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
* Use the convenient form below.

We appreciate your help.

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.
Paying the Right Price
By Catherine Wilde, Mobility Management Coordinator-
Seven Valleys Health Coalition

On a recent ride-around on the local buses, a bus driver brought to my attention his concern that some senior citizens may be accidentally overpaying for their bus rides. The problem, according to Cortland Transit, is confusion between a monthly bus pass and the half-price fare card.

A monthly bus pass costs $45. However, senior citizens and individuals with disabilities can purchase a monthly bus pass for half price ($22.50). A monthly bus pass allows you to ride the bus as often as you want during the month stated, just by showing that pass. No additional fare is required.

MONTHLY PASS

A half-fare card, however, is simply just proof that you qualify for the half price fare. A half fare card is free to obtain and is good for one year. It is not an onboard pass. Half fare cards are for people who only ride the bus occasionally. A typical one-way ride on Cortland Transit costs $1.50. If you have and can show the driver you have a half fare card you will only need to pay $.75 for that ride.

HALF - FARE CARD

HOW TO CHOOSE

A monthly pass works well for the person who rides the bus several times a week or more. Someone who rides the bus once a week or less will do better to pick up a half fare card and pay as they go.

If you are not sure whether purchasing a monthly pass or getting a half fare card is the best option for you, call either Way2Go Cortland at 607-756-4198, or Cortland Transit 607-758-3383 for help deciding.

Under no circumstances should a rider be purchasing a monthly bus pass and then paying again to board the bus. That is double paying!

Newsletter Attempting to Go Green!
Alternate Means of Receiving Senior News

In efforts to Go Green, the Senior News offers alternate ways to receive the newsletter. Sign up to receive the newsletter delivered electronically by email. Simply email us at cccaa@cortland-co.org. Be sure to provide your name, email address, and current mailing address, so we can remove your name from our postal delivery mailing list.
NYS ID & DRIVERS LICENSE COMPARISONS

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<td>Land &amp; Sea to Canada, Mexico &amp; Caribbean*</td>
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<td>Six points of ID: Valid Driver’s License, SS Card**, US Birth certificate or proof of lawful presence in US, 2 proofs of NYS residency. (If name has changed from birth, certificate must show proof of change.)</td>
<td>Six points of ID: Valid Driver’s License, SS Card**, Proof of citizenship, 2 proofs of NYS Residency. (If name has changed from birth, certificate must show proof of change.)</td>
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<td><strong>Permission to operate a motor vehicle?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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* Cruise lines may require a passport.
** Current W2, 1098, 1099 tax forms can be used for SS# if previous NYS license holder.
*** These licenses also available as non-driver identification cards. All permissions remain the same except for operating a motor vehicle. Info extracted from chart compiled by Elizabeth Larkin, Cortland County Clerk

The Census Is Coming – What You Need to Know

By law, every 10 years the U.S. Census Bureau counts every household and person living in the United States. Census data is important because for every person not counted, communities lose thousands of dollars in funding over a 10-year period. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in fiscal year 2015, 132 federal programs used Census data to distribute more than $675 billion in funds.

The AAA staff and other professionals in the Aging Network want to encourage everyone to complete the Census because it serves as the basis for the distribution of funding for many federal programs, including the Older Americans Act.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2030, 73 million, or one in five, people in America will be 65 or older. It is more important than ever that accurate data is collected to reflect our local communities and their makeup.

Privacy is a concern for many older adults, so it is important that people are reassured that under the law, the Census Bureau is required to keep respondent information confidential. According to a fact sheet, the 2020 Census and Confidentiality, the U.S. Census Bureau will never share a respondent’s personal information with immigration enforcement agencies like ICE, law enforcement agencies like the FBI or police—or allow Census data to be used to determine eligibility for government benefits.

In mid-March, households will begin receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census. April 1, 2020 is Census Day. Every household will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. There are three ways in which households can respond: online, by phone or by mail. In the months of May & June, Census takers will begin visiting homes that haven’t responded to the 2020 Census to help make sure everyone is counted.

Make Your Mark...continued from page 1

Why not tutor a student who could use extra help in math, music, or science?

Share your story. There are so many ways to do this, from showing your grandkids around your old neighborhood to writing a book. Take a class and learn how to express yourself with the arts! Or, assemble a photo album of important moments in your life.

Get involved in your neighborhood. Join a homeowner or resident association, organize a block party, or sign up for a book club or other social group. Have a green thumb? Small projects like planting flowers in your yard or cleaning up the community park have a big impact.

