

A circle is a group of people in which everyone has a front seat.

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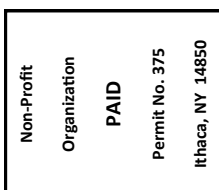
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Senior Focus: Meet Eileen Driscoll

By Trish Chevallard, Coordinator of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Tompkins County for the Aging

I met Eileen Driscoll when I started working at the Office for the Aging 5 years ago. I was hired to be the Coordinator of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, and Eileen had been a volunteer in the program for 5 years at that point, starting in 2013. Over the years, I have learned there is a lot about Eileen besides her being a dedicated volunteer.

Eileen moved to Ithaca from Ohio in 1973 to attend graduate school at Cornell. She majored in statistics at that time, and although moving back to Ohio was never in her plans, she decided to stay in Ithaca post graduate school. The culture of working at Cornell in a professional environment where there was a non-corporate feel, and an open exchange of information, was very important to her. It also didn't hurt that she didn't have to wear a suit each day! Eileen stayed on at the ILR school for 30 years ultimately having the role of Director of Computing.

One thing I learned from Eileen in preparation for writing this article, is that Eileen took a front seat in learning how to build, and then actually building, a house here in her younger years. She also took flying lessons and got her license to fly about 25 years ago. When recounting this story, she stated that most of the class was filled with men, but she remembers that she wasn't going to let them intimidate her.

Life-long learning has not slowed down for Eileen, even after retirement. She has maintained her voracious love of learning which is evident in her hobbies; gardening, reading, weaving, cooking, traveling, hydroponics, world religions, socializing and spending time with her extended family and her beloved dog, Bella. She is particularly interested in how things work and enjoys creating items from scratch, such as making cheese, ketchup, and textiles. She also incorporates motifs from her travel into her weaving. One of her current goals is to weave garments for an upcoming international fashion show and she is also currently on a mission to visit all of Ithaca's religious places of interest. Additionally, Eileen enjoys staying current on topics such as climate change, elder care, social justice, women's issues, and aging issues. Currently, Eileen is working on learning Spanish and particularly enjoys seeing live theatre and frequently attends shows at the Kitchen Theatre.

As Eileen has taken a month off here and there from volunteering to travel, I asked her to tell me more about where she has travelled. She has



visited 29 countries, including her travels as a Road Scholar. Her most recent trips have included Greece, Morocco, Alaska, Australia, Italy, India, and Peru. She travels not with close friends or family, but with a group, opting to get to know different people in the group and others along the way. When asked what appeals to her about travelling, she said that she enjoys seeing how people adjust to their environment. As an example of this, she referenced how resourceful people were in Burma with a broken fan. She thoughtfully spoke about how in the US, it would have been discarded. However, in Burma, it was fixed and valued by the people. She spoke about how she loves to see new places and try new food that she often brings home with her, specifically referencing vanilla bean, roasted crickets, and even talking about trying grasshoppers on the tacos in Mexico.

As I have spent time with Eileen, I have always thought of her as a humble and adventurous spirit, but doing this article has made me realize how humble and adventurous she truly is. Last year, Eileen was named as one of two Volunteer Ombudsmen of the Year by the New York State Office for the Aging. Through her advocacy, she has assisted residents of long term care facilities resolve their concerns and complaints. She has educated residents on their rights, worked with facility staff to get improved care for residents, and established trusting relationships with those who may not have someone to advocate for them.

Eileen has not slowed down during her retirement, as evidenced by her volunteering her time for this program, as well as all of her hobbies, travels, and educational pursuits.

Senior Services

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 independently as possible

NY Connects staff can assist you between 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.
 By phone: (607) 274-5482 or 1-800-342-9871
 Or visit us on the web at www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa
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

The Registry

The Finger Lakes Independence Center administers the Registry Program. The Registry 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 607-272-2433 or email: info@fliconline.org. This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

Let it Snow

With winter weather upon us, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging is updating its listing of snow shovelers. Deep snow and icy sidewalks are dangerous for everyone but can be especially problematic for older adults and people with mobility problems. Many are not able to remove the snow from their sidewalks or driveways without assistance. If you need assistance with this task, please contact the Tompkins County Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482. Likewise, if you are interested in assisting older adults by shoveling or plowing, on either a paid or volunteer basis, please call our office at 607-274-5482.



Certified Aging in Place Specialists

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has two Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS). This means that our CAPS trained employees can assist you by suggesting home modifications to allow you to live in and enjoy your home longer. This can include a home safety assessment at no charge, where our Certified Aging in Place Specialists will walk through your home with you. Changes discussed may be minor, such as handrails, to more involved solutions such as an elevator or stair lift. It’s important to empower people with the tools necessary to Age in Place, and we can help! Call the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

While the outdoor temperature keeps steadily going down, you may be seeing your heating costs steadily going up. If you, or someone you know, is having a tough time keeping up with the rising heating costs, encourage them to apply for the Home Energy Assistance Program. The Office for the Aging handles applications for clients who are 60+ and can be reached at 607-274-5482. For those who are under 60, please call the DSS HEAP Unit to apply at 607-274-5264. The income guidelines are listed below, clients who are eligible will receive a HEAP benefit that will go directly to their heating vendor as a credit on their account. For more information, please give the Office for the Aging a call. Here’s to staying warm!

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	3,035
2	3,970
3	4,904

Having Mental Health Challenges? Support is Available!

The Mental Health Association in Tompkins County is offering an ongoing Zoom support group for people 55 years of age and older, who are experiencing or who have experienced mental health challenges.

This group is open, no-cost and there is no commitment necessary. Wednesday mornings from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm on Zoom.

Please contact either Larry Albro at lalbro@mhaedu.org or, Micaela Corazon at mcorazon@mhaedu.org. You can also call us at 607-273-9250 with questions or to sign-up to join this dynamic group.



Sign up to receive our monthly COFA Newsletter and/or the quarterly Caregiver Newsletter by email.



The *Senior Circle* is published four times a year by Lifelong, 119 West Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850, and contains information on activities and services which add to the quality of life for older adults and assists them to maintain an independent lifestyle.

The *Senior Circle* is partially funded by the **Tompkins County Office for the Aging.**



Lifelong is proud to be a United Way Agency

Vaccinations and Older Adults

NIH National Institute of on Aging
nia.nih.gov

August 24, 2023

Which vaccines do older adults need?

As you get older, a health care provider may recommend vaccinations, also known as shots or immunizations, to help prevent certain illnesses.

Talk with a doctor or pharmacist about which of the following vaccines you need. Make sure to protect yourself as much as possible by keeping your vaccinations up to date.

COVID-19 vaccines

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that causes symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Older adults are more likely than younger people to get very sick from COVID-19. The disease can lead to serious illness and death.

Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of getting this disease. The vaccine will also help you from getting seriously ill or having to go to the hospital if you do get COVID-19. We are still learning how effective COVID-19 vaccines are against new variants of the virus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that older adults stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, including booster shots.

The COVID-19 vaccine is available at no cost in the United States. Contact your local health department or visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where you can get vaccinated.

Flu vaccine for Older Adults

Flu, short for influenza, is a virus that can cause fever, chills, sore throat, stuffy nose, headache, and muscle aches. Flu is very serious when it gets into your lungs. Older adults are at a higher risk for developing serious complications from the flu, such as pneumonia.

The flu is easy to pass from person to person. The virus also changes over time, which means you can get it again. To ensure that flu vaccines remain effective, the vaccine is updated every year.

