

## **“There’s No Place Like Home”**

*Joanne Fisher, Program Coordinator*

The senior citizens in Newton, Massachusetts have been clicking their heels together and coming home to the Newton Senior Center for 16 years! Much as Dorothy and Toto in the “Wizard of Oz”, Newton’s seniors want a place where they can be comfortable, feel welcome and be among friends.

The center has become a “home away from home” for many. Although the calendar is packed with programs to be accessed in groups (language classes, Bridge, fitness, etc.) many citizens use the facilities of the center, in more individual ways.

At any given time, the public computers on the lower level are in use. Other computer users come with their own lap-tops and take advantage of the building’s wireless capabilities. Readers of *The Boston Globe*, read “all the news that’s fit to print”, in our homey first floor “living room”. Small groups of friends drop-in for a pick-up game of Bridge or Mah-Jong, while others watch a tennis match on the big screen TV.

Recently the center has begun offering “brain fitness” for individuals, on the public computers. One can play “brain sharpening games” (Scrabble, Sudoku, memory stretchers, etc.) and we add more games all the time. The FABB Center, employing the Nintendo Wii, strengthens the mind/body connection and challenges many senses. This is an individual activity, with student volunteers assisting players.

Exercise for the mind and body are around every corner of the center.

The warm atmosphere of the center lends itself to unscheduled opportunities to chat with a new friend, read a book quietly, work on needlepoint and just feel “at home”. Solitary pursuits and opportunities to connect with others are in abundance, at the Newton Senior Center.

The wizards at center provide a welcome atmosphere for the “lions” (*heart*), stimulation for the “scarecrows” (*brain*), and fitness programs for the “tin-men” (*flexibility*) who find their way to this magical place. If you have not “clicked your heels” and headed over... now may be just the right time. *“There’s no place like home.”*