AGE WELL CENTER AT CORTLAND UPDATE

Why the name change? Restructuring the congregate meal program has been a long process that began in 2020. For a number of reasons including 40% progressive decline in participation over eight years, client feedback, and rising operating costs with decreased revenues, the need for change to a more sustainable model became abundantly clear. Implementation of a new type of service delivery that supports community driven programming in the outlying areas are occurring at this time. In addition, the agency is focusing on what is needed to open the Age Well Center and creating a realistic time line. The commitment to restructuring the congregate meal program is high. Funding streams have shifted AAA’s focus across the nation to health and wellness as an effort to reduce Medicare and Medicaid costs related to preventable disease.

The name “Age Well Center at Cortland” was designated in 2021 to better reflect the vision for a new model with a greater focus on overall wellness through enhancement of past programming.

When will we open?

After over a year of touring multiple sites and holding many conversations with potential hosts, partners and landlords, the agency is relieved and grateful for the Legislature’s approval to lease the beautiful new space located at 165 Crescent Commons. Renovations are needed, community input is imperative, permits need to be obtained, systems need to be expanded, code guidelines need to be followed, availability of Buildings and Grounds staff to perform renovations, and plans need to be drawn. In addition, the rise in Covid cases has added a new level of uncertainty once again.

As much as we all desire an open date in October, it is clear this goal will not be met. As an effort to expedite planning, in September the agency requested Legislative approval to contract with an expert to assist with the process. Help is needed to facilitate meetings with stakeholders and the community to create an action plan that clearly defines a timeline and refined vision based on community input. At this point, it appears opening may not be until after the first of the year. In the meantime, the agency is actively working with a new partner to jointly offer limited activities and Grab and Go Meals in a temporary location until the Age Well Center at Cortland is open.
Increasing Quality of Life for the Person
For Whom You are Responsible
By: Bill Hopkins, Phd
2020-2021 Senior of the Year

- Include them in household activities. Don't correct if they don't do it as you would. If the fork is on the wrong side of the dinner plate, leave it. Moving it is criticism. Folding bath towels and putting the silverware away in the kitchen drawer is relatively easy.

- Soothe the person with gentle massages. Most of us like it. Touch is an important way to communicate. Use a little lotion and gently rub into hands and forearms. It can provide a sense of calmness.

- Make table tops accident proof. Remove items that could tip over or that could be swiped off the table.

- Prepare for showers and baths. Put everything together and close by ahead of time.

- Lay out the clothing for the day. If Henry likes to wear a certain shirt all the time, buy a few the same.

- If talking about Helen or Henry, never do so when they are in ear shot. Never whisper. If you talk about them in their presence, use their name, and don't forget eye contact.

- Seniors like music. A “smart speaker” (e.g., Alexa) can play any kind of music you ask. Many public libraries also loan music CDs and have books on CD. Buy a pair of low-cost earphones.

- Use the “Best Friend Approach”. Would I say this or use this tone of voice for my best friend? For all of us, it's not what we say, but how we say it. People with dementia are often better able to read body language, intonation, and volume than others are.

- Ask the Guidance Office of your local intermediate or high school if they have students they would recommend reading books to older people. When my daughter was seven, she read to people in nursing homes.

- If what you’re doing isn’t working, you’re doing the wrong thing.

- Don't forget your sense of humor. Getting upset isn't helpful.

- Find the person inside!

- Find what’s right, not what’s wrong. This is good advice for everyone!

Congratulations Senior of the Year 2021
Bill Hopkins!!
As with most people when the COVID-19 pandemic started, my thoughts first went to my mother. At the time my mom was 84 years old. A car accident many years ago resulted in a long-term issue with her lungs due to infection. Often when she gets a cold, she has a hard time getting over the cough because of this issue.

For the past five or so years she has lived in an independent senior living facility in Washington State. As with many families, we are all over the country, but my siblings and I are committed to making sure Mom has all that she needs. Over the course of the first year of the pandemic, we acknowledged that if Mom did get COVID-19, it would be difficult for her to recover. Throughout the year we held our breaths when she got tested.

