

Boston Seniority

Age Strong Commission

City of Boston

Mayor Kim Janey

COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH P. 14-19

June 2021
Issue 2
Vol. 45

Free Publication



Mayor's Letter
p. 4



Food Resources
p. 10



Virtual Programs
p. 12

CONTENTS

4
MAYOR'S SPOTLIGHT

5
COVID-19 UPDATES
Reopening in the City of Boston.

6
EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT

You may be eligible.

8
HEALTHY RECIPES

Quick and easy to make.

10
FOOD RESOURCES

Making sure everyone has access to nutritious food.

14-19
COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH

Older Bostonians who faced the pandemic with strength.

20
COMMISSION INFO

How we can help you.

24
THE BUZZ

Find out what this month's buzz is all about.

27
SEEN AROUND TOWN

See if we saw you!

In This Issue...

This issue highlights seniors during the pandemic. See pages 14-19 for more information.



Boston Seniority

Published by the City of Boston's Age Strong Commission

Kim Janey
Mayor

Emily K. Shea
Commissioner

Martha Rios
Editor and Photographer

Andrew Higginbottom
*Staff Assistant
Writer and Photographer*

City Hall Plaza-Room 271
Boston, MA 02201

Printed by Flagship Press, Inc.

Boston Seniority is supported in part by The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Although all material accepted is expected to conform to professional standards, acceptance does not imply endorsement by the City of Boston.

Stay Connected with the Age Strong Commission:



Main number: (617) 635-4366



Website: www.boston.gov/age-strong



Facebook: @AgeStrongBos



Twitter: @AgeStrongBos

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

Email us at Bostonseniority@boston.gov

From the Mayor's Desk

Leading Boston's Recovery



Hello, Boston! I'm Kim Janey and I'm proud to serve as the 55th Mayor of this wonderful City. When I was sworn in as the first Black mayor and the first woman mayor of Boston, I talked about how far our city has come, but also about how much work we still have to do.

Our city has faced incredible challenges, and I am deeply grateful for the strength, resilience, and generosity that the Boston community has shown. We learned just how much we can accomplish even during difficult times. I'm proud of our older residents who have shown their strength throughout this pandemic. You represent a broad diversity of cultures and backgrounds, and have helped make our City what it is today. We will continue to support and empower our older residents, and also celebrate the incredible contributions you make in our communities.

As Mayor, my number one focus is leading Boston's recovery, distributing the COVID-19 vaccine in a timely, equitable manner, and making sure that our economic recovery focuses on those communities most affected by the pandemic. So, now, as the city rebuilds from this crisis, it is essential to make sure we recover equitably, giving those most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic their fair share of relief.

As a proud fourth-generation Roxbury resident, I come from a long line of educators, entrepreneurs, artists, and advocates. I have been raised with values that guide me to this day: the importance of education, the power of community organizing, and the fundamental principles of equity and justice. These values guide my leadership and service on behalf of older residents throughout Boston.

Thank you for your wisdom and strength during this hopeful time.

Sincerely,

-Mayor Kim Janey



► Coronavirus Info

COVID-19: Reopening in the City of Boston

The City of Boston has aligned with the state's reopening plan. All remaining COVID-19 restrictions and capacity limits for businesses have been lifted as of Saturday, May 29. Following CDC guidance, the state's face covering order has also been rescinded. The Commonwealth's State of Emergency will end on June 15.

As of May 29, all industries were permitted to open. With the exception of remaining face-covering requirements for masks in public and private transportation systems, hospitals, and

other facilities housing vulnerable populations, all industry restrictions have been lifted. Capacity has increased to 100% for all industries, and all gathering limits have also been rescinded.

City Hall will be open to the public five days a week starting July 12, and appointments won't be needed for in-person services.

At the time of publishing this is the most current information available. For the latest information, please visit boston.gov/covid19

Vaccine Appointments

The COVID-19 vaccine is an important tool to keep ourselves and our communities safe. Along with wearing masks, social distancing, and frequent handwashing, the vaccine will help us end the pandemic.



