



FALL 2023: Volume 50

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[Visit COFA Website](#)

In Support of Caregivers

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging



Caregiver Resources

Local Caregiver Support Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Caregiver's Resource Center: Amy Jackson 607-274-5486

Project Care Services: Dawn Sprague 607-274-5499

The Caregiver's Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit offers family caregivers information, consultation services, workshops, this newsletter, packets of information that are helpful to caregivers, and a lending library of books on family caregiving topics. Stop by or call Amy for an appointment.

The Tompkins County Long-Term Care Unit may be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call 607-274-5278 to discuss your needs.

Caregiver Counseling

Family and Children's Services - 607-273-7494

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers monthly to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Call to complete an intake.

Individual Counseling and Support

Individual counselors can provide clinical and therapeutic counseling and support for you and/or your loved one.

Ann Dolan, LCSW (counseling for ages 60+ or caregiver for 60+)
(607) 708-0808

Buttermilk Falls Therapy Services (Lisa Luciano, LCSW-R, ACSW)
(607) 591-2763

Adult Day Program

Longview Adult Day Community

Monday through Friday, 9am-3pm; contact Pamela Nardi at 607-375-6323 for more information.

Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters. Fee: \$75/day includes lunch and snack; minimum 2 days per week, and must be fully Covid vaccinated with booster.



SUPPORT GROUPS

Family Caregiver Support Group/Discussion

Every Other Tuesday from 1-2 pm online via Zoom, offered by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. To register or for more information call Amy at 607-274-5486.

Brookdale Caregiver Support Group

Brookdale's Caregiver Support Group meets on the 4th Thursday of the month from 4p-5p in the Crossings community. Please RSVP and/or ask questions to Lisa Roan at 607-592-7986 or email at lroan@brookdale.com

Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups

1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm in person at Lifelong, 119 W. Court Street, Ithaca. For information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900.

3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30 pm at Walden Place, Cortland. Call 607-756-8101 for information.

Cancer Caregiver Group

Zooms on the 2nd Tuesday from 5:30-7, and the 4th Tuesday from 1-2:30pm. online via Zoom through the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes. For family, friends and caregivers of individuals with Cancer. For information call 607-277-0960.

Parkinson's Caregivers Group

For more information, call Carol Grove at 607-279-8257

Funding for Family Caregiver Respite

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has a limited amount of funding to help family caregivers afford to hire substitute care that enables them to take a break from caregiving, usually a few hours a week. We have some uncommitted funds available if you know a family caregiver who might want to take advantage of this opportunity.

Title III E Respite: This is federal funding that pays for respite service for family caregivers who are caring for an older adult (60 or older) who needs assistance with 2 or more ADL's (dressing, bathing, incontinence, transferring, toileting, eating) **OR** needs substantial supervision due to cognitive impairment (e.g., Alzheimer's or other dementia).

Alzheimer's Respite Scholarships: This is New York State funding granted to Tompkins County through the CNY Alzheimer's Association. This funding pays for respite service (at home or in a licensed care facility) to give a break to family caregivers of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementia.

Although neither program is means-tested, we do try to target these funds to those who find it difficult to privately hire enough substitute care.

To Apply or Inquire:

Please encourage family caregivers to contact **Joanne Wilcox** or **Terry McCann** at **Tompkins County Adult and Long Term Care Services (607-274-5278)**. Due to the overall shortage of aides, or if clients prefer it, they may be able to use this funding to privately hire friends or relatives through the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP).

Respite Vouchers to Informal Family Caregivers Now Available!

After a pause, NYSCRC is again offering \$600 respite vouchers to informal family caregivers across New York State. The program is open to both Kinship Caregivers caring for a child under 18 years old and caregivers of adults with a long-term chronic condition.

Please note that while we welcome applications from both first-time applicants and veterans of the program, we continue to give first-time applicants priority. We cannot guarantee approval of second vouchers, and these caregivers may be placed on a waitlist.

