The Beacon Advocate

OCT-DEC 2026

Welcome to the Beacon Advocate, a monthly newsletter from the Beacon Cottage informing, empowering and supporting our older adults in our communities.

MEDICARE COUNSELING

Are you new to Medicare or need help reviewing your 2027 Medicare coverage?

Meet with a certified State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) counselor for free, confidential, and unbiased support.

Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15 - December 7

In-person appointments are now available at Beacon Cottage in Ogunquit!

Additional appointments are available on Zoom, by phone, and at locations throughout Southern Maine.

Advanced registration is required. Please call 207.396.6524 to request an appointment.

Greetings from Beacon Cottage!

Home of Maines Elder Justice Investigator and the York County Elder Abuse Task Force!

The Beacon Cottage provides a safe, welcoming space where older adults connect, learn, and gain the tools and support needed to prevent elder exploitation, fraud, and abuse. The cottage represents the true meaning of collaboration. With the Town of Ogunquit donating the building, various local partners contributing needs, volunteers donating their time/expertise/support and an investigator sponsored by Kennebunk Police Department/Maine Dept of Public Safety…it is a remarkable collaborative effort hosted by the York County Elder Abuse Task Force.

B: Belonging
E: Education
A: Advocacy
C: Community
O: Outreach
N: Networking

VOLUNTEER VA SPECIALIST

Meet Meghan

Join us!

We are proud to welcome Meghan to Beacon Cottage, where she will be offering guidance, support and education to help navigate VA benefits and available resources.

SUPPORTING OLDER VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES

We are proud to welcome Meghan to Beacon Cottage, where she will be offering guidance, support and education to help navigate VA benefits and available resources.

★ WHAT SHE OFFERS ★

GROUP SESSIONS
- ★ VA benefits education
- ★ Resource awareness
- ★ Understanding available services

PRIVATE APPOINTMENTS
- ★ One-on-one support
- ★ Benefit questions & applications
- ★ Personalized guidance

★ MEETINGS & OFFICE HOURS ★

FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH
10:00AM – 11:00AM
Office hours will be until 2:00PM

Other appointments available upon request.

Join Us!

102 Main St.
Ogunquit, ME

207-646-6492

APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

COMMUNITY FARM FOOD SHARE

YCEATF EST. 2005 York County Elder Abuse Task Force

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Justice & Community BEACON COTTAGE Supporting Older Adults

Also sponsored by Partners for Healthier Communities

The Beacon Cottage is excited to announce that we have a CSA share sponsored by **York County Elder Abuse Task Force (YCEATF), Partners for Healthier Communities,** and the **York County Food Council!**

Items we pick up each week will be on our cottage porch for you.

HAVE EXTRA? DROP IT OFF!

Share your surplus fruits, vegetables, herbs, or garden goodies and help reduce food waste while supporting our neighbors.

NEED SOME FRESH PRODUCE? STOP BY AND TAKE A FEW!

Fresh fruits and vegetables are here for anyone in our community.

Meet Emma & Dotti!

This amazing Grandmother and granddaughter duo will be leading the *Intergenerational Walking Club* here at the Beacon Cottage.

EXERCISE for body & mind

SOCIALIZATION across generations

FRIENDSHIP that lasts a lifetime

Join Us!

They have so many great ideas in mind and we hope to have a good group of us that will come together!

First Thursday of Every Month at 10am.

Justice & Community BEACON COTTAGE Supporting Older Adults

102 Main St. Ogunquit

Let's walk, talk and build a stronger community—one step at a time.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic abuse can affect people of any age, including older adults. For some, the abuse has been happening for many years. For others, it may begin later in life as health, finances, caregiving needs, or family relationships change. Regardless of when it starts, abuse can leave lasting emotional, physical, and financial impacts. Every older adult deserves to live with safety, dignity, and respect.
Many older adults grew up believing that what happened within a marriage or family should remain private. Because of this, it can be difficult to talk about abuse or ask for help. The York County Elder Abuse Task Force and Caring Unlimited want you to know that you are not alone, and there is no shame in reaching out for support.

