



TOMPKINS COUNTY  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

*Aging Better, Together*



*Spring 2021*

*Vol. 40*

## ***In Support of Caregivers***

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

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# Local Caregiver Support Services

Caregiver's Resource Center & Project Care Services

*Tompkins County Office for the Aging*

Amy Jackson 274-5486

Dawn Sprague 274-5499

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

Volunteers with ***Project CARE*** offer caregivers a needed break and help in other ways as needed. We may also be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call Dawn to discuss your needs.

## **Caregiver Counseling**

*Family and Children's Services*

Ann Dolan 273-7494

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers periodically in her office to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. Special circumstances may be considered for in-home service. No charge. Donations accepted.

## **Adult Day Program**

**There may be changes to this program due to COVID-19**

*Longview Adult Day Community*

Monday through Friday, 9am-3pm

Pamela Nardi 375-6323

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: \$60/day includes lunch and snack.

# Support Groups



**Most Support Groups are still meeting virtually.**

## **Family Caregiver Support Group**

**Every Tuesday at 11 am** online via Zoom, offered by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. To register or for more information call Amy at 274-5486.

## **Caregiver Support Group**

**Last Thursday of every month at 5:30pm** online via Zoom through Brookdale Ithaca. For more information contact Lisa at 607-246-5094.

## **Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups**

**1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm** online via Zoom. For information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900.

**3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30 pm** online via Zoom through Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 607-756-8101 for information.

## **Cancer Caregiver Group**

**2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00pm** 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.

### **Eligibility:**

**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 or aides listed with the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) through FLIC's Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP).

# 16 Ideas for Recharging Your Caregiving Energy in 15 Minutes

## A realistic guide to self-care during the pandemic

by Lee Woodruff, [AARP](#), February 17, 2021

When I was actively caring for my husband during his recovery from a brain injury, there was one simple phrase that could instantly light my tail feathers on fire: "Be sure to take care of yourself." Boom. That was it.

Every caregiver has heard some version of that advice from well-meaning friends and family. And every caregiver has probably done what I did: smile politely, nod and think, *Easier said than done*.

The global coronavirus pandemic has strained the bonds and boundaries of people going about their daily lives. But for caregivers, the ensuing quarantine has made once-simple things, like having a friend spell you for a few hours of respite, either incredibly complex or prohibitive.

Carrie Barron, M.D., director of creativity for resilience at Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin, points out that even 15 minutes of focusing on yourself can make a difference. "It's less about the time spent and more about staying connected to life-affirming experiences," Barron explains. "Compassionate caregivers are altruists, whether their actions are driven by love or a sense of obligation. So it's normal to feel a twinge of guilt if we duck out or slip away from our caregiving duty to take time for ourselves."

But Barron suggests that what feels like a lapse actually gives you a leg up in the role of tending to others. "A lift from an activity we enjoy reenergizes, motivates and grounds us. It connects us to our core identity and gives us a sense of pleasure and effectiveness. Whether it's a brisk walk or a few more rows on a knitted scarf, a beloved activity enhances both mental and physical health. Being transported for a brief period gives us the strength to keep going and keep giving."

Sara Cohen, a potter in Chicago, has been married for 52 years. When her husband developed a rare autoimmune disease requiring hospitalization, she was determined to be by his side 24/7.

No longer able to spend all day in her studio, Cohen found small ways to recharge — going to the synagogue, running errands or taking a solo walk. She was also able to arrange some kind of coverage, from a friend or companion, so that she could attend her monthly book group and mah-jongg dates. When all of that stopped with the COVID-19 pandemic, Cohen needed to find different ways to stay centered and access "me time."

"We keep a jigsaw puzzle in progress on the table each week that either one or both of us can work on," she says. "I love being in nature, and it calms me to walk around our backyard, which is full of gardens we have spent years designing and planting. I pick up leaves, fallen branches, and I pull weeds." She also emails friends and family pictures of a weekly art creation, which gives her "a creativity goal" each week. "Depending on my week, I may spend 15 minutes or a few hours a day creating art."

