From the desk of: Elizabeth Haskins, Director

SAVE THE DATE!

COUNTYWIDE PICNIC FOR 60+

THURSDAY, JULY 29

FOOD AND GAMES

*TICKETS WILL BE LIMITED

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

The Cortland County Area Agency on Aging is a member of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and is supported by the New York State Office for the Aging, the Cortland County Legislature, and donations from individuals and organizations.
The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has partnered with California-based GetSetUp, an online community of people who want to learn new skills, gain new connections, and obtain new life experiences. Continued on page 3

The Area Agency on Aging Nutrition Program’s Meals on Wheels was once again chosen as a “home town” charity by Royal Subaru for the 2020-2021 Subaru “Share the Love®” event. Grant funds will be used to replace older equipment needed for meal delivery, help with the cost of emergency food bags for homebound and vulnerable clients during the winter months in addition to items needed to expand and enhance the Home Delivered Meal program.

The “Subaru Share the Love®” Event gives Meals on Wheels programs across America an opportunity to grow a valuable funding source that supports Meals on Wheels America members all year long by providing unrestricted grant funds through fundraising and awareness campaign efforts.

On behalf of the Area Agency on Aging and the clients we serve, thank you, Mr. Reagan and Subaru for supporting the Meals on Wheels program!

Pictured: Colby Reagan, Director of Digital Marketing, Royal Subaru; Joseph Reagan, Owner, Royal Subaru; Liz Haskins, Director, Cortland County Area Agency on Aging; Anita Doty, Aging Services Worker, Cortland County Area Agency on Aging; and Jeromy Bushy, Director of Operations, Royal Subaru.

Bringing Fun Live Virtual Classes To Older Adults

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has partnered with California-based GetSetUp, an online community of people who want to learn new skills, gain new connections, and obtain new life experiences.
This is a moment when you can look at the pros and cons, risks and benefits. For adults, the fatality rate for COVID-19 is 1.8% in the U.S. 10% of people infected with COVID have long-term symptoms which last for months.

We know that many people do get side effects from the COVID vaccines. These usually are fever, chills, body aches, and nausea, but typically last 1-2 days. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine is associated with a rare side effect (2 out of 1,000,000, seen in women ages 18-49) of a dangerous blood clot. So far there is no evidence of long-term side effects. So bottom line, there may be a bit of temporary discomfort after vaccination vs. getting potentially really sick and dying or having long-term symptoms.

Here are a few things to know:

- The virus that causes COVID goes all over your body.
- You cannot get COVID from the vaccines.
- The vaccines prime your immune system and then go away. They do not stay in your body.
- The vaccine cannot alter your DNA.
- 95% of doctors were vaccinated as soon as they could.
- The early vaccination effort will likely save 100,000 lives.
- All of the vaccines went through the same 3 phase testing for safety that all vaccines do.

This remains a personal decision. Please remember by getting vaccinated, you will make it extremely unlikely that you would ever pass COVID-19 on to a loved one.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought social isolation to the forefront of everyone’s minds, but is not a new concept with our aging population. Seniors who live alone, independent from family and friends, have been grappling with isolation far before the pandemic. As more seniors go online, new ideas and programs await to assist in combating isolation.

GetSetup is a virtual collection of over 350 classes ranging from opportunities to engage in art discussions to learning how to play an instrument. Have you ever secretly, or even non-secretively, wanted to learn how to knit, line dance or learn what a tic toc is? Join a class with others who are interested just like you!

NYSOFA and the Cortland County AAA invite you to visit https://www.getsetup.io/partner/nystate, create an account, and sign up for a class for FREE using special code: NYSTATE. For assistance setting up an account over the phone, call the Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060.
What is a Plant-Based Diet and Why You Should Try It
By Jessica Planer, RDN, CDN

Plant-based diets are defined as a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes and celebrates plant-based foods. Plant-based meal plans include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, soy foods, nuts, seeds, plant oils, herbs, and spices. People who consume a plant-based diet choose more foods from plants, instead of animals. However, they are not vegetarian or vegan. Hence, they practice more flexible meal planning. Some researchers have used the term “Flexitarian” to describe plant-based diet consumers. The main principles are consuming mostly fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains, with the focus on protein from plants, instead of animals. The consumer is flexible and incorporates meat and animal products from time to time. Flexitarians also limit added sugars and processed foods.

