

It's not retirement — it's 2nd half of life

JUDY WAKEFIELD
Staff writer

If you were born between 1946 and 1962, welcome to the Boomer Club.

You no doubt have a lot of questions centered around money, starting another career, your changing lifestyle now that your kids will be out of the house, and being healthy in the so-called second half of life (don't call it retirement). After all, people in your age group are living about 30 years longer than their grandparents did.



Alexandra Mezey

BoomerVenture, an Andover program entering its second year, is meant to help residents find the answers.

In fact, a life coach specializing in boomer transitioning is coming to town next month to talk about these issues.

The boomer population is growing nationally, and Andover is part of the trend. Approximately 1 in 7 Andover citizens is a baby boomer by age (46 to 62), according to the Andover Senior Center. Population numbers provided by the center show there were 4,683 boomers in Andover in 1980; in 1990 the number rose to 5,437; in 2000 this population hit 7,149; and the projection for 2010 is 7,938 boomers in town.

"Baby boomers are and will continue to change the face of aging far into the future," said Kathy Urquhart, Elder Services director. "We're trying to develop programming of interest. ... It's aimed at forestalling a retirement exodus, which could have a dramatic financial impact on our town."

Urquhart is concerned about boomers moving and diminishing the town's revenue base. While some boomers may leave Andover, life coach Alexandra Mezey said there's "not a monolithic" answer when you talk about boomers' future. Every situation is different.

Mezey will be at the Andover Senior Center for four 90-minute sessions beginning this month. She says boomers must think about the second half of their lives.

"You should start thinking about this second half of life early — say around 45, even though finding time to do it is difficult. You're working, raising kids, helping take care of parents," Mezey said. "But there is a whole life ahead of you. You need to focus on this. We are healthier and living longer and you have to be ready."

Her message for boomers centers on four key points. Her sessions are based on the book "2 Young to Retire," and attendees can expect to hear about:

BOOMERS: Fall sessions on retirement options offered

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- Paying for the lifestyle you want
- Jobs, including talk of "encore careers" that people have always dreamed about, and giving back by volunteering
- Relationships beyond immediate family, in and out of the community
- Wellness, to be mentally and physically healthy for the next 30 years.

"I am enthusiastically in my second adulthood," said Mezey, a licensed therapist in Newburyport who says she is working on a book for boomers while working with boomer clients. "I am excited about redefining how we live our adult years."

She said people ask about employment possibilities more

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than anything else.

"People say they have no idea what they would do if they left the workplace. Some have to work; others want to. This is what boomers should be thinking about," she said.

Her first session is Thursday, Sept. 25, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Andover Senior Center on Whittier Court. Sessions also will take place on Oct. 9, Oct. 23 and Nov. 6 at the same time. The cost is \$40 a session. For more information, call the Andover Senior Center at 978-623-8381 or visit www.boomerventure.com.

Contact
Karen Payne-Taylor
978 623-8321
kpaynetaylor@andoverma.gov

ASC
(Andover Senior Center)
36 Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810