As is true for so many of us, for Cohen, using videoconferencing for events has been a lifeline during the pandemic, removing the pressure of physically going out at a time when her husband's mobility is decreasing. Through Zoom, the Cohens can attend Friday-evening services at their synagogue, book groups and other events. "I think it's important that in a spouse/caregiver relationship there be some fun, non-caregiving, equal things we do together," she says. "And I look for activities like snuggling and watching a movie that put us on familiar footing as a couple."

To discover some of the best advice for a "home mini-recharge" during the pandemic, I asked caregivers what they did when unable to leave the house. Here are some of their suggestions.

- A 15-minute meditative self-manicure
- A paint-by-numbers kit that can be worked on during free time
- A needlepoint or knitting project (thank you, YouTube, for instructional videos)
- A quiet moment of prayer or meditation
- A few yoga moves or stretching exercises
- Breathing exercises
- A quick walk in the safety of a yard, outside of an apartment or jumping up and down indoors
- Dancing your heart out for 15 minutes to a memorable song from your teenage years
- A bubble bath while reading a book or magazine
- A 15-minute catnap
- A phone call with an old (or new) friend

- Rereading books loved as a child, like *Little Women*
- Flipping through a beautiful coffee table book of photographs
- Listening to an audiobook with headphones
- Reading poetry — snack-sized bits of inspiration and wisdom
- Journaling — One friend told me about a five-year journal that provides only four or five lines to transcribe thoughts or happenings from each day. It doesn't let you stare at a blank page but gives you enough space for gratitude and venting.

Michele Cappellano, a massage and wellness therapist in Rye, New York, observes that it's important to first recognize what skills you have in your own wheelhouse to make yourself feel good. “Ask yourself what you find most enjoyable or relaxing,” she says, “and think about how you can participate in some version of this for a small chunk of time.” At the end of the day, whether you are taking care of a loved one or not, anything that elevates your heart rate and allows for some happy thoughts is a good thing.

*Lee Woodruff is a caregiver, speaker and author. She and her husband, Bob, cofounded the Bob Woodruff Foundation, which assists injured service members and their families. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram.*

# 10 Warm-Weather Activities Seniors and Caregivers Can Enjoy Together

By Lori Johnston, [AgingCare.com](http://AgingCare.com), 2021

Enjoying a breezy spring day or the warm summer temperatures doesn't have to be a distant memory for elders and caregivers. Finding an interesting activity that is suitable for a senior's abilities takes some creativity and planning, but it is well worth switching up the routine and getting out of the house.

## The Benefits of Getting Outside

A main advantage of heading outdoors, even for a short period of time, is being able to soak up some sunlight. Sun exposure generates vitamin D, which is necessary for a healthy brain, bones and muscles, says Dr. Michael Raab, a geriatrician with Lee Health System in Fort Myers, Florida. Some doctors even prescribe sunlight as a source of vitamin D, which research has shown can improve cognitive function and mood.

In addition to the physical benefits of natural sunlight and fresh air, being outside provides mental and emotional benefits. Getting out enables elders to socialize with new people, and many outdoor activities provide opportunities for interacting with children and animals. Such activities can give people an extra spring in their step and rejuvenate them, says Christina Chartrand, vice president of training and staff development for Senior Helpers, a nationwide in-home care company.

## Ideas for Outdoor Activities

When selecting an activity to do with your loved one, focus on hobbies and interests that they used to enjoy and get creative with new options they might find fun and rewarding.

1. **Catch a sporting event.** Attending a grandchild's soccer game or a professional baseball game can be an action-packed way for your loved one to reconnect with one of their favorite pastimes.
2. **Fish for fun.** You can cast a rod from a dock, pier, or other location, even if someone has mobility problems or uses a wheelchair. Check your state's tourism or state park websites to see if they provide listings of accessible fishing locations. Many areas across the country have also started offering all-terrain wheelchairs for check out or rental that can help a loved one with mobility issues get closer to the water.
3. **Be a tourist.** If you live in a city, take an open-air bus or trolley tour to see the local sights. Another option could be a boat tour, depending on what type of equipment an elder needs to take with them. "It gets you both outside, but you don't necessarily have to be walking," Chartrand says. A

Sunday drive around town can also allow a senior to check out happenings in the community that interest them. This could be new construction, blooming flowers and trees, or even festivals and community events.

