



*From*  
*Megan's Desk*

**Happy Holidays!**

**A**s I write this column, we have just turned our clocks back an hour and the first snowfall of the year is being predicted. Winter is on its way and with only a couple of months left in 2020,



I am more than ready to welcome a new year that will hopefully bring a peaceful return to some semblance of normal life for all of us.

November is Family Caregiver Month. Caregiving for an older family member can be challenging on most days and simply overwhelming on others. SMAA's team of family caregiver specialists provide information, education and support for family caregivers to help reduce stress and make caregiving easier. And the Sam L. Cohen Adult Day Center offers respite for caregivers by offering programs and care during the day.

By the time this issue of the Senior News is published, the fall election will be over. I hope you were able to evaluate the issues and candidates and exercise your right to vote. Maine has the oldest population in the country and older adults can and should have a significant impact on present and future legislation—especially on issues that directly affect the quality of life in our State. As we approach a new state legislative session in January, I urge you to stay informed and engaged in the discussions with your local legislators regarding the growing need for affordable senior housing and long term care, aging in place opportunities, transportation, and other gaps that directly affect Mainers.

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## Virtual Programs Become Key to Connection and Community During COVID

**T**he Agewell programs at SMAA have shifted gears over the last few months to offer wellness programming that helps people maintain or develop health practices and feel a sense of connectedness while physical distancing. SMAA has traditionally offered in-person workshops that focus on falls prevention including Tai Chi, A Matter of Balance, and Healthy Steps for Older Adults. But when COVID hit, many of these programs had to be put on hold for safety reasons, as well as rules about how the programs can be offered.

“We immediately recognized that we wanted to find a way to continue to engage with our communities and class participants, despite not being able to gather in person”

said Anna Guest, Agewell Programs Manager. The Agewell team of volunteers quickly began to consider what could be offered to support basic wellness needs like physical activity, stress management and social connection. “The beauty of Agewell programming is that the falls prevention or wellness information is just the beginning, people develop friendships, connections and a sense of community,” Guest adds.

Since March, virtual programming options have grown to include a variety of options like Gentle Exercise, Tai Chi for Health and Bal-

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**Classes like Laughter Yoga, taught entirely remotely have helped participants in many ways. “You’ve helped me keep my sanity, and my hope for the future, alive through the connections I’ve made through the zoom sessions.”**



*Tai Chi Instructors Kathy Ross and Paula Gillies teach a virtual class from the Scarborough Office.*

## Spirit of SMAA Award Winner – Ashley Perrone

**E**ach year, the Lawrence W. Gross Spirit of SMAA award is presented to a staff member who provides encouragement and support to other SMAA staff, helps others overcome obstacles to successfully accomplish goals; is an honest and dependable team player who contributes to group collaboration and shows empathy and respect for others, and who builds and maintains good working relationships.

This year’s recipient, Ashley Perrone, embodies all of the characteristics of the award—and then some! Ashley began her career at SMAA as a resource specialist working in the Community Services department. Three years ago,

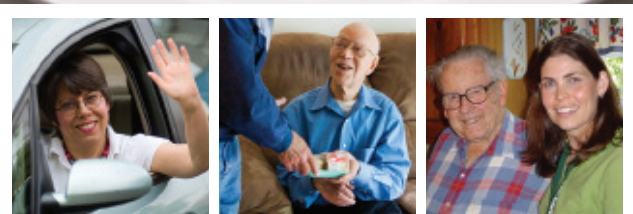


she made the move to nutrition, becoming the Meals on Wheels site coordinator in Biddeford. Renee Longarini, SMAA’s Nutrition Director said, “Ashley consistently goes above and beyond when it comes to managing her site, her volunteers, her clients and supporting her peers. Her background in community services gives her a great understanding of SMAA’s “bigger picture”. She shares her knowledge with her peers and always does it with a smile.”

Ashley’s passion for helping older adults live to their full potential is palpable when she talks about her work at SMAA and the vital role that nutrition plays in keeping our clients healthy and safe. “She is a vital part of our team and I am so happy that she has been recognized this year as the 2020 recipient of the Spirit of SMAA award,” said Longarini.

Have questions about Senior News?  
Call 396-6594 or email [seniornews@smaa.org](mailto:seniornews@smaa.org)

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## MEDICARE

### Medicare Plan Finder

Medicare Open Enrollment is Here! October 15-December 7

Medicare has a plan finder that allows you to see your account and what plans will cover your prescriptions. Learn more about how to use the plan finder by watching this video at <https://youtu.be/QgXmY8-gEHk>

If you have any questions about using the Plan Finder, please call 1-800-Medicare. For more information and resources on Medicare, please see SMAA's website.

**Medicare questions?  
Need help?  
Call 1 800 427-7411**

### Virtual Programs Key to Connection and Community During COVID continued from page 1

ance, Yoga for Healthy Aging, Laughter Yoga, Qigong, Guided Relaxation, and social Coffee Talks. Agewell has also partnered with groups like the Maine Humanities Council to offer a Discussion Project exploring Aging Issues through shared readings, American Bone Health to offer a series of presentations, and the Maine Falls Prevention Coalition for the Walk Across Maine Challenge.

While virtual classes weren't offered at SMAA before COVID, we're seeing how they can overcome some barriers to participation like transportation, rural living, and even weather. And participants, like this Tai Chi student, have shared how valuable they have been during COVID, "I've enjoyed the Tai Chi Deepening classes in Zoom. I appreciated the fact that [SMAA] has offered this to us. I think it is really important, in these strange times, for us to have some semblance of normality. Social interaction is really important, and I hope eventually we will be able to meet in person once again."