Share Your Story

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Caring Unlimited will host Survivors' Stories on October 22, 2026- This event honors the courage, strength, and resilience of survivors. We invite community members to attend, listen, and support those who share their experiences. Individuals who wish to share their own story are welcome to submit it through our website. Stories can be written in any format - a narrative, a poem, a song, etc. Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and cared for in their own home. It is never too late to ask for help, whether the abuse began recently or has been happening for years. Support, information, and resources are available. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, Caring Unlimited's confidential, free 24-hour Helpline is available at 1-800-239-7298.

Together, we can break the silence, end the stigma, and help ensure that everyone can live free from abuse.

Anna Dullea (York County Elder Abuse Task Force Member)
Violence Intervention Coordinator *she/her/hers* | anna@caring-unlimited.org |207-850-8525
P.O Box 590 Sanford, ME 04073 **York County Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Program**
Caring Unlimited, York County's Domestic Violence Resource Center

YORK COUNTY CDVIP Growth. Accountability.

Shield Seniors

www.shieldseniors.com

You Don't Need to Be a Tech Expert to Stay Safe Online

Short 2-minute lessons. Real-life examples. Zero jargon. Shield Seniors teaches you to spot fake texts, phone scams, and computer pop-ups — so you feel confident every time you go online. No downloads, no pop-up ads, no pressure. Just calm, clear learning at your pace.

Contributed by York County Elder Abuse Task Force Member, Ilene Kanoff

Meet Task Force Member Cindy Karolides!

If you come by the Beacon Cottage on a Wednesday, chances are you'll be greeted by Cindy! Cindy is a licensed social worker who retired last year from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services after 20 years of service. During her career, much of her work focused on the protection, safety and well-being of children and adults throughout York and Cumberland Counties.

At the Beacon Cottage, she helps welcome visitors, answer questions, connect people with resources and programs, assist with day-to-day Cottage activities and, most importantly, make everyone who walks through our door feel comfortable and at home. She has taken on responsibilities such leading our Book Nook lending library!! On occasion, you may also find Cindy with her husband, Bill, who serves as our Beacon Cottage maintenance man, or with their four-year-old yellow Lab, Izzy. Izzy is currently training to become a therapy dog and hopes to spend even more time at the Cottage.

Outside of the Cottage, Cindy enjoys spending time with Bill, their adult children and their four grandchildren. She loves the ocean, especially Ogunquit Beach and Marginal Way, and also enjoys kayaking and boating on the beautiful lakes of Southern Maine.

We are incredibly fortunate to have Cindy, Bill and, of course, Izzy as part of our Beacon Cottage family. They each bring something special to our little Cottage, and we are so grateful for all they do.

Cindy is one of those people who makes a place feel like home. Her kindness, experience, warmth and genuine care for others are felt by everyone who walks through our doors. Thank you, Cindy, for everything you do for the Beacon Cottage, the York County Elder Abuse Task Force and the older adults we are so proud to serve.

Health & Wellness Tip

Keep Moving, even a Little!

You don't have to spend hours at the gym to benefit from movement. A short walk, gentle stretching, or a few minutes of movement throughout the day can help support strength, balance, and overall well-being. Find something you enjoy and keep moving! **More opportunities are coming soon at the Beacon Cottage!**

STOP AND VERIFY:

The Simple Step That Can Stop a Scam

By Detective Mike Taddei, York Police Department

As a police detective, I have investigated scams where victims have lost thousands, tens of thousands, and in some cases hundreds of thousands of dollars. I have also worked cases where we were able to intervene, trace stolen cryptocurrency, seize assets, and identify and charge those responsible.

Through those investigations, I have learned something important:

the most effective time to stop a scam is before you send the money.