Source: https://acl.gov/oam/2020/older-americans-month-2020
**Older Americans Month**
By Julia Chavoustie,
Nutrition Program Supervisor

Join in the celebration of Older Americans Month at one of our eight welcoming Senior Centers during the month of May. This national event honoring older Americans for their commitment and care in our community has become a local tradition.

On Thursday May 7 we will be celebrating in the gymnasium at the Cortland County Office Building. Festivities begin at 4:00 with cheese, crackers and punch. At 4:30 the Senior Citizen of the year will be announced followed by our annual 4th, 5th or 6th grade essay contest winners. Dinner is served at 5:00pm. Our talented cook will be serving delicious roast turkey with gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans and dessert.

Nomination forms for “Senior Citizen of the Year” are located in the Area Agency on Aging Office.

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**Nutrition Program**

Meals at Senior Centers with Activities and Events
Home Delivered Meals
Food Pantries

To reserve your seat call your local senior center by noon the day before the meal:

- Marathon (849-3884) May 6th at 4:30pm
- Cortland (753-5166) May 7th at 4:00pm
- Harford (844-3808) May 12th at 4:30pm
- Willet (863-4887) May 13th at 4:30 pm
- Homer (749-2362) May 18th at 4:30 pm
- Truxtun (842-6253) May 26th at 4:30pm
- Scott (749-7973) May 26th at 4:30pm
- McGraw (836-8916) May 28th at 4:30pm

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**Cortland County Office**
Bldg. Room B-23

1st & 3rd Fri. 9:00am-12:00pm

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**Scam Alerts**

Social Security Launches New Campaign to Fight Scammers

The Social Security Administration launched a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign to continue warning people about the ongoing nationwide telephone impersonation scheme. The PSAs feature a message from Social Security Commissioner Andrew Saul. Social Security and its Office of the Inspector General (OIG) continue to receive reports about fraudulent phone calls from people falsely claiming to be Social Security employees. The scammers mislead victims into making cash or gift card payments for help with purported identity theft, or to avoid arrest for bogus Social Security number problems.

People should also be on the lookout for versions of this scam. Fraudsters are now emailing fake documents in attempts to get people to comply with their demands. Victims have received emails with attached letters and reports that appear to be from Social Security or the OIG. The letters may use official letterhead and government jargon to convince victims they are legitimate; they may also contain misspellings and grammar mistakes.

Social Security mainly calls people who have recently applied for a Social Security benefit, someone who is already receiving payments and requires an update to their record, or a person who has requested a phone call from the agency. If a person is not in one of these situations, they normally would not receive a call from the agency.

Social Security will not:
- Tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended.
- Contact you to demand an immediate payment.
- Ask you for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Require a specific means of debt repayment, like a prepaid debit card, a retail gift card, or cash.
- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money.

If there is a problem with a person’s Social Security number or record, in most cases Social Security will mail a letter. People should never provide information or payment over the phone or Internet unless they are certain of who is receiving it.

**Information provided by the Social Security Administration**

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**Nominations Sought…..continued from page 16**

1. Must be over the age of 60 years.
2. Must have lived in Cortland County for at least two years prior to nomination.
3. Must have a lifetime of service to the general welfare of the community.
4. Only nominations received on the official form will be considered – judges will only review this form and no additional documentation will be considered.
5. No employee whose remuneration derives from the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging is eligible for consideration.
6. Nominations will be kept for one year. Individuals who were nominated for consideration the previous year, but who were not selected, will automatically be entered for the following year’s award.
7. The Cortland County award winner will be entered for judging in the NYS Senior of the Year Award contest the following year.
Wellness Watch
By Rebecca Smith, Public Health Programs Manager

Human Trafficking 101 for Parents, Grandparents and Guardians

Often times, when people first learn about sex trafficking, the first thing that comes to their mind is how to protect their own children or grandchildren from becoming a victim. Parents and grandparents need to know what Human Trafficking is and how to notice the practice. The Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines the crime of human trafficking as:

(A) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age, or

(B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjecting to voluntary servitude, debt bondage, subjection to voluntary servitude, debt bondage, forced labor, or slavery.

As a parent, grandparent or guardian, you may have varying degrees of apprehension about giving your child enough freedom necessary to grow up and become an adult. In today’s world, it is perfectly acceptable to have fears about your child’s safety, especially when it is nearly impossible to keep up with teens’ latest social media trends. One thing is certain, nearly all teens have a cell phone, and almost half of those own smartphones.

