The Cortland Aging Well Center Update

Excitement is growing as the construction crew transforms space at the Crescent Building on South Main Street into the new Aging Well Center. The Area Agency on Aging and Older Americans Act Advisory Board are pleased to provide this update summarizing the status as of February 3, 2022 (article deadline).

Center Update from Liz Haskins, Director

- Accessibility: Alex Mikowski, Executive Director, and Erin Vallely, Advocacy Specialist, both with Access to Independence, joined us to tour the site to help identify areas where accessibility might be a challenge for individuals who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs and scooters. Ms. Vallely provided useful information and recommendations. Many thanks to Alex and Erin for their help and expertise!

- Kitchen design: Concrete plans are dependent upon permit requirements and we are in a bit of a holding pattern at this time. As a reminder, the central kitchen located in the county office building will deliver a hot noon meal to the new location five days a week. No cooking will occur on site with the exception of small-scale demonstrations such as “healthy cooking for one” performed using a hot plate.

- Floor plan: Once the walls came down, we recognized that the original plan did not provide the desired space for dining. Plans were reworked to free up additional space for dining and large group activities.

- The Stakeholders workgroup met on January 10 to strategize, clarify and list the action steps needed to open as soon possible. Much was learned during this four-hour workshop. A preliminary strategic plan will be created to streamline the process and gain

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deeper understanding of all the moving parts to ensure the project is moving as quickly as possible. The AAA wishes to extend our appreciation for the individuals who participated in this workshop and support the vision for the new center.

- The Federal Aid Allocation Citizen’s Advisory Committee approved $175,000 to furnish and equipment the new site.

Stakeholder workgroup members:

- AAA Staff: Liz Haskins, Director; Amber Giamei, Assistant Director, Jackie Gillespie, Nutrition Program Manager; Cheryl Kenyon, Secretary II, Cindy Stout, Aging Services Specialist (Retired Aging Services Coordinator and RSVP Director)

- Legislators: Beau Harbin, Richard Stock, Cathy Bischoff, Ron VanDee, Susan Wilson, Ann Homer, Sandy Price, Chris Newell

- County Departments: Chuck Miller, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds; Don Ware, Supervising Public Health Sanitarian; Trisha Jesset, Director of Planning; Jack Hess, Director of IT; Amy Buggs, Director, Cayuga Cortland Workforce Development Board

- Older Americans Act Advisory Board Members: Mary Robillard, Sheila Cohen

- Partner Agencies: Jackie Leaf, Executive Director, Seven Valleys Health Coalition; Alex Mikowski, Executive Director, Access to Independence

- Cortland center Participant and Past Center Council President: Ken Smith

As I prepared this update, I reflected on time spent and the significant amount of work done leading up to this point. The Older Americans Act Advisory Board felt the community would be interested in knowing the various locations suggested, considered, and/or toured since 2020. The following lists many of those sites:

- Smith Corona Building
- Save A Lot
- TC3
- Parker School
- Grange
- McDonald Building (SUNY)
- Grant Street
- Family Video
- County Office Building dining room
- Red Dragon
- JM McDonald’s Sports Center
- YWCA
- East End Community Center
- SUNY Cortland
- Armory
- Cortland County gym
- Elks – Cortland
- 20 Crawford Street
- K-Mart Plaza
- Elks—Homer

We are extremely thankful and excited about our new home on South Main Street. We look forward to spending time with each other soon at the Crescent Commons building! In the meantime, please remember the center is meeting at the Presbyterian Church on Church Street Tuesdays and Thursdays until our new home is ready. Call 753-5060 for more information.

Superintendent of Building and Grounds Report on Page 14
## Local Area Satellite Service Site Updates

### Harford

**Creamery Hills Apartments**  
355 Creamery Road, Harford  
Open Thursdays 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Activities: Chair Yoga, Puzzles, Book Club  
Contact: Michael Thomas, 607-844-8229

### Preble

**Preble Senior Club**  
Preble Fire Station  
1911 Preble Road  
Open Wednesdays, times vary.  
Activities: Luncheons, cards, guest presentations  
Contact: Dave Morse, 315-663-1654

### Scott

**Scott Senior Club Inc:**  
6816 Route 41  
Open:  
Mondays for Pitch 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Fridays for Breakfast 7-10 a.m.  
Contact Kay Harvey  
607-842-6871  
607-749-9391

