

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR'S REPORT
DECEMBER 2025**

SUBMITTED TO: Jill Goldsmith, Town Manager
SUBMITTED BY: Leah LaCross, Director of Community Services

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Center for Active Living (CFAL) Renovation Project

The CFAL Building Working Group (BWG) made their recommendation to go back to Annual Town Meeting (ATM) in May to request additional funding to fully renovate the Center for Active Living to its' fullest potential. The Select Board unanimously approved this request.

Reassurance Luncheon

For the fourth year in a row, I had the honor of attending the Chatham Police Department's (CPD) Annual Reassurance Luncheon at the Chatham Bars Inn on December 10th, along with select members of the CFAL staff. The Reassurance Program is a critical service offered by the CPD that has vulnerable older adults living alone in Chatham call into the Police Department every day before 10:00 a.m. If no call is received, a police officer will call the individual and then dispatch to the home if necessary. This annual luncheon allows the individuals to put a face to the names of the people who serve them each day, while enjoying a lovely meal and fellowship with other older adults in their community. We are so grateful to the Chatham Police Department for providing this important service to our residents.

Emergency Preparedness Drill: Serious Weather Event

On December 16th, I was a part of the Chatham Emergency Management Working Group Drill at the Chatham Fire Department (CFD). In this simulation, we discussed steps that we would take in the event of a serious weather event, staff needed, transportation, and other services that would need to be put in place should an extreme weather event occurred.

Exciting News

I am pleased to announce that Anna Milan, Programs and Communications Coordinator for the Council on Aging (COA) Division, has been accepted into the Cape Cod Community Leadership spring, 2026 cohort after a successful application and interview process.

Founded in 1992, the Cape Cod Leadership Institute (CLI) engages, inspires, and prepares individuals through an interactive program that connects current and emerging leaders.

Participants learn from one another while exploring the key issues, challenges, and opportunities shaping our region. The program offers direct access to local leaders who are actively addressing Cape Cod's most pressing concerns.

The Institute consists of twelve biweekly sessions held from January through June, culminating in a commencement ceremony. Sessions examine a wide range of sectors—including the economy, environment, healthcare, social services, government, civic engagement, education, and infrastructure, providing participants with an in-depth understanding of the region and the leadership strategies used to address complex local challenges.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIAN / CLINICAL SERVICES:

December Numbers

In the month of December, there were 21 working days.

In those 21 days, I had 114 interactions with 28 Chatham residents, for a total of 38 hours and 20 minutes hours and 13 hours of professional development and community events.

Of the 114 interactions:

28 were Behavioral Health Clinician contacts, which included in-person contact between a Center for Active Living (CFAL) client and me. It could be at CFAL, Chatham Police Department (CPD), or at their home.

12 were CFAL phone outreach calls, which include calls I made to check in on residents, calls with family members, calls with collateral providers, and calls with medical providers.

4 were CFAL incoming client calls, which include the number of calls I received from Chatham residents asking for assistance.

8 were incoming CFAL client calls, which includes calls made by community members requesting to speak with the behavioral health clinician.

10 were CFAL client consultations, which means I spoke with other providers within and outside of our Town agencies, on behalf of the client.

1 was a CFAL home visit, which occurs when the clinician meets the client at their home due to client's inability to get themselves to CFAL to meet with me.

1 was a CPD walk in meeting, which involves someone from the community coming to CFAL to discuss a police situation with the clinician.

5 were CPD Referrals, which included calls that police officers responded to, where the officer feels it necessary for the behavioral health clinician to assess the identified client for possible mental health/substance abuse services or referrals.

3 were CPD Referral Follow-Up calls/home visits, which include the clinician following up on an original CPD referral, either in person or over the phone.

3 were CPD phone outreach calls, which occurred when a request had been made that I “check in” on a community member who accessed CPD.