Appointments can be scheduled online. To find vaccine sites in Boston, visit boston.gov/departments/public-health-commission/covid-19-vaccine-boston. Older Bostonians can also contact the Age Strong Commission for assistance at 617-635-4366.

Testing Sites

The City of Boston partners with community health centers, hospitals, and pharmacies to increase access to COVID-19 testing for Boston residents. Boston is encouraging residents and businesses to help stop the spread of COVID-19, and an important part of stopping the spread is getting more

people tested. This will help the City of Boston better understand and control the spread of the virus.

For testing locations, visit boston.gov/departments/public-health-commission/covid-19-testing-sites or call the Mayor's Health Line at 617-534-5050.

► Benefit

Federal Communications Commission Launches Emergency Broadband Benefit

Source: FCC

On May 12th, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) kicked off the Emergency Broadband Benefit. The benefit provides eligible consumers discounts on broadband service and devices. The benefit will continue until there is no longer funding or six months after the federal government declares an end to the pandemic.

Eligible households will be able to receive:

- \$50/month discount for high-speed internet services.
- \$75/month discount for high-speed internet services for households on Tribal lands.
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer or tablet purchased through a participating provider.

In Massachusetts, 28 broadband providers are offering the benefit. The benefit is available to eligible new, prior, and existing customers of participating providers.



The eligibility for the benefit is broad. It includes any household with an income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, or if any member of the household qualifies through various means. This includes but is not limited to participation in SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, the Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program, as well as certain qualifying events such as experiencing substantial loss of income or receiving a federal Pell Grant in the current award year.

Customers can sign up by contacting a participating provider, enrolling online at getemergencybroadband.org, or sending forms via mail. More information about the application process is available online or by calling (833) 511-0311.

► Book Picks

Boston Queerly Beloved: LGBTQ+ Romances to Read During Pride Month

Source: Boston Public Library

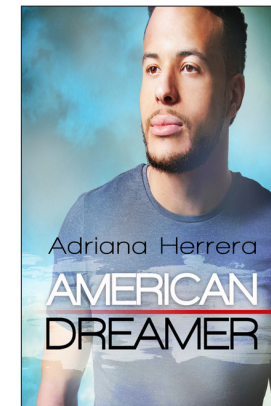
You can celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride every day with one of these romance novels. Queer protagonists and happily-ever-afters are guaranteed!



Something to Talk About by Meryl Wilsner

When her career is threatened by a red-carpet photo that appears to have romantic undertones, a Hollywood showrunner and her female assistant are targeted by paparazzi

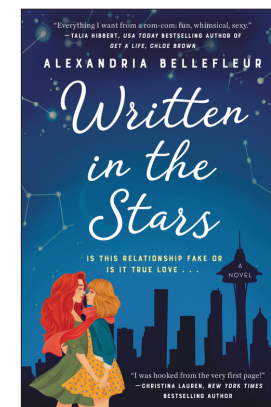
before realizing their actual feelings for each other.



American Dreamer by Adriana Herrera

Nesto Vasquez has six months to make his Afro-Caribbean food truck a success in upstate New York—the last thing he needs is a distraction. But the handsome local librarian might offer a

kind of happiness not measured in dollars and cents.



Written in the Stars by Alexandria Bellefleur

After the worst possible introduction, a free-spirited astrologer and an uptight actuary unexpectedly find themselves fake-dating their way to true love.

For more titles or BPL info, visit www.bpl.org

BPL Update

On June 1st the Central Library in Copley Square reopened for limited in-person services. On June 14, those services will be expanded, and all branch libraries not currently under reconstruction are planned to reopen. All reopening plans follow the latest city and state public health guidance.

You will be able to pick up holds and check out books, spend time browsing, use the library's computers for limited time

slots and print, and make photocopies. Additionally, branch exterior spaces such as courtyards or reading gardens will be accessible as well.