Everyone age 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine, but the protection from a flu vaccine can lessen with time, especially in older adults. Still, you are less likely to become seriously ill or hospitalized with the flu if you get the vaccine. A flu vaccine is especially important if you have a chronic health condition such as heart disease or diabetes.

Ideally, you should get your vaccine by the end of October each year, so you are protected with the flu season starts. It takes at least two weeks for the vaccine to be effective. However, if you have not received your flu vaccine by the end of October, it's not too late. Flu season typically peaks in December or January. As long as the flu virus is spreading, getting vaccinated will help protect you.

There are flu vaccines designed specifically for older adults. The CDC recommends that people age 65 and older receive a higher dose flu vaccine or an adjuvanted flu vaccine (one with an

additional ingredient called an adjuvant that helps create a stronger immune response). These vaccines are potentially more effective than the standard flu vaccine for people in this age group. Talk with a health care provider or pharmacist about which vaccine is best for you.

Medicare will pay for the flu vaccine, and so will private health insurance plans. You can get a flu vaccine at a doctor's office or local health department, as well as at many grocery stores, drug stores, and pharmacies. Flu shots may also be available at other community locations, such as schools, religious centers, and workplaces. The ingredients of a specific vaccine are the same wherever you receive it.

RSV vaccine for Older Adults

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. However, older adults have a higher risk of developing severe symptoms if they are infected with RSV. The illness can be particularly dangerous for people who have chronic diseases or a weakened immune system. Older adults who get very sick from an RSV infection may need to be hospitalized, and the illness can even be life-threatening.

RSV vaccines are available to protect older adults from the serious health problems that can occur with RSV infection. The CDC recommends that adults 60 years and older talk with their health care provider about whether they should receive the RSV vaccine. Like the flu, RSV infections are most common in the fall and winter months, so consider getting vaccinated before RSV season starts. However, you can benefit from the RSV vaccine at any time of the year.

You can get the RSV vaccine at a doctor's office, your local health department, and many pharmacies. Medicare Part D and private health insurance plans may pay some or all of the cost. Check with Medicare or your health plan for details about coverage.

Vaccine to help prevent Pneumonia

Pneumococcal disease is a serious infection that spreads from person to person by air. It often causes pneumonia in the lungs and it can affect other parts of the body. Older adults are at higher risk than younger people of getting very sick or dying from pneumococcal disease.

The CDC recommends that all adults age 65 and older get pneumococcal vaccination. This vaccine helps protect you from getting a serious infection, including pneumonia. There are multiple forms of the pneumococcal vaccine: Talk to a health care provider to find out which is best for you. You can also visit the CDC's Pneumococcal Vaccination webpage to learn more about the types of vaccines that are available.

Medicare will pay for the pneumococcal vaccine, as will many private insurance plans. You can get the vaccine at a doctor's office, your local health department, and many pharmacies. Pneumococcal vaccines may also be available at other community locations, such as schools, religious centers, and workplaces.

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping

cough) vaccines

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis are diseases caused by bacteria that can lead to serious illness and death.

Tetanus (sometimes called lockjaw) is caused by bacteria found in soil, dust, and manure. It can enter the body through a deep cut or burn.

Diphtheria is a serious illness that can affect the tonsils, throat, nose, or skin. It can spread from person to person.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, causes uncontrollable, violent coughing fits that make it hard to breathe. It can spread from person to person.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Most people get vaccinated as children, but you also need booster shots as you get older to stay protected against these diseases. The CDC recommends that adults get a Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis) or Td (Tetanus, Diphtheria) booster shot every 10 years. Ask a health care provider when you need your booster shot.

You can get the Tdap or Td vaccine at a doctor's office, your local health department, and many pharmacies. Medicare Part D and private health insurance plans may pay some or all of the cost. Check with Medicare or your health plan for details about coverage.

Shingles vaccine for Older Adults

Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox. If you had chickenpox, the virus is still in your body. As you get older, the virus could become active again and cause shingles.

Shingles affects the nerves. Common symptoms include burning, shooting pain, tingling, and/or itching, as well as a rash with fluid-filled blisters. Even when the rash disappears, the pain can remain. This is called post-herpetic neuralgia, or PHN.

The shingles vaccine is safe, and it may keep you from getting shingles and PHN. Healthy adults age 50 and older should get vaccinated with the shingles vaccine, Shingrix, which is given in two doses. (Zostavax, an earlier shingles vaccine, is no longer available in the United States).

You should get a shingles vaccine even if you've already had the chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine, or if you don't remember whether you had the chickenpox. You should also get the shingles vaccine if you've already had shingles or received Zostavax. However, you should not get a vaccine if you currently have shingles, are sick or have a fever, have a weakened immune system, or have had an allergic reaction to Shingrix. Check with a health care provider if you are not sure what to do.

You can get shingles vaccine at a doctor's office, your local health department, and many pharmacies. Medicare Part D and private health insurance plans may pay for some or all of the cost. Check with Medicare or your health plan for details about coverage.

Travel vaccines

Check with a doctor, a pharmacist, or your local health department about vaccines you need if

(Continued on page 5)

Caregiver's Corner

Tips for Family Caregivers

By Selina Ali, COFA intern

Effective Communication Strategies for Caregivers:

When working with care receivers, family members, and healthcare professionals, it is critical to communicate clearly and compassionately. Active listening involves paying whole attention, displaying empathy, and responding properly. Using concise language, avoiding jargon, and paying attention to non-verbal cues such as body language are crucial for effective communication. Pose unrestricted questions to encourage meaningful dialogue and show empathy. Patience is essential, allowing individuals time to express themselves without interruption. Respect boundaries, create a comfortable atmosphere, and make use of visual aids for better comprehension.

Building a Support Network:

Caregivers can benefit from building and maintaining a support system. This includes interacting with other caregivers, participating in support groups, and seeking assistance from friends and family. Connecting with other caregivers facing similar challenges provides a platform to share experiences and ideas. Utilizing community services, taking breaks, expressing gratitude, and maintaining regular contact with the support network are essential for caregiver well-being. Remaining open to new connections and exploring legal and financial resources further enhances the support network.

Technology Tools for Caregivers:

Introducing caregivers to various applications and technologies can streamline responsibilities. This includes medication management apps, telehealth platforms, care coordination applications, emergency response systems, health monitoring devices, calendar and reminder applications, meal planning apps, wearable GPS trackers, video calling platforms, and memory aid apps.

Emotional Resilience and Coping Mechanisms:

Self-care practices are crucial for caregivers. This involves prioritizing activities such as exercise, meditation, and hobbies. Establishing realistic expectations, seeking emotional support, recognizing flaws, setting boundaries, and practicing mindfulness or relaxation techniques contribute to emotional well-being. Celebrating small achievements, educating oneself about the care recipient's condition, and engaging in resilience-building activities like writing or music can further enhance coping mechanisms.

Creating a Safe and Accessible Home Environment:

Providing tips for modifying the home environment ensures the safety and accessibility of care recipients. Suggestions include decluttering, installing grab bars, using non-slip flooring, adjusting illumination, creating larger paths, incorporating adaptive furniture, ensuring a safe bathroom, securing carpets, organizing an accessible kitchen, and having an emergency preparedness plan in place.

