

# THE SENIOR STARTER

DECEMBER 2023

THE PLACE TO START FOR SERVICES

BY THE

**TOWN OF COLONIE  
SENIOR RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**



## Greetings!

As colder weather approaches, we encounter an increase in cold and flu viruses. While hand washing, vaccines and social distancing can provide barriers, we also need to incorporate proper nutrition into our lifestyle to help boost our immune health. We know there isn't a magic fruit or vegetable that will prevent illness, however, there are some foods that stand out due to their immune-boosting nutrients. They include:

- Protein: seafood, lean meats, poultry, eggs, beans, peas
- Vitamin A: sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, spinach
- Vitamin C: citrus foods, strawberries
- Vitamin E: almonds, hazelnuts, peanut butter
- Zinc: lean meats, poultry, milk, whole grain products, beans

With the busy holiday season upon us, maintaining a regular sleep schedule, managing stress, limiting alcohol and incorporating some of these immune boosting foods will help your body prevent and fight off sickness.

The holidays can be a very stressful time for many of us, whether it's due to additional errands that need to be run or celebrating without your loved ones for the first time. My wish for you this holiday season is to find a way to slow your pace enough to enjoy the simpler things life presents. Smile at the snowflakes, sing for joy at the sunshine, bundle in a warm blanket on a frigid day and savor a warm beverage. Wishing you a peaceful holiday and continued good health in the year ahead!

Sincerely,  
*Angelina*

Angelina J. Searles  
Director



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12 Metro Park Road, Suite 103  
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(518) 459-5051

Newsletter Editor  
Carrie Blanchard

## HEAP - Home Energy Assistance Program

### 2023-2024 Income Guidelines

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income
1	\$3,035
2	\$3,970
3	\$4,904
4	\$5,838

#### Application Assistance Dates for all HEAP Benefits:

**December 13, 2023**

**January 10, 2024**

**February 14, 2024**

**March 13, 2024**

**10am -12pm**

**Town of Colonie Senior Resources Dept.**

**12 Metro Park Rd. Ste. #103**

**Colonie, NY 12205**

**APPOINTMENTS NECESSARY - PLEASE CALL TO SCHEDULE**

**518-459-5051, ext. 2**

#### HEAP Benefits Available for Application include:

- ⇒ **Regular Benefit**
- ⇒ **Emergency Benefit** \*not available till 1/2/2024\*
- ⇒ **Heating Equipment Repair/Replacement:**  
*assists with cost to repair/replace furnace, boiler or other direct heating equipment.*
- ⇒ **Clean & Tune:** *cleaning of furnace/chimney*

## NYS Master Plan on Aging

The State Master Plan for Aging (*MPA*) is designed to ensure that older adults and individuals of all ages can live healthy, fulfilling lives while aging with dignity and independence. This survey seeks to understand the living conditions, care and service needs, and the areas of focus New Yorkers would like to see addressed in the MPA.

The answers received from this survey will recommend strategies, policies, and new or improved programs for inclusion in the MPA.

This is an important opportunity to let your voice and/or family's/caregivers' voices to be heard! The survey must be completed by Dec 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Online form:** <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/mpasurvey> [[forms.ny.gov](https://forms.ny.gov)]

**Printable form:** <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-states-master-plan-aging/master-plan-aging-survey> [[ny.gov](https://www.ny.gov/new-york-states-master-plan-aging/master-plan-aging-survey)]

## StateWide's Medicare Corner

### *Guard Your Card*

In 2018, Medicare removed Social Security numbers from all Medicare cards. This aimed to protect your sensitive information, but unfortunately, scammers find new ways to exploit beneficiaries. A Medicare card is a paper card with a blue banner on top, a white middle section, and a red banner at the bottom and there are no plans for further updates.

Scammers use various tactics to trick individuals into revealing their Medicare information. Be cautious if someone calls you with the following claims:

- You need a **new plastic Medicare card**. It's a new year, you need a new card.
- Medicare is **transitioning to a card with a chip in it or a new black and white card**.
- **Requesting your Medicare number to check** if you've received the new card or to verify your current one.

