

Senior Scope

Serving the towns of Acushnet ■ Dartmouth ■ Fairhaven ■ Gosnold ■ Marion ■ Mattapoisett ■ New Bedford ■ Rochester

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Building Skills During Pandemic Downtime

After spending nearly three decades in the workforce, Lois Carvalho's retirement lasted about a year and a half. Despite that sounding like a relatively brief period of unemployment, Carvalho described it as "a long time."

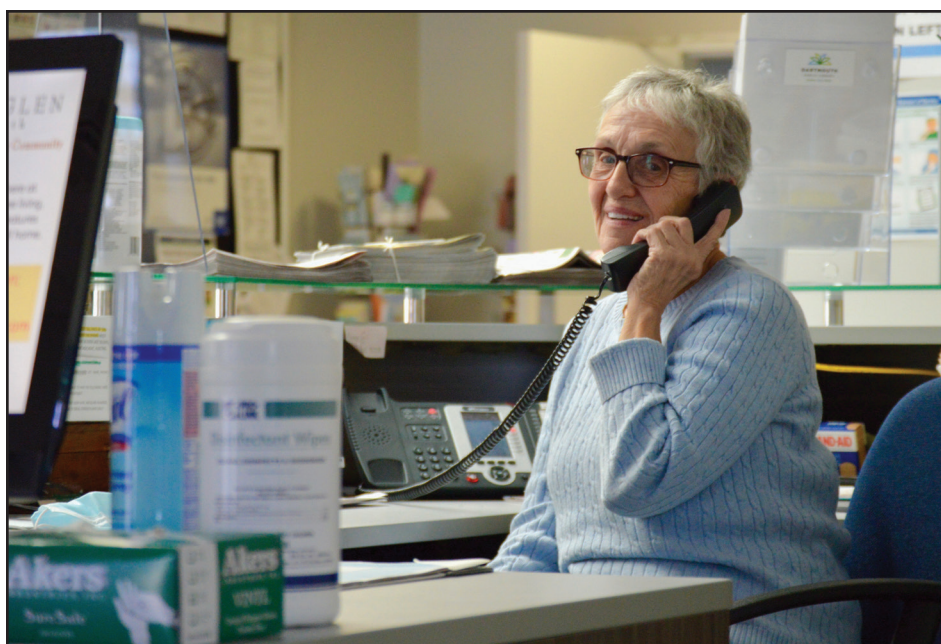
"I was just so bored," she said. "It wasn't a good thing. There's only so much you can do."

A friend suggested she check out the Dartmouth Council on Aging, where she later became a volunteer, answering the phone and completing miscellaneous tasks. Eventually, a position opened up in the center's adult social day program. And while that program has been on hiatus due to the pandemic, she has since pitched in at the center periodically.

"I was delivering meals for a while, and now I just come in," she said. "I'll do whatever they want me to do. I'll even do windows, if that's what they want!"

For many older adults, navigating the labor market was difficult even prior to the pandemic upending everyday life and triggering a recession. The uncertain economy, compounded by the health threat brought on by the coronavirus, prompted many mature workers to leave the labor market altogether.

Data from the Pew Research



Lois Carvalho spent about a year and a half in retirement before becoming a volunteer at her local council on aging. For her, working has been a way to stay active. The pandemic has caused upheaval in the labor market, but while awaiting the vaccine, this downtime could be spent updating your résumé or learning new skills.

Center show that the pandemic drove baby boomers – those born between 1946 and 1964 – to retire at a higher rate than normal. About 3.2 million more baby boomers retired during the third quarter of 2020 than in 2019. Since 2012, the number of newly retired baby boomers had increased annually by about 2 million, according to Pew.

While unemployment grew to a staggering 14.7 percent in April, the economy has since rebounded. Still, millions remain unemployed,

and the ongoing recession has had an outsized impact on low-wage workers, women and those without a college degree.

What sectors of the economy will be able to bounce back – and to what extent they recover – depends largely on the vaccine's rollout during 2021 and the response of elected officials. Following weeks of debate in Washington, President Trump signed a bill providing \$900 billion in COVID-19 relief

Continued on page 12

How to Connect to the Internet at a Reduced Rate

For nearly a year, Americans have been living apart. We now work and socialize from a distance, and for many of us that means logging onto our computers and typing out an email or joining a group discussion over Zoom.

This transition has been relatively easy for those who feel comfortable using a computer and for those who have a high-speed internet connection at home. For everyone else, this migration to the web has made fully participating in society feel impossible.

The division between those who can access the internet and those who cannot, often referred to as the "digital divide," existed well before the pandemic. For nearly two decades, the Pew Research Center has tracked the

number of high-speed internet (or "broadband") users, and the data has consistently shown that people



Programs like Internet Essentials can help you afford a high-speed internet connection. For questions on how to use technology, you can call Cyber-Seniors or Senior Planet.

over the age of 65 are more likely to not have a broadband connection at home compared to other age groups.

For example, by 2019 nearly 80 percent of those between the

ages of 50 and 64 were broadband users, according to Pew. That same year, only about 60 percent of those who were 65 and older had an internet connection.

This divide arguably matters now more than ever because a broadband connection allows you to perform tasks that require a high transfer of data, such as communicating over video. With many services now offered this way, including telehealth check-ups with physicians and specialists, having access to broadband is becoming more of a necessity.

The cost of a high-speed internet connection at home can be a major barrier, however.

Since 2011, Comcast has offered a service called Internet Essentials.

Continued on page 7

Get Your New Standardized Benefit Verification Letter Online

By Delia De Mello
Social Security



Delia De Mello,
Social Security

If you receive a Benefit Verification letter, sometimes called a “budget letter,” a “benefits letter,” a “proof of income letter,” or a “proof of award letter,” we have good news for you! A new standardized Benefit Verification letter is now available when you need proof of Social Security benefits, Supplemental Security Income or Medicare.

In addition to name, date of birth, and the benefits received, the new Benefit Verification letter includes other identifiers to prevent misuse and fraud. This is an added benefit to you as proof of income for loans, housing assistance, mortgage and other verification purposes.

The same standardized letter is also available if you need proof that you do not receive benefits, or proof that benefits are pending. If you are an individual representative payee, you can use the my Social Security Representative Payee portal to access the same standardized Benefit Verification letter online for your beneficiaries.

This new standardized Benefit

Verification letter is another example of our commitment to improve our service to you.

No matter how you request your letter, whether calling our National 800 Number, your local office, the Interactive Voice Response system, or online with your personal my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount, the Benefit Verification letter now contains a seamless look.

As we head into the new year, stay vigilant for signs of fraud. The Social Security Administration uses emails, text messages and social media to provide information on our programs and services. We will not, however, request personal or financial information through these methods. Sometimes, we send emails with information that are particular to your needs, usually after a discussion with you in person or over the phone.

If you receive a suspicious call from someone alleging to be from Social Security, hang up, and then report details of the call to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) online at oig.ssa.gov.

Letter from the Editor

Something miraculous happened on Dec. 16. A friend of mine who works at one of NewYork-Presbyterian’s medical centers in Manhattan sent me a text message. It was a photo of a large red sticker with big, bold lettering. It read: “I’VE BEEN VACCINATED.”

Since receiving that text, the vaccine has been all over the news. Local doctors started rolling up their sleeves. And on Christmas Eve, my friends who work at my hometown hospital in Glens Falls, New York, talked over one another during a video call, excited to report that they either had the vaccine or were scheduled to have it soon.

On the same day, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health released its first COVID-19 Vaccination Report, which reported that, from Dec. 15 through Dec. 22, about 35,000 people had received the first dose of the vaccine here in the Commonwealth.

All of this is to say that for the first time in a long time, I’m feeling optimistic. And I know it will take a while before the coronavirus is behind us. The vaccine will take months to administer. Things will likely not go back to “normal” any time soon.

But the vaccine has enabled me to think about the future –

something I’ve struggled to do in 2020, namely because my thoughts were mired in the everyday horror of the pandemic.

That said, I wanted some of this issue to be future-focused.

For those who have avoided the job market due to health concerns, but are thinking of returning when the pandemic subsides, the cover story this month features some advice for what job seekers can do in the interim. We’ve all be stuck at home, which makes this the perfect time to brush up a résumé or learn a new skill.

For some older adults, a major hurdle during the pandemic has been connecting to the internet, which can be incredibly expensive and hard to justify if you’re relatively new at using technology. I recently heard about a service called Internet Essentials, which brings the bill down to \$9.95 for those who qualify. I also found a few agencies that help older adults with computer questions, and both maintain hotlines you can call.