9 were CPD co response calls, which involves co-responding with an officer to a emergency call involving behavioral health concerns

1 was a CPD follow up contact, which means that I either followed up in person or on the phone to a client that the police department felt needed contact with the clinician

5 were incoming CPD clinician calls, including calls made by someone from the community which involved the Chatham Police Department.

3 were CPD referral follow ups, which entails a phone call or home visit to an individual who had previously engaged with CPD.

13 were case management services, which involve helping residents with any type of referral service, including phone calls, emails, or meetings with outside agencies, on their behalf.

2 were CPD well-being referrals, which occur when an officer requests that I follow up with an elder who may benefit from CFAL services

1 was a CFD/Emergency Management Services (EMS) referral which involves Chatham Fire Department (CFD) reaching out to the clinician with concerns and requesting a follow up to the client to assess if further assistance is needed.

1 was a CFD/EMS well-being referral, which occurs when someone from CFD feels an in-house or over the phone contact would be beneficial for the client to assess if the client could use further support.

1 was a community referral and this happened when someone from Chatham called me to request that I follow up with a community member they had concerns about.

3 were client consultations, where colleagues discussed the best plan for each client together as a team.

Community Connections and Collateral Meetings for December

This month, I spent 13 hours participating in my monthly co-responder meeting, a *Reassurance Luncheon*, an annual *Shop with a Cop* event, and our monthly Chatham Elder Working Group (CHEWG) meeting.

I attended my monthly *Community of Practice Meeting*, with co-response clinicians from the state of Massachusetts. This month we discussed understanding our building policies and their importance in this line of work.

I was able to attend the annual Reassurance Luncheon held at Chatham Bars Inn, for our residents who participate in the Chatham Police Reassurance Program. It is a great opportunity for our police officers and staff to put a name with a face and get to know our residents beyond the telephone.

I attended two online courses that focused on *“Raising Accountable and Empowered Children,”* and another online zoom course that focused on *“Treating the Transgender Population”*. Both populations are increasingly relevant in today’s world and are very much in need of behavioral health services.

I was asked to be part of the *Shop with a Cop* annual event this year. I was able to accompany our Chatham Police Department and a 7th grade student to our local mall to spend money on gifts for her loved ones and family that she would otherwise not be able to purchase. It was an amazing opportunity for the students to get to know that my position exists and that I am not just someone who engages in an emergency, but who is available for positive events as well.

Last, I attended the monthly CHEWG meeting with colleagues from varying departments that offer insight, helpful information, and solutions regarding our town’s community members who may be presenting to us across departments.

December Reflections

December brought an increase in mental health calls compared to more recent months, and the reasons may be many. Some may see it as a reflection of an increase in distress amongst our community, while it can also reflect that more people are feeling more at ease reaching out and asking for help.

From my perspective, not only are people calling me directly asking for assistance, but they are looking out for their friends and neighbors and calling me with concern for others. As the Towns’ clinician, this brings me hope that people are becoming more familiar and more comfortable with noticing and talking about behavioral health and that it is not something to hide or run from.

I continue to see a slight increase in males reaching out for support, which is again something I am very hopeful about.

I had my second client move to assisted living this month, and although it was bittersweet, it brings me great comfort knowing that many people in Chatham worked together for over a year to get this particular client to a place where she is now safe and surrounded by people who will care for her around the clock. Our work is very rarely made up of just one interaction, but instead it involves many, many, calls and visits and discussions and meetings for each client.

Our successes are never achieved by a single employee, but rather by a team of departments who use their backgrounds to bring about the best outcome for our community members.

COA DIVISION:

DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT:

This monthly report summarizes the number of phone calls received by the Center for Active Living (CFAL) Department Assistant and the types of support sought after by our Older Adult Community members during the month of December 2025.

During this period, the CFAL received approximately a total of 530 incoming phone calls. Please note that the total does not directly correspond to the breakdown of call topics, as participants often contact the CFAL for multiple types of reasons within a single call. Therefore, there are more calls in the categories below than the total incoming phone calls. For example, Participant A may call in to sign up for programs that we are offering and want to share details of a medical appointment that they need our transportation services.