"The NY Senior Medicare Patrol has received reports of scammers falsely representing a Medicare representative to obtain confidential information," announced Tiffany Erhard, NY SMP Director. Protect yourselves and loved ones by sharing these proactive steps you can take to safeguard yourself against these scams:

- **Avoid Unknown Calls:** Do not answer calls that you do not recognize. Scammers often use caller ID spoofing to appear legitimate.
- **Guard Your Medicare Number:** Never confirm your Medicare number or answer "Yes" to any unsolicited questions.
- **Treat it Like a Credit Card:** Protect your Medicare card and number like you would your credit card. Do not share it, laminate it, make copies, or allow others to copy it.

If you believe you have fallen victim to a Medicare card scam, contact the New York State Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at 800-333-4374. Certified counselors are ready to assist you in navigating and resolving these issues.

**JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST BY  
EMAILING CARRIE AT  
BLANCHARDC@COLONIE.ORG**



## STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

**Angelina Searles, Director**  
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## Keeping Warm During Cold Months Ahead

Living in a cold house, apartment, or other building can cause hypothermia. People who are sick may have a harder time keeping warm. Do not let it get too cold inside and dress warmly. Even if you keep your temperature between 60°- 65°F, your home or apartment may not be warm enough to keep you safe. This could be a problem if you live alone because there is no one else to feel the chilliness of the house or notice if you are having symptoms of hypothermia. Here are some tips for keeping warm while you're inside:

- Set heat to 68°- 70°F. Close vents & doors to rooms that aren't being used and place rolled up towel in front of door to block out any drafts.
- Make sure your house isn't losing heat through windows. Keep your blinds and curtains closed. If you have gaps around the windows, try using weather stripping or caulk to keep the cold air out.
- Dress warmly on cold days even if you are staying inside. Throw a blanket over your legs. Wear socks/slippers.
- When you go to sleep, wear long underwear under your pajamas, and use extra covers.
- Ask family, friends, or neighbors to check on you during cold weather. If a power outage leaves you without heat, try to stay with a relative or friend.



## FREE Home Energy Assessments

Whether you own your own house, are renting, or are a landlord of a residential rental property, there are resources available to help you become more energy efficient while saving money on your energy bills.

The following Community Energy Advisors are available to answer questions - they are not salespeople:

Fiona Hynes

518-941-4041

[Fmh44@cornell.edu](mailto:Fmh44@cornell.edu)

Bradley Towle

518-603-7519

[Bt344@cornell.edu](mailto:Bt344@cornell.edu)

Joanna Peterson

518-603-0983

[Jlp336@cornell.edu](mailto:Jlp336@cornell.edu)

Further details are available at: <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Home-Energy-Efficiency-Upgrades>



## COVID Corner

### Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests

Announced on 11/20/23, every U.S. household may place another order to receive four free COVID-19 rapid tests delivered directly to your home. To place your order, visit <https://www.covid.gov/tests> or call **1-800-232-0233, 1-888-720-7489**(TTY)

### N95 Face Masks Available

Albany County has provided our office with disposable N95 particulate respirator face masks. These are available for pick-up to any TOC resident who needs them. Come by our office during regular business hours, M-F, 8:30am – 4:30pm.

## Common Symptoms of a Cold, the Flu, and COVID-19

Learn more at [www.nia.nih.gov/flu](http://www.nia.nih.gov/flu)



\*Symptoms may vary based on new COVID-19 variants and vaccination status.