### Truxton

**Truxton Living Well Center**  
United Methodist Church  
Route 13  
Open Tuesdays, 12-6 p.m.  
Activities include: Bingo, chair yoga, art, movies, games, coffee hour, pie cook-offs and more!  
Contact: Jill Kraft, 607-244-1445

### Virgil

**Virgil Seniors**  
United Methodist Church  
1194 Church Street, Virgil  
Open Thursdays 9 a.m. to Noon  
Activities: Puzzles, crafts, computer lab, exercise, guest speakers  
Contact: Pastor Steph Brown, 607-857-3556

### Willet/Cincinnatus

**Cortland/Chenango Rural Services**  
Willet Town Hall  
OPENING SOON!  
Route 41, Willet  
Contact: Joanne Brown-Garringer  
607-863-3828
Nutrition for Immune Health
By: Emma Harwood,
Syracuse University Dietetic Intern

Here in Central New York, we know the harsh winters are long-lasting, which increases the time period when we are most likely to get sick. Did you know that nutrition plays a very important role in keeping our immune systems strong? There are many different foods containing specific vitamins and minerals that can help us from getting sick or lessen the severity of our symptoms if we become ill.

You may have heard that vitamin C is an immune-boosting nutrient and you would be correct! Vitamin C helps increase the activity of our white blood cells, which are our body’s first responders when we get sick. There are a lot of vitamin C supplements in the stores, like gummies or pills, but getting this nutrient from food is the best option!

Foods containing vitamin C include: oranges, red bell peppers, grapefruit, spinach, kale, potatoes, and strawberries

Vitamin D is also thought to be linked to improved immune function; however, more research is needed. Several studies have shown that a lower vitamin D intake is seen in people with autoimmune diseases. Researchers have even thought that a low vitamin D intake may worsen Covid-19 symptoms if we contract the virus. For this reason, it is suggested that we consume enough sources of vitamin D.

Foods containing vitamin D include: eggs, beef liver, mushrooms, salmon, tuna, cheese, dark leafy greens, and fortified orange juice

One mineral that does not get the credit it deserves for its role in our immune system is zinc. Zinc boosts the activity of T-cells and natural killer cells, two types of cells that fight bacteria and viruses in our body. Supplementation has been shown to reduce the risk of infections and pneumonia, as well as enhance the immune response in older adults. As with all supplements, work with your doctor to figure out if you would benefit from zinc supplementation.

Foods containing zinc include: oysters, crab, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), baked beans, and poultry

Finally, antioxidants protect our cells from free radicals, or compounds our body produces when we expose it to toxins in the environment like air pollution or tobacco smoke. Antioxidants are most commonly found in fruits and vegetables. In fact, the different colors of each fruit and vegetable represent a different antioxidant. For example, anthocyanin in blueberries and lycopene in tomatoes are two examples of antioxidants that correlate with the fruit or vegetable’s color. This is why Registered Dietitians advise everyone to consume a variety of fruits and vegetables – we benefit from the different colors!

As you can see, there are many foods we can eat that help our body stay healthy or help us get better quickly from a cold or flu. The next time you sit down to enjoy a meal, see if you can include any food sources of the nutrients mentioned above!

Sources:
https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/vitamin-c/
https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/vitamin-d/
www.healthline.com/nutrition/zinc
https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/understanding-antioxidants
1. Eat Breakfast: Start your day with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit and whole grain cereal.

2. Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables: Fruits and veggies add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber to your plate. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen and canned.

3. Watch Portion Sizes: Use half your plate for fruits and vegetables and the other half for grains and lean protein foods. Complete the meal with a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt. Measuring cups may also help you compare your portions to the recommended serving size.

4. Be Active: Regular physical activity has many health benefits. Start by doing what exercise you can. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults at least two hours and 30 minutes per week. You don't have to hit the gym – take a walk after dinner or put on music and dance at home.

5. Get to Know Food Labels: Reading the Nutrition Facts panel can help you choose foods and drinks to meet your nutrient needs.

6. Fix Healthy Snacks: Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more of the MyPlate food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese or hummus, or a tablespoon of nut or seed butter with an apple or banana.

7. Consult an RDN: Whether you want to lose weight, lower your health-risks or manage a chronic disease, consult the experts! Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you by providing sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice.

8. Follow Food Safety Guidelines: Reduce your chances of getting sick with proper food safety. This includes: regular hand washing, separating raw foods from ready-to-eat foods, cooking foods to the appropriate internal temperature, and refrigerating food promptly. Learn more about home food safety at www.homefoodsafety.org.

