

## In the Spotlight: Deb Bosanko: A Lifelong Staple

Snapping cornflower blue eyes over a dazzling smile and infectious laugh. This is the first impression you get of Deb Bosanko, an amazing woman who has graced Lifelong with her expertise and energy for almost thirty years. Many of you know her as a wonderful Strength Training instructor, but if you haven't yet looked beneath the surface, you might be impressed by the sharp intellect, wealth of educational and professional training, and creative curiosity that powers that smile.

Currently, Deb enriches the quality of the health and lives of Lifelong members as a contracted Fitness Instructor and a volunteer on Lifelong's Board of Directors in the role of Vice President (she's served on the board for 5 years). But this is only part of her professional and personal journey, the Lifelong portion of which started decades ago when the senior center was beginning to expand its role in the community. In 1997, Lifelong offered its first ever classes (aerobics and strength training 9 times a week in Brooktondale, Trumansburg, and at St. Catherines & Lifelong) and, in 1998, then Executive Director Marion Kinner created the original Program Director position with the intention of hiring someone who would

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## Bridging the Gap between Generations

BY SKYLAR ROBINSON, PRESIDENT,  
PROJECT GENERATIONS,  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Out of the thousands of Cornell organizations on campus, it was Project Generations that caught my attention. I was drawn to its purpose of combatting loneliness in the aging population and bridging the generational divide through regular one-on-one visits between college students and older adults in the Ithaca area. I wanted to volunteer as soon as possible, but things didn't go as planned my freshman year. I was paired up with a man named Henry, but after a few emails back and forth, he let me know that he had to withdraw from the program due to an ongoing illness. I felt bad, both for him and about los-

ing the chance to volunteer and couldn't find another partner the rest of the year.

Luckily, as a sophomore, I was now the President of Project Generations and had the opportunity to pair myself with any older adult participating. Looking through the list, I was surprised to see the very same Henry requesting a volunteer. Even though he was now described as someone with memory problems, I felt like I owed it to him to reconnect given his continued interest in the program. I got in contact with him through the service coordinator at the retirement home he lived in, and shortly thereafter my first visit with Henry was set.

Heading into the meeting, I was rather nervous about what the experience would entail. I had never

interacted with someone facing diagnosed memory loss before and had little training on how to handle the situation. However, once talking with him much of the worry faded away. While taking a walk, his first time outside in weeks, he told me about his motorcycle adventures throughout the west coast while I described my most interesting government classes. Though he did ask some questions multiple times and could be forgetful, I was delighted that we were able to have an engaging conversation, and I couldn't wait to come back.

Unfortunately, being sick kept me from meeting with Henry again for a few weeks, and he started to worry I wasn't coming back. By the time I finally returned to see him, he had com-

pletely forgotten about our first meeting and confused me with a Project Generations volunteer he had met with years ago. I was disheartened to hear this and began to question if there was any point to my visits. After all, if he was just going to forget the whole experience afterwards, was I really improving his quality of life or just engaging in a futile effort? Despite my concerns, I knew I had to keep visiting him. I saw how lonely he was, how he never left his room and watched the same movies over and over again, and I couldn't bear leaving him in that state. So, from the second meeting, I made sure visits with Henry were regular and predictable. To aid his memory, I put a note on his

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# Services for Older Adults - NY Connects

NY Connects Tompkins County Office for the Aging provides information, assistance, and referrals for Long Term Services and Supports for people of any age and any income. Long Term Services and supports are for medical and non-medical needs.

**NY connects can provide information about**

- Personal Care Services
- Caregiver Supports
- Respite Care
- Financial Benefits
- Education and Counseling
- Care Coordination
- Transportation
- Health and Wellness
- Plus, other services to help you remain as independent as possible

NY Connects staff can assist you on the phone between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday 607-274-5482 or 1-800-342-9871

Or visit us on the web at: [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging)

[tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging](http://tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging)

Free language assistance (interpretation and translation) services available

**Joy for All Companion Pets**

The Office for the Aging has several cats and dogs available for “adoption.” These interactive pets offer support, comfort, and companionship to older adults. If you or someone you know would be interested in a companion pet, please contact the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482.

**Monthly Newsletter**

The Office for the Aging distributes a monthly newsletter with information on upcoming events, issues affecting older adults, community events/programming and much more. This newsletter is available electronically only. To sign up please visit: [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging)

**Gadabout Tickets Through**

**COFA**

If you are 60 and over with transportation needs, contact the Office for the Aging for free Gadabout tickets. The Office for the Aging has purchased Zone 1 and Zone 2 tickets from Gadabout, and they are available at our office. There are no income guidelines. There is a 20-ticket cap for each individual within a 12-month period. Call our office today at 607-274-5482 for more information or to receive tickets.

**The Registry**

The Finger Lakes Independence Center administers the Registry Referral Program. The Registry Referral is a free referral service linking individuals seeking independent employment to people who need care in their home. Opportunities include elder companion, housekeeper, run errands, do yardwork, cook, personal care aide, home care aide, LPN, RN. People looking for help can call and receive names of people who are willing to provide

those services. Payment and other arrangements are made by the person seeking help with the person willing to provide the services. If you either need assistance or if you would be interested in listing your name as a caregiver, please call FLIC at 272-2433 or email [info@fliconline.org](mailto:info@fliconline.org). This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

**Help with yard work**

The Office for the Aging/ NY Connects

Maintains a listing of people who are willing to do yard work for older adults on either a paid or volunteer basis. If you need some help with your yard work, please give us a call 607-274-5482. Likewise, if you are interested in assisting older adults with yard work, on either a paid or volunteer basis, please call our office at 607-274-5482.

## Crocktober is Coming! Cozy up with Crockpot Cooking this Fall Season

WRITTEN BY: JILL SEELEY MS, RD,  
FOODNET MEALS ON WHEELS

The beauty of fall is upon us. The leaves are changing, there’s a crisp feeling in the air, and comfort food via a crockpot will be making a comeback for the season. Unfortunately, many crockpot recipes make several servings, which often times leads to feeding your garbage can instead of your stomach after a few meals of eating the same dish. What if there was a way to transform these crockpot meals into different dishes to decrease food waste and keep dinners exciting (as well as easy)? Look no further. Cook once eat twice Crockpot edition is here!

**Chicken Breast:** Place 1 pound thawed raw chicken breast into the crockpot along with ½ cup of low Sodium chicken broth. Cook on high for 4 hours. Remove from crockpot and shred.

• **Dinner 1-Hawaiian BBQ**

**Chicken Sandwiches:** Place half the shredded chicken breast back in the crockpot. In a separate bowl, add ½ cup of your favorite barbeque sauce, ¼ cup pineapple tidbits, and 2 tablespoons of pineapple juice. Mix well and pour sauce onto shredded chicken. Mix to coat in the crockpot. Allow mixture to warm for about 1 hour. When ready to eat, place portion onto a whole grain bun with red onion.

• **Dinner 2- Buffalo Chicken Taquitos:** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In microwave safe bowl, mix 2 ounces reduced fat cream cheese and ½ cup Buffalo Red Hot sauce (like Frank’s). Place carefully in microwave for 30 seconds until cream cheese is softened and melts when stirred into sauce. Add ¼ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt, and mix until sauce is fully combined. Add in shredded chicken. Place chicken mixture onto small

tortillas and roll to form taquitos. Place on a prepared cookie sheet. Bake in oven for 10 minutes. **\*\*option to add a tablespoon of crumbly blue cheese inside to cut down on the heat!\*\***

**Ground Beef:** Use a skillet to cook 1 pound ground beef until no pink remains.

- **Dinner 1- Sloppy Joes:** Add cooked ground beef, 1 onion and 1 bell pepper (both diced), 2 cloves minced garlic, 6oz tomato paste, 15oz tomato sauce, 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce, 1 tablespoon yellow mustard, 2 tablespoons brown sugar, 2 tablespoons vinegar, 1 teaspoon chili powder to the crockpot. Stir to combine. Let cook on high for 2 hours or low for 4. When ready to eat, place portion onto a whole grain bun.
- **Dinner 2- Stuffed Peppers:** Cook ½ cup rice (which equals ~ 1 ½ cup rice cooked). Cut tops



off of bell pepper and scoop out seeds/membrane. Mix leftover sloppy joe meat into the rice, and scoop mixture into the bell peppers. Place filled peppers into crock pot. Place enough water into crockpot to cover the bottom. Cook on high for 2 hours until peppers are tender. All it takes is a little planning ahead and some culinary creativity. What crockpot meal hacks can you come up with?