4. **Take a dip.** For some folks, this might entail putting a foot in the pool, while others may be able to handle low-impact water aerobics. If a senior is willing and able, spending some time in the pool is an excellent way for them to incorporate some physical activity into their routine that seems more like relaxing than a workout.
5. **Stroll around.** If a walk is possible, start slow and work up to longer outings. Either keep the first few walks short, or bring along a walker or wheelchair in case your loved one gets tired and needs to rest along the way or requires help getting back.
6. **Be an animal lover.** This could be as simple as encouraging a loved one to sit outside and enjoy the sights and sounds of a birdhouse, bird feeder or bird bath in the yard, or could mean an outing to the zoo or local dog park. There are plenty of options for seniors who enjoy animals to get outside and either interact with or observe nature.
7. **Go fly a kite.** Head to a park or beach and get a kite soaring. Let an elderly individual take control, which they can do while sitting down. If children are around, they can get involved by trying to keep the kite in the air.
8. **Picnic outdoors.** Picnics are another flexible activity that you can plan at a park, in your own backyard, or on the surrounding grounds of a long-term care facility. At the park, seniors can watch children run around and enjoy the buzz of outdoor activity. Make sure to locate an area with comfortable seating and plenty of shade in advance, or remember to bring your own.
9. **Attend community events.** From Memorial Day concerts to Fourth of July parades and fireworks, there are plenty of community events during spring and summer that offer opportunities for elders to get out and be part of the crowd. Many communities offer outdoor musical performances, art shows, car shows, flea markets and more. Peruse the events section of the local newspaper to find happenings that fit your loved one's interests and abilities.
10. **Go out for a treat.** Most seniors have a favorite snack or restaurant that picks their spirits right up. Instead of limiting this indulgence to special occasions or the post-doctor's appointment routine, make an outing out of it just because. This could consist of getting an ice cream cone from the local Dairy Queen, a coffee and pastry from a favorite breakfast spot, or a lunch special from the diner around the corner. If the weather is nice, enjoy your goodies at a patio table.

Older bodies don't adjust to temperature changes or perceive thirst as well as younger ones. With each of these activities, be sure to watch your loved one for signs of fatigue, thirst, sunburn, and overheating that could signal it's time to leave, perhaps with a promise to return at another time.

## **Encourage Them to Participate**

Use these ideas as a springboard. You know your loved one best. What did they enjoy when they were younger? What is something they always wanted to try? Don't be afraid to ask what they miss doing or what they'd like to revisit. They may not hear those questions very often. You may get some resistance, so just say with a smile that it would make you very happy to do this with them. Have a couple of suggestions prepared to choose from and head outside to enjoy the day together.

# **The Saving Power of a Caregiving Journal**

## **How it can help you stave off depression, regain a sense of control**

by Barry J. Jacobs, [AARP](#), March 2, 2021

While recently rereading the journal that I kept from 2010 to 2017 when I was a dementia caregiver for my stepfather and, later, my mother, I came across this passage from August 28, 2010:

"I stayed at the apartment with my stepfather today while my mother was shopping with my wife. He was frankly paranoid, saying he'd leave and call the police. I talked to him calmly and then distracted him by putting a John Wayne movie on the TV. He did calm down but continued to pick at the skin on his scalp until it bled. I watched him do it, too worn out to argue with him to try to get him to stop."

It was a short entry about one afternoon's inconsequential events, but it captured a lot — the day-to-day situation, its many challenges and its many frustrations. I had forgotten the actual incidents, probably because they were among hundreds of small caregiving interactions that left scant memories. But I felt glad now to have this written report to help me recall what I'd been through and how, on one day at least, I was patient enough to make a positive difference — at least partially.

Throughout my tenure as a family caregiver, I used my journal as a historical record and place to vent without troubling anyone else. Other caregivers' journals are filled with worry lists or angry diatribes at a loved one's doctors, or used as a means of monitoring their own thoughts and moods. Still others keep gratitude journals in which they write down three moments of joy or humor they experienced during that day for which they felt grateful, as proof that caregiving isn't always gloom, doom and drudgery.

Regardless of the journaling format, research suggests that writing down our experiences decreases the likelihood we'll become depressed. As the website for the branch of popular psychology known as positive psychology notes, journaling "helps [people] build a buffer between their negative thoughts and their sense of well-being."