Questions? Please reach out to Rebecca at rhyde@lifespan-roch.org or Kristine at klawrence@lifespan-roch.org

Caregiver Articles:

10 Tips for Caregivers During the Holidays

Feeling stressed? Reset your expectations and enjoy the little moments

By: Amy Goyer, as posted on www.AARP.org

For some [family caregivers](#), the holidays can be a joyful time when spirits are lighter. It feels good to care for loved ones and enjoy time together, celebrating with family traditions. But for many, the holidays also [bring added stress](#). Caregivers are already busy, and there's even more to do during the holidays. Something's gotta give! It's OK to give yourself a bit of a break this year.

Here are some tips to help you make it through the holiday season with more joy and less stress.

1. Focus on what is most meaningful

As much as caregivers would like to create the perfect holiday experience, remember that perfection is not the goal — it's really about meaning and [joy](#). There are many factors that can't be controlled when it comes to a loved one's health and abilities, so adjust your view of a "successful" holiday. Talk with your loved ones about what makes the holidays most meaningful for them and for you, and prioritize those holiday activities. Focus on the least amount of things needed to evoke a holiday feeling and create good memories. Your grandmother's tablecloth, the family menorah, a poinsettia or some candles along with holiday music and movies may be enough.

2. Simplify your holiday activities

If going all out for the holidays will push you over the edge, remember that it doesn't have to be all or nothing. If you can't put out all of your decorations, choose a few items that are most significant. You might ask a friend to decorate or pay someone to do so. (My helper, Debbie, a "concierge," assisted me with holiday decorations many times while I was caregiving for my parents, and it was such a relief!) You can always rearrange decorations once someone else puts them out. If going to all religious services feels like too much, choose the one service that means the most to you. If

sending greeting cards is too time-consuming, try sending e-greetings, or just send cards to a few key people this year. Many family caregivers also adjust the location of celebrations or postpone holiday travel to accommodate loved ones in their care.

3. Start new traditions

Instead of focusing on losses and what you and/or your loved ones aren't able to do, try doing something new. If those you care for have trouble getting around, drive through a holiday light display or watch a holiday concert on TV. If you can't make it to a holiday gathering, have a video chat. Start a [home holiday movie night](#) tradition — or watch old home movies and relish the memories. Are your loved ones unable to participate in decorating this year? Turn up the holiday music, invite a friend over to help and make it festive. Your loved ones can be nearby to watch and cheer you on or be surprised by the results.

4. Adjust meals

Food is a big part of many holidays, so it's especially difficult to think about changing mealtime traditions. But [meals also require a lot of time, money and coordination](#). Over many years of caregiving, I found doing holiday baking and meals so exhausting that I couldn't even enjoy them. So rather than canceling holiday meals entirely, I've learned to make adjustments like these:

- Simplify the menu. Try fewer side dishes or one dessert instead of three. Focus on the dishes that are traditional and give you that holiday feeling.
- Split up the grocery shopping and cooking among other family members and guests. There's nothing wrong with a potluck.
- Pay someone to cook meals at your house ahead of time or on the holiday.
- Order all or part of your holiday meals to go from a local grocery store or restaurant — either fully cooked or ready for you to cook at home.
- Eat at someone else's home or at a restaurant.

5. Approach gift giving more efficiently

Gift giving is a part of many traditions, but it can be costly and time-consuming. Try shopping online (many online stores will also wrap gifts). You might ask a friend or relative to do your shopping and wrapping for you, or you can always fall back on gift cards. Family caregivers are often financially stressed, so it might be necessary to lower your gift-giving budget this year and scale back the number of presents. Give the gift of time or attention, like scheduling outings or helping with a project. If your family is large, draw names and exchange with just one person. Have a regifting exchange, sharing items you already have. Order a photo gift — like a photo mug, pillow or calendar — or write a meaningful letter that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

