



Neighborhood Falmouth  
PO Box 435  
Falmouth, MA 02541

Address Label

## January Neighborhood Happenings

FRI 9	4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	<b>In the Gallery: Falmouth Artists Guild Members from the 70's and 80's</b> <b>Falmouth Art Center</b> Reception is January 9, artwork is on display January 7—February 2 in the Hermann Gallery
WED 14	12:00 PM— 1:30 PM	<b>Meet for Lunch: Quarterdeck</b> Join us for food and friendship. Order from the menu, pay for your own, cash is preferred for splitting checks. RSVP to the office. Members, let us know if you need a ride.
MON 19	9:00 AM— 11:00 AM	<b>19th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Breakfast</b> <b>The Coonamessett Inn, 311 Gifford Street</b> Georgia State Law Professor Tanya Monique Washington: "Where Do We Go from Here?" plus breakfast, music, and conversation. Tickets \$30. Space is limited.
WED 28	1:30 PM— 2:45 PM	<b>NF Library Talk — Strong, Safe, and Savvy: Financial Tips for the New Year!</b> <b>Falmouth Public Library Hermann Room</b> Featuring Jennifer Ray from Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank



## Neighborhood Falmouth News

January 2026

### A Note from the Executive Director: Candice A. Geers



Warm wishes for a happy New Year! As we begin the year, I want to share some news with you all—news I share with mixed emotions.

I have made the decision to step away from the day-to-day operations of Neighborhood Falmouth. During this transition, I will continue to work a few days each month to provide support and mentoring.

In this new role, I will also focus on overseeing fundraising efforts while offering guidance as the organization moves through 2026.

I'm pleased to share that Jamie Thibodeau and Sarah Stevenson will both be moving into full-time roles. Jamie will take on administrative responsibilities, while Sarah will oversee volunteer operations and member services. Jamie and Sarah have been instrumental in bringing Neighborhood Falmouth to where it is today, and I hope you will join me in supporting these remarkable women during this transition and beyond.

This was not an easy decision. I truly adore this organization and remain in awe that something so special exists. Falmouth is a wonderful place to live, and I am deeply grateful for your support, kindness, and friendship over the years.

Looking ahead, my husband and I plan to do some traveling and see more of the world while we can. Please know that I am only a phone call or email away, and I will always be a fan and a proud supporter of Neighborhood Falmouth.

Candice

### Volunteer Profile: Beth Finn

By Bill Laberis, Volunteer



*In life there are givers and takers. Beth Finn falls decisively into the former category, given her work and voluntary efforts. Whether it was her long career teaching special education students, offering her services as an educational skill tutor, helping seniors age in place in their homes, or caring in her home for a parent that fell ill, it seems she always put the needs of others foremost in her work. Now, in her adopted town of Falmouth, she continues seeking out ways to help while taking time to "smell the roses" in our special coastal community.*

#### Q: What were the influences in your earlier life that led you down a path of serving others?

A: My dad's parents (European immigrants) and my mom's mother—my grandparents—were a big part of my life growing up. As they aged, I would often go with my parents to visit and help care for them. Eventually they all went into some type of retirement home. I continued to visit them regularly and recall how that made them, and me, feel. My mom died relatively young and I did my best to help my dad as he aged. In his 70s he started showing signs of dementia. I would travel weekly from Massachusetts to Connecticut to visit and help him, in the same way I watched my parents help my grandparents. Right before Covid my dad moved into our home, where we could spend more time with him and provide him with the care he needed as Alzheimer's disease progressed. We were lucky to have him living with us for close to a year before he passed in the fall of 2020.

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**Q: How did you start incorporating these early learnings and lessons into your professional life?**

A: I was raised just outside of New Haven, Connecticut and went to Skidmore College, where I majored in Psychology. My plan was to become a clinical psychologist. Upon graduation, I decided I wasn't ready for graduate school quite yet and began my first job at Yale University in the Psychology Department studying the effects of television on children. This included watching every episode of *Barney!* I then worked in Washington, DC at a nonprofit clearinghouse of information on educational TV programming for children, which led me to my next job at a private educational testing and tutoring agency in Potomac, Maryland. I found my passion at this job working with students from preschool through high school and decided to go back to school at George Washington University, where I received a master's in special education.

**Q: Where did all that lead you next?**

A: After teaching special education in Virginia for a couple of years, we moved back north and settled in Natick, MA. I began working in the Wellesley public school system as a special education teacher, where I spent the remainder of my 25-year teaching career at Hunnewell Elementary School. I met my husband Ross in 2009 and remarried in 2012. We blended our families—my two girls, Alex and Emma, and his children Jacey and Noah—and remained in Natick until our youngest graduated from high school. Emma is currently a junior at the College of Charleston majoring in Dance and Psychology. Alex is 25 and working as a school counselor in Connecticut. Noah lives in Boston and works as an account executive at a software company, and Jacey works as a recruiter in NYC.