Common Symptoms*	Cold	Flu	COVID-19
Fever and/or chills		✓	✓
Headache		✓	✓
Muscle pain or body aches		✓	✓
Feeling tired or weak		✓	✓
Sore throat	✓	✓	✓
Runny or stuffy nose	✓	✓	✓
Sneezing	✓		
Cough	✓	✓	✓
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing		✓	✓
Vomiting and diarrhea		✓	✓
Change in or loss of taste or smell			✓

## Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment

Beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, if you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C) & are unhappy with your current plan or if you missed Medicare's Open Enrollment deadline of December 7<sup>th</sup>, you may be in luck to have an opportunity to review or make changes to your coverage. Each year, Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment period occurs from January 1<sup>st</sup> - March 31<sup>st</sup>. During this time, if you are enrolled in an Advantage Plan, you are able to switch to a different Advantage Plan with or without drug coverage or return to Original Medicare and also join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, if needed. If you make any of the above changes, your new coverage will start the first day of the month after your new plan receives your enrollment request. Senior Resources is here to help you with your Medicare decisions.

Our caseworkers are certified, unbiased Health Insurance Counselors that can meet with you during this enrollment period to review your coverage options and help you make any necessary changes.



## Colonie Library Classes & Events

**Monday, December 11 • 10:30am-12pm**

Mystery Book Club

**Tuesday, December 12 • 1-2pm**

Citizens Preparedness Corps

**Wednesday, December 13 • 6-8pm**

Film Noir Comedies: "The Big Lebowski" (1998)

**Thursday, December 14 • 6:30-7:30pm**

Hands Only CPR, AED & Narcan training

**Saturday, December 16 • 10-11:30am**

Memoir & Essay Writing Group

**Sunday, December 17 • 2-3:30pm**

"Can a song change the world?" Songs of struggle/protest

**Monday, December 18 • 2-4:30pm**

Free Movie Monday: "BlackBerry"

**Thursday, December 28 • 6:30-7:30pm**

Homespun Dancing

**Registration is required! Visit here to register:**

<https://www.colonielibrary.org/events/>

**From December 1<sup>st</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>, the Colonie Library will be providing a tree to decorate with donated mittens, hats and scarves for the children of St. Catherine's Center in Albany.**



## How to Build Motivation

The holiday season is upon us. Is it a tough time for you? The pre-holiday stress or the post-holiday blues or both?

January seems to go on forever, with gray skies on most days. February is short, but could be bitterly cold, icy and snowy. March is a wild card weatherwise and another long month.

This is a good reminder to take care of yourself. You've heard by now all the tips to beating the holiday blues and stress.

You might also feel very unmotivated and lack interest.

Many people think the way to cope with low motivation is to say: 'Well, I'll just wait for motivation to hit, then I'll do that project.'

With this thought, though, you could be waiting a very long time.

The trick to getting motivated is to push yourself to do what you've been putting off even if you don't feel like it. This, ironically, starts the process of jumpstarting motivation.

It's like starting the dishwasher. You need to press the Start button first - it doesn't start on its own. That's the same for motivation.

Now, go and push yourself to start something you've been procrastinating!

Submitted by:

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# Senior Clubs of Colonie

## Christ Our Light Seniors

Pres. Sal D'Amore, 518-458-1648

**Business Meeting:** First Monday @ 12:30pm

## Colonie Senior Citizens Club

Pres. Kathy Ingalls, 518-482-5049

**Business Meeting:** First Wednesday @ 10am

## Lisha Kill Seniors Citizens Club

Pres. Shirley Hamm, 518-869-3020

**Business Meeting:** Second Tuesday @ 9:30am

## Menands Senior Citizens Club

Pres. Diane Leonard, 518-465-3771

**Business Meeting:** Fourth Thursday @ 10:30am

## Towers of Colonie Silver Streakers

Pres. Ralph Della Rocca, 518-542-1807

**Business Meeting:** First Monday @ 1pm

## Thunder Road Seniors

Pres. Barbara Williams, 518-314-9385

**Business Meeting:** Second Wednesday @ 10am



## TOWN OF COLONIE

### Office of the Supervisor

Memorial Town Hall  
534 New Loudon Road  
Latham, New York 12110

Phone (518) 783-2728 Fax (518) 782-2360

[www.colonie.org/supervisor](http://www.colonie.org/supervisor)

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

Peter G. Crummey  
Town Supervisor



## Supervisor Crummey's Colonie Connection

As we head towards the New Year, we assess our accomplishments and set our next goals. This time of year, also brings snow conditions and our Public Works Department will work to keep our streets clean.

