



CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORS

ARLINGTON BELMONT CAMBRIDGE SOMERVILLE WATERTOWN



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

2024

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A Year of Community Growth

Dear Members and Friends,

We are pleased to present you with the 2024 Annual Report which reviews our organization's highlights and accomplishments over the past year. We are happy to report we had a significant increase in the number of new members, requests for services (both volunteer and vetted vendor referrals), and ended the year in a healthy financial position.

I hope 2024 held more joy than disappointment for you. As I mentioned in our February newsletter (and it bears repeating), I am re-reading *The Road Less Traveled* by Scott Peck, the classic and celebrated guidebook on how to live a good and fulfilling life that was published back in 1978. His insightful lessons on how to manage life's inevitable sorrows (The book's first sentence reads, "Life is difficult."), are timeless and original. Peck describes love as a major coping mechanism and defines love as, "The will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." He clarifies that self-love and love of others go hand-in-hand and are ultimately indistinguishable. Love, he imparts, is more than a feeling; it's a combination of action and intention.

When I say it is a labor of love for Cambridge Neighbors to support those who want to create their own path as they age—to live out their lives on their own terms, I speak on behalf of the board, staff, committee members, volunteers, service providers, community partners, donors, and members themselves. Thank you for the privilege to be of service.

Warm Regards,

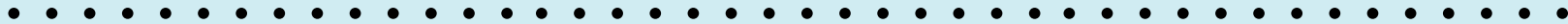


OUR MISSION

Cambridge Neighbors (CN) is a membership-driven nonprofit organization dedicated to helping adults aged 60 and over in Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Somerville, and Watertown stay in the homes and neighborhoods they love. CN provides its members the opportunities and support necessary to remain an integral part of their communities and gives them peace of mind with practical services, stimulating activities, and a social network—enabling successful “aging in place.”

OUR STORY

Established in 2007, Cambridge Neighbors is a 501c3 grassroots nonprofit, often referred to as a “village”. It is one of many villages—over 300 nationwide and 32 in Massachusetts. Cambridge Neighbors (originally Cambridge at Home) was established by a group of forward-thinking residents in response to the need to support a fast-growing number of older adults who wished to remain in the homes and communities they loved as they aged. In 2014, our organization grew to include residents of Arlington, Belmont, Somerville, and Watertown. By offering social and educational activities; volunteer services and opportunities; referrals to vetted professional services; and a combination of information, referrals, and direct assistance, this model encourages members to support other members—a core value of the village concept.



OUR VALUES

Inclusiveness – Welcoming members of diverse cultures, faiths, genders, orientations, and abilities

Compassion – Supporting and caring for each other

Collaboration – Member-driven mindset of working together

Community – Strong relationships within and outside the village

Individuality – Respecting and celebrating the uniqueness of each member

Sustainability – Managing our organization with fiscal discipline and responsibility

HIGHLIGHTS

We were pleased to welcome 46 new members to our community.

This is the largest number of members to join in six years. As always, word of mouth is how most hear about Cambridge Neighbors, and we are grateful to those of you who have spread the word.

We have had 17 individuals join our volunteer corps, totaling 59.

These volunteers are available to support the various service needs of our members. We are especially grateful to our expanding group of CN volunteers. They get members to medical appointments, help with technology problems, pay friendly visits, and shop for groceries — among other things. A good number of our volunteers are not members, but “neighbors” of all ages who believe in and support our mission. Since members increasingly rely on their technology, it’s not a surprise that volunteer tech requests remained ahead of transportation requests as they did in 2023.

We said farewell to Anna Whitcomb, the President of the Board.

Anna, who faithfully served in that role from 2022 through 2024, contributed significantly to the organization’s functioning, including the launch of our strategic planning effort. Anna will remain a member; she plans to use some of her free time pursuing other interests and spending more time with her growing family. We also thanked Jay Lorsch (a founding member), Rachel McCaw-Navin, and Peter White for their thoughtful contributions as board members. We welcomed new board members: Claudia Albert, Lotte Bailyn, and Tom Novak, our Treasurer.