The data is analyzed into the following service categories:

Transportation: ~172

CFAL Programs: ~166

SHINE: ~60

Outreach Resources: ~61

Adult Supportive Day Program: ~17

Socialization & Recreation: ~0

CFAL Renovation: 0

Administrative/ Miscellaneous: ~54

There were notable fluctuations across service categories from month to month. It is likely that the holiday season contributed to lower overall participation, as many participants were traveling and did not require services as frequently. However, administrative calls increased due to the significant snowfall the Town of Chatham experienced last month. We received a higher volume of calls requesting assistance with snow removal.

Unfortunately, snow removal services were difficult to secure for many older adults needing help clearing their driveways. As well as finding anyone who was willing to shovel decks, porches and entryways, this service poses liability reasons. After searching through resources, we did come across a few that we hope to provide successful clearings for our community. As

seasonal factors continued to influence service needs, we also began to see a shift in the types of assistance requested toward the end of the month.

As SHINE Open Enrollment concluded in December, we are transitioning into tax season in partnership with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Calls related to tax assistance have begun to increase and are expected to continue rising in the coming months.

OUTREACH:

In the month of December, Chatham's Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator saw an increase in connections, with total interactions at 345, for 181 individuals. This number includes this year's *Santa for Seniors* sponsored by *The Friends of the Council on Aging*.

Outreach received 4 new referrals from Chatham Police/ Fire Departments and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) services that lead to follow-up calls and ongoing support. We performed 26 check-in/ follow-up calls on 20 members, from previous months.

In December, Outreach had 106 phone consultations for 58 individuals. Many of the incoming calls aimed to follow up on Fuel Assistance applications that were finally processed. Members started to see payments made on their accounts. Fuel Assistance provides much needed relief, as the weather started to get colder. The other common calls this month were an increase in families concerned with loved ones who live on their own. There were also increases in members looking for assistance with finding in-home services.

Outreach had 70 office visits for 55 individuals. These included follow-up Fuel Assistance processing, Housing applications, SNAP questions, and Home Health services. We were able to connect a few members with legal services through the *Elder Law Project* and *We Can* organization.

In December Healthy Meals in Motion served 36 members. We were able to assist 8 members by delivering their orders. Some members were sick with COVID or in the Hospital and are not able to make it to the Center For Active Living to pick up their orders. We do our best to accommodate those members.

Durable Medical equipment (DME) loaned out 12 items to 8 people. We did receive 1 new donation of DME.

On December 10th Outreach attended the Annual Reassurance Luncheon at the Chatham Bars Inn Hosted by the Chatham Police Department (CPD). This is a function that brings together the participants of the Reassurance Program and a mix of those that serve them, Chatham Fire, Chatham EMS, Chatham Police and the Council on Aging.

Every year the Friends of the Chatham Council on Aging sponsors *Santa for Seniors*. This year the Friends decided to increase this to 100 \$50.00 grocery gift cards provided to individuals in need. Outreach helps coordinate this program each year.

TRANSPORTATION:

This December was colder, snowier, and icier than in past years. Many participants tend to avoid scheduling medical appointments during December due to a variety of factors, including family visiting, travel to see family, and increased activities during the holiday season. Despite these challenges, Transportation Services at the Center for Active Living (CFAL) continued to provide reliable transportation to Chatham residents for the following services:

Orleans Supportive Day Program

- 3 participants
- 22 round trips

Ryders Cove Respite Program

- 2 participants
- 6 round trips

Medical Appointments

- 42 round trips serving 23 different participants

Grocery Access

- 7 pantry deliveries
- 29 resident trips to Stop & Shop (Thursdays)
- 16 grocery deliveries from Chatham Village Market

Overall, Transportation Services supported grocery access for more than 21 different households through our grocery delivery and shopping programs.