Offering programming virtually has taken lots of planning, practice and adaptation. Agewell volunteers have shown their incredible dedication in new ways by learning Zoom skills, adapting teaching methods for virtual presentation, and figuring out how to set up their home workspaces so that they can lead successful classes. Tai Chi Instructor Kathy Ross shares "the isolation and restrictive life since COVID has been difficult for me. I love sharing Tai Chi with others and enjoy the people I meet. So I tried Zoom Tai Chi teaching. Of course not the same as in person but I am again meeting new people, sharing Tai Chi, and having fun. I was surprised how uplifting it is to see others and share with them on Zoom. Gives me something to look forward to when I need it."

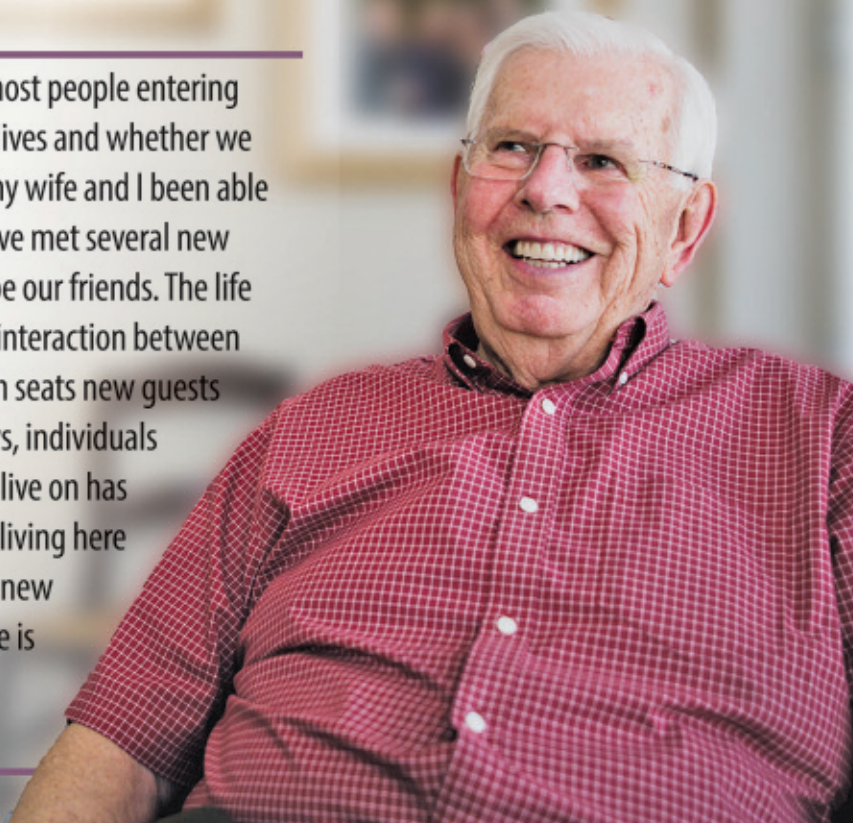
We're living through unprecedented times that are challenging us in many different ways, but with the Agewell programs people are invited to join a community, build connections with others, and find strategies for nurturing their wellness.

To learn more about the Agewell Programs visit <https://www.smaa.org/wellness/falls.html> or visit our calendar at <https://www.smaa.org/wellness/agewell-calendar.html> for our most current listing of classes.



[www.smaa.org](http://www.smaa.org)

“ I had some concerns, as I suspect most people entering senior living may have, regarding our social lives and whether we would develop friends here. Not only have my wife and I been able to maintain existing relationships but we have met several new people here. . . people we now consider to be our friends. The life enrichment program is designed to nurture interaction between people. The hostess in the Main Dining Room seats new guests with compatible table mates and within days, individuals become neighbors and friends. The floor we live on has become our new neighborhood. The people living here seem to understand that all of us have been new to The Park Danforth at some point. Everyone is so friendly here. My wife and I could not feel more at home. ”



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[www.smaa.org](http://www.smaa.org)

## Be a Fraud Fighter — Current Scams

### Utility Scams

Some scams never go away regardless of the season. Utility scams are a perfect example. If it's hot or cold out, scammers will call, email and even knock at your door demanding immediate payment for overdue bills or they'll shut off your service. When it's storm season and the power goes out, these crooks show up offering to restore service for a payment.

Whatever the season, the goal of these crooks is the same—to create a sense of panic in their targets in hopes they will act hastily and pay up. If you get a surprise visit or call from the “utility company,” ask questions like what your bill history is or what the individual's employee ID number is, and then follow up to confirm before taking any action.

### Real Estate Rental Scams — COVID

These days, because of COVID-19, lots of financial transactions that used to take place in person now happen virtually. This creates an opportunity for scammers to pose as legitimate operators and steal people's money. One place this is happening more often is in real estate—specifically fake home rentals.

Scammers take pictures from legitimate home rental offers and create their own fake rental listings. The rentals are often offered for well below market price and the crooks use the coronavirus as a reason why a tour and in-person meeting aren't possible. Only after the victim sends their deposit and shows up at someone else's home, do they find out it is a scam.

Be suspicious of any rental where you can't physically visit the space and make sure you're using secure and trusted websites when looking for a home rental.

