

# Caregiver Corner

... Ideas and information for people caring for others 778-2411

## New Year's Resolutions for Caregivers

(Adapted from past Caregiver Corners and a Caregiver website.)

Chances are that many times in your life you have made New Year's Resolutions and then broken them. It isn't too late to try and make resolutions and then keep them. Here are some tips that will help you make resolutions that stick:

- ✓ Think about what you hope to accomplish.
- ✓ Outline your plan. Write down as much detail as you can.
- ✓ Break your goals into manageable activities you can do over a period of time
- ✓ Have a small goal for each month
- ✓ Celebrate your success as you go.
- ✓ Don't give up, start again if you need to and keep trying.

Below are some samples of resolutions that were found on-line. Use them as a guide and then make your own resolutions based on your personal life that will help you as a caregiver:

- Spend more time with family and friends! Mark time on your calendar for a monthly or bi-weekly family event.
- Get 30 minutes of exercise 3 to 5 times a week. (Its okay if it is 10 minutes at a time.)
- Tame the bulge – weight loss is one of the most popular resolutions people make.

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- Quit Smoking – on average a smoker tries about 4 different times before they finally quit.
- Make an appointment with yourself. Plan a two hour break for yourself weekly.
- Get out of debt; spend this year getting a handle on those finances.
- Learn something new – challenge your mind and expand your horizons.
- Help others – there are many nonprofit and volunteer organizations that could use a hand.
- Get organized: (or clean out one closet).

Good Luck! Sticking to your resolutions and taking care of yourself, the caregiver is a good plan for 2008. If you find yourself struggling then call Caregiver Services at 778-2411 for some guidance.



## Medication Use Safety Training for *Seniors*(tm) (MUST for *Seniors*(tm))

**The National Council on Patient Information and Education** - a non-profit coalition of more than 100 organizations working to improve communication on the appropriate use of medicines - has launched **Medication Use Safety Training for *Seniors*(tm)** (MUST for *Seniors*(tm)) a national education awareness campaign to promote safe and appropriate medicine use among America's older adults.

**MUST for *Seniors*(tm)** is an interactive program designed to give older adults and caregivers the tools and know how to avoid medication misuse, recognize and manage common side effects, and improve medicine use knowledge, attitudes, and skills to avoid medication errors. For more information about the program and safely using medicines, visit the **MUST for *Seniors*(tm)** web site at [www.mustforseniors.org](http://www.mustforseniors.org)



## Chat group to discuss Body Mechanics: Keep it Safe!

The January Caregiver Chat will host Amber Ranger, Director of Health and Safety Services for the Southern Tier Red Cross. Amber will share with group participants the Red Cross's Family Caregiving quick reference guide which includes a DVD set on various topics relevant to caregivers. Her primary focus with the Chat group will be on the topic of body mechanics. Through a corresponding DVD, caregivers can learn to master skills such as positioning and transferring by watching healthcare experts in action. A general caregiver discussion will follow the featured topic.

The Chat will meet Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, from 1-3PM at the Stay Healthy Center which is located in the Oakdale Mall near Sears. Chat is an informal discussion group for people who are concerned about an older friend or relative. The group is coordinated by Judy Bobinski, Caregiver Services Case Manager. You are welcome to bring your lunch and a beverage with you and enjoy the company of other caregivers. Call Judy with questions at 778-2411.

## Promoting Cognitive Health

Evening program to focus on  
Mind Games that promote  
Senior's Health



When it comes to how the mind ages, research is increasingly giving new meaning to the popular phrase "use it or lose it." What are today's seniors doing to keep mentally fit?

Many have said so long to BINGO and are instead gravitating more to video-game technology and group activities such as Scrabble and bridge tournaments. According to the latest studies, it all helps.

Do you need a little encouragement to keep your mind engaged? Plan to try something new and meet some fun people at our January Evening program.

Rosemary Mahon; HomeInstead Senior Care and Robbie Smolinsky; Action for Older Persons will offer seniors a demonstration on Wii technology and video games all of which promote cognitive health and keep you sharp. Even if you are a little intimidated by the computer – you will still be able to learn and play. Let us help you get started. It is a great way for caregivers to keep their stress in check.

The second half of the program will offer tips on how to engage the person you care for. Stimulating their mind is important to. Rosemary will offer tips on how to encourage your care receiver to stay active. **"Senior Mind Games to Keep You Sharp"** will be **Wednesday, January 9th from 6-7:30 PM** at the **Broome West Senior Center, located at 2801 Wayne Street, Endwell. Pre-registration is requested. Please call Caregiver Services at 778-2411 with questions and/or to register.**

## 21st Century Caregivers

### . . . Then and Now

(Adapted from the National Family Caregiver Association webpage)

Families have always taken care of their ill or disabled loved ones. Neighbors have been helping care for other neighbors for eons. But, the nature of caregiving has changed over the years.

