

## **Survey Overview**

Roush & Associates, Inc., in conjunction with a group of Martha's Vineyard residents, developed a survey designed to gain a better understanding of the needs and wants of Martha's Vineyard residents aged 62 years and older. The survey was also sent to a younger subset of Island residents on the assumption that they may be serving as caregivers for or have concerns about an elderly family member residing on the Vineyard.

The survey, comprised of eighteen questions, was sent to 2,417 Vineyard homes. The recipients included two groups: 1) those with heads of household ranging between the ages of 35-60 (1,464 homes), and 2) those with heads of household who were 61 years of age and older (953 homes). (The mailing list age cohorts were available for 61-70, not starting with 62 years and older.) Notices advertising the survey were also placed in the two local papers, *The Martha's Vineyard Times* and the *Vineyard Gazette*. Additionally, an ad with a link to the survey was posted on *The Martha's Vineyard Times* website for one month.

When 1,539 surveys (64% of the 2417 mailed out) addressed to Vineyard Haven and Edgartown residents were returned, it became apparent that the purchased mailing list was not accurate. (Most of the addresses we were given were street addresses rather than post office boxes, and therefore not deliverable). The mail house attempted to remedy this situation by re-sending 215 surveys to post office boxes in Vineyard Haven. As a result, a final total of 1,093 surveys were sent. The mailing generated 422 responses with an additional twelve people submitting their answers via the ads or online survey for a total of 434 completed questionnaires. The response rate of 40% was phenomenal, despite the mailing list mix-up. Overall, most participants answered the survey in its entirety. However, there were some who opted not to answer all eighteen questions; as a result, some of the tallies do not reflect the number of returned surveys. A summary of findings follows.

## **Summary of Findings**

Ages of the participants ran from 35 to 96 years with an average age of 66. 61% (263) said they have lived year-round on the Island for 20 years or more. Many of them have spent additional years coming to the Vineyard part-time as summer residents. 19% (84) said they leave the Island for part of the year, but only for one- to three-month stretches.

<b>Respondents age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
30-40 years	4	1%
41-50	35	8%
51-60	87	20%
61-70	157	36%
71-80	101	23%
81+	50	12%
<b>Total # of responses</b>	<b>434</b>	

Survey participants' appreciation of the Vineyard's natural resources and the lifestyle it offers was apparent; biking, kayaking, sailing, fishing and walking were frequently listed as favorite pastimes. Comments praising the sense of community and beauty of the Island were plentiful. The high number of responses coupled with the fact that 94% (408) said they had no plans to move from the Vineyard within the next three years seems to reflect the respondents' strong affinity towards the Island and its way of life.

Surprisingly there wasn't a significant difference in the living situations of younger respondents (35-60) compared to those 61 and older. Of the younger group (total of 126 respondents), 23% (29) reported that they lived alone and 48% (60) said they resided with a spouse/significant other. (The remainder fell into other categories.) In the older group (total of 308 respondents), 35% (108) lived alone and 52% (161) lived with a spouse/significant other.

Self-reports of health levels also showed little variation between the two age groups. In the younger group, 73% (92) respondents listed their health as excellent/good while 74% (227) of the older group reported the same. In both groups, however, spouses/significant others didn't seem to fare as well. Of those who replied, only 52% (65) of the younger survey participants listed the health of their spouse/significant others as excellent/good and only 40% (124) spouse/significant others in the older group were given an excellent/good health rating.

The number of respondents who said they have family on the Island, 56% (243) was only slightly higher than the 42% (184) who reported that they have no relatives on the Vineyard. This finding should be taken into consideration when targeting individuals who could benefit from the concierge program. Family members living off-island would probably welcome the peace of mind and sense of relief that a local service could support their efforts to provide care for their elderly parents or relatives living on the Vineyard.

When asked if the Vineyard provided adequate services to Island seniors, 44% (190) said "yes" while 42% (184) answered "no" or "somewhat". If separated into the two age groups, 36% (45) of the younger group felt that services were adequate, and 48% (60) answered "no" or "somewhat". In the older group, 47% (145) said "yes" and 40% (124) answered "no" or "somewhat".