### Work at Home Scams That Cost You

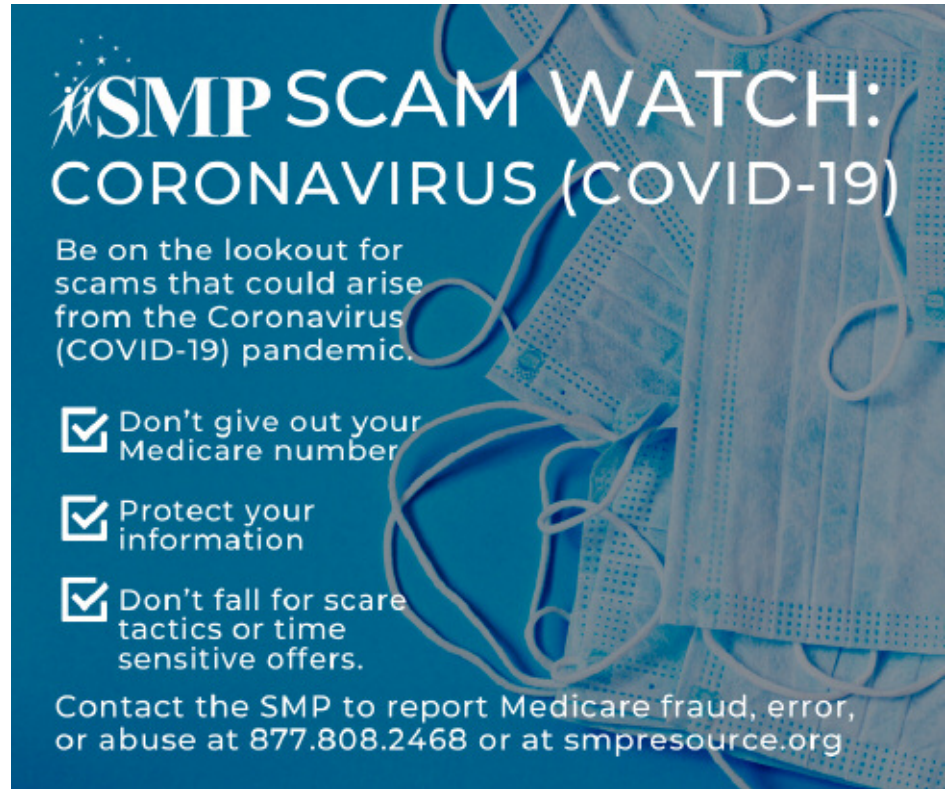
Criminals are looking to take advantage of people who may have lost income during the pandemic. They post legitimate sounding work at home opportunities on trusted job boards. The offer is typically for some basic accounting work. Once the target is “hired,” the “boss” sends money to their banking account. The boss explains that, once the check clears, the new hire needs to send that money using Venmo or CashApp to pay vendors. The new hire does as directed, and learns some days or weeks later that the check the “boss” sent was fake. The money sent to “vendors” was the tar-

## BE A FRAUD FIGHTER! IF YOU CAN SPOT A SCAM, YOU CAN STOP A SCAM.

get's own money, and the “boss” disappears.

Look at all online employment opportunities with a healthy dose of skepticism. Find out all you can about the “employer.” If it doesn't add up, move on to real opportunities.

Visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/fraud-watchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraud-watchnetwork) or call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 1-877-908-3360 to report a scam or get help if you've fallen victim.



**SMP SCAM WATCH: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

Be on the lookout for scams that could arise from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

- Don't give out your Medicare number
- Protect your information
- Don't fall for scare tactics or time sensitive offers.

Contact the SMP to report Medicare fraud, error, or abuse at 877.808.2468 or at [smpresource.org](http://smpresource.org)

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## “We Are So Happy Mom is Thriving.”



“As Mom aged, we thought it best if she stayed in her house, but even with hours of expensive home care, Mom wasn't thriving. She needed more. She especially needed more socialization — not isolation; and reliable access to care when she needed it. So she made the move to Scarborough Terrace. She truly loves her elegant new home! Life is more complete in a community with lots of friends and activities, chef-prepared meals, daily care, medication management, and even transportation to appointments and outings. I know Mom is happier and more relaxed now... and I am too. We only wish she'd moved sooner.”



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## How to Enjoy the Holiday Season with Health in Mind

The days are increasingly shorter and cooler here in Maine, and that means we are getting closer to the holidays. The holiday season can often be a mix of excitement and stress, and one topic that can bring about both these emotions in nutrition world is how to celebrate the season while also supporting our health and wellbeing.

As a dietitian, the last thing I want is for individuals to feel anxious about food or pressure to eat “perfectly”. Good nutrition includes foods that are both nourishing to our bodies and pleasurable to eat! Mindful eating, consistency, and balance can be a recipe—pardon the pun—for a happy and healthful holiday season!

Mindful eating is the practice of tuning into your body and listening to its cues like hunger and fullness. It can also involve noticing what foods you’re craving, savoring those foods, and aiming to enjoy your meal without a side of guilt or judgement! This may look like perusing a table of food, choosing those dishes that are most appealing to you, and taking the time to notice the flavors, textures, and aromas of those foods—giving you a highly satisfying sensory experience!

Our bodies also like consistency! It’s important to note that making thoughtful food choices can be very difficult to do when our routines are off or we’re not eating regular meals. As much as possible, keep to eating regular meals and snacks throughout the day instead of “saving up” for the big meal. Consistency, as well as eating foods that are nutritionally dense, such as whole grains, produce, heart healthy fats, and

lean protein, will help fuel us through a busy holiday season.

Finding balance is something that is important all year round, but it can be exceptionally important during the holiday season when we can feel pulled in many different directions. We can aim balance our plate, just like we do with our time and energy during this busy period of the year. When we balance our time and energy between social engagements, rest, and our normal routine activities, it can help us from feeling overwhelmed. Similarly, we can aim to balance our eating by consuming foods and drinks that might feel a bit more indulgent as well as foods that support steady energy, healthy digestion, and meet our macro-and micro-nutrient needs.