Balancing Work and Caregiving Obligations:

Caregivers face challenges in balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. Communication with employers, exploring flexible work arrangements, utilizing leave policies, setting clear limits, prioritizing tasks, and seeking workplace assistance are vital. Employer assistance programs, educating coworkers, workplace self-care, and incorporating holistic self-care practices contribute to effective management.

Planning for Long-Term Care:

Discussing long-term care planning is crucial for both caregivers and care recipients. Initiating talks early, transparent communication, investigating long-term care alternatives, financial planning, legal documentation, involving the care recipient, and regularly evaluating care needs are essential considerations for effective long-term care planning.

Caregiver Video Resource Center. (2022, August 31). Caregiver Action Network. <https://www.caregiveraction.org/resources/videos>

Take Care of Yourself as a Caregiver. (n.d.). National Institute on Aging. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/take-care-yourself-caregiver>

Reactive attachment disorder - Symptoms & causes - Mayo Clinic. (2022, May 12). Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/reactive-attachment-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20352939>

AARP's Easy to Download Family Caregiving Guides. (n.d.). AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/prepare-to-care-planning-guide/>

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Educational Programs and Dementia Care Resources. (n.d.). Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. <https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/care-education-resources>

COFA PRESENTS

LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS

Are you feeling lonely? Socially isolated? Or want someone to talk to?

We are looking for older adults, aged 60 and over in Tompkins County to participate in COFA's Project CARE, a friendly visitor program

You will be matched with a volunteer in Tompkins County who will visit 1-2 hours per week

WHAT TO DO!

- play games
- do crafts
- conversation
- hangout!

More Info :

email Dawn Sprague
dsprague@tompkins-co.org



Tompkins County Office for the Aging Seeks Members for Advisory Board

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging is seeking members for our Advisory Board. If you are concerned with the interests of older adults in our community, please consider becoming a member. We are looking for representatives from Danby, Trumansburg, and Enfield but all are invited to inquire. Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of each month. You must be age 60 or over and a resident of Tompkins County.

If you are interested and would like more information please contact Lisa Monroe, Director at 607-274-5485 or lmonroe@tompkins-co.org.

The Right Care, Right Price.

Longview is happy to announce its Assisted Living Moderate Income Program. Starting at \$2,500 per month you will receive 24-hour assistance, meals, assistance with medications and arranging appointments, housekeeping, laundry assistance, participation in our Longview / Ithaca College Partnership and much more.

We continue to offer exceptional care as a solution to the evolving needs of the community on our 34- acre campus overlooking Cayuga Lake. **Longview** is a vital non-profit organization serving older adults in the Ithaca and surrounding communities, and has been enriching lives for over 50 years.



Call Kylie Morse, Senior Living Counselor, at 607-375-6360 or kmorse@longviewwithaca.org for more information.

Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)

By the TCOFA Aging Services Staff

For this edition of the Senior Circle, we are going to talk about averages. Specifically, let's look at the average prices associated with some of our general monthly spending habits:

- Fast food - \$10 McDonald's meal
- Video Streaming - \$47 monthly per household
- Reading materials - \$15 for a physical book or \$14.99 for Audible
- Haircut - \$25 for a basic cut from a chain retail (plus tip)
- Cell Phone - - \$27 prepaid plan

Let's say we have a month wherein we spend the average amount on these average categories; you get a haircut, stop at McDonald's to pick up a Big Mac meal, snag the newest Robert Patterson novel, pay your phone bill, and then top it all off with streaming a couple movies. Your average spending in a month on those items, conservatively, would be \$124 (plus tax).

I think we can all agree that there is no egregious spending contained within our list of average purchases.

Do we need Netflix or that milkshake from McDonalds? No.

Does treating ourselves make life a little more fulfilling? Absolutely.

Now consider these purchases from the perspective of an individual who has limited autonomy. We could argue that the new novel or trip to McDonald's holds more value to someone who does not have the opportunity to freely go and do the things they want, when they want. Now, hold that thought.

Most residents of skilled nursing facilities, or what we call nursing homes, pay for their stay in a nursing home with Medicaid. Considering the average daily cost of a nursing home stay in Upstate NY is \$264, it is not surprising that many people cannot afford to pay this out of pocket. Medicaid requires the individual to put their personal income towards the facility bill and they cover the remainder. Residents then receive something called a Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) each month.

Nursing home facilities are required to provide a clean room and bed, linens, pajamas or hospital gowns, meals, basic toiletries, and activities designed to add meaning to residents' lives. Additional expenses such as clothing, haircuts, snacks/treats not included in the daily menu, cell phones and bills, preferred personal care brands, magazines and books, etc., are expected to be covered by the PNA. PNA's vary by state; in NY, the monthly amount allocated to nursing home residents is \$50.

Let's jump back to our average spending exercise: \$124 (plus tax) from your average, basic "extras".

Things we can all live without that undeniably add pleasure or enhance the quality of our lives; things that cannot be reasonably afforded on a PNA.

Sure, we can cut back costs – purchase used books online, get that milkshake instead of a meal, stick to a single streaming service, and extend the time between haircuts, but that still leaves a deficit:

- Used book - \$4.99 (plus shipping)
 - Milkshake - \$3.49
 - ½ a haircut - \$12.50 (plus tip)
 - Netflix standard plan - \$15.49
 - Cell phone plan - \$27
- Total = \$63.47

Keep in mind, our sample budget does not include replacing your phone when it breaks, new clothes (facility machines are hard on fabrics), or that particular deodorant that smells nice and doesn't make you break out in a rash.

Ask yourself how satisfied you would be with this budget. Maybe milkshakes aren't your thing. I bet there's some other treat you could easily substitute, and it probably costs more. Would you be content with only indulging once a month? How many times can you watch the same movies on Netflix? Is that used book you can afford the one you actually want to read? Is \$27 enough to get unlimited data included in your phone plan? Do you want to wear that same pair of threadbare socks, or would you rather buy a new package? Would your answers to these questions change if you were confined to a single building, without the freedom to leave on a whim?

I challenge you to ask yourself, is \$124 (plus tax) a month too high a price to pay? Would you be content or much less satisfied, with a \$50 a month budget? If you answer no to these questions, you're not alone. The people who live in nursing facilities, their families and friends, and the professionals who work with and advocate for residents agree that \$50 a month is not sufficient.

The PNA was initially set by the federal government in 1974 at \$25 and raised to \$30 in 1988, where it has remained. Individual states have the authority to increase that number, but they cannot set it below the federal standard. Thirty-five years later the amount in New York is \$50. If we were to calculate a 3% cost-of-living (COLA) increase each year for those 35 years, the PNA would be \$84.

The Personal Needs Allowance in New York is simply inadequate. It is time for a change, but it can't happen without your support. **We need to let our elected officials know that this cannot continue.** Call, write an email or letter, or visit them in person. Remind them that we care about our friends and family living in nursing homes. Remind them that every member of our community matters.

Personal Emergency Response System Program and FALLS Home Safety Assessment

Whether you are at home or on the go, you can keep one of our Personal Emergency Response System GPS units with you. These are wearable units that allow you to call for help whenever you need it. With the push of a button, you are connected directly to a response center that is monitored 24/7. You can speak directly into your unit, as well as hear them clearly when they respond. Depending on your situation, they can immediately call someone for your assistance. For more information, or to purchase one of these devices, please give the Office for the Aging at call at 607-274-5482.

And if you would like to find ways to make your home safer and allow yourself to be less at risk for falls, the Office for the Aging does FALLS home safety assessments. Their Outreach Workers can walk with you through your home to identify any potential hazards and give you recommendations on how to remediate them. For more information, or to schedule one, please give the Office for the Aging a call.