Until branches reopen, you can continue to rely on the BPL To Go program to check out items from your preferred location. Once the branches have reopened, you will no longer need to make an appointment to pick up your holds, and can pick up your items at the front desk during open hours as normal.



► Healthy Recipes

Spring Pea & Radish Salad

Provided by Melissa Carlson, MS, RD, Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Partnerships

There's nothing like enjoying the warmer weather with a new delicious meal. Enjoy these quick and easy recipes carefully selected by our expert nutritionist.

Do you need help applying for SNAP or home-delivered meals? Call the Age Strong Commission for assistance if you or a loved one need access to food resources at 617-635-4366.

More information on food resources available on pages 10-11.

Ingredients

- 1/2 pound fresh wax or green beans
- 1/2 pound fresh sugar snap peas
- 2 cups water
- 6 large radishes, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

Directions

1. Snip ends off beans and sugar snap peas; remove strings from snap peas. In a large saucepan, bring water to a boil over high heat. Add beans and reduce heat; simmer, covered, 4-5 minutes. Add sugar snap peas; simmer, covered, until both beans and peas are crisp-tender, another 2-3 minutes. Drain.
2. Toss beans and peas with radishes. Stir together honey, tarragon, salt and pepper. Drizzle over vegetables. **Serves: 6**

Source: tasteofhome.com

Lemon-Sopressata Chicken

Ingredients

- 2 8-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1/2 cup diced sopressata or salami (about 2 ounces)
- 1 medium lemon, peeled, seeded and chopped

Directions

- 1 Cut chicken in half crosswise and sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Place flour on a plate and dredge both sides of the chicken in it. Shake off any excess. Whisk tomato paste and 1/3 cup water in a small bowl and place near the stove.
- 2 Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook, turning once, until browned on both sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate.
- 3 Add sopressata (or salami) to the pan and cook, stirring, until browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste mixture and lemon. Return the chicken to the pan, cover and cook, turning once, until the sauce has thickened and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the chicken registers 165 degrees F, 5 to 7 minutes.



Source: eatingwell.com

Boston Food Resources

Provided by Food Access

The Mayor's Office of Food Access works to improve the accessibility and affordability of healthy food in Boston. We want everyone to have access to nutritious food. That food should be affordable, easy to find and reflect the many cultures of our City.

Our goal is to create food-secure communities with vibrant and inclusive food cultures. We want to reflect the diversity of the residents of Boston.

For more information about Food Access visit boston.gov/food or call 617-635-3717.

Pick Up Food

Fair Foods Sites

Fair Foods sites offer bags of fresh produce for only \$2.

Visit fairfoods.org
617-288-6185

Fresh Truck

The Fresh Truck is a mobile farmers market. SNAP and HIP are available at their locations.

Visit aboutfresh.org/fresh-truck/#schedule
617-297-7685

Food Pantries

Food pantries provide groceries to those in need, regardless of immigration status.

Visit The Greater Boston Food Bank at gbfb.org/need-food
617-427-5200

Visit Farmers' and Mobile Markets

Buy fresh local produce at Boston farmers' markets.

Find the nearest location at boston.gov/farmersmarkets
617-635-3717

Deliveries

Meals on Wheels

Nutritious meals delivery for home bound elderly residents.

Call Ethos 617-477-6606 or call Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center- Sofia Ding 857-990-3316

Daily Table

Discounted produce and free deliveries within 2 miles of their stores. Use SNAP and HIP at their locations.

Visit dailytable.org/shop
Dorchester:
617-506-0219
Roxbury:
617-516-8174
Cambridge:
617-945-1924

Friday Food Market

Discounted produce and \$2 deliveries.

Visit fridayfoodmarket.com

Food Benefit Programs

Apply for SNAP

SNAP can help you or your family afford food. MA residents who receive SNAP benefits can use their EBT card to buy food online from Amazon, Walmart, ALDI and Price Chopper via Instacart.