Here are three tips to support steady energy and digestion throughout the day:

1. Aim for a combination of the three macronutrients, protein, fat and carbohydrates at each meal and protein and carbohydrates at snacks.
2. Eat something at least every four hours and try not to go more than six hours without eating. This is especially important if you are trying to maintain steady blood glucose levels, such as the case if you have prediabetes and diabetes.
3. Include fiber-and probiotic-containing foods on a daily basis. Fiber-rich foods include whole grains, vegetables and fruit. Probiotics can be found in foods such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut and kombucha.

**Andrea Paul, RDN, LD**  
**Hannaford Dietitian**  
**Andrea.paul@hannaford.com**

### Senior News

is a publication of



136 U.S. Route One,  
 Scarborough, ME 04074-9055

**Telephone:** 207-396-6500

**Toll-free:** 1-800-427-7411

**e-mail:** info@smaaa.org

**Web site:** www.smaaa.org

**Editor:** Kate Putnam  
 kputnam@smaaa.org or  
 207-396-6590

**Advertising & Article Submission:** Jessica LeBlanc  
 jleblanc@smaaa.org or  
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For details on advertising in “Senior News,” log on to [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org) and see Senior News on home page and/or send an e-mail to [seniornews@smaaa.org](mailto:seniornews@smaaa.org). You may also reach “Senior News” representative Janet Bowne at 396-6533.

Marketing options include, full color ads, advertorial columns and inserting pre-printed materials into the newspaper. Reach your potential customers with Maine’s only newspaper specifically for people age 50 and older!

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### Mission Statement

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging’s mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities, and the people who care for them.

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The Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) is a non-profit, charitable organization. Services of SMAA are supported in part by state and federal funds provided through the Office of Aging and Disability Services of the Maine Department of Human Services. Learn more at [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org) or by calling 207-396-6500 or 1-800-427-7411.

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From Jo Dill's Notebook

**News from Maine Senior Games**



A special thanks to all of you who donated to the Maine Senior Games Keep the Flame Burning fundraiser. Our goal was to raise \$10,000 by the end of the year and that goal was met mid-October. We cannot thank you enough. We are still, of course, accepting donations so we can be up and running for the 2021 season. Our website is under construction but should be ready soon. Look for us at [www.maine seniorgames.org](http://www.maine seniorgames.org)

Our new mailing address is: MSG, PO Box 513, Scarborough, ME 040470

Maine Senior Games is moving forward with becoming its own nonprofit. We are fortunate that our board all decided to stay with us and have been hard at work filling out forms, making decisions and raising funds. Kudos to them! Our executive board members are: Deb Smith, Chair, Kim Koehler, Vice Chair, Pam

Dutremble, Treasurer, Jess LeBlanc, Secretary, Other board members include, Cyndi Bona, Miranda Dolph, Robin Kessler, Ginny Ketch, Jerry LeVasseur and Noelle St. Hilaire

Our goal is to start planning for the 2021 Maine Senior Games events all the while watching where Covid takes us and following the State of Maine protocols and mandates. We have developed Covid guidelines for each event and hope that together we can make each event safe for everyone.

Thanks to the following sponsors who stayed with us during the pandemic:



**From Megan's Desk**  
continued from page 1

This year, the holidays will look a lot different than in years past. The coronavirus is making it almost impossible for families to celebrate together and greatly impacting travel and social gatherings. But even in past years, the holidays can be very overwhelming to many who struggle with securing the very basic necessities of life such as a nutritious meal and a warm home. On December 1, SMAA is participating in #Giving Tuesday—a global day dedicated to helping others through the gift of a donation to their favorite nonprofit organizations in honor of the good work they do in the community. I encourage you to add SMAA to your holiday “shopping list” this year and help us provide critical services for those who desperately need our support—not just at the holidays but throughout the year. You may contribute on our website at [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org) or by sending a contribution to SMAA, 136 US Route One, Scarborough, ME 04074.

Due to the growing number of COVID-19 cases in Maine and across the country this holiday season, SMAA will continue to deliver many of our services via telephone and Zoom. A limited number of in-person appointments will be made available. For the most up-to-date information about SMAA's current offerings, please visit our website at [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org). Our healthy aging classes, including tai chi and others, are a great way to relieve stress and stay fit during these cold winter days. There are also many volunteer positions open for those who would like to get involved and give back to the community.

I wish you all a very joyous holiday season.

**Megan Walton**  
Chief Executive Officer



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## Three Tips to Decrease Back Pain From Arthritis

By Dr. Phil Finemore, PT, DPT,  
Owner/Founder of WorkFitME  
Mobile PT

**A**rthritis in the spine (stenosis) is incredibly common. If we X-Rayed 100 people between 50-55, about 90 of them would show some degeneration in the spine. Of those, about 60% wouldn't have pain associated with that arthritis! Those numbers get higher as we age. The degeneration that happens in the joints and discs is a very natural process. No one can take away those arthritic changes, but because the arthritis alone doesn't cause pain, certain areas can be addressed to relieve stress and pain from that area.

Typically, back pain from arthritis is most noticeable when standing for periods of time, walking for periods of time, or standing up after sitting for a period of time. Another

common sign that arthritis is a culprit is the ability to walk as much as you want without pain if you are holding onto a shopping cart or walking aid. Bending forward, even slightly, will relieve the pain.