Pharmacy Support

- 13 prescription deliveries

Council on Aging (COA) Program Participation

A total of 11 participants received transportation to various CFAL programs, including:

- Bingo
- Book Club
- Busy Fingers (Knitting Group)
- Chair Yoga
- Golden Oldies (Movies)
- New Year's Eve Brunch
- Reassurance Luncheon

Additional Transportation Services Provided

Transportation Services also accommodated personal transportation requests, including trips to:

- Banks
- Chatham Village Market
- Exercise classes
- Hair salons
- Insurance companies
- Laundromats
- Legal services
- Post Office

While we strive to accommodate all transportation requests whenever possible, medical appointments remain our highest priority. In cases of scheduling conflicts, personal trips may be rescheduled to ensure timely access to essential medical care.

December is historically a slower month for CFAL Transportation Services. Many residents travel for the holidays or host visiting family members during this time. Additionally, CFAL closed early on two days and was closed for three full days in observance of the holidays. This December also brought increased snowfall compared to prior years. Given that we serve an older population, some participants chose to cancel appointments and transportation due to concerns about navigating icy conditions safely.

On December 10, 2025, Transportation Services provided rides to the annual Reassurance Luncheon held at Chatham Bars Inn, hosted by the Chatham Police Department.

Because both holidays fell on Thursdays, our regularly scheduled Stop & Shop transportation day, we offered alternative grocery trips on the preceding Mondays to ensure participants had continued access to food.

While medical transportation trips were lower in December compared to prior months, there was an increase in food and prescription deliveries. This highlights the ongoing need for these essential services, particularly for individuals who are unable to drive or do not have nearby family support.

Due to an increase in transportation-related phone calls, participants are now asked to allow CFAL staff at least 24 hours to respond to any transportation requests. This helps staff coordinate schedules effectively and are aware of communicating promptly if a requested ride cannot be accommodated.

PROGRAMMING:

December began with a meeting of the Center for Active Living (CFAL) Volunteers. This program has almost doubled in size since FY23 and continues to gain new members monthly. Volunteers were invited to attend to learn about upcoming volunteer needs, discuss procedures and enjoy time connecting with peers. Our programming and services are made better by the generous giving of our volunteers' time, and it was a lovely opportunity to express thanks and talk about goals for the new year.

There was cheer and community in the air this month, the CFAL Book Club members read and discussed *Christmas with the Queen* by Hazel Gaynor and Heather Webb, the Better Together group welcomed the *Cranberry Shores Chorus* for a holiday sing along concert, and on New Year's Eve a group gathered for a *Coffee Hour*, enjoying refreshments and sharing stories before 2025 came to a close.

This month was filled with CFAL favorites, like *Bingo*, where participants competed for a chance to go home with a special prize of their choice. This month at the CFAL classic movie program, *Golden Oldies*, two niche holiday films from the 1940s were screened, many leaving the viewing sharing they were grateful to have been re-introduced thanks to our volunteer host and her thinking outside of the box.

Among CFAL opportunities for social, educational, and recreation, our health and wellness offerings were robust in December. Our weekly exercise classes continue to be well attended, a favorite being *Indoor Walking*. This program is held in the Community Center Gymnasium to provide safe, reliable terrain for those utilizing durable medical equipment such as canes, walkers, etc. *Reiki Healing Sessions* and *Sound Meditations* were fully booked this month, providing our community members with opportunities to relax, and unwind in a mindful and supportive setting.

Programs in December were impacted by seasonal weather, already in Chatham we have seen a few snowy days. The VNA was scheduled to host an educational session discussing the neuro benefits of exercise, but due to snow the program was rescheduled for a future date. As we continue through the winter, we will continue to be cognizant of weather forecasts and communicative with facilitators and participants to ensure all parties are safe.

RYDER'S COVE RESPITE PROGRAM:

December was a positive and productive month for the Ryder's Cove Adult Supportive Day Program, marked by strong participant engagement, thoughtful transition planning, and a joyful holiday atmosphere.

