



# The Brookfield Citizen

Community Identity Through Communication

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Average People Promoting a Loving Environment.

PO Box 411 Brookfield, MA 01506

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## Invitation to Senior Community

The staff and students of the Brookfield Elementary School cordially invite senior community members to a free spaghetti luncheon Thursday, March 19 at 1:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria. The school band and choir will provide the entertainment. This program is funded by a Community Partnership Grant. Donations will be accepted for the Brookfield Food Pantry. Please RSVP by Friday, March 13, to Janice at 508 867 8774.

## Preliminary Master Plan Survey Results

Remember last July and August when it was warm outside and the flowers were blooming? At that time, the Brookfield Master Plan Committee mailed every household a 10-page survey to be filled out anonymously. We asked you about your likes and dislikes, as well as how you envision Brookfield's future. This article will review the demographic and general information collected from 240 surveys returned by residents, which based on 1,560 households, is a response rate of about 15%. The Master Plan Committee envisioned a larger response rate, because the more residents that respond, the better the Master Plan can be. Please consider picking up a blank survey at the library or town hall. Residents who have not submitted a survey are still urged to do so, but please, only one submission per household. As new surveys are returned, that data will be entered and included in the analysis. Our final date for return of surveys is April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. They can be dropped off at the Selectmen's Office in the town hall or at the library.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on the surveys returned, the average number of people per household is 2.6. Only 27% of households have children under 18 while 39% have at least one person over age 65. The vast majority of housing is single family (78%) and owner-occupied (94%) rather than rented. The next largest category of housing is mobile home (14%) with the remaining 8% divided between Condos, Apartments and Multifamily residences.

Level of education is spread rather evenly  
(Continued on page 3)

## Veterans News

A note to Brookfield's Veterans and their families .

My Name is Bryan Griffing, the Veteran Service Officer for Brookfield. I want to again let our Veterans and their families know that I am available to assist you in any way that I can. If you have questions or concerns regarding Veteran Benefits please contact me at 413-436-9615 to set up an appointment. I look forward to assisting you with any questions you may have.

Thank you for your service

## Valentines for Veterans

The students and Staff of the Brookfield Elementary School have once again produced some terrific Valentines Day cards for Veterans who are currently residing in the Holyoke Soldiers Home. I would like to take a minute to express my sincere appreciation to the students, teachers and staff of the Brookfield Elementary School on behalf of the Veterans who are there, as well as Veterans everywhere. It is important that we do not forget the sacrifices that they have made. When I delivered these cards, the Veterans that I spoke with were very appreciative of the hard work that the students put into the project. Thank you again for your continued support of our nation's Veterans

Bryan Griffing  
Veterans Service Officer

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## Brookfield's New Ambulance

On Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Brookfield Emergency Squad took delivery of its new ambulance. EMS Chief Donna M. Lafleur said that members spent the entire day getting oriented with the new ambulance as well as stocking and installing equipment. The new ambulance was placed in service the same day. This ambulance was designed and specified by the squad members, drawing on decades of experience to come up with a unit that would best serve the residents of Brookfield. Many of the features will go unnoticed by the patients, but will go a long way to help provide the best possible care.

According to Chief Lafleur, the new ambulance was manufactured by Horton Emergency Vehicles in Grove City, Ohio and sold by Greenwood Emergency Vehicles of North Attleboro, Massachusetts. The ambulance is a modular body mounted on a 2008 GMC 4500 chassis. The new ambulance replaces a 1998 Road Rescue on a Ford chassis, which will stay in service with the fire department as a rescue type vehicle to support various fire operations.

## MEALS ON WHEELS NEEDS YOU

Tri-Valley, Inc. is looking for reliable people to deliver Meals on Wheels to elders in North Brookfield. Meals are packed and delivered out of the West Brookfield Nutrition Site located at the Senior Center.

All volunteers receive training and drivers are eligible for travel reimbursement at the rate of 45.5 cents per mile. Anyone who can give as little as two hours per week of their time to help with this important task is asked to call the West Brookfield Nutrition Site at 508-867-1411.

Tri-Valley, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency providing in-home and community based services in 25 towns in south central Massachusetts. The agency receives funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and Federal financial support under the Older Americans Act furnished by the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Funds are also received from other public and private sources. All donations are welcome and memorials may be established.

For information about services call Tri-Valley's free Help-Line at 1-800-286-6640 or visit our website at: [www.trivalleyinc.org](http://www.trivalleyinc.org).

### Be part of Brookfield's future!

Open Space/Master Plan Committee Meetings

Be part of Brookfield's future!

All are welcome \* At the Town Hall

6:30pm, first and third Wednesdays of the month.

## GOODS & SERVICES SILENT AUCTION

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2009 6:30 PM TO 9:00 PM  
AT THE BROOKFIELD U.U. CHURCH

The Women's Alliance is once again sponsoring a Goods and Services Auction. Wine, cheese, hors-d'œuvres, dessert, and coffee will be served while bids are being considered. The proceeds of the Auction are used to help the Alliance support the church and the community.