We knew she felt isolated because they had closed down the dining room, game room and coffee area, but we were thankful that her facility was doing all they could to prevent the spread of COVID. We all called her daily to chat, and we sent books and yarn via Amazon so that she would stay busy.

In late January of 2021, we rejoiced when Mom was given the vaccine at her facility. Two weeks later she got her second shot, and two weeks after that she was able to have a bit of normalcy. She still wore a mask and socially distanced when possible.

I planned to surprise her with a trip in July. About a week before the trip, there was an outbreak of the Delta-variant in her facility. They closed back down the common areas and began testing. While waiting to board a flight to see her, my brother called to tell me that Mom had tested positive. I arrived in town worried about her health and her spirits. I called to talk to her standing outside of her window. She sounded great and had no cough. She was upset when I told her I had come to visit as she was not allowed to leave her facility.

About ten days later after I left, she tested negative for the virus. She never got any symptoms of COVID. The vaccine saved my Mom’s life. It enabled her to fight off the worst of the symptoms. I will make another trip to see her in a few months - this would not have been possible without the vaccine.

Please get vaccinated - for your sake and the sake of your family.

IMPROVING LINES OF COMMUNICATION

As an effort to keep the public informed about “hot topics”, the agency plans to implement the following in October:

- Restore Senior News publications to six times a year from quarterly (previous budget reduction)
- Issue regular updates every two to three weeks through a variety of media outlets (radio, newspaper, social media)
- Create a new page on the agency website listing current local, state and federal topics impacting older adults and updates on agency activities

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.
**Ask The Dietitian**
By Carolyn Allen, MS, RDN, CDN

**Q:** How can I increase my protein?

**A:** Protein is an important nutrient for our bodies to function properly. It helps create hormones, chemicals, enzymes, hair, bones, muscle, skin, and blood. If you want to increase your protein, ask yourself: Why do you want to? Is there a health issue that requires a greater protein need? In our American diet, we get more protein than we think.

It is also important to make sure you are getting enough complex carbohydrates and healthy fats as well. Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables? Keep in mind, protein is only one of the five food groups that should be on your plate!

The recommendations for protein are 56 grams per day for men and 46 grams per day for women over 60. This means, for every ounce, you get about 7 grams of protein. For example, if you eat 3oz of chicken, you get 21 grams of protein. Sometimes, you need to increase protein to help heal wounds, broken bones, or recover from an illness or surgery.

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**Justen’s Pumpkin Seeds**

**Rinse pumpkin seeds**

**Dry well**

**Coat lightly with**

**Extra virgin olive oil**

**Season as desired**

**Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes**

Justen Cole, Senior Cook, Area Agency on Aging

*Below are examples of protein foods that can be included in your diet. Throw a handful of seeds, nuts, egg, cheese, or beans into salads, soups, casseroles, or replace as a snack.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Grams of Protein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egg</td>
<td>1 item</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut Butter</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>1 oz (4 dice)</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>8 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>8 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red meat, poultry, pork</td>
<td>3 oz (palm of hand)</td>
<td>21 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>2 slices</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish, any kind</td>
<td>3 oz (palm of hand)</td>
<td>21 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts, any kind</td>
<td>1 oz (14 walnut halves, 24 almonds, 16 cashews, 28 peanuts, 45 pistachios)</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds (sunflower, chia, flax, pumpkin, hemp, sesame, etc.)</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans (black, pinto, kidney, etc.) and lentils</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hummus</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
<td>7 grams</td>
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Working through the COVID-19 pandemic has had its challenges. When faced with most challenges, new ideas start to bloom and surface. No one really enjoys change, and in the words of John F. Kennedy, “Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future”.

New and exciting things are coming for Cortland County and our older population. On the horizon is a new center, housed in a beautiful industrial location, which has the potential to house so many new innovative ideas and to be a place that is inclusive, inviting, and interactive. “Good food and good company” is a saying I heard recently. This really stuck with me and influenced the direction the agency wants the new center to go. We want to include new ways of learning (i.e. computer labs), new wellness and exercise programs, cooking classes for one and two, games, and so many more exciting activities. The kitchen staff has been working vigorously to roll out some new and exciting meals that are sure to please the palate. Don’t worry; we will still have your favorite meals that we have had in the past.

