LeadingAge® Massachusetts

72ND ANNUAL MEETING & AWARDS CELEBRATION

Change *makers*

Celebrating today's changemakers.
Creating what's next together.

OCTOBER 14, 2026 | 4:30 – 8:30 P.M.

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Membership. Tonight, we celebrate the people who make our community strong and take a historic step toward the future we will build together.

For seventy-two years, members have shaped LeadingAge Massachusetts through your leadership, your generosity, and your commitment to older adults. You have made this association a place where colleagues become trusted friends, challenges become shared work, and ideas become opportunities to improve lives.

Our theme, Changemakers, honors that spirit. We see it in the caregiver who earns a resident's trust, the leader who helps a team find its confidence, and the colleague who asks, "How could we do this better?" Across our member communities, you turn compassion into action. Tonight's award recipients remind us how much one person, one team, or one idea can make possible.

This evening, we also become changemakers together. Members will cast the formal vote on the proposed merger with LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire to create LeadingAge New England – North, serving Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Your overwhelming support reflects a shared belief in what we can accomplish together: a stronger voice for aging services, deeper connections among members, and greater opportunities to learn from and support one another.

Congratulations to our award recipients, and thank you to everyone who brought a colleague's contributions forward through a nomination. We are especially honored to present the Barbara A. Doyle Memorial Distinguished Service Award for the first time. Barbara was a mentor, colleague, and friend to many in this room. Through this award, we honor her enduring influence and the generosity with which she helped others grow and lead.
Thank you for being here, for investing in this community, and for carrying its work forward. What we celebrate tonight, and what we begin together, will be shaped by you.

With gratitude,

Elissa Sherman
President

Margaret Mantoni
Chair, Board of Trustees

Schedule of Events

4:30 PM
Cocktail Reception

5:30 PM
Program | Dinner | Awards Ceremony

Business Meeting Agenda

1. **Call to Order**	Margaret Mantoni
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting**	Margaret Mantoni
3. **Report of the President**	Elissa Sherman
4. **Remarks from LeadingAge President & CEO**	Katie Smith Sloan
5. **Report of the Chair**	Margaret Mantoni
6. **Remarks from LeadingAge ME & NH Board Chair**	Leanne Fiet
7. **Vote on the Proposed Merger**	Margaret Mantoni

The Business Meeting will be immediately followed by dinner and then the Annual Achievement Award Ceremony

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Barbara A. Doyle Memorial Distinguished Service Award

James "Jim" Freehling

Brookhaven at Lexington

The Barbara A. Doyle Memorial Distinguished Service Award recognizes an individual whose sustained leadership, service, and commitment have made an extraordinary and lasting contribution to not-for-profit aging services. It honors the legacy of Barbara A. Doyle, a longtime leader in the LeadingAge community and former CEO of Carleton-Willard Village, known throughout the field as a trusted mentor, colleague, and friend. We are proud to present it for the first time to Jim Freehling.

Jim has devoted his career to this field, including thirty-four years at Brookhaven at Lexington, where he has served as President and CEO since 1999. A steadfast Association leader for more than two decades, he served as Board Chair in 2005–2006 and returned in 2022, the only member in more than twenty years to serve a second stint on the Board. He has chaired numerous committees and task forces, including the Finance Committee, Committee on Trustees, and Technology Task Force.

In 2025, Jim represented LeadingAge Massachusetts on the Legislature's Special Commission on CCRCs. Most recently, his work on the merger advisory committee has helped shape the culture of the organization we are building for the future.

Beyond his formal roles, Jim consistently supports others in the field. In 2017, a graduate student contacted thirteen senior living CEOs hoping to learn more. Two responded; Jim was the first. He welcomed the student to Brookhaven and spent hours with him over four months, sharing his experience and answering questions. Six years later, when that professional was considering a CEO position, Jim reached out to offer guidance and support before being asked. Today, that former student is a chief executive.

This is one of many examples of Jim's generosity of spirit. Recognized with the Association's Outstanding Mentor Award in 2012, he continues to offer thoughtful counsel, practical guidance, and encouragement, proactively reaching out to members new to their positions. Colleagues speak of his generosity, humility, and the lasting difference his support has made.

Across decades of service, Jim has strengthened organizations and prepared others to lead them. His influence continues through the people he has mentored and the community he has helped build, a lasting contribution that honors Barbara's legacy.

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Emerging Leader Award

Emily Levine

2Life Communities

The Emerging Leader Award honors an employee who has taken on new leadership responsibilities, built strong relationships, and advanced a shared vision within their organization. This year, we proudly recognize Emily Levine of 2Life Communities for building an advocacy program that connects the organization's mission, residents' experiences, and public policy.

During her seven years at 2Life, Emily advanced from Chief of Staff to Chief of Advocacy, a role established in 2024. She built the advocacy function from the ground up and now serves on the senior leadership team, helping shape the organization's approach to affordable housing, economic security, and social connection for older adults.