It’s been a challenging time, but we’re heading in the right direction. Take this time to focus on yourself, learn something new and be well.

Best,
, Editor

Mass Options
massoptions.org

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844-422-MASS



SHINE Counselors in the Greater New Bedford Area

Acushnet Council on Aging 59 ½ South Main St., Acushnet	508-998-0280	Patricia Midurski Heather Sylvia
Dartmouth Council on Aging 628 Dartmouth St., Dartmouth	508-999-4717	Peggy Vollmer Jane Jacobsen Ann Raymond
Fairhaven Council on Aging 229 Huttleston Ave, Fairhaven	508-979-4029	Dianne Perkins Carolyn Dantoni Freda St. Marie-Johnson
GNB Community Health Center 874 Purchase Street, New Bedford	508-992-6553 x147	Derek Mendes
Immigrants’ Assistance Center 58 Crapo St., New Bedford	508-996-8113	Lucy Oliveira
Marion Council on Aging 465 Mill Street, Marion	508-748-3570	Connie Heacox
Mattapoisett Council on Aging 17 Barstow Street, Mattapoisett	508-758-4110	Connie Heacox
New Bedford Council on Aging 181 Hillman St. (for New Bedford residents only)	508-991-6250 508-991-6252	Natasha Franco Luisana Paez-Espinal
PACE, Inc. 166 William St., New Bedford	508-999-9920	Ginny DeSilva Linda Pavao Freda St. Marie-Johnson
Rochester Council on Aging 57 Dexter Lane, Rochester	508-763-8723	Jan Cote
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Checks can be made out to “Coastline” (not “Senior Scope”) and mailed to 1646 Purchase St., New Bedford, MA 02740.

Donations for January 2021

Our donors help *Senior Scope* carry out its mission, and we cannot thank you enough for your support. Voluntary donations can be mailed to Coastline, 1646 Purchase St., New Bedford, MA 02740. Checks can be paid to the order of: *Coastline*. We cannot process checks made out to “*Senior Scope*.” You can also call Coastline’s Accounting Clerk, Michelle Walton, to donate directly with a credit card. She can be reached at 508-742-9114.

In Memory:

- In memory of Thomas Lundy. Missing you.**
From wife, Terry Lundy, & family
- In memory of Laura & Elmer Haskell. Always in my heart.**
From daughter, Florence Gauthier
- In memory of Gilly Leonardo. Wishing you were here.**
From wife, Donna Leonardo
- In memory of Alfred Gauthier. Never forgotten.**
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Officials Urge Americans to Stay Wary of Vaccine Scams

For as long as the pandemic has been making headlines, grifters have been taking advantage of the ever-developing situation. Now, with the rollout of two COVID-19 vaccines, federal agencies are warning the public to remain vigilant as scammers will also take advantage of this latest development.

The sheer volume of reported scams during the COVID-19 crisis have been staggering. The Federal Trade Commission logged more than 260,000 consumer complaints related to COVID-19 and stimulus checks in 2020. A recent report from the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis found that the Paycheck Protection Program, which was designed to help small businesses cover the cost of payroll, rent, and utilities during the pandemic, could be subject to more than \$4.2 billion in fraud and abuse.


And throughout 2020, scammers exploited the general uncertainty brought on by the global health crisis. They posed as the Centers for Disease Control, sending phishing emails in an attempt to gain personal information. Toward the end of February 2020, when COVID-19 had only sickened around 80,000 people worldwide, Facebook was already fighting back against ads on its platform that promised miracle cures for the virus.

The same holds true nearly a year later. As nations around the world slowly start to authorize the use of vaccines developed and

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey


www.mass.gov/community-engagement

COMMON SCAMS TO AVOID




ROBOCALLS & TELEPHONE PHISHING SCAMS

If you do not recognize a number, let the call go to voicemail. If you are asked to provide personal information, the call is most likely a scam.



COVID-19 SCAMS

Fraudulent unemployment assistance claims, high-priced and low quality products, vaccines and other treatments.



GRANDPARENT SCAMS

Scammers call pretending to be your loved one, pretending that your loved one is hurt, in trouble, or has been kidnapped. Usually, they will demand payment for their safe return.

Adapted from a document provided by the Office of Attorney General Maura Healey.

tested by major pharmaceutical companies, federal authorities are warning the public to be wary of an onslaught of false promises.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has turned its focus to fake vaccines and treatments and “expects a surge in illicit attempts to introduce counterfeit versions of approved vaccines into U.S. and global marketplaces,” according to a release from the agency.

For many Americans, the road to receiving the vaccine will be a long one. As vaccines are slowly authorized for use, they will be available for different segments of the population at different times.

Scammers will be preying on an inpatient public stricken by pandemic-fatigue. ICE intends to counter the threat of fake vaccines “by disrupting and dismantling fraud schemes, removing illicit websites and other online marketplaces, and seizing counterfeit or illicit vaccines and treatments.”

The agency is advising the public to avoid purchasing purported COVID-19 vaccines or treatments over the internet or through an online pharmacy, to ignore social media ads promoting cures, and to *not* respond to texts, emails, or robocalls about vaccines or treatments.

According to Attorney General

Maura Healy’s Office, there is no one way to protect yourself from scams since they take on so many forms. However, there are some general best practices you can follow:

- Secure your accounts by regularly changing passwords on your email, banking and other personal accounts.
- Know who you are dealing with when releasing personal information.
- Keep records and take notes about all conversations and keep copies of all records.
- Shred all important documents like medical bills, bank statements and utility bills.
- Get a copy of your credit report and dispute any fraudulent transactions. You can request credit reports online from the three major credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and Transunion) or by calling 877-322-8228.

Resources

How to Report:


Telephone Scams 877-382-4357
Mail Scams 877-876-2455
Internet Scams: ic3.gov
Identity Theft: identitytheft.gov

Contact the AG’s Office:


Elder Hotline 888-243-5337
Consumer Hotline 617- 727-8400
Fair Labor 617-727-3465
Medicaid Fraud 617-963-2360

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Funding is provided by AmeriCorps and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.




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Foster Grandparents are role models and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving youth in their communities.




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Foster Grandparent Program volunteers receive a small tax-free stipend for their time and commitment, while benefiting from the impact they make in a child’s life on a daily basis.




Contact Coastline for more info

Learn more on Coastline’s website at coastlinenb.org. Contact FGP Director Jacqueline Medeiros at **508-742-9198** or via email at jmedeiros@coastlinenb.org.



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Update

Tri-Town Fuel Assistance

The George E. Curtis Charitable Trust is a fund administered by Coastline to help older adults living in Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester who are having difficulty paying for fuel or electric services. Applicants must be age 60 or over and in financial need. It is a one-time payment and can be used for oil, gas, electric, propane or other fuels. Call your local Council on Aging for more information.

Winter Walks

The Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust will be hosting free, guided winter walks throughout January. Slocum’s River Reserve (320 Horseneck Rd, Dartmouth, MA 02748): Jan. 9 from 10 a.m. to noon. Ridge Hill Reserve (Collins Corner Rd, Dartmouth, MA 02747): Jan. 29 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register online at dnrt.org or call 508-991-2289 for info.

Mobile Market

The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center will hold monthly, farmers market-style mobile markets in partnership with The Greater Boston Food Bank. Produce is free of charge. Next market: Jan. 11, 10 a.m. to noon at GNBCHC, 399 Acushnet Ave., New Bedford, MA 02740. The 2021 dates are as follows: Feb. 8, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9 and Sept. 13.

To register, call Joyce Dupont at 508-992-6553 ext. 142. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Those who do not pre-register must wait until the end of the market to shop. Please leave your info: name, date of birth, number of people in household, zip code and phone number. The Community Health Center has put out a call for volunteers who can help bag items for contact-free pickup. Volunteers can work from 9 a.m. to noon or just an hour to help out. To volunteer, call Joyce Dupont.

‘Grandparents Raising Grandchildren’ Update

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in the Greater New Bedford region, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren will be offering services over the telephone only. To make an appointment, please call Brenda Grace at 508-996-0168. Her days off are Tuesdays and Wednesdays. You can also call after 5 p.m. on work days. The group also depends on donations for its annual scholarship program benefitting the grandchildren of program participants. Checks can be made out to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Inc., and mailed to 119 Parker St., New Bedford, MA 02740. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is partly funded by Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Family Caregiver Support Group

Join Coastline and the Dartmouth Council on Aging at it’s Family Caregiver Support Group, which is now being held on Zoom. The group will meet every other Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to noon. For more info about the support group, contact Stephanie Gibson at 774-510-5209.