Vaccinations and Older Adults *Continued from page 3*

you're planning to travel to other countries. The vaccines that are required and recommended are based on your destination, planned activities, and medical history. Sometimes multiple vaccines or doses are needed. It's best to get them at least four to six weeks before you travel to allow time to build up immunity and get the best protection, particularly from those that may require multiple doses.

Contact Medicare or your private health insurance plan to find out whether they cover the travel vaccines you need. You may be able to get some travel vaccines from a local health care provider. Others are available from health departments and travel medicine clinics. For more information, visit the CDC Traveler's Health website or call its information line at 800-232-4636.

Vaccine safety and side effects

Vaccines are very safe, and they can keep you from getting serious or life-threatening diseases. The most common side effects for all these vaccines are mild and may include pain, swelling, or redness where the vaccine was given.

Before getting any vaccine, talk with a doctor or pharmacist about your health history, including past illnesses and treatments, as well as any allergies. A health care provider can address your concerns, It's a good idea to keep your own vaccination record, listing the types and dates of your shots, along with any side effects or problems.

Ness-Sibley Funeral Home

Serving the community
with dignity and compassion

Alison M. Weaver
Owner/Funeral Director

23 South Street, Trumansburg
(607)387-8151

sibleyfh@twcny.rr.com
www.ness-sibley.com

Notary Public Service available at Lifelong

Free of charge

To arrange an appointment email
Liza Burger at
lburger@tclifelong.org





Lifelong News

All events listed are held at Lifelong unless noted. For more information and full listings of programs please check our website at www.tclifelong.org
Please call Lifelong at 607-273-1511 or email programmgr@tclifelong.org to register for any of these events!

A Line from our Executive Director, Liza Burger



While I wish that I was one who relished winter weather, admittedly the darker days and colder temps are sometimes a challenge! I'm finding gratitude in hikes in the woods with our always-adventurous yellow Lab, followed by reading a good book in front of the woodstove. Sometimes annoyingly so, my dear husband adores winter weather, but his excitement about snow and cold weather, like a kid awakening to the news of a "snow day", makes even me embrace this time of year on occasion!

If you've been following the "HVAC adventures" at Lifelong, you're aware that by mid-December we (mostly!) wrapped up our conversion to a heat pump system for our building, and at last our space heaters have been returned to their respective owners! Dealing with a building that was quickly chilling down this Fall, and without hot water for a few weeks sure reminded me of the simple pleasures that I take for granted every day.

With winter's arrival comes... the tax season! Now in its 43rd year, Lifelong's free tax program is ramping up under the stellar leadership of Khaki Wunderlich, with plans for expansion and efficiency in handling appointments! Look for details in this issue of the Sr. Circle about **when and what** number to call to set your appointment up for this invaluable service.

Many thanks to Lucia Sacco, my predecessor and mentor, for her willingness and hard work helping us pull together an amazing array of classes for the Spring semester, as we finalize our search for a new Program Manager! I, for one, have my eye on the ukulele classes, a morning of birding with a local ornithologist, more delicious food from West Africa on a Plate, and a much-anticipated Spring Fling with live music from Radio London!

If you've not received your Spring semester catalog in the mail, or need an extra to share with a friend, please swing by and pick up a hard copy, with a digital catalog always available on our website as well.

Hope to see you here soon!

Warmly, Liza

Spring into Lifelong Learning!

Though the snow is flying and the temperatures dropping, we are already focusing our sights on Lifelong's Spring semester. Luckily, our long-time instructors are patient with us when we're asking for class information for the upcoming months while they're still in the mind-set of the current semester.

Speaking of long-time instructors, we are delighted to be welcoming back Barry Adams and his popular Shakespeare offerings, Tom Butler's interest in politics and government, Zoe Pontiero with a timely look at eclipses and Ron Krieg's newest list of World Cinema films.

Ukulele is back! So many people have been asking for this class again and we're happy to announce this 6- week class will begin in March.

Another very timely presentation will be Dr. William Klepack discussing Cannabis: Legalization, Regulation and Public Health Impacts.

As part of our Mosaic program, filmmaker and documentarian Austin Bunn will join us for the screening of three short films: Lavender Hill, A Love Story, In the Hollow and Campfire. He and his students from Cornell's Milstein Program in Technology will also be here to record some stories and make their own short documentaries. Kuukua Yomekpe will be back with a new menu as she offers West Africa on a Plate.

Deserving to be mentioned: Mindfulness, Medicare, Meditation, Mastodons, Movement, Museums, Microbiome and much, much more!

And we mustn't neglect to mention Special Events and Travel opportunities. RADIO LONDON is coming back to provide great music at our Spring Fling on Friday, May 3rd. There will be a Volunteer Fair on April 24th for those of you looking for opportunities to offer your time and expertise to area agencies. Be sure to check out the travel section of the catalog for day trips and trips of a lifetime.

Don't let iffy weather cause you to miss out on a class. Many are offered in a hybrid format, allowing for in-person as well as Zoom participation.

We say it every semester but there is truly something for everyone in the Spring 2024 catalog!

VOLUNTEER FAIR

 Lifelong - 119 West Court Street

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024

2:00-4:00

- Visit booths from Tompkins County non-profits who are looking for volunteers.
- Talk directly with Volunteer Coordinators and Active Volunteers
- Pick up an updated listing of volunteer opportunities in our community!



BENEFITS OF LIFELONG

MEMBERSHIP:

- Eligibility to participate in Lifelong Learning classes & onsite activities at 119 W. Court Street (may require additional fees)
- Eligibility for \$35/month unlimited Health & Wellness Activities
- Eligibility for \$35/month unlimited Creative & Language Arts Activities
- Discounted TCAT bus passes
- 25% discount on Cornell Concert series tickets
- 25% discount on Ithaca YMCA membership
- 10% discount on first year of Love Living at Home
- Free Science Center passes
- Free parking while attending Lifelong programs and events (on a first-come, first-served basis)
- Free in-person 1:1 technology assistance from volunteers
- Access to the Virtual Senior Center, an easy-to-use website that brings a vibrant community and a wide range of interactive programs straight to you in your home.
- 20% off coupons at Mary Durham Boutique
- \$100 discount on Lifelong travel bookings with Collette Tours (beginning with trips taking place in 2024)

LIFELONG'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES:

- Lifelong is committed to making our membership accessible to everyone. We offer a sliding scale for annual membership fees, and trust that you will choose an amount that reflects what you are able to pay and also your desire to support others in joining our community.
- Learn more on our website: www.tclifelong.org, by contacting us at 607-273-1511, or stop in!

SCHOLARSHIPS AT LIFELONG

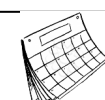


Thanks to the Triad Foundation, Lifelong has set aside funds to assist older adults for whom cost is a barrier to participation, to pay for programs offered by Lifelong. **As long as funds are available, eligible individuals may use up to \$250**

a year towards Lifelong membership, semester-based classes, Health & Wellness or Creative Arts Activities, Special Events, or Day Trips. Some programs do not qualify for scholarship funds, such as extended travel and AARP classes, etc. **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

Tompkins County residents, age 50 and older, can qualify for scholarships with a **total monthly income (from all sources) of \$1823/month or less for a single person, and \$2465/month or less for a couple.** In addition to meeting the monthly income guidelines, **eligibility is also based on very limited assets and limited disposable income.** **HOW DO I APPLY?**

Call Lifelong's front office at 607-273-1511 or stop by at 119 West Court Street in Ithaca for more information!