The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) assesses the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States. Data from the NHANES III study has analyzed the value of plant-based diets. Findings have supported that people who consume a plant-based diet have a lower risk of suffering from obesity, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure. The American Heart Association also claims that, “Eating a lot of high fat meat is not a healthy way to lose weight, especially if you have heart disease.”

Sources of plant-based proteins include tofu, peanut butter, soy milk, nuts, seeds, and legumes, such as kidney and black beans. Simple meal ideas may include spinach and roasted red pepper with feta over whole grain pasta or meatless chili with black beans and sweet potato.

“Flexitarian Eating” is becoming more popular in the United States as 39-52% of US consumers are trying to eat more plant-based foods. Remember, there are no specific rules to this way of eating, making it an appealing option for consumers who are looking to cut back on animal products. Start with trying a meatless dish once a week as a health goal!

References:

Easy Three Bean Salad

1 cup cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
1 cup chickpeas
1 cup cooked kidney beans
¼ cup fresh cilantro
1 cup frozen shelled edamame
4 medium scallions (sliced)
1 cup sweet corn

Dressing:
½ tsp. black pepper
½ tsp. sea salt (optional)
2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
Squeeze of fresh lemon or lime

Directions:
• Add all the salad ingredients to a big bowl and mix well.
• In a small bowl mix the ingredients for the dressing.
• Add the dressing to the salad; mix well. Enjoy!
A draft proposal for changes to senior center programming has been released and presented to elected officials and community members in various locations. The draft proposal is two-fold. The first creates one main site in the city of Cortland where the population is most dense. Transportation will be available to individuals from the outlying areas of the county. In addition, the proposal implements a restaurant voucher program. This site will offer traditional programming including subsidized meals, socialization, and health and wellness activities. The second focus of the draft proposal is to make available community operated centers or satellites accomplished through a grant application process. The grants will be offered by the county, and applicants can apply for one of three options. The model for the outlying areas removes unpopular practices currently in place to meet funding guidelines, including the meal reservation system, inability to bring food in and take food out. In addition, the proposal supports centers that are tailored to the needs and wants of each community.

For more information about the draft proposal, please visit the agency website at https://www.cortland-co.org/434/Area-Agency-on-Aging. You can also request a copy by calling 607-753-5060, emailing ccaa@cortland-co.org, or by mailing requests to Cortland County Area Agency on Aging, 60 Central Ave., Office B4, Cortland, NY 13045.


The agency is seeking input from community members. A public hearing to solicit input has been scheduled for July 29, 2021 during the Countywide Picnic. Comments can also be submitted by phone, email or mail using the contact information previously stated.

I am very excited to be afforded the opportunity as the new Nutrition Program Manager for the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging. I have been working for the agency now for a little over nine months as an Aging Services Specialist, working closely with the Home Delivered Meals program. The food service industry is something in which I am very comfortable. I have fifteen years of experience managing and running restaurants. I also have extensive knowledge with the food bank and other community based organizations.

In addition to my food service experience, I also have a Masters in Psychology with eleven years of human services experience. My Home Delivered Meals experience has allowed me to connect with our community, clients, and staff in all departments of the AAA. I look forward to combining my experience, my passion to help, and my love of health and wellness as the Nutrition Program Manager to help serve and meet the mission of the Cortland Country Area Agency on Aging.
Pat’s Retirement Journal
By Pat Walter, a Retiree with ties to Cortland County

One of my favorite activities in retirement has been reading. I take pleasure in the escape to places and situations that are beyond my reality. While I have read biographies, travel guides, self-help and other non-fiction selections, my favorite genre is fiction. Over time, I have developed a list of favorite authors, three of which I would like to introduce to you.

Barbara Delinsky creates characters that might remind you of your neighbor or your best friend. In her own words she identifies herself as “an everyday woman writing about everyday people facing not-so-everyday challenges”. Her characters and the situations they face are believable; and though you might sometimes doubt the outcome, you can pretty much count on a happy ending. My first Delinsky read was Blueprints, and right now I am reading Looking for Peyton Place.

Another favorite is Kristin Hannah. She has written over 20 novels with characters and situations that get me very emotionally involved. Many of her books have a “tear your heart out” plot with incredibly intense characters. No guarantee of a happy ending with Hannah; but once you start reading, you will resent the world around you that won’t let you sit and read it straight through. My first Hannah book was The Nightingale, and The Four Winds is loaded on my tablet to go on vacation with me.