**Q: How did you come to settle in Falmouth?**

A: We vacationed with the kids every summer in Falmouth at Old Silver Beach, so we all knew and loved this part of the Cape. After a rough 2020 and the realization that life is short, we started casually looking at real estate in this area, knowing that we would be ready to make a move from Natick in a few years. We found our home in North Falmouth and closed in early 2021. We spent most weekends and summers here for a couple of years, always feeling this great sense of relief and happiness when crossing the bridge onto the Cape. In June of 2023, we sold our home in Natick, I retired from teaching in Wellesley and we moved here full time. We have wonderful neighbors in Fiddlers Cove and have met great friends here in Falmouth; our stress levels are minimal and we truly love the life we have made for ourselves here; we both enjoy boating, the beach, and spending time with family; our kids visit often and my brother and sister-in-law also recently moved to Falmouth. We have both found new hobbies we enjoy; Ross is an avid fisherman now and I play mahjong. What's not to like?

**Q: Have you continued to feed that urge to help others?**

A: Because of my life experiences with my dad, grandparents, and others, as soon as I learned about the mission of Neighborhood Falmouth, I knew it was a very special and unique organization. As a volunteer I provide transportation to some members but also have regular social visits with truly fascinating and wonderful people, like this one 96-year-old woman who earned a Ph.D. long before many women did so. I joined the Gala committee to help plan the main NF fundraiser, and I serve on the member services committee. In addition, I still do some tutoring with students, both in person and remotely, along with some educational consulting. I have donated to the Falmouth Service Center and Clipper Closet, a free clothing shop at the high school, and I hope to become more involved with both organizations. This fall I walked in the Jimmy Fund Walk with a wonderful group of women in Falmouth on a team called "Sole Sisters" and together we raised over \$18,000. In my free time in this new chapter of my life, I read a lot, I joined a book club, and I enjoy cooking, yoga, and Pilates. There is plenty to do for others and Falmouth is a great place to find opportunities to help.

*Wishing you peace, joy, and laughter  
in the year to come!*

*January Birthdays***Members**

Val Tillman 1/4  
Alice Liljestrand 1/5  
Donna Scheer 1/7  
Eleanor Ericson 1/8  
Noreen Greetham 1/8  
Maggie Reynolds 1/8  
William McCormack 1/8  
Edith Ross 1/11  
Nancy Sherwood 1/14  
Lena D'alleva 1/14  
Joan Watkins 1/15  
Kevin O'Brien 1/17  
Kirstin Moritz 1/22  
Michele Peal 1/24  
Martha Kim 1/26  
Anne Parker 1/26  
Grace Watt 1/26  
Carl Bowin 1/30

**Volunteers**

Jennifer Cattin 1/1  
Vivian Esswein-Leary 1/2  
Sonia Smith 1/2  
Sarah Stevenson 1/4  
Wendy Faxon 1/10  
Jodi Freedman 1/10  
Kathie Hebden 1/13  
Mary Jo Benjamin 1/18  
Nancy Sinclair 1/19  
Katherine Jansen 1/22  
Lynne Stack 1/24  
Bob Spadafora 1/25  
David Crichton 1/25

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Waquoit Congregational Church  
Woods Hole Foundation  
Mary & Redwood Wright Foundation

**New Members**

Sue Chotkowski  
William O'Connor

**New Volunteers**

Valerie Anderson  
Yanie Arnoux  
Sue Harman  
Deborah Silva  
Peg Townsend  
Lora Tutuny

welcome



# Healthy Living for Older Adults

By Dr. Michael Bihari

President, Neighborhood Falmouth Board of Directors



As we age, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including good nutrition, appropriate physical exercise, and avoiding loneliness can be difficult for many of us. Each month, Neighborhood Falmouth focuses on a health topic of importance for older adults, supplies information about Aging in Place, and provides a healthy seasonal recipe.

## Winter on Your Feet: Preventing Falls

Winter on Cape Cod can bring beauty—but it also can bring ice, snow, poor lighting, bulky clothing, and slippery surfaces that dramatically increase the risk of falls in older adults. Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal injuries among older adults, and injury rates climb sharply as temperatures drop. Winter fall risks are predictable and they are often preventable.