Children who are most vulnerable are those who do not have a parent or guardian looking out for them or children who are raised in poverty or come from the foster care system. Teens tend to over share information. What seems like harmless chatter between friends can end up pinpointing your child’s location and regular behavior to a predator.

Learning how to use Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and the latest trends are part of good parenting today. For more information about Human Trafficking in Cortland County, please contact Nikole Hurlbert at 607-753-5106.

If you suspect Human Trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-8888 or text HELP or INFO to (BeFree) 23373.

Nominations Sought For Senior Citizen Of the Year

The Cortland County Area Agency on Aging is seeking nominations for the 2020 Senior Citizen of the Year Award. The award honors a Cortland County resident age 60 or older, who stands out in the community for ongoing devotion of time and talent in a variety of areas.

An independent panel of judges selects the winner from among the nominations. The winner will be announced at Cortland’s Older Americans Month Celebration slated to be held in the County Office Building on Thursday, May 7. An individual need not be a member of a club, Senior Center, or other organization to be eligible for the award. However, in an attempt to have a broad range of nominations, an informational letter and application form have been mailed to many local groups and organizations. Nominations must be received on or before April 9, 2020 and must be mailed to Nancy Hansen, 14 Yong Street, Cortland, NY 13045.

The Older Americans Month Committee of the Area Agency on Aging’s Advisory Council has established the following guidelines for the Award:

1. The nominee must be age 60 or older;
2. The nominee must have on ongoing record of community service for which he/she receives no remuneration;
3. Candidates must be nominated by an
Our household “Project of the Month” had been to clean out a four-drawer file cabinet that contained all our important papers and some not so important catalogues and tourist guides. We have been avoiding the project for a long time and as we worked, we realized it had been years since we worked on the entire file. It was a project that both George and I had to go through, together, to make it completely successful. We survived, and the next week we went south for three weeks as our reward! The file had become the place to put any piece of paper that we might need sometime in the future. We have resolved to be more discretionary in what we save. Can we get the information from somewhere else? Will our children exclaim in disbelief over what they find? (Funny how that has become a deciding factor in anything we save). What is the chance that we will actually remember that we saved the article or that we will remember how we filed it?
You might be surprised over the file that I found hardest to shred. It was my college transcripts. Those transcripts were two years old; and receipts for clothing we no longer have. Trash day was monumental with bags of shredded paper but we have clean file drawers.

Bonesaver Exercise Class

Cincinnatus Mon. & Wed. 9:00am-10:00am
Cortland Mon. & Wed. 1:00pm-2:00pm
Harford Tues. & Thurs. 9:30am-10:30am
Homer Wed. & Fri. 1:30pm-2:30pm
McGraw Tues. & Thurs. 10:00am-11:00am

Registration is required, including a physician’s release. Contact the Area Agency on Aging for more information at 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 ______________________ Phone ____________________________

I designate my contribution of $________ to be used for:
☐ Newsletter ☐ Caregiver Respite Program
☐ Use Where Most Needed ☐ Handyman ☐ Meals on Wheels
☐ All donations are greatly appreciated. ☐ In-Home Services
☐ 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

Area Agency on Aging Volunteer Engagement Program
By Cindy Stout, Aging Services Coordinator

We have a new Name!

As we went through the transition from being a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to our own independent volunteer program, we needed to have a name for our program. A few individuals from our last RSVP Advisory Council agreed to be on a committee to discuss a program name, as well as being a sounding board for a few other ideas. After several ideas/thoughts, our official new name is the Volunteer Engagement Program.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Receptionist – volunteer coverage at our agency front desk is sought during the lunch hour, specifically Fridays. Volunteer duties include greeting clients, answering the phone, taking messages, and sometimes light clerical projects. Shifts are 11:30-1:00pm.

Kitchen Assistance – volunteer assistance is sought in our agency kitchen, which prepares senior center meals as well as meals for delivery to homebound clients. Volunteers help with preparing sandwiches, filling containers with snacks, etc. Shifts are 8:30-10:30, day of week is flexible.

Clerical Assistance – a volunteer is sought for a short-term project involving several clerical tasks. Day of week and time of day is flexible.

AAA Newsletter Work Group – volunteers are sought for a quarterly work group, who help prepare this newsletter for mailing/distribution. Duties include folding, taping and collating the newsletter with a group of other volunteers. Generally held on a Thursday morning every quarter, consider joining this social group and complete a worthwhile task.