If you are a mystery fan, you must try reading Louise Penny’s series set around the life of Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of Sûreté du Québec, the provincial police force for Quebec. There are 17 books in the series; and though you will enjoy them in any order, I highly recommend reading them in sequence. The characters on Gamache’s homicide team in the Sûreté and the residents of the village of Three Pines develop through the series. Start with Still Life; and if you get hooked, Google will provide you the correct sequence.

All three authors are popular enough that you can find their books in the library. I hope you have a chance to enjoy one or more for your summer reading.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Because needs are always greater than the resources available to meet them, Cortland County Area Agency on Aging encourages and appreciates financial contributions. Thank you!

Name _____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________

Phone _____________________________________________

I designate my contribution of $ __________ for: □ Newsletter □ Use Where Most Needed
□ Legal Services □ Caregiver Respite Program
□ Handyman □ In-Home Services
□ Nutrition Program □ Meals on Wheels

All donations are greatly appreciated.
All contributions are tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Clip and return this coupon with your donation to: Cortland County Area Agency on Aging
60 Central Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
The sense of freedom that area bicyclists experienced around the turn of the previous century literally paved the way for a novelty that would be the catalyst for social revolution: the automobile. The rural community around Cortland County was opposed at first to this new thing, but quickly began to see the benefits of reliable transportation that didn’t require acres of hay and hours of labor.

Roads around the county at that time were generally in poor shape. The introduction of the Rural Free Delivery mail system helped highlight the need for road improvements. In 1916, the federal government considered a federal road program, authorizing millions to improve rural post roads and star routes, the latter roads awarded to a private mail carrier.

By the 1920’s, road improvements were underway in all corners of the county. Changes were happening: women buyers were starting to step up, and “buying on time” was grudgingly put in place by Henry Ford after rival Studebaker offered this convenience.

With the era of the automobile, supporting businesses such as filling stations, motor hotels (motels) and roadside diners sprang up, followed later by novelties such as shopping malls, which made a permanent change to the rural roadside landscape.

One of the most important changes was trying to establish some type of order to this new and dangerous practice of driving.

Fay C. Parson, the Cortland correspondent for the “Empire State Motorist”, named some rules as early as 1910:

- Always keep on the right hand side of the street, and do not think because there is no one ahead of you that you are privileged to drive in the center.
- Never turn a corner or turn around without first looking to see if there is someone coming behind you.
- See that your front and tail oil lamps are lighted at dark and that it keeps burning.
- Be particularly careful about speeding. While 10 miles per hour is provided in the old law, we will have no trouble if everyone will hold down to the proposed limit and the new law of 15 miles per hour.

To be honest staying home wasn’t a huge change from “normal” life. I don’t go out much anyway so not going out was no big deal, EXCEPT psychologically. When you are told you can’t do something that’s when everything within wars to do it!

The first thing I lost during the pandemic was my homecare aid around month 3, but I worked with an AAA Case Manager and at 5 months I got a teen who helped for 6 weeks until school started. We then decided to discontinue service until we knew how COVID would change. Erring on the side of caution, I made the best of the situation.

Was my house as clean as I like it? No, but who was going to see it? One time I spilled something and upon trying to mop the sauce up, all it did was smear. In frustration I left it and let it dry. When I came back, it wiped right up. I did the best I could; but whenever I hit a wall and needed help, I would ask God, and he would give me the ability or send someone. Working with the AAA, I now have an aide that is very helpful!
The Family Caregiver Alliance defines an informal family caregiver as any relative, partner, friend or neighbor who has a significant personal relationship with, and provides a broad range of assistance for, an older person or an adult with a chronic or disabling condition. Caregiving can be a full-time job; and for many caregivers, they also work at a job outside of the home and must juggle both working and caregiving. This presents a new set of challenges and extra need for support. To learn more about this, I interviewed Kim, a working niece and caregiver of Karen, who lives alone in her own home in Cortland County:

**Q:** What has been your biggest challenge while working and also being a caregiver?
**A:** Finding time for everything – time for my own job, taking care of my own household, plus taking care of my aunt’s household and her care – basically managing 2 households, such as lawn care and house issues that always come up.

**Q:** How many hours do you work (outside the home) per week?
**A:** Full-time, so 40 hours.

**Q:** How has being a working caregiver affected your job?
**A:** I’m very lucky because my position at TC3 has flexibility, and my colleagues have been wonderful and supportive. Thankfully my job has not been in jeopardy.