6. Anticipate holiday hot buttons

Are there holiday activities or toxic relatives that trigger stress or unhappy memories? Perhaps feelings of grief or loss overcome you at certain times of day. Do unhelpful relatives arrive for the holidays and [criticize your caregiving](#)? For some families, lifelong conflicts inevitably flare up at gatherings. It may be best to limit your exposure to — or even avoid — certain places, events, conversations or people. If you can't do that, prepare yourself. Minimize the drama, and don't try to resolve problems over the holidays. Instead, try short encounters and develop quick-exit strategies. Mentally put yourself in a protective bubble, letting negative energy bounce off without hurting, annoying or distressing you.

7. Mind your mindset

Negative thinking activates your body's stress response, so steer your mind to the positives when you start down that slippery slope. Try to [stay mindful](#), concentrating on the present moment. Think about what you can accomplish instead of what isn't getting done; celebrate what your loved ones can do, rather than dwelling on what they can no longer participate in; revel in the holiday joys you experience instead of focusing on those you bypass; appreciate the help you are receiving rather than resenting people who aren't supportive.

8. Keep self-care at the top of the list

As caregivers, we give and give and give, and during the holidays we give even more. All that giving can leave you running on empty, with high stress levels or even full-on burnout. Beware of emotional ups and downs, fatigue, foggy thinking and an inability to sit still or the opposite — feeling frozen and unable to get anything done. These red flags must be dealt with, but when we're busy it's easy to let self-care slip just when we need it most. Like our cars, we can't run on an empty, so think about what fills you up and do more of that. Get plenty of good-quality sleep, and keep moving: Walk with loved ones in a decorated shopping mall, or dance to holiday music.

Enjoy holiday goodies in moderation; too many sugary treats can cause an energy crash later. Monitor yourself for unhealthy coping skills, like overeating or drinking too much. Get outside for some mood-elevating vitamin D from sunlight, or consider therapeutic lighting if you suffer from [seasonal affective disorder](#). Relax with some holiday-scented aromatherapy to soothe and boost your mood.

9. Connect with other caregivers

Other caregivers are feeling many of the same emotions you are, even when non-caregivers don't understand. Connect to share your feelings and get tips for holiday survival. If it's difficult to get to an in-person caregiver support group due to health issues, holiday activities or weather, try [online message boards](#) or social media groups like [AARP's Family Caregiver Discussion Group on Facebook](#), which I moderate. I'd love to see you there!

10. Ask for help

Even if you don't normally do so, the holidays are a great time to get some extra help — even a few hours can be a huge relief. Family and friends can lend a hand with holiday preparations. A personal assistant or concierge can complete items on your holiday to-do list or handle personal things like organizing mail or running errands. Hire someone to clean the house or catch up on laundry. To free up your time so you can enjoy holiday activities, [ask family and friends to help with direct care](#) for your loved ones, or try [community](#) and [state resources](#) like adult day care centers, in-home or facility-based respite care, or paid home health aides/caregivers.

Remember, you'll be happier if you can go with the flow and expect that there will be some delays, a crisis or two and maybe some disappointments. But alongside those things, there can be real joy. Our family spent Christmas in the hospital with Dad one year when he was sick. We made the most of it with decorations and music and festive headgear (hats, headbands, antlers, etc.). The hospital prepared a darn good holiday meal for us too. It was a stressful time, but we also laughed and loved each other and made new memories.

The bottom line is that this time is precious. Even if this holiday season doesn't include all of your family traditions, savor the moments and make new, meaningful memories you can cherish forever.

Editor's note: This article, originally published in 2018, has been updated with more recent information.

Holiday Hints for Alzheimer's Caregivers

National Institute on Aging, <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/holiday-hints-alzheimers-caregivers> (no date)

Holidays can be meaningful, enriching times for both the person with [Alzheimer's disease](#) and his or her family. Maintaining or adapting family rituals and traditions helps all family members feel a sense of belonging and family identity. For a person with Alzheimer's, this link with a familiar past is reassuring.