Portuguese Memory Café Returns

The Portuguese Memory Café, which has been held at Project Independence, will resume virtually this November. The group will meet online from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The group will meet every other week. For more information, contact Natasha Franco at Natasha.Franco@Newbedford-Ma.gov or 508-979-1693.

Coastal Foodshed’s Virtual Market

Shop online from Saturday at 8 a.m. to Monday at midnight. Deliveries occur on Wednesday from noon to 5 p.m. Credit/Debit accepted for online purchase only. SNAP/EBT/HIP accepted for pre-order online only; payments upon pickup. Pick-up happens on Wednesdays from 2 to 5 p.m. at Coastal Foodshed’s Food Hub, 38 Blackmer St, New Bedford. Delivery Area: Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Rochester. More info at: coastalfoodshed.org.

Legal Services

South Coastal Counties Legal Services continues to provide services to clients during these challenging times. Their offices remain closed; however, intake hours have been extended to Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. To apply for services, call 1-800-244-9023 or fill out an online inquiry at sccls.org. SCCLS is partially funded by Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Help and Hope SC

Help and Hope South Coast offers daily resources to address mental health issues during the pandemic. Visit them online at: www.helphopesouthcoast.com.

‘Brain Builders’ Online

Buzzards Bay Speech Therapy has moved its Brain Builders course online. The class helps participants improve memory, word-finding, thinking skills and socialization. Classes will be held on Mondays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Participants can access the classes using Zoom or over the phone. For more info, contact Lisa at 508-326-0353 or email lycslp@gmail.com. Funding provided in part by a grant from Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Free Class for Caregivers

“Powerful Tools for Caregivers” is a six-week educational program designed to help take care of you while you’re caring for a loved one. The course will be held once a week from Jan. 19 through Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to noon. The program is provided at no cost by Coastline. iPads are available to borrow. The program will meet once a week via Zoom for six weeks and covers the following topics: taking care of you; reducing stress; communicating feelings; communicating in challenging situations; learning from our emotions; mastering decisions. For more information or to register, please call Stephanie Gibson at 774-510-5209 or email her at sgibson@coastlinenb.org.

NB Age-Friendly Housing Guide

The Age-Friendly New Bedford Initiative is excited to share a new housing guide, which can help provide guidance for renters and homeowners in the Greater New Bedford region. The guide is packed with information about rental applications, home modifications, tax credits, legal assistance and more. The guide can be found online at Coastline’s website: coastlinenb.org/housing_guide. A limited print version of this document was made possible through the office of the District Attorney of Bristol County Thomas M. Quinn III.

The Age-Friendly New Bedford project helps residents of all ages and abilities to stay healthy, active, and connected. Age-Friendly New Bedford supports the idea of Aging in Place - the ability to live in one’s own home safely, independently, and comfortably regardless of age, income, or ability level. A survey conducted by AARP revealed that 90 percent of older adults would prefer to stay in their current home and community for as long as possible. Aging in place has been shown to improve life satisfaction, health and self-esteem.

The Age-Friendly Team is committed to working on Housing and Aging in Community included members from the New Bedford Housing Authority, New Bedford Department of Housing and Community Development, SouthCoast Legal Services, Coastline Elderly Services, and others. Throughout the pandemic, the group has supported residents by delivering groceries and PPE, providing eviction counseling, and making wellness calls.

If you need advice or assistance, please call the Council on Aging at 508-991-6250. If you are at risk of becoming homeless, please call 508-999-4757. If you would like to learn more about the Age-Friendly project, please email Christine Sullivan at csullivan@coastlinenb.org.

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www.coastlinenb.org
for employment opportunities.






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Your Health

Focus on the Future as We Await the Vaccine



By Dr. Thomas Bozzo
New Bedford Wellness Initiative

Happy New Year and good riddance to 2020! Two incredibly effective vaccines, already safely administered to over a million Americans, provide a glimmer of light for the new year. 2021 brings hope and the opportunity to climb out of the pit of hardship we have endured.

2020 has at a minimum been discouraging for all of us at times. At its worst, it has been absolutely devastating for those hit with illness, isolation, loss of loved ones, unemployment, injustice, housing insecurity and hunger. Yet out of these ashes, opportunities for growth and transformation arise.

Science will get us back to some semblance of normal in 2021. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are safe, are about 95 percent effective at preventing disease and are being manufactured in massive quantities. However, the logistics of rolling out these vaccines to a large chunk of the population means that it will still be months before they rescue us.

These next several months will be the most devastating of the pandemic. COVID-19 is raging, and we must renew our focus on personal prevention to minimize the damage this winter and spring. We have heard it a thousand times – masking, distancing, avoiding crowds and incessant hand-washing. It seems most of us have gotten good at these four things. A fifth step has



With COVID-19 vaccines on the way, Dr. Thomas Bozzo said there's a light at the end of the tunnel and "it may be time to look up and see what you can do to get there in one piece."

proven harder during the holidays: avoiding indoor time with people you don't live with. We yearn for social interaction. But it really is time to avoid congregating indoors with people outside of your "bubble."

Your "bubble" is the select few family and friends that you interact with inside your home – ideally just your household and maybe one or two others.

Knowing that the light is at the end of the tunnel, it may be time to look up and see what we can do to get there in one piece. The new year is always a time of new beginnings, a time for resolutions to change for the better. None of us would choose the year we've had. Yet hardship can sometimes foster growth.

We have all heard of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is the negative aftermath from a traumatic event. You may not be as familiar with post-traumatic growth (PTG), which is also a normal response to trauma. In fact, it may be the *more* common response to trauma. It occurs when your world is upended, your core beliefs are challenged, you

undergo psychological struggle, but ultimately find positive change.

Hardship or trauma can affect three types of growth. The first is a change in self-perception – feeling more resilient, stronger and more confident from discovering your underlying strengths and ability to overcome difficult circumstances. The second is a change in interpersonal relationships – appreciating the value of human connections and how fragile they can be. The third is a change in philosophy about life, such as a renewed appreciation for life, a new focus on living life to the fullest, or a strengthening of spiritual beliefs.

How can we achieve growth during COVID times? Being open to new experiences and a willingness to connect with others (socially distanced of course!) are at the root of fostering growth from difficult times. This can take many shapes and forms. It can come from recognizing the silver linings that have developed this past year: a simpler lifestyle, more time with family, being forced to learn something new, etc. It can

come from a shared experience with our community – the common enemy of COVID has brought us together.

I recently asked my 12-year-old daughter to think about what gift she wants COVID to give her over the next few months. That may sound absurd, but our COVID world has given her more free time. If she learns something new or creates something, she'll have a tangible gift to herself when COVID is behind us.

If you have extra time or money, consider giving yourself or someone else a COVID gift. Learn something new (yoga, meditation, music, language, sport), do something small for a loved one each day (a text, a call, a letter), or support a local charity that might be struggling during these lean times.

The next few months will not be easy, but 2021 fills me with hope. There will be new beginnings on both public health and personal levels. We will come out of this pandemic changed, and with some attentiveness and effort, we may be lucky enough to come out for the better.

Dr. Thomas Bozzo is an internist who has worked as a primary care doctor at the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center from 2008 to 2015. Since 2015, he has worked in addiction medicine at CleanSlate in New Bedford, and he is one of the local physicians who leads the Walk with a Doc program.

Resources

For more updates from the New Bedford Wellness Initiative, visit them online at nbewell.com or follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/NewBedfordWell.

Look for the Initiative's "Live Streaming Schedule" for a list of classes being offered throughout the week.

Add Weights to Your Routine for Bone Health

By Cam Bergeron, CSCS
Cam's Conditioning & Rehab

Everyone has heard that you need to exercise regularly. Most experts will say you need to exercise your cardiovascular system via walking, jogging, biking, etc. But you should also consider resistance training, which involves lifting weights and helps slow the loss of muscle mass caused by aging.

Did you know that humans lose one percent of muscle mass per year after age 30? And while you can't completely reverse this process, you can slow it down.

When you don't use your muscles, they begin to lose activation. Losing "activation" means your brain is not providing electrical impulses to as many fibers within the muscle. The more muscle fibers your brain is able to activate, the more weight an individual is able to lift. This neurological adaptation is called muscle fiber recruitment.

"If you don't move it, you lose



We begin to lose muscle mass after age 30, but resistance training can help slow the process.

it." I'm sure most of you have heard this phrase before, and it's muscle fiber recruitment that's behind this saying.

Endurance training does help with muscle fiber recruitment, but not to the extent that resistance training does. If you do lift weights, you may notice you feel as if you've become stronger within the first

couple of weeks. You did not gain muscle mass in the first few weeks – you became stronger due to muscle fiber recruitment.