**Q:** What has been the biggest help?
**A:** The help that Cortland County has provided through Meals on Wheels (MOW) and by providing the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS). These are the two main things that help. Prior to her receiving MOW, I was taking her all of her meals, while also working. So it is really helpful now that she gets MOW, and I just supplement on the weekends and other times as needed. With her PERS system, we know that if she falls or needs help, she can get the help she needs right away; and this helps give us peace of mind.

**Q:** Do you have any advice for other working caregivers?
**A:** Yes – take all the help you can get, any help from your support system that you have! My husband and children are a strong support system and help especially when I have to travel for work. Take help from the County; it really makes a difference!

If you are a caregiver, especially a working caregiver, take Kim’s advice and contact the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging’s Caregiver Resource Center at 607-753-5060 to learn more about Caregiver Services and Support.

---

Caregivers Support GROUP
JOIN US ON ZOOM
Every 4th Thursday of the month from 3-4 pm
Meet with others who are also coping with caregiving issues.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE CAREGIVERS’ RESOURCE CENTER
753-5060
Research has shown that petting and interacting with companion animals can offer relaxation and lower stress levels, and these benefits extend to people of all ages. (1). Joy for All™ Companion Pets allow socially isolated older adults to receive similar comfort that they would from live pets by calming anxiety, decreasing loneliness, and providing a better quality of life—without needing to worry about food or vet bills.

Doris Randall of Cortland is 99 years old and lives alone. Doris adopted an animatronic cat, which she named Tabby the Cat, from the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging last May during the midst of the pandemic. Doris was previously the proud owner of a 22 pound cat, Jerry that she had for nearly 11 years. Sadly, Jerry had to be put down due to health conditions, leaving Doris feeling alone and heartbroken. She really missed his companionship, but knew that caring for another pet would be difficult. Because of the pandemic, Doris’ social interaction was limited, and she was only getting out for doctors appointments. Having Jerry brought her great comfort during the time she would have otherwise been alone. When Doris was presented with the option to adopt an animatronic pet, she was ecstatic. This was exactly what she needed during this difficult and unprecedented year.

Doris stated that at a young age, she always had an extensive collection of stuffed animals and dolls; and she even has a story to tell for each one. When Doris received her new pet, she took him out the box and brought him to life with the flick of a switch on his belly. The excitement on her face was priceless. From that day forward, Doris took her new pet cat everywhere with her. She tucks him in at night and wakes him up in the morning after breakfast is made. Doris also states that Tabby the Cat loves listening to Lawrence Welk. Sure, she knows that Tabby the Cat isn’t real, but he brings her a sense of purpose and companionship. Doris was surprised to learn how much Tabby the Cat was going to be a part of her life. Doris has recently adopted an animatronic dog, Leo, as well and states, “The two get along pretty well and talk back and forth.” Joy for All™ Companion Pets have brought Doris a lot of comfort and companionship this past year, and she states, “I would recommend them to anyone”.

Robotic pets can help with social isolation and depression in older adults throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. If you or a loved one are interested in learning more about Joy for All™ Companion Pets, contact the Caregivers Resource Center at the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060.

Does Medicare provide dental coverage? The answer to this question is not as simple as it should be. It really depends on the dental need of the Medicare beneficiary. Dental coverage is very limited under Original Medicare. Medicare does not cover most dental procedures, such as cleanings, fillings, tooth extractions, dentures, or other dental devices. However, routine dental coverage may be an additional benefit available as part of a Medicare Advantage plan.

The Medicare & You handbook states, “Medicare will not cover services in connection with the care, treatment, filling, removal, or replacement of teeth or structures directly supporting teeth. Medicare will cover surgery to treat fractures of the jaw or face, biopsy and tumor removal, dental services that are integral part of a covered surgery, or extractions pre-radiation to the jaw, or inpatient oral exam pre-kidney transplant (does not cover treatment).”

Medicare Advantage (Part C) plans, which are private health insurance plans, are required by law to cover everything that Medicare covers, and some plans offer additional dental benefits. Many Advantage plans cover preventive care, such as cleanings, X-rays, and regular exams, either partially or in full. Dental benefits vary by plan. Some Medicare Advantage plans may require the beneficiary to use dentists in their provider networks; other plans will have a set amount such as $500 to $1,000 for reimbursable dental services. Beneficiaries of Medicare Advantage plans should review their dental coverage with their plan administrator before making a dental appointment.