We have not forgotten about our rural area residents. In fact, when tasked with a difficult situation on how to move forward, we chose to step up and help as best as we could by providing choices to the rural area residents. There is an option for some of the previous centers to continue as satellite centers in areas previously established throughout the county. They will provide initiatives determined by the participants of each specific center. The alternative option is to be transported into the main center hub here in Cortland. Keep in mind, the Cortland center will still have the reservation system. The new Cortland Center will offer many new and familiar services.

As we all move forward with this new and exciting journey, we, as a community, can rewrite this beautiful story together.

Continued from page 1

What is the Vision?
The Vision is to enhance and expand past programming to create a modern state of the art center that incorporates best practices of successful 21st century models across the nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Focus Areas of Successful Models</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) State of the art, attractive and welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Trained Community Navigators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Facilitate programs to increase civic participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Classrooms (art, music, writing, drama, cooking, language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Programming designed to appeal to younger older adults (60-70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Expanded transportation options</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
For those of you who are long time followers of this column, you know that a year ago my husband George and I made a dramatic lifestyle change and moved from a four-bedroom farmhouse with a four-bay garage on 30 plus acres of land in Marathon to a two-bedroom apartment in a senior independent living facility in Utica. When we made the change, we were convinced that it was the right time and right place to downsize. We still feel that way. The second most asked question from our friends and family was how we came to that decision. How did we know it was time to downsize so dramatically, and how did we choose our new home?

Our decisions were part of a five-year plan, albeit compressed considerably. The plan was based on the research we did to answer some basic questions. How long would we be physically able to maintain our household and yard? How long before we would need to put some major investment into the house and garage? When would the roof, windows and appliances need replacing? When would the heating system need revitalizing? How long before the care of the gardens became a chore I dreaded instead of a relaxing hobby? What could we do to make the house more appealing to buyers without investing a lot of money, and how long would that take? What was the real estate market doing?

The second half of the equation dealt with where our new home would be. Where would we like to live? What were the pros and cons of a retirement community vs. other rental property? Should we move closer to our children, or stay where we had friends and other family? As we worked through our research, the direction and the time frame became clearer.

The first most often asked question we faced was how we had the courage to make the move. It wasn’t easy, but as we worked through the above process our confidence grew. When our determination waivered, we were able to review our research and then continue to move forward.

If you need help to find housing, give our office a call and let one of our NY Connects Specialists help you.

607-753-5060

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
Most of us have heard the phrase “seven valleys” in relation to Cortland County, but where does that phrase come from?

It is attributed to early pioneer Jonathan Hubbard, who reputedly climbed a tree on West Court Street hill sometime in the mid-1790’s, looked around, and noted the valleys surrounding him.

These seven valleys are as follows, with two minor valleys also listed:

- West Branch Tioughnioga River (begins at Tully Lakes)
- East Branch Tioughnioga River
- Tioughnioga Valley to Binghamton
- Trout Brook Valley
- Factory Brook Valley
- Cortland-Dryden Valley
- Otisco Valley
- Cheningo Creek Valley (minor)
- Dry Creek Valley (minor)

A very shrewd businessman, Hubbard would own much of the property that would eventually become Cortland Village. He put $1,000.00 of his own money to build the first county courthouse, located close to the site of the tree climb, and near where today’s Old Main building on the SUNY Cortland campus stands. According to H.P. Smith’s 1885 History of Cortland County, the building itself was beautiful: a wooden structure with a steeple and a spire, with its front facing the village. The view was said to be magnificent. The Board of Supervisors’ minutes for the year 1814 directed it be painted a spruce yellow with white, or the whole of it white, and the building was to be underpinned with stone.

The courthouse was rented out for a small fee, with the occupant required to keep the rooms cleaned. Unfortunately, the location on a steep hill made it difficult for both residents and attorneys to conduct county business, fighting thick mud in the spring and deep snow in the winter. The next courthouse, much easier to access, would be built where the present Cortland Free Library stands today.