At present, six participants are actively attending the program. Overall interest in the program remains steady, with one additional applicant currently participating in a trial period. Her application continues to be reviewed carefully as we assess our ability to safely and appropriately meet her individual needs within the program setting. Attendance throughout December remained consistently strong, averaging approximately 90%, which reflects both meaningful engagement and overall participant satisfaction.

We were especially pleased to welcome back a former participant who now attends the program one day per week. His return brought genuine happiness to both staff and fellow participants. Our newest participant has continued to attend regularly and has shown a very positive adjustment. He quickly adapted to the daily routine, participated independently without caregiver presence, and engaged comfortably with peers, demonstrating an encouraging initial fit with the program structure and supports currently in place.

As we continue the recruitment process for a new aide position, the program has temporarily postponed filling additional participant openings. This decision ensures that appropriate staff-to-participant ratios are maintained and that safety and quality of care remain our top priority. Once a candidate has formally accepted the position, available program spaces will be reopened.

December programming was filled with energy, creativity, and festive cheer. Participants enjoyed a well-balanced mix of physical wellness activities, therapeutic programming, and opportunities for meaningful social connection. The holiday spirit was especially evident through singing along to Christmas carols, engaging in lively music sessions, creating holiday wreaths, painting winter-themed canvases, and decorating cookies. The month concluded with a joyful holiday party and a festive pizza luncheon, which were enjoyed by all.

Communication books continued to serve as an effective tool for keeping families informed, providing regular updates on participants' daily moods, activities, and experiences.

The Ryder’s Cove Adult Supportive Day Program remains committed to its mission of providing a safe, engaging, and supportive environment that promotes well-being, connection, and an enhanced quality of life for all participants.

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Council on Aging Board of Directors did not meet in December. Regularly scheduled meetings will resume in January, 2026.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE:

The Human Services Committee did not meet in December. Regularly scheduled meetings will resume in January, 2026.

RECREATION AND BEACHES DIVISION:

The Recreation & Beaches Division is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all Chatham Residents, by striving to provide the best recreational programming and park facilities possible.

PARK Program

The PARK Afterschool Program is for students in grades 3-7 to have a safe, fun, and engaging afterschool experience. It is also the intent of the program to foster a sense of community and to forge new and lasting friendships among the students attending the program.

PARK Special Events Held in December:

12/9- Christmas Door Decorating Contest for all grades

12/14- Bingo and Downtown Scavenger Hunt

12/19- Christmas Pizza Party and Yankee Swap

12/22-(vacation day)- Nova Field Trip- 37 participants

12/23-(vacation day)- Orpheum and Gift Factory- 34 Participants

	September	October	November	December
MONTHLY ATTENDANCE	846	829	545	615
MONEY COLLECTED	\$10,580	\$10,375	\$6,655	\$6,800
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	40	38	36	41

Programming

Adults:

Winter Tuesday Night Pickleball- 69 participants

Winter Thursday Night Pickleball-72 participants

Winter Saturday Night Pickleball- 45 Participants

Winter Indoor Pickleball Mon-Fri- 284 Participants

Winter Adult Basketball- 21 participants

Yoga with Jackie! (Hatha Mondays)- 37 participants

Yoga with Jackie! (Restorative Thursdays)- 11participants

Yoga with Jackie! (Vinyasa0 Fridays)- 9

Winter Floor Hockey- 25 Participants

Winter Badminton- 6 participants

Fun and Functional Fitness- 12 participants

Youth:

December Family Karate-8 participants

December Family Tai Chi- 4 Participants

Youth Skating Session 1- 28 participants

Grades 3-4 Boys Basketball- 1 team (14 participants)

Grades 5-6 Boys Basketball- 1 team (10 participants)

Special Events

On Wednesday December 10th, we hosted *Jingle Ball BINGO* for 34 participants. The event featured candy, prizes, and snacks throughout the night.