If that's you keep reading! Here are three tips to improve back pain from arthritis:

### Tip #1: Don't Push It

When stenosis causes pain that radiates away from the spine and into the legs, nerves are irritated. The more nerves get irritated, the harder it is to calm them down. That's why it's important to seek treatment through movement and a hands on approach early. That's also why it's important to avoid pushing past your symptoms. Keep moving but don't keep flaring up your pain. If you are having trouble moving any amount, seek out some conservative treatment!

### Tip #2: Variety is the Spice of Life

Nerves like three things: space, movement and blood flow. Arthritis in the spine decreases all three of these. Avoid sitting too long, standing too long, walking too far (don't push it). Simply keep switching it up. This will give those nerves what they want!

### Tip #3: Get Your Glutes Stronger

This gives your spine some great support. Here is a great exercise to help:

#### Sit to stand

In a kitchen chair, scoot toward the front edge. Keep your chest up tall and stand up. Try to think about squeezing your buttock muscles as you stand up. Use your hands



for balance. Make sure you control your descent back down to the chair. No plopping! Complete three sets of ten repetitions.

Prevention is the best medicine, but back pain from arthritis is very treatable! Try these three tips and see for yourself!



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## Upcoming SAGE Maine Virtual Programming

### SAGE Speaker Series: Mental Health through the Holidays November 13, 1PM

Any older adult from across the state is invited to join this speaker series. Christopher McLaughlin, an LCSW and Associate Vice President of Community and Pediatrics Services at Northern Light Acadia Hospital, will present on mental health might be impacted this holiday season.

### SAGE Virtual Thanksgiving November 19, 6PM

**Cooking with SAGE Bangor** – Hosted the first Saturday each month at noon.

To join in these events, please message SAGE Maine on Facebook or email [sage@equalitymaine.org](mailto:sage@equalitymaine.org) for the Zoom links.

SAGE Maine is a program of Equality Maine and is dedicated to providing advocacy, support, and services to the LGBTQ+ elder community. Learn more about their work at <https://www.sagemaine.org>

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**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION, MAINE CHAPTER**

For more information on the Alzheimer's Association, Maine Chapter's programs and services visit [alz.org/maine](http://alz.org/maine) or call the toll-free 24/7 Helpline 800.272.3900

**SUPPORT GROUPS:**

- Virtual Caregiver Support Group: York County**, Monday, November 9, 3-4:30PM
- Virtual Caregiver Support Group: Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin Counties**, Monday, November 9, 5:30-7PM
- Virtual Caregiver Support Group: Cumberland County**, Tuesday, November 10, 6:30-7:30PM
- Virtual Caregiver Support Group: Greater Portland Area**, Friday, November 13, 10-11:30AM
- Virtual Caregiver Support Group: Knox and Waldo Counties**, Tuesday, November 17, 3-4:30PM
- Virtual Caregiver Support Group: Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)**, Wednesday, November 18, 2-4PM
- Virtual Support Group: Grief, Loss, and Life After Dementia**, Second and Fourth Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30PM, Contact [alirussell@alz.org](mailto:alirussell@alz.org) to learn more

**VIRTUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS:**

- Conquering Caregiver Overload:** November 18, 3-4PM
- COVID-19 and Caregiving:** Friday, November 13, 11AM-12:30PM; Monday, November 16, 6-7:30PM
- Coping With the Holidays:** Tuesday, November 17, 11AM-12:30PM
- Dementia Conversations:** Thursday, November 12, 12-1:30PM
- Legal and Financial Planning:** Wednesday, November 18, 5-7PM
- Effective Communication Strategies:** Wednesday, November 18, 1:30-3PM
- Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research:** Tuesday, November 10, 3-4:30PM; Monday, November 23, 12-1PM
- Safety and Memory Challenges:** Tuesday, November 10, 3:30-5PM
- 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's:** Wednesday, November 11, 1:30-3PM

**Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior:** Tuesday, November 17, 3:30-5PM; Tuesday, November 24, 12-1:30PM

**COVID-19/ Como reducir el estress durante el dia [Holiday]:** November 9, 10-11:00AM

**Información básica sobre el Alzheimer:** November 18, 6-8PM

**COVID-19 / Plan de emergencia:** November 23, 10-11AM

**EARLY-STAGE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS:**

- ALZ Meet Ups**
- Literature:** Thursday, November 12, 11AM - 12PM
- Museum of Fine Arts Virtual Tour Artful Feasts: The Artist as Chef and Host Featuring Paul Cezanne:** Wednesday, November 18, 1PM
- Gratitude:** Thursday, November 19, 11AM - 12PM
- Cooking with Kristen: Cranberry Bars and No Bake Pumpkin Cookies,** November 17  
Contact: Carolyn DeRocco to receive the link to join at 203-623-5407 or [cderocco@alz.org](mailto:cderocco@alz.org)

Participants will receive the recipe and a gift card to purchase the ingredients.

**Shared Voices Intergenerational Choir:**

Fridays, 2:30-4PM  
Shared Voices is an intergenerational chorus (non-skill based) that gives persons living with dementia and their families a chance to do something fun, socialize, and make music together!  
Contact Heather Dobbert at 860-819-1528 or [heatherdobbert@gmail.com](mailto:heatherdobbert@gmail.com).

**Virtual Music Bingo**

First Friday Monthly, 10:30AM - 12PM  
Join us for a fun, musical game of BINGO from the comfort of your own home! This is a fun way to connect through music and go back in time to enjoy popular tunes.  
Contact Pam at [pamatwood@gmail.com](mailto:pamatwood@gmail.com) or call 860-798-0369 to register and receive your BINGO card.