Emily's ability to build relationships and mobilize support has produced significant results. She helped secure approximately $7 million in federal and state funding for Brooke House, Solimine House, and Treehouse at Olmsted Village. During deliberations on the housing bond bill, she brought healthcare, insurance, and other leaders together to testify in support of senior housing. The final legislation included a senior housing commission.

Equally meaningful is her commitment to helping residents make their voices heard. Emily works individually with residents to develop and rehearse testimony, connecting their lived experiences to the policies under consideration. At MRVP Cookie Day in February, 60 of the approximately 110 affordable housing residents who visited the State House came from 2Life. Over the summer, residents wrote more than 2,500 postcards reminding voters that seniors matter.

Through her vision, initiative, and commitment to resident voices, Emily has strengthened 2Life's capacity to influence change and opened new opportunities for older adults to help shape their futures. Her leadership brings people together around a shared purpose and ensures that those most affected by public policy have a voice in its direction. We are proud to honor Emily with the 2026 Emerging Leader Award.



Heart and Hands Award

Jessica Frezin-Charles

Lasell Village

The Heart and Hands Award honors employees whose exceptional relationships with residents or clients enrich daily life through efforts beyond their usual responsibilities. This year, we proudly recognize Jessica Frezin-Charles of Lasell Village for the warmth, compassion, and personal attention she brings to residents and the generosity she extends to colleagues.

Since joining Lasell Village in December 2022, Jessica has earned residents' trust by getting to know them as individuals. Beginning in the skilled nursing facility at Lasell House, she cared for people with a wide range of needs, personalities, and abilities. She respects their preferences, encourages their choices, and offers the attentiveness she would give her own family, keeping dignity at the center of every interaction.

When asked to provide temporary support in Independent Living, Jessica readily embraced the assignment. She learned a new part of the campus and adapted to supporting residents in their own apartments. Her kindness and willingness to help quickly earned their appreciation. As one resident shared, "Jessica was so kind and helpful. I also noticed the great care and attention she gave to the other patients."

Jessica's commitment reaches beyond her assigned responsibilities. When her Independent Living schedule allows, she returns to Lasell House to support colleagues, assist residents with lunch and personal care, and cover aide breaks. She notices where help is needed and takes the initiative to provide it.

Through the trust she builds across levels of care and the support she offers her team, Jessica embodies Lasell's One-Village spirit. Her work reminds us that exceptional care lives in everyday moments: knowing a person's preferences, taking time to listen, and offering an extra helping hand. We are proud to honor Jessica with the 2026 Heart and Hands Award.

Innovation & Impact Award

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The Age of Excellence Awards

The Innovation & Impact Award recognizes a LeadingAge Massachusetts provider member organization whose innovative work has the power to transform aging services. This year, we proudly honor Glenmeadow for its Age of Excellence Awards, a program that challenges assumptions about aging by celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of people over 60.

Launched in 2024 in Western Massachusetts, the Age of Excellence Awards bring extraordinary stories of later life to a wider audience. Honorees are pursuing encore careers, strengthening their communities, caring for loved ones, and continuing to lead, create, and learn. Their stories reveal the possibilities of later life and the many ways older adults enrich the world around them.

In three years, the program has recognized twenty-seven older adults from more than one hundred public nominations. Among them are a founder advancing cystic fibrosis research in memory of her daughter, a retired television broadcaster teaching communications, and a former teacher caring for her ninety-seven-year-old mother. An independent panel of corporate and nonprofit community leaders selects the honorees. No connection to Glenmeadow is required, and Glenmeadow staff do not vote.

The community's response speaks to the program's impact. The second celebration sold out two weeks in advance, welcoming more than 190 guests; the third drew more than 220. Each year has required a larger venue, and sponsorship has more than doubled since the program began. The celebration brings people together in an inviting cocktail-party setting while also raising funds. Glenmeadow has created a model that other aging-services organizations can adapt, from a regional celebration to recognition within a single community. Sponsorship helps offset costs, making the approach accessible at different scales.

Through the Age of Excellence Awards, Glenmeadow is giving older adults' achievements the attention they deserve and inviting its community to see aging with greater appreciation, possibility, and pride.

