Social Distancing Doesn't Mean Isolation

Coming up on Lunchtime Chats:

Friday at 1pm: Jean Gagnon owner of Plaza Travel in Latham and a frequent WAMC guest, will speak on recent travels to Morocco and Portugal. Get ready to be transported!

Next Tuesday: Susan Leath of the Town of Bethlehem speaks on "The History of John and Sarah Dickson".

We all have heard about the studies showing that social isolation increasingly puts older adults at risk of heart disease, stroke, depression, obesity, cognitive decline and even death. Similar studies have also shown the opposite to be true. Engaging in social or meaningful activities, such as book clubs or volunteering, can improve people’s health outcomes and mental well-being.

So how do we find a balance in this unusual time of Covid-19, as we are asked to stay at home and at least six feet away from other people when in public? A recent New York Times article by Paula Span, highlighted what some organizations are doing to combat isolation associated with this quarantine. Many are using technology, such as Zoom, or Uber Conference or Facetime, to keep older people engaged and connected. They are offering social and wellness calls along with group chats or programs.

Here at Community Caregivers, we are doing many of the same things. Our dedicated staff and volunteers are making reassurance calls to our clients a few times a week. We have also created telephone support groups for caregivers and for people dealing with grief. We started a small group “Creative Coffee Break” on Thursdays from 2-3pm, where people can check in and share ideas or tips for what they are doing to stay engaged and active at home.

Since late March, we have been hosting Lunchtime Chats on Tuesdays and Fridays at
1pm. These are opportunities to learn about a variety of subjects and ask questions of an expert in the field. Previous chats have been about the history of the Empire State Plaza, an explanation of how to make syrup, and decluttering. We are pleased to announce that these chats are co-sponsored by the Albany Guardian Society - which has been holding educational classes for years and is now using a virtual model.

We hope you will join us for any of the group programs by calling into 518-992-6661. Make sure to check our newsletter, website and Facebook for upcoming virtual events.

(Submitted by Laura Jonas, Consultant to Community Caregivers.)

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Dear Friends of Community Caregivers,

We have been so pleased with the number of participants calling into our Lunchtime Chats and other support group calls. We will continue to host these on a variety of topics and interests, based on your feedback.

As you know we are still learning how to operate these virtual meetings, and we are saddened to learn that some of you have been charged by your phone company for participation in these calls. We are working on correcting this problem immediately which will involve changing our call-in phone number to an Albany location to avoid charges. The new number to call is: 518-992-6661 starting on Tuesday, April 28. If you have any concerns, please call our office at (518)456-2898. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

"Those that contemplate the beauty of the Earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

-Rachel Carson

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Judith Rothstein, Board of Directors Member, Finalist in the Capital Region Jefferson Awards

Last month, Community Caregivers' Board of Directors Member Judith Rothstein was selected as a Capital District finalist in the prestigious Jefferson Awards. These awards highlight local and national individuals who are committed to improving their communities through voluntary and community services. The program was established by the American Institute for Public Service which was created in 1972 by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Senator Robert Taft and Sam Beard. According to the Institute, chosen candidates "...are ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things...and go above
As we enter the month of May and the hope of better days ahead, Community Caregivers is grateful to all of you who have supported us—and who continue to support us—during this ongoing pandemic. The virus has not stopped us from providing critical services to our clients nor has it compromised the strength and willingness of our volunteer corps providing these services.

That’s why we are participating in #GivingTuesdayNow on May 5th. This is a global day of giving and unity as an emergency response to the unprecedented needs caused by COVID-19. Please consider making a gift to us on May 5th so we can continue to provide critical services to our isolated senior citizen population and to those others who rely on us the most.

Visit our website at www.communitycaregivers.org and click on the Donate buttons located on the homepage. It is because of you—a member of our passionate, dedicated, and generous community-- that we are able to do what we do. Thank you!

"BEST OF..." – Staff Picks

INSTOK is an easy way to Listen to an interview
Life Kit is a podcast from NPR that provides helpful tricks and tips on sleeping, parenting, cooking and just being human during this time. Experts weigh in during these 10-15 mini-sessions.

Click for Life Kit

Guilderland Library Expands in a Little Way

If you are missing the idea and feel of a newly-borrowed book from your local library, look no further! The Guilderland Public Library has just "opened" it's latest branch. Stop by the library and visit the "Little Free Library" right in front of the main building. The idea is to "Take a Book, Leave a Book". So, the next time you're passing by on Western Ave., be sure to bring along a book or two to trade in for a new read!

Food Shopping and Delivery

On a limited basis, Community Caregivers is offering grocery shopping for persons in need. Please call the office at 518-456-2898 for more information. Also, the Guilderland Food Pantry is delivering items to persons on Social Security, free of charge. Call them at 518-938-1001 to see if you or someone you know qualifies. If you are able, donations to local food banks are desperately needed right now. Please consider donating to one near you!

Creative Concoctions from Your Pantry
She's been at it again. Our own Laura Jonas has created another mouth-watering dish that's perfect for these times. Simply look in your cupboards - chances are, you'll have everything you need! To check out her latest recipe - **Laura's Pantry Chili**, see Laura's latest post on our Facebook page! Be sure to "like" our page and "share" with friends!

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**Links to Local Resources and More**

Below are internet sites that provide basic information about food availability and access, Medicare assistance, and local charities ready to help now!


**The United Way** is offering assistance to meet the needs of anyone in crisis. Click here for more information: [https://www.unitedwaygcr.org/call-211](https://www.unitedwaygcr.org/call-211)

The information provided within is potentially outdated by the time it is delivered electronically. Please check with each organization to be sure that their information has not changed.

**The Medicare Rights Center Consumer Helpline** is up and running to help Medicare eligible seniors navigate their coverage as it relates to the COVID-19 outbreak. To speak with a Medicare counselor please call 800-333-4114.

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**Coffee Break, Anyone?**

Join us on Thursdays each week for a virtual coffee break. We will share ideas about how we are making use of our time and resources at home, revisit old hobbies or start new ones and find creative ways to have fun! Simply call 518-992-6661 at 2pm to join the audio conference.
MASKS AVAILABLE for clients and volunteers

One of our community partners has graciously provided a supply of masks for us to distribute to our clients and volunteers. If you need a face mask to use while in public, please call our office at 518-456-2898 and we will mail one out to you ASAP! Also, Sheriff Craig Apple announced that the Department had 100,000 to give to Albany Co. residents as of April 23rd. Call 518-720-8036 for availability.

Official Websites for COVID–19 Information

The following are official websites that will provide you with the most up-to-date information available:

- New York State Department of Health
- Albany County Department of Health
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The World Health Organization

New York State COVID-19 Hotlines

New York State has established a COVID–19 Hotline (1–888–364–3065) that can provide additional information related to travel and symptoms.

New York State has established an Emotional Support Hotline for persons experiencing increased stress and anxiety. Over 6,000 experienced volunteers are ready to help. Call 1–844–863–9314 to speak with a trained professional.

All of us at Community Caregivers understand that these are uncertain, difficult and confusing times. But we want you to know that everyone here is working together to provide ongoing support and assistance to our clients and volunteers.

While we have suspended all in–person services including transportation and home visits, we will continue to strive and meet any needs that may arise.

Please call Community Caregivers at (518) 456–2989 M–F, 9AM–4PM.

A staff member will answer or return your call promptly.