## HEAP



The regular HEAP heating benefit is anticipated to open in mid-fall. To be eligible, applicants must reside in the home for which they are requesting

assistance, the heating bill must be in their name or their spouse’s name, and they must meet the program’s income guidelines.

Early HEAP applications for the regular heating benefit are anticipated to be mailed at the end of August to clients who received a HEAP benefit during the previous heating season. Although these applications may be submitted before

the program officially opens, the regular heating benefit will not be issued until the program begins.

Once the program opens, clients who did not receive a HEAP benefit during the previous heating season may apply online or pick up an application from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. If neither option works for you, please call the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482.

# Caregiver’s Corner

## 12 Ways for Family Caregivers to Deal with Their Toughest Days

BY: BRUCE HOROVITZ, AARP  
PUBLISHED APRIL 7, 2025  
ON AARP WEBSITE

Some days, it can feel like every day is the toughest day for family caregivers. That’s because what can go wrong often does go wrong. Additionally, every family caregiver is, first and foremost, human.

Then — wham! — along comes a doozy of a day, and you’re certain that this one is your worst day as a caregiver. It’s a day when your caregiving duties challenge you emotionally, physically, financially — or all three simultaneously. How can a loving family caregiver specifically respond to such an impossible situation?

AARP reached out to a handful of experts — two academics and two who have written books about family caregiving — for advice on the things that family caregivers can do to deal with the physical and emotional stress of their roughest days as caregivers.

Here are their top tips:

- 1. Control your anger when your loved one messes up**  
What caregiver hasn’t

experienced this challenge a million times: their loved one accidentally makes a big mess — perhaps without even leaving their bed. Or the person they care for accidentally falls and hurts themselves. Or their loved one momentarily gets lost — perhaps in a big department store — during an outing.

The natural reaction for any caregiver would be to get angry. That’s okay, but only if you hold off and get angry in private and not in front of your loved one, says Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, active professor emerita in the Department of Psychiatry at Stanford University and author of Family Caregiver Distress.

“If you approach something with a negative attitude, you’ll only foster more negativity, and you’ll feel guilty later,” she says.

For example, when your “lost” loved one in the department store is finally found, hug them with joy instead of yelling at them and tell them how happy you are that you found them. “If you focus on that, you can take joy in being together again,” she says.

- 2. Allow bureaucratic stress to roll off your back**

Sometimes, your toughest days will have nothing to do with your loved one’s behavior or condition and everything to do with the massive bureaucracy that almost every caregiver is forced to deal with, says Gallagher-Thompson.

She says that bureaucratic stress can be the worst kind of stress because it can feel so out of your control. For example, when you’re on the phone for an hour waiting for someone to pick up at the other end, or when the pharmacy messes up on a prescription and can’t quickly fix it.

“Take deep breaths,” she advises. “If you don’t do that, you won’t be able to think clearly.” Practicing yoga or meditation can help you avoid a feeling of helplessness.

Gallagher-Thompson says this is also where a support network can be invaluable. “You may have a friend, relative, or acquaintance who has previously had success with this problem.”

- 3. Remind yourself why you’re a caregiver**  
On the most challenging

days, it can be easy to forget why you chose to become a caregiver in the first place. That’s when it’s most important to stop and remind yourself that you’re there because you care, says Connie Baher, author of Family Caregivers: An Emotional Survival Guide.

“When the daily grind has ground you down, you have to find a way of grounding yourself,” she says.

She suggests on those difficult days, every caregiver should take a moment to spell out the word C-A-R-E and think about what each of the four letters stands for. “C,” she says, stands for your compassion for your loved one. “A” is for the admiration you also feel for them. “R” is for the lack of recognition that your loved one often feels. And “E,” she says, is a reminder to embrace the caregiver experience. “You are there to embrace and lean in.”

- 4. Rediscover past passions**  
Sometimes, says Baher, long-haul caregivers, in particular, experience such difficult days that they feel as if they have nothing left inside to give.

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## The Office for the Aging has moved!

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has moved to our new location at **31 Dutch Mill Road, Ithaca, NY 14850**. We are ready to welcome you to our new office! If you have any questions or need assistance finding us, please call **607-274-5482**. We look forward to serving you at our new location.

## PERS

The fear of falling may be present with many older adults, even if they have never fallen before. This fear may lead many to avoid several different day-to-day activities and have an impact on their social, physical, and mental wellbeing. 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.
- Do physical activity regularly.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Improve the lighting in your home.

- Paint a contrasting color on the top edge of all steps.
- Look out for pets who may get underfoot or are resting on the floors or stairs.

If a fall does occur, the next step is to find the best way to get help if needed. A couple ideas are always carrying a phone or having a wearable alarm device that will call for help when needed. The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) has Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) that are available to clients in Tompkins County for a monthly monitoring fee. COFA partners with Doyle Medical Monitoring to provide clients in Tompkins County with PERS units that can connect the client to a responder within minutes. The PERS unit can work with either a landline phone or cell phone towers. The unit has a two-way speaker

system, allowing the client to speak directly with a responder from the Doyle call center. There is a pendant that is included with the unit, which can be worn around the neck or on the wrist. Whether 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 an emergency contact 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.

For a free copy of the 54-page booklet, Resources for Caregivers in Tompkins County, call the Office for the Aging or view it online at **resources-for-caregivers-guide\_2025\_edits-finals.pdf**.

(Click on the orange Resources for Caregivers booklet cover about 2/3 down on the home page.)

# Medical Aid in Dying

**SUBMITTED BY: ANDREA DAVIS, COFA  
AGING SERVICES SPECIALIST**

New York State has entered a new chapter in end-of-life care. As of August 5, 2026, the Medical Aid in Dying Act is in effect, giving eligible terminally ill New Yorkers another option when facing the final stages of a terminal illness. Under the law, mentally capable adults who meet specific requirements, including having a prognosis of six months or less to live, may request medication that they can choose to self-administer.

Medical Aid in Dying is a deeply personal and often complex topic that can raise important questions for individuals, families, caregivers, and health care providers.

As New Yorkers begin learning more about this new end-of-life option, understanding what the law provides, who may be eligible, and what protections are in place can help individuals and families make informed decisions about their care.

The following is a Law Summary from the Albany Law Firm RM&S (Reid, McNally & Savage) published April 2026.

## New York's Medical Aid in Dying Law Summary

**April 2026**

## Medical Aid in Dying (MAID)

## Background

- MAID is the medical practice of an attending physician prescribing medication to a qualified individual that the individual may choose to self-administer to bring about end of life.

- A qualified individual is a patient who is 18 years of age or older and residing in New York with a terminal illness or condition, who has decision-making capacity, has made an informed decision, and has fulfilled extensive requirements detailed below in order to obtain a prescription for medication.
- Terminal illness or condition is defined as an incurable and irreversible illness or condition that has been medically confirmed and will, within reasonable medical judgement, produce death within six months whether or not treatment is provided.
- Governor Kathy Hochul signed the Medical Aid in Dying Act (S.138/A.136, Chapter 714 of the Laws of 2025) into law on February 6, 2026, including chapter amendments (S.8835/A.9515, Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2026), making New York the 13th state, in addition to Washington, D.C., to authorize MAID. The law took effect on August 5, 2026.