The Age Strong Commission is now a SNAP Outreach Center and advocates can fully assist seniors with applying for SNAP benefits.

For more information and assistance call Age Strong at 617-635-4366.

Shop at Double Up Stores

Shop with SNAP to get 50% off your fresh fruits and vegetables. Save up to \$10 each day.

Visit boston.gov/doubleup
617-635-3717

Use HIP at Farmers' Markets

Save when you shop with your EBT card at participating HIP farm vendors.

For more info visit boston.gov/healthy-incentives
617-635-3717

► Events + Activities

Age Strong Commission's Virtual Classes

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

Mondays: Zumba 11:30am - 12:30pm

► Building confidence in movement and community in a fun and free environment.

Wednesdays: Yoga 11:30am - 12:30pm

► Explore intentional movement (yoga and breathing) to promote the healing of stress and anxiety in the body.

Thursdays: Tai Chi 1:00pm - 2:00pm

► Focuses on preventing falls and improving balance.

Fridays: Meditation 11:30am - 12:30pm

► Learn breathing techniques to overcome anxiety, fear and negative emotions.

For more information on our events, call 617-635-4366 or visit boston.gov/Age-Strong-Events

Memory Café

Each Memory Café is different. Some cafés invite guest artists, some offer education about memory changes. And some are just for relaxing and chatting. But, all cafés share one goal — to help guests feel comfortable and to know that they are not alone. Cafés are a place to talk with others who understand what you are going through. You can forget about your limitations and instead focus on your strengths.

Virtual Café Del Recuerdo (Spanish speaking café)

► Un ambiente acogedor para personas experimentando la pérdida de la memoria y sus cuidadores.

July 8, 10am - 12pm

Normalmente nos reunimos el segundo jueves de cada mes a las 10am - 12pm (Usually meets the second Thursday of every month from 10am - 12pm)

Virtual Vine Street Café

► A welcoming place for Black/African American individuals experiencing memory loss and their care partners.

July 9, 10am - 12pm

Usually meets the second Friday of every month from 10am - 12pm

If someone cannot access the café because of lack of technology, please reach out to us!

To learn more, contact Nuria Silva at 617-635-4366, or email nuria.silva@boston.gov



*Communities of Strength:
Older Bostonians Who Faced
The Pandemic With Strength*

After a year-long global pandemic, life looks very different. The coronavirus has prevented many of us from seeing and spending time with our loved ones. Despite it all, there have been older Bostonians who have continued to spread positivity and give back to their community. We're happy to share the stories of older adults who have volunteered, worked, and helped others throughout this time.

Boston Seniority spoke with a few seniors who have continued to Age Strong during this difficult time. These older adults have helped Boston continue to grow and prosper.

-Boston Seniority Team



"The strength and resilience of our older residents has been front and center throughout the pandemic. You built connections when we all needed to be physically separate, met essential needs, and helped support each other. From the bottom of my heart - thank you. Your strength and experience will help lead us forward together in recovery and healing." *-Commissioner Emily Shea*



Julia Walker, 88, Dorchester

By Andrew Higginbottom, Age Strong Staff Assistant

Julia and Smiler made an impact during the past year. The duo have helped others and showed their strength and resilience even in such a difficult time. These older Bostonians have shown how they Age Strong every day and helped others along the way.

What does strength mean to you?

Julia Walker: Strength means to me is helping those who are less fortunate. Being able to care for someone. I am blessed to have my health and want to continue to help others.

Smiler Haynes: Kicking adversity and challenges down both mentally and



Smiler Haynes, 87, Dorchester

physically. Don't sweat the small stuff and smile!

Have you worked or volunteered throughout the pandemic? If so, what did you do?

JW: I work part-time and I help drive people to doctor's appointments and bring groceries to others. I'm taking care of my

family members who are sick and doing things for them that they are unable to do.