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**“Quitting smoking and getting screened early for lung cancer could save your life.”**

—DR. BRIAN HANEY, LUNG CANCER SPECIALIST

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**One: quit smoking now!** Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer by far. The sooner you quit, the better your chance of not getting lung cancer. Every year and every month helps. Get tips on quitting smoking at [MaineQuitLink.com](http://MaineQuitLink.com).

**Two: get screened for lung cancer now!** If you’ve been a heavy smoker for any significant time in your life, early detection could save your life. Low-dose Computed Tomography, or LDCT, can detect early-stage lung cancer, which is often treatable. And it’s covered by insurance for qualifying patients.

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## Holiday Celebrations and COVID

As many people in the United States begin to plan for fall and winter holiday celebrations, the CDC offers the following considerations to help protect individuals and their families, friends, and communities from COVID-19. These considerations are meant to supplement—not replace—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which holiday gatherings must comply. When planning to host a holiday celebration, you should assess current COVID-19 levels in your community to determine whether to postpone, cancel, or limit the number of attendees.

In order to increase safety at your holiday gatherings, consider:

- Hosting outdoor activities rather than indoor activities as much as possible. If hosting an outdoor event is not possible,

and you choose to host an indoor event, avoid crowded, poorly ventilated, or fully enclosed indoor spaces.

- Increasing ventilation by opening windows and doors to the extent that is safe and feasible based on the weather.
- Hosting activities with only people from your local area as much as possible.
- Limiting numbers of attendees as much as possible.
- Providing updated information to your guests about any COVID-19 safety guidelines and steps in place to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Providing or encouraging attendees to bring supplies to help you and others stay healthy. For example, extra masks (do not share or swap with others), hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and tissues.

- If you are planning in-person holiday gatherings with people outside of your household, consider asking all guests to strictly avoid contact with people outside of their households for 14 days before the gathering.

Follow these tips to reduce your risk of being exposed to, getting, or spreading COVID-19 during the celebration:

- Social distance and limit close contact
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet or more from people you don't live with. Be particularly mindful in areas where it may be harder to keep this distance, such as restrooms and eating areas.
- Avoid using restroom facilities at high traffic times, such as at the end of a public event.
- Avoid busy eating areas, such as restaurants during high volume mealtimes, if you plan to eat out at a restaurant.
- Minimize gestures that promote close contact. For example, do not shake hands, bump elbows, or give hugs. Instead wave and verbally greet others.
- Wear a mask at all times when around people who don't live in your household to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.
- Avoid singing, chanting, or shouting, especially when not

wearing a mask and within 6 feet of others.

- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
- Wash your hands often.

After your celebration, if you participated in higher risk activities or think that you may have been exposed during your celebration, take extra precautions (in addition to the ones listed above) for 14 days after the event to protect others:

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Avoid being around people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Consider getting tested for COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or if you test positive for COVID-19, immediately contact the host and others that attended the event or celebration that you attended. They may need to inform other attendees about their possible exposure to the virus. Contact your health care provider and follow the CDC-recommended steps for what to do if you become sick, and follow the public health recommendations for community-related exposure.

*Adapted from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>*



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*Southern Maine Agency on Aging*  
**AGEWELL PROGRAMS**

**Join the Agewell Community**

As the weather grows colder, the days shorter, and holiday traditions are impacted by physical distancing, please consider joining Agewell for a variety of wellness classes to support physical, mental and social health. Become a part of this warm and welcoming community as we support each other in navigating these different times. All Agewell programs will be offered via Zoom. Registration is required. Please view our most current schedule and register at <https://www.smaaa.org/wellness/age-well-calendar.html>. We can also be reached at 396-6578.

Our virtual Agewell programs are generously sponsored by the Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation, and are offered at no cost to participants.



**Drop In Classes –**

Registration required, and join us any time as your schedule allows.

**Guided Relaxation – Mondays 2:00-3:00**

Deep relaxation and mindful breathing help us reduce stress and live our lives in a calmer, more focused way. This class explores a variety of relaxation strategies and tools including breath-focus, body scans, muscle relaxation, mindfulness and meditation. No experience needed.

**Yoga for Healthy Aging – Wednesdays 11:00-12:00**

A “real-world” yoga program with a modified series of traditional poses, which can be done by almost anyone—of any age or ability. We’ll place special emphasis on “bone-safe” yoga, balance, and fall prevention. The class is a combination of seated and standing poses, but all of the poses may be done seated.

**Laughter Yoga – Select Wednesdays 1:00-2:00**

Laughter Yoga is based on scientific evidence that our bodies cannot distinguish the difference between real and “practiced” laughter. Some major benefits include boosting your immune system, reducing stress, elevating your mood, and feeling socially connected. Bring an open mind and the willingness to laugh!

**Gentle Exercise – Thursdays 10:15-11:15**

This guided exercise program includes a full body routine of movements to gently warm-up your joints, stretch and strengthen your muscles, and practice your balance. The program includes both seated and standing exercises, but a seated option will be demonstrated for all exercises.

**Qigong – Thursdays 2:00-3:00**

Qigong, based on the wisdom of traditional Chinese medicine, helps you feel clear, relaxed, and energized through gentle movement, conscious breathing, and meditative visualization. No experience needed.

**Coffee Talk – A Toolkit for These Different Times – Fridays 10:30-11:45**

Join us for a morning of connection, humor, and reflection. Each session will focus on a topic to spark conversation and discussion. This warm and welcoming group is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, learn from others, share laughs, and gather strategies for navigating these different times.

**Scheduled Programs –**

Registration required. Programs have a specific start and end date, and it’s recommended that you attend as many sessions as possible.