## MAID Process

1. MAID is optional for most involved – no patient is required to use it and no individual health care provider is mandated to provide it. Some private facilities may be exempt. Chapter amendments include an additional requirement that religiously-oriented home hospice providers are allowed to opt out of offering MAID, while ensuring a patient receiving hospice care

- within their own home is not restricted from accessing it.
- A private health care facility can only prohibit the prescribing, dispensing, ordering or self-administering of MAID medication while the patient is being treated in the health care facility, or in an affiliated facility that is majority-owned, operated, or controlled by the same corporate entity as the health care facility or while the patient is residing in the health care facility if:
  - It is contrary to a formally adopted policy of the facility that is based on religious beliefs or moral convictions central to the facility's operating principles and
  - The patient has been informed of this prior to admission or as soon as reasonably possible.
  - If a facility has prohibited it, the patient must be transferred promptly to another facility that is reasonably accessible and willing to participate. Any health care provider, employee, or independent contractor of the facility who violates the prohibition may be subject to sanctions otherwise available to the facility.
2. A patient asking for MAID would first make the request and have an in-person examination by their attending physician. The request is required to be recorded by video or audio and permanently stored in the patient's medical record. An exception to the in-person visit is allowed if the attending physician believes it would result in extraordinary

hardship, and the examination may be conducted via telehealth once the attending physician affirms that all other requirements have been fulfilled. Extraordinary hardship is defined as circumstances in which an in-person examination would cause the patient undue pain or suffering, or would necessitate extraordinary expense or logistical burden for medically necessary transportation.

3. The attending physician would then confirm that the patient meets the strict eligibility requirements through examination of the patient and their medical records. The physician must ensure that the patient is making an informed decision and then refer the patient to another physician for a second consultation to confirm that the patient is eligible.

4. The second physician would then review the patient's medical records and confirm if the patient has the mental capacity to make this decision while providing them with the opportunity to rescind their request for MAID.

5. As mandated in the chapter amendments, the attending or consulting physician must refer the patient to a mental health professional for a final determination of whether the patient has decision-making capacity to make an informed decision. The mental health professional can be a psychologist, neurologist, or psychiatrist and must report in writing to the attending and consulting physicians

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# Medicare Open Enrollment

October brings us the beauty of fall, football games, hot chocolate, cooler temperatures, apples, pumpkins, Halloween, and Medicare Open Enrollment. It is more important than ever to review your insurance and to make sure you are up to date on any upcoming changes regarding Original Medicare,

Medicare Advantage Plans, Part D Prescription Drug Plans, Medicare Savings Program, LIS/Extra Help, and Medicaid.

Medicare Open Enrollment starts on October 15th and ends on December 7th every year.

During this time, you are able to join, drop or switch your Medicare

Advantage Plan (Part C), or add or drop a prescription drug plan (Part D). It is vital that you make sure that all your prescriptions drugs are still covered under your plan's formulary for the upcoming year. All changes during open enrollment are effective January 1st of the upcoming year.

You can meet with a certified Health Insurance Information, Counseling, & Assistance Program (HIICAP) counselor who will review your current coverage and compare your coverage to other options for the following year. HIICAP counselors listen to what is important to you regarding your health coverage and help you understand your options. HIICAP counselors are able to enroll you in Medicare Advantage Plans, prescription drug plans, and connect you to other options such as Medigap Supplemental Plans.

HIICAP counselors work with Tompkins County residents of any age that are currently enrolled in Medicare or soon to be eligible. This program provides free, accurate and objective information, counseling, assistance and advocacy on Medicare, retiree and related health

coverage plans.

HIICAP counselors are able to provide information, screen and assist with applications for low income programs such as the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), Extra Help (prescription assistance and pharmacy discount programs), Medicaid, and Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program. These programs help with paying part of your monthly costs, offer discounts, or provide full medical coverage.

If you would like to schedule an appointment, have questions, or you are new to Medicare and would like to know how to apply or what your options are, you can speak with a HIICAP counselor by contacting Tompkins County Office for the Aging at (607)274-5482 or Life-long at (607)273-1511. This service is available all year long, but some changes to your Medicare coverage can only be made during certain enrollment periods. Please be aware that if you are planning to meet with a HIICAP counselor during the fall Medicare Open Enrollment period, appointments fill up fast. We look forward to assisting you with your health insurance needs.

# PARTNER WITH PURPOSE



Introducing Lifelong's New  
**Corporate Sponsorship  
Program**

- Support programs that strengthen our community.
- Increase your company's visibility and impact.
- Give back, engage locally, and create lasting impact.



**More information**  
<https://tinyurl.com/LLCorpSponsor26>

 **QUESTIONS?**  
**919.796.4730**  
[VREDDING@TCLIFELONG.ORG](mailto:VREDDING@TCLIFELONG.ORG)

# \$50 Is Not Enough: The Campaign to Increase the Personal Needs Allowance

For nearly four decades, New York nursing home residents who rely on Medicaid have been expected to meet their personal needs with just **\$50 per month**.

This money, known as the **Personal Needs Allowance, or PNA**, is the small portion of income Medicaid-funded nursing home residents are permitted to keep. The remainder of their income generally goes toward the cost of their nursing home care.

The PNA must cover items and services Medicaid does not provide, including clothing, shoes, haircuts, telephone service, postage, books, hobby supplies, favorite snacks, gifts and cards for family members, and other personal purchases that support a resident’s independence and quality of life.

New York’s PNA has not increased since 1988. Adjusted for inflation, \$50 in 1988 would be worth approximately \$140 today. As prices have risen, residents’ ability to make personal choices and participate in ordinary daily life has steadily declined.

### Progress Made Through Statewide Advocacy

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and its advocacy partners

made increasing the PNA a major priority during the development of New York’s 2026–27 State Budget.

Although the increase was not included in the final budget, the campaign achieved meaningful progress:

- More than **7,500 petition signatures** were collected.
- Advocates held **55 meetings** about the PNA with elected officials.
- A total of **48 different state lawmakers** were reached.
- Regional Ombudsman Programs raised awareness through social media and community education.
- At least **10 newspapers across New York** published articles or letters to the editor about the issue.
- Advocates met with the Governor’s Office, where staff brought the PNA proposal forward during budget discussions.

These accomplishments matter. Legislative change often requires sustained advocacy over several years. This year’s work helped move the PNA from a problem known primarily by residents and their advocates to an issue receiving broader public and legislative attention.

### What Happens Next?

The campaign is not over.

Ombudsman Programs and statewide partners will continue meeting with legislators, aging and disability organizations, resident advocates, and other stakeholders. The next phase will focus on building a broader coalition, identifying legislative champions, increasing public awareness, and ensuring that residents’ experiences remain at the center of the discussion.

Advocates will also continue seeking not only an immediate increase but a mechanism for future adjustments so the PNA does not remain frozen while the cost of living rises.

Importantly, increasing the PNA would not require nursing homes to absorb the difference. Nursing homes receive a Medicaid rate for eligible residents’ care. When the amount a resident is permitted to retain increases, the corresponding reduction in the resident’s required contribution is covered through the Medicaid payment process.

### How You Can Help

Community members, residents, families, aging-services professionals, and advocates can all help keep this issue moving forward.

Contact your New York State senator and assemblymember and ask them to support an

increase in the PNA during the next legislative and budget cycle. Explain that \$50 per month is not enough to preserve dignity, independence, and meaningful personal choice.

Residents and families can make an especially powerful difference by sharing real examples of what residents must postpone or go without because their allowance is inadequate. Resident councils can also invite elected officials to visit, hear directly from residents, and discuss the issue.

You can support the campaign by signing and sharing the statewide petition at:

<https://forms.office.com/g/urMXCZJy42>

Nursing home residents should not have to choose between a haircut, a new pair of shoes, a birthday card for a grandchild, or an occasional personal treat. Raising the Personal Needs Allowance is a modest but essential step toward ensuring that every resident can continue to live with dignity.

**Questions or interested in helping?** Contact Katherine Lyon, Region 12 Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Coordinator, at **607-274-5437**. The local Long Term Care Ombudsman Program hotline is **607-274-5498**.

# Say Boo to the Flu (and other illnesses too!)

Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself from severe illness.

It is recommended to receive your annual flu vaccine before October 31st.

### Flu Vaccine:

- Everyone age 6 months and older should get the 2026-2027 flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is available now. Contact your local pharmacy to schedule an appointment.
- Everyone age 65+ should get the “high dose” vaccine formulated for seniors.

### COVID-19 Vaccine

- At time of article written (08/2026), the annual updated COVID-19 vaccine release date has not yet been announced. Please contact your healthcare provider, pharmacy, or our office for more information.
- We anticipate updated vaccine will be available in late September - early October.
- COVID-19 vaccines can be

taken at the same time as a flu shot.

