

# Caregiver Corner

... Ideas and information for people caring for others 778-2411

## Caregiver Wednesday Night Program Mental Health And Social Connections



There are many kinds of -health emotional and mental - and many ways to stay healthy. Research has shown that connections with people may be just as powerful for your well-being as exercise. A big contributor to depression is loneliness and isolation. One way to prevent loneliness is to maintain social connections. To learn about some of the ways to keep socially connected, attend "Mental Health and Social Connections" offered by the Broome County Office for Aging on Wednesday, April 11th from 6-8 p.m. Our speakers will be Bill Knecht from Family & Children's Society and staff from the Mental Health Association. Participants will receive copies of a new directory of social resources developed by Aging Futures. Pre-registration is required. Please call 778-2411 with questions or to register.

## Be a part of the LIVE Campaign "It's About How You LIVE Campaign" Advance Care Planning Week April 15-21, 2007



It is best to make informed decisions about end-of-life wishes, before a health crisis hits.

The Southern Tier End of Life Coalition, [www.steolc.org](http://www.steolc.org), is coordinating a LIVE Campaign to promote education that will help you and your family put a plan together to address these issues. During this year's campaign, residents are encouraged to learn about treatments such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders, Do Not Intubate (DNI) orders, and artificial nutrition and hydration options.

End-of-life decisions include advanced directives which consist of a Living Will and Medical Power of Attorney. A Living Will informs family and health care teams of your wishes if you are not able to communicate your needs. A Medical Power of Attorney selects a person you trust to make decisions about your medical care when you are unable, otherwise known as a "Health Care Proxy." Talk with your family, friends, your health and spiritual providers to be sure that your wishes are known and honored. Watch for guest editorials and also plan to visit a display near the Stay Healthy Center (by Sears) at the Oakdale Mall on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Caregiver Services and its publication, "Caregiver Corner" are supported by a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging

### Content

1. Caregiver Wednesday Night Program Mental Health and Social Connections.....1
2. Be a part of the LIVE Campaign Advance Care Planning Week April 15-21, 2007.....1
3. Come to the Caregiver Retreat..... 2
4. Could your love one benefit from Meals on Wheels?..... 2
5. Physical Activity Programs May Help You Keep the Keys Longer ..... 2
6. Seniors Beware of Scams ..... 3
7. Caregiving Tip..... 3
8. Introducing Two New Wellness Programs for Adults Sixty Years and Older ..... 4

## Come to the Caregiver Retreat



The Broome County Office for Aging and the Alzheimer's Association invite you to a Caregiver Retreat on Tuesday, May 22, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Brothers 2 Restaurant in Endwell. The retreat will feature a talk about "Food and Moods: How What You Eat Can Affect Your Emotions, Energy and Ability to Learn". Come enjoy the music of a female barbershop quartet called Good Vibrations and get away for a few hours of relaxation, sharing and enjoyable activities. You'll also enjoy a delicious lunch and meeting with other caregivers. This event is for family and friends that are providing unpaid care. There is no charge, but contributions are gratefully accepted. **Registration is mail-in only and the deadline is Friday, May 11th.** You may bring one guest for a charge of \$13.00. If you wish to bring the person you are caring for, there will be a respite program staffed by trained professionals from Yesteryears, Adult Day Program. Space is limited, register early. No phone-in or walk-in registrations will be accepted.



## Could your loved one benefit from Meals on Wheels?

Meals on Wheels visits neighborhoods throughout Broome County each day to deliver healthy meals to people 60 years of age and over who are unable to prepare meals for themselves due to an illness or debilitating condition.

A hot lunch and cold supper is delivered around noontime Monday through Friday by caring and dedicated volunteers. Volunteers bring the meals to people's homes along with a warm smile and kind greeting.



This program has been found to be extremely important in helping people maintain proper nutrition and avoid worsening health conditions. An overwhelming majority of recipients report that they have been able to live healthier, more independent lives as a result of the Meals on Wheels Program.

If you think you or someone you know needs Meals on Wheels, please call the Office for Aging Senior Resource Line at 778-2411.

## Physical Activity Programs May Help You Keep the Keys Longer



When you drive you use your whole body: your shoulders and arms, head and neck, legs and feet, back and chest.

