

THE SENIOR STARTER

AUGUST 2022



THE PLACE TO START FOR SERVICES
BY THE
TOWN OF COLONIE
SENIOR RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Greetings!

As we enter the final phase of summer there's still plenty of time to enjoy its rewards. Many of summer's delights do not cost a penny. Star gazing, fire flies in the night, butterflies and bees buzzing, birds chirping, flowers blooming, and thunderstorms are just a few of summer's delights. Personally, I find thunderstorms frightful but know of many who consider them delightful!

We are happy to include a new section in this month's newsletter entitled **Spotlight of the Month**. Since we have such a wealth of talent and knowledge in our senior community we thought it would be nice to showcase these works. To start off this series, we have included a poem "MY GARDEN", from a collection of poems written by Sara Wellen and published in her book *REFLECTIONS*. Sara, a gifted writer, and a senior in the Town of Colonie was gracious enough to allow us to pick out this piece to share with you. I love how it brings to life the endless beauty of gardening. Thank you, Sara, for sharing your talent with us.

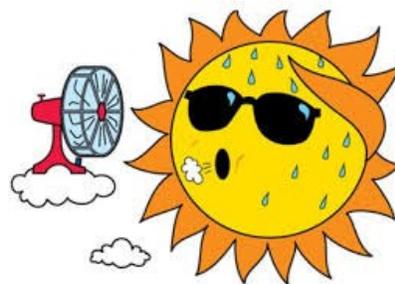
Do you have a gift with words? Art? Cooking? If so, we encourage you to consider sharing your works with our readers. Please send us your submissions by email or stop by office with your work, so we can share them in future newsletter editions.

I know we've had some rather hot, humid days of late. Personally, I enjoy the heat but not everyone shares my sentiments. For many, health issues are exacerbated by the heat. It's important to stay hydrated during these hot days. We have included an article on ways to cool down and hope you find the information useful.

Hope you are enjoying your summer!

Sincerely,
Angelina

Angelina J. Searles
Director



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12 Metro Park Road, Suite 103
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 459-5051

Newsletter Editor
Carrie Blanchard

Spotlight of the Month

My Garden

By Sarah Wellen

The flowers in my garden
Grow in great profusion;
I pick them for the house,
Their scents a great infusion.

Each day I change the water,
Discarding those that died,
Enjoying every bloom
That I have brought inside.

And so, the season passes,
With new species every week,
Until the cold arrives
And my garden becomes bleak.

But I am so undaunted,
I know without a doubt,
That spring will come again,
Ending winter's flower drought.



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EMAILING CARRIE AT

BLANCHARDC@COLONIE.ORG



STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Angelina Searles, Director

searlesa@colonie.org

518-459-5531

Carrie Blanchard, Specialist II

blanchardc@colonie.org

518-459-3977

Katie Connelly, Caseworker

connellyk@colonie.org

518-459-3259

Sue Conlon, Specialist

conlons@colonie.org

518-459-2516

Racheal Dames, Caseworker

damesr@colonie.org

518-459-5764

Kelly O'Sullivan, Caseworker

osullivank@colonie.org

518-867-3931

Healthy Aging Seminar Series:

Better with Age

When: Tuesdays, 9:30– 10:30a.m.

Location: Specialty Medical Practice Building
1785 Route 9 Clifton Park, NY 12065

August 9 - Bladder Control: Age- related incontinence, tips for bladder control, home delivery of incontinence products and medications.

August 16 - Advance Care Planning: Types of advance directives, making your wishes known, talking with your health care provider and completing and storing forms.

Limited seating • Registration recommended

Call 518-641-3025 or Register online @

Insights.CDPHP.com/c/r/Better

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StateWide's Medicare Corner

What is Medical Identity Theft?

Medical Identity Theft occurs when someone steals personal information such as a beneficiary's name, date of birth, and Medicare number and uses that information to get medical treatment, medical supplies, prescription drugs, surgery and other services and then bills Medicare for it. When a Medicare beneficiary falls victim to a scam and their Medicare number is then compromised and they may also be a victim of Medical Identity Theft.