### RSV Vaccine

- Everyone age 75 years or older and higher risk adults over age 50 should get the RSV vaccine (consult your healthcare provider).

### Tdap Vaccine

- The Tdap Vaccine, which covers tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough), is recommended for any adult who did not receive the vaccine in childhood.
- A booster of the Tdap Vaccine is recommended for any adult every ten years, especially if you will be around newborns, to protect unvaccinated infants from whooping cough (pertussis).

### Pneumococcal Vaccine

- Protects against pneumococcal disease, including the most common type of bacterial pneumonia.



- Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for all adults age 50 years or older.

### Shingles Vaccine

- Everyone age 50 years and older should receive the two-dose Shingles vaccine.
- More than 99% of adults born before 1980 had Chickenpox, whether they recall having it or not. No screening is necessary to confirm prior chickenpox infection before receiving the Shingles vaccine.
- You should still get

vaccinated even if you have already had shingles, to prevent future occurrences. Wait until the current shingles rash has completely gone away before getting the shot.

Tompkins County Whole Health offers in-home vaccinations to homebound Tompkins County residents. Please call 607-274-6604 to get more information about this service. TCWH also provides free vaccines to those eligible for the NYS Vaccines For Adults program. Visit our website or call our office to learn more: 607-274-6604.

# Protect Yourself from Scams with SilverShield

Scams are on the rise — and Tompkins County Office for the Aging is proud to offer a free tool to help keep our community protected.

SilverShield is a service that helps you identify scams and guides you through exactly what to do next. If you receive a text, email or phone call from someone not saved in your contacts — or anything that just doesn't feel right — send it to

SilverShield first. Even if it looks like it's from your bank, Medicare, or a company you recognize, SilverShield will tell you if it's real or a scam and walk you through exactly what to do next, step by step. No app needed!

**How it works:** Got a message from someone not in your contacts or something that feels off? Just send it to SilverShield one of these ways:

- Text 855-903-3561
  - Email [help@silvershield.ai](mailto:help@silvershield.ai)
  - Chat online at [www.silvershield.ai/chat](http://www.silvershield.ai/chat)
- Free licenses are available for Tompkins County residents through our office — **spots are limited so sign up today!**
- For more information or to get signed up contact the **Tompkins County Office for the Aging** at **607-274-5482**.



## AID

Continued from pg 4

their independent conclusions about the patient's capacity with a copy of the mental health professional's report.

6. If confirmed by the mental health professional, the patient would go back to their primary attending physician, however if capacity is not confirmed, the patient would not qualify for MAID.

7. Per their attending physician's advisement, the patient must then put their request for MAID in writing with two witnesses present.

8. The patient's physician must also discuss with the patient the protocols for taking the medication and counsel them on all of their end-of-life care options including hospice and palliative care. Only after this, can the physician write the prescription. Once written, pharmacies are required to wait five days before filling the prescription

unless the patient's attending physician believes the patient will die within that period.

9. The patient's physician must offer the patient an opportunity to rescind their request for MAID at any time.

10. The patient then will decide if they will take the medication – they must be able to ingest it on their own. No one may administer it to them as this would be a felony.

11. If the patient does not use the medication, the unused medication must be disposed of in accordance to state and federal laws in the same way as controlled substances.

### Other Provisions

- No person is eligible for MAID solely because of age or disability. Patients must have a qualifying terminal illness and decisional capacity to be eligible for MAID.
- It is specified in the law that health insurance companies are prohibited from denying coverage

- for care because a person requests or fails to request a MAID prescription.
- Additionally, to protect against any coercion, a list of people who cannot serve as a witness to a patient who requests MAID is listed and includes: the attending physician; the consulting physician; the mental health professional providing the decision-making capacity determination; an owner, operator, employee, or independent contractor of a health care facility the patient's domestic partner; health care proxy; relative by blood, marriage, or adoption; or anyone who has power of attorney for the patient or who may benefit financially from the death of the patient.
  - Similar to other states' laws, it is up to the attending physician to determine the aid in-dying medication to be prescribed. Typically, MAID medications are made at compounding pharmacies.
  - The American Clinicians Academy issued a recommended aid-in-dying pharmacology on April 16, 2024 which can be found [here](#).

- The NYS Department of Health will be issuing regulations required for implementation of the law and develop health literate and culturally appropriate educational material regarding hospice and palliative care.
- The Academy of Aid-in-Dying Medicine has also created free Aid-in-Dying Care Courses for those interested in additional training noting though there is a charge for Continuing Medical Education.
- The NYS bill is modeled after the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, which has had no documented or substantiated incidents of abuse or coercion since it was first implemented in 1997, over 25 years ago. 12 other states and D.C. have authorized MAID.
- Any violation of the law is defined as professional misconduct under the Education Law and would be subject to applicable criminal liability under state law.

[MedicalAidinDyingSummary.pdf](#)  
<https://www.nysafp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/MedicalAidinDyingSummary.pdf>



**The TCE program gives you an opportunity to learn while providing a much-needed service to highly appreciative individuals in our local community during the annual tax season.**

Training and support are provided, and volunteers work collaboratively to support each other and the taxpayers.

What are the best things about working with the program?

- Interaction with and appreciation from clients
- Support and camaraderie with your fellow volunteers
- Problem solving satisfaction
- Increased understanding of many of the challenges faced by seniors in our community

Are you comfortable with numbers? Would you like to better understand basic tax issues? Are you looking for an opportunity with a finite timeline? Do you have basic computer skills? Think about joining us as a preparer.

Not sure you're comfortable preparing tax returns? Volunteers also welcome people to the tax clinics, help them get ready to meet with a preparer, and provide other supports to the program.

*"I've even had people hug me because their refund was going to make something important happen for their family."*

Think you might be interested in joining us? Let's talk about it. Email [TCELifelong@gmail.com](mailto:TCELifelong@gmail.com) or call 607-273-1511 and leave your name and phone number. We will get back to you.

*Certified and grant funded by the Internal Revenue Service with additional support from Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Park Foundation, and Lifelong*





Lifelong's

**MEDICARE**  
**BASICS**

A virtual presentation

[Link: https://tinyurl.com/MCBasicsFall2026](https://tinyurl.com/MCBasicsFall2026)

**Learn the essentials of Medicare & how it works for you!**

*Topics We'll Cover:*

- What Medicare is and who is eligible
- The different ways in which to receive your Medicare benefits
- How Medicare works with other health insurance
- Financial assistance programs that may be available
- Tips to help you become an informed healthcare consumer
- How to advocate for yourself when making healthcare decisions

**Presented by:**  
**Liza Burger**  
Executive Director of Lifelong  
Certified HICAP\* Counselor

*\*Health Insurance Information, Counseling, & Assistance Program*



**Need more help after the presentation?**

- Free, unbiased 1:1 Medicare counseling available
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- Appointments are also available at TCOFA by calling 274-5482



# A Line from our Executive Director, Liza Burger

Hello Lifelong Friends and Community Members,  
As we head into fall, I'm reminded of what makes Lifelong such a special place: clearly it's the people! Whether you're attending a class, volunteering your time, sharing your expertise as an instructor, or simply stopping by to connect with friends, you help create the welcoming and vibrant community that Lifelong is known for.  
This is one of my favorite times of year because it marks the start of a new season of lifelong learning. As I write this, our [Fall Catalog](#) is now available online, and printed copies are on their way to current members and available at Lifelong. Our team is excited about the wide variety of programs planned for the months ahead, and we're grateful to everyone

who participated in our recent Health & Wellness and Lifelong Learning survey. Your feedback helps us develop programs that reflect the interests, goals, and evolving needs of our community.  
Fall also means that Medicare Open Enrollment is right around the corner. Our dedicated HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling & Assistance Program) volunteers have been hard at work completing training and certification requirements so they're ready to provide trusted, unbiased guidance. Choosing healthcare coverage can feel overwhelming, and we're proud to offer support that helps people make informed decisions with confidence. Be sure to check out our upcoming Medicare walk-in clinics. They're a great opportunity to review your

options once Open Enrollment begins on October 15.  
We're also continuing to invest in the spaces that bring our community together. Recent improvements, including outdoor lighting and updated furnishings are helping make Lifelong safer, more comfortable, and more welcoming for everyone who walks through our doors. These projects may happen behind the scenes, but they play an important role in ensuring that Lifelong remains a community asset for years to come.  
This season has also brought exciting developments in organizational leadership. We are pleased to welcome new members to Lifelong's Board of Directors and grateful for the dedication of those who continue to serve. Their leadership, experience, and commitment help guide our

organization as we plan for the future and continue responding to the needs of our community.  
Behind the scenes, our staff team has been focused on strengthening Lifelong through professional development, technology improvements, and continued work on our strategic priorities. While much of this work isn't always visible, it helps ensure that we're well-positioned to meet new opportunities, navigate challenges, and continue delivering meaningful programs and services.  
Thank you for being part of the Lifelong community. Your participation, support, and enthusiasm are what make this organization thrive. We look forward to learning, connecting, and growing together this fall!  
**With gratitude,**  
**Liza Burger**  
**Executive Director, Lifelong**