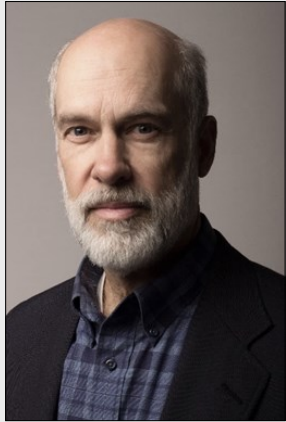


Lifelong Office Closures

Monday, January 15 -Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday, February 19, Presidents Day
Monday, May 27, Memorial Day

Lifelong Welcomes New Board Members: Gordon Rowland and Janet Schutt

Gordon Rowland



retired in 2022 from Ithaca College, where over a thirty-year career he served as Professor of Communication, Department and Graduate Program Chair, and Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses and engaged in scholarly inquiry in a range of areas, including instructional design, design education, systemic design, powerful learning experiences, research methods, human performance improvement, and planned change in organizations. He began his teaching career in music theory, and he continues to play several instruments in two bands, Common Railers, and L'il Anne and Hot Cayenne. He lives in Danby with his wife, Anne Stork, who teaches in the Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences and manages the student gardens at Ithaca College.

Janet Schutt returned to Ithaca in May after being



away for nearly 30 years. For most of that time she worked at the Peconic Land Trust in Southampton NY. Janet started her journey at the Trust in 1998 as a project assistant in the Conservation

Programs department. There she worked with project managers to protect the working farms and natural lands on Long Island. In 2004 Janet moved into the Fundraising department where she managed and maintained the donor database. As her fundraising prowess grew, she took on many diverse roles including managing the direct mail campaigns, creating ways to welcome and retain new donors, and writing and editing stories for their monthly email and print newsletters. Janet retired in 2022 with the title of Senior Manager of Donor Services. She was integral in creating strategic marketing and stewardship campaigns for monthly donors, annual fundraising, special project fundraising, as well as giving days like Earth Day and Giving Tuesday. Janet lives on South Hill with her husband, the scientist and author, Bill Schutt (Cornell PhD '95).



Travel Bug

Lifelong's Upcoming Trips with Collette Tours

Lifelong members are traveling! Feedback on **Collette trips** has been favorable and we're excited to add more to these offerings

moving forward. If you're kicking yourself for not signing up for trips that took place this summer, you're in luck, as we're offering another Canadian Rockies trip (this time by rail!) and Alaskan adventure again next summer. Don't miss it! Have a trip you'd like to see us offer? Please reach out and let us know!

NEW: Starting with all trips taking place in 2024 or later, trip pricing will include a **\$100 discount for current Lifelong members, above and beyond any savings offered by Collette.** Time to revisit that bucket list and join us!

On-demand webinars available for other trips! Contact lburger@tclifelong.org to have a link emailed to you!

Take the hassle out of travel. Collette picks you up right at Lifelong and handles all the details on these amazing adventures. All you need to do is pack!

Essence of Thailand

Discovering ancient wonders and natural beauty from Bangkok to Phuket

February 01 — February 16, 2024 • 16 Days • 24 Meals

Bangkok, Reclining Buddha, Emerald Buddha, Bangkok Street Food, Choices on Tour, Sukhothai, Chiang Rai, The Golden Triangle, Chiang Mai, Elephant Experience in Chiang Mai, Lanna Home Visit, Home-Hosted Meal, Phuket, Tuk Tuk Rides

Zip around the buzzing city streets of Bangkok on a Tuk Tuk. Trek by 4x4 vehicle to an elephant sanctuary where you will prepare tasty treats for these endangered residents. Explore the canals of Bangkok's old town on a boat trip.... And more!

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1151954>

Memorials of WWII

April 08 — April 17, 2024 •

8 Days • 10 Meals

London & Paris WWII-Focused City Tours, Portsmouth, The D-Day Story Museum, English Channel Crossing, Juno Beach, Caen Peace Memorial Museum, Arramanche-les-Baines, Longues-sur-Mer, Apple Cider Farm Visit, Normandy American Cemetery, Omaha Beach, Pointe du Hoc, Airborne Museum, Utah Beach, Giverny Gardens, Seine River Dinner Cruise

Retrace the D-Day preparation efforts at The D-Day Story Museum, dedication to Operation Overload. Navigate the path of the D-Day Landings as you cross

the English Channel by ferry. Set foot on the hallowed grounds of the Normandy landing beaches.

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1151884>

Spain and Portugal:

Costa del Sol to the Portuguese Riviera

April 20- May 1, 2024 • 12 Days • 16 Meals

Small group travel (12-24 passengers!) includes such highlights as Malaga, Cordoba, Seville, Lisbon, and Cascais

Optional 3 night Madrid pre-tour extension

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1205003>

Canadian Rockies, by rail!

featuring Rocky Mountaineer

July 21 — July 28, 2024 • 8 Days • 13 Meals

Vancouver, Stanley Park, Rocky Mountaineer, Kamloops, Lake Louise, Banff, Icefields Parkway, Icefields Adventure Choice on Tour, Calgary

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1194078>

Alaska Discovery Land & Cruise

back by popular demand!

featuring a 7-night Holland America Cruise

August 14 — August 25, 2024 • 12 Days • 26 Meals

Fairbanks, Sternwheeler Discovery, Music of Denali Dinner Theater, Denali National Park, Tundra Wilderness Tour, Luxury Domed Rail, Anchorage, Hubbard Glacier, Glacier Bay, Skagway, Juneau, Ketchikan, Inside Passage

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1195647>

Painted Canyons of the West

Featuring Utah's Five National Parks!

Sept 24- Oct 2, 2024 • 9 days • 11 meals

The mighty 5: The Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Zion.

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1205268>

Peru: Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca

Small group travel (12-24 ppl)

February 15-24, 2025 • 10 Days • 15 Meals

Lima, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Local Andean Cultures, Ruins, Machu Picchu, Cuzco and more! Optional 3-night Peruvian Amazon Post Tour Extension

To learn more, visit:

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1205270>

Time to revisit that bucket list



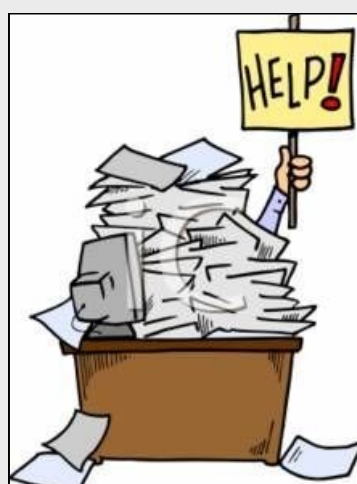
SPRING 2024 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!

From January 1-31, anyone who is a new member, refers a new member, or is returning after not having been a member since 12/31/2021, will receive a \$10 coupon that can be applied to any Lifelong program, including membership. If any of these apply to you, please let us know when you sign up

Come join us!

Need Help with Tax Preparations?

Check on page 12 for information about Lifelong's TCE program



Collette will be holding a Vacations Travel Presentation on Thursday, January 18, 10-11:30 am

Come and learn about the following trips:

Alaska

Discovery Land & Cruise

Painted Canyons of the West

Peru: Machu Pichu & Lake Titicaca

Mark your calendar today and come and join us!