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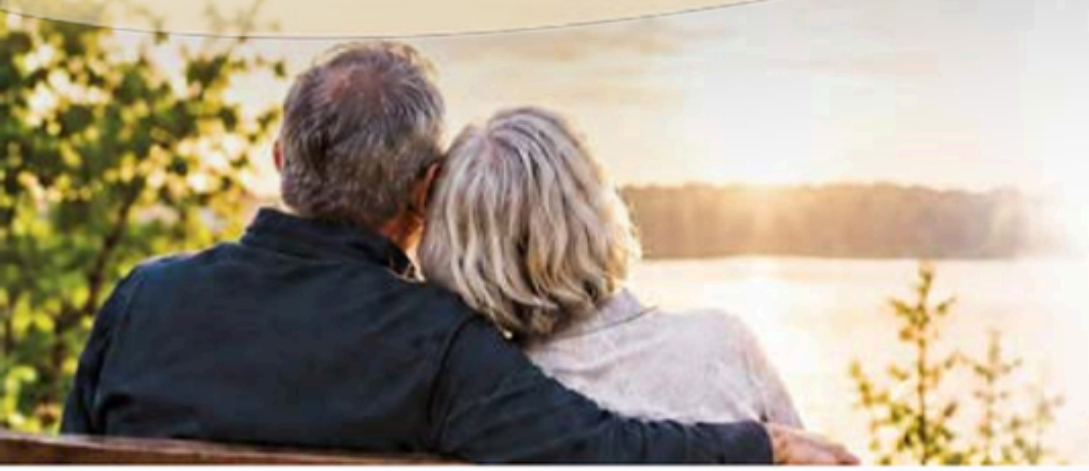
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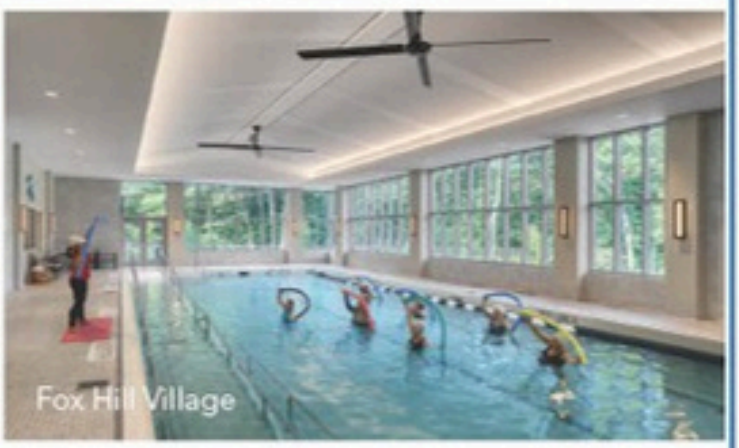
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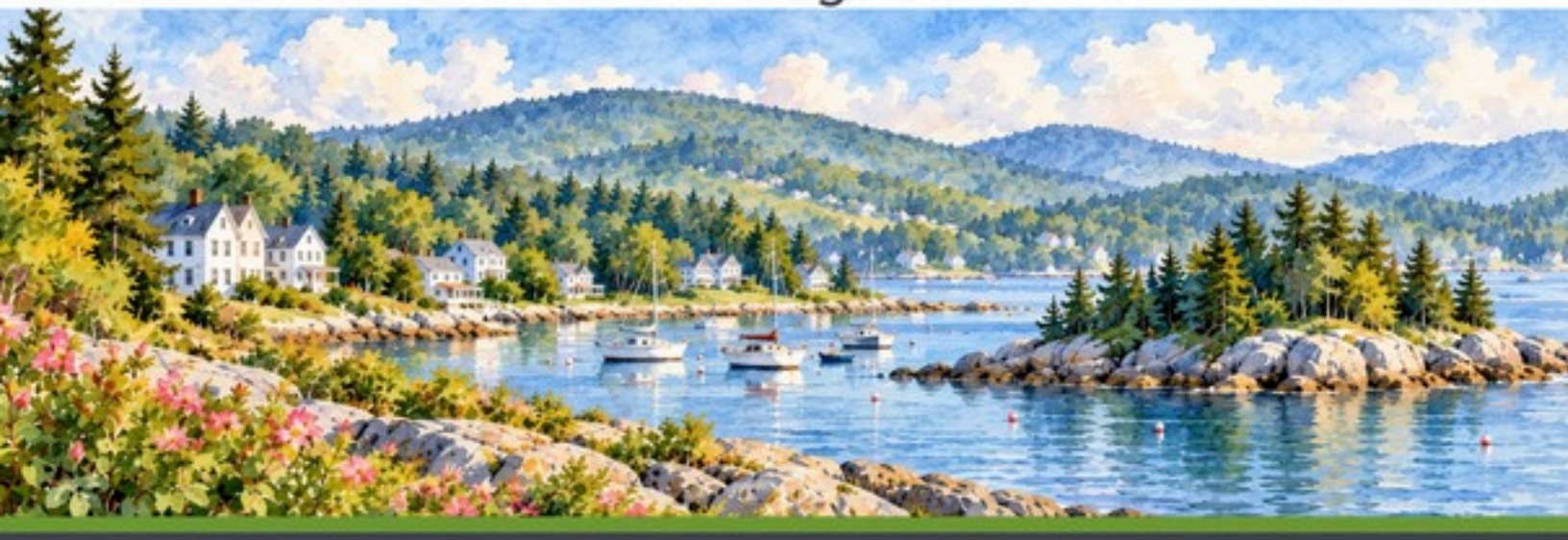
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