Map of the Seven Valleys

1. West Branch Tioughnioga River/I-81
2. East Branch Tioughnioga River/Rt. 13
3. Tioughnioga River/I-81
4. Trout Brook/Rt. 41
5. Otter Creek/Beaver Creek/Rt. 13
6. Factory Brook/Rt. 41
7. Dry Creek/Kinney Gulf

Photo: http://andrewontrails.blogspot.com/
Halloween is fun - dressing up, parties, and trick or treating. However, for people with dementia, it can be hard. Scary decorations, costumes, and other activities aren’t part of our normal routine, and they can cause issues for someone with dementia.

Transforming your house decorations and dressing up in Halloween costumes are things that can cause confusion for someone with dementia.

- Put pumpkins and mums up on tables to avoid tripping.
- If you find your loved one picking decorations, remove or take them down.
- Limit decorations because they may cause anxiety, confusion and agitation.

The world is confusing for people with dementia, causing them to misinterpret the world around them. Add spooky decorations, cobweb-strewn yards, and jack-o-lanterns, and the threat is more real than ever.

- Avoid decorations that are voice-activated or have sound effects.
- Don’t put a fake cemetery and hanging goblins in the yard. This may scare someone with dementia, and they may refuse to walk in or out of the house.
- Avoid using flashlights, candles and light-up pumpkins. People with dementia have vision changes, and the eerie glow can lead to anxiety.

People with dementia may have trouble recognizing familiar people, which can lead to confusion and turn into fear.

- Be prepared to change plans. Instead of a Halloween costume parade, try a fall foliage ride or a visit to a local pumpkin patch when it’s not crowded.
- Television has horror movies this time of year. A scene in a movie can leave a lasting impression on someone with dementia. Consider blocking channels known to show scary movies. Keep your loved one busy with other activities.
- Discuss your plans for the holiday, but don’t go into a lot of detail.

In a world full of misperceived threats, home is familiar, comfortable and predictable. But on Halloween, loud visitors in costumes asking for candy can disrupt your loved one’s safe haven.

- Place candy outside with instructions for trick or treaters.
- Create memories by baking a pie, decorating cookies, painting or carving a pumpkin with family and friends.
- Decorate and fill candy bags, paint gourds, place fall flowers in vases.
- Look through old photographs, and remember holidays past.

For more information on Caregiver Support, contact the Caregivers Resource Center at the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060.

Melissa was born in Virginia and raised in Locke, NY. During high school, she went to BOCES for Certified Nurse’s Aide Certification and began working in nursing facilities for 16 years. Melissa is a single mother of two grown children. Her daughter (25) is now a Veterinary Technician at Cornell, and her son (22) is a United States Marine. When her kids were young, she went to college and earned her degree in Office Management and Administration. Upon graduating, she gained employment at Cortland County Department of Social Services where she worked for 11 years. She began as a Social Welfare Examiner Trainee and was later promoted to a Senior Social Welfare Examiner.

In January of 2017, Melissa began working with the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging (AAA). She started in the agency as an Aging Services Specialist where she worked closely with caregivers to provide support, counseling, coordination of in-home services, and assisting caregivers with navigating their roles and responsibilities of caring for their loved ones. In the fall of 2020, Melissa was promoted to an Aging Services Coordinator, overseeing the Home Delivered Meals, Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), and the Caregivers Resource Center at the Area Agency on Aging.

Melissa also works part-time as a Direct Support Professional at Racker, working with persons with disabilities. She has a passion for helping individuals and their caregivers, and thoroughly enjoys working with the people she serves at both jobs. She believes her life’s calling is to help others.

In addition to her employment, Melissa is also currently in her last semester at TC3 for a degree in Human Services. She then plans to transfer to SUNY to complete her Bachelor’s degree. She hopes to continue this path to be better able to serve and advocate for the people with whom she works. Melissa is dedicated to helping the aging and disabled population and their caregivers.