9. Drink More: Water Quench your thirst with water instead of drinks with added sugars. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water, especially if you are active, an older adult or live or work in hot conditions.

10. Get Cooking: Preparing foods at home can be healthy, rewarding and cost-effective. Master some kitchen basics, like dicing onions or cooking dried beans.

11. Order Out without Ditching Goals: You can eat out and stick to your healthy eating plan! The key is to plan ahead, ask questions and choose foods carefully. Compare nutrition information, if available, and look for healthier options that are grilled, baked, broiled or steamed.

For additional food and nutrition information, visit www.eatright.org

MyPlate.gov
George and I had a strong desire to be with our family over Christmas, and our son in Cheyenne was willing to act as host. We decided to be adventurous and take the train in order to avoid airport delays and several days of driving. We could board in Utica at 8:45 pm Tuesday, switch trains in Chicago, and arrive in Denver at 7:00 am Thursday. We reserved a sleeper car for both legs of the journey.

Now, we were not unfamiliar with the accommodations in a sleeper car as we had experienced the auto train a few years before. But it was like child birth. You forget the worse of the details when it comes time to do it again. A sleeper car is about 7 feet by 8 feet. The bathroom/shower and wash sink take up about one-quarter of the space. Next to that is a seat that folds out of the way when you need room to turn around. On the other wall is a sitting bench that converts to a bed and an upper bunk that lifts out of the way during the day. On the outside wall, there is a table that tucks away when the beds are in place. In sleeping mode, you could feel the rocking of the train. This was not too bad until we came to a switch; and the sensation was that the car was being torn apart, and you were being thrown to the floor. But here is the big payoff...you are traveling with your own bathroom!

Train travel is not without delays. On the way west we were delayed for two hours by a freight train that broke down on the track ahead of us. On the way home, our train from Denver was seven hours late. Our seven-hour layover in Chicago turned into ten minutes to find and board our train to Utica. We had our plan to get off the train and run like crazy. Our Christmas miracle was that once we stepped off the train, our connecting train was directly across the platform.

Would we do it again? We booked the auto train for our winter trip south.
One of the research treasures that a county maintains is the certificate of incorporation. This record lists the purpose of a proposed incorporated business and type of stock held as well as the names of shareholders and directors. The older ones give a glimpse into our shared history.

The Virgil Hay Scale Company was incorporated on November 13, 1866, for the purpose to regulate the price charged for weighing hay. Each stockholder was entitled to one vote for each five dollars of stock owned. Elisha Winslow was chosen as chairman and Alexander Mahan as secretary.

The American Garnet Company came into being on March 30, 1907. The purpose of the company was to “quarry, mine, manufacture, prepare for market, import, export, buy and sell garnets and other minerals”. The amount of capital stock was $100,000.00, half common and half preferred. H.A. Dickinson, J.C. Foley, and Charles H. Riley, all from the city of Cortland, were directors along with Kenneth Lord from Holland House, New York City.

Companies like the ones listed above and others such as the Twibill Farm Company of Harford, The People’s Cash Trading Company of McGrawville, and The Glen Wagon and Car Corporation of Marathon have long since faded from activity but will continue to be preserved permanently as part of the county’s archival records.

Also in 1907, the Kneepka Silk Throwing Company was organized in Homer with the goal being “the purchase of raw silk, throwing of raw silk and sale of the thrown product”. William G. Crandall as well as four others each owned five shares, with 35 shares total available. A filing tax of $1.75 was paid to the county clerk.

Community organizations also incorporated. St. Catharine’s Church in Homer was incorporated on January 16, 1908, and then was again incorporated a few months later as St. Margaret’s.

Discriminatory sentiments of the time can be seen in one certificate filed in 1911 by the Greater Cortland Company. A deed restriction barred a specific list of recent immigrants from purchasing property from this company. Ironically, one purchaser had parents who had emigrated from Ireland.

With a new tax season under way, the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging would like to remind taxpayers to take steps to protect themselves from scams during this upcoming tax season. According to the New York State Department of Taxation, “Scammers often prey on taxpayers by impersonating Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or New York State Department of Taxation and Finance employees. The most common tax scams tend to involve a taxpayer receiving a phone call, letter, or email asking for their personal information to either release their refund or process their tax return.” DO NOT RESPOND TO THESE COMMUNICATIONS! Report these scams immediately to either the IRS at How Do You Report Suspected Tax Fraud Activity? or New York State Department of Taxation and Finance customer service number at 1-518-457-5181.
Many view spring-cleaning or deep cleaning as unavoidable that we resent having to do. Others look forward to it, like a rite of passage to summer. Regardless of how it is viewed, there are ways to make it more enjoyable.