**Seated Tai Chi – November 16-December 16 (no class Thanksgiving week) Mondays & Wednesdays 1:00-1:45**

This modified seated version of our Tai Chi for Health and Balance program can be enjoyed by anyone wishing to practice Tai Chi sitting

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down. People with almost any chronic condition can learn to improve their health and mobility. This program includes an introduction to tai chi warm-ups, cool downs, and teaches a sequence of several forms, demonstrating each movement step-by-step. This slow, gentle, and smooth practice is a wonderful addition to your wellness routine.

**Special Events**

**Eating for Healthy Bones presented by American Bone Health – November 17 2:00-3:00**

Are you one of the 75% of Americans who don’t get enough calcium every day? Learn the best sources of dietary calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, protein and other important nutrients and how to make bone-healthy food choices for you and your family.

**Healthy Body, Healthy Brain – November 2 2:00-3:00**

A healthy brain is vital to our daily activities, and as we strive to keep our bodies healthy and fit, we often forget to attend to our brain

health. Join us a virtual presentation where we’ll explore the main functions of the brain, changes that can occur as we age, and learn about ways we can increase and maintain the health of our brains.

**Balance and Fall Prevention Clinics – Tuesday November 17 10:30-11:30 and Tuesday December 15 10:30-11:30**

Our sense of balance is like a muscle that needs to be exercised to stay fit. Join us for an introduction to Balancing Act, a self-paced program developed by the University of New England you can practice at home. The program has many physical and mental benefits, and is designed for anyone who would like to improve balance and reduce the risk of falls. Each clinic will provide:

- An introduction to the program
- Tips for beginning the program safely from your home
- Instructions for accessing manual and videos
- Information about resources, other Agewell programs, and more

Please visit our online calendar for the most up to date listing of workshops!  
[www.smaaa.org/events.html](http://www.smaaa.org/events.html)

  
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## Vet to Vet Maine: Growing and Thriving Despite the Pandemic

Originally conceived as “Vet to Vet” at SMAA in 2014 by RSVP Director Carol Rancourt and VISTA Volunteer Susan Gold, this organization is committed to supporting veterans by matching them to fellow veteran friends based on branch of service, shared interests, work/volunteer history, and other considerations. The two veterans visit (or talk on the phone) on a regular basis, sharing stories, enjoying activities (or discussions) together, and developing a friendship that can last a lifetime. The volunteers also guide their veteran friends in applying for needed services and benefits. In 2018, Vet to Vet transitioned away from SMAA and became the non-profit organization Vet to Vet Maine. Led by Executive Director Gold, the organization has since added new staff members Judie O’Malley (Program Director) and Kate Spanier (Outreach Director and Volunteer Coordinator). They also remain affiliated with SMAA as a much valued RSVP station, with current veteran volunteers (age 55+) contributing service hours to SMAA’s volunteer network.



**Vet to Vet Maine volunteer Bob Marlowe addresses fellow volunteers at a case review in 2019 at Martin’s Point Health Care in Scarborough during happier (pre-COVID-19) times. Credit: Sharon Roberts**

As Vet to Vet Maine, the organization has continued to positively impact veterans in southern Maine and beyond. They currently have 71 matched veterans, with 14 waiting to be matched. They have also expanded their volunteer total to 124 individuals, including those who assist with social media, administrative work, fundraising, and serving as Board Members. Perhaps the most eye opening statistic is that since becoming Vet to Vet Maine, the organization’s volunteers have logged more than 10,000 hours with 82 new veteran friends served.

Like many organizations, Vet to Vet Maine has also been impacted by COVID-19. Almost immediately, veteran visits were severely restricted—with only phone calls, texts, and emails allowed. As time has passed, volunteer/friend interaction has slowly expanded to include outside visits (6 feet apart with masks), window visits, and snack deliveries, all while adhering to CDC guidelines. Case Reviews and trainings have fully transitioned to the Zoom format as well. While there is a general sadness about not being able to visit in person, many veteran volunteers and friends have maintained an upbeat attitude, and willingness to adapt in order to support each other.

So what does the future hold for Vet to Vet Maine? With veterans needing more support than ever, the Vet to Vet Maine Board is committed to expanding further, and becoming a **statewide** program within two to four years. Veterans will continue to receive help from their veteran visitors for referrals and assistance in applying for other services from the VA in addition to companionship. Vet to Vet Maine also provides support by offering emergency funds for groceries and other needs, and a commitment to online training/case review options. There is no doubt, that despite the circumstances, Vet to Vet Maine is well positioned to grow and thrive while improving the lives of veterans in Maine.

*If you are interested in volunteering with or supporting Vet to Vet Maine, please visit [www.vet2vet-maine.org](http://www.vet2vet-maine.org)*

*maine.org or contact Judie O’Malley by calling 207-579-4024 or emailing her at [director@vet2vetmaine.org](mailto:director@vet2vetmaine.org). You can also contact Judie to refer a veteran who would benefit from having a veteran visitor. The next volunteer training takes place in February 2021.*

*The author wishes to thank Vet to Vet Maine Program Director Judie O’Malley for providing the information/resources for this article.*

## Face Masks Available

SMAA is pleased to announce that cloth masks are available for individuals who need them. A “mask distribution” team of volunteers has been trained to process, package, and send out the masks. Mask options include elastic or tied. Please contact [referral@smaa.org](mailto:referral@smaa.org) if you or someone you know could benefit from a cloth mask.

