

Dedham Community House campers visit Senior Center for bingo & barbecue

DCH Camp partners with Livable Dedham for community service, civic engagement

Contributed to The Dedham Times

Livable Dedham and the Dedham Community House are partnering this summer, funded by a grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, to add a programming component to the Teen Camp, which focuses on community service and civic engagement related to age-friendly initiatives – making our community a great place to grow up and grow old.

The campers this week visited the Senior Center and enjoyed a delicious barbecue lunch from Blue Ribbon BBQ with the older adults at the center. They learned about the types of programming offered and were played a getting-to-know-you bingo game with the attendees, which encouraged participants to find common interests and spark intergenerational conversations.

Over the course of the program, campers are learning about an aging population and exploring solutions for our community related to transportation, communication, volunteer opportunities and programs and activities for older adults, with the goal of providing mutually rewarding intergenerational experiences for all involved!

Here is a summary of the activity, by campers Giani Rodrigues & Justin Reilly:

“This week in Teen Camp, we took a trip to the Council on Aging Senior Center. On Monday, July 15, Sheila Pransky, Director of the Dedham Council on Aging, visited us to discuss the Senior Center, programming for older adults and their new building. She made us consider the difficulties some seniors have in their everyday lives, including transportation issues, social isolation, and inactivity—all of which senior centers help to resolve. We learned the challenges the Council on Aging faces in the current confines of the senior center and how the larger building being constructed as part of the new town hall, will help resolve many of these issues.

“On Wednesday, we were picked up by the senior center bus and visited the current senior center to participate in activities and mingle with the seniors. Our interactions at the center showed us how much we could learn from our elders that we have not learned in our lives. The environment was positive and everyone was nice. Though the atmosphere was welcoming and exceeded our expectations, the physical space did not. The many tables cramped into a small space made it difficult for even campers to walk in between them, let alone our senior friends. There was roughly twenty campers and about thirty seniors meaning fifty people were cramped in the main room.

“The good news is they are working on a new senior center which will be located in downtown Dedham at the old Ames School House. We are happy to hear that the new building will have six times as much space as the current senior center. This will allow for many more people to volunteer and more seniors to utilize it. It will also allow more activities to take place at the center. At the end of the day, many campers were surprised to discuss how much they had enjoyed our experiences there and we asked to visit again soon.”

We would like to add a special thank you to Sheila Pransky and her staff at the Council on Aging for a wonderful visit, as well as Blue Ribbon Barbeque for a fantastic lunch. We are looking forward to next week’s community service outing with Dedham Civic Pride!



(Above): Isabella C., Ryan Wilmar, David Fitzgerald, Ryan Harris, Emily Pujols.

Photo contributed to The Dedham Times by Maddie DeFelice



(Above): Sandra Tocman, Rachel Qu, Ann Cautela, Emma Francis, Joan Schaffner.

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(Above): Cassandra Furtado and Sheila Pransky.

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(Above): Sandra Corben, Justin Reilly.

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