In her spare time, Melissa loves to garden and enjoys taking walks to connect with nature. She loves animals and has five cats, one dog, and a snake for pets.
Every year Medicare, Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare Prescription Drug plans, and Medigaps change their coverage. The changes can include premiums, copays, coinsurance, and/or even coverage. Medicare offers an Annual Medicare Open Enrollment so beneficiaries have a chance to review their plans and make changes if needed. This Annual Open Enrollment occurs from October 15 to December 7 every year. If a beneficiary enrolls in a plan during this Annual Open Enrollment period, their new coverage will start January 1 the following year.

Even if a beneficiary is satisfied with your current Medicare coverage, this Medicare Annual enrollment period gives them the opportunity to at least review and compare other Medicare plans for the upcoming year. There could be a new plan to our service area that was not offered the previous calendar year. It’s always worth the appointment to see what else is out there for 2022.

New Medicare enrollees on or after January 1, 2020, will no longer have the option of Medigap Plan C or Medigap Plan F. Anyone enrolled in a Medigap Plan C or Medigap Plan F as of December 31, 2019 or before, will be “grandfathered” and able to continue with their plan as long as the beneficiary wants. So if you currently have a plan C or F, you will be able to keep it. In the past, we have seen these kinds of changes significantly impact premiums. This change continues to be an important factor in reviewing your Medigap plan.

For the years 2020 and beyond, seniors will pay 25% for both generic and brand-name drug purchases in the Donut Hole which is also known as the Coverage Gap. Medicare considers the Coverage Gap "closed" at this point because based on the CMS Standard Model Medicare Part D plan, you would be paying the same cost-sharing (that is, 25%) for purchases made while in the Initial Coverage Phase AND in the Coverage Gap so you have the same coverage through both phases of coverage.

Does this sound confusing? Don’t worry, our agency can help! The Cortland County Area Agency on Aging’s Health Insurance Information, Counseling & Assistance Program (HIICAP) are New York State Certified Counselors who are available for individual, unbiased appointments.

For more information on Medicare’s Annual Enrollment period, please call 607-753-5060.
El Período Anual de Inscripción Abierta de Medicare está a la vuelta de la esquina. ¿Estás listo? La inscripción abierta es del 15 de octubre al 7 de diciembre y permite a los afiliados de Medicare la oportunidad de reevaluar su cobertura. Los inscritos pueden unirse, cambiar o abandonar un plan. La cobertura comenzará el 1 de enero de 2022. Llámenos para concertar una cita hoy al 607-753-5060.

Este artículo fue traducido al español con servicio de traductor de Microsoft.
Alternatives to Hearing Aides
By Rachael Wood, Aging Services Specialist

Have you found yourself needing hearing aids but not wanting to deal with batteries, cleaning, and worrying if it is placed correctly on your ear? Who really can afford the high cost of hearing aids which is usually out of pocket? According to statistics, many people who need hearing aids are choosing not to get them. Individuals with hearing loss may be surprised to know there are alternatives to the standard hearing aid that are readily available.

One option for people with mild to moderate hearing loss are personal sound amplification products (PSAPS). These are amplified earpieces that can stream music, TV shows and other Bluetooth enabled materials.

A second option is a “Pocket Talker”. The Pocket Talker is a portable listening device, the size of a deck of cards that uses sound amplification technology to make it easier to hear in loud or noisy environments. Pocket Talkers range in price from $29.88 to $379.00 and can be purchased through outlets such as Amazon and Walmart.

A third option is a “Caption Call” phone. Caption Call is a transcription service that is used with landlines. A transcriber types out the conversation for you and also uses visual cues for additional assistance. This service is free and can be used with hearing aids.

A fourth option is bone conducting headphones. Bone conduction offers a different way of hearing. Instead of sending vibrations through the eardrums, bone conduction sends vibrations through your cheekbones and into your cochleas avoiding the eardrum. The most highly rated bone conducting headphone for 2021 is made by Aftershokz for $159.00. These can be purchased through Amazon. Other bone conducting headphones range in price from $38.99 to $149.00 and are sold through such outlets as Best Buy and Walmart.

The Time is Now!
Get Vaccinated!
By: Karen Felker-Harrity, RN, Cortland County Health Department

The Cortland County Immunization Coalition urges you to get the Covid-19 vaccine if you have not already done so. You can do your part and get vaccinated for the love of your family, your friends, the community and yourself! The vaccines authorized by the United States have proven to be safe and very effective in reducing your risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from Covid-19.