SH: I crocheted hats and scarfs all summer and delivered them to the Sunday school students at Charles Street A M E Church, which is my church for Christmas. I made gift bags at my church and delivered them to seniors homes. I painted "Kindness Rocks" and gave them to people who I encountered. I'm also continuing to give excess food to neighbors, and I'm making masks for anyone who needs one.

Why did you think it was important to work or volunteer during the pandemic?

JW: I think it was important because there were so many people who needed help. I'm grateful to be in the position to help others, so I used my strength to help those close to me who were in need.

SH: It was and is important to volunteer because everybody needs each other. I have always planned to do something for someone everyday. Pandemic or no pandemic. Even if it is just a smile at someone who looks like they could use something positive. Focusing on others helped me minimize my challenges.

How has the pandemic changed your life?

JW: The pandemic has changed my life immensely. I lost family members. It has affected me so much. It's hard not being able to see loved ones during this time. I try not to stay down and I do so by staying busy.

SH: My life has slowed down. However, this gave me time to appreciate little things that I took for granted.

What are you looking forward to after this pandemic?

JW: I'm most looking forward to seeing my family. I usually cook every Sunday for my kids and grandkids and we haven't been able to do that for a long time. So, I'm really looking forward to doing that again. I can't wait back to my normal routine and exercising at the Reggie Lewis Center with my group, the Sensational Seniors out of Roxbury.

SH: Attending church, hugging people, and attending the festivities sponsored by the City of Boston's Age Strong Commission. I'm also excited to travel to distant places!



Kevin Linsky, 68, Quincy
Public Works - Senior Civil Engineer



Michelle Shields, 63, Boston
Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) - Counselor, Southampton Street Shelter

challenge for all of us. I've made sure we are all safe and wearing masks both with our guests and family at home.

What type of work did you do throughout the pandemic?

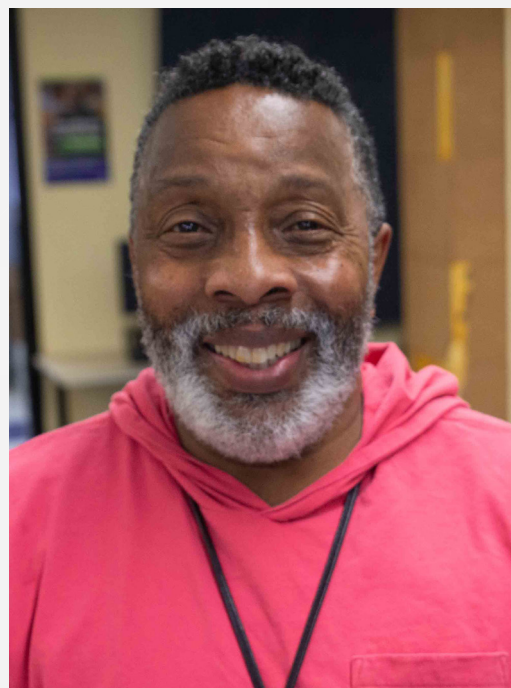
KL: Despite the construction season being halted due to COVID-19, I was able to oversee 16 miles of roadway being resurfaced across the City of Boston. I'm proud that under very challenging conditions, we were able to implement protocols to keep our staff and contractors safe.

MS: I did my normal duty throughout the pandemic helping to keep all our guests safe by encouraging all our guests and staff as well to wear our masks so we can all be safe for our family.



Berto Sanchez, 60, East Boston
BPHC - Manager, City-Wide Overdose Prevention

“ As a person in recovery from substance use disorder I use my story to promote healthy behavior among folks who are still struggling. During the pandemic I got a bad case of COVID and ended up in the hospital. Similarly, I've turned that experience into a tool for education. ”



Doug Lomax, 71, Roxbury
BPHC - Safe and Sound Recovery Center Coordinator

“ I run the Safe and Sound Recovery Center. We stayed open all throughout the pandemic. People who were actively using, looking for support, were able to come up here. Our job is to provide a safe space and COVID couldn't stop that. ”

City workers share their thoughts and roles during the pandemic.

