

# A New Year's message from the Senior Center

**Carolyn Wynn**  
For The Weekly News

The start of a new year is not only a great time to think of all the possibilities that lie ahead, but it also gives us the opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed. In this New Year's message, I thought it would be a great time to share some statistics regarding the many services we have provided throughout 2023.

As many of you know, the Peabody Council on Aging is primarily a social services agency. For over 50 years, we have based many of our core services on the Older Americans Act of 1965. The tenants outlined in that legislation include Transportation, Social Services, and Nutrition. Our transportation service, "Project Mobility," is for Peabody residents only. We provide transportation to medical appointments, shopping, and the PCOA to attend programs, receive services, and share lunch with friends. We also provide many miscellaneous trips as well.

Project Mobility provided 31,961 trips this year. Of those trips, 6,197 required using our wheelchair lift, making our services more accessible to all.

Our social services are also available to Peabody residents only. We often receive requests for social services from non-Peabody residents, but we must be steadfast in this rule, as a significant portion of our city is over 60. We would like to be able to help everyone, but unfortunately, that is not possible. However, we are happy to provide contact information for non-residents to receive necessary assistance. Our social services team assists with many services, such as health insurance (particularly during open enrollment), Mass Health, fuel assistance, SNAP program, I & R, housing applications, and the commodity food program. This year, we provided 16,378 units of service.

Our licensed Adult Day Health program is the only one



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**Mayor Ted Bettencourt assists Peabody Council on Aging Board members Kat Morrocco, left, President Michael Zellen, center, and Judy Enos, right, with the ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the new Friends Cafe.**

in the state to be operated by a senior center, going beyond the scope of a supportive day program through the support of our clients. The ADH program has extremely caring staff providing needed services. Our program has allowed caregivers more time together with their loved ones - often delaying placement in nursing homes and many times avoiding placement altogether. The ADH program also gives clients' families a respite to take care of themselves. Caregiving is one of those things that truly cannot be completely understood until you are experiencing it.

It is always enjoyable to share a meal with friends. Our senior center operates an independent lunch program, and all are welcome! A wonderful addition to this nutrition program is the recently opened Friends Café, which serves older adults from

many communities. Our lunch program is one of the biggest social programs that we have. This year, we served 31,770 meals.

I was fortunate to be present 32 years ago when Mayor Peter Torigian cut the ribbon to open our new senior center. His words still ring true, that all who can get to our center will be welcome — something that has been our policy and our strength from the beginning.

From that day, we have always been a welcoming place to older adults from Peabody and many surrounding communities, just as Peabody residents are welcomed in other local senior centers. In fact, many of our volunteers are from other communities but choose to volunteer their time and talents here at our center.

Aside from our core services, we have a myriad of classes and activities to keep older adults engaged

and living independently in the community. There are so many positive health benefits from participating in social activities. I know many are looking for that "miracle cure" to stay young and mentally fit, but the one tried and true solution is to stay active and socially engaged. There is no better place for this than the Torigian Senior Center, as is evidenced by 12,486 people signed in for fitness and exercise programs, 19,802 activity and class attendees, and 3,456 tickets sold for our special events.

Currently, every available space in the center is being used. We realize that the new generation of retirees who have started to join us are looking for more exercise programs, and we hope to provide that. We are presently in the process of completing our outside recreation area that will house modern pickleball and bocce

courts. This addition has transformed an unused area that will become a place of incredible activity! We want to thank the CPA for funding this project.

In the near future, we hope to start a capital campaign to expand our senior center, which will add more space for fitness programs. In the meantime, we are trying to add afternoon exercise classes to accommodate this growing need. Remember, we have a beautiful indoor fitness room that is staffed by helpful volunteers, and it is free to use. Even with all that is offered here, we are always open to suggestions for new classes and activities, so please share your ideas with us!

I hope to see you at our center!

Fondly, Carolyn

## Moulton calls for shift in Israeli military strategy in Gaza

For The Weekly News

Congressman Seth Moulton joined Reps. Jason Crow (D-CO), Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ), Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), and Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) to send a letter to President Joe Biden urging his administration to use all of its leverage to achieve a shift in Israeli military strategy.

"From our positions on the Intelligence, Armed Services, and Foreign Affairs Committees, we have consistently pushed

for Israel to shift its military strategy—there has been no significant change," the members wrote in the letter. "The mounting civilian death toll and humanitarian crisis are unacceptable and not in line with American interests; nor do they advance the cause of security for our ally Israel. We also believe it jeopardizes efforts to destroy the terrorist organization Hamas and secure the release of all hostages."

"Accordingly, we urge you to continue to use all our leverage to achieve an immediate and significant

shift of military strategy and tactics in Gaza," the members continued.

In the letter, the members noted their own military experience. Moulton is a veteran of the Iraq War.

"We know from personal and often painful experience that you can't destroy a terror ideology with military force alone. And it can, in fact, make it worse," the letter reads.

Moulton has repeatedly called for Israel to learn from the lessons of America's War on Terror and minimize civilian casualties. He previously

published op-eds in CNN and *Time* magazine. Earlier this month, he led a letter with Reps. Veronica Escobar (D-TX) and Houlahan outlining concerns over Israel's current military operations and the need for a strategic approach that works toward a political resolution.

On Monday, Israel's military said it would shift thousands of soldiers out of the Gaza Strip, in the first significant drawdown of troops since the war began. Army spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari did not say whether the decision

meant Israel was launching a new phase of the war.

But forces continue to bear down on parts of the embattled territory. Fierce fighting continued Monday in areas of Gaza, particularly in the southern city Khan Younis and central areas of the territory. An *Associated Press* reporter saw at least 17 dead, including four children, from a missile strike on a house in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.

*Material from the Associated Press was used in this report.*