## Fall in Love with Learning: Lifelong Drops Its New Autumn Lineup!

Ready to shake off the summer heat and jump into something new? Lifelong, Ithaca's ultimate social and learning hub for adults 50+, is officially rolling out a jam-packed fall semester catalog bursting with creative and educational classes, empowering fitness programs, uplifting support groups, and fantastic social events.  
The autumn adventures officially kicked off with a sweet celebration at Lifelong's annual Ice Cream Social and Catalog Launch on August 26, where members, instructors, staff, and guests scooped up their favorite flavors, met new friends, and learned about the new Fall Catalog dedicated to learning, laughing, and staying strong and active.

**Class Highlights**  
• **Clay Studio:** Unwind, get your hands dirty, and bring your clay projects to life! Various sessions run September 3 – December 17 at 10:00 a.m., \$60 - \$80 includes all materials and firing.  
• **[Celebrate Your Inner Child at Any Age:](#)** What does it mean to find and celebrate your inner child? What would that feel like? Join us for this fun and provocative workshop! Thursday, September 17 at 9:45 a.m., \$10  
• **[America at 250:](#)** Explore the pivotal moments that shaped the nation! This course traces the American journey from the Revolution and early continental expansion to the Civil War and examines 20th century milestones. Fridays,

September 18 – November 6, 1:00 p.m., \$40/series, \$10/drop in  
• **[Spirited Aging:](#)** As we age, we seem to become more focused on our bodies and minds, but what about our spirit, our spark, our light? Wednesday, September 30 at 10:00 a.m., \$10  
• **[Branches of Time:](#)**  
**Researching Your Family Tree:** Genealogy is a journey with many visits and revisits. Learn where to begin, how to follow the clues, how to identify the best resources and websites, and how to keep records. Wednesdays, October 7 – November 11, 1:30 p.m., \$40  
• **[Muscles Don't Retire:](#)**  
**The Power of Protein for Healthy Aging:** Join us to learn why protein is important as we age, and discover simple ways to keep your muscles strong, support energy, and help maintain your independence. Thursday, October 22 at 11:00 a.m., FREE  
• **[Get Empowered: Embrace Your Mental Well-Being:](#)** This

age-friendly workshop series is designed to increase your understanding of mental health concerns and provide knowledge on treatment and support options. Mondays, October 26 – November 9, 1:30 p.m., FREE and Lifelong membership not required  
This semester, you'll find over 50 dynamic classes and events, alongside a diverse selection of social groups that include Group Writing and conversational German, Spanish, and Hungarian sessions. Lifelong also provides dedicated support groups designed to comfort and guide individuals navigating grief or managing chronic illnesses, health and wellness activities to keep active with balance, tai chi, and movement, and private one-one-one tech support sessions.  
Registration is officially open for our fall lineup, designed to inspire learning, fitness, and connection. Click here to explore more: [Lifelong Fall Catalog](#)



**Buying a gift card to pay someone?**

**STOP. It's a scam!**

**Gift cards are for gifts.**

Do NOT use a gift card to pay: the IRS or Social Security, tech support, a family member in trouble, ransom or to avoid arrest or deportation, a member of the military, or to keep your utilities on.

Report gift card scams at: **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**



### Lifelong Closures

September 7 – Labor Day  
October 12 - Indigenous Peoples' Day  
November 26-27 - Thanksgiving  
December 24- January 1 - Winter holiday break

Note: Lifelong's on and off-site programs are cancelled when the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) is closed due to weather. If ICSD has a delayed opening due to weather, Lifelong will cancel all programs scheduled before noon. Any weather-related closures will be announced by 7:30am on Lifelong's website ([www.tclifelong.org](http://www.tclifelong.org)) or facebook page.

# CAREGIVER’S

Continued from pg 3

“They are numb,” he says. “They have no time to go to the spa or have lunch with a friend.”

This is when family caregivers should consider looking back to their own pasts. “You need to rediscover what you used to love — and do it now,” she says.

Maybe you used to love quilting. Perhaps you used to enjoy painting with watercolors. Or maybe you still have the flute, French horn, or violin that you used to play.

“You have to have something left of who you are,” says Baher.

## 5. Find time to vent

Family caregivers know better than most that problems tend to come in bunches. Perhaps, for example, your loved one soiled the bed and when you tried to move them to change the sheets, you hurt your back. With your back aching, you’re suddenly uncomfortable helping them into their wheelchair and pushing them outside for a walk. So now everyone is unhappy.

“Negative things come in multiples some days,” says Baher.

First, she says, you can only solve one problem at a time. Once you solve one problem, she says, it’s incredible how the others can seem more minor or even start to solve themselves.

Even then, it’s important to vent your frustration privately. Baher knows of one family caregiver whose favorite way to vent is to step into her car, close the door, bang on the steering wheel and shout. No one hears

her, but it helps her feel better.

## 6. Know your loved one’s wishes for your peace of mind

Perhaps nowhere is it more difficult to be a family caregiver than in the hospital emergency room. The toughest days for many caregivers involve moments when they are suddenly faced with making life-or-death decisions for their loved one without knowing their true wishes.

Whenever possible, it’s always best to find out (and write down) your loved one’s wishes about medical treatment before an emergency happens, says Lynn McNicoll, director of education for the Division of Geriatrics and associate professor of medicine at Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

If you are unaware of what your loved one wants, “the stress can be exponential, she says. “Second-guessing can be difficult.”

McNicoll says the best place to have this conversation is with their primary care doctor so that everything can be documented and the caregiver can have peace of mind.

## 7. Gravitate toward positive people

Particularly difficult days can also be influenced by the company you keep.

McNicoll says that as a family caregiver, you want to surround yourself with people who provide support. It’s difficult to comfort your loved one if you are not receiving a similar sense of comfort from compassionate family, friends, or professionals.

“If you are having a

particularly difficult day, try not to interact with those who are negative,” she says. “Stay focused on what’s positive.’

## 8. Unburden by journaling

On those really rough days, writing down your feelings can bring an unexpected sense of comfort, says Judith Henry, a caregiving expert and author of Dutiful Daughter’s Guide to Caregiving.

It doesn’t matter if you use a pencil, pen, typewriter, or laptop. Heck, you can even write or record your feelings on your cellphone. “Writing allows you to express your emotions on paper rather than at people,” says Henry.

Journaling can also help loving caregivers clarify their own feelings and determine the next steps in care.

For Henry, who provided care for both parents, journaling also helped her deal with harder feelings like anger and resentment. “This is about getting the jumble of thoughts in your head out of your head.”

## 9. Create a list of accomplishments

The frustration of being a family caregiver can multiply when your to-do list gets too long. Henry says adding more items to this list for your loved one will likely make you feel even worse and unaccomplished.

So, try this instead: Create a list of your caregiving accomplishments, suggests Henry. This list should mention all of the things you’ve managed to juggle as a caregiver for your spouse or parent, even small things like grocery shopping or getting to a doctor’s appointment.

If you’ve done the list accurately, the sheer number of impressive accomplishments on it might blow you away.

“When you see this list, you will be amazed at what you are achieving under difficult circumstances,” says Henry.