If you have already had Covid-19 disease, you can be vaccinated once you have completed your isolation. Talk to your doctor about that. The vaccine can provide the longer-term protection you need.

By late summer, only 56% of those 12 and older in Cortland County had been vaccinated; and while it’s a good effort, it is not enough to provide protection for the community.

Please, do your part. Help stop the spread of the virus. Now is the time; get vaccinated!
What is Assistive Technology, and why might you need it?
As we age, our bodies change, and our needs change. You may have grown up in a time when “assistive technology” was a phrase that did not even exist. So why do you need to know about it now?

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

While the definition may throw you off (I don’t have a disability, you are thinking), many of us have a “disability” we adapt to without even thinking about it. For example, do you wear glasses? That is a disability mitigated by a piece of equipment!

There are two types of Assistive Technology: low tech and high tech. An example of low tech AT is a buttoning aid hook. This tool is simple, with a hook and wire design and comfortable grip that allow the user to button blouses, jackets and pants easily with only one hand. This device is fantastic for seniors with arthritis, fine motor impairment, or reduced dexterity.

An example of high tech AT is a video remote doorbell such as the Ring doorbell. This allows an older adult to see who is at the door and communicate with the person without going to the door. This can help an older person screen visitors and stay safe when home alone.

What are some other examples of Assistive Technology?
- Smart watch
- Personal Emergency Remote System (PERS)
- Remotes with enlarged buttons
- Captioned telephones
- Automatic pill dispensers

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is equipment which
(a) can withstand repeated use, (b) is primarily and customarily used to serve a medical purpose, (c) generally is not useful to a person in the absence of an illness or injury, and (d) is appropriate for use in the home. All requirements of the definition must be met before an item can be considered to be DME.

What are some examples of Durable Medical Equipment?
- Walkers
- Wheelchairs
- Canes
- Commode
- Grab bars
- Seat swivel

Depending on the challenge you are experiencing, there are many options that may help. For example, if you or someone you are caring for is experiencing memory issues, misplacing things may be an issue. An item such as the Object Locator and Beeping Key Finder (a digital tracker for small household items) can be useful for those in the early stages of dementia. If you are experiencing vision challenges such as macular degeneration, items such as a Lighted Full Page Reading Magnifier can make reading easier and enjoyable again.

Resources
Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID) Program provides access to assistive technology to any New Yorker with a disability through Regional TRAID Centers. Regional TRAID Centers provide device loans and hands-on training to people with disabilities. https://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/traid-program

Equipment Loan Fund (ELF). The Equipment Loan Fund allows you to borrow up to $4,000, with an interest rate of 4%, to purchase wheelchairs, wheelchair van lifts, ramps, and adaptive equipment. https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cb/equiploanfund.asp

Other resources may include county/town offices, Lions Clubs, Elks Lodges, and other local civic organizations.
Southern U.S. hospitals are filled with Covid infected patients and care for them through a hurricane. The U.S. is evacuating people from Afghanistan with large capacity military jets packed to save lives. In CNY, it is State Fair time, college students return to college, and our local schools have all age levels returning. It's a difficult time to try to survive a pandemic!

In the war against Covid, the Delta variant prevails at 1000 times more contagious and more virulent\(^1\). Vaccination is the number 1 disease treatment and prevention for all strains thus far.

Covid vaccines are well studied and safe. Covid vaccine research began with the original Sars-CoV pandemic many years ago. In early 2020, Covid genes were sequenced, then tacked on to pre-pandemic work to create the mRNA vaccines we have today. New vaccine protocols allowed roll out of data in a timely fashion, and manufacturers were able to quickly get the data points needed to prove efficacy and safety.

By August 23, 2021, we had full FDA approval of Pfizer with others anticipated soon\(^2\). Soon we will have approval for administration in children. Please know, the societies that guide care for women encourage all women considering pregnancy, are pregnant or breast feeding to get the Covid vaccines as Covid illness is much more severe in these women\(^3,4\). All major medical societies have endorsed vaccination against Covid illness.