An additional choice for Medicare beneficiaries is to pick up a supplemental dental insurance plan. Currently seniors can buy supplemental dental coverage through Humana, Delta Dental, and Physicians Mutual. Every supplemental plan varies in cost and coverage. Before purchasing a supplemental dental plan, review the coverage and costs offered by the insurance company to see if it’s cost effective for you and your dental needs.

If you would like additional information on Medicare or Medicare coverage of dental, please call the Area Agency on Aging at (607) 753-5060 and ask to speak with the ONLY state certified Medicare counselors in Cortland County.

Did you know...Depression is a common problem among older adults, but it is NOT a normal part of aging. Depression is a real illness. You cannot “snap out of” clinical depression. Most people who experience depression need treatment to get better. Everyone on Original Medicare is eligible for a free depression screening once a year. This screening can help Medicare beneficiaries to get treatment to improve their quality of life.
Staying connected and engaged can be more difficult with all the precautions we have had to take during the pandemic limiting almost everyone’s opportunity for social involvement. We all want to get back to connecting with others and not be isolated. Volunteering can improve physical/mental health and improve awareness, unite with others, while sharing your experience and skills. Some safe options for volunteering include:

**Pen Friend Program** - Any senior can become a Pen Friend. This is our way of reaching all seniors, despite inabilities to connect with internet, etc. Persons interested in the tried-and-true art of letter writing can contact this agency. Geared towards age 60+, a match involves at least one senior, but an intergenerational match would be welcome, i.e. a student, 4H’er, etc.

**Telephone Reassurance** - Are you a good listener? Consider connecting with older adults, some of whom were isolated / lonely prior to COVID-19, with the pandemic only intensifying the problem. Interested volunteers are paired with an agency client or a resident of an Assisted Living / Long-Term Care facility. The volunteer calls the client weekly, providing socialization and companionship.

**Wellness Calls** - The agency continues to offer a wellness check to Senior Center Participants to make sure you are okay, i.e. “Do you stay connected with family? Friends?” “Do you have concerns regarding upcoming holidays?”

**Technology** - Lead/Coach A Matter of Balance to teach class virtually. Lead a ZOOM Social hour. If you are comfortable with technology, you could put your skills to use leading older adults.

**Food Distribution with Home-Delivered Meals** – Volunteers are needed to deliver meals at Cortland Housing Authority’s 42 Church Street and 51 Port Watson Street apartments. Safety training, including Covid protocols, are given to all volunteers. The drivers deliver to the buildings, and the volunteers distribute to the residents who receive Meals On Wheels.

**Shopping Assistance Program** - through agency case management referrals only. If you were previously a Shopping Assistance Volunteer or a newly interested volunteer, give us a call for details at 753-5060.

---

**Here To Help**
At the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging, we specialize in providing the education, information, services and benefits important for enhancing the health and well-being of adults 60 and older. Though we are currently unable to see visitors in our offices, we are always available by phone Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 4:00. If calling after hours, please leave a message. We will get back to you the next business day. Our number is 607-753-5060. We can also be reached by email: ccaaa@cortland-co.org.
Have you ever had the experience of waiting weeks, even months, for a doctor’s appointment only to leave the office feeling like problems were not addressed; questions were not answered; or you cannot remember what the doctor said? So many of us have had that experience! However, following a few tips and putting in a minimal amount of effort can change the experience for you and enable you to get the most out of your doctor’s visit.

According to an article by Synergy Home Care, it is important to prepare for your appointment ahead of time. Sometime before your appointment ask yourself: how are you feeling? Write down any questions, concerns, problems or new symptoms.

Another piece of advice is to take notes during your appointment and ask questions. The article encourages the reader to “ask questions until you are comfortable with the answers.” Don’t be intimidated or embarrassed about asking questions and taking notes. After all, many patients do not have a medical background or education to enable them to understand so much of what is said. This goes along with understanding treatment options and side effects. Again, don’t be intimidated, it is in your best interest to understand all your options.

The article suggests asking for a full medication review. Create your own list, get a printout from your pharmacy, or bring all your medications with you. Include any supplements you might take and any prescriptions from any other doctor as well. This can help prevent any drug interactions.

Another way to get the most out of your visit is to be upfront about concerns with costs. Doctors sometimes have samples of medications or discount programs that can assist.

