



RESILIENT AGING

CLINTON COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING NEWSLETTER

Making Social Connections

There are many people who feel that as they lose loved ones and friends that their world gets smaller. Social connections are important for health and wellbeing. So how can you build new, meaningful social connections?

Start small - reach out and check on someone. Maybe a family member (near or far), a friend, or a neighbor. Others may be struggling too. Take the first step.

Be deliberate - make time in your routine to contact others who care about you. Join a group with shared interests to create a sense of belonging.

Reach out for help - even when it's hard to ask for. Find ways to be responsive and grateful to others.

Address barriers - take care of yourself so you can readily connect socially. Find ways to share the things you are already doing, like exercising or cooking.

Volunteer - there are many organizations that can use good volunteers. Ask how you may assist, even if it's just on an occasional basis.

Add something new to your calendar - join an exercise class, take an art class, or learn about something new. Check your local library or senior center for options.

You may have to step out of your comfort zone, but you can find new ways to enrich your life. Go ahead - try something new!



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY: DARLEEN COLLINS

Happy New Year! I just want to take a moment to reflect on one particular accomplishment from 2025.

During the Medicare Open Enrollment period of October 15th through December 7th, staff from Office for the Aging and JCEO Senior Outreach provided assistance to more than a thousand clients. Information was provided about the various plan options so clients could determine which plan best fit their needs when considering cost, which medications are covered, and which providers accept the plan.

I am so proud of the collaboration among these staff members. Health insurance counseling is not their only task during this busy time of year and their efforts are so appreciated.

thank you



Places to Make New Connections

Senior Center

5139 N. Catherine St.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
Variety of activities
518-563-6180

Senior Planet Exploration Center North Country

60 Smithfield Blvd.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
Digital technology courses,
workshops, talks, and social events
518-566-4422

Local Libraries

Churches

Local Eateries & Coffee Shops

Volunteer Sites

Contact Kate Gardner at
AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP for
more information at
518-566-0944





CAREGIVER CORNER

Caring for Yourself as a Caregiver

Caregivers do a lot for others. Because there is so much on their plate, many caregivers don't spend time taking care of themselves. For example, they are less likely than others to get preventive health services, like annual check-ups, and to practice regular self-care. As a result, they tend to have a higher risk of physical and mental health issues, sleep problems, and chronic conditions such as high blood pressure. They are even at an increased risk of premature death. It's not always obvious when a person needs help. It may seem like certain problems are unavoidable or a normal part of caregiving, but there are ways to make things better.

Watch out for these signs of caregiver stress:

- Feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, or anxious
- Becoming easily angered or impatient
- Feeling lonely or disconnected from others
- Having trouble sleeping or not getting enough sleep
- Feeling sad or hopeless, or losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Having frequent headaches, pain, or other physical problems
- Not having enough time to exercise or prepare healthy food for yourself
- Skipping showers or other personal care tasks such as brushing your teeth
- Misusing alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications

Don't wait until you are completely overwhelmed: Learn what your own warning signs are and think about changes you could make.

Take Care of Yourself as a Caregiver



Activities like these can lower your stress, boost your mood, and help make you a better caregiver, too.

Learn more about caregiving at www.nia.nih.gov/caregiving.



Community Connectors

A new series about people who make a big impact on their communities.

Citizen in Action: Janet McFetridge

By Ray Alexander

My boss suggested that Janet McFetridge would be an outstanding choice to interview for our Resilient Aging newsletter. She raved about her accomplishments and then offered possibly the ultimate in complements, "I just wish we could clone her". That was all that I needed to hear. So, in the last week of November I took a drive out to Red Canoe Coffee and Books to interview Janet (who also happens to be the Mayor in the Village of Champlain).

I was able to do some research, and her resume of civic achievements was more than impressive. Some of the volunteer experiences include Board member for Habitat for Humanity, President North Country Youth Hockey, President North Country Skating Club, President Champlain Kiwanis and JCEO Board member. Her list of honors is no less impressive; Older New Yorkers Day Honoree (from our own Office for the Aging), Community Leadership Award, NYS Women of Distinction (Billy Jones), and teacher of the year not once but twice!

Turns out Janet is a "import" to our region. Originally from Oregon until "life brought her here". She married a professor from Clinton Community College named Clarke Herdic. He was one of the very first teachers at Clinton being hired in 1969 where he would remain for 36 years. He also had a passion for woodworking. One of his favorite sayings was "I never met an old building I didn't want to restore". Janet and Clarke shared a love for each other, history and civic service.