We were thrilled to announce that Claudia Albert was chosen to serve as the next President of the Board

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Claudia has been a member of Cambridge Neighbors since 2023 and has already made her mark as an active member, a volunteer and a board member. *"As President, I look forward to working collaboratively with the Board, with the staff, and with CN members toward our mission of healthy aging and aging in place. I bring to the Board more than 20 years in leadership positions including Assistant Principal and two principalships before moving to various Central Office positions. When I retired from PK-12 education after 9 years as the Assistant Superintendent in Stonington, CT, I did consulting in CT and, for 15+ years, taught Educational Leadership to graduate students at UConn and Brooklyn College. Other experiences relevant to Board President include long-time grant writing and President of my Condominium Board in Brooklyn for about 5 years. I currently serve as*

Belmont High School and the Chenery School Advisory Councils. After I moved to the greater Boston area to be with my son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren, I did not expect to retire nor to be lonely, but both happened. My position at Brooklyn College went back to in-person and my family was busy with jobs and school and friends of their own. After some floundering, I happened to meet a young woman at the Grove Street playground (where I had taken my grandchildren) who told me about an organization called Cambridge Neighbors. I joined, I started meeting people; I volunteered, I went to all sorts of activities. CN gave me what I needed – a community of like-minded people and a purpose. Now it is time for me to give back. I thank all of you for giving me this opportunity." -Claudia Albert



Claudia Albert

STRATEGIC PLAN

Various committees — comprised mostly of CN members and board members — were hard at work creating a strategic plan that will guide our organization over the years ahead. This plan will provide a road map of sorts, keeping us focused on set goals and desired outcomes. Be assured that Cambridge Neighbors will continue to offer high-quality services, programs, and events. We will keep you updated on the results of this effort, due by early spring. See more about this under **FROM THE BOARD** on page 14.

GOALS

- Offer choice and control of how and where we choose to live
- Help maintain and enhance our quality of life
- Provide peace of mind
- Support lives of purpose and promise
- Enable successful navigation through the transitions of aging

MEMBER SURVEY

In March of 2024 we asked members to complete a survey. They had an opportunity to provide input on what makes Cambridge Neighbors valuable to them and share with us their service and program preferences and ideas.

“It gives me peace of mind knowing that CN is there.” was the top choice as to what makes CN’s membership important. The survey showed that the activities most supported by responders were educational programs, social activities, and cultural programs. Most respondents said they prefer having both in-person and Zoom programming. Leading services were referrals to vetted vendors, volunteer support, and referrals to other community resources.

Somewhat surprising is that the survey showed that loneliness and isolation do concern some of our members—generally on an occasional basis. It was, however, reassuring to know that, as survey respondents reported, Cambridge Neighbors has made some difference in alleviating both loneliness and isolation.

Thank you to those of you who participated!

Monthly “Exploring Diversity” member-led program



Member outing to the Somerville Theatre



FUNDING

Since membership fees only cover 55% of our budget, we depend upon the kindness of individual donors (Many of whom are members.) who want to financially support our mission.

Because of their generosity, we are able to deliver critical services and offer a variety of opportunities for members to connect with one another. In 2024, we received a generous gift from the estate of Joel and Ann Baehr who were Cambridge Neighbors members for many years. Their commitment to our work was extraordinary.



J.B. and Valerie Maxwell

Members, J.B. and Valerie Maxwell, chose to extend their financial support beyond an annual donation to include a legacy gift in their will. They wrote:

"The concept of the Village Movement is so important to us in a world where, as we age, we find our social circles shrinking and our needs changing. Cambridge Neighbors gives us access to ample opportunities to connect with others and to local resources we now need as we live through our "elder years" at home.

For us, it is comforting, enjoyable and rewarding to belong to a community of such talented, helpful, and knowledgeable people – both Staff and Members – from so many places and experiences who want to share their trove of knowledge, experience and understanding."

We are donating to Cambridge Neighbors to help ensure the continuation of this idea, their mission and this exemplary organization and community service."

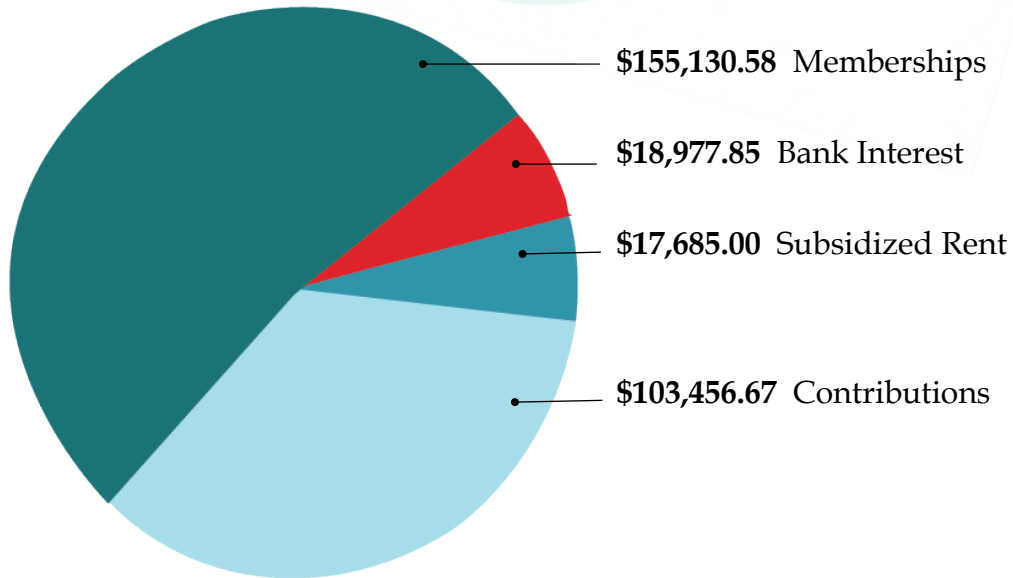
FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2024