What does strength mean to you?

improving the quality of life for residents, visitors, and business owners across the City of Boston.

Michelle Shields: My strength is what I depend on everyday to do my work when I come in and try to do my best at my job. The pandemic for the past year has been a great

Kevin Linsky: I've been working in the Public Works Department for 49 years and I still have the same energy and passion for the job that I did on Day 1. Strength to me is knowing that the work my team is doing everyday is

Sometimes the bravest and the most important thing you can do is show up. -Brene Brown

► In Boston, we Age Strong.

As part of the Health and Human Services cabinet, our mission is to enhance your life with meaningful programs, resources, and connections so together we can live and age strong together in Boston.



We can help with:

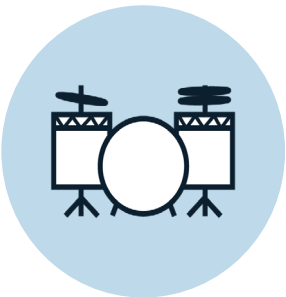
Call us for more details at 617-635-4366.



Access to Information and Benefits:

Community Advocates connect seniors to a comprehensive array of resources, benefits, and information. We can:

- Assist with applications for public benefits like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and fuel assistance.
- Ease the process of applying for, and receiving, Medicare benefits.
- Assist older adults access several tax relief exemptions and programs like the Elderly Exemption 41C, Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit and more.
- Assist older adults with navigating systems including the aging network and city services.



Outreach and Engagement:

The Commission organizes many events and programs throughout the year. From large city-wide celebratory events to smaller neighborhood focused gatherings, we engage with older residents on many levels.



Transportation:

We are committed to helping people continue to lead independent lives by connecting them to transportation resources. We offer:

- Free wheelchair-accessible shuttles that provide door-to-door service for non-emergency doctor's appointments. Call 617-635-3000 for more information.
- Taxi Coupons at discounted rates.



Volunteer Opportunities:

We operate volunteer programs in impact driven work across the city:

- *RSVP* matches seniors with valuable volunteer opportunities in Boston.
- The *Senior Companion Program* matches seniors with homebound persons who need assistance.
- *Senior Greeters* volunteer their time to greet guests of City Hall.
- *Senior Property Tax Work-Off Program*: Qualified senior homeowners get the opportunity to work-off up to \$1,500 on their property tax bill by volunteering for a City agency.



Housing:

The Age Strong Commission works to ensure that older adults are able to find and maintain housing. We can:

- Assist with housing applications.
- Connect older adults with other City and community agencies that can provide resources for home repair and other challenging situations like hoarding.
- Provide mediation and court advocacy.

