm | Thursdays | 10am-12:15pm  
45 Danforth St, Jamaica Plain  
(617) 635-4250



AGE+ City of Boston  
Age Strong Commission  
Mayor Michelle Wu



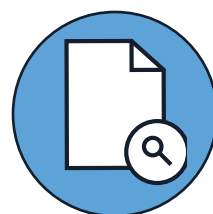
## ▶ IN BOSTON, WE AGE STRONG.

As part of the City's Human Services cabinet, The Age Strong Commission's mission is to enhance your life with meaningful programs, resources, and connections so we can live and age strong together in Boston.



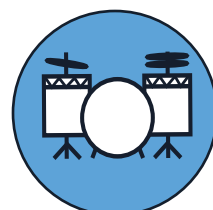
*We can help with:*

*Call us for more details at (617) 635-4366*



### AGE STRONG ADVOCATES

Our Advocacy and Benefit Specialists connect older adults to resources, benefits & information including health insurance counseling, food access applications, referrals to fuel assistance, tax relief exemptions, protective services & more.



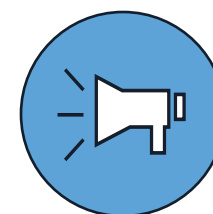
### EVENTS & PROGRAMMING

Age Strong produces a variety of events & programs specifically for older residents, including celebrations for Black Heritage, Hispanic Heritage & LGBTQ+ Pride. We host our programming in community spaces around Boston with various focuses such as fall prevention, mindfulness, arts, cooking & more.



### TRANSPORTATION

We are committed to helping connect older adults to all of the transportation options available, such as our Age Strong Shuttle, Taxi Coupons, and more.



### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We can connect you to a variety of volunteer opportunities based on your interests, location, and preferred time commitment.



### AGE & DEMENTIA FRIENDLY BOSTON

Our Age & Dementia Friendly work helps create a Boston where people can age and live well in community. We hold Memory Cafes for those experiencing memory loss and thier care partners to meet in a safe, social environment, as well as support groups for care partners to learn about resources and share experiences.



### HOUSING SUPPORT

Our housing advocates can help older residents learn about tenants rights, eviction prevention, navigate housing eligibility, and assist with housing applications.



# CIVIC ACADEMY

Each year Age Strong hosts the Senior Civic Academy, a 6-week in-person workshop for older adults to learn about government & how to use their voices to affect change. The final workshop ends with a series of participants' elevator pitches of new ideas and a graduation ceremony commemorating their efforts.



Commissioner Emily K. Shea  
With Graduate Teresa Mirabito



Angela Shariff-Sabir  
giving her Elevator Pitch



Commissioner Emily K. Shea  
With Graduate Shirley Jones



## WANT TO PROVIDE PROGRAMMING FOR BOSTON'S OLDER ADULTS AGE 60+?

*Apply for Age Strong's ROLLING GRANT!*

Grants range up to \$2,500 to address small-scale programming needs.

**FOR GRANTS AWARDED IN FEBRUARY,  
APPLICATIONS MUST BE IN BY THURSDAY,  
JANUARY 15, 2026 AT 11:59 P.M.**

*Grant Period: February 1, 2026 - April 30, 2026*

For more information & how to apply,  
visit [bit.ly/ASrollinggrant](https://bit.ly/ASrollinggrant)





# PROTECTING YOURSELF THIS WINTER: THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING VACCINATED

By Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Boston’s Commissioner of Public Health



Boston Seniority Magazine spoke with Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Boston’s Commissioner of Public Health about winter health risks, the importance of vaccines, and how older adults can stay protected.