Start with a plan: Before heading out in cold weather, think about how you will get from one place to another. Whenever possible, exit your home through an enclosed or covered garage and enter buildings through covered entrances. Reducing even short exposures to ice and snow can significantly lower your risk of a fall. If the weather is icy and the trip is not essential, staying home might be a smart—and safe—choice.



**Slow down and give yourself time:** Many winter falls happen because people rush, especially during holiday season. Allow yourself extra time for shopping, visiting and other errands. Walk slowly, take small steps, and keep your center of gravity stable—some balance experts recommend a slight “penguin walk,” with short strides and feet pointed slightly outward. Avoid shortcuts across untreated areas, and use walkways that have been salted or sanded.

**Wear footwear that works:** For the best traction, wear well-fitting boots with rubber soles and good tread. Tennis shoes, sneakers, and dress shoes offer little traction on ice. For added stability, consider spike-less shoe grippers or traction aids. Keep your shoes and mobility devices dry and free of snow or ice.

**Use support—and accept help:** When conditions are slippery use handrails, canes, walkers, or walking sticks. Make sure rubber tips on canes and walkers are in good condition and replace them if worn. If something feels unsafe—like an icy driveway or a distant mailbox—ask for help. Avoiding an injury is the best way to preserve independence.

**Prepare your surroundings:** Keep rock salt, sand, or even cat litter near walkways and sprinkle it to improve traction. Clear snow and ice promptly, or ask someone to do it for you. Indoors, immediately wipe up water tracked in from melting snow. Remove clutter, cords, space heaters, and blankets from walkways. If you use throw rugs, secure them with rug tape.

**Light the way:** Good lighting prevents missteps. Use the highest-wattage bulbs recommended for your fixtures, add nightlights in hallways and bathrooms, and ensure outdoor entrances and stairs are well lit. Keep flashlights handy in case of power outages.

**Dress smart—and stay balanced:** Bundle up to stay warm, but avoid overly bulky clothing that restricts movement or vision. Wear gloves or mittens so your hands stay out of your pockets and free to help with balance. Carry your cell phone at all times—inside and outside—in case you need help.

**Be ready for the unexpected:** If traveling by car, pack a blanket, water, and snacks. Keep a list of medications and important medical information with you. If you have an iPhone or Apple Watch, make sure they are set to detect emergency falls.

Winter doesn't have to mean fear or isolation. With planning, awareness, and a few practical steps, you can stay steady, confident, and active all season long. And, if you are a member of Neighborhood Falmouth, call the office if you need help navigating winter conditions or need help making your house safe for the winter.

## From Dr. Mike's Kitchen

*The first month of the year is cold and a time that often brings snow and ice. After taking a brisk walk with friends or just watching the snow fall and listening to the winds howl, sitting down to a hearty bowl of a homemade stew can warm your tummy and your soul!*

*In honor of our Brazilian friends and neighbors let's start the New Year with a recipe for feijoada, a hearty stew of black beans and salted pork or beef. Considered the national dish of Brazil, it is traditionally made with cheaper cuts of meat like ears, feet, and tail, it's slow-cooked and served with white rice, sautéed collard greens, farofa (toasted cassava flour), and orange slices to cut the richness. The following is a healthy, east-to-make and delicious plat-based version.*

### Plant-Based Feijoada

1½ cups chopped red bell pepper  
¾ cup chopped onion  
2 tablespoons no-salt-added tomato paste  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
3 15-oz. cans no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained (4½ cups)  
2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth  
1½ tablespoons lime juice (zest lime for garnish, if desired)  
1 bay leaf  
¾ teaspoon dried oregano, crushed  
¾ teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
¼ teaspoon ground allspice  
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro  
3 cups hot cooked brown rice  
Orange slices

In a large saucepan cook bell pepper, onion, tomato paste, and garlic over medium 4 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding water, 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time, as needed to prevent sticking.

Stir in the next eight ingredients (through allspice). Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 15 minutes or until heated through and flavors meld. Remove and discard bay leaf. Stir in cilantro. Serve stew over rice. Garnish with orange slices and, if you like, lime zest and additional cilantro.



**Recipe Health Tip:** Makes 6 servings, each with about 330 calories, 14 grams protein and 16 grams fiber.

### Health Benefits of Black Beans

Black beans are the main ingredient in feijoada and because of their noteworthy disease-fighting power are considered a "superfood". According to the Mayo Clinic, black beans are a great source of protein and fiber. They are rich in antioxidants, can help with weight loss and promote gut health.

A serving of black beans has 28% to 32% of the daily allowance of fiber and has the following health benefits:

- Increase volume without excess calories.
- Help you feel full for longer periods and prevent you from overeating.
- Regulate blood sugar levels.
- Reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- Prevent the development of diseases.

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