Recruiting these fibers increases strength at first. After six weeks of consistent lifting, you begin to build muscle mass. Building muscle mass (hypertrophy) is the main muscular system benefit to resistance training.

Another reason for participating in a resistance training program is increasing bone density.

An individual cannot just lift any weight and expect to increase bone density. There is a rule called "minimal essential strain." This term refers to the amount of weight needed to lift in order to increase bone density. How will you know how much weight to lift? A general rule of thumb is to select a weight

that you can only perform 8 to 12 reps with. The last rep or two should be difficult to lift.

The aging process is inevitable, but exercising regularly with both cardiovascular and resistance training is extremely important to keep the body up to par and strong!

Resources

Dartmouth Community Media (DCTV) has recorded several exercise classes with Cam, which are airing on DCTV in Dartmouth and are available everywhere on the web.

View the videos online by visiting DCTV's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/DartmouthCommunityMedia.

Visit DCTV online at: www.town.dartmouth.ma.us/dartmouth-community-media.

Many COAs around the area have recorded exercise classes with their local cable access channels. Check your local cable access channel or call your COA.

Guidance for Large or Extended Families Living in the Same Household

People of any age who have certain underlying medical conditions are at risk for getting COVID-19. Some groups have an increased risk for severe illness from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The following information is aimed to help you protect those who are most vulnerable in your household.

Family members should leave only when absolutely necessary.

Essential errands include going to the grocery store, pharmacy, or medical appointments that cannot be delayed (e.g., infants or individuals with serious health conditions in need of aid).

- If you must leave the house, please do the following:
- Choose one or two family members who are not at a higher risk to run the essential errands.
- Wear a mask, avoid crowds, practice social distancing, and follow these recommended tips for running errands.
- If feasible, use forms of transportation that minimize close contact with others (e.g., biking, walking, driving or riding by car either alone or with household members).
- Wash your hands immediately after you return home.

- Maintain as much physical distance as possible with those at higher risk in the home. For example, avoid hugging, kissing, or sharing food or drinks.
- If necessary to ride in a car with members of different households, improve air flow in the car by opening the window or placing air conditioning on non-recirculation.

[Information sourced from the CDC.]

Orientação para famílias numerosas ou extensas que vivem no mesmo agregado familiar

Os idosos e pessoas de qualquer idade que tenham condições clínicas subjacentes graves estão em maior risco de doença grave provocada pelo coronavírus de 2019 (COVID-19).

Não saia de casa a menos que seja absolutamente necessário!

Por exemplo, saia apenas quando tiver de ir para o emprego, ao supermercado, farmácia ou a consultas médicas que não consiga adiar (como consultas para bebés ou pessoas com problemas graves de saúde). Escolha um ou dois familiares que não estejam em risco elevado de contraírem doença severa de COVID-19 para fazerem as tarefas diárias necessárias. Se necessitar de sair de casa, siga estas nove sugestões:

- Evite multidões, incluindo aglomerações sociais de qualquer dimensão.
- Mantenha uma distância de, pelo mesmo, 2 metros de qualquer pessoa.
- Lave as mãos com frequência.
- 4. Não toque em superfícies que são frequentemente tocadas em zonas públicas, como botões de elevador e corrimãos.
- Se possível, não use transportes públicos, como comboio ou autocarro. Se tiver de usar transportes públicos: Mantenha 2 metros de distância de outros passageiros, quando possível; Evite tocar em superfícies tocadas com frequência, como corrimãos.
- Não ande de carro com membros de agregados familiares diferentes.
- Use uma máscara para ajudar a abrandar a propagação da COVID-19.
- Lave imediatamente as mãos assim que regressar a casa.
- Mantenha a distância física entre si e os que estiverem em maior risco no seu agregado familiar. Por exemplo, evite abraçar, beijar ou partilhar comida ou bebidas.


Familias que viven en espacios reducidos

Las personas de cualquier edad con ciertas afecciones subyacentes tienen un mayor riesgo de contraer COVID-19. Algunos grupos tienen un mayor riesgo de enfermarse gravemente a causa de la enfermedad del coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). La siguiente información busca ayudarle a proteger a las personas más vulnerables de su hogar.

Los miembros del hogar deben salir a la calle solo cuando sea absolutamente necesario. Los mandados esenciales incluyen ir a la tienda de comestibles, farmacia o citas médicas que no puedan postergarse (p. ej., bebés o personas con afecciones graves que necesiten asistencia).

Si debe salir de casa, haga lo siguiente:

- Elija a uno o dos miembros del hogar que no tengan un mayor riesgo de enfermarse para que realicen los mandados esenciales.
- Use una mascarilla, evite las multitudes, mantenga el distanciamiento social y siga estos consejos recomendados para hacer mandados.
- Si es factible, use formas de transporte que minimicen el contacto cercano con otras personas (como andar en bicicleta, caminar o usar su propio auto, ya sea solo o con otros miembros de su hogar).
- Lávese las manos de inmediato después de volver a casa.
- Mantenga la mayor distancia física posible de las personas de mayor riesgo de su hogar. Por ejemplo, evite abrazarse, besarse o compartir alimentos o bebidas.
- Si necesita trasladarse en auto con miembros de otros hogares: Si es posible, limite el contacto cercano y deje espacio entre las personas dentro del vehículo. Mejore el flujo de aire dentro del auto al abrir la ventanilla o poner el aire acondicionado en modo de no recirculación.




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UnitedHealthcare SCO is a Coordinated Care plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Medicaid program. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare. This plan is a voluntary program that is available to anyone 65 and older who qualifies for MassHealth Standard and Original Medicare. If you have MassHealth Standard, but you do not qualify for Original Medicare, you may still be eligible to enroll in our MassHealth Senior Care Option plan and receive all of your MassHealth benefits through our SCO program.

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Internet continued...

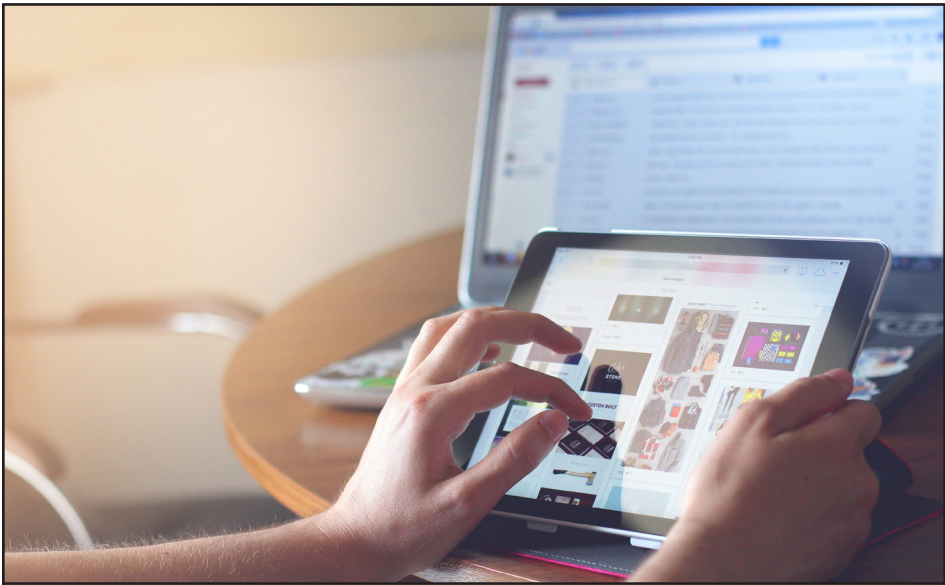
Initially the program was intended to help parents afford an internet connection for students enrolled in the national lunch program. Eligibility has since expanded to include those who receive a variety of federal benefit programs.

“The good thing about this program is that it’s not just a connection,” said Marc Goodman, director of Public Relations at Comcast Boston. “It also provides educational resources and free digital literacy training so that users can better connect with their communities, find new employment opportunities, and connect with educational services that matter to them.”

The monthly cost for the service is \$9.95 (plus tax). Residents living within Comcast’s coverage area (which covers the South Coast) can qualify for Internet Essentials if they also qualify for at least one state or federal program, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), SNAP or housing assistance.

To qualify, you also must not have had Comcast Internet services in the past 90 days. Comcast recently announced that through June 30, 2021, Internet Essentials-eligible customers can receive the first two months free.

Unlike, other broadband connection packages offered through Comcast, there is no contract for Internet Essentials, meaning you can back out of the



Internet Essentials provides a high-speed internet connection to eligible customers at a reduced rate. Comcast will mail you a device that combines a router and a modem, meaning you will be able to connect multiple devices to the internet in your home.

service when you choose. Through a separate process, customers can request a low-cost computer, which is under \$150.