Friendly Visitors – volunteers are sought to become a weekly friendly visitor to a homebound client of the agency. Friendly Visitors provide socialization and company to someone who generally lacks the opportunity to be out of the home often. There is no hands-on care. Day of week and time of day is flexible.

Shopping Assistance – volunteers are sought to provide grocery shopping to homebound clients of the agency. Interested volunteers would be matched with one of these clients. Frequency of shopping is determined by client need and volunteer availability.

Full explanations and volunteer job duties will be given on all volunteer jobs, as well as any orientation needed, upon inquiry.

Interested in Becoming a Volunteer?

Please call our agency to learn the details. We have a registration form a person must complete, we are required to have a copy of your driver’s license/sheriff I.D., and we perform a search on a public website, National Sex Offender Public Website. Agency staff can review the current volunteer opportunities and the duties involved for anyone interested to learn more. It starts with a simple call, and soon you can become a volunteer, making a difference in the lives of others. Call 753-5060 for more details.

We Celebrate National Volunteer Week
April 19-25!
Thank You RSVP Volunteers!

As we ended the RSVP Program in 2019, following are some statistics to share:

25,862 volunteer hours donated
29 – Volunteer Stations (agencies) served
364 – RSVP volunteers involved

Thank You RSVP Volunteers!

2019 Final RSVP Statistics:

advancement of the relationship between OAA programs and services and health outcomes. Encouraging states to work with AAAs to address potential administrative barriers to transferring funds between nutrition programs for congregate and home-delivered meals. Next Steps for OAA Reauthorization

The Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 was introduced as a substitute amendment to the House-passed Dignity in Aging Act, which was unanimously approved by Congress in the fall of 2019. That passage will help expedite the Senate approval process.

UPDATE 3/3/20: THE US SENATE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES BILL.

The bill will now have to go back to the House for passage before heading to the President’s desk for signature.

If you would like to voice your support or concerns for this measure, please contact your local national elected officials.

Congressman Anthony Brindisi-DC office, (202) 225-3665
Binghamton office, (607) 242-0200

Senator Charles Schumer-DC office, (202) 224-6542
Binghamton office, (607) 772-6792

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand-DC Office, (202) 224-4451
Syracuse office, (315) 448-0470

House and Senate leaders recently released a bipartisan, bicameral bill, Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020, to reauthorize the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) for five years.

Some of the key provisions in the final compromise bill include:
• Reauthorizing the OAA for five years, which is the timeframe included in the House-passed Dignity in Aging Act (H.R. 4334) and two years longer than the prior reauthorization.
• House-passed increases in authorized funding levels: a seven percent increase is recommended for the first year, with six percent increases in each subsequent year through 2024.
• Language to clarify that Area Agency on Agencies (AAA) can, outside of the OAA, engage in private pay, integrated care and other arrangements to expand services.
• Removing the Title III E funding cap on grandfamilies and older relative caregivers.
• Authorization of an Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) grant demonstration program for Title VI Native American aging programs to enhance the capacity to support wrap-around supportive services to Native American elders in tribal country.
• Establishing a research, demonstration and evaluation center for the Aging Network to improve assessment and promote

The Cortland County Area Agency on Aging Nutrition Program has a new Head Cook and his name is Justen Cole.

Justen has been with the Nutrition Program for the past 14 years, starting as a dish room attendant through the Work Experience program with the Department of Social Services, to an assistant cook, and now the head cook. “I am proof how the system can help those in need and better themselves,” said Justen.

Justen describes himself as hard working, dependable, dedicated and fun. His hobbies include cooking (as he has been doing it since he was 11 at home,) bowling every Friday, fishing, and anything outdoors.

Justen is a lifetime Cortland County resident, graduating from Homer High School. Beyond his experience working at the AAA, Cole also has served as a chef for 3 years at Pita Gourmet. He currently lives in Cortland with his girlfriend and two step-children.

Justen said the biggest question he gets asked is, “Can you make the Mac and Cheese as good as Danny?” Danny Ferris was the prior cook for the past 31 years at the AAA. He said he has already answered that question, having served the mac and cheese with no complaints or issues. “They call me Danny Jr.” said Justen when the seniors refer to him.

“I have some big shoes to fill, but I am pleased to keep the good that Danny brought to our agency as head cook.” He adds, “Sure, there will be minor changes as the agency evolves but we will continue to work hard for all of our seniors.”