However, celebrations, special events, or holidays, which may include other people, can cause confusion and anxiety for a person with Alzheimer's. He or she may find some situations easier and more pleasurable than others. The tips below can help you balance busy holiday activities with everyday care for a person with Alzheimer's disease.

Finding the Right Balance

Many caregivers have mixed feelings about holidays. They may have happy memories of the past, but they also may worry about the extra demands that holidays make on their time and energy.

Here are some ways to balance doing many holiday-related activities while taking care of your own needs and those of the person with Alzheimer's disease:

- Celebrate holidays that are important to you. Include the person with Alzheimer's as much as possible.

- Set your own limits, and be clear about them with others. You do not have to live up to the expectations of friends or relatives. Your situation is different now.
- [Involve the person with Alzheimer's](#) in simple holiday preparations, or have him or her observe your preparations. Observing you will familiarize him or her with the upcoming festivities. Participating with you may give the person the pleasure of helping and the fun of anticipating and reminiscing.
- Consider simplifying your holidays around the home. For example, rather than cooking an elaborate dinner, consider a smaller dinner with close family. Instead of elaborate decorations, consider choosing a few select items.
- When health and safety provisions allow, encourage friends and family to visit even if it's difficult. Limit the number of visitors at any one time. Plan visits when the person usually is at his or her best. Virtual visits through video or phone calls are also a great way to connect over the holiday season.
- Prepare quiet distractions to use, such as looking at pictures or going for a walk, if the person with Alzheimer's becomes upset or overstimulated.
- Make sure there is a quiet space where the person can rest and have time to recharge.
- Try to avoid situations that may confuse or frustrate the person with Alzheimer's, such as changes in routine and strange places.
- Try to stay away from noise, loud conversations, loud music, lighting that is too bright or too dark, and having too much rich food or drink (especially alcohol).
- Find time for holiday activities you like to do. For example, go for a walk in the neighborhood and look at holiday decorations, or bake holiday cookies.
- If you receive invitations to events that the person with Alzheimer's cannot attend, consider going yourself. Ask a friend or family member to spend time with the person while you're out.

Holiday Home Safety Tips

Holiday decorations, such as Christmas trees, lights, or menorahs, should be secured so that they do not fall or catch on fire. Anything flammable should be monitored at all times, and extra precautions should be taken so that lights or anything breakable are fixed firmly, correctly, and out of the way of those with Alzheimer's disease. Candles should never be lit without supervision. When not in use, they should be put away. Also, try to avoid clutter, especially in walkways, during the holidays. For more home safety tips, visit [Home Safety and Alzheimer's Disease](#).

Preparing Guests

Explain to guests that the person with Alzheimer's disease does not always remember what is expected and acceptable. Give examples of unusual behaviors that may take place such as [incontinence](#), eating food with fingers, [wandering](#), or [hallucinations](#).

If this is the first visit since the person with Alzheimer's became severely impaired, inform people ahead of time what they can expect. The memory-impaired person may not remember guests' names or relationships but can still enjoy their company.

- Explain that memory loss is the result of the disease and is not intentional.
- Stress that the meaningfulness of the moment together matters more than what the person remembers.

For more information, visit [Helping Family and Friends Understand Alzheimer's](#).

Preparing the Person with Alzheimer's

Here are some tips to help the person with Alzheimer's disease get ready for visitors:

- Begin showing a photo of the guest to the person a week before arrival. Each day, explain who the visitor is while showing the photo.
- Arrange a phone call for the person with Alzheimer's and the visitor. The call gives the visitor an idea of what to expect and gives the person with Alzheimer's an opportunity to become familiar with the visitor.
- Keep the memory-impaired person's routine as close to normal as possible.
- During the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, guard against fatigue and find time for adequate rest.