If your application is approved, Comcast will mail you a starter kit, which includes a guide for how to install the equipment.

The main piece of equipment is called an xFi Wireless Gateway, which is a modem and router combined into one device. It will enable you to link a computer and your phone to the internet. Basically, this box needs to be plugged into an outlet and connected to a coaxial cable, which is already installed in many homes. For those who don’t feel confident setting up the service, Comcast does have technicians who can make home visits.

Goodman said the speed of the

connection can sufficiently handle multiple devices.

“The service has a download speed of 25 megabytes per second, which is more than enough to be able to video chat, access the internet, and download applications. And it’s enough bandwidth to connect their laptop and other devices in the home as well,” Goodman explained.

If you have a smartphone, you can apply for the service online at internetessentials.com. You can also call Comcast’s call center at 1-855-846-8376.

Once you have a broadband internet connection in your home, then what?

Internet Essentials does offer some online training for customers. Its official website features a learning center with a variety

of topics from internet basics to understanding web safety.

The websites Cyber-Seniors and Senior Planet can also provide assistance. Both agencies maintain hotlines you can call with technology questions. Cyber-Seniors offers numerous tutorials to help bridge the digital divide, including daily webinars.

Both organizations have published an extensive collection of “how-to” videos on YouTube, which you can follow at your own pace. If ever you’ve wondered how to use Zoom or how to sign up for a social media account, Cyber-Seniors maintains a catalogue of in-depth guides, and Senior Planet offers numerous webinars.

Resources

Learn more about Internet Essentials by visiting them online: internetessentials.com. You can apply for the service online or by calling 1-855-846-8376.

Learn more about Internet Essentials’ Low-Cost Computer Program on their website or call 1-888-234-4272.

Learn more about how to use the internet by visiting Cyber-Seniors at cyberseniors.org. You can receive tech help by calling 844-217-3057.

You can also learn about using the internet at Senior Planet’s website at seniorplanet.org. Call the National Senior Planet Hotline at 920-666-1959.

Massachusetts Rolls Back Reopening Plans Amid Surge in Cases

In mid-December, Governor Charlie Baker rolled back his reopening plans to “Phase Three, Step One,” which reduced the capacity of indoor spaces, including stores, offices and restaurants. By the end of the month, capacity limits were lowered yet again and at-home, indoor gatherings were restricted to 10 people.

The return to Phase Three, Step One was an effort to alleviate some of the burden placed on the health care system as cases spiked throughout Massachusetts.

The state had previously tightened restrictions ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday, requiring residents to wear a mask whenever they left their homes. A 10 p.m. curfew was also implemented at the time to try to stop the spread of the coronavirus. After Thanksgiving, however, cases continued to spread, and more than half of the cities and towns throughout Massachusetts were considered “high-risk” communities.

The return to Phase Three, Step One was intended to limit citizens’ indoor exposure to people outside their households.

“As we all work our way through this second surge, it’s it important for everybody to understand the decisions that you make every day about what to do and who to be with will have a significant impact on our ability to stop the spread, to make it possible for people to work,

to keep our schools open for kids and to build ourselves a bridge to the vaccine,” Baker said during a press conference on Dec. 5.

“The days of ‘most people doing most of the right things’ are probably not enough, and we’re asking everyone to step up their vigilance every day, everywhere,” he added.

Days before Christmas, Baker announced that restrictions would tighten yet again starting the day after Christmas. The updated guidelines, which began Dec. 26 and are effective through Jan. 10, include the following restrictions:

- Most industries in Massachusetts will be subject to a 25 percent capacity limit, which includes restaurants, office spaces, places of worship, retail businesses, among others.
- Indoor gatherings will be limited to 10 people. Outdoor gatherings will be limited to 25 people outside. The gatherings limit applies to private homes, event venues and public spaces.
- Hospitals were directed to postpone or cancel all nonessential inpatient elective invasive procedures in order to maintain and increase inpatient capacity. Patients are reminded to still seek necessary care at their hospital or from their health care provider.

For testing updates, visit: mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread

COVID-19 Vaccines Authorized for Emergency Use

It was the cartoon penguin seen ‘round the world. On Dec. 8, Margaret Keenan received the very first clinically approved COVID-19 vaccine outside of a trial setting. UK regulators had approved the vaccine the week prior. The 90-year-old woman from Coventry, England, wore a bright blue T-shirt adorned with a penguin framed by falling snow and the words “Merry Christmas.”

“I feel so privileged to be the first person vaccinated against COVID-19,” Keenan said in a release from the National Health Service. “My advice to anyone offered the vaccine is to take it – if I can have it at 90 then you can have it too!”

In the days that followed, regulators in Canada and Mexico approved the vaccine for emergency use, which was produced by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech. The vaccine requires two shots, spaced about three weeks apart.

On Dec. 11, the Food and Drug Administration had authorized the vaccine for emergency use in the US, and within 48 hours of that announcement, nearly 3 million doses were shipped to all 50 states. UPS and FedEx teamed up to handle distribution of the vaccine, which will be transported in special containers designed by Pfizer. The vaccine must be kept at minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit, and the containers can be opened no more than twice a day to maintain the ultra-cold temperature.

BioNTech began work on the COVID-19 vaccine back in January 2020. By March, they had partnered with Pfizer on the project to speed up the testing process. Following a clinical trial that involved 44,000 people, their COVID-19 vaccine was found to be nearly 95 percent effective.

On Dec. 18, the FDA approved a second vaccine for emergency use that was produced by Moderna, which was also found to be about 95 percent effective for the general population. However, for those age 65 and older, Moderna’s vaccine is about 86 percent effective.

The road to recovery is anticipated to be a long one. As more nations approve vaccines, they will only be able to vaccinate a small amount of the population at any given time. In both the UK and the US, the first wave of vaccines will be administered to health care works and people in high-risk categories, namely nursing home residents and those living in other long-term care facilities. Health experts anticipate that precautionary measures, like wearing masks and social distancing, will remain a part of everyday life well into 2021.

On Dec. 21, the European Union approved the Pfizer vaccine for its 27 member states. The same day, nations around the world suspended air travel to Britain after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said a variant of the coronavirus was shown to be more contagious.



The act of gifting is more complicated than most realize. Typically, gifts and transfers to a properly drafted trust may make a lot of sense.

Questions to Consider Before Making Gifts

By Brandon Walecka, Esq.
Walecka Law, P.C.
Estate and Elder Law

Many seniors consider gifting assets for long-term care planning purposes or just to help a child or other loved one in need. Did you know that some gifts can cause major problems for both the generous donor and the recipient?

Below are a few points to ask yourself before writing that check.

What is a gift?

If you transfer an asset (e.g., you write a check to someone without intending to be paid back, transfer an account ownership to someone else, buy a car for someone, to name a few).

Any transfer that you make, however innocent, could come under scrutiny if you need long-term care. Should you enter a long-term care facility and if you do not have documentation showing that you received fair market value in return for a transferred asset, you could be subject to a transfer penalty.

Why are you making the gift?

Is it simply an expression of love on a birthday or to celebrate a major life event, such as a graduation or wedding? Or is it to protect assets from the cost of long-term care?

If the latter, ensure there is really a true benefit to the transfer. Gifts can cause up to five years of ineligibility for long-term Medicaid/MassHealth, which you may need to help pay your long-term care costs in the future.

Are you keeping enough money for yourself?

If you are making small gifts, you might not need to worry about this question. But before making large gifts, please do some budgeting to ensure that you will not run short of funds for your basic needs, activities you enjoy – which may include traveling, taking courses, or going out to eat – and emergencies such as the need for care for yourself or to assist someone in financial trouble. Once you gift something it may be difficult, if not impossible, to get the asset back.

Is it really a gift or is it a loan?

Are you expecting the money to be paid back or for the recipient to

perform some task for you in return? In either case, make sure that the beneficiary of your generosity is on the same page as you.

The best way to do this is in writing, with a promissory note in the case of a loan or an agreement if you have an expectation that certain tasks will be performed. (e.g., a care contract).

There is a difference between a moral obligation and a legal one.

Often a client will tell us, “I am gifting this money to my son so he will provide for my wife after I am gone.”

If you do not use a trust when you gift to an individual, you do so with no (legal) strings attached. While you may have the utmost trust in your loved one, the risk is your expectations may not be realized if the recipient does not do what you want or runs into unforeseen circumstances such as bankruptcy, a lawsuit, divorce, illness, or death.

If the idea is to make the gifts with expectations, it is best to create a trust to ensure that they are honored.