- Families provide more care and more years of care.
- Families are caring for people that are more ill and disabled.
- Fewer children live in the same communities as their parents.
- Women are now working and having children later in life.
- Finances and medical costs are complex and people need more resources set aside for years after retirement.
- Medical technology has prolonged life.

For more information consult the National Family Caregiver Alliance at 800-445-8106 or on the web at [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org).

## Extended Family – Our Greatest Resource

(Taken from Caregiver.com.)

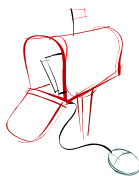


There are many family situations today where you can find three, four, or even five generations living under one roof. While the circumstances that result in multi-generational living vary, families that choose to live together experience periods of adjustment. Many of these family members ultimately find their relationships strengthened.

There are many families that want to be close but not live in the same house. Some of the other ways to keep family ties include: holding reunions, taking a family vacation or even using audio options to keep families in touch. Try taping interviews with older family members about the “family” and share them with everyone. This would make a nice gift or keepsake for someone. Yet another option is coordinating a family letter where someone contacts family members for information and puts it in a letter form to send to everyone that wants to receive it. This can be sent through postal mail or computer e-mail.

However you choose to keep the family together it is worthwhile to maintain the ties.

## Update on the Mailing List & Email distribution list



It is that time once again! If you have any name or address changes or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call Andrea Wright in Caregiver Services at 778-2411 and let her know. If you would rather receive the newsletter electronically that is also possible. Thanks for your cooperation and Happy New Year!

*Caregiver Services and its publication, “Caregiver Corner” are supported by a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging.*

## Broome County Traffic Safety Boards’ Guidelines for Winter Driving

(As found in the December/January Newsletter)

### Getting Started:

- Get an engine tune-up. If you haven’t already done this, then switch to winter weight oil.
- Have your lights and brakes checked to make sure they are in good working order.
- Have the battery and regulator checked.
- If the terminals seem dirty or corroded, clean them with a paste of baking soda and water and then apply a thin film of petroleum jelly to keep them free of corrosion.
- Check all fluids and make sure they are at proper refill as needed.
- Clean wiper blades and switch to winter blades if possible.
- Don’t idle an engine for too long to warm up the car-it could harm the engine.

Have the following items on hand and in the car for emergencies:

1. Snow shovel
2. Scraper with a brush
3. Flashlight and extra batteries
4. Abrasives like cat litter, sand, salt, or traction mats.
5. Jumper cables
6. Flares or reflectors
7. Bright cloth to signal for help
8. Empty coffee can with matches, candles, or lighters.
9. Sleeping bag or blankets
10. First aid kit
11. Compass and maps
12. High energy food like chocolate bars, dried fruit, or nuts

## Tips to Energize Instantly

(As found in the Rockland County Office for Aging’s Newsletter.)

If you start feeling drained, these tips can revive you right away:

- **The shoulder shrug:** You can sit or stand. Raise your shoulders as high as you can, reaching for your ears. Hold them in that position for a few seconds and then drop them back down. Take a deep breath and repeat three times. This will relieve upper shoulder tension.
  - **The “rag doll”:** Stand with arms dangling at your sides, and start to shake your hands, and then start shaking your arms. Next, sit and do the same moves with your feet and legs. You will feel less tense and more alert in minutes. Remember to breathe deeply in between moves.
  - **The natural lift:** Getting outdoors can recharge you in a flash. Even gazing out the window may briefly help. One study has shown that surgery patients who had a view of trees spent less time in the hospital, took fewer pain medications, and had fewer complications.
- **The TV turn-off:** Although TV seems relaxing, research has shown that people feel less relaxed and less satisfied after watching it.
  - **Let the light shine:** We all need plenty of light, especially as we age. The older we get, the more light we need to see clearly. For safety, comfort, and piece of mind, make sure your environment is always well lit. The following are tips to help with lighting:
    1. Make the most of natural light during the day – open the curtains and pull up the shades.
    2. Use adjustable lamps that allow direct light where it is needed.
    3. Have a light switch at the top and bottom of stairways for convenience.
    4. Use night lights for when you have to get up and around during the night.
    5. Be sure all the outdoor entrances, walkways, and outside steps are well lit.

Your January 2008 “*Caregiver Corner*”

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Broome County  
**Office for Aging**

*...bringing seniors and services together*