On Friday December 19th, we hosted our annual *Parents Night Out* for grades K-6. We had 33 participants. The event featured gym games, pizza dinner, holiday crafts, and a holiday movie for the children.

Community Center Use

Aerobics Room – 60 Reservations

Chatham Tai Chi, Lite Fitness with Susan Hunter, CFAL Chair Yoga, Full Body Fitness with Rachel, COA Full body Fitness, Heisig Belly Dance, CFAL Yoga, CFAL Balance Training, Friday Night Family

Karate, Friday Night Family Tai Chi, Vinyasa Yoga, Restorative Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Fun & Functional Fitness, First Night Chatham

Club Room – 13 Reservations

Women’s Club knitting group, Working Waterfront Advisory Committee, Women’s Club Board meeting, Friends of Chatham Waterways, CC Hospital Auxiliary, Mary Byrbne/What Now?, Chatham Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Trees.

Conference Room – 15 Reservations

Chatham/Harwich Fiber Arts, Chatham Cemetery Commission, Friends of Chatham Pickleball, Chatham Parks & Recreation, Behavioral Health Innovators, Chatham Garden Club Board Meeting, Chatham Platform Tennis, Chatham Ecumenical Council for the Homeless, Chatham Independence Day Parade Committee, Chatham Bikeways Committee.

Gymnasium – 70 Reservations

Open Gym, Mo/We/Fr pickleball 8-10, Winter Pick Up basketball, Tu/Th pickleball 8-10 & 10-12, CFAL Indoor walking group, Tues night pickleball, We/Fr pickleball 10am – 12pm, Thurs night pickleball 5:30 – 7:00pm, Winter Floor hockey 7-9, Sat night pickleball 5:30 – 7:00pm, Adult badminton 12:30 – 2:00 Mon, Beast Em basketball clinic, First Night Chatham.

Large Meeting Room – 15 Reservations

CPR/BLS Classes, Jingle Ball Bingo Night, Crafty Chicks Holiday party, Men’s Club Chatham, First Night Committee, Women’s Club of Chatham Holiday party, Broad Reach Hospice, Parents Night out, Park Gift factory, BOCH monthly meeting, First Night Chatham.

Serving Room – 15 Reservations

Chatham Walkers Holiday Party, Mahjong private group, Mahjong Community group, Men’s Club Chatham Board meeting, Chatham Republican Town Committee, Chatham Women’s Club board meeting, First Night Chatham.

Fitness Room Access Scans

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
September	37	139	136	138	123	116	75	764
October	45	82	132	153	141	142	72	767
November	64	151	89	120	106	79	134	743
December	36	181	168	147	92	86	107	817

Active Fitness Room Memberships: Family Members- 497 Individual Members- 201

Parks & Recreation Commission

The Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting was held on Monday December 8, 2025. The meeting started with *Permission to Use* requests. The Chatham Garden Club's *Annual Plant Sale* was approved unanimously. The second *Permission to Use* request was the Annual Summer *Shakespeare in the Park*. The Commission unanimously approved this request as well.

Theresa Malone presented Monomoy Community Services building update along with ADA issues that have come up during the project. They have requested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Town stating that the Town will communicate their updated Open Space and Recreation plan once completed for Monomoy Community Services to use for their State Grant requirements.

The Commission was given an update on the Beach Sign Project and it was going before the Community Preservation Committee later in the month for a funding request.

The Commission requested for Town staff investigate the possibility that automatic renewals be sent out for the community center fitness room. Town staff will be looking at it and bring an answer to the next meeting.

The Commission was tasked by the selectboard to again look at the new Facility Use Fee structure. After public input was given, the commission voted unanimously to recommend that any businesses operating on town property pay 12% of their fees collected, and for the policy to be revisited in 2 years.

The Commission was given an update on the Center for Active Living (CFAL) project. The Commission would like continued updates as the project moves forward.

Golf Advisory Committee

There was no Golf Advisory Meeting in December

Respectfully submitted,

Leah LaCross

Leah LaCross, MPA
Director of Community Services