

February 5, 2023

Dear Somerville Council on Aging Folks,

I would like to express my interest in joining your SCOA Board of Directors.

I think that I may have some knowledge and contacts that would fit nicely with the mission and activities of the SCOA. I am currently a member of the Board of Directors for Somerville Cambridge Elders and have enjoyed membership there for 7 years as well as serving as Clerk for 3 and heading up the SCES high school scholarship giving program for SHS and CRLS students for 6 years.

I came to Somerville in 2019 to help out my daughter with rent as she had been laid off (thank goodness that did last too long). I then spent 3 years triangulating between here and work in Haverhill (directing a program providing services for elders by contracts with 3 ASAPs, MA Rehab and Veteran Services) and visiting my mother who was in a nursing home in Amesbury (very long and stressful days).

But, as soon as I retired in 2012 I found SCOA! First, I joined the Book Club and Fit-4-Life and I have made use of the many, many terrific programs ever since. Arts and Crafts at the former Cross Street Center and joining in with Youth Empowerment group for a tour and Boston Pops performance complete with a welcome by Keith Lockhart; assisting Velma with the gardens at Ralph and Jenny and other activities there, and, of course, day trips and programs at Holland Street. Where else would we seniors be so spoiled with picnics, holiday programs, good food and entertainment? I think that I could fill a whole Dr. Suess Oh, the Places You'll Go! book with the enriching opportunities that the City of Somerville and the COA have afforded me and so many other seniors in our community. The list can be endless: a trip to Tanglewood and fancy luncheon on the lawn under a tent to ward off the sun; Ships and history galore at Battleship Cove; Attending recitals at Berklee College of Music; a walking tour of Somerville's cultural food shops; Somerville 4th fireworks front row; Mayor's picnic; Kiwanis dinners etc. etc.

I also value meeting new individuals at outings, at the centers, and through volunteering at the old Brown Bag program when we packed bags at the Armory, taking applications for the Farmer's Market program, and Memory Cafe to name a few. And, I am very proud that I helped to take over and continue the COA Book Club when the former staff person left. We have managed to keep the group going through Covid by creating a free Zoom account and it continues to this day in a hybrid form in person and online with the gracious assistance of COA staff, meeting room, equipment and snacks (yum).

I am enjoying my time with the SCES board, but am finding that perhaps I might to 'slow my roll' a little as I grow older. I have spent time involved in national, state, and various communities in the Commonwealth over the years, but would like to concentrate my efforts in my home community.

I have worked all my career with low-income folks and elders and I know first hand how isolation and being without enriching and socializing opportunities can cause many to struggle. Now, I would love to play a part in the planning and operation of the Somerville Council on Aging.

Thank you for taking the time to review my application for a seat on the SCOA Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Ellen Ellis
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