Is the gift good for the recipient?

If the recipient is low-income or has a disability, the gift could make them ineligible for various public benefits, such as Medicaid/MassHealth, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or subsidized housing. On a different note, if the recipient has issues with impulsive spending (e.g., drugs, alcohol, gambling), they could use the gifted funds to further the habit. Often, there are better ways to gift to individuals who may not benefit from traditional informal gifting (e.g., special needs or asset protection trust).

As you can see, the act of gifting is more complicated than most realize. There may be a safer way to gift. Typically, gifts and transfers to a properly drafted trust may make a lot of sense.

Often trusts can save money in estate taxes, capital gains, and protect from the cost of long-term care, to name a few benefits. It is advised to check with a qualified elder law attorney to discuss the Medicaid/MassHealth, tax, and other possible implications of your generosity.

Trivia

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT – KIM CAMARA

- 1.) What nickname did Broadway earn in the 1880’s
A.) The Great White Way B.) The Straight Street
C.) New York’s Red Carpet D.) The Theatre Trail
- 2.) What is Broadway’s LONGEST running show?
A.) Rent B.) Hamilton C.) Phantom of the Opera D.) Cats
- 3.) What is NOT one of the four main ingredients in beer?
A.) Hops B.) Malt C.) Wheat D.) Water
- 4.) What is the wine industry’s most widely used grape?
A.) Chardonnay B.) Merlot
C.) Pinot Noir D.) Cabernet Sauvignon
- 5.) How can you tell if cranberries are ripe?
A.) They bounce like a rubber ball B.) They start to brown
C.) They glow in the dark D.) They’re soft to the touch
- 6.) Which of these foods NEVER spoils?
A.) Sweet Potatoes B.) Honey
C.) Chocolate D.) Celery
- 7.) According to legend, young George Washington chopped down what kind of tree?
A.) Oak tree B.) Apple tree C.) Maple tree D.) Cherry tree
- 8.) What was the first weekly news magazine published in the U.S.?
(Hint: 1923.)
A.) National Geographic B.) Time
C.) The New Yorker D.) The Atlantic
- 9.) Who was the first woman to run on a U.S. presidential ticket?
A.) Sarah Palin B.) Eleanor Roosevelt
C.) Nancy Pelosi D.) Geraldine Ferraro

[Answers listed on page 11]

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Rochester Delivers Christmas Cheer Despite Nor'Easter



Linda Perkins (left) braved the weather to deliver a meal to Helen Taylor (right).

On Dec. 17, a nor'easter swept through the Northeast and New England, breaking records in upstate New York and New Hampshire, and citizens of the South Coast were still digging themselves out the following day.

As luck would have it, the Rochester Council on Aging had planned to celebrate the holidays on Dec. 18 with a meal to go. Volunteers spent the morning prepping ham, green bean casserole,

and apple crisp, and by 11 a.m. the meals had been packed into brown bags, ready for volunteers to make door deliveries.

“Usually we have a Christmas party,” said Barbara Francis, who has worked as a driver for the Rochester COA for nearly a decade. “We usually have about one hundred people for Thanksgiving and Christmas, but we couldn’t do it this year, so we’re delivering.”

Francis, equipped with a map of Rochester and a cheetah-print face mask, navigated the snowy streets, and Linda Jenkins hopped off the bus to make door deliveries.

Jenkins has volunteered at the center throughout the pandemic, namely during its Wednesday coffee hour. She said the council on aging has been mostly quiet.

“You don’t see the regulars you normally would. Some of them don’t drive in bad weather. Some of them are afraid,” said Jenkins in between stops on the delivery route.

She said most activity from the Rochester COA has centered on food relief, whether it was from the Boston Food Bank, Coastline or PACE.

“If you need anything, you could call. You might not be able to go to the center, but you can always call,” said Perkins.



A large room in White’s of Westport, typically used for events, transformed into the site of a food assembly line during the holidays to accommodate demand.

Restaurants Support Community Throughout Pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, restaurants have struggled to keep their doors open, mostly due to capacity limits for indoor seating. And while many have transitioned the bulk of their business away from sit-down meals to takeout, sales have been inconsistent, placing many restaurants in peril.

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, many establishments provided meals to older adults during the holiday season. Coastline ordered meals from a variety of restaurants for the holidays, including LaFrance Hospitality, Mac’s Soda Bar, Greasy Luck, Fay’s Restaurant

and Matt’s Blackboard Restaurant. Fallon Health provided funding to make the meals possible.

For some businesses, like LaFrance Hospitality, which typically serves meals inside its restaurants or holds large events across several destination spots, to-go orders have played a major role in keeping the lights on.

“It’s been crazy, but what’re you going to do?” said Sherri Rego, a manager at LaFrance Hospitality. “It’s not like we’re the only ones suffering – everybody is. We’re just trying to do our best and think of creative ways to do things differently.”





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Councils on Aging

Acushnet COA

For more information, call the Acushnet Council on Aging at 508-998-0280. The center is located at 59 ½ South Main St., Acushnet, MA 02743.

Programming Notes for January: The Acushnet COA continues to provide services to seniors in a safe and reliable manner. While the Senior Community Center building remains closed to the public, all staff are available by phone or email, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., to meet your outreach and administration needs.

Medical transportation is available and Meals on Wheels continue to be delivered. While we are taking the month of January off from outdoor programming, we are working behind the scenes to install privacy fencing and heaters in the outdoor area to resume classes once the weather allows.

Toe nail care, dental hygiene services, Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Buried in Treasure group will continue to meet without an interruption in their schedule. Please know how much we miss everyone and can't wait to see you in 2021. Happy New Year!

Toe Nail Care: Jan. 8 and 22. By appointment. Call 508-998-0280.

Dental Care: Jan. 13. Dental Care by appointment. To set up an appointment or for more information, call 508-827-6725 or email smiles@mobiledentalhygiene.com.

Limited computer use at the Acushnet Public Library: Computers are now available at the Acushnet Public Library by appointment only. Computers have been spaced 6 feet apart and will be sanitized between each use. Each session is limited to 45 minutes, and patrons can book 1 session per day. To make an appointment, call 508-998-0270.

Snow Parking Ban for Acushnet: By vote of Town Meeting, parking is restricted as follows: in water district, parking allowed opposite side of hydrants, out of water district, parking allowed north side of street running east and west; and, parking allowed on west side of streets running north and south.

Dartmouth COA

For more information, call the Dartmouth Council on Aging at 508-999-4717. The center is located at 628 Dartmouth St., South Dartmouth, MA 02748. A complete list of events can be found at: www.towndartmouth.ma.us.

Zoom Room: If you would like to participate in our Zoom activities but need some help using Zoom on your device (phone, tablet or laptop), please call the Center and we will arrange to help you. Connect with us on Tuesdays mornings at 10 a.m. for coffee and a chat. Log in from your tablet, phone or laptop, or call us from any phone and virtually join the staff at the Center. Zoom Meeting ID: 868 9154 1490. Password: 665252.

Pound by Pound Support Group on Zoom: We all have put on a few Covid pounds. Losing weight and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is hard to do alone. Join us on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. beginning Jan. 20. Coastline's dietitians Stephanie Boulay and Katlynn Ferreira will each join us once a month for education and encouragement. Contact Nancy at the Center for more information.

Write On Journaling Club on Zoom: Have you always wanted to journal but never had the time or motivation? We would love to have you take part in the write on journal group the Center is hosting. Participants will be provided the journals and the prompts to motivate writing! Entries will express reflections on the 2020 pandemic and other life experiences and history. Contact Nancy at the Center for more information

Brain Builders: As a part of the DCOA virtual programming in collaboration with Dartmouth Community Media, Buzzards Bay Speech Therapy will present "Brain Builders." The three classes will focus on tips and techniques to improve short term memory, remembering names and word finding and thinking skills. Classes are available on Channel 18. Please check your local listings.

Identity Theft & Fraud Prevention in the time of COVID: Presented by the Office of Consumer Affairs and the Better Business Bureau. This presentation will include, how to spot scams, how to prevent identity theft and current scams. This educational presentation can be viewed on demand on /Dartmouth Community Media Channel 18 and is also available on YouTube channel Dartmouth Community Media.

Romeo and Juliet meets Burns and Allan. The play Mabel and Jerry will

be aired on Channel 18 for your viewing on Jan. 5, 11, 13 and the 15 at 11 a.m. Thank you Dartmouth Cultural Council and Dartmouth Community media for bringing Comedy performance to the community.