The Book Nook

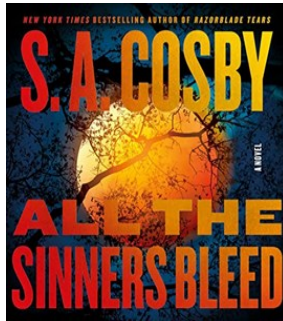
A feature from the Tompkins Public Library

Find out what's happening at Tompkins County Public Library!
 Visit www.tcpl.org or call 607-272-4557.
 Browse and borrow our digital books anytime!

Tompkins Public Library offers a variety of book clubs for all ages. Find information at www.tcpl.org/book-clubs. All Library programs are **free** and **open** to the public.

All the Sinners Bleed by S.A. Cosby

If, while you hunker down for winter, you crave a gripping, psychological thriller that's impossible to put down, this book's intensity pulses through every minute, beginning with a high school shooting that leads to the discovery of multiple buried bodies.



Not for the faint of heart but well-worth the ride with one of the most heroic and moral main characters I've met in fiction. Titus Crowne, an ex-FBI agent, is the first black sheriff in a small Virginia town infused with Confederate pride. Sheriff Crowne wants to make a difference in Charon County, especially in the lives of the black community who have suffered at the hand of white law enforcement. From all sides, Crowne confronts hatred, racism, and bigotry, as he struggles to fulfill a commitment to his duties and even to the citizens who honor Charon's horrific past.

The mystery is dark. The killings are brutal. The serial murderer -- incredibly evil. *All the Sinners Bleed* could be compared to *Silence of the Lambs*, by Thomas Harris, with an origin story.

In the audio edition, narrator Adam Lazarre-White renders an unforgettable performance!

Birnam Wood by Eleanor Catton

This political mystery set in New Zealand, involves a narcissistic, American billionaire, Robert Lemoine, and an activist, non-profit, Kiwi collective, "Birnam Wood," who promote survival through covert cultivation of unused lands - highway roadsides, unoccupied properties, abandoned lots - anywhere their plantings might not be noticed.



When a natural disaster suggests that Birnam Wood might finally have its own land to farm, they clash with each other over the billionaire's interest in their goals and activities, unaware of how he privately plans to use them and the land.

Personalities and ideologies collide as questions and struggles for survival surface in this excellent book by the award-winning author of *The Luminaries* (Man Booker Prize 2013.)

Reviews by Joyce Ann Wheatley, Librarian

5 Minutes to Better Balance!

Looking to improve your balance? Research shows that regular balance training for seniors can significantly reduce the risk of falls.

Nearly 1 in 3 adults over age 65 will fall each year. It's no surprise that falling is the number one cause of injury among senior adults.

Falls can lead to serious injury, including hip fractures or other broken bones, head or brain injury, and even death.

There is good news! Engaging in just 5 minutes of balance training daily can lead to significant improvements and lower the risk of falling.

Ready to start improving today? Try some of these beginner exercises.

The only equipment you will need is a chair or counter to hang on to!

Close Leg Stance: Stand behind a chair or at a counter. While holding onto the back of the chair or counter, place your feet together and stand up straight looking straight ahead. To increase the difficulty, hold on with one hand only, or slowly alternate your hands and loosen your grip. When you are ready to go a bit further, try doing this with your eyes closed while holding the chair, or within easy reach of another stable surface.

Heel to Toe Stance: While standing behind a chair, place one foot in front of the other, about 6 inches apart. Slowly work towards moving your front heel to touch your rear toe, to increase the difficulty. Switch feet. If this is too easy, try it with your eyes closed!

Single Leg Stand: Stand behind a chair or counter. While holding on, slowly lift one foot up off the ground and hold for 10 seconds. Switch feet.

Clock work: Stand sideways behind a chair or counter. Using the foot furthest from the chair, extend the toe forward and tap the 12 o'clock position. Slowly work your way around the dial, from 12, 3 to 6, then switch sides.

Do you have 5 minutes? Get started today and have a steady winter with more fun and adventure and less risk of falls!

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- Access to Public Transportation
- Dining Facility with Evening Meals
- Preference provided to eligible Veterans/Surviving Spouses residing in NYS
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(607)-272-7054

221 S. Geneva Street, Ithaca
www.mcgrawhouse.org



Medicare: Tips on dealing with excess calls and mail

While nuisance calls and possible scam phishing happen to everyone, it appears that older adults are targeted more often. This is especially true during Fall Open Enrollment Period (October 15 to December 7) when people who have health insurance through Medicare can choose to change their coverage and the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (January 1 through March 31) when people who have a Medicare Advantage plan can change their plan. Private companies who contract with Medicare to provide Medicare Advantage Plans and stand-alone Part D plans (Rx prescription coverage) might call and/or send mail promoting their products, with the intention of selling insurance to new customers. Some Medicare recipients find this invasive, especially the phone calls at mealtime. Here are some suggestions to reduce unwanted calls and mail.

Do Not Call Registry

The Federal Trade Commission manages the National Do Not Call Registry. Users can register home and mobile phones for free. This will limit **sales** calls. Charities, political groups, debt collectors and surveys can still call. It can take a month for the registration to be effective.

Be aware that this service will not limit scammers!

Go to DoNotCall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY: 1-866-290-4236) from the phone you want to register. It's free.

If you register your number at DoNotCall.gov, you'll get an email with a link you need to click on within 72 hours to complete your registration.

Opt Out Registry

The Opt Out Registry will limit mailed credit and insurance offers. This registry is operated by the major credit bureaus and endorsed by the Federal Trade Commission Consumer Affairs Department. Go to optoutprescreen.com or call 1-888-5-OPT-OUT (1-888-567-8688).

For more information: <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/prescreened-credit-insurance-offers>

Some things to keep in mind:

- Medicare and Social Security do not solicit or call and ask for information. Do not give your personal information to a caller claiming to be from Medicare. This could be a scam and could lead to your identity being stolen.
- When googling Medicare, Social Security or other government sites, make sure that you are accessing the official site that ends in **.gov** such as <https://www.medicare.gov/> or <https://www.ssa.gov/>
- Look for the "s" in the website address, the URL: <https://>. This indicates that this is a secure site. General website addresses using [http](http://) without an "s" are not secure and will not protect your personal information.
- Be **SMART** with your phone. If you need assistance setting up your phone, Lifelong and the Tompkins County Public Library offer individual assistance.
- Use your contacts to list family, friends, and businesses that you want to talk to. Do not answer the phone if caller ID does not recognize the caller from your contacts list. If it is important, the caller will leave a message.
- Activate and check your voice mail. Keep your mailbox and voice mail cleaned out. There is a limited amount of space and will give the message: "the mailbox is full".
- *Do not be afraid to HANG UP on an unwanted call!*

Where to get creditable information about Medicare, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans:

The Medicare Counseling Program (HIICAP) is funded by NYS Office for the Aging. Every year HIICAP at Lifelong prepares a spreadsheet with up-to-date information regarding Medicare Advantage plans available in Tompkins County. The 2024 spreadsheet for Medicare Advantage plans and a list of stand-alone Part D drug plans are available either at:

- Lifelong, 119 W Court St. or 607 273-1511
- Tompkins County Office for the Aging, 214 W State St. or 607 274-5482

Staff at both locations also provide Medicare counseling face-to-face, by Zoom, or over the telephone.

Got Medicare Questions?

Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance Program (HIICAP) is funded by NYS Office for the Aging and helps people of all ages who are trying to understand their Medicare coverage. If you have questions about Medicare and related insurance, or if you are having trouble paying for Medicare, or any related problems or issues, please turn to HIICAP.

HIICAP's certified volunteer insurance counselors provide personalized counseling face to face, over the phone, or via zoom, to individuals who have questions about Medicare.

Frequently HIICAP is helping people understand what Medicare covers:

- Part A is hospital insurance.
- Part B is medical insurance.
- Part C is the option of a Medicare Advantage Plan (through a private insurance company).
- Part D is Medicare prescription drug coverage (also through a private insurance company).

In addition, counselors provide information on Medicare supplement policies. A common concern brought to HIICAP is the issue of cost – keeping insurance and health care costs within each person's budget. Those concerns are addressed in several ways, including:

- Informing people with low incomes about options that can assist them: Medicare Savings Program, Part D Extra Help Program, and Medicaid.
- Comparing the costs and the coverage offered through Medicare supplemental policies (Medigap) and Medicare Advantage Plans. Both are available from private insurance companies.
- Looking at New York State's Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (EPIC) which can help with drug costs.

At each appointment, the starting point is your individual situation, your questions, and concerns. If you wish to talk with a certified counselor, call Mary-Ann Reeter, HIICAP coordinator at Lifelong at 607-273-1511 to make an appointment. Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) also has HIICAP certified counselors. COFA can be reached at 607-274-5482.

Join Lifelong for a **FREE**

Medicare Basics Presentation via Zoom on
Tuesday, January 23, 2024 from 4:30-5:45pm

Or

Wednesday, May 1, 2024 from 4:30-5:45pm



Medicare Basics is an introduction to the federally administered health insurance program that provides coverage to persons 65 and older, and persons under 65 who are disabled. Our presentation will cover the different ways you can receive your Medicare benefits, how Medicare works with other health insurance, and financial-assistance options that may be available to you. Be your own advocate! This presentation will provide you with some clarity on how to be an informed consumer.

Presented by Liza Burger, Executive Director of Lifelong, and certified Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) counselor.

In addition to offering presentations, certified HIICAP counselors offer **FREE**, non-biased 1:1 health insurance counseling at Lifelong. Telephone, Zoom, and in-person HIICAP appointments are available.

Please contact Lifelong either by email lburger@tclifelong.org, or by phoning: 607-273-1511 to provide us with your email prior to the presentation if you'd like handouts emailed to you:

Medicare Basics—Winter 2024

Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 4:30-5:45pm

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/3ShhWrM>

Medicare Basics—Spring 2024

Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 4:30-5:45pm

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/3FHgreN>

Vitamin D

By Jill Seeley MS, RD

Registered Dietitian at Foodnet
Meals on Wheels



infective diseases. Recently, researchers have been widely investigating the benefits of Vitamin D supplementation, in the form of vitamin D₃ or cholecalciferol, in older patients infected with COVID-19, showing a link between supplementation and reduced overall severity of COVID-19. Additionally, the older patients with a lower baseline Vitamin D status in the study were more likely to exhibit worse lung outcomes and higher inflammation.

Bone Health: Calcium and Vitamin D work together to reduce risk for osteoporosis in older population. Vitamin D has long been known for its protective effect on musculoskeletal outcomes as it is essential for Calcium metabolism in the body (interesting fact: without adequate Vitamin D, the body can absorb only 10-15% of dietary Calcium). Although studies are indicating inconclusive results on Vitamin D supplementation on risk of falls in older adults, it does show that higher odds of hip fractures are observed more frequently in older adults with lower Vitamin D levels.

The recommended daily intake for the elderly between 51 to 70 years old is 15mcg, while adults older than 70 years old should consume at least 20mcg daily. In New York- you get minimal Vitamin D from October-April. From May to September, enjoy 15 -20 minutes outside to help reach your Vitamin D goals.

**Fortified means that Vitamin D was added to the food item. Be sure to check the food label as the level of Vitamin D will vary. Struggle to hit your goal intake? Talk to your doctor to see if supplementation would benefit you.*

Food Item	Amount of Vitamin D (mcg)
Non-Dairy Milk*	2.5-3.6
Cheese	0.4
Cow's Milk	2.9
Egg Yolk	1.1
Cereals and Oatmeal*	2
Mushrooms	9.2
Orange Juice*	2.5
Salmon	14
Tuna Fish	1
Yogurt	2.5

What is on your mind when you think of Vitamin D?

Is it the sun?

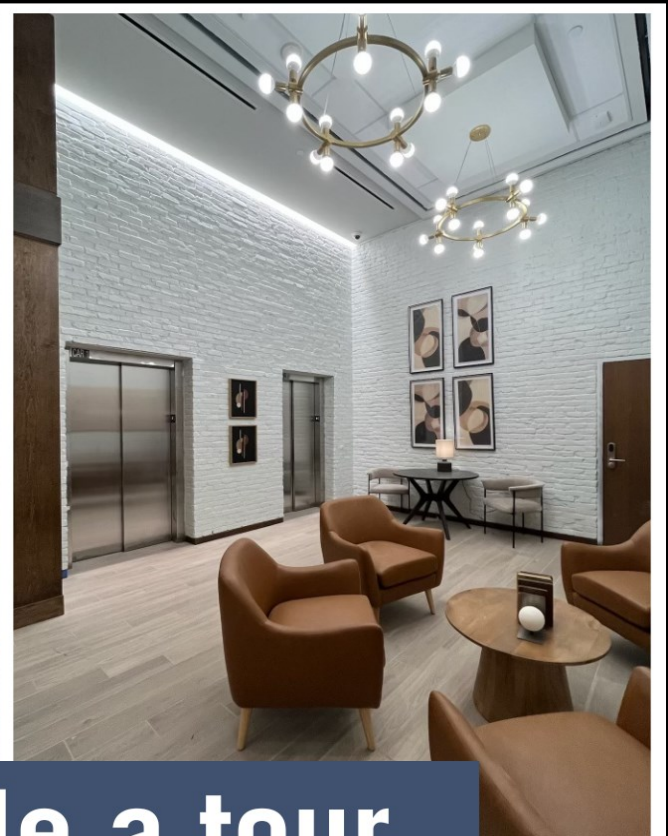
Yes! In fact, sunlight helps the production of active Vitamin D on our skin (which is the primary natural source of Vitamin D), but that is not the only place we get this important vitamin from. It is also found in food sources such as dairy products (e.g., milk, cheese), fish, mushrooms, and eggs... which is great considering we live in an area with limited sunshine many months of the year. Sounds like it would be easy to get enough of, right? Unfortunately, recent data shows that more than half (53.4%) of middle-aged and older adults between 50 to 79 years old have either an insufficiency or deficiency in Vitamin D. This has been a global health concern, and now it has been related to severity of chronic diseases, such as COVID-19, inflammatory bowel disease, and obesity-related diseases- making adequate Vitamin D intake that much more important. Here is what an adequate Vitamin D level can do for you.

Immune Response: Studies are showing that Vitamin D could play an important role in immunity by enhancing antiviral defense and increasing production of antibodies against

Alzheimer's Support Group

Don't forget Lifelong has a monthly caregiver's support group and this Fall will offer educational programs focused on care issues related to Alzheimer's disease. The educational programs will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm, beginning September 6th, and are followed by the support group after at 5:00 pm. Scheduled programs include: "Understanding Dementia and Alzheimers", "A Caregivers Guide to Finance" and "Effective Communication Strategies."

