



# Orleans Citizens Forum Observer

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## Overflow Crowd Attends Aging in Place Forum

An overflow crowd attended the January 23rd mini-forum on *Aging In Place* held at the Snow Library to hear about the obstacles and opportunities for planning to stay in your own home and what steps can be taken to remain safe, comfortable, and independent. Featured speakers included Judi Wilson, Director of the Orleans Council on Aging, and Pat Zeiss, Membership Director & Vice President of Outreach for Nauset Neighbors. In addition, Orleans Police Chief Scott McDonald spoke about Project Reassurance, a telephone call-in program for those living alone who would like peace of mind knowing they can check in with someone daily.

Judi spoke to the obstacles and opportunities for aging in place, a term generally referring to the process and goal of remaining independent in our own home environments for as long as possible. She urged attendees to become educated about the aging process and its potential challenges, remembering that it is much easier to address a problem if you have planned for its possibility. Consult an Elder Law Attorney to get your affairs in order, and know what you can afford. To echo Judi's words, "It is never too early to start planning, and it is never too late!" Our area has a wealth of community resources - the key to remaining independent for as long as possible is to seek out those resources, to prepare your environment, and to create a network of family, friends, church, health care providers, volunteer organizations, paid help, and wellness programs. In conclusion, Judi said to develop a plan for aging in place that focuses on safety, health and wellness, assistive devices, home modification, and community support. Make SAFETY the primary focus, and learn best how to avoid falls. Judi also wants you to feel free to contact the Orleans Council on Aging at 508-255-6333 with your questions.

Pat shared the beginnings of Nauset Neighbors (NN), an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff whose mission is to help seniors remain independent and in their own homes as long as possible. NN does this by providing "one call does it all" help for transportation for doctors' appointments, shopping, visits with friends, support for certain tasks of daily living, handyman and technology assistance, and more. Towns currently served are Brewster, Eastham, Harwich, Orleans, and Wellfleet. Presently there are 185 members and over 250 volunteers on record. The annual fee for a membership is \$120 for a single and \$140 for a household, which covers administrative costs, such as liability insurance. Pat shared a number of personal stories of NN volunteers helping to make Christmas easier for members, of helping set up the summer stuff such as air conditioners and patio furniture, and one volunteer who went in to hang some pictures and ended up also sewing some loops on a drape hanging in the window! Another story told of two Brewster friends separated by a move and loss of driving abilities, being able to renew their friendship, and another of a younger woman falling down the stairs, shattering her knee cap, whose goal was to get rehabilitated so she could become a volunteer - all delightful and heartwarming stories! In conclusion, Pat urged everyone to think of the expression 'Pay It Forward,' in terms of our helping today so there will be a Nauset Neighbors tomorrow when you might need it.

*by Jeanne Hayward*

*As a result of the interest in this program, OCF hopes to offer in the future another forum that will address similar topics. We express appreciation to our three excellent speakers and to the Snow Library for the use of its meeting room.*



## ADVANCED EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY FORUM

On February 12, 2014 the Orleans Citizens Forum presented the latest equipment, tools, technology, skills and knowledge offered by the local fire and rescue departments on the Lower Cape. Speakers at this event were Deputy Chief Tony Pike and Captain Geof Deering of the Orleans Fire and Rescue Department and William Flynn, Director of the Cape and Islands EMS. After an opening statement from Deputy Pike, Joe Cardito and Kingsley Nelson, representing the Orleans Citizens Forum, were pleased to accept a Community Service Award presented to citizens/organizations showing zeal in assisting the OFD with non-emergency initiatives. This award will be hung in the Fire Department for all to see.

Captain Deering spoke on the fact that they were representing all fire and rescue departments on Cape Cod, not just Orleans. The mutual aid is a Cape-wide system that is tried and true and definitely works. All departments have similar technology, such as a computerized recording system, cardiac monitoring system, and a very advanced intravenous procedure whereby they can inject medications into a bone if an IV doesn't work. Captain Deering also borrowed a CPR machine from Brewster, which is a definite help to the EMTs/Paramedics in the ambulance as they don't have to perform CPR in a moving vehicle. Other departments are hoping to buy this in the near future.

William Flynn spoke on the function of the Cape and Island EMS which was started in 1975 by two doctors, one from Cape Cod Hospital and one from Falmouth Hospital who had been paramedics themselves and knew what was required for a smooth transition from ambulance to hospital. The Cape and Islands EMS is in charge of the training and schooling of all the EMTs and Paramedics. Currently there are 419 paramedics in the system that they are responsible for. Mr. Flynn explained the three grade levels involved: *EMT basic*, *EMT intermediate* and *Paramedic*. During the question and answer period Captain Deering explained further. The following number of hours of classroom, practical, hospital and field training are required to reach each level: EMT basic, 120 hours; EMT intermediate, 250 hours; and paramedic, 1400 hours. Captain Deering stressed how important all members are to the team and in addition to being medics, have to go to fire camp as they are also our firemen.

The fact the Cape does not have a trauma center was also addressed. If helicopters are unable to fly a patient to a trauma center, our ambulances have to transport the patient off Cape to either South Shore Hospital or from

the Upper Cape to Rhode Island. It was also pointed out that a trauma center would be extremely costly for the Cape and most centers are placed in areas where they can be reached by all surrounding towns.

Captain Deering responded to, "Why it is better to call 911 for an emergency than to contact the OFD directly?" There are times when all are on the road on emergencies and if you dial 911 you will get the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office dispatcher, who knows where all the ambulances are, will contact the one closest to your home via radio, and will be able to coach you on what to do till it arrives. All towns have the same knowledge, skills and equipment so even if you should receive help from a mutual aid town, there is comfort in knowing you will receive excellent care. Importance of having a File Of Life in your home to assist the medics in an emergency was emphasized and the OFD had these Files available for all in attendance. If you don't have a File Of Life, just drop in at any fire department and ask for one and keep it on your refrigerator or in plain sight.

After the question and answer period the OFD and William Flynn directed everyone to the back of the room to an expo of OFD equipment. It was very eye opening for all and many additional pertinent questions were asked and answered.

The Citizens Forum would like to thank our panelists for a very informative event and the OFD for their time and efforts in showing all their equipment and bringing an ambulance for all to see. We'd be remiss if we didn't thank Judi Wilson and the Council on Aging as well for the use of their facility. As a result of the interest and importance of this subject matter the OCF hopes to present a similar forum again in the Fall.

by Judi Weil

*Deputy Chief  
Tony Pike*

*OCF President  
Joe Cardito*

*Board Member  
Kingsley  
Nelson*



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