(Content reviewed: May 18, 2017)



Caregiving and the holidays: from stress to success!

www.Caregiver.org (December 31, 2014)

For many caregivers the holiday season gives rise to stress, frustration and anger, instead of peace and good will.

Caregivers may feel resentful towards other family members who they feel have not offered enough assistance. Managing care for someone who has a cognitive

impairment may leave caregivers feeling that they will not be able to participate as fully as they would like in family gatherings. Already feeling overwhelmed with caregiving tasks, stressed-out caregivers may view traditional holiday preparations as more of a drain of precious energy than a joy.

Following are some suggestions that may help make the holidays more enjoyable for you and your loved ones. Keep in mind that the holidays can, in fact, provide unique opportunities to seek better communication, connection and support from family and friends.

An opportunity for communication

It's hard to know how much to communicate about a loved one's decline in cognitive functioning and personal care needs. Whom do you tell? How much do you tell?

Although it is understandable to have reservations about discussing a loved one's impairments, honest communication about the realities of the caregiving situation offers others the opportunity to respond with assistance. Sharing the truths of your situation may help reduce some of the feelings of isolation and lack of appreciation common in caregivers.

Holiday greetings and a brief note

Some caregivers have had success in writing a brief note describing the person's condition and enclosing it in a holiday greeting card. This can be a nonthreatening way to inform distant or uninvolved relatives about the realities of the caregiving situation. If written in a tone that's not accusatory or guilt-inducing, family members may be more forthcoming with assistance or, at least, have a better understanding of the effort you are putting into providing care.

Let sleeping dogs lie?

It is common for caregivers to be disappointed with family members who they feel are not "pulling their weight" in caregiving responsibilities. If this holds true for you, and your goal is to enjoy the holidays, you must decide how much and when to communicate this disappointment. Consider clearing the air before the holidays or perhaps resolve within yourself to put those feelings on hold, with the intention to discuss the matter after the holiday season passes. In the meantime, enjoy the holiday!

Be clear about your energy level

Let family members know that your caregiving duties are keeping you very busy and that you only have so much energy for holiday preparation and hosting duties.

Accept the need to adapt

Caregivers often have to adapt their traditional role or experience of the holidays. This may mean allowing another family member to host more time-intensive festivities. You may need to modify the amount of time away from home to match the comfort level of your impaired loved one. You may also have to choose which events to attend based on which would be the simplest, least exhausting and most enjoyable for the person for whom you provide care—and for you.

The visit room

Don't expect the person with cognitive impairment to be able to adapt to all situations; you may need to adapt the environment to their needs. See if you can arrange to have another room in the house designated as a quiet place for the impaired person. Many people with dementia find multiple conversations and background noise disturbing. To avoid this anxiety, the person may benefit from time in a quieter room with less stimulus where family members could take turns visiting with them.

Share your wish list

- **Respite:** some caregivers ask for time off from caregiving duties as a gift for the holidays. This could mean another family member gives you a break. Sometimes asking for a Saturday off “in the next three months” is more accepted, as family members can then schedule it into their calendars. If this is not possible, perhaps they would consider paying for a home care worker or a stay at a respite facility. Your FCA Family Consultant can help you locate these resources in your area.
- **Home repairs:** Do light bulbs need changing, or grab bars need installation? That maddening pile of junk in the garage needs to go to the dump? Tasks such as these may be the perfect way for a family member to help out if providing personal care is too uncomfortable for them.
- **Care for you!** How about a gift certificate for a massage, facial or manicure? How about an opportunity to spend the day fishing or a walk in the outdoors?
- **Book your homecare worker early!** Speak with your home care worker or home care agency early about your holiday plans!

Schedule one-on-one time

While caregiving, it is easy to get caught up in all the tasks of personal care and homemaking chores. Make a point of setting some time aside this holiday season to enjoy the person you care for in a relaxed, one-on-one context. The best activities are those which take advantage of long-term memory—usually less impaired in people with dementia. Try looking through family photo albums or unpacking holiday decorations, which may stimulate memories.