## AVERT Volunteers Needed!

After a successful response to Meals on Wheels needs during the pandemic in March/April, SMAA Volunteer Services is once again looking for individuals to join a **Volunteer Emergency Response Team (AVERT)**. This group of volunteers will be trained and ready to assist deliver, package and set-up meals as part of our emergency preparedness plan. New volunteers will be required to attend a virtual training, and pass a background check. Want to join the team, but not sure if your schedule will allow it? Not a problem—we still want to hear from you! This is a constantly changing situation, and the goal is to have a large number of people to reach out to, should the circumstances warrant it. Please contact us at 207-396-6525 or [volunteer@smaa.org](mailto:volunteer@smaa.org) if you want to join or support the AVERT team. We are all in this together!

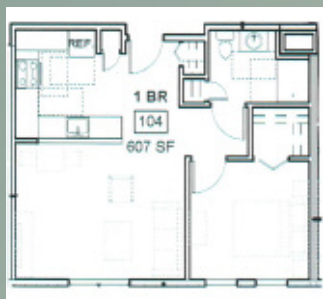
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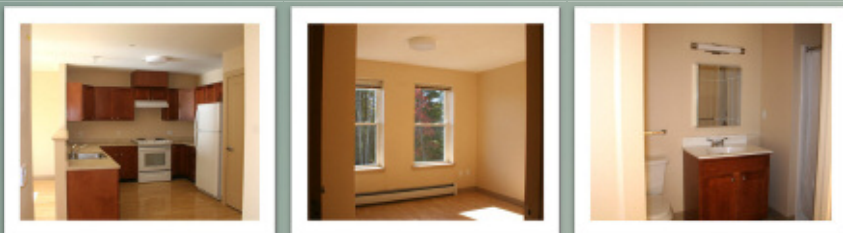
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**Vet to Vet Maine volunteer Charlene Vaughan adjusts her passenger’s mask during a Flag Day 2020 car parade organized by Vet to Vet Maine at the Maine Veterans’ Home in Scarborough to honor the staff and residents there. Photo credit: Sharon Roberts**

# Help Older Adults Feel Remembered and Appreciated this Holiday Season

**M**any of us cherish the holiday season. It is an opportunity to visit friends and family, a time for reflection, gratitude, community, and giving.

The holidays traditionally bring people together. BUT, this year has been anything but traditional.

As we continue to struggle with the uncertainty of the pandemic, the holidays will look very different for most of us. Many families are forgoing travel, and there will be fewer group gatherings and celebrations. Sadly, isolated older adults will experience even greater loneliness over the next few months as they spend the holiday and winter season alone.

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) is doing everything we can to help older adults stay connected and cared for by their community. You can do your part by making a donation and sending a message of appreciation today.

This year SMAA has adapted to expand critical programs like Meals on Wheels, providing more than 1,000 clients a week with friendly check-ins and hearty meals, offering virtual one-on-one meetings with compassionate social workers, and introducing new services, like Phone Pals and Tech Pals, to better meet the needs of isolated older adults.

*2/3 of our Meals on Wheels clients live alone - almost 700 people.*

*Our Phone Pal program has more than doubled due to COVID-19. We have over 100 volunteer and client pairs.*

*This fall we received 250+ requests for help each week from people just like David.*

Your donation will help support thousands of older adults this year who are struggling with isolation and uncertainty. Older adults like Susan and David (names have been changed to respect their privacy):

Susan called SMAA to enroll in Meals on Wheels. Her husband passed away just a few days before, and he had been the one to do all of the cooking. She was overwhelmed by grief and anxiety around going to the store and inexperience with prepar-

ing her own meals. Susan began receiving Meals on Wheels and was

connected to the Phone Pal program—a service that pairs volunteers with isolated seniors to increase connectedness and decrease isolation. The two share multiple calls a week, and the Phone Pal will provide extra check-ins during what will be an especially difficult holiday season for Susan.

David went more than two years without a working hot water heater. He heated up water on the stove for dishes, baths, and other tasks. Eventually his entire piping system failed. A SMAA Resource Specialist worked tirelessly on

David's behalf to identify community partners and resources that would help pay for and organize the home improvements he needed. David now has a safe and effective plumbing and hot water system, receives weekly Meals on Wheels deliveries and checks in with a Phone Pal to stay connected to SMAA and his community.

Make a gift today by visiting [www.smaa.org](http://www.smaa.org). Every dollar and every kind message will improve the lives of our older friends, family, and neighbors this holiday season.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP VULNERABLE OLDER ADULTS:

- Step 1:** Make a donation to SMAA today by visiting [www.smaa.org](http://www.smaa.org), or use the form below to mail your donation.
- Step 2:** Write a holiday card with a caring message to an older adult. Let them know you are thinking of them. These are especially difficult times to be alone.
- Step 3:** Return your completed holiday card to:  
Southern Maine Agency on Aging,  
Attn: Development Office  
136 US Route, OneScarborough, ME 04074  
SMAA will deliver your card to an isolated older adult over the holiday season.
- Step 4:** Enjoy the spirit of the holidays knowing you have brought joy to the life of a senior in need.



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**Yes, I would like to support seniors in need and make a gift to the Southern Maine Agency on Aging!**

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*We do not sell or share our mailing and email list.*



## Planning for Elder Care

Tuesday, November 10th, 2020 1-2pm via Zoom

Where do you begin the process of helping an older family member plan for the future? What concerns need to be addressed? How do you find out what resources are available when help is needed? All of these questions will be discussed in this one-hour class.

Please call 396-6541 and leave your name and email address, or go to [www.smaa.org](http://www.smaa.org) by 11/9/20 to preregister. You will then receive an email with the Zoom log-in information.



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[oceanviewrc.com/legacy](http://oceanviewrc.com/legacy)