THE SCAMMER'S PLAYBOOK

Scammers are experts at creating a sense of urgency. They may tell you that your bank account has been compromised, your computer has been hacked, your Social Security number is being used by criminals, a family member is in trouble, or that you owe money to the government.

They may sound professional. They may know your name, address, or other personal information. They may even make the phone number on your caller ID appear to belong to a legitimate business or government agency.

Their goal is to keep you talking and prevent you from taking the time to think.

STOP That is when you STOP.

If someone unexpectedly contacts you and asks for personal information, account information, passwords, verification codes, or payment, **end the communication. Hang up the phone. Stop responding to the text or email. Do not click the link they provided.**

Then VERIFY.

If the person claims to be from your bank, hang up and call your bank using the phone number on the back of your card, your official bank statement, or the bank's legitimate website. If they claim to be from a government agency, find the agency's official phone number yourself and call it. For companies like Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, or others, look up their legitimate contact information. **Do not use the number provided by the person who contacted you.**

The same principle applies regardless of how you were contacted.
It could be a phone call, text message, email, social media message, or a pop-up on your computer or tablet.

If you have trouble verifying on your own, enlist help!
Call a family member or a friend, ask them to help you look up the number. Even call your local police department!

Stop the communication. Then independently verify the story.

WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

Scammers depend on urgency. They don't want you to hang up and call your bank. They don't want you to talk to your spouse, your children, a friend, or your local police department. They want to keep you on the phone while they control the conversation.

They may tell you that if you hang up, your money will be stolen. They may tell you that you cannot tell anyone what is happening. They may tell you that moving your money, buying gift cards, sending cryptocurrency, or providing a verification code is the only way to protect yourself.

It isn't.

No legitimate government agency is going to demand that you move your money to "protect" it. No legitimate business is going to require you to purchase gift cards and provide the numbers over the phone to resolve an account problem. And an unexpected caller should never be trusted simply because they know some information about you.

OTHER SCAMS TO WATCH FOR

Not every scam starts with a phone call. Some of the most damaging scams begin by building a relationship.

- **Romance scams** – A scammer builds trust online, then asks for money for an emergency, medical expense. travel, or other reason.
- **Investment scams** – They offer opportunities in cryptocurrency, stocks, real estate, or other investments. They may show you a fake account or allow a small withdrawal to gain your trust.
- **The combination** – A scammer creates a romantic relationship and then introduces an investment opportunity.

It is still a financial transaction with a stranger.

If someone you met online asks you for money or encourages you to invest, **STOP AND VERIFY.** Talk to someone you trust. Research the investment independently. Do not use any website, phone number, cryptocurrency wallet, or platform provided by the person who contacted you. And never allow someone you met online to pressure you into making a financial decision before you have had a chance to verify what you are being told.

Remember, you do not have to prove that you trust someone by sending them money.

STOP.
Slow down. Hang up.
Stop texting. Close the email.
Don't click the link.
Don't send the money.

VERIFY.
Contact the organization yourself using information you know is legitimate.

THEN DECIDE.
Once you have verified what is happening, get a second opinion. Call a loved one. Call the police. Ask for help.

There is no shame in being targeted by a scam. These criminals are professionals. They manipulate people using **fear**, urgency, authority and trust. **If you realize you** have been scammed, or even think you may have been scammed, **report it.** **Contact your financial institution** immediately and contact your local police department.

Join us!

Widow and Grief Support Group

Losing a loved one is one of the most difficult experiences a person can go through, whether it is a spouse, partner, family member, or another household member. The longer you've been together, the more complicated the loss can feel.

Please join us on the **2nd Monday of each month** for an ongoing conversation about love, loss, and navigating the challenges of grief.

Our goals are to provide information and resources, support through the stages of grief, and offer a safe and welcoming space to share memories, life lessons, and, occasionally, even laughter.