Reflect on the rewards

Reflecting on the rewards of caregiving can help maintain your self-esteem. It may feel very rewarding to know that you are fulfilling a vow or promise you have made to the person for whom you provide care. Your caregiving may be an expression of living up to your personal ideals or religious beliefs. You may also be experiencing a great deal of growth as you learn new skills and meet challenges in ways you never imagined possible.

A little thank you goes a long way

After the holidays, write a thank you note to family members or friends who spent time with your loved one. Emphasize the positive impact their visit or brief time spent with your loved one had on them. This may reinforce positive feelings from their visit and diminish any discomfort they experienced. They may then be more encouraged to visit again or be more supportive of your efforts.

Program Updates



CAREGIVERS SUPPORT

NOVEMBER IS CAREGIVER APPRECIATION MONTH!

**We would like to
recognize family
caregivers by
giving them a gift
bag filled with
items!**

**Tuesday, 11/07/2023
2-4 pm**

**No need to pre-register, just
stop in at our office to get
your bag during the above
time at 214 West State
Street/Martin Luther King Jr
Blvd, Ithaca**

**Note: Only family caregivers in Tompkins County currently caring
for a loved one/friend are eligible. 50 bags are available, first-
come, first-serve in person on 11/7. One per person.**



TOMPKINS COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

Aging Better, Together

214 W. Martin Luther King/State St.
(607) 274-5482
www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa



AmeriCorps Seniors

New program in Tompkins County

Volunteer respite providers

Program overview

How can I access respite?

Starting a group program

Volunteer options

- Volunteers must be aged 55+
- Stipend of \$4/per hour
- 20 hours of pre-service training and orientation
- Must pass background check



Tuesday, October 24, 2023

10:00-11:00 am on Zoom

**To register, contact Amy Jackson,
Tompkins County Office for the Aging**

call: 607-274-5486

e-mail: ajackson@tompkins-co.org



For additional information, please visit
<https://www.nyscrc.org/ameriCorps>





Free Caregiver Tool!

Notebook

In

Case of

Emergency

**These notebooks are available in our
office to keep track of all your care
receiver's vital information!**

**Stop in at our office at 214 West State Street,
Ithaca to get one!**



TOMPKINS COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING
Aging Better Together

Personal Emergency Response Systems

"Help! I've fallen and I can't get up!" This is an unfortunate reality for many older Americans. This predicament can cause older adults to feel uneasy about living alone. Luckily, there are several steps that can be taken to prevent falls. Some of these steps include-

- Finding a good balance/exercise program.
- Talking with your health care provider and family members.
- Regularly reviewing your medications with your doctor.
- Getting your vision and hearing checked annually.
- Keeping your home safe.
- Wearing proper footwear.

If a fall does occur, the next step is to find the best way to get help if needed. While having a phone nearby at all times is a good option, it is easier to have a wearable pendant that can be pressed in the event of a fall or medical emergency. The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) has a program that gives out these types of alert pendants with a monthly monitoring fee, they are called Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS). COFA partners with Doyle Medical Monitoring to provide clients in Tompkins County with PERS units that can connect you to a responder within minutes. The PERS unit can connect to either a landline phone or work off cell phone towers. The unit also has a two-way speaker system, allowing you to speak directly with someone from the Doyle call center. The pendant, that is wirelessly connected to the unit, can be worn around either your neck or wrist. Wherever you are in/around your home, this PERS unit will notify a responder with the push of the button on your pendant. Here's how it works:

- If you have a fall or a medical emergency, press the button on your pendant.
- An alarm will sound on the unit and Doyle will answer within minutes.
- If you are not alright and need assistance, Doyle will call a responder to come and assist you.

Standard pricing starts at \$25 a month, please call our office at 607-274-5482 for more information or to speak with an Outreach Worker who can assist you.