New Zumba for Beginners: After receiving some feedback from viewers, this month Dartmouth Community Media and Zumba instructor Michelle Thimus will be bringing you a series of four new basic classes choreographed for beginners. This easy to follow class will focus on simple dance steps, balance and range of motion. Please check your local listings

Legal Assistance: Please call the center for information, appointment and protocol. New Elder Law Consultations with Atty. Brandon Walecka. Second Thursday of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. by appointment.

Justice Bridge through UMass Law: Last Wednesday of the month from 2 to 3 p.m. by appointment.

The COA Newsletter: 1.) You can receive the newsletter on the town website: Google "Town of Dartmouth Council on Aging." Click the newsletter link on the left of this page. The newsletter will open in a new window where you can read it online or print it. 2.) Regular Mail: To receive the newsletter by regular mail, please call us at 508-999-4717 to request to be put on our mailing list.

Fairhaven COA

For more information, call the Fairhaven Council on Aging at 508-979-4029. The center is located at 229 Huttleston Ave., Fairhaven, MA 02719. Visit the Fairhaven COA website at: fairhaven-ma.gov/council-aging.

Transportation: The COA van will run Monday through Friday beginning at 8 a.m. for in-town shopping and errands as well as daily trips to Market Basket. All passengers will have their temperature taken before entering the van and must wear a mask while on the van. The van will be thoroughly sanitized after each use. Volunteer medical transportation has not yet been resumed.

The Dental Hygienist: We are excited to offer dental cleanings, exams, desensitizing treatments, denture care, temporary fillings and crown re-cements, if needed. Services are covered for anyone with MassHealth Standard/Medicaid and Senior Whole Health. We offer affordable rates for individuals without dental insurance, as well as grant funded services for eligible individuals. Please call 508-827-6725 to set up an appointment or with any questions. Smiles@mobiledentalhygiene.com.

Fuel Assistance Recertifications: For new applications, call Maria Grace at PACE at 508-999-4473. If you have any questions, please call Phyllis at the Senior Center at 508-979-4029.

Project Bread Foodline: Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline (1-800-645-8333) is able to provide SNAP application assistance over the phone and help you identify all of the allowable expenses such as housing and medical costs to ensure you receive the full amount of benefits that you are entitled to. They can also answer questions from current SNAP recipients, including using their SNAP funds to purchase groceries for delivery, navigating the Healthy Incentive Program (HIP), and providing information about other local food resources. The hotline is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Clients are also encouraged to connect with us via our Live Chat featured on: www.gettingsnap.org.

Update from the Millicent Library: The library is now offering book bundles for children and adults. Want to try out some new authors, but unsure of which books to get? Fill out a quick form and the librarians will be happy to find some books for you based on your favorite genres or authors. When you pick up your book bundles, browse the titles we selected and read something new!

Marion COA

Call the center at 508-748-3570. The center is located at the Benjamin D. Cushing Community Center, 465 Mill St., Marion, MA 02738. Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/marioncoa.

Grab n' Go: After the popularity of November's luncheon, we have decided to offer our own grab n' go lunch program on Tuesday in addition to our soups on Thursdays. Starting Jan. 5, we'll be serving half a sandwich, salad, chips and fruit. Registration is a must by the Friday before. Call 508-748-3570. Please

Continued on Page 11



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*Income guidelines may apply. Please inquire in advance for reasonable accommodations. Info contained herein subject to change w/o notice.

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VISIT: Wings Court in New Bedford and the CNHC Fairhaven office until January 4
ONLINE: communitynurse.com/honorees



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Honoring and Remembering the Stars in our Community

consider a \$5 donation for each lunch, but this is a suggestion. We do not want to exclude anyone due to cost. **Sandwich schedule:** Jan. 5, Roast beef sandwich & three-bean salad. Jan. 12, Rotisserie chicken salad sandwich & cauliflower salad. Jan. 19, Ham and Swiss sandwich & Greek salad. Jan. 26, Egg salad sandwich & broccoli salad. **Soup schedule:** Jan. 7, Taco Soup. Jan. 14, Cream of broccoli soup. Jan. 21, Borscht. Jan. 28, Beef barley soup.

Transportation: We continue to offer transportation to routine doctor’s appointments. We request as much advanced notice as possible – at least 48 hours (not counting weekends and holidays). Transportation to grocery stores will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis. Only one passenger will be allowed on the buses at one time, with the exception of those accompanied by a caregiver or relative. Buses are sanitized between rides.

Inclement Weather Policy: When the Marion Public Schools are closed due to a weather-related emergency, COA-sponsored activities, including transportation, will also be canceled. If you aren’t sure, call the COA office at 508-748-3570.

Dental Cleaning: Schedule your appointment for Feb. 17 by calling 508-827-6725.

Waterfront Memory Café: Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. Weekly programming for individuals with Alzheimer’s or other memory loss, with their care partner, family or friend, in a safe, supportive environment. Call for details.

Memory Loss Support Group: Jan. 14 and 28 from 1 to 2 p.m. Hosted online by Community Nurse Home Care. Call 508-992-6278 for log in information.

Friendly Caller Program: If you are interested, or know someone who would be interested or in need of a friendly phone call, please contact Karen Gregory at 508-748-3570.

Mattapoisett COA

For more information, call the Mattapoisett Council on Aging at 508-758-4110 or go to mattapoisett.net/council-aging. The center is located at 17 Barstow St., Mattapoisett, MA 02739.

Program Update: Programs and services are limited due to COVID-19. An “all call” will be made when programs/services resume in any form. Any updates and/or other information will be sent to anyone in our database via telephone, email; and anyone may find updates on Facebook, and the COA page on the Town’s website. Such communication may relate to programs and services (start, halt, change, etc), but it may also relate to weather or safety issues. If any of your contact information has changed, please let us know so that we can update your information.

Exercise: Programs available via YouTube, cable television, and Zoom with local entities. Recommend calling a friend to do the class with you; you can both be on the phone and watching the same class and give each other some incentive. Contact the COA for resources.

Food: If you need groceries or other necessities, call the COA for assistance.

Medical Rides: Call 508-758-4110, no later than 48 hours ahead (earlier notification appreciated).

Medical Equipment: Always available, based on inventory. Contact the COA.

Friendly Caller Program: Benefit from a weekly call with a friendly voice! Call Liz at 508-562-2788 for more info.

Fuel Assistance: Mattapoisett COA is teaming with the local fuel assistance program through P.A.C.E. (People Acting in Community Endeavors) to offer filing assistance. One-on-one appointments are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, by appointment, at the COA. At this appointment you will have direct phone access with a PACE representative to answer your questions and to ensure your application is complete and processed. Photocopies can be made of any necessary documents you must submit. Contact the COA to make your appointment by calling 5087584110 or email: coadirector@mattapoisett.net.

New Bedford Councils on Aging

The Rosemary S. Tierney Community Center and the Buttonwood Senior Center will remain closed to the public until further notice. For updates and assistance, contact the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250.

Social Day: The New Bedford Council on Aging’s Social Day Care Program has returned. Contact the New Bedford COA for more information at 508-991-6250.

Construction Underway: Renovation of the bowling greens, located at Hazelwood Park behind the Rosemary S. Tierney Community Center, is underway. The renovated greens will be available for the public starting in spring 2021.

Co-ed Adult Indoor Pickleball: New Bedford Parks & Recreation is offering indoor pickleball from Nov. 3 to June 10, 2021 at the McCoy Rec Center, 181 Hillman Street, New Bedford, MA 02740. Held Tuesdays and Thursdays.

First session: noon to 1 p.m. Second session: 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. Limited to eight players per hour. Two courts are available. All players must be McCoy Rec Center Members and adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols. Masks must be worn at all times in the facility. Register online at: newbedfordma.myrec.com.

Friendly Calls: Volunteers are calling those who have utilized our services in the past to check in. We are looking for others who would be willing to connect. If you would like to receive a friendly call, call the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250.

Rochester COA

For more information, call 508-763-8723. The Rochester Council on Aging is located at 67 Dexter Lane, Rochester, MA 02770. Visit the website at townofrochestermass.com/council-aging. Facebook: facebook.com/RochesterMass.

The Senior Center closed on Dec. 24 and will remain closed until Jan. 11. The Senior Center remains closed to the public, but is staffed and able to arrange van rides, food distribution, lending of medical equipment and a few other services. Please call for details or if you have needs. We provide free transportation to and from local appointments for Rochester residents. Please call for a ride with one of our friendly drivers at least 24 hours in advance so we can schedule a driver.

The Senior Center participates in various programs for those who are food insecure. Eligibility varies depending on the program. If you are experiencing food insecurity, even if temporarily, please call us. It would be our pleasure to assist you in navigating these programs. The Senior Center can also help with fuel assistance programs for families and seniors.