To best assist our crews during a storm, please visit <https://www.colonie.org/departments/highway/snow-removal> for some helpful tips. Also, for our winter season, the West Albany Pocket Park will once again be hosting an ice-skating rink, weather permitting. By the way, have you signed up for Stay

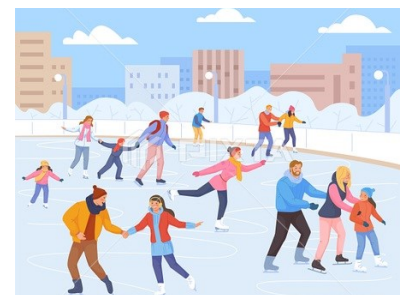
Connected to receive other notices of activities in our Town?

Please visit <https://www.colonie.org/stayconnected/>

I would like to congratulate our *Celebrate a Senior* Honoree Bert Trzcinski. Throughout her time in Colonie, Bert has been an active member in the community, working with St. Ambrose Church and currently serving as a Trustee. Additionally, Bert has been an active volunteer for the Colonie Senior Resources Department and Colonie Senior Citizens Club, Inc.

Don't forget to submit nominations, including a photograph, to [blanchardc@colonie.org](mailto:blanchardc@colonie.org) for our next Town of Colonie *Celebrate a Senior* segment.

As always, I am here if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call my office.



## Celebrate a Senior Spotlight

This month's Senior Spotlight is shining on a woman whom many of you may know through her generous volunteer hours in many areas of our community: Bert (Roberta) Trzcinski. She was born and raised in the home town of Harriet Tubman and William H. Steward: Auburn, NY. As a young professional floral designer, Bert's duties involved travel. While working in the Capital Region for a Ukrainian Church, Bert was set up on a blind date by Sister Peter. Bert went to the Golden Fox on Central Avenue with a man named Paul. Paul was a carpenter by trade and had many other skills which he volunteered to the convent's upkeep. Paul's volunteer work for the nuns unexpectedly paid off! He and Bert were instantly friends. A year and a half later, bride and groom. One year after that, parents to twin girls, Suzi and Sandi!

Bert worked for Felthousen Florist for 42 years before retiring in 2000. She noted that Paul is the youngest of ten children; so, there was usually an aunt available when their daughters needed a babysitter! The family enjoyed RV camping at Alpine Lake each summer for 28 years. In addition, they ventured on many excursions together, including Germany, Austria, Holland, Hawaii and Bermuda just to name a few distant jaunts.

Bert's family are presently active members of St. Ambrose Church and have been since the 1970s. All of them have a history of volunteer work within St. Ambrose. Suzi currently serves as a Board Member for Catholic High and as the Treasurer for the church.

Do you remember when the TOC Senior Resources Department was located at the Goodrich School on Fiddlers Lane? It was then that Bert and Paul were two of about 15 volunteers who transported seniors to wherever they needed to be. This was all done with one vehicle and with the help of Jim Hummel to schedule the rides. They enjoyed giving their time to the community in this way and provided this service for over five years. They were both featured in the Times Union in 2004 for their generosity to the community.

Bert and Paul, have been members of the Colonie Senior Citizens Club (CSCC) for decades. Bert served as their Vice President under John Deffigos in 2000. Under the mentorship of Barbara Maples of the Silver Streakers, Bert was also able to serve as the CSCC's Trip Advisor. Today, Bert continues to be a member of the club, bringing her experience and ideas to club meetings at the Crossings and Senior Advisory Committee meetings held at our office. She has seen much growth over the years, noting that their club currently has approximately 700 members! Bert described her vision of all the TOC Senior Citizen Clubs being in one central location to share in activities together and positively noted that this is currently a work-in-progress.

Today, Bert and Paul reside in the same home where they raised their family. They celebrated their Golden 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary this year and continue to be one another's best friends.