By preparing for your appointment beforehand, taking notes, asking questions, reviewing your medications, and voicing cost concerns, you are more likely to get the most out of your doctor’s visit.

**Synergy HomeCare, “Six Tips for Being Your Senior’s Health Advocate at a Doctor’s Appointment”.** Synergy Homecare, 3/18/2020, 5/17/2021.

---

I could work with the missing aide, but not getting hot meals from MOW was probably the hardest. I discontinued MOW when they went to frozen meals. For some reason I just could not tolerate them. God spoke to individuals and provided meals via friends. They would make extra and bring it over. I often had more than needed. I did miss the MOW driver; it makes a huge difference when you might only say Hi, but at least someone knows you are alive. When hot meals returned, I was ecstatic!

In addition to my work as an editor, I was able to finish writing my memoir that I started over twenty years ago. On March 1, 2021, I published **Steps of Faith: God’s Provision in Overcoming in Adversity**. The book is doing well, but the most exciting part is finding out what God had in mind, as proceeds will help widows and orphans in Tanzania.
Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held to receive comments on annual updates to the Area Agency on Aging Four Year Plan for 2020 - 2024 to be submitted to the NYS Office for the Aging pursuant to Section 541 of the Executive Law of New York State and regulations promulgated there under. The public hearing will be held on Thursday, July 29 at 10:30 a.m. during the Countywide Picnic at Dwyer Memorial Park, 6799 Little York Lake Road, Preble, NY 13141. A summary of services, current issues, concerns, and funding can be obtained prior to the hearing by contacting the Area Agency on Aging at 60 Central Ave, Cortland, NY 13045, phoning 607-753-5060 or visiting the agency website at http://www.cortland-co.org/434. Accommodations for individuals with hearing or visual impairments are available upon request with advanced notice of at least 72 hours. This site is accessible.
An exciting initiative is afoot in Cortland County: the creation of a robust, centralized Volunteer Driver Program. With support from a network of agencies within the community, CAPCO is seeking to expand its existing Volunteer Driver Program.

CAPCO is working with the St. Lawrence County-based Volunteer Transportation Center to bring the program to fruition. The VTC already operates a successful Volunteer Driver Program in St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, and Oswego counties, among others.

This initiative will help address transportation gaps that exist in the community by dispatching volunteer drivers to fulfill rides. The program’s first step will be to recruit drivers; that is where all of you readers come in!

Are you retired and looking for something to do for a few hours a week? Are you looking for a way to stay social and involved in your community? Maybe seeking ways to give back to your community and help in a tangible way?

Becoming a volunteer driver may be just the answer. All you need is a valid driver’s license, a reliable vehicle that has passed NYS inspection and is insured and registered, and to pass a criminal background check.

According to Sam Purington, Director of the Volunteer Transportation Center, it is one volunteer opportunity that really allows you to make a difference just by doing something you do every day. “You get to pick and choose when, and who, and where; and that offers flexibility,” said Purington.

You also get to make a difference in your community by helping your neighbors in need.

Drivers are reimbursed for mileage at the federal rate of $0.56 cents per mile. This is a tax-free reimbursement that does not affect Social Security or other benefits.

Another concern in the era of COVID-19 is transmission of the virus. But Purington offers reassurance on that front as well. “We do 800 trips a day, and we’ve had no virus transmission in a vehicle,” he says. Wearing masks and using common sense go a long way.

Interested in being a Volunteer Driver? Contact Nicki Van Ben Schoten, Transportation Coordinator/Dispatcher at CAPCO NickiV@capco.org 607-753-6781.

**Neighborhoods Helping Neighbors**
By Catherine Wilde, Mobility Manager Coordinator
Seven Valleys Health Coalition

NYS inspection and is insured and registered, and to pass a criminal background check.

According to Sam Purington, Director of the Volunteer Transportation Center, it is one volunteer opportunity that really allows you to make a difference just by doing something you do every day. “You get to pick and choose when, and who, and where; and that offers flexibility,” said Purington.

You also get to make a difference in your community by helping your neighbors in need.

Drivers are reimbursed for mileage at the federal rate of $0.56 cents per mile. This is a tax-free reimbursement that does not affect Social Security or other benefits.

Another concern in the era of COVID-19 is transmission of the virus. But Purington offers reassurance on that front as well. “We do 800 trips a day, and we’ve had no virus transmission in a vehicle,” he says. Wearing masks and using common sense go a long way.