## 10. Stop chasing perfection

Too often, caregivers are at their wits’ end because they feel it is somehow their duty to respond perfectly to the needs of their loved ones.

“Ban the word ‘perfect’ from your vocabulary,” says Henry. Not only is it unachievable, but constantly striving for it can make caregivers sick.

“You will be constantly dealing with flawed institutions, flawed practices, flawed people, and situations where there is no easy answer,” says Henry. “So, perfection is an unreasonable expectation for yourself and for your loved one.”

She suggests substituting the word “acceptable” for “perfect.” Sometimes, she says,

“Acceptable is as good as it gets.”

## 11. Schedule specific times for self-care

The most challenging days may feel a lot less rough if you have pre-scheduled time for self-care that day and every day, says Gallagher-Thompson. The minimum, she says, is at least four times every day.

“It’s a buffer against the ups and downs of caregiving,” she says.

Gallagher-Thompson says the key is to spread short self-care breaks throughout the day. It’s also important to mix them up a bit instead of always doing the same thing during your breaks. This can be a walk to the neighborhood store instead of a drive, or it can be 10 to 15 minutes in a quiet place reading a chapter in a book.

Early morning self-care often works best for many caregivers because it might afford them a bit more time to feel more in control of their lives, says Baher. She calls these self-care breaks “minute mood hacks.”

She suggests setting a clock or kitchen timer for 10 or 15 minutes so you don’t have to keep track of time while taking your break. “This allows your brain to run free,” she says.

## 12. Reject codependency

Sometimes, we set ourselves up for our toughest days by allowing codependency to rule. This can occur when the person we care for tells us we are the only ones who can properly care for them, says Henry. We take these words to heart and believe them to be true.

“I wanted to be the good daughter who knew what to do in every situation,” she says. “You come to feel as if you are the one only who can make everything OK.” But of course, that’s not true, she notes.

Yes, you can feel proud that your loved one might feel that you are the only person who can help them through everything, says Henry. But it’s important that you know, in your heart, there are times you simply can’t make things right or can’t be there to help them. Accept that some things are out of your control, and you will probably have fewer “toughest days.”

*Bruce Horovitz is a contributing writer who covers personal finance and caregiving. He previously wrote for The Los Angeles Times and USA Today. Horovitz regularly writes for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Investor’s Business Daily, AARP The Magazine, AARP Bulletin, Kaiser Health News and PBS’s Next Avenue.*



# FALL SALE

## Begins

### Saturday, Oct 10!

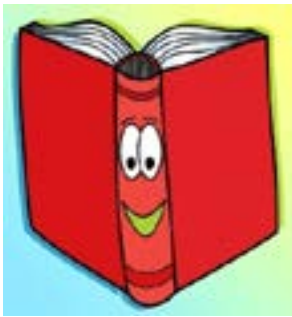
**Sat-Mon, Oct 10\*-12**  
**Sat-Mon, Oct 17-19**  
**Sat-Tues, Oct 24-27**  
*\*First Day, 10/10 Only: 8am-8pm*  
*All Other Days: 10am-8pm*

**Senior Day: Wed, Oct 21**  
*10am-4pm for older adults (60+)*  
*& anyone with a disability*

**509 Esty St, Ithaca**  
**www.booksale.org**  
**607-272-2223**

Page 8

Vital Connections • Fall 2026



# Lifelong Library News

## Fall 2026

One of the most important categories in our lending library, is that of Self-Care. In the later stages of our lives, much thought is devoted to this subject. The collection contains a variety of books offering information that support the good health of our body, mind, and spirit. Included are world-renowned authors, such as:

Wayne Dyer - “Being in Balance” & “Wishes Fulfilled”

Dr. Andrew Weil - “Spontaneous Healing”  
Louise Hay - “You Can Heal Your Life”

There are also books that address the physical challenges of high-blood pressure, prostate cancer, manic depression, menopause, dementia, osteoarthritis, and Parkinson’s disease.

AARP has published several helpful checklists that may be of

interest:

- “Checklist for Family Survivors - A Guide to Practical and Legal Matters”
- “Checklist for My Family - A Guide to My History, Financial Plans, and Final Wishes”
- “Checklist for Family Caregivers - A Guide to Making It Manageable”

And, finally, I would like to mention the uplifting book,

“Younger Next Year,” which is said to be brain-rattling, irresistible, and hilarious, as it outlines how to live strong, fit, sexy, and smart until you’re 80 and beyond!

So, make some time to peruse our library stacks in the lounge. Members are encouraged to take out books and return within 30 days, so others may enjoy them. Thanks!

Marie Benedetti, Library Monitor

## Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) & Medicare Open Enrollment

During Medicare’s Open Enrollment Period, October 15th to December 7th, Lifelong is offering free walk-in clinics to speak with a certified Medicare counselor one-on-one to help you explore options for the upcoming year and decide which healthcare options are best for you (See flyer for specific dates). This period allows individuals to change their Prescription Drug Plan (Part D) or their Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C), or switch to Original Medicare. All changes

made during the Open Enrollment period are effective January 1st of the following year. Plan costs and coverage often change annually, so this period is a chance for you to review your options and select the coverage that best fits your needs for the upcoming year.

Every year HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program) at Lifelong prepares a spreadsheet with up-to-date information regarding Medicare Advantage

plans available in Tompkins County. The spreadsheet for Medicare Advantage plans and a list of stand-alone Part D drug plans will be available after October 15th, both at Lifelong and Tompkins County Office for the Aging. Staff at both locations also provide free, non-biased Medicare counseling face-to-face, by zoom, or over the telephone. If you would like to schedule an appointment, have questions, or are new to Medicare and want to learn how

to apply or what your options are, you can speak with a HIICAP counselor by calling Lifelong (607) 273-1511 or Tompkins County Office for the Aging (607) 274-5482. We look forward to assisting you with your insurance needs.

Lifelong is located at 119 W Court St., and Tompkins County Office for Aging is located at 31 Dutch Mill Rd. in Ithaca. HIICAP is supported by funds from the Office for the Aging.

## The Friends We Never Expected

How connections across generations can enrich our lives at every age

Picture a retiree teaching a young professional how to grow tomatoes, while learning from that same friend how to navigate the latest smartphone app. At first glance, they may seem unlikely companions. Yet friendships like these are becoming some of the most rewarding relationships people experience.

According to insights highlighted by AARP Research, friendships that

span generations offer benefits that go far beyond pleasant conversation. They can provide companionship, broaden perspectives, and create opportunities for mutual learning. In a world where people are often grouped by age, intergenerational friendships help build bridges that might otherwise never exist.

For adults over 50, younger friends can bring fresh energy and new viewpoints.

Conversations may introduce unfamiliar technologies, cultural trends, and different approaches to life’s challenges. These relationships can help keep us engaged with a rapidly changing world while reminding us that curiosity does not have an expiration date.

The benefits are just as meaningful for younger adults. Many value the wisdom, perspective, and practical advice that older friends provide. Lessons learned through decades of experience often cannot be found online or in a classroom. Whether discussing careers, family relationships, finances, or resilience, older adults possess knowledge that younger generations genuinely appreciate.

Intergenerational friendships are often formed naturally. Volunteer organizations, community programs, book clubs, faith communities, fitness classes, neighborhood groups, and lifelong learning programs all create opportunities for people of different ages to connect. A shared interest can quickly become the foundation for a lasting friendship.

The lesson is simple: some of life’s hidden gems are the friendships we never expected to have. By remaining open to friendships across generations, we gain new perspectives, strengthen our communities, and enrich our own lives in the process.

Perhaps most important, these friendships can combat loneliness and social isolation. Meaningful relationships contribute to well-being and a stronger sense of belonging. When people expand their circles beyond their own age group, they often discover common interests that matter far more than the number of candles on a birthday cake.

**Source and Attribution**

This original article was inspired by AARP Research’s data story, “Intergenerational Friendships: The Hidden Gems” (June 2026). It is not a reproduction of the AARP publication. Readers can access the original resource at <https://datastories.aarp.org/social-leisure/relationships/intergenerational-friendships/>.