The VAERS system helps identify the rare side effects. We have vaccinated many millions, and the risk of vaccine side effect remains very low. The risk of serious Covid illness is significantly reduced after full vaccination plus two weeks. The risk of serious illness from Covid infection remains much greater than risk for vaccine side effects.

Unfortunately, Cortland County has the 3rd highest case rate in NYS right now\(^5\). Last week we had over 120 new cases. Today we had over 40 new cases. Currently, all NYS counties are advised by the DOH to wear masks indoors and get vaccinated ASAP. Cortland County has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the state. Higher infection and lower vaccination rates go hand in hand.

Vaccine mandates are beginning to roll out in all business sectors. In NYS we will have most health care workers, school teachers, school staff, and government workers vaccinated. Other employment groups will likely add their businesses.

Vaccine mandates? Too many have chosen to not get vaccinated, and we are now seeing stronger, more virulent variants of Covid 19 developing in unvaccinated individuals. Businesses and agencies want to protect vulnerable people, their employees and families, and reduce the costs of illness.

I am a supporter of vaccination of as many eligible people in the school systems as possible, 100% mask wearing and 6 foot
social distancing. This approach is needed to help reduce the risks of serious Covid illness in our schools. I also support vaccination and mask wearing in places of worship, fitness centers, stores, and any that serves the public. It’s how we beat Covid. The only true contraindication to vaccination is allergy to the components.

There has been NO vaccine EVER to have any long term late sequelae. Vaccine reactions occur within hours to weeks. I’ve had no patients report serious vaccine side effects. I’ve had several unvaccinated patients die. Better to risk vaccine side effects than to fight Covid without a vaccination shield. Of course the Delta variant can cause illness in vaccinated individuals as “break through cases”. If vaccinated, you might get sick, but you are much less likely to end up in the hospital or on a ventilator.

All should be aware of monoclonal antibody infusion to treat early Covid illness or prevent illness if you are high risk. Please isolate and seek care if you become ill, and ask for monoclonal antibody infusion.

Future expectations? We are hopeful for an oral antiviral medication similar to Tamiflu for flu. Expect Covid vaccination mandates. Treatments for Covid will continue to improve. Watch for the next variant of interest. Stay healthy—eat healthy, exercise regularly, sleep routinely. Isolate and seek care/testing if ill. Ask for monoclonal antibody treatment. Get your booster vaccine doses when recommended. Don’t take Ivermectin, Hydroxychloroquine, or high dose vitamins if you are ill—they won’t help and may make you sicker. Wear a mask indoors, socially distance 6 feet and wash your hands.

Please look for information sources that are valid and not political. Your own physician is your best resource. I also like: Your Local Epidemiologist, the American Society for Hospital Pharmacies Covid treatment tables, the National Institute of Health (NIH) guidelines, and the Infectious Disease Society of America guidelines.

Please be well. Vaccination, wearing masks, washing hands, and social distancing remain the main methods of risk reduction for Covid illness.

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1 https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(21)00475-8/fulltext
2 https://yourlocalepidemiologist.substack.com/p/full-fda-approval-whatwill-this
5 http://www.cortland-co.org/432/Health-Department

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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. 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.
The Home Energy Assistance Program - known as HEAP - is a federally funded program that assists eligible households with a one-time payment applied to your heating bill.

Cortland County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) can help you receive this benefit if you are:

- Age 60 or over
- Homeowner or renter (tenant of record proof required) and
- Meet monthly 2021-2022 income guidelines – yet to be released

**How to apply:**

- Seniors (60 or over) new to HEAP can submit applications:
  - Online at:
    * [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov)
  - Call Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060 for an application.

- Seniors with prior HEAP assistance should get an application in the mail to complete and mail to the Area Agency on Aging at 60 Central Avenue, Cortland NY 13045.

- Households currently receiving Temporary Assistance and/or SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) generally receive HEAP assistance automatically - no application required.