Interested in being a Volunteer Driver? Contact Nicki Van Ben Schoten, Transportation Coordinator/Dispatcher at CAPCO NickiV@capco.org 607-753-6781.

---

**Go Green!**
Alternate Means of Receiving Senior News

Sign up to receive the newsletter delivered electronically by email. Simply email us at ccaaa@cornland-co.org. Be sure to provide your name, email, and current mailing address.

---

**Save The Date**
Countywide Picnic
Food, fishing, games, dunk tank, basket raffle
Thursday, July 29
9:30am-3:00pm
Advance tickets only
Scam and Fraud Alerts
By Michelle Baker, Aging Services Specialist

Scams in America are plentiful. They are a costly crime for the individual but are considered “low risk” because they are hard to prosecute. Scams are a billion-dollar industry. Con artists like to prey on members of the population they perceive to be vulnerable. Unfortunately, older Americans are usually targeted by scammers. This article will discuss some common scams that are directed at the older population and give tips to avoid scams.

- **Online fraud.** Scammers usually like to send emails about inheritances. They send an email and claim you have come into some money and need your help to get it, or you receive an email stating you have come into some money and you need to pay taxes on the money to get it, and they will share half with you once in hand.

- **Government Officials.** These scammers pretend to be from government agencies, and their stories often sound legitimate. Scammers may call you telling you that they are from the IRS, Medicare, or the Social Security Administration. Their aim is to pressure seniors into giving personal information and/or money.

- **Romance scams.** Romance scams are popular because they touch on loneliness and isolation. Once the suspect has gained the senior’s trust, it becomes all about scamming money out of the individual.

These scams are real and detrimental to the individual. If you have been scammed, please reach out to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) which is the main agency that collects scam reports. They can be contacted online at [www.Reportfraud.ftc.gov](http://www.Reportfraud.ftc.gov) or by phone at 1-877-382-4357 from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm.

Do not be a victim; learn what scams are out there, and guard your finances and identity.

Having trouble paying for your internet bills due to the pandemic? If you are income eligible or participate in a government assistance program, the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging can help.

In December of 2020, lawmakers approved funding to create the Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund. $3.2 billion was allocated to create an Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB). The program will last until funds are depleted, or six months after the end of the pandemic.

The EBB allows for a $50 internet credit and a $100 credit towards the purchase of a tablet or laptop through participating providers. Consumers must pay a minimum of $10 up to $50 for a tablet or laptop to receive the additional benefit.

Households can qualify for the EBB discount through current enrollment of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Medicaid, Lifeline, or if a child in the household participates in the USDA Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch Program.

“This program will have a tremendous, positive impact on so many American households. It’s an investment in American families and a vote of confidence in the economic power of getting us all online,” said Jessica Rosenworcel, Acting Chairwoman of the FCC. “High-speed internet service is vital for families to take advantage of today’s health, education, and workplace opportunities. And the discount for laptops and desktop computers will continue to have positive impact even after this temporary discount program wraps up.” (1)

If you are not enrolled in or participate in any of the assistance programs listed, you may still qualify for the program through income guidelines. Participants must have an income no greater than 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$17,388</td>
<td>$1,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$23,517</td>
<td>$1,959.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$29,646</td>
<td>$2,470.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To apply for the EBB, households can apply online at [https://getemergencybroadband.org/](https://getemergencybroadband.org/), or print an application to mail. To learn more or to get a mail-in application, call the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging at (607) 753-5060 or the Emergency Broadband Benefit information line at (833) 511-0311.


“In the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”

Abraham Lincoln
The 2021 HEAP Cooling Assistance benefit opened May 3, 2021, extending through August 31, 2021, or until funding is exhausted.

The HEAP Cooling program may assist you, with a doctor’s note, to obtain an air conditioner or fan to help cool your home this summer.

You may be eligible for a Cooling Assistance benefit if:
- HEAP/SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) program eligible,
- The household includes a person who has a documented illness aggravated by heat (Doctor note required),
- You currently do not have a working air conditioner or the air conditioner you have is five years old or older, and,
- You did not receive a HEAP funded air conditioner/fan within the past five years.

If eligible, you may receive one benefit per household - purchased and installed. If an air conditioner cannot be installed safely, a fan will be provided. For applications and/or questions, call 753-5060.

Regular and Emergency HEAP Extended

The 2020-2021 HEAP and Emergency HEAP season has been extended through August 31, 2021. Emergency HEAP requests must call 607-428-5400, leave your contact info on the recorded line to be called back in the order calls were received.