## Jazz Concert and Dinner

The First Congregational Church, 36 North Main Street, West Brookfield will host a Jazz Concert and Dinner on Saturday, February 28th, featuring "The Jems", a local group with vocals by Jeanneane Pugliese, Emily Anderson and Virginia Bailey; Terry Parker on piano; Ted Chmura III on bass; Michael Bouchard on guitar; and David Bouchard on drums.

The dinner, beginning at 6:00 PM, will be Chicken Dijon, Rice Pilaf / Roasted Potatoes, Vegetable and Soup. The concert will follow at 7:00 PM. The cost is \$15 per person. Reservations are required and can be made by calling the church at (508) 867-7078. Please leave a message and someone will call you back.

*1% of sales to local non-profits*

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about our food co-op and other offerings.*

(Continued from page 1) Survey Results

through most of the categories: High school, 22%; Some college, 20%; College Graduate, 33%; Graduate Degree, 18%. Some high school registers at less than 1% and Technical Degree is 5%. About 1% left this question blank.

People who have resided in town over 10 years are in the majority (56%). The breakdown of the categories is as follows: Less than 5 years, 19.5%; 5-10 years, 24.5%; 10-20 years, 18%; Over 20 years, 38%.

The answer to the question "Where do you work, geographically speaking?" was quite diverse: 12% said "In Brookfield"; 7% within a 10 minute drive of Brookfield; 12% are within 20 minutes; 7.5% within 30 minutes; 24.5% more than a 30 minute drive. Retirees, at 35.5%, is the largest percentage. This question was left blank by approximately 1.5% of respondents. In retrospect, it probably would have been good to add a category "home-based work" to differentiate those who work in Brookfield outside the home from home-based workers.

The next question asked for yearly household income within ranges. Seven percent of respondents left this question blank. Another 7% listed household income as under \$15,000. Three percent were between \$15,000 - \$19,900. Ten percent said \$20,000-\$29,900. \$30,000-\$39,900 was checked by 13% of those answering. 9% said \$40,000-\$49,900; 17% answered \$50,000-\$74,900; 13% marked \$75,000-\$99,900. Twenty-one percent checked \$100,000-up.

#### GENERAL

Question 10 was "What do you like about living in Brookfield?" and gave a number of choices and allowed people to check more than one answer. The choices were:

- low tax rate
- low crime rate
- open spaces
- historic resources
- employment opportunities
- affordable housing
- convenience to work
- school system
- recreation opportunities
- convenience to services
- small town character
- access to highways
- municipal services
- community activities

Of all the choices, by far the most popular was Small Town Character, which was checked 190 times. The next most popular was Open Spaces, checked 152 times. The third most popular was Low Crime Rate, 127 times. Access to highways was next with 90 checkmarks. Historic Resources had 73 checkmarks and the School System received 65 checkmarks. The other choices were fairly even with 30-50 checkmarks each, except for Employment Opportunities (4

checkmarks) and Low Tax Rate (11 checkmarks).

Question 11 was also multiple choice and asked "What do you find undesirable about living in Brookfield" and, again, gave the instruction that more than one choice could be checked. The choices for this question were:

- high tax rate
- center of Brookfield
- school system
- municipal services
- excessive traffic
- excessive development
- lack of retail shopping opportunities
- lack of community gathering place
- lack of affordable housing
- lack of recreation opportunities
- lack of employment opportunities
- loss of small town character

In this case, High Tax Rate was the most chosen at 133. Next was Lack of Retail with 106 checkmarks. Lack of Employment Opportunities was third with 66. Excessive Development was close behind at 50. All of the rest received between 40 and 15 checkmarks each.

The final three questions in the General Section dealt with Brookfield's sense of community. First, "What does a 'sense of community' mean to you?" It is difficult to summarize the responses although the words "respect" and "working together" and "helping one another" came up often. Here is a sampling of responses:

"Feeling welcome. Having common interests, background or goals. Desire to work together, play together, compromise."

"Taking care of each other. Thinking of your neighbor as your family. Doing anything possible to improve your town's quality of life and volunteering — helping someone when they need you the most!! Really caring about what your town looks like!"

"People are friendly, want to know one another and care about each other's children. Help in hard times and rejoice in good times."

The next question asked people to respond to "I feel that Brookfield has a 'sense of community' ". Agree or Strongly Agree was checked 70% of the time, while Disagree or Strongly Disagree was checked 18%. 12% left this question blank.

The final question in this section requested any additional comments or concerns. There were many responses, covering a wide range of topics. Several issues came up repeatedly: concern over high taxes, concern about "eyesores" such as the large yellow sign on Rt. 9, disappointment about the lack of a sewer system, lack of activities for young people, desire to have small retail in town, problems with town government, and concerns over development including the disappearance of open space and farms.

One common theme is summed up in these comments: "People live here because of how the town feels now and do not want big changes" (Continued on page 4)