## What is the Boston Public Health Commission?

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is Boston’s health department, the oldest in the country. Our mission is to partner with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston

residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities. We offer a wide range of direct services like home visits, access to doulas for pregnant families, and lead inspections to ensure that homes are safe. We also address major public health issues like homelessness by running the largest adult shelters in the northeast and leading Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

## Which illnesses should older residents know about?

At this time of the year, there’s a high risk of respiratory viral illness, like influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19. Adults 65 and older are at higher risk for serious complications and have an increased rate of hospitalization and death after getting sick. Many are also managing chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and cancers, which can make an infection worse. Additionally, falls, memory loss, and dementia are common concerns that impact many people as they age. As we

age, it’s natural for our immune system to weaken, increasing risks to fight infections. This increases the likelihood of severe symptoms from common infections like the flu. Vaccines are one of the most effective tools to reduce the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Staying up to date with your vaccination will protect you, your family and our communities.

## Is getting more than one vaccine at a time safe?

Yes! Getting more than one vaccine during the same visit has been shown to be safe. Studies show that combining vaccines does not reduce effectiveness or increase side effects. But if you are concerned, you should always speak with your health care provider.

## Where can older residents learn where to get vaccines and what’s the cost?

Start by speaking with your primary care provider or your preferred pharmacy about getting vaccinated and the cost. Or, take advantage of BPHC’s free vaccine clinics, a great resource for all Bostonians. Find a full list of our

clinics through December at [boston.gov/vaccine-clinics](https://boston.gov/vaccine-clinics). Boston has resources available to help ensure that all our residents live long and well. BPHC’s Mayor’s Health Line has trained staff ready to help, from applying for health insurance to finding a primary care doctor. It’s open weekdays, **9am-5pm**, at **(617) 534-5050** or **mayorshealthline@bphc.org**.





## ▶ SEEN AROUND TOWN



## THE BUZZ: FREE ACTIVITIES FOR BOSTON OLDER ADULTS FROM AGE STRONG PARTNERS

Check out a sampling of activities from our community partners across Boston's neighborhoods. You can also view our Monthly "To-Do" calendar via email, listing dozens of free activities across Boston for older residents: [bit.ly/age-strong-monthly-to-do](https://bit.ly/age-strong-monthly-to-do)

### West Roxbury Holiday Market

December 6, 4-7pm  
Rockland Trust parking lot,  
1920 Centre St., West Roxbury  
-West Roxbury Main Streets -  
[wrms.org/holiday-market](https://wrms.org/holiday-market)  
(617) 325-6400

*Vendors, activities, movies, music,  
and a visit from Santa*

### Free Vaccine Clinic

December 15, 10am-2pm  
30 North Bennet St., North End  
-BCYF Nazzaro -  
(617) 534-5395 or  
[boston.gov/vaccine-clinics](https://boston.gov/vaccine-clinics)  
*Flu & COVID-19 vaccines available*

### Hyde Park Arts & Crafts for Older Adults

December 17, 2-4:30pm  
1179 River St., Hyde Park  
-BCYF Hyde Park  
Community Center-  
RSVP (617) 635-5178  
[HydeParkCC@Boston.gov](mailto:HydeParkCC@Boston.gov)

### Fields Corner Library

#### Drop-In Hours

Tuesdays, 1-5pm  
Chill on Park,  
142 Park St., Dorchester  
-Fields Corner Branch Library-  
[fieldscorner@bpl.org](mailto:fieldscorner@bpl.org)  
(617) 297-5401  
*Come by for library services even  
when the branch is closed*

### Seniors on the Move

Monthly: 3rd Monday,  
10am-12pm  
-Roxbury YMCA-  
Contact  
[angela.allen@ymcaboston.org](mailto:angela.allen@ymcaboston.org),  
(617) 894-7681  
*Speakers, lunch, socializing, no  
membership required*



Join Us for AT&T & Age Strong's Annual

# HOLIDAY connections

DECEMBER 12 | BOSTON CITY HALL

- Make free phone calls anywhere in the world
- Learn smart phone tech tips
- Entertainment & photo opps
- Unique holiday vendors (goods for purchase)
- Complimentary meals
- A surprise guest!

FREE  
FOR  
AGES  
55+

RSVP BY 12/5

617-961-6835

[yarlin.gonzalez-nunez@boston.gov](mailto:yarlin.gonzalez-nunez@boston.gov)

OR SCAN HERE!



CITY of **BOSTON**

**AGE+**

Age Strong  
Commission