Beacon Cottage

102 Main Street, Ogunquit

Facilitated by:

Christopher "Kris" Clough, LCSW

Foundations Counseling, ME PLLC

All of our programs and offerings are FREE and made possible by volunteers and donations!

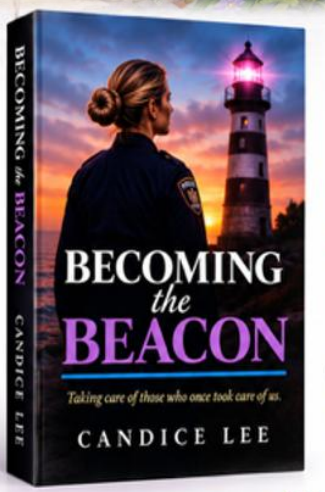
Thank you!

BEACON COTTAGE
Supporting Older Adults

Beacon Cottage Book Club

Join us for conversation, connection and great books.

- Last Wednesday of Every Month
- 10:00 AM
- With Nancy Crotty
- At Beacon Cottage
- Refreshments Provided



Our First Book

Officer Candice Simeoni's book

Becoming the Beacon

Books may be purchased at Beacon Cottage Monday through Wednesday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

All are welcome!

Elderflower Pound Cake w/ Lemon-Elderflower Glaze

*c/o MyRecipes *Contributed by our Karen*
Active time: 15 minutes/Total time: 2 hours/Servings: 16

Cake

1½ C salted butter, softened
3 C sugar
6 large eggs
2 T elderflower liqueur (such as St. Germain or St. Elder)
(may substitute 7-Up or elderflower tonic water)
1 T lemon zest
3 C a/p flour, plus more for dusting the pan
1 C elderflower tonic water (such as Fever Tree)
Shortening, for greasing the pan

Glaze

2 C powdered sugar
2 T elderflower tonic water
2 t lemon zest
2 T lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350. Beat butter on medium speed until creamy. Gradually add sugar and beat until light and fluffy, 3-5 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until just blended after each addition. Stir in liqueur and zest.

Alternate adding flour and tonic water to butter mix, beginning and ending with flour, beating on low speed until just blended after each addition. Pour batter into a greased (with shortening) and floured 10" Bundt pan. Bake in preheated oven until a long wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 60 to 80 minutes. Tent with tin foil after 45-50 minutes to prevent excessive browning if necessary.

Cool in pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Invert cake onto rack and cool completely, about 30 minutes. Spoon glaze over cake.

Winter Bucket List Must-Dos

Winter Fun

- ☐ Build a snowman
- ☐ Take a winter walk
- ☐ Make homemade hot chocolate
- ☐ Visit a winter market
- ☐ Go see holiday lights
- ☐ Have a snowball fight
- ☐ Make a winter craft

Cozy & Meaningful

- ☐ Call an old friend
- ☐ Bake your favorite treat for a neighbor
- ☐ Write down a favorite memory
- ☐ Try a new recipe
- ☐ Send a handwritten card
- ☐ Plan lunch with someone you love
- ☐ Do one thing you've never tried before

Candice's Corner: Meet Investigator Candice

Officer Candice Simeoni is a law enforcement officer and recognized expert in elder justice and elder abuse prevention, serving primarily in Maine. She is employed by the Kennebunk Police Department, where she specializes in elder crimes and elder justice investigations. Simeoni began her law enforcement career in 2004 and graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy's 9th Law Enforcement Training Program in 2005.

Candice is the Founder and President of the York County Elder Abuse Task Force, a nationally recognized nonprofit established in 2005 to address elder abuse, exploitation, and fraud. She is also a lead instructor at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, where she teaches elder justice investigation courses to law enforcement officers and helped develop Maine's first mandatory Elder Justice Investigations curriculum.

