Neighbors Helping Neighbors for Over 25 Years

Community Caregivers Expands Services into Rensselaer County

We are so excited to announce our new program, Checking on Our Neighbors! This initiative connects isolated individuals in Rensselaer County with our own volunteers who provide ongoing check-ins and assurance phone calls in an effort to combat loneliness. Carol Rosbozom, Commissioner of the Office for the Aging in Rensselaer County, said the program is needed now more than ever before. “Senior adults who live alone and those with disabling conditions have been particularly hard hit by the disruption of daily life and routines that have occurred during the COVID-19 shutdown.”

The program, which is funded through a grant from The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation, is a collaboration between Community Caregivers and the Rensselaer Office for the Aging. Our Executive Director, Lee Lounsbury said, “Individuals at risk of social isolation will be paired with a volunteer, screened and trained by Community Caregivers, who will call them for a friendly chat over the telephone twice a week.” Both Rosbozom and Lounsbury hope that these phone calls will offer a regular social connection for the recipient and therefore reduce loneliness and isolation.

Checking on Our Neighbors has received attention in the press! Both the Times Union and the Altamont Enterprise carried stories on the program and News Channel 10 featured it in a news story.

For more information on this free program, or if you would like to refer someone, please call Community Caregivers at 518-456-2898 or email Linda Miller at linda@communitycaregivers.org.

We are Just a Phone Call Away
If you or someone you know would like ongoing conversational support, please call us at 518-456-2898 or email info@communitycaregivers.org.

Community Caregivers welcomes new referrals in Albany and Rensselaer counties and we are always seeking volunteers. Client intakes are currently being conducted over the phone by our registered nurse. Please contact us at 518-456-2898 if you know someone in need or if you would like to lend a hand.

With Community Support, Our Services Continue

All of us at Community Caregivers extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region. Their generous award, deployed from the Capital Region Community COVID-19 Response Fund, enables us to maintain essential services to our isolated, senior clients. These services include grocery and food pantry pickup and delivery, prescription delivery, and weekly calls to reduce such isolation and meet essential needs.

We also express our gratitude and appreciation to the John D. Picotte Family Foundation for their recent award. Their donation will similarly be used to help support our ongoing services to isolated clients and other vulnerable individuals.

The generosity and commitment from these foundations exemplifies their confidence in the services we provide on behalf of our community. We salute them!

Albany Medical Center Releases New Video, "Finding a Doctor"

Earlier this year, staff at Community Caregivers took part in the creation of a video just released by Albany Medical Center that helps consumers find doctors in their local area. The video demonstrates how someone new to the Capital District might go about locating medical professionals and assistance in a safe and correct manner. We are proud to have helped with this production!

This Week on Our Lunchtime Chats:
- Tuesday, May 19th at 1pm - Our own Mike Burgess reflects on the excitement caused by the 1980 Winter Olympics held in neighboring Lake Placid.

- Friday, May 22nd at 1pm - Join us to learn about beekeeping and the plight of this important insect.

To access our free Lunchtime Chat line, simply dial 518-992-661. Or we can call you! Just let us know by calling our office at 518-456-2898. This program is brought to you by Community Caregivers and The Albany Guardian Society, a non-profit organization that seeks to improve the lives of seniors, their families and caregivers.

Creative Writing with Diane Cameron on June 2nd

Past CC director, Diane Cameron, is also a writer, teacher, advocate and long-time family caregiver. Her columns appear in the Albany Times Union and in papers across the country. Diane's essays on caregiving were included in the program “The Sound of Writing” on National Public Radio. She is also the author of three books: Looking for Signs, Out of the Woods and Never Leave Your Dead. On June 2nd, Diane will talk with us about writing your own story and share tips on how to get started! Call in to the chat line at 518-992-6661 at 1pm and learn how to begin!

Click here for examples of Diane’s writing:


"Always do what is right. It will gratify half of mankind and astound the other."

-Mark Twain
BEST OF... – Staff Picks

Tell your story and have it archived in the Library of Congress! StoryCorps Connects allows you to become part of history through still photos and audio recordings.

Coronavirus and Compassion: Looking out for Older Americans - an interview with author Louise Aronson. *Elderhood* was recently named as a finalist for the 2020 Pulitzer Prize!

Free ZOOM class for beginner gardeners! Home Gardens for Beginners is presented by SUNY Adirondack Continuing Education. May 22 at 2pm.

Volunteers Making a Difference

We received correspondence from a volunteer who wanted to let us know that their client would like our reassurance calls to continue even after the pandemic is over. This client said that Community Caregivers' calls help her feel "connected" and believes others "feel the same way." She added that the calls help her remain "positive" in the face of this crisis.

Shopping for Food: Some Strategies and Tips

As you continue to practice social distancing, the one reprieve you have from the confines of your home may be your trip to the market. If you are still stopping for yourself, here are some tips from the experts about staying safe while grocery shopping.

- The State of New York is now requiring all persons to wear face masks when in public to help stop the spread of the disease.
- Maintain six feet from other shoppers as the biggest risk of infection comes from direct contact with those infected.
- Do not touch things you do not need and avoid touching your face.
- Go shopping at times that are less busy.
- There is currently no evidence that supports the transmission of the virus from food packaging, but it can't hurt to wipe down non-porous containers like glass or cans with disinfectant wipes.
Wash your hands, counter, and all the surfaces you have touched after you have put your groceries away.

As for food, current evidence suggests that the risk of getting the virus from your food is considered low and it is recommended to wash produce as you normally would.

The biggest risk associated with grocery shopping is from coming in contact with sick shoppers, so if you are concerned because you are an older adult or at higher risk of complications from COVID-19, another option is grocery delivery services.

Arrange to have the items delivered to your doorstep so you can avoid direct hand-off and be sure to tip electronically. There is currently a higher demand for these services which is resulting in longer wait times so be sure to order earlier in the day. Instacart.com is one grocery delivery option. (The second part of this article will appear in the next issue of The Helping Hand.)

-Contributed by Priyanka Kolli, a student at Albany Medical College

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!

GUILDERLAND FARMERS MARKET is now open! Click above for times and location.

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

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.

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.
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

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!

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) 456–2898 M–F, 9AM–4PM. A staff member will answer or return your call promptly.