Allocation of Income and Expenses

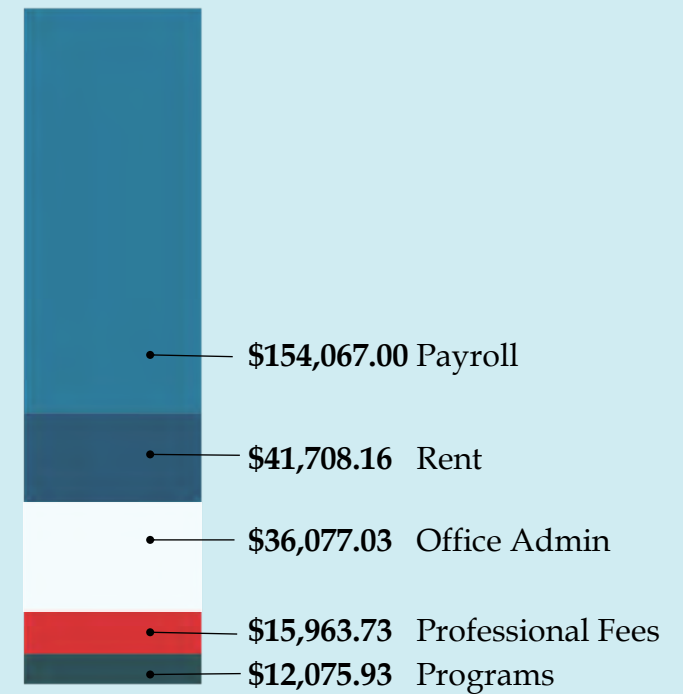
INCOME 2024

\$295,250.10 Total



EXPENSES 2024

\$259,891.85 Total



PRACTICAL SUPPORT

In 2024, we answered 576 service requests.

The village concept — built on the idea that together we're stronger — emphasizes peer-to-peer networking and mutual support. The Neighbors in Service Volunteer program is a vital part of our organization.

Last year, **59 volunteers** were available to help with transportation to critical appointments, grocery shopping/delivery, errands, household tasks and minor repairs, tech assistance, organizing, friendly visiting, and regular phone check-ins.

Technology service requests were at the top of the list with transportation requests in second place.

Others said it best when describing how volunteers have been invaluable.



"Cambridge Neighbors has been integral to my mother being able to remain in her home these last three years and we will be forever grateful for the kindness of the three volunteers who brought her groceries, Alain, Agnes, and Kathleen. Thank you for the work you all do."

— Adam Haslett

"Thank you so much for sending Samara to help me with my tech stuff. She is knowledgeable and fun to work with. She not only helped me with my tech problems. She made me "think". As we progressed, she would ask me to intuit the next step. Such a leap for me. I felt so empowered. A pleasant afternoon."