They purchased an old country Dr's home that would become the "Champlain Meeting House". It would help fill numerous needs in the community including weddings, yoga classes, gardening talks and the local knitting club. Then in 2017 they purchased the old "Falcon Drug Store" that was built in the 1800's. While the meeting house had been in reasonably good shape, the new purchase was not and would require extensive renovation. (Continued on page 5.)

(Continued from page 4.)

On the plus side it was located next door to the meeting house. Their inside joke was that it was a five-year project. The renovation was Clarke's baby and required complete gutting of the premises. At the time they weren't even sure what the building would be used for.

Janet and Clarke shared a love for the great outdoors and would often take out their red canoe onto the Great Chazy river (the heart of the village). It would become the inspiration for the "Red Canoe" coffee house and bookstore. As I sat with Janet, I marveled at the result of their vision and hard work. Today Red Canoe is the de-facto point of socialization for many of the community. A wide variety of books can be perused while enjoying a hot beverage, sweet treats and good fellowship.

One of its newer editions is the outdoor "wind phone". Open 24/7, it's a phone booth with an old-style rotary phone that is not connected to the phone lines. The idea is that you call loved ones that are passed away. This idea originated with a Japanese garden designer and is a unique way to grieve.

Somehow Mayor Janet has also risen to the challenges facing her community. Her administration has dealt with everything from updating

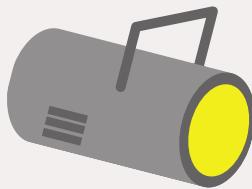
While Janet is not looking for the spotlight - she just does what she does to help her community thrive, she is a connector in all the best ways. She is always looking for new ways to connect people - to services, to opportunities, to each other.

As we move through 2026, we aim to highlight individuals who are impacting their communities and improving lives. What we have come to learn is that each small act has a ripple effect. Improving one life in a meaningful way then impacts another, and another.

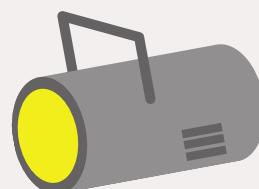
It's time we look past ourselves and see the impact we make on others, and to realize that small acts can leave people with the impression that not only are they seen, but that they matter. We can do better. We can enrich the lives of others and improve our own wellbeing.

dog tether laws to brokering a deal with Amazon to build a new distribution facility in the area.

Sadly Clarke passed away in April of 2021. He was able to do it in style, in home, in his favorite chair with his loved ones around him. By the way, Janet still has her red canoe. I for one am not surprised.



Program Spotlight



WITS WORKOUT

As older adults we spend a significant amount of time exercising our bodies as we age. Shouldn't we use the same level of care for our brain? Now the **Clinton County Office for the Aging is offering the WITS WORKOUT** an engaging, interactive, and educational brain health program.

The program can help improve your memory, attention and thinking skills. In the classes, you will solve puzzles, discuss different topics and learn ways to take care of your brain. WITS WORKOUT has two main goals- to provide purposeful opportunities for older adults to engage intellectually, and to increase their socialization through ongoing group participation. Each unit has four "pen and paper" activities and a training component that features educational topics on memory, brain health or aging. There are 24 themed units/classes, and each class takes approximately 1 hour. The units are all independent of one another and do not require that you complete any of the other classes.

If you would like more information, contact Ray Alexander at the Clinton County Office for the Aging at 518-565-4629. We are also looking for organizations/locations that would like to host our classes. The number of classes may be tailored to meet organizational needs.





2026 TRANSPORTATION NEEDS SURVEY FOR CLINTON COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING



Clinton County Office for the Aging is looking for your assistance in determining the transportation needs for our older adults (ages 60+) in Clinton County. Please complete this short survey with as much information as possible to help determine the service needs in our community. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Where do you live? (Town, village)

What is your age?

Under 60 60-69 70-79 80-89 90-99 100+

Are there activities that you are unable to participate in due to lack of transportation?

Yes No

Which of the following activities do you lack transportation for? Check all that apply.

Grocery Shopping Medical Appointments Hair/Salon
 Banking Visit friends/family Gym/Exercise Class Church
 Community Activities Dining (Restaurant/Nutrition Meal Site)
 Other _____

What specific locations do you need transportation to?

When do you lack transportation? Check all that apply.

Weekday Mornings Weekday Afternoons Weekday Evenings
 Weekend Mornings Weekend Afternoons Weekend Evenings

Do you use a mobility device that requires a handicap accessible vehicle?

Yes No

Please add any additional information regarding transportation needs or suggestions you have to improve mobility for older adults in Clinton County.