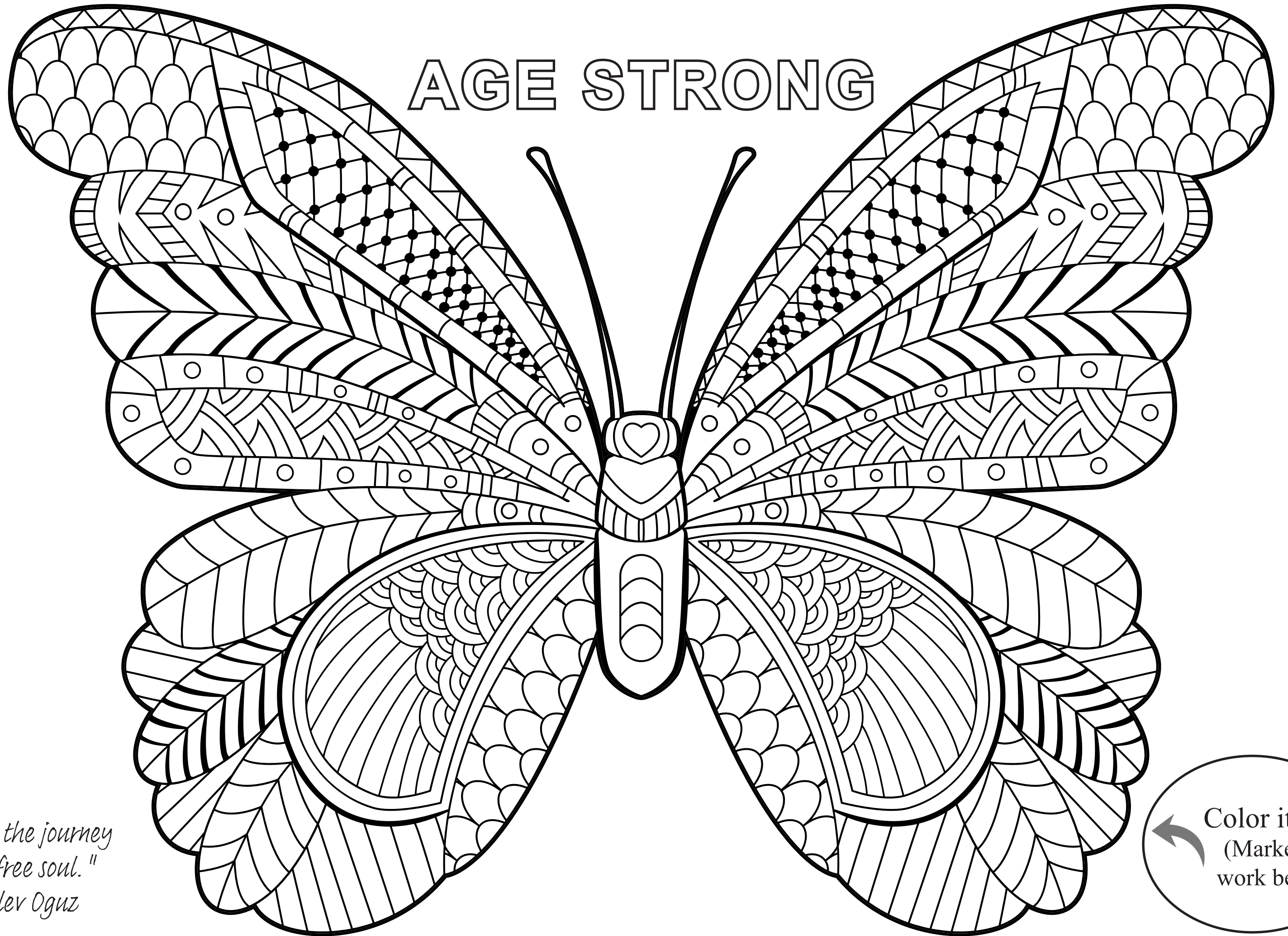


Alzheimer's and Caregiver Support:

Know that you are not alone; we are here to support you. We:

- Host Memory Cafés, which are places where individuals experiencing memory loss and their caretakers can meet in a safe, social environment.
- Provide referrals and offer workshops, training, and support groups for those who are supporting an older loved one.

AGE STRONG



*"Art is the journey
of a free soul."
-Alev Oguz*

Color it in!
(Markers
work best)



Senior Property Tax Work-Off Program

Qualified senior homeowners can work off up to \$1,500 on their property tax bill by volunteering for a City agency.

The FY 2022 application is now available. You must be 60 or older by January 1, 2021. Before you apply, please check the program requirements at boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/senior-property-tax-work to see if you qualify.



Please Keep in Mind:

The maximum abatement amount for this program is \$1,500, which equals 111 volunteer hours at a rate of \$13.50 per hour. The amount of the tax work-off credit cannot exceed the total tax due for the fiscal year after any other exemptions have been allowed.

Key Dates:

Application Filing Deadline: July 1, 2021

Work Completion Date*: November 5, 2021

*If we approve you for the program, you will only receive credit for work performed up to November 5, 2021, toward your Fiscal Year 2021 third-quarter tax bill.