— Marianne Iacuzio

VOLUNTEER AND VETTED VENDORS PROGRAMS

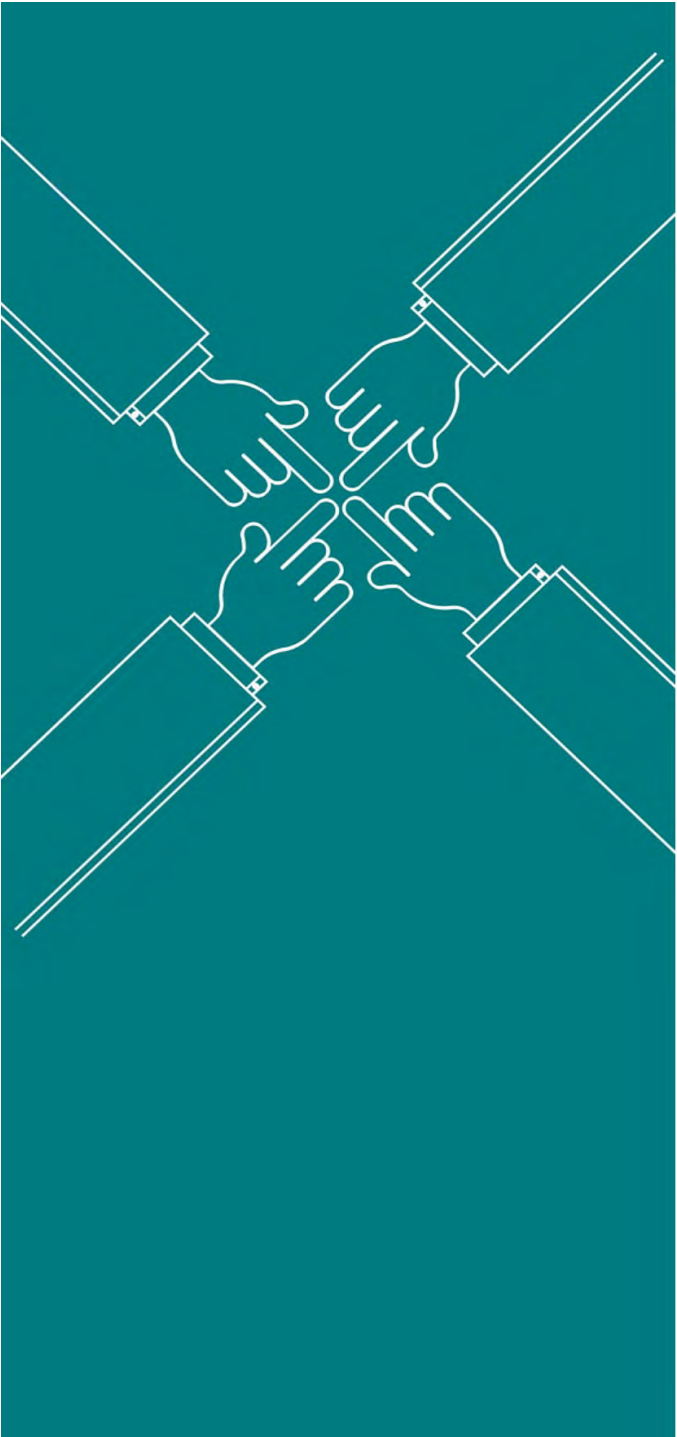
One of the reasons members join Cambridge Neighbors is for the variety and scope of vetted service providers we offer. They are assured that the vendors with whom we work have usually been recommended by other members and that those vendors have passed our vetting process. This past year, members with full memberships had access to over 110 vetted service providers – often at a discounted rate – to help them with a variety of tasks including plumbing, professional handymen, housekeepers, rug and upholstery cleaners, legal assistance, and homecare services. See a full list of types of services offered on our website at:

<https://www.cambridgenighbors.org>

Volunteers assist with technical issues.



Our vendors program provides a wide range of professional services.



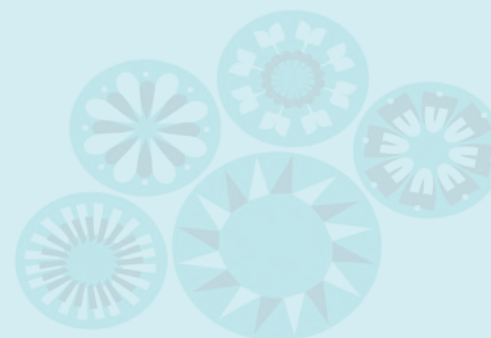
PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, AND NETWORKS

- Received several referrals from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services for our Scholarship Program
- Presented at the Arlington, Belmont, and Watertown Councils on Aging
- Shared programs with sister villages: Newton at Home, Wellesley Neighbors, and Beacon Hill Village
- Continued as a member of AARP's "MA Coalition to Build Community and End Loneliness" that brings together thought leaders in the aging network to create solutions to the epidemic of loneliness and isolation among older adults
- Partnered with Kate Granigan, CEO of Life Care Advocates to present the series, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?"
- In partnership with the Cambridge Public Library, presented the film, "Join or Die," a documentary about civic unraveling through the journey of legendary social scientist Robert Putnam
- Member of the Massachusetts Coalition of Village Leaders
- Presented to the Somerville and Cambridge Rotaries
- Referred members to Paine Senior Services, a nonprofit which provides a variety of services to Cambridge residents over the age of 60

FROM THE BOARD

In 2024, a major focus for the Board was to work on the Strategic Plan. Through various committee work, the following progress was made:

- Various members of the Board took leadership responsibilities for each of the established committees and asked additional CN members to collaborate with them in meeting committee goals.
- The mission statement was updated and work progressed on the vision and value statements. It is anticipated that these guiding principles will be approved in early 2025.
- Succession plans were discussed and, to facilitate a change in leadership, the duties and responsibilities of the Board President and Vice-President were clarified and added to the Policy Book. Later in the year, the Board initiated various steps for transitioning to a new President.
- To ensure that all areas of member need are successfully met, review of current staffing, office technology, volunteer possibilities, and budget implications were begun. This work will continue into 2025.
- Research and outreach to organizations with similar missions is also underway to expand and broaden the benefits we can offer our members. This work will also continue during 2025.
- Also underway is the development of a plan to consider future CN funding sources and possibilities for financial development. Additional members were added to this committee to explore these areas, work with other committees to clarify needs, and move this work forward.



Other work completed by the Board included:

- Maintaining and updating the Board Policies and Procedures Guide and its Appendices to ensure continuity and clear guidance for the Board's work,
- Developing additional policies including: Guidelines for Interest Groups as a program option, Ex-Officio Status for non-voting participants on the Board, and Emeritus Status for long-serving Board members to acknowledge them as they retire from the Board,
- Writing of formal job descriptions for the Treasurer, the Bookkeeper, and the Board Secretary,
- Reviewing CN's financial position on a regular basis to monitor receipts and expenditures and ensure that required State and Federal forms are being filed,
- Overseeing the completion of a Membership Survey to clarify trends and better support members' needs while also providing ideas for new programs and services,
- Maintaining an active and well-functioning Board including recruiting and adding three new Board members: Liz Aguillo, Executive Director at Paine Senior Services; Janet Littell, a CN member; and Bill Walker, our beloved CN tech volunteer.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

In 2024, we held a total of 262 programs and events.

Providing a supportive and inclusive community is an important part of Cambridge Neighbors' mission. Members can participate in a variety of programming and activities where they get to meet other members. Studies repeatedly show that connecting with others ultimately combats the mental and physical health implications of loneliness and isolation. Last year's events included health and age-related topics, educational and cultural events, and social gatherings. We thank the members of the Program Committee and their leader, Alex Clarke, for creating diverse and meaningful programming.



Members explore the MIT Museum.

New Additions

In 2024, we added: a bi-monthly **New Member Orientation** led by volunteer members Megan Lower and Claudia Albert, a monthly **Women's Group** led by CN member, Marianne Iacuzio; a monthly **Tech Tuesday** where long-time tech instructor, Beth Luchner, attends to members' technology questions; and monthly **Single and Mingle** meet-ups where single members get together over food and drinks.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- *Loneliness and the Need for Belonging and Trust* with Dr. Louise Hawkley
- Author talk: “How to Write a Mystery”
- Self-guided tours of the Harvard Art Museum
- Indoor Walks at MIT
- *Creating a Life Transition Binder* with Sandra Batra
- Tour of the State House
- Summer Backyard Cocktail Party
- Tour of the Wang Theatre
- Joint Walk with Beacon Hill Village
- Scam/Fraud Prevention
- Understanding Streaming Services
- Road Scholar Presentation
- Online talk on Low Vision
- *What Can Music Say, and How: Some Answers from the Music of Friderik Handel* with Dr. Cynthia Verba
- Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day dinner gatherings
- *Achieving a Good Death* with Chris Palmer
- An in-person lecture on Victorian London

Lunch with Beacon Hill Village Members



A few members of our Women’s Group





Our Volunteers' Contributions

When we consider support, we include the amazing contributions made by our volunteer team. In 2024, they contributed hundreds of hours valued at \$45,078 (Independent Sector Value of Volunteer Time was \$33.49/hour in 2024.)

In addition to our loyal individual donors, we thank those foundations and sponsors that supported us this past year. Foundations fund our Scholarship Program for low-income individuals. Our sponsors support our On The Move discount taxi program.

FOUNDATIONS



Katharine C. Pierce Trust



SPONSORS



STAFF AND BOARD

Executive Director

Jan Latorre-Stiller

Assistant Director

Alex Clarke

Bookkeeper

Sarah Hershberger

2024 Board of Directors

Anna Whitcomb, President

Nancy Carlson, Vice President

Tom Novak, Treasurer

Helene Quinn, Secretary

Emily Flax

Judy Lindamood

Jay Lorsch

Peter White

Janet Whitla

Claudia Albert

Lotte Bailyn

Jan Kinasewich

Rachel McCaw-Navin



MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY

To support the people and programs of
Cambridge Neighbors please consider a
donation at

www.cambridgeneighbors.org/donate/

For more information contact

Jan Latorre-Stiller, Executive Director, at
jan@cambridgeneighbors.org