- **Pace yourself.** The cleaning does not need to be completed in a day or even a weekend. Spread it over a longer period, perhaps a month of smaller daily tasks.

- **Clean with a friend.** Clean one house then the other or alternate days/weeks. It is always more fun spending time with a friend. Plan together so you both have the same expectations.

- **Be realistic about your abilities.** People with balance or blood pressure issues should not climb ladders to clean lights. Those with heart problems should avoid multiple trips up and down stairs. What limitations do you have? This is a perfect time to enlist the help of kids and grandkids. Alternatively, hire a neighbor or the teen down the street to help you with the challenging tasks that are a bit beyond your abilities.

- **Set the right mood.** Open the windows to let the fresh air in, weather permitting of course. It is always nice after being closed over the long winter. Comfortable clothes you are not worried about getting dirty or stained are necessary. Crank up the music! Find something energizing, not soft soothing music to help you relax.

- **Gather tools and supplies.** Before you begin, gather everything you think you may need. Some tools may be a step stool with a back to hold onto, various size scrub brushes, scouring pads, lint free cloths, paper towels, mop, broom, etc. Gather all your favorite cleaning supplies. This is a good time to take inventory and make sure you have enough for the tasks to be completed. Consider trying a natural cleaning product, which is safer for you and the environment.

Sit back and enjoy the benefits of your hard work. Celebrate with some spring flowers for your table!

For more ideas or for Caregiver Support, contact the Caregivers Resource Center at the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060.
What is it
Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that cycles with the seasons. It can occur during any time of the year, but it typically affects people during the winter. Winter brings colder weather, shorter days and longer periods of darkness which can bring symptoms of depression including loss of energy, changes in appetite and sleeping habits, irritability, and loss of interest in participating in social activities.

How to Treat It
Like other forms of depression, SAD can be treated with antidepressant medications. Because medications can take time to work, it is best to start treatment prior to the onset of symptoms each year.

A non-pharmaceutical option for treatment of SAD is light therapy. Bright light therapy utilizes a piece of equipment called a “light box,” which is a fluorescent lamp that emits a spectrum of light intended to simulate natural sunlight. It’s important to make certain the light box has a filter that blocks harmful UV rays, so the light does not cause any damage.

Vitamin D
Low levels of vitamin D have been found in people with SAD. It is unclear whether this is linked to SAD, but Vitamin D deficiency is particularly dangerous for older adults. Symptoms of vitamin D deficiency are very subtle and can include muscle and bone pain, excessive fatigue, and depressed mood. Older adults are more at risk for being vitamin D deficient due to changes in diet which result in eliminating foods rich in vitamin D; additionally, aging bodies have more difficulty converting and absorbing vitamin D from foods. Older adults deficient in vitamin D are at increased risk for health maladies including negative impacts on bone and heart health, increased risk of cognitive decline, heart disease, hypertension, cancer, diabetes, and decreased immune function.

How to Treat It
You can obtain vitamin D by increasing intake of foods where vitamin D is naturally found such as: eating beef liver, egg yolks, cheeses, and fatty fish like salmon. You can also increase intake of vitamin D fortified foods including: milk, yogurt, cereals and juice. You can take a vitamin D supplement but should only do so if recommended by your physician.

Did you know
- Women are four times as likely to be diagnosed with SAD
- Vitamin D levels tend to drop during the winter months
- Certain medications, such as the anti-inflammatory prednisone, can inhibit the ability to produce and metabolize vitamin D.
- Seasonal affective disorder can occur in spring and summer as well
- Those who suffer from depression or bipolar disorder may see symptoms worsen with seasons changing

http://lh3.googleusercontent.com/xLY2wUjAe5AlJ3odNnANxOMmNuNCHTPL7VImADumu1F1sXdlUL6tz2J0t--bJyg-
Most people become eligible for Medicare at age 65, which is also the age many people consider retirement. If you are retiring and are approaching age 65, you may have questions about how this will affect your Medicare coverage and retiree plan. Retiree insurance is a form of health insurance coverage an employer provides to their former employee.