The 2021-2022 HEAP season opens in November. This is the regular heating benefit. If you received a HEAP benefit for the 2020-2021 season, you should be receiving a new HEAP application by mail by September. SNAP recipients must maintain active status to receive HEAP, and is an automatic award.

When received, please complete the application and return it to the Area Agency on Aging at 60 Central Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045. If you do not receive an application by mail, or are a new applicant, you may apply when the HEAP season opens in November. Watch the next newsletter for more HEAP information.

Senior Farmer’s Market Coupons to be distributed in July and August

Call 607-753-5060 or visit our website at http://www.cortland-co.org/434/Area-Agency-on-Aging to view details on the 2021 distribution schedule to claim your $20.00 coupon booklet. Income guidelines apply.
What is a Death Binder, and How is it a Gift to your Loved Ones?
By Hospicare & Palliative Care Services

A Death Binder is a place to gather necessary information and documents that detail how we want our wishes carried out, our belongings dispersed, our finances dealt with, etc. A Death Binder puts all your important documents in one place.

So why should you make one? At Hospicare we believe that it is a gift to our loved ones because it reduces the stress for our families when confronted with difficult medical decisions or in the event of our death. Here are four steps to create your own Death Binder:

STEP ONE: Set your Intention. Set the intention and ask yourself the hard questions about your life and your choices.
- How do you imagine your end-of-life experience?
- What medical or life-sustaining care do you want?

STEP TWO: Gather your Documents. Gather important information and documents that we want to be available in case of natural disaster, medical emergency, or death. It will include medical, financial, and legal documents. Also consider funeral plans, other personal information, household information, and passwords.

STEP THREE: Organize your Documents. You can put documents in a binder, file cabinet, or box. You may make your own so that you can customize it to be an expression of you and your values. Or you can purchase one on the internet or at a local bookstore. Poke around and see what makes the most sense for you!

STEP FOUR: Have the Conversations. Talk to your loved ones, and let them know what you are doing and why it's important to you. They may be hesitant to have these conversations, but be patient and remember your intention of providing your Death Binder as a gift to them.

Remember, a Death Binder is a living document and should be updated regularly. Visit Hospicare.org/blog/deathbinder for more information on advance care planning. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions at info@Hospicare.org or 607-272-0212.

“Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional.”
Walt Disney
Cortland Housing Assistance Council, Inc.
36 Taylor Street, Cortland
Affordable rentals in the City of Cortland
Handicapped accessible, off street parking
On-site laundry, secured building
Call 607-753-8271 or visit us at cortlandhousing.org

To help defray the cost of printing and mailing, the Area Agency on Aging accepts paid advertisements for Senior News. Acceptance of ads does not constitute endorsement of any service, product or business.

CORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Cortland Housing Authority has 380 high quality apartments available in its senior/disabled and family developments throughout Cortland County. A single person could earn up to $40,500; and a family of five up to $62,500 and still qualify to live in one of our apartments.

We have senior/disabled efficiency and one bedroom apartments located in the City of Cortland. We also have one bedroom senior/disabled units in Homer, McGraw, Marathon, Truxton and Cincinnatus. Our large family apartments (3, 4 and 5 bedrooms) are located in the City of Cortland. We also have two and three bedroom family apartments scattered throughout the county in Homer, Truxton, McGraw, Cincinnatus and the City of Cortland. There are short waiting lists for apartments in most of our developments.

Call 607.753.1771 today for an application or email request at info@cortlandha.com
CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?
Please Let Us Know

Whether it is temporary or permanent, the Area Agency on Aging appreciates knowing your new address. This will help keep our mailing list up to date and avoid the expense of mail returned to us by the post office (we are charged approximately $1.25 for each newsletter returned).

If your change of address is temporary, or if you do not have second-class mail forwarded, please let us know. We’ll send your newsletter to your temporary address until you notify us of your return.

To notify us of your change of address:
* Call the Area Agency on Aging: (607)753.5060 or
* Use the convenient form below.

We appreciate your help.

CHANGING OF ADDRESS

Name ____________________________________________
Current Address ______________________________________________________________________
New Address _______________________________________________________________________
Effective from (Date) ___________________________ If Temporary, to (Date) ___________________

Mail to: Area Agency on Aging
60 Central Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045

[ ] Please remove my name from the mailing list.