There is something about recording what is happening to us and our emotional reactions that enables family caregivers to stand apart from the onrush of tasks and crises they're immersed in and observe what they're going through, reflect on its greater meanings and feel more in control.

There is no one right way to journal; all who practice it find the focus and style that work for them. But here are some general suggestions to consider for using journaling as an effective coping technique:

## **Just write. Don't edit**

This is not a school assignment. No one is grading you. The important thing is to take the concerns and reactions swirling through your head and deposit them on paper (or a computer screen) so that they preoccupy you less. You don't need to use big words or full sentences or even words at all; drawings work, too. Just empty the contents of your mind without judging yourself.

## **Write when you want. But read it back infrequently**

There is no requirement that you write daily, weekly or even regularly; instead, write whenever some caregiving moment strikes you as moving or important. If you do journal daily, don't read back what you wrote more than weekly; if you write weekly, read back no more than monthly. The time elapsed is necessary to gain greater emotional distance from the immediate experiences and reactions you've recorded to recognize larger trends and realize deeper insights.

## **Consider the audience. But keep your journal private**

If you are having trouble getting started, imagine an audience to whom you are directing your thoughts and feelings about being a family caregiver. Would it be the person you are today or will be five years from now looking back on this trying time? Family members who haven't stepped up to help? The care receiver who may no longer be capable of understanding your words? Your choice will create a context, but keep your actual journal private. You will be less inhibited about speaking your mind fully and honestly.

## **Think of your journal as travelogue**

If the cliché is true that caregiving is a journey, then a caregiver journal is its travelogue, full of new experiences, local color and sometimes complaints about where you've landed. Re-reading it one day, as I recently did, will bring back the sights and sounds, the places where you got lost and the new lingo you picked up along the way. But it will also reveal the longer trajectory of what you learned about yourself through the distances you covered and the destinations you reached.

*Barry J. Jacobs, a clinical psychologist, family therapist and healthcare consultant, is the co-author of Love and Meaning After 50: The 10 Challenges to Great Relationships — and How to Overcome Them and AARP Meditations for Caregivers (Da Capo, 2016). Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.*

## Personal Emergency Response Systems



TOMPKINS COUNTY  
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*Aging Better, Together*

Are you concerned about the safety of a family member or a friend? Are you, or someone you know, at risk for falling in their home? Tompkins County Office for the Aging can help!

We contract with Doyle Medical Monitoring to provide Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) to residents of Tompkins County. Standard pricing starts at \$25 a month and there is no installation, cancellation, or service call fee. When you get a PERS through our office, an Outreach Worker will visit your home, install and test the device, and explain how it works. With our Personal Emergency Response Systems, you will receive personalized in-home service, peace of mind, services and connections from a local agency, and 24/7 monitoring service. Call the Office for the Aging today at 607-274-5482 to speak with an Outreach Worker about our devices!



**DOYLE**<sup>®</sup>  
Security for your life.<sup>™</sup>

# You Are Not Alone

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman of Tompkins, Schuyler, and Chemung are still here and available to you and your loved ones.

We care about the rights, dignity, and well-being of all long-term care residents. Call us at **607-274-5498** if you or a family member live in a *Nursing Facility* or *Adult Home* and:

- Have questions or concerns about the care being received
- Would like information on issues relating to long-term care
- Are concerned with how Covid-19 is affecting facility resident's daily life



# Project CARE



TOMPKINS COUNTY  
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*Aging Better, Together*

Project CARE is a **friendly visitor program** in Tompkins County for Seniors age 60 and over. Project CARE provides companionship to Seniors by having a volunteer make a weekly visit. Project CARE can be a great comfort to Seniors by providing in-home support and companionship, especially to frail or homebound older adults, those that are socially isolated, as well as family caregivers.

### **Weekly visiting:**

Many Seniors in our community greatly benefit from a weekly visit. Visits provide a caring bond, especially to those who are socially isolated. Volunteers can provide conversation, support, organize calendars/paperwork, play games, go for a walk, read to their Senior, polish nails, do a puzzle together, and much more.