Retiree insurance almost always pays secondary to Medicare. Nearly all retiree policies require the beneficiary to sign up for Parts A and B once they become Medicare eligible. Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plans are the only retiree plans that do not require their beneficiaries to enroll in Medicare Part B. FEHB retirees can consider delaying their Medicare Part B enrollment, though they will face penalties and gaps in coverage if they ever choose to enroll in Medicare at a later date.

Retiree coverage generally does not pay the total medical costs during any time period in which the retiree was eligible for Medicare but did not sign up. When the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare, it is critical to enroll in both Medicare Part A and Part B in a timely fashion. This will ensure the beneficiary gets the full benefits the retiree coverage has to offer. Retiree insurance is almost always secondary to Medicare, meaning it pays after Medicare pays. Retiree coverage provides coverage for Medicare deductibles, coinsurance, and often prescription drug plan.

Deciding whether to keep retiree coverage after enrollment in Medicare is a personal choice. Retiree coverage premiums can be very costly, but it may be worthwhile to keep the plan if the beneficiary anticipates high medical costs now or in the future. Retiree coverage may also pay for other items and services that Medicare does not cover, such as vision care, dental care, or over the counter medications. The retiree should speak to the benefits administrator or human resources department of their former employer to find out if the retiree can choose to keep certain parts of their plan (dental and/or vision) and what the associated plan costs, benefits, and premiums will be after they are Medicare eligible.

If you have more questions regarding Medicare, retiree coverage, or need a retiree/Medicare plan comparison, call Cortland County’s ONLY New York State certified health insurance counselors at 607-753-5060.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 30% of Americans age 65 and older are obese. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index of 30% or more. According to Medicare.gov, Medicare covers intensive behavioral therapy for people with obesity. Medicare covers behavioral therapy sessions to help beneficiaries lose weight. This counseling may happen in the beneficiary’s primary care setting. Beneficiaries pay nothing for this service as long as the primary care doctor accepts Medicare assignment.
La mayoría de las personas se vuelven elegibles para Medicare a los 65 años, que también es la edad que muchas personas consideran la jubilación. Si se está jubilando y se acerca a los 65 años, es posible que tenga preguntas sobre cómo esto afectará su cobertura de Medicare y su plan para jubilados. El seguro para jubilados es una forma de cobertura de seguro de salud que un empleador proporciona a su ex empleado.

El seguro para jubilados casi siempre paga lo secundario a Medicare. Casi todas las pólizas para jubilados requieren que el beneficiario se inscriba en las Partes A y B una vez que sea elegible para Medicare. Los planes de Beneficios de Salud para Empleados Federales (FEHB, por sus siglas en inglés) son los únicos planes para jubilados que no requieren que sus beneficiarios se inscriban en Medicare Parte B. Los jubilados de FEHB pueden considerar retrasar su inscripción en la Parte B de Medicare, aunque enfrentarán multas y brechas en la cobertura si alguna vez eligen inscribirse en Medicare en una fecha posterior.

La cobertura para jubilados generalmente no paga los costos médicos totales durante ningún período de tiempo en el que el jubilado era elegible para Medicare pero no se inscribió. Cuando el jubilado se vuelve elegible para Medicare, es fundamental inscribirse tanto en la Parte A como en la Parte B de Medicare de manera oportuna. Esto asegurará que el beneficiario obtenga todos los beneficios que la cobertura para jubilados tiene para ofrecer. El seguro para jubilados es casi siempre secundario a Medicare, lo que significa que paga después de que Medicare paga. La cobertura para jubilados proporciona cobertura para deducibles de Medicare, coseguro y, a menudo, planes de medicamentos recetados.

Decidir si mantener la cobertura de jubilado después de la inscripción en Medicare es una elección personal. Las primas de cobertura para jubilados pueden ser muy costosas, pero puede valer la pena mantener el plan si el beneficiario anticipa altos costos médicos ahora o en el futuro. La cobertura para jubilados también puede pagar por otros artículos y servicios que Medicare no cubre, como atención de la vista, atención dental o medicamentos de venta libre. El jubilado debe hablar con el administrador de beneficios o el departamento de recursos humanos de su antiguo empleador para averiguar si el jubilado puede optar por mantener ciertas partes de su plan (dental y / o de visión) y cuáles serán los costos, beneficios y primas asociados del plan después de que sean elegibles para Medicare.