In 2025, She was appointed by the Maine Department of Public Safety as the State of Maine's Elder Justice Investigator, a pilot position focused on strengthening elder justice investigations, mentoring law enforcement agencies, collecting data, and promoting best practices in the response to elder crime statewide. In this role, she works collaboratively with law enforcement, adult protective services, prosecutors, financial institutions and other professionals to improve the response to cases involving older adults. Nationally, she has spoken on elder abuse, financial exploitation and elder justice issues and has testified before the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging regarding senior fraud and financial scams. She holds degrees in Business Administration and Organizational Leadership Studies from the University of Southern Maine and recently obtained her Women's Leadership Certificate from Yale University.

Beyond law enforcement, Candice is deeply committed to community outreach and education. Through the York County Elder Abuse Task Force and Beacon Cottage, the Task Force's community home in Ogunquit, she provides fraud prevention education, connects older adults and their families with resources and develops programs and initiatives designed to support, protect, and empower older adults.

Candice recently published her first book, *Becoming the Beacon*, which reflects on her experiences in law enforcement, elder justice, leadership, and community service. She is also the founder and director of the Maine Golden Beauty Pageant, an initiative celebrating women over 60 while raising awareness and support for elder justice. Outside of her professional work, she is active in community service, including creating custom cakes for chronically and terminally ill children through Icing Smiles. She also enjoys her work with the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Maine. At the heart of everything she does is a simple mission: protecting and respecting older adults and making sure they know they are worthy, valued and never forgotten.

csimeoni@kennebunkmaine.us and/or visit: www.yceatf.org 207.646.6472

Trust Your Gut: Did you know that your instincts can be one of your best safety tools? If a phone call, email, visitor or situation doesn't feel right, it's okay to pause, step away and verify before taking action. You never have to make an immediate decision just because someone is pressuring you to do so. That pressure is a red flag!

Pause Before You Pay: If someone asks you to send money, buy gift cards, or make a payment unexpectedly, stop and verify first.
Scammers often create a sense of urgency, so you don't have time to think.

BEACON COTTAGE WISH LIST:

- Paper Towels
- Copy Paper
- Baked Goodies on Mondays
- Napkins
- Tissues
- Winter Wreath for Door

SEEKING INSTRUCTOR

Share your passion.
Make a difference
Help older adults stay active, build connections, and feel their best!

Justice & Community
BEACON COTTAGE
Supporting Older Adults

We are seeking a volunteer instructor to lead a
YOGA, STRETCH OR PILATES
class on
WEDNESDAY MORNINGS
at **9:00 AM**

CLASSES HELD AT:
Beacon Cottage
102 Main St.
Ogunquit, Maine

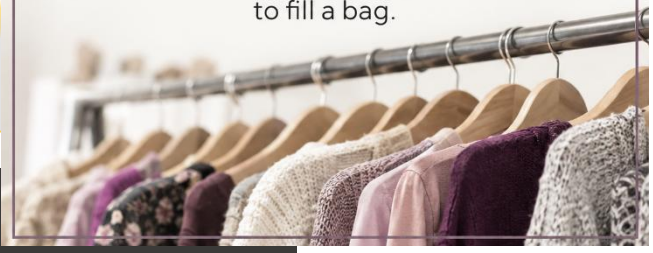
INTERESTED? *Let's connect!*
yceatf@gmail.com | YCEATF.org

TAKING CARE OF THOSE WHO ONCE TOOK CARE OF US.

Cottage Hours:
Monday- Wed
9am -1pm!

Be sure to like us on Facebook!
Beacon Cottage
&
York County Elder Abuse Task Force

BERNICE'S
POP-UP BOUTIQUE
COMING SOON
WEEKEND OF
DECEMBER 12
Free for anyone age 60+
to fill a bag.



THANK YOU!

The York County Elder Abuse Task Force is dedicated to protecting our older population from abuse. From projects that lift them up to educating in various ways, the group is determined to make a make a difference. The mission is to provide resources, education and ways to help eliminate victimization and empower our older Mainer's.
They strive to take care of those who once took care of us.

Taking care of those who once took care of us...