Medical Identity Theft can affect a beneficiaries' medical and health insurance records. Each time a scammer utilizes a beneficiary's identity to receive or bill for care/ supplies, a record is created with incorrect medical information about them. This can also affect a beneficiary financially if they have copays or coinsurance costs for the services, procedures, or supplies the scammer utilizes their information to obtain.

Report potential medical identity theft from fraud, errors, or abuse if:

- You see on your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits charges for services or equipment you didn't receive.
- You are contacted by a collection company for a provider you have never seen.
- You receive a box of braces, testing kits, or other medical supplies in the mail you did not request.

The NYS Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) receives calls from individuals asking what to do in challenging situations like this. The SMP program educates Medicare beneficiaries on how to protect themselves from fraud and abuse and is the go-to when people suspect they've been billed incorrectly or have been victim to a scam. You can reach the **NYS SMP Helpline at 800-333-4374.**

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New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc
275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210 • 800-333-4374 • Fax 518-436-7642
www.nyseior.org

Benefits Gardening & Yardwork have on Mental Health

Summer used to be the time we looked forward to. A break from school, time to travel, or hang out with friends. Instead, we find ourselves continuing to live our lives online, indoors, and socially distanced.

COVID-19 is easing, but the uncertainty and stress about the next variant still affect our mental well-being. One fix is right outside your door. Here are seven benefits that gardening and yardwork have on your mental health:

You Can Depend on It: Gardening is the perfect way to balance frustration with today's "new normal." Schedule an hour a day for gardening and pruning. Digging, pulling weeds, and pushing seeds into the earth is a holistic and healthy way to achieve balance in an unpredictable world.

Green is Good: Just being outside in a green space is good for your mental health and can result in reduced stress. There's also a mental health benefit to digging in the dirt.

Better Nutrition: It's no secret that healthy eating boosts your mental health. A diet rich in fiber also boosts your immune system. Plant an array of colorful vegetables such as sweet potatoes, eggplant, green beans and swiss chard for a healthy menu.

Gardening as Exercise: Just a few minutes of gardening can help lower your levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Getting the proper amount of exercise also boosts your immune system. Push lawn mowing burns between 250 and 350 calories an hour.

A Sense of Connection: Some people say they've lost a sense of connection as all the hallmarks of daily life suddenly changed. Caring for a living garden, or better yet a community garden, can reconnect you with a sense of purpose, and keep you surrounded by like-minded people.

Being Mindful: Mindfulness is "the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis." And that's the trick out in the yard. Activities such as pruning roses or cutting back bushes, afford you the opportunity to practice being in the moment. It's a practice that has proven mental health benefits.

Pride of Accomplishment: Now that many of us are sticking closer to home, you might be able to spend more time working on an Instagram-worthy flower garden. It's an activity that's proven to come with big benefits to your stress level and time well spent.



Ways to Save Energy \$\$\$ at Home

By National Grid

One of the easiest ways to put some extra dollars in your pocket is to cut down on unnecessary energy use. Saving energy dollars is easy to do whether you own or rent. Below are 12 steps you can take to save energy \$:

- Just a few degrees change in temperature levels can make a big difference in the amount of energy used. Summer season: 76 -78F, Winter season 66-68F.
- When you go to sleep set thermostats for low energy use.
- When you go out, set thermostats for low energy use; A/C: 5-10*higher Heat: 5-10* lower.
- If a room is not in use, don't heat or cool more than is necessary. Keep the windows closed, shades down, draperies drawn and keep the door closed.
- Adjust heating/cooling system to work more efficiently. Make sure the air duct system isn't leaking, clean or replace filters, clean the coil, close fresh air intakes and clear away obstructions.
- Cool your home the natural way: Keep the sun's heat out by adjusting your shades, blinds, draperies, or awnings to block out the sun's rays. Let hot air out through the upper vents in your attic and make sure any lower vents are not blocked.
- Let the sun help heat your home in cold weather. Remember to pull up the shades, open the blinds or draperies on the sunny side to let in those warm rays.
- "Button up" your home to retain cooled or heated air. If you have cooled down your home naturally at night closing the blinds or draperies in the morning can help retain that coolness and insulate against the heat of a sunny day. In cold weather use your storm doors and windows, and close draperies.
- Keep your body comfortable & dress appropriately.
- Use less hot water in the bathroom, kitchen and laundry. When you shower keep it short and turn off the tap. If you use machines wash larger loads, try cool water clothes washing. Save on machine drying too on nice sunny days hang your clothes outside.
- Conserve energy by turning things off when they're not being used or needed.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs. When a bulb burns out, consider replacing them with LED or energy saving light bulbs.

nationalgrid

HERE WITH YOU. HERE FOR YOU.



Senior Clubs of Colonie

Christ Our Light Seniors

Pres. Sal D'Amore, 518-458-1648

Business Meeting: First Monday @ 12:30pm

Colonie Senior Citizens Club

Pres. Kathy Ingalls, 518-482-5049

Business Meeting: First Wednesday @ 10am

Lisha Kill Seniors Citizens Club

Pres. Shirley Hamm, 518-869-3020

Business Meeting: Second Tuesday @ 9:30am

Menands Senior Citizens Club

Pres. Diane Leonard, 518-465-3771

Business Meeting: Fourth Thursday @ 10:30am

Towers of Colonie Silver Streakers

Pres. Ralph Della Rocca, 518-542-1807

Business Meeting: First Monday @ 1pm

Thunder Road Seniors

Pres. Edward Johnson, 518-554-8588

Business Meeting: First Tuesday @ 1pm

Health Benefits of Farmers Market

Featured Expert: Melinda E. Cater, MS, RD, LDN

If you are lucky enough to have a local farmers market, you have access to an array of fresh produce, from local farmers, bakers, artisans and vendors. Melinda Cater, a dietitian at Johns Hopkins, has some delicious ideas about how shopping at your local farmers market can add nutrition to your meal planning and health to your family and community.

Nutritional benefits: Produce from local farmers has spent more time on the vine, on the tree or in the ground, so you get better taste and more nutrients. When it comes to fresh fruit and vegetables, the shorter the time and distance from farm to sale, the higher the levels of vitamins and minerals.

Best things to buy: Talk to the farmers and sellers they will tell you what's good that week and what they're likely to bring next time. The great thing about the markets is that the sellers are often the producers: They raise, grow, harvest, bake or prepare the products themselves.

Food to avoid: Avoid produce with wet or slimy leaves, and keep an eye out for produce that is changing color, such as green veggies that are turning yellow. Be on the lookout for mold and avoid produce that smells foul or bitter or that is abnormally soft. Especially during hot months, buy perishables such as meat, poultry, fish and eggs last and transport them in a separate bag from fresh fruits and veggies to help avoid cross-contamination. Prepared foods, observe the vendors, they should be wearing gloves when handling foods, and changing gloves when moving between raw and cooked foods.

Risky Foods: May pose health risks, especially for children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems. Raw sprouts such as raw mung bean, radish, alfalfa or clover sprouts, can be risky in terms of food poisoning. They are typically grown in warm humid conditions, which can foster bacterial growth. The FDA (food drug administration) and CDC (Center for Disease Control) all advise against consumption of raw milk & cheese as it may contain multiple pathogens that can cause vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and flu-like symptoms.

Storing & Freezing Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: There are many ways to preserve produce, including freezing, drying and canning. Learning some of these techniques can be a rewarding way to keep healthy vegetables on your table all year long.

Preparing leafy greens: Separate leaves from the head. Soak for 10 minutes in cold water, and swirl to remove dirt; dry in a salad spinner, or pat each leaf with a clean towel. Keep greens separated from orchard fruits, bananas, avocados and tomatoes; which emit ethylene, a natural compound that can make salad greens go bad faster.