Si tiene más preguntas sobre Medicare, la cobertura para jubilados o necesita una comparación de planes para jubilados / Medicare, llame a los ÚNICOS consejeros de seguros de salud certificados por el condado de Cortland en el estado de Nueva York al 607-753-5060.
According to a recent AARP article, today over 53 million adults in the United States are caregivers. A caregiver is defined as having provided care to an adult or a child with special needs at some time in the last 12 months. Of the 53 million adults, a quarter of these caregivers are caring for more than one person, are having difficulty coordinating care, are caring for someone with Alzheimer’s or dementia-related conditions, and are seeing a decline in their own health. Over half of these caregivers are also working.

Anyone who has been a caregiver is aware of the unique challenges in that role. With so many caregivers active in the United States, what help is available for them?

Cortland County Office of the Aging and New York Connects is a helpful resource. Specialists can connect you to resources in the community such as respite, aides, classes and support groups.

One such class is Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week class designed to provide you with the skills you need to take care of yourself. The Powerful Tools class meets for an hour and a half once a week and provides tools and support to caregivers. This program helps caregivers reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate feelings better, balance their lives, increase their ability to make tough decisions, and locate helpful resources.

Peer and professional support is available through Cortland County’s Office of the Aging Caregivers’ online support group that meets the last Thursday of the month from 3:00-4:00pm. This group is facilitated by experienced staff and provides a platform for caregivers to support and connect with one another.

With one out of five adults taking on the often-challenging role of a caregiver, many are also in need of resources and support. Cortland County Office of the Aging and New York Connects offers resources, classes and support groups to assist caregivers to care also for themselves.


“A How to Make a Death Binder:A Gift to Your Loved Ones”
A virtual workshop hosted by Cortland County Area Agency on Aging
Presented by: Wendy Yettru, Manager of Volunteer Services and Sara Worden, Director of Development & Community Relations, Hospicare & Palliative Care Services
April 6th 10:00-11:30 am

A death binder or “in case of death file” is a tool to help organize and keep all your important documents, financial records and personal wishes in one place. Preparing a death binder or file can make it much easier for your loved ones in the event of your death. Join Hospicare & Palliative Care Services for this free virtual workshop and receive an overview of important documents to include and ideas about how to organize them. Our program includes time for discussion and questions and answers.

The program is free, but registration is required. Call the Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060 to register.
NY Connects will be offering a new series on the topic of addiction. All types of addictions will be addressed from alcoholism to overeating. Before we explore the world of addiction, it is important to first understand what addiction is, how it affects the individual, the community, and society. Addiction does not discriminate; it reaches every race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and economic status. Both the rich and the poor have succumbed to addiction. But what is an addiction? Addiction is a condition in which the individual engages in a behavior that negatively impacts his/her life.

The statistics are staggering. According to Dobric (2021), Substance use disorders are more commonplace than you may think. Let’s look at the data.

1. **40% - 60% of an individual’s risk for addiction comes from genetics.**

2. **Since the start of COVID-19 pandemic, overdoses have increased by 50% in the United States.**

3. **18 million people have abused prescription drugs at least once in their lives.**

4. **5.3 million women have an alcohol use disorder.**

5. **In 2010, the United States suffered $249 billion in costs due to alcohol addiction.**

6. **Almost a million people over the age of 65 have a substance use disorder.**

    medically reviewed by Dusan Gollic, Pharm D., 2021)

Sources:

- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services National Hotline 1-800-662-4357
- Family Counseling Services of Cortland 607-753-0234
- Syracuse Recovery Services 607-756-4167
- Alcoholics Anonymous of Cortland 607-273-1541
- Overeaters Anonymous, contact Marcia 607-591-7218

Area Agency on Aging to Honor Centenarians During Older Americans Month

Every year since 1963, May is celebrated as Older Americans Month. In Cortland County, the Area Agency on Aging plans a variety of special events and activities to acknowledge the contributions that older persons make every day to the community. As part of this effort, the Agency will recognize individuals who are 100 years of age or older, or who will be turning 100 during 2022. Members of the Area Agency on Aging’s Older Americans Act Advisory Council will deliver a small gift during the month of May to these centenarians.