NYS Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)

Serving Tompkins, Chemung, and Schuyler Counties



Volunteer Spotlight: Q&A with Eileen

How did you learn about the program?

A friend invited me to lunch and sprang the idea of joining the program on me. I was reconsidering my involvement in another program, and I thought that ombudsman experience could be useful in caring for my parents.

What was most surprising to you about the LTCOP Program?

I am surprised by how much I can find in common with residents and by how thankful residents are for ombudsman help but especially for help from their caregivers.

What would you say to someone considering volunteering with LTCOP?

The program brings satisfaction and joy by getting to know people that you would not really talk to in other circumstances, and it brings sadness in seeing people become sicker and pass away. Big changes do not happen easily in the system, but the ombudsman (and resident) hopes to improve care for residents who cannot communicate for themselves. Even the (dreaded) paperwork part of the program is important as it documents the need for better staffing for nursing homes at a statewide or national level as reports from individual ombudsman and residents are consolidated by the State office.

Educate Empower Advocate

Certified Long-Term Care Ombudsmen provide *free-of-charge* services to individuals who reside in long term care facilities (nursing homes, assisted living and adult-care facilities) and the relatives and friends who act on their behalf.

A trained and certified Long-Term Care Ombudsman conducts regular facility visits, helps identify and resolve concerns, and acts as an advocate for residents on issues regarding:

- Quality of care
- Abuse and neglect
- Rights violations
- Lost and stolen belongings
- Dietary concerns
- Discharge, eviction or termination of services
- Public benefits programs
- Cost of care

For more information or to volunteer:

www.ltcombudsman.ny.gov

or call

607-274-5498



**Office of the State
Long Term Care
Ombudsman**



"I define connection as the energy that exists between two people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship." Dr. Brene Brown

Project CARE Friendly Visiting Program

Project CARE is a friendly visitor program free to Tompkins County residents age 60 and over, where a volunteer and Senior are matched together and enjoy weekly visits with each other. Volunteers provide companionship, especially to Seniors who are experiencing social isolation or loneliness. Weekly visits are a wonderful opportunity for volunteers and seniors alike to form a caring bond.

What does a friendly weekly visit mean...?

- Comfort to ease the loneliness or social isolation
- Conversation to break the silence
- Laughter to lighten your mood
- Friendship to fill your heart

Please **contact Dawn Sprague, Project CARE Coordinator** at **607-274-5499** or by email at dsprague@tompkins-co.org, if you would like to discuss this opportunity further, would like to sign up for a weekly friendly visitor, or if you are interested in becoming a Project CARE volunteer.



The Registry at FLIC

The Registry is a compiled list of private pay aides who have been screened through a face to face interview with the Registry Coordinator at Finger Lakes Independence Center. References are provided and verified to make sure the aide has the necessary skills and compassion that are important for someone to have when taking care of people in their homes. The Registry also contains a list of skilled nurses varying from pediatrics to palliative care.

For more information **contact Teresa Sivers at 272-2433.**

The Registry program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the New York State Office for the Aging.



Contributions Are Welcome!

If you can afford a contribution to the Caregivers' Resource Center, it will help support this newsletter, our lending library, and other caregiver services. You can make a contribution in person, or by mail. Please make check payable to the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and if mailing, send to:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Ithaca, NY 14850

Please don't feel pressured to contribute financially if you are not able to do so.

Thank you!

Amy Jackson, Caregiver Resource Coordinator

607-274-5486 or ajackson@tomppkins-co.org

New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) promotes two partnerships to support caregivers:

[Trualta](#) -The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) and Association on Aging in New York (AgingNY) have partnered with Trualta to offer Trualta's web-based caregiver education and support platform at no cost to any unpaid caregiver in New York State.

[ARCHANGELS](#) -ARCHANGELS is a national movement and a platform that is reframing how caregivers are seen, honored, and supported using a combination of data and stories.