Herbs and asparagus: Wash in cold water and spin, wrap in a damp (not wet) towel then refrigerate. For basil; trim the stem ends and put in water like you would flowers; do not refrigerate.

Keeping berries fresh: Rinse the berries and lightly dry on clean towels; store in the refrigerator in a small strainer or colander so water does not collect in the bottom.

Melons: Wash the outsides, which can harbor germs that can get on your cutting board and other surfaces when you slice them.

Freezing vegetables: Trim stalks, remove seeds from peppers, and cut large vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Blanch to kill germs, brighten color and lock in nutrients. Freeze separated pieces on a baking sheet then store in a vacuum-sealed freezer bag. Do not freeze tomatoes. **How to blanch:** Cook in boiling water for 2-3 minutes, drain, and place vegetables into a bowl of ice water.

Freezing fruits: Wash berries and sliced orchard fruits, but do not blanch them: Simply freeze on a baking sheet.



Cool Down with Healthy Hydration From your Hannaford Dietitian

Why Do We Need to Hydrate?

- Helps the function of organs that keep us alive & feeling good.
- Regulates our body temperature throughout our daily activities.
- Aids in digestive health by working with fiber in your diet to promote regularity.
- Prevents dehydration, especially during activity and in hot weather

Hydration Tips:

- Drink before you feel thirsty! When you feel thirsty, your body has already become partially dehydrated
- Choose water most often for the best calorie-free hydration option.
- Make sure your tap water is safe to drink and invest in a quality water filter if necessary.
- Purchase a reusable water bottle that you can carry with you throughout the day for easy access to water.

Creative Ways to Stay Hydrated:

- Add fresh fruit to your water for extra flavor. Try adding herbs, like fresh mint and basil!
- Try seltzer water! It is a flavorful and carbonated option for soda lovers that are trying to cut back on sugar.
- Fresh fruit contains water, so eat some throughout the day. Pop fruit in the freezer to have a nice cold snack on hand to cool you down on a hot summer day!



Social Security Online: Your First and Best Place to Start

More than likely you do not have to visit a Social Security office to do business with us. You might not have to call, either. Our Online Services provides you a wide variety of self-service options you can use on your phone, tablet, or computer. You can even apply for retirement, disability, or Medicare online. You can get the most out of your online experience if you have a personal *my Social Security* account. With it you can do the following:

- Get your Social Security Statement instantly.
- Appeal a decision we made on your claim.
- Find out if you qualify for benefits.

Already receiving benefits? If so, you can use your personal *my Social Security* account to:

- Get your benefit verification letter for Social Security, Medicare, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) instantly.
- Check your information and benefit amount.
- Change your address and telephone number.
- Start or change your direct deposit.
- Request a replacement Medicare card.
- Get a replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S instantly for tax season.
- Report your wages if you work and receive disability benefits or SSI.

Create or sign in to your personal *my Social Security* account today to take advantage of these easy-to-use features.

<https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>



Weatherization Assistance Program

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) was created in 1976 to assist low-income families who lacked resources to invest in energy efficiency. Funds are used to improve the energy efficiency of low-income homes using the most advanced technologies and testing protocols available in the housing industry. The Program provides energy related services to make your home safer and more comfortable.

Services may include but are not limited to:

- Sealing of cracks & holes to reduce heat loss
- Insulation of attic and walls
- Heating system repairs or replacement
- Providing efficient lighting & refrigeration
- Window and/or outside door repair or replacement
- Address any energy related health & safety issues identified during the inspection.
- Minor repairs which are needed to ensure maximum efficiency of the weatherization services performed.

Who can apply? Anyone who owns or rents a home and meets the income guidelines below:

Household Size	Monthly Income
1	\$2,729
2	\$3,569
3	\$4,409
4	\$5,249

If you want to apply or have any questions, call the Senior Resource Department for assistance 518-459-5051 ext 2.



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