

## **2024 - 2025 Annual Report Sherman Senior Center Town of Sherman**

This fiscal year **249** individuals participated **6721** times in an activity at the center, **45%** of our clients were **80+**.

**Mission:** The mission of the Sherman Senior Center is to improve quality of life for adults ages 55 and older and disabled adults by providing programs and activities for recreation, education, and health and wellness.

According to the latest census completed in 2020, 53.7% of Sherman households have one or more people 60 years and over, 33% of our population is 60+ and qualifies for our services at the senior center.

**Staff:** In 2024-25, the Sherman Senior Center was staffed by Suzette Berger, Coordinator at 30 hours, Van Drivers Sue Moore and Bob Reiling shared the budgeted 25 hours per week. Bob retired June 30, 2025, and David Sitterley has been hired. Carolyn Decker and Azuma Andos share the clerk's hours assisting with administrative and programming duties totaling 22 hours per week.

**Transportation:** We utilize three vehicles, a donated 2021 Jeep Cherokee, 2016 Ford 14 passenger handicapped-accessible service bus and a 2024 Ford 8 passenger handicapped-accessible service van to provide free rides for Sherman's seniors. The State Matching Grant Program for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation provided \$15,340 toward our transportation costs. The vehicles are used to bring clients to the senior center, on weekly shopping trips, nutrition programs as well as various events and activities. **Our vehicles logged a total of 10784 miles. We drove 3678 one-way trips of which 2242 are recorded as disabled client trips.** Shopping trips are of vital importance to our rural community, and **883 trips last year were for client shopping.** We schedule shopping for a minimum of one time a week.

**Program Planning:** The center was an active place during the week and has an average of 25-35 clients per day and Wednesday's averaged 41 clients. There was an increase in attendance at programs and activities serving our growing senior population. Health and welfare programs are provided by RVNAHealth, Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, health care professionals and volunteers from Sherman. We offer programs for hearing, low vision, healthy nutrition, monthly blood pressure, fall prevention and flexibility exercise programs.

**Accessibility:** The auditory system is available for the hearing impaired. It is utilized at all the educational programs allowing participation by seniors who were unable to previously join in. Additional assistive devices such as magnifiers, large print items, wheelchairs etc are available at the center to improve the participation of attending clients.

**Nutrition:** The congregate Wednesday lunch program is well attended as the senior dine breakfast outings. An average of 18 clients attend breakfast each week and 23 attend lunch. The cost of lunch is a requested \$3 donation from the client, the food is supplied by RW Solutions LLC, and all labor are volunteers. These programs serve a largely elder and disabled population in a friendly setting.



**Emergency Preparedness:** We continue to focus on community Health and Wellness Programs and Education. Communication and reminders about weather safety are ongoing. The staff training includes CPR, AED and situational training appropriate to our building and clients.

**Communication:** The Senior Center continues to publish a newsletter. Mutsumi Hyuga is our volunteer editor and designer. The Newsletter was inserted into the Town Tribune every two months and is available on our town website for those who would prefer to view it online. The local papers are constantly updated. In addition, we have developed an email list to distribute digitally. The low-tech signboard is also utilized.

**Volunteer Management:** We could not accomplish half of what we do without our volunteers. This year **23 wonderful people volunteered** in some capacity. Many programs, such as Congregate Meals, Discussion Club, Exercise and assorted classes, are possible only through volunteer help. Karen Dech is our head congregate meal volunteer, which is a significant commitment. Volunteers also provide clerical help, office assistance, and run our regular activities such as bridge, pinochle and exercise club. This spring we supervised an intern from Western CT State University as well as a graduate from Scranton University.

Collaboration with town groups included programs with JCC, CT Audubon, Sherman Historical Society, Sherman School, Sherman Library, scouts, and Sherman EMS and SVFD.

The Friends of the Senior Center is a 501C group that pays for improvements to the senior center and equipment that we need financial help with.

The Commission on Aging continues to support and coordinate with the Senior Center. They have a separate annual report that goes into much greater detail about their accomplishments for the year. We are very grateful for all their hard work and dedication to helping seniors in Sherman.

We continue to be committed to making the Sherman Senior Center a welcoming place so that all who come through its doors may enjoy all the good things it has to offer.

Respectfully submitted,

 8/14/25

Suzette Berger  
Coordinator, Sherman Senior Center