If you know of a Cortland County resident who is at least 100 years of age, or will be turning 100 this year, please call the Area Agency on Aging at 753-5060.
Radon
By: Elizabeth Nichols, Public Health Educator, Cortland County Health Department

Cortland County has the highest average basement and first floor living area radon readings in New York State. Radon exposure is dangerous. In the United States, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that lung cancer due to radon exposure claims approximately 21,000 lives annually. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. The problem arises when radon gas from underneath a home leaks in through cracks or gaps. Indoor exposure becomes a health hazard when radon gas accumulates, and you inhale it. The radioactive particles can get trapped in the lungs, irritating lung tissue and damaging DNA. Radon entry routes into a home can be through cracks in solid floors and walls, concrete slabs and construction joints, loose fitting pipes, exposed soil and water. The only way to know the radon levels in your home is to test. Radon levels can vary greatly, even from home to home in the same neighborhood. Radon levels in your home can be lowered through mitigation, and new homes can be built radon-resistant.

Testing your home is easy and FREE! Test kits are available for Cortland County residents through the Cortland County Health Department. For more information, and for a free radon test kit, contact the Healthy Neighborhoods Program at 607-428-5410.

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Center Update from Chuck Miller, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds

- Permit: We are still waiting for the signed blue prints from the proprietor of the fire alarm safety system for the upgrade before code will entertain issuing a building permit to move forward with Change of Occupancy.

- Construction: The construction is moving along quite well, walls are removed and basic floor layout complete, but until code issues the permit we are at a standstill for kitchen area development. The vendor was contacted for progress with prints and installation projections but have not yet received word on either. Once that print is accepted Liz and I can then work with City Code and the Sanitarian to design the kitchen area and see what needs must be met. I don’t foresee any large hurdles with that area nor should it take any large amount of time to address as there will not be any cooking done on site. I wish I had more concrete information about completion times but this is out of our hands until code concerns and issues are addressed.

- Most of the vendors we deal with are extremely short staffed and behind in almost all aspects. I have tried two other vendors for the Fire Alarm system, but unfortunately it is a proprietary system and they must be involved at any level. As far as a move in date, it still will all depend on all of the above taking place and I have no current estimation.

It is better to take many small steps in the right direction than to make a great leap forward only to stumble backward. - Louis Sachar
The New York State MyBenefits website is a great resource to apply for benefits and assistance online. Here you can apply for many programs ranging from food assistance, heating, health insurance, and prescription drugs. We have provided a walk-through on how to navigate the site and what you can apply for specifically.

In your search bar of an internet browser, type mybenefits.ny.gov, and click on “Am I Eligible”.

This website states it will take you about 10 minutes to use. For this article, I did a test run, and it was true: 10 minutes. This site will ask you about the people in your home, the money you get from Social Security, pension(s), a job or other places, your housing costs, and a few other bills.

Keep in mind this website is just a test to see if you might be able to receive benefits; results are based on the information you provide. You will have to apply for these programs to get a final decision about benefits, but the site will let you know how to do that. This site walks you through the whole test process.

Have with you:
- Recent pay stubs/any & all income, i.e. SS income, pensions
- List of household resources
- Current rent/mortgage statement
- Current property tax bill
- Current homeowner’s insurance bill, utility bills
- Healthcare expenses

After this test process is complete, this site walks you through each benefit for which you could apply:
- Help with buying food (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance (TA)
- Special tax credits
- Home Energy Assistance (HEAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Various Health Insurance programs for individuals, families, children, and sole proprietors
- WIC - Women, Infants and Children
- Uninsured Care Program
- Health insurance information, counseling and assistance (HIICAP)
- NY Connects- information on long term care services and supports and assistance linking to these services
- Legal assistance
- Nutritional services, and
- Help with the purchase of prescription drugs.

If you have any questions or assistance in this process, please call the Area Agency on Aging, and we will be happy to help!
A Matter of Balance Returns!
By Matt Kemak, Aging Services Coordinator

Are you changing your lifestyle and habits because you have fallen recently? Do you have a fear of falling? Has your doctor recommended you to attend classes concerning your balance? If you are 60 and older, A Matter of Balance is perfect for you!

Many older adults experience a fear of falling. People who develop this fear often limit their activities, which can result in physical weakness, making the risk of falling even greater. A Matter of Balance is a program designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. A Matter of Balance is more about reshaping your thoughts about falling, with light exercise to build your strength and confidence.

Matthew Kemak, Master Trainer for A Matter of Balance for the Area Agency on Aging, said anyone can benefit from the course. “The course is not all about exercise as people would assume. It is about rethinking how you can see risks, then assess and respond to those risks to allow you to continue to live your life as you want without the fear of falling.”