Get strong: Your muscles need to be strong and your joints flexible so that your body will be able to do what you want when driving. Strong arms and legs will help you drive, lift groceries and walk around.

Stretch: The more you stretch, the easier it will be for your neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee and ankle joints to move. To drive and stay active you need your joints to move freely, without pain or stiffness. Stretching also helps with coordination and lower stress.

Improve balance: Improving your balance and coordination lets you be more active and can help prevent falls when walking or standing.

Build endurance: You need energy to get in your car and drive. Doing more physical activity can build stamina, which helps you keep going when you're behind the wheel.

The American Society on Aging has a program that includes specific exercises that help develop strength, balance, and endurance. Check out [www.asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org) and click on the roadmap to driver wellness icon on the right side of the

### 3 Office for Aging

screen. Check out Chapter 4 for information on specific exercises.

Talk with your medical provider or family if you are having trouble parking, or if your legs become stiff, numb, or tingly as you drive. Occupational therapists can evaluate and recommend specially designed foot pedals, mirrors and seat cushions to improve driving position, vision and performance. Many older drivers experience impaired trunk movement and loss of strength in their shoulders, arms and hands. Simple adjustments to the seat and steering wheel can improve performance for drivers with limited flexibility.

Ask what exercise options will help you be able to maintain driving longer. If you do decide to stop driving, there are alternative ways for getting around. Call the Senior Resource Line at the Broome County Office for Aging, 778-2411, to learn what is available.



## Seniors Beware of Scams

(Adapted from *Gene-Senior*)

To avoid scams:

- Never disclose your credit card, bank account or Social Security number to someone who contacts you by telephone or Internet.
- Ask detailed questions about offered products and services; the total price, the delivery date, cancellation policy and warranty information.
- Ask the caller to send you more information through the mail. Con artists will try and pressure you into a decision by saying this is a one-time offer and you must act now.

April 2007

- Do research. Check the company's track record with your local Better Business Bureau.
- Resist pressure to send payment via private courier, wire transmission or overnight delivery. These methods sometimes prevent you from changing your mind. Pay with a credit card since Federal law protects consumers from paying for charges on their accounts when they have not received the ordered merchandise. You have the right to contest such a charge with your credit card company.
- Read everything first and know what you are signing. Con artists have been known to slip quit-claim deeds into other paperwork and steal a senior's house right from under them.
- Watch for scams such as the "Sweepstakes Scam". Either by letter or phone, a potential victim is told they have won money, but they first must send money to receive it. They are told they have to pay a fee, taxes, or even make a charitable contribution to get it. When they send in the money, they never get the prize.



## A Caregiving Tip

(From *In Support of Caregivers*  
Newsletter from Tompkins County Office  
for aging)

This is something that may be helpful for people with memory impairments that still like to help with things around the house. A woman whose mother likes to help make beds would get frustrated at which sheets go on which beds. The problem was solved by buying sheets that are color coded to match the color of the room. She now uses the blue sheets for the blue room etc.

## Introducing Two New Wellness Programs

### Living Healthy

Living Healthy is a six week workshop in chronic disease self-management that empowers people with a chronic disease to take control of their health.

Many caregivers have found attending these classes has helped them to better understand what a person with a chronic condition deals with on a regular basis. Not just physically but also emotionally. It is also a time that Caregivers can set aside just for themselves or they can attend with the person they are caring for.

Subjects covered include: 1) techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation; 2) appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance; 3) appropriate use of

April 2007

medications; 4) communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals; 5) nutrition; and, 6) how to evaluate new treatments.

### Active Choices

Active Choices is a six-month program which encourages regular physical activity.

A volunteer coach maintains regular, supportive telephone contacts with individual participants to help each develop and maintain an exercise routine customized to his or her needs, abilities and goals.

**This is a great opportunity for caregivers that find it difficult to leave the house, you can become a coach or if you are 60 years or older you can become a participant.**

**There is no cost for either program. Programs are scheduled to start [in the spring of 2007](#). Call RSVP at 231-0726 for more information.**

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Your April 2007 "Caregiver Corner"