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BOSANKO

Continued from pg 1

increase the range of classes available and accessible to older adults. Who taught those fitness classes and who took on the task of making Lifelong a better resource for its members? Deb Bosanko.

Having recently (1997) completed her second Master’s degree in Recreation with a Recreational Therapy focus at SUNY Cortland, Deb felt that Lifelong aligned perfectly with her vision of helping seniors. Her ambition had been to be an Activities Director in a senior residence, but when she saw the depth and breadth of the impact that Lifelong could have throughout the community, she turned down an offer at a regional senior home and, in addition to already teaching fitness, became the first Lifelong Program Director. Under her leadership, existing clay, watercolor, and a few other classes were expanded to include language classes, current affairs, Shakespeare, classes introducing different cultures, and a six-station

computer lab. One of Deb’s proudest accomplishments from that time was obtaining six full licenses and a golf game donated completely free of charge from Microsoft!

Her pathway to Lifelong wasn’t exactly straightforward. Quintessentially Midwestern (remember those cornflower blue eyes and warm smile?), Deb hails from Minnesota, fourth child in a family of two boys and three girls. Her love for her family is evident in her favorite movie choice – Lily Tomlin and Steve Martin’s “All of Me,” a film chosen because of its humor and because it brings back memories of watching it with her mother and siblings. In high school she sang in the choir and began her love affair with martial arts, studying taekwondo as a junior. (Currently, she’s a fourth degree black belt in Seido Karate, teaching and taking multiple classes at the dojo every week.) Intending to do research in juvenile justice, she obtained a BA with a double major in psychology and criminology at the University Minnesota (Duluth) followed by an MA in Applied Sociology at the University of Iowa. In 1990,

after many years of working for a variety of organizations in the field of all things data related, she found herself working for Cornell. Shortly thereafter, she realized that this wasn’t what she wanted to spend the rest of her working life doing, and decided to dedicate herself to movement and exercise as a means to mental, emotional, and physical health, especially for older adults.

Dedication indeed. Currently, Deb teaches 14 classes a week at a variety of places, teaching those ages 5 through over seventy. These classes include Strength Training at Lifelong (supplemented with a daily sheet of jokes), Hatha yoga, Karate, Rock Steady Boxing, and an exercise class for people with Parkinson’s, as well as personal training sessions with private clients. She’s also a skilled quilter and small project seamstress (her creative curiosity takes flight here!), walks every day, and grows a huge volume of tomatoes and other veggies in her backyard. She used to sing in a women’s barbershop quartet and choir in Trumansburg, but the cuteness of her then infant son who accompanied her to

rehearsals proved to be too much of a distraction for other choir members. Taking pity on them, she left the group so that they could focus on the music. She met her husband Pete at the iconic Rongovian Embassy in 1991, has two sons (Ryan, an electrical engineer with an MA in biomechanical engineering, and Grady, a computer engineer with a minor in neuroscience) and a step-daughter (Kiley, a data analyst).

Deb Bosanko helped shape Lifelong into what it is today, enriching the lives of people who might not otherwise have access to programs and connections with others. Even after decades with Lifelong, she continues to work towards improving the quality of the lives of the older adults in Tomkins County. When asked what she thinks the next steps for the organization might be, she says she would like to see early evening and weekend classes, a larger venue, and an increase in the diversity of the membership. Lifelong is fortunate to have people like Deb Bosanko keeping us vibrant, relevant, and growing!

GENERATIONS

Continued from pg 1

computer calendar that our meetings would be every Thursday, along with emailing him the day before I came. After a few weeks of this routine, he started not only to remember us meeting the week prior but also information about me. Now, instead of asking what I wanted to do with my life, he

would ask me if I still intended to pursue a career in law. He still had little recollection of most of what we talked about, but it was clear what mattered most stayed with him.

Just as he was in our first email exchange my freshman year, Henry could be excessively negative at times. He often told me he felt bad that I was so young, given the current state of affairs, and that he

**What a volunteer may mean to you:**  
Companionship, conversation, laughter, friendship, help and more....  
[Click here to request a volunteer](#)

Project CARE-Project Generations is a free friendly visiting program for Tompkins County adults aged 60 and above. For more information or to enroll in the program via phone or email:  
Contact Dawn Sprague, Project CARE Coordinator  
dsprague@tompkins-co.org or call 607-274-5499

took some comfort in knowing he had already lived through most of his years. Yet, as I spent more time with him, I noticed his disposition towards life was slowly turning more positive. He now told me that not only did he think he could live longer, but that he wanted to. Besides his sister who brought him groceries, I was the only person that had shown genuine interest in his life in years, which I believe contributed to his more positive outlook.

At the last meeting with Henry before I left Ithaca for the summer, I felt remorseful that I had to go. I feared that with so much time in between visits; he would forget that there was a friend out there that cared about him and return to his previous self. To try and address this, I now send him regular emails checking in on how his life is going. In one of the emails, I even attached a photo of us together so he would have something tangible to remember me by.

Through my time with Henry, I got first-hand experience with the loneliness epidemic amongst older people. Seeing Henry in such a sedentary state, living life on autopilot, I truly realized the importance of the program’s mission. Now, I am more committed than ever to use my position as President of Project Generations to

bring companionship to as many older adults as I can. Volunteering also prompted me to reflect on deeper questions on life and remembrance. I came to understand that experiences don’t exist only in our memories, but also in the joy we feel while living them in the moment. Even if Henry forgot most of our time together, the way his face lit up when I opened the door and engaged in meaningful conversation certainly counted for something.

Overall, the time I’ve spent with Henry has been valuable to me in ways I never imagined. While I went into this volunteer role hoping to impact the life of an older adult, the lessons I learned have made a difference in my life as well. Once hesitant about working with someone with memory issues, I now look forward to opening Henry’s door again this fall.

Note: The name of the older adult in the article has been changed for confidentiality.

*Project Generations aims to bridge the gap between the student and the aging population by matching students to older adults in the Ithaca community. Through a weekly, one-on-one volunteer visit, Project Generations allows students to build close meaningful bonds to lessen feelings of loneliness in the aging population.*

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140 Seneca Way,  
Ithaca, NY

# Travel with Collette and Lifelong late in 2027

PLAN AHEAD to join Lifelong and Collette Tours on one of the amazing upcoming trips offered in 2027! Take the stress out of travel and let us take care of the details. Travelers are picked up and returned to Lifelong - all you need to do is pack! Current Lifelong members receive a \$100 discount per person on these trips.

Have another destination in mind through Collette but not shown here? *Feel free to reach out to Lifelong and we can set up a trip just for you!* <mailto:lbarger@tclifelong.org>

Join Collette at Lifelong on September 9th, 11am-12:30pm to learn more about trips to: Ireland (June 2027), Magical Rhine and Moselle Rivers (September 2027) and a Greece Island-Hopper (yet to be released!) trip (October 2027). [Please register to attend if possible.](#)

## Discover South Pacific Wonders-New Zealand & Australia

January  
26-February 9, 2027  
15 days and 22 meals  
Christchurch,  
Queenstown,  
Lake Wakatipu  
Cruise & Sheepdog  
Demonstration,  
Milford Sound,  
Cairns, Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Opera House



For more information and to register: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1326446>

## Treasures of Egypt

February 25- March 9, 2027  
13 days and 28 meals  
Pyramids of Giza,  
Great Sphinx, 7-Night Nile River Cruise,  
Luxor, Temple of Karnak, Valley of the Kings, Queen Hatshepsut Temple,  
Kom Ombo, Aswan, Philae Temple



For more information and to register: <https://groups.gocollette.com/en-US/link/1326449>

## Shades of Ireland

June 3- June 12, 2027 10 days and 13 meals

Dublin, Irish Dinner & Entertainment, Blarney Castle, Brewery Experience, Jaunting Car Ride, Ring of Kerry, Cliffs of Moher, Sheepdog Demonstration, Castle Stay



For more information and to register: <https://groups.gocollette.com/en-US/link/1422991>

See TRAVEL on pg 12



## 2026 Medicare Open Enrollment Walk-In Clinics

Annual Election Period at Lifelong  
119 West Court Street, Ithaca



Ask questions about Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans, Medigap, and coordination of benefits. Explore ways to save money on premiums and medications. Compare options and select the best match for YOU!