For more information contact Amy Jackson, Caregiver Coordinator at 607-274-5486 or ajackson@tomppkins-co.org



Office for
the Aging

New York
Caregiving Portal
Powered by Truaita

Provided in Partnership With:
**Association on Aging
in New York**

Access free training and resources to help you build skills and confidence to provide care at home.

New York's new online Caregiver Portal is designed for families. Articles, videos, tip-sheets, and professional level training offers something for everyone. Our learning portal helps family caregivers reduce stress, find local resources, and provide better care for their loved ones.



"This was wonderful. My husband and I danced and we had a good time singing these oldies but goodies. I will highly recommend these to anyone who's husband or wife has Alzheimer's."

- Pat from "Alzheimer's Music Connect"

Thousands of family caregivers across North America need support. Every caregiver has a custom learning journey, so you can choose the topics that interest you and learn any time of day.



Sign up for FREE today!
NewYork-Caregivers.com

Scan me with
your camera
to visit!





Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

As summertime comes to an end, the time to resume using our heating equipment is quickly approaching. Through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), you can get your heating equipment cleaned and tuned up so that it is ready for the upcoming heating season. The Clean and Tune program is a once-a-year benefit to applicants who receive HEAP and are the homeowner. Making sure that your heating equipment is cleaned and tuned regularly is a great way to ensure its' longevity.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) also assists with heating bills during the winter months. Our office works with the Tompkins County Department of Social Services (DSS) to ensure that HEAP is widely available to residents in Tompkins County that need help with their heating bills during the winter. Our office assists clients that are over 60 and do not receive food stamps; or are under 60 and receive Social Security Disability. All other clients would call DSS at 607-274-5264 to apply. Clients that meet the income requirements listed below can apply for HEAP if the heating bill is in their name, regardless of whether they are a renter/homeowner. The 2023-2024 HEAP season is expected to open in early November. New and returning applicants can pick up HEAP applications from our office during regular business hours or apply online at www.mybenefits.ny.gov once HEAP is open. For more information about these programs, or to apply, please call our office at 607-274-5482. Stay warm!

The current income eligibility levels for

HEAP in 2023-2024 are as follows:

Household Size/Maximum Gross Monthly Income

1	\$3,035
2	\$3,970
3	\$4,904



FALLS PREVENTION!

Are you seeing more hazards in your home? Do you worry about the safety of your living space, or the likelihood of a fall? The Office for the Aging provides Falls Home Safety Assessments at no cost to you. Our Outreach Workers can take a tour of your home, noting potential hazards, and giving recommendations on how to remediate the noted hazards. Our Outreach Workers can also leave you with information on the different agencies that may be able to help with remediating those hazards.

For more information, or to set up a Falls Home Safety Assessment, please call the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482.

Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa

- Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" on the left side to access our Tompkins County Resource guides and links to other helpful information.

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

CaringBridge: www.caringbridge.org

Caregiver Action Network: www.caregiveraction.org

AARP Caregiver Resource Center: www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving

Next Step in Care: www.nextstepincare.org

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The Caregiver Resource Center at the Office for the Aging

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes—stay tuned for upcoming classes early next year!

Caregiver Workshops—Monthly workshops on topics of interest to caregivers.

Caregiver Support Group/Discussion—We currently have a caregiver support group/discussion every other week on Tuesdays, and welcome any family caregiver residing in Tompkins County to join us. Contact us to discuss!

Caregiver Library - We loan out books on caregiving. Stop in at our office to look at all the resources, and take a book home with you! We also have two kinds of valuable caregiver packets available free in our library: Dementia: When Memory Fades and Caregivers: When Loves Ones Age.

Caregiver Resource Counseling - We are available to help caregivers navigate services available in our community.

For more information about these services please contact the Caregiver Resource Center at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. We'll be glad to help you!

Phone: 607-274-5486

Email: ajackson@tompkins-co.org