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***If you are interested in having a Project CARE friendly visitor please contact Dawn Sprague at NY Connects Tompkins County Office for the Aging by phone @ (607)274-5499 or email @ [dsprague@tompkins-co.org](mailto:dsprague@tompkins-co.org) to discuss this opportunity further.***

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# 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 FLIC. 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 Teri Reinemann 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.*

# NEWS AND NOTES



TOMPKINS COUNTY  
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## The Caregiver Resource Center at the Office for the Aging

**We are still providing support to family caregivers remotely.**

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes**—there is an online class in April! Please see the information on the following page.

**Caregiver Workshops**—Previously scheduled workshops with the Alzheimer’s Association have been changed to an online format.

**Caregiver Supportive Group Discussion**—We are currently holding remote caregiver supportive group discussion weekly and welcome any family caregiver to join us.

**Caregiver Library** - We loan out books on caregiving. We can mail you a book from our library!

**Caregiver Counseling** - We are available by phone 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](mailto:ajackson@tompkins-co.org)**

**Visit our website for COVID-19 resources: <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa/cofa-COVID>**

Feeling  
Stretched?

**Let's Face It...**

Caring for someone with illnesses such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, or chronic cancer can be stressful physically, emotionally, and financially.



*Balance Your  
Life*

**Powerful**  
**Tools**  
for **Caregivers**

*Spring 2021*

**Powerful Tools for  
Caregivers Class**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with tools you need to take care of *yourself*.

You will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase your ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

**The program consists of 90-minute class sessions offered weekly for six consecutive weeks.**

**This class is offered free of charge to those caring for spouses, parents or other adult relatives/friends. (It is not intended for professional caregivers.)**

**Thursdays, April 22nd - May 27th, 2021**  
**2:00PM - 4:00PM**  
**Via Zoom**

**Register as early as possible as class size is limited.**

**To register or inquire about the program, call the  
Tompkins County Office for the Aging:  
607-274-5482**

## Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Summer is just around the corner, but there are still plenty of cold nights ahead. As you may know, keeping a home warm can be costly at times, but there are programs to assist heaters during the colder months. The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides assistance with fuel and utility expenses for income-eligible homeowners and renters. Under HEAP, eligible clients can also receive a benefit to have their furnace cleaned and tuned as well as repaired or replaced. The current HEAP income guidelines are as follows:

Household Size:	Monthly Income Maximum:
1	\$2,610
2	\$3,413
3	\$4,216

Does your care receiver or someone else that you know fit these criteria? If so, please give our office a call at 607-274-5482 for more information. The Tompkins County Office for the Aging processes HEAP applications for those who are over 60 or receive SSD/SSI and do not receive Food Stamps. All other applicants would call the Department of Social Services at 607-274-5264. The HEAP benefit to assist with a clients' fuel/utility expense will come to an end on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021; but the benefit to assist with a clean and tune/repair or replacement will be available until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Our office is always taking new applications and assisting those in need of help, please feel free to give our office a call for more information or to apply. Here's to warm and comfortable homes!

***You can always contact the Office for the Aging for information and referral on Caregiver and Long-Term Care services at 274-5482.***

If you would like to be taken off our mailing list, or if you would like to be taken off our mailing list but added to our Email list, please contact us!

**Thank you!!**

# The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

Please call or visit us at the  
Tompkins County Office for the Aging  
214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr./State Street, Ithaca

**Amy Jackson, CRC Coordinator and Newsletter Editor**

**Telephone:** 607-274-5486

**Email:** [ajackson@tompkins-co.org](mailto:ajackson@tompkins-co.org)



**Dawn Sprague, Project CARE Coordinator and Newsletter Editor**

**Telephone:** 607-274-5499

**Email:** [dsprague@tompkins-co.org](mailto:dsprague@tompkins-co.org)

## Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging:** [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa)

- Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" to access our Tompkins County Resource guides.

**Family Caregiver Alliance:** [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

**CaringBridge:** [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)

**Caregiver Action Network:** [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)

**AARP Caregiver Resource Center:** [www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving](http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving)

**Next Step in Care:** [www.nextstepincare.org](http://www.nextstepincare.org)

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*This newsletter is made possible in part by a grant from the NYS Office for the Aging*

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