Certified HIICAP counselors offer **free**, non-biased 1:1 health insurance counseling on a first-come, first-serve basis, on the following clinic dates:

**Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup> 9 am – 12 pm**  
**Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> 9 am - 12 pm**  
**Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> 9 am - 12 pm**  
**Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> 9 am – 12 pm**

Limited scheduled appointments also available on the following dates:  
10/15, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 11/11, 11/18, 11/25, 12/2, & 12/3

**Call Lifelong at 273-1511 for more information**

### Please bring the following with you:

- \* Your Medicare card
- \* Any other health insurance cards or information
- \* List of your prescriptions, dosages/frequency
- \* Documentation of monthly or annual income

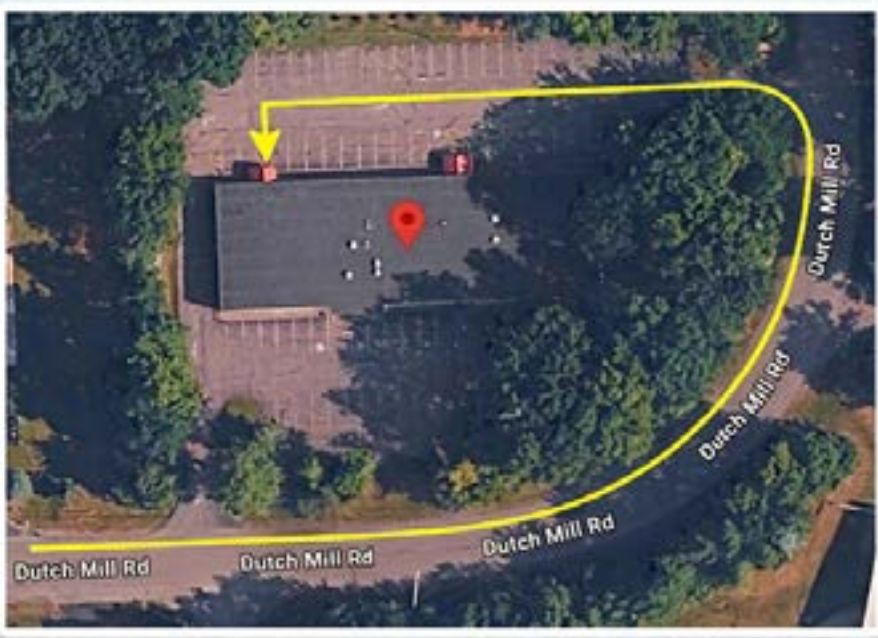
Tompkin's County HIICAP is funded by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging



**TOMPKINS COUNTY  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING**  
*Aging Better, Together*

**Welcome to Our New Location!**  
**31 Dutch Mill Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850**

- **Parking:** Enter the parking lot behind the building
- **Entrance:** Walk in through the second door on your left



Dutch Mill Rd

**SCC MEDQR**

We are excited to introduce a groundbreaking technology that is revolutionizing how we can access vital personal information in case of emergencies - SCC MedQR. This innovative wearable QR code wristband technology is designed to provide quick and easy access to important medical and contact information when it matters most.



NO APP REQUIRED—JUST UTILIZE ANY CELL PHONE CAMERA. EACH WRISTBAND FEATURES AN ENCRYPTED ALPHANUMERIC CODE FOR EXCLUSIVE INDIVIDUAL ACCESS. WITH INFORMATION EXPIRING AFTER FIVE MINUTES. IN CASE OF SCANNING, EMERGENCY CONTACTS RECEIVE AN EMAIL NOTIFICATION. SECURITY MEASURES ENSURE SCANNING REQUIRES PROXIMITY TO THE QR CODE. UPDATE INFORMATION EASILY VIA THE WEBSITE. WATER RESISTANT AND SECURELY STORED INFORMATION. WITH A STRICT NO-INFORMATION-SELLING POLICY AND NO MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTIONS.



**BENEFITS OF SCC MEDQR**

- **Instant Access to Vital Information:** Ensure that your important medical details are readily available to healthcare providers in case of an emergency.
- **Peace of Mind:** Feel secure knowing that your essential information is easily accessible when you need it most.
- **User-Friendly:** The QR code technology is simple and easy to use, making it accessible for individuals of all ages.

**WHAT IS SCC MEDQR?**

SCC MedQR is a wearable wristband that contains a QR code linked to a secure online profile where individuals can store essential personal information such as: existing medical conditions, prior surgeries, allergies, medications, emergency contacts, and more. In the event of an emergency, first responders or medical personnel can scan the QR code using a smartphone to quickly access this critical information.

**HOW DO YOU GET YOUR SCC WRISTBAND ?**

To obtain your own SCC MedQR wristband, please contact the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. We believe that this technology has the potential to greatly improve emergency response times and enhance the safety and well-being of our community members.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to prioritize your health and safety with SCC MedQR!

[SCCRESOURCE.COM](https://SCCRESOURCE.COM)

**Tompkins County  
Office for the Aging**

**607-274-5482**

TRAVEL

Continued from pg 11

Magical Rhine and Moselle Rivers

Sept. 14-22, 2027 9 days and 20 meals  
Amsterdam, 7-Night River Cruise, Rhine and Moselle Rivers, Cologne, Cochem, Lorelei Passage, Speyer, Strasbourg, Breisach, Freiburg  
For more information and to register: <https://groups.gocollette.com/en-US/link/1268107>



Greece Island Hopper Tour

October 15-25, 2027  
11 days and 14 meals  
Acropolis of Athens & The Parthenon; Taverna Dinner Show; Mykonos Old Town; Santorini Island, Oia Village, Ancient Akrotiri; Wine Tasting  
For more information and to register: <https://groups.gocollette.com/en-US/link/1422930>



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**TOMPKINS COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING**

**2026 ANNUAL SENIOR LIVING EXPO**

Community Vendors  
Mobility Screenings

*Convo With COFA: What does COFA do?*  
*Panel discussion with COFA staff*

**SEPTEMBER 29**  
**2:00PM - 5:00PM**

**HOTEL ITHACA**  
**222 S CAYUGA ST**

**MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!**

**Guthrie Primary Care**

**Personalized Care for You**

At Guthrie primary care, we understand that your health is your greatest asset. Our experienced and compassionate team of physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs) work closely together to provide personalized care tailored to your needs.

Trust in our team to bring you reliable, comprehensive care. To schedule an appointment with Guthrie Primary Care, visit us online at [www.Guthrie.org](http://www.Guthrie.org) or call **866-GUTHRIE** (866-488-4743).

**Lifelong & The National Council on Aging Present:**

**OPEN TO PUBLIC**

**Get Empowered: Embrace Your Mental Well-Being**

**A FREE Workshop Series for Older Adults**

**MODULE 1:**  
**MENTAL WELL-BEING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**MODULE 2:**  
**TIPS & STRATEGIES TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE ABOUT MENTAL WELL-BEING**

**MODULE 3:**  
**UTILIZING SELF-CARE STRATEGIES TO EMPOWER YOUR MENTAL WELL-BEING**

Do you often feel sad, anxious, or overwhelmed? This workshop is designed to increase your understanding of mental health concerns and provide knowledge on treatment and support options. Learn age-friendly strategies for navigating life transitions and protecting your peace of mind in a safe, supportive setting.

**JOIN US FOR THIS FREE 3-PART SERIES!**  
**Mondays 10/26, 11/2, 11/9 | 1:30 - 3 p.m.**

Instructors | Susan Weiner & Sam Swartz  
Registration required. Maximum 20

**Stronger Together!**

GET FIT. FEEL GREAT. BE STRONG.

Join live exercise classes **designed for older adults** - completely **FREE!**

**FREE**

To participate, you just need:

LAPTOP/TABLET

INTERNET

- Fun, safe workouts that **you can join from home**
- Improve your **strength, balance, and mobility**
- **Personalized attention** from expert instructors
- Connect with others in a **welcoming community**

Register for small group classes at:  
<https://partner.teamvivo.com/vivo-ny-aaa>

Register for large group, follow along classes online at:  
<https://partner.teamvivo.com/ny-group-class>

Questions? Call the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482