**Information needed:**

- Identification for all household members
- Proof of gross income for everyone in the household
- Heat and Electric Utility bills

**How HEAP works:**

- If you rent and:
  - Pay for heat separately, the HEAP payment goes directly to your fuel supplier.
  - Your rent includes heat, the HEAP payment will come directly to you.
- If you own a home: The HEAP payment goes directly to your fuel supplier.
- It can take up to 3 months for the HEAP credit to appear on your bill.

**Emergency Heating Assistance** generally opens in January; specific dates to be announced.

- For a fuel emergency like a power shutoff or less than ¼ tank of fuel, Call 607-428-5400 to apply for Emergency HEAP over the phone. HEAP income eligibility guidelines apply.
- For a Guarantee Letter to keep the heat on for another fuel delivery, *Call and leave a message at 607-428-5400.*

**Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement:**

- Available to low-income homeowners to repair or replace heating equipment
- Homeowner must reside in the house for which the benefit is provided.
- If you are without heat, Call to make arrangements and complete an application.
- If not an emergency, Call AAA at 753-5060 or DSS at 428-5400 to mail you an application.
Has the continued stress and length of the pandemic left you a little lethargic and thinking about starting an exercise option? Through the National Institute on Health and the Institute on Aging, Go4Life has put together a few, easy, strength building exercises for you to try. However, before you begin, always consider safety first by calling your doctor if you haven’t had a regular checkup. Drink plenty of water, and wear comfortable clothes.

For these workouts, you will need items that you should have around your home, including a sturdy chair, a tennis ball, and some soup cans as weights. It is also advised to give yourself a warm up routine, such as 5 minutes of walking, biking, or even going up and down a flight of stairs a few times.

**Exercise 1: Hand Grip**
- Hold a tennis ball in each hand.
- Slowly squeeze ball as hard as you can and hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Release slowly.
- Repeat 10-15 times.

**Exercise 2: Overhead Arm Raise**
- Hold weights shoulder height at your sides with palms facing forward.
- Slowly raise both arms up over head keeping your elbows slightly bent.
- Hold the position for 1 second.
- Slowly lower your arms.
- Repeat 10-15 times.

**Exercise 3: Back Leg Raise**
- Stand behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance.
- Slowly lift one leg straight back without bending your knee or pointing your toes. Try not to lean forward. The leg you are standing on should be slightly bent.
- Hold position for 1 second.
- Slowly lower your leg.
- Repeat 10-15 times; Repeat 10-15 times with other leg.

**Exercise 4: Toe Stand**
- Stand behind and hold on to a sturdy chair, feet shoulder width apart.
- Slowly stand on tiptoes as high as possible.
- Hold position for 1 second.
- Slowly lower heels to the floor.
- Repeat 10-15 times.

Go4Life, [www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life](http://www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life)
Hi! I am Melissa Potter, the new Mobility Manager for Cortland County located within the Cortland County Health Department. My job is to improve and address the transportation needs of all county residents, especially among individuals with disabilities, older adults and persons with limited incomes.

I am very grateful and excited to take on this new position and learn about all things transportation in Cortland County. My goal for the program is to improve and expand our county transportation system that ensures quality public transportation services for our community. I am also excited to collaborate with local agencies and neighboring counties to increase ridership in Cortland County.

Public transportation systems bring many benefits to individuals, communities and the local economy. It benefits communities financially: Every $1 invested in public transportation generates $5 in economic returns. It provides not only jobs in the industry itself, but is also a key component of a healthy business ecosystem by increasing mobility options for both job commuters and customers alike. Public transportation reduces air pollution and traffic congestions, as well as offers safer alternatives than driving a car. More importantly, public transportation is linked to healthier lifestyles, as it provides opportunities for increased physical activity.

I am a Cortland County resident and SUNY Cortland graduate with a Masters of Public Health from East Stroudsburg University. My previous experience involves working at both Cortland and Onondaga County Health Departments on grant funded programs improving population health in tobacco control and have built successful programs. When I am not working, you can find me chasing around two energetic kids and three dogs with my husband.

I look forward to this opportunity; and for more information, check out way2go-cortland.org. If you need any assistance with navigating bus maps, bus routes or assessing your best transportation option, feel free to contact me at 607-756-3416.
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).

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.

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CHANGE 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.