Dementia Directory

www.alzconnected.org

Memory Cafés (Call for updates)

Memory Cafés are supportive gatherings for individuals with memory loss and their care partner, family or friends. Due to the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, many in-person gatherings and events have been canceled. Contact the cafés and support groups below for updates and information about reopenings. Visit www.memorycafedirectory.com/cafe-connect for a list of virtual memory cafés that you can access through video conference apps or over the phone.

Marion Waterfront Memory Café: Every Wednesday. 1 to 2 p.m. At the Marion COA, 465 Mill Street, Marion. RSVP: 508-748-3570.

Café da Memoria: Fridays at Project Independence, 250 Elm St., New Bedford. 12:30 to 2 p.m. Para mais informação contactar 508-979-1693.

Alzheimer’s Support Groups (Call for updates)

Mondays: LGBTQ Phone Support Group: First Monday of the month. For partners/spouses of people living with dementia. Contact Barb Meehan at 508-291-0660 or bamscats@gmail.com.

Tuesdays: Dartmouth COA with Carolyn Greany, 508-304-4587. Every other Tuesday, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Meetings are for caregivers and the individual diagnosed. RSVP.

Wednesdays: Fairhaven COA with Fairhaven Community Nurse & Hospice Care, 508-992-6278. First Wednesday of the month, 1 to 2 p.m. **Royal of Fairhaven Nursing Center:** with Maureen Bradley, 508-997-3193. Fourth Wednesday of the month, 6 to 7 p.m. **New Bedford, Wilks Library:** 1911 Acushnet Ave. with Alan Johnson, 508-775-5656. Fourth Wednesday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m. RSVP. **Dartmouth COA** first Wednesday of the month, 6 to 7 p.m. Call Nancy Miller at 508-999-4717.

Thursdays: Marion COA: Caregiver Support Group. Call Karen Gregory at 508-748-3570 to pre-register. Every other Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. **Residence at Cedar Dell** from 5-6 p.m., fourth Thursday of the month. Call 508-636-0590.

Fridays: Dartmouth COA: First Friday of the month at 1 to 2:30 p.m. Contact Carolyn Lazaris at 774-510-5204 or Stephanie Gibson at 774-510-5209.

Saturdays: The Cottages at Dartmouth Village: 4 to 5 p.m., last Saturday of the month. Call 508-999-0404.

New Bedford Senior Travel Club

The trips that were scheduled this spring as part of New Bedford’s Senior Travel Club program have been canceled as a precautionary measure. *Senior Scope* will provide updates from this program as they become available.

January 2021 Trivia Quiz Answers

1. A | 2. C | 3. C | 4. D | 5. A
6. B | 7. D | 8. B | 9. D

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Community

Feeling Lonely? The Samaritans are a Phone Call Away

By the end of 2020, the Food and Drug Administration authorized multiple COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use. Health experts encouraged the public to hold on for several more months as the vaccines slowly make their way through the general population.

For nearly a year, the pandemic has upended everyday life, shuttering businesses and community centers, which has made it harder for people to connect with one another. And the public health protocols that have separated Americans during the pandemic are expected to remain in place throughout the winter.

While limiting our exposure to others will help stop the spread of the virus, it will keep us in isolation that much longer. And researchers have long linked social isolation and feelings of loneliness to a variety of health problems, including anxiety and depression.

“We know people are feeling even more stressed,” said Darcy Lee, the executive director of the Samaritans of Fall River/New Bedford. “They’re afraid for their own health and feeling more isolated than ever because people are not able to visit them.”

The Samaritans of Fall River/New Bedford offers a free service that may help you if you’re feeling isolated right now. The agency’s telephone service, called KARE Calls, provides older adults with a friendly conversation once a week.

“It’s not therapy; it’s not counseling. It’s a volunteer calling you to have a chat,” said Lee. “There is a friendly, compassionate

person on the other end of the line whom will contact you once a week to check in. People can talk for ten to fifteen minutes about anything they need to talk about.”

Lee said the volunteers will not judge you nor lecture you. And while the volunteers won’t offer you direct solutions to any given problem, they will give you the space to unburden yourself from your thoughts.

The Samaritans are perhaps most known for their suicide prevention hotline. But Lee notes that, much like the KARE Calls service, you do not need to be suicidal to call the hotline.

“You can share anything that you need to share that will help you de-stress your life,” she said, adding that mental health is as important as one’s physical wellbeing.

Resources

To learn more or sign up for the KARE Calls program, call the Samaritans of Fall River/New Bedford at 508-679 9777 ext. 10 or email Darcy Lee at samaritansfrnb@gmail.com.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. You can also text 1-877-870-4673. (In an emergency, please call 9-1-1 directly.)

For additional info, visit: www.samaritans-fallriver.org.

To learn more about mental health services for older adults in the South Coast, call Coastline at 508-999-6400 or the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250.



Dartmouth Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator Ann Raymond (right) greets patrons – alongside Santa! – during a drive-through holiday event held on Dec. 22.

Dartmouth Receives Age-Friendly Designation from AARP

On Dec. 15, the Town of Dartmouth was formally recognized as a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

A release from the Dartmouth Council on Aging said planning for the project began back in early 2018. After hearing from stakeholders, which included members of the community and local government, the COA developed an action plan “in order to enhance the health, participation and general well-being of the town’s residents.”

For years, the Dartmouth COA has positioned itself as a community center, offering intergenerational programming, whether it’s inviting high school students to the center for its annual Valentine’s Day dance or hosting foreign exchange students from UMass Dartmouth to give presentations on their home countries.

“This designation makes it more

official,” said Dartmouth COA Director Amy DiPietro. “It will allow us to work more cohesively with other town departments.”

The designation from the AARP coincided with another announcement from the Town of Dartmouth: the youth advocate position, which had remained vacant for nearly two years, had been filled toward the end of December. The youth advocate offers support to young residents, and could provide a bridge between generations through local government.

With the certification from AARP, the COA plans to make a presentation about their future plans to Dartmouth’s Select Board in early 2021. From there, the COA will build momentum for the project by collaborating with outside organizations and community members.

“We want to make sure it’s a community-led project,” DiPietro said.

Building Skills continued...

on Dec. 27. Two unemployment programs were extended for an additional 11 weeks, the Paycheck Protection Program was renewed and another round of stimulus checks will be sent to eligible adults.

For those who would like to reenter the labor market, there will undoubtedly be hurdles ahead. However, with citizens around the nation stuck indoors, now could be an ideal time to update your résumé or strengthen your skill set.

Karyl Ryan, director of Coastline’s Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), said that about half of those currently enrolled in SCSEP lacked internet access or basic computer skills, which can be a major obstacle in a labor market that is becoming increasingly web-based.

“It’s so important to have some basic computer training,” said Ryan.

In the new year, Coastline will be providing computer training for some of those enrolled in SCSEP and the Foster Grandparent Program. For the FGP volunteers, they’ll be learning how to perform one of the basic functions of their job – mentoring young students – over the internet.



The new look of manufacturing: the MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center offers welding training using a computer and a virtual reality headset. Courtesy: MassHire

The MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center continues to provide career training during the pandemic, including periodic digital literacy workshops.

“As we come out of the pandemic, so much of it is going to be remote or tech-based,” said James Daniels, the director of the center. He said a better approach to learning technology is to learn a specific skill set rather than trying to learn about every possible facet of a computer or every app on your smartphone.

“Like, for example, learn the skills you would need to run an

Amazon business,” he said.

Prior to the pandemic, the Career Center happened to turn its focus to several industries that are projected to fare better in the recovering economy, including manufacturing, the maritime industry and health care.

Daniels said the center helps people think outside the box when it comes to job training. Even manufacturing, he said, is something to reconsider.

“People always think that manufacturing jobs involve working in a factory. People hear ‘manufacturing’ and think of the auto industry, where you’re

working a line...and that’s hard work,” he said. “But there’s other manufacturing jobs that involve small, technical parts. You’re working in a sterile environment.”

Daniels said that for older workers, some believe they can’t learn new skills, and that’s just not true. He also noted that older workers benefit from soft skills – like customer interaction and dependability – that some younger workers have yet to acquire.

Back at the Dartmouth Council on Aging, before returning to the desk to answer the phone, Carvalho parted with this advice to older workers: “Whatever you’ve done in the past is what you bring into the future. You don’t lose anything. It’s all part of the aging process.”

Resources

Contact Coastline at 508-999-6400 for info on the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the Foster Grandparent Program, both of which are currently enrolling new participants.

Learn more about the MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center at 508-990-4000 or online at masshiregnbcc.com.