For more information, call Lisa Martins, Volunteer Coordinator at 617-635-5741 or email Lisa.Martins@boston.gov.

Support Line

The Boston Neighborhood Trauma Team through @HealthyBoston offers support for individuals, families, and communities impacted by community violence. They have a free, confidential, 24/7 support hotline at 617-431-0125.

For more on how NTT can help go to: neighborhoodhealing.com



Help for Residents who Wander



The Boston Police Department is partnering with SafetyNet Tracking Systems, Inc to assist individuals who have a tendency to wander as a result of dementia or developmental disabilities. Wandering can be dangerous for the individuals involved and extremely stressful for their families.

If you have a loved one resides in the City of Boston and meets this criteria, please contact SafetyNet directly at (877) 434-6384 and reference the Boston Police Program in order to inquire about the availability of these services, which will be given out on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Funeral Assistance

Did you lose a loved one to COVID-19 after Jan. 20, 2020? FEMA is now accepting applications to reimburse up to \$9,000 in COVID-related funeral expenses. Applicants can call (844) 684-6333 to apply.

More information available at fema.gov/funeral-assistance/faq.

Fraud Alert: There has been reports of scammers reaching out to people offering to register them for funeral assistance. **FEMA has not sent any such notifications and does not contact people before they register for assistance.**



▶ Traveling in Boston



Age Strong Shuttle

We provide Boston residents age 60 and older with free transportation within the City of Boston to non-emergency medical appointments and grocery trips, with advance notice. We also have wheelchair-accessible shuttles. Call us at 617-635-3000 to set up a ride.

Taxi Coupons

Good news - they're back! Discounted taxi coupons are available for Boston residents age 65 and over and persons with disabilities starting June 14th. Coupons can be used in taxis licensed by the City of Boston.

Please note the following changes:

- ▶ Coupons will be available at City Hall by appointment only until July 12th. You can make an appointment by calling Age Strong at 617-635-4366 or online at boston-scheduling.as.me/age-strong.
- ▶ We are excited to announce you'll be able to purchase double the coupons through the end of the summer! For a limited time only, you can purchase up to 4 coupon booklets per month for just \$20.
- ▶ Coupons will be sold in limited additional sites across the city, so please call us at 617-635-4366 or go to boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/how-buy-taxi-coupons for updated information. More sites will be added over time.

▶ Seen Around Town



©Jeremiah Robinson



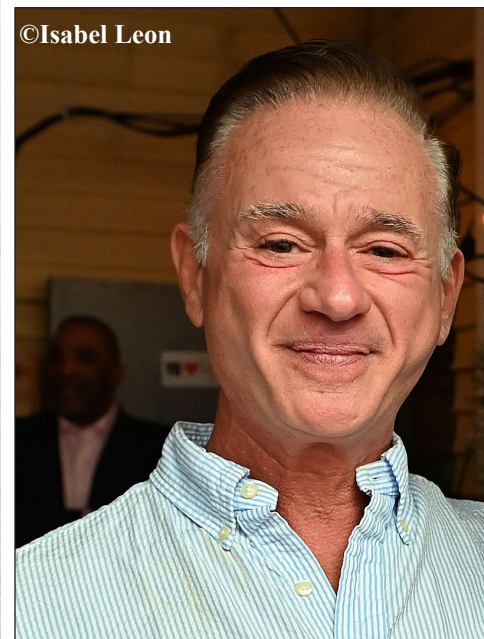
©Jeremiah Robinson



©Jeremiah Robinson



©John Wilcox



©Isabel Leon



©John Wilcox

Psst...

WIN A TAXI COUPON BOOK!

Let us know how you get around in Boston, for a chance to win a Taxi Coupon book. Email us at bostonseniority@boston.gov by August 1st with: ● your name ● age ● neighborhood ● phone number

AGE+

City of Boston
Age Strong Commission
Mayor Kim Janey

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”

-Coretta Scott King