The Cortland Housing Authority has a rental assistance program that may be able to help you! The Section 8 Housing Program helps qualified people meet their monthly rent bills by paying a portion of their rent directly to their landlord. Interested persons may pick up applications at the Housing Authority offices located at 42 Church Street or 51 Port Watson Street Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm or call 607.753.9384 or 607.753.1771 and request to have an application sent by mail.

 advocated for a reorganization bill, as detailed from the n4a (National Associations of Area Agencies on Aging)
Do you know someone who might benefit from a few hours away from caregiving to recharge their batteries and not worry about caregiving responsibilities?

Respite supports caregivers who are caring for loved ones. Respite allows caregivers to step away from their duties to refresh, relax and to take care of themselves. Do you often wonder what you can do to help?

Do you often hesitate to offer your time because:
- You might get in over your head?
- You worry about a crisis happening while you are there?
- You don’t want to make a mistake?
- You are unsure about providing personal or physical care?
- They said they are doing fine/they don’t need help?

We can help. REST is a standardized, national training program which prepares caregivers to step away from their duties to refresh, relax and to take care of themselves. Do you often wonder what you can do to help?

Do you often hesitate to offer your time because:
- You might get in over your head?
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- They said they are doing fine/they don’t need help?

We can help. REST is a standardized, national training program which prepares caregivers to step away from their duties to refresh, relax and to take care of themselves. Do you often wonder what you can do to help?

Things you will learn:
- What Respite is and role of volunteers
- Coping strategies for you and the caregiver
- The rules of confidentiality
- Important communication techniques
- Respecting a person’s independence and abilities of the care receiver
- Family diversity
- Adapting activities for different abilities
- Universal precautions and safety
- Abuse/neglect and crisis intervention, what to do
- Understanding behaviors

Respite is often referred to as “giving the gift of time”.

If your organization would like to provide REST Companion training sessions, be a respite provider or if you would like to be a trainer please contact the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging’s Caregivers Resource Center at (607)753-5060 to find out more.

Cortland County Area Agency on Aging Caregivers Support Group

Every 4th Thursday of the month 3:00pm-4:00pm at the Guthrie Cortland Medical Center in the basement, Conference Room B

If you can’t make this, ask about our online support group! For more information, call the Caregivers Resource Center at 753-5060.

Walk-Ins Welcome!
Many older adults and empty nesters looking to downsize into quiet comfortable housing such as a nice retirement community can find housing options in Cortland County very limited. Retirement communities are wonderful and have a lot to offer; unfortunately, one needs to relocate to live in one.

Housing options in Cortland include subsidized/independent living facilities such as Friendship House, Ellis Pines, Creamery Hills, and several Cortland Housing Authority Apartments and Cortland Housing Assistance Apartments just to name a few. Because these housing options are subsidized, there are income guidelines and limits.

Other options include unsubsidized apartment complexes. Residency for this type of housing is based on your ability to pay the asking rental or lease fee (credit history and references are usually required as well). Most of these housing options do not have age limits or disability requirements so there could be a mixture of age groups and specific populations living in the same building. One of the more upscale apartment buildings in Cortland is the newly renovated Crescent Commons on South Main St Cortland. Others include Sherbrook Apartments, Squires Apartments, and several others.

Recently there was an article in the Cortland Standard by S.N. Briere regarding plans to build a 38 unit condominium development in Homer. Briere’s article indicated that the plans have not yet been reviewed and finalized by the Homer Village Board, but a date to do so has been set and the hope is that the plans will be finalized and the construction started this spring.

Retirement Communities, Condominiums, and other Senior Housing options can be found in other parts of the county for those willing to relocate. Tiny House Communities are popping up such as Boiceville Cottages in Ithaca NY. These are small single family rental homes (but not strictly for the older population). Natural Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) have developed in many areas. A NORC naturally evolves as the people in the community age, aging people move into the community, or as younger residents move out of a community leaving a sizable population of older residents behind.

For a more complete list of housing options in Cortland County contact the Area Agency on Aging office and request a housing guide at 607-753-5060.

WE WANT TO HELP YOU

The Agency staff each specializes in a variety of subjects. While walk-ins can sometimes be seen, the Agency staff person who can best assist you might be with someone, out of the office, or doing a home visit.

To make sure that you are served by the person whose expertise is in your area of need, we encourage you to call to make an appointment.