A Matter of Balance is an eight class program of two-hour classes being offered weekly starting March 9, 2022. Led by instructors Leslie Fladd and Richard Stock, participants will learn and engage in activities to overcome a fear of falling. Classes will be held at the United Presbyterian Church on Wednesdays starting March 9th and ending by April 27th. Registration is free and limited to the first 12 participants. Call 607-753-5060 to register today!

A Matter of Balance is one of 19 nationally recognized evidence-based programs recognized by the Evidenced Based Leadership Collaborative, EBLC. The mission of the EBLC is to increase delivery of evidence-based programs that improve the health and wellbeing of diverse populations. The program is administered through Maine Health and teaches Master Trainers across the country. The Master Trainers then instruct and manage coaches to provide the program to community members.

Pre-register
(607) 7 5 3 – 5 0 6 0
Cortland County Area Agency on Aging

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.
Cheers to volunteers! We are saluting all volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 17-23, especially volunteers of our agency. It is a time to recognize the impact of volunteer service to build stronger communities and to be a force that can make positive change for others.

Each year, we like to shine a light on our volunteers who serve by lending their time, talent and voice to our agency’s efforts as we serve our clients and people in need of assistance. Our volunteers inspire us by their generosity of spirit.

During 2021, our agency utilized 158 volunteers who gave a total of 2,438 hours of service in a variety of jobs. Some opportunities are ongoing (once a week), while others are short-term projects with which you might be able to help.

During this time of the COVID pandemic, a person can feel isolated or wonder how they can make a difference. Volunteering can still be an option and help you stay connected to others. Volunteering offers help to people in need, but the benefits can be even greater for the volunteer. The right volunteer match can help develop friendships, make connections with the community, and possibly learn new skills.

Are you interested in hearing about volunteer opportunities? Our agency offers volunteer jobs to people 18 years or older. Although our volunteer opportunities are somewhat limited due to the pandemic, there are still ways you can give back through our agency. A staff person can discuss with you the types of volunteer jobs that are available, the time commitment needed and how you can get started.

If you would like to hear more about how you can make a difference and join our volunteer team, give our agency a call at 607-753-5060.

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CORTLAND BREAKFAST ROTARY’s 30th ANNUAL Call 607-753-5060 to signup for light Spring Cleaning items.

Cortland/Homer Area Households Limited Availability

FREE spring cleanup

Rake Lawns Prune Shrubs (light pruning) Clean Gutters (single story)
Winter Bus Travel Tips
By Melissa Potter, Mobility Manager
Cortland County

Winter is one of the best times of the year to switch up your commute and try using public transportation. Cortland Transit is a great alternative transportation option when you want to avoid the hassle of driving in poor weather conditions. Consider getting on board Cortland Transit this winter by following some winter bus travel tips.

- Plan extra time in your commute. During periods of heavy snow and ice, buses, like traffic, may fall behind schedule.

- Be cautious when boarding in areas with ice and snow banks. Please wait back on the sidewalk or at a cleared driveway or corner. DO NOT stand in the street or wait at the top of a snow bank.

- Don’t hesitate to call Cortland Transit 607-758-3383 to tell them where you are waiting for the bus on the route. Drivers may not always see you in poor weather when you are flagging down the bus.

- Try to clean off snow from shoes prior to boarding the bus. Keeping shoes as clean as possible before boarding the bus helps prevent the bus floors from getting wet and slippery.

- Be careful when boarding buses. Melting snow and ice can make bus floors slippery. Make sure to hold handrails when boarding or walking inside the bus.

- Take extra measures when commuting in the early morning or evening. Hold a flashlight or wear reflective apparel or safety bands on your coat or other clothing.

- Remember to always dress appropriately for the weather. What you wear can make a big impact on how cold weather affects you. Watching the local news for the forecast is one of the easiest ways to stay informed on upcoming weather and how to prepare for it.

Public transportation is often a safe and easy way to get around town. If you need any assistance with navigating bus maps, bus routes or assessing your best transportation option, feel free to contact Cortland County Mobility Manager Melissa Potter at 607-756-3416 or mpotter@cortland-co.org or visit www.way2gocortland.org for more information.

Update on our Get Published Covid Stories...
We are working diligently to put together the collection of stories we have received.

Stayed tuned for our finished masterpiece.
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.

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.
### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Current Address</th>
<th>New Address</th>
<th>Effective from (Date)</th>
<th>If Temporary, to (Date)</th>
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Mail to: Area Agency on Aging  
60 Central Avenue  
Cortland, NY 13045

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.