When asked if they were aware of services and programs available to Island residents, 40% (175) of the respondents said "yes", while 47% (203) said they had little to no awareness on the topic. Among the younger age group, 32% (40) were aware of services and programs, while 52% (66) were not, or somewhat, aware of services and programs. Among the older group, 44% (135) were aware of services and programs, and the same, 44% (137), were not as well informed.

13% (58) of the respondents said they would be willing to move to a continuing care retirement community (CCRC). 46% (198) said they would need more information before they could decide while 27% (117) said that they would not consider such a move.

### **Services Overview**

Industry research indicates that seniors are healthier now than their predecessors from thirty years ago. Members of the baby boomer generation facing retirement have a very different idea than their parents as to how they plan to grow old. The upcoming retirees are accustomed to spending money for services. They are willing to spend on themselves and they place a high premium on wellness and quality of life. They want to remain as healthy and independent as possible. These factors were evidenced in our survey's findings.

None of the services listed under Question Nine would be categorized as a necessity. However, when asked if they would consider purchasing these services if offered at a reasonable price, 63% (274) said "yes". The most popular services were off-island trips, personal trainer sessions and spa services.

<b>Top-ranked services participants would consider purchasing</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Organized off island trips	79	29%
Personal trainer sessions	63	23%
Spa services	54	20%
Transportation	50	18%
Grocery Delivery	49	18%
Luncheon groups	37	14%
Consultation with a nutritionist	31	11%
Golf outings	25	9%
Assistant to complete personal errands	24	9%
Other	0	

Over the past year, many survey participants have received help to carry out aspects of their day-to-day living. There were 895 occasions where respondents received assistance with at least one of the services included under Question Seven. 69% (614) of these instances involved payment for services. The table below lists the top four purchased services and the percentage of respondents who reported using them during the past year.

<b>Purchased services most frequently used</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Housecleaning	114	<b>26%</b>
Lawn Service	96	<b>22%</b>
Handyman Services	92	<b>21%</b>
Pet Care	79	<b>18%</b>

Question Fourteen asked participants to rate, from 1-10 ('1' being the most important), which factors they considered when making a purchase. Responses to this question were not as clear as anticipated. Some people gave all factors a '1', some left factors blank and others only placed an 'X' next to those they took into consideration. Adjustments to the tallying process were made, giving each selected factor a '1'. The table below lists those factors that were most commonly selected.

<b>Top factors when considering purchasing a service</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Reputation	26	<b>6%</b>
Knowledgeable staff	22	<b>5%</b>
Reliability	22	<b>5%</b>
Cost	21	<b>5%</b>

### **Considerations**

While the majority of those surveyed seemed to be content with their life on the Vineyard, 16% (68) said they felt the increased cost of living (property taxes, food, utilities, and house maintenance) on the Island could serve as a potential barrier for them to remain living comfortably in their homes. The other perceived barrier to remaining in one's home was incapacity due to an illness or stroke 10% (42).

When asked if there was anything that could make life on the Vineyard more manageable for residents over aged 60, responses included: more senior discounts on expenses such as food, gas, utilities and ferry service: 12% (53); improved transportation: 7% (30); and affordable senior housing & long-term care facilities: 7% (31). Additional suggestions for improvement included help with home maintenance: 5% (20); quality in-home, affordable, personal care: 5% (22); and better medical care: 5% (20).

While the response rate was unusually high, our survey was unable to reach a few groups who could benefit from the services proposed by the Vineyard Village concierge program: those adult children living off-island who may be concerned about an aging parent living on the Vineyard; the more frail population of seniors who will need intensified care after a hospitalization or rehab stay; and those individuals who are considering the island as a possibility for their future retirement.

Conducting focus groups during the summer season, when off-island family and future retirees tend to visit, may help us to connect with and gain insights into the needs and concerns of this group. Working with the patients and staff (especially the social workers) at Windermere could provide us with a better understanding of some of the challenges that the more frail Island population faces.

Looking over the survey results, some patterns present themselves. From the unusually high response rate, we can infer that there is a strong sense of connectedness and community amongst Vineyard residents. Many people took the time to complete and return a survey to share their views of what's working and what can be improved upon for seniors on the island.

We heard from the 'young-old'. Qualities that many of them share include an interest in their community; a desire to continue to 'do', both physically and mentally; and a wish to remain on Martha's Vineyard.