These events are hosted by the Alzheimer's Association of Central New York. They are free and open to all.



Contact us to schedule a tour

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Tips for Beating the Winter Doldrums

A typical winter day in Tompkins County often includes gray, sunless skies. While up to 4 to 6 percent of Americans suffer from seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, even more suffer from a lesser form known as ‘the winter blues’.

“Symptoms can start as early as September, but January is the peak month,” says Norman Rosenthal, a clinical professor of psychiatry at Georgetown University School of Medicine. Fortunately, there are ways to keep spirits high. According to Rosenthal, “You have to put together a coalition of treatments in order to get the best effect.” Here are some suggestions for beating those winter doldrums.

Reducing Stress:

Since relieving stress is one of the first things you should do to combat the winter blues, Rosenthal suggests setting aside a few minutes each day to meditate. A 2021 study found that a highly stressed group of people at risk for depression reduced their stress levels after meditating for 12 minutes per day. Rosenthal also suggests taking a yoga class once per week, saying that is a potent stress reliever. Since yoga has both an aerobic component and meditative component, it’s a complete discipline. There are online classes available if the weather does not permit getting out and about.

Exercise in the Morning:

Did you know that the time of day you exercise matters? Studies show that morning exercisers report better sleep, burn more calories throughout the day, and have lower blood pressure. Weather may hinder getting to a gym in the winter, but if you have access to a computer or other tech devices, there are free exercise programs available online.

Wear Bright Colors:

Research indicates that the more depressed we are, the worse we are at distinguishing colors. Dark skies during winter don’t help this situation. Adding color to your wardrobe can give your mood a boost. Warm colors such as red, orange, and yellow are good choices. You could choose a room in your home to make over and have painted a bold shade.

Sleep Less:

No matter what time of year it is, it’s essential to maintain a steady rhythm of sleep per night by waking up and going to bed at the same times every day, including weekends. However, in the winter, many people sleep more than they do in warmer months. Try keeping your blinds open to allow as much sunlight as possible into the room in the morning. You might want to check out ‘dawn stimulators’, which slowly emit light over the course of 30-45 minutes to mimic sunrise and provide more morning light on cloudy days.

Get a Whiff of Citrus:

The next time you feel an energy slump coming on, slice an orange or light a lemon-scented candle. Researchers say it’s likely that the potent citrus smell is enough to stimulate sensory systems, giving a much-needed boost of energy.

You might be surprised that being proactive in these small ways will take you a long way in the battle against those winter blues!



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TOMPKINS COUNTY
Whole Health
tompkinscountyny.gov/health



Get Whole Health updates or other county news via email or text, scan the QR or go to tcgov.co/newsletters

Tompkins County Whole Health wishes you a happy, healthy holiday season!

Spend more time enjoying the season and less time feeling ill! *Get Vaccinated* against the triple threat of COVID-19, Flu and RSV this winter.

Everyone age 6 months and older should be vaccinated for the Flu and COVID-19. Infants and adults aged 60 years and older can also receive the RSV vaccine.

To schedule an appointment to be vaccinated, call your primary care provider or schedule with a local pharmacy. You can also use the website www.vaccines.gov to find a location near you. If you need assistance in scheduling an appointment online, dial 2-1-1 to speak with the helpline.

Dr. William Klepack, TCWH Medical Director stated, “Please stay up to date on vaccination to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Vaccination is essential to protect yourself from these respiratory illnesses and reduce the severity of your sickness should you become ill.”



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- Emphasis on monthly activities such as: newsletters, recipe cards etc. to help stimulate as Covid taught us isolation is detrimental to seniors.

All Caregivers are carefully Screened, Insured and Bonded.

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Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program – our 43rd year!

Lifelong provides free tax return preparation for many local residents:

- Sixty years of age or older or
- Disabled or
- Limited English Proficiency or
- With family incomes \$60,000 or less



Tax Preparation Appointments will be available beginning Tuesday, January 30 through Saturday, April 13. Call 607-279-3741 to schedule an appointment .

- Call beginning January 8 if you are 60+ or had your return completed by Lifelong last year
- Call beginning February 12 all eligible taxpayers

Appointments are available this year at:

- Lifelong in Ithaca
- Ulysses Philomathic Library in Trumansburg
- Southworth Library in Dryden

Organized tax records make preparing a complete and accurate tax return easier – help us help you! It also helps avoid errors that can lead to delays that may slow your refund and can help find all the deductions or credits you are entitled to claim.

Packets with information and forms to complete before your appointment will be available by January 20 at Lifelong, Ulysses Philomathic Library in Trumansburg, Southworth Library in Dryden, the Groton Library, and on the Lifelong website www.tclifelong.org.

Taxpayers are required to wear an appropriate mask to meet with tax preparers. For joint returns, both taxpayers must be present at the appointment.

If you need a disability-related accommodation to fully utilize our services, call 607-273-1511 x258 or email TCE@tclifelong.org.

If you have any concerns about meeting, reading, writing, or communicating with us or completing your forms, please let us know so we can help you successfully complete this year’s process and make sure you understand your tax return. Call 607-273-1511 x258 or email TCE@tclifelong.org.

In January, information will be available on the Lifelong website at www.tclifelong.org for contact-free and self-prep tax return options.

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nco | AgingMastery

national council on aging

Aging Mastery Program Promotes Positive Aging

The quote “Old age is not for Sissies” is often attributed to the American actress and comedian Bette Davis, and emphasizes that aging is not a straightforward journey, but rather it requires a willingness to confront the inevitable challenges of advancing years.

Birthered by the National Council on Aging in 2013, the Aging Mastery Program (AMP) is an evidence-based intervention that seeks to change the way we age by promoting positive aging via fun, engaging, and life changing experiences. Successful aging is best determined by active management and self-determination of one’s aging roadmap. While we cannot always know what will come our way as we age, we can use strategies and even shift our mindsets to how we address this process.

AMP will help older adults create their own playbook for aging well via actionable goals, sustainable behaviors, peer support, and incentives. The program encourages mastery-developing behaviors across many dimensions that will lead to improved health, stronger financial security, and overall well-being.

Thanks to generous support from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Lifelong can offer AMP, a series of 10 classes, at no cost (over \$100 value), including classes and a curriculum and resources for each participant.

The program requires that participants commit to attending at least 7 (but hopefully more!) of the 10 ninety-minute classes, which will run weekly from January 12 through March 15, 2024. Titus Towers is graciously hosting Lifelong for this upcoming program, and AMP is open to anyone 50 or older who resides in Tompkins County.

The AMP curriculum will include the following classes, taught by instructors with expertise in these areas:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Navigating Longer Lives: The Basics | • Healthy Relationships |
| • Advance Care Planning | • Sleep |
| • Health Eating and Hydration | • Falls Prevention |
| • Exercise and You | • Medication Management |
| • Financial Fitness | • Healthy Engagement |

Interested in creating your own playbook for aging well, and able to commit to attending no fewer than 7 of the 10 sessions? Contact Lifelong at 607-273-1511 to register for this series or sign up online at www.tclifelong.org

Looking for space to hold a community group meeting or a gathering of friends and family?

- Lifelong rooms are available for rent outside of business hours.
- The spaces available include a large activity room, smaller conference rooms, and a kitchen
- Interested parties should contact us at 607-273-1511



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