Effective Communication Strategies

Thursday, 4/2/20 from 12-1 p.m.
Communication is more than just talking and listening – it’s also about sending and receiving messages through attitude, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. As people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias progress in their journey and the ability to use words is lost, families need new ways to connect. Join us to explore how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer’s, learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia, and identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

Legal & Financial Planning
Thursday, 4/2/20 from 1-4pm
The diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease makes planning for the future more important than ever. This is an interactive program where you will have a chance to learn about important legal and financial issues to consider, how to put plans in place, and how to access legal and financial resources near you. This program will cover information for families and individuals dealing with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia.

Topics covered will include:
- Making legal plans that fit your needs
- Legal documents you’ll need and what they mean for all of you
- How to find legal and financial assistance
- Practical strategies for making a long-term plan of care.

Please join us for these free events located in Room 302 of the County Office Building and hosted by the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging’s Caregiver Resource Center, Call (607)753-5060 to register.
Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)

Is a Medicare Advantage Plan The Right Choice For me?
by Sara Hazard, Aging Services Specialist

Medicare beneficiaries are bombarded with advertisements of both Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans options. The information can be confusing and at times a little misleading. You will hear words like “free dental,” “free glasses,” “free hearing aids,” and even “free meals.” A wise consumer would ask themselves, “Sounds great, but what is real deal?” “What is the true cost and coverage?”

Medicare Advantage Plans are offered by private companies that are approved by Medicare. Medicare pays these companies to cover your Medicare benefits. If you join a Medicare Advantage Plan, the plan will provide all of your Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance), Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance), and Medicare Part D (Prescription drug) in one plan. Medicare Advantage plans are required to offer beneficiaries “as good as” or “better than” what Medicare covers. Advantage plans usually offer a zero monthly premium and the beneficiaries continue to pay their Medicare part B premiums. Medicare Advantage Plans have copays associated with physician visits, hospitalizations, surgical procedures, and imaging. Copays vary depending on the Advantage Plan the beneficiary chooses. Most Ad-vantage Plans have networks (a group of doctors, hospitals and clinics that have agreed to provide plan members with health care services) and require prior authorization (approval for certain health services).

Original Medicare does not cover routine eye exams, prescription eye glasses (except in certain limited situations), dental work, routine hearing exams or hearing aids. One of the perks of Medicare Advantage Plans are the inclusion of some of these benefits, depending on the plan. Many Advantage Plans cover routine dental exams twice a year, and some plans may have a benefit towards fillings, root canals, crowns, and dentures. Routine hearing exams and hearing aids are also a benefit with some plans. Other benefits sometimes include a fitness benefit, prepared meals after a hospitalization, and a small benefit for over-the-counter purchases.

Although the extras are great, before signing up for a particular Medicare Advantage Plan read the fine print. Make sure all of your doctors participate with the plan you choose. Check your prescriptions to make sure that they are on the Medicare Advantage Plan’s formulary (a list of prescription drugs that are covered by a specific health care plan.)

For assistance, please contact our HIICAP specialist at the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060.

Did You Know? Acupuncture…
Source: Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has recently finalized a decision to cover acupuncture for Medicare beneficiaries with chronic low back pain. Chronic low back pain is defined as lasting 12 weeks or longer with no identifiable systemic cause. This decision will allow for Medicare coverage for up to 12 sessions in 90 days with an additional 8 sessions for patients who demonstrate improvement. No more than 20 acupuncture treatments may be administered annually. Acupuncture is a treatment in which practitioners stimulate specific points on the body, most often inserting thin needles through the skin. For many, this method of pain management is very effective and used as an alternative to traditional medications. Medicare will only cover acupuncture for chronic low back pain at this time. If you feel you are a candidate for acupuncture, please discuss this with your primary care provider. You may also call the Area Agency on Aging at 753-5060 for a listing of providers.

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 2020. 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.

2020 Empire State Senior Games
By Machell Phelps, Cortland Regional Sports Council

Cortland Regional Sports Council is coordinating the Empire State Senior Games, which will be hosted at SUNY Cortland. The games will take place between June 13 - 21. Consider taking advantage of a local opportunity to compete with fellow New York state athletes. You must turn 50 in 2020 to be eligible to compete. Interested athletes can go online at www.nyseniorgames.com for a complete list of sports and registration information to compete in the games. The 2020 games will be a qualifying year for the 2021 National Games being held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Along with the actual competition, the Area Agency on Aging will be coordinating and participating in the Wellness Fair at the Park Center on Thursday, June 18 from 9am-3pm and June 19 from 9am-12pm. Stop in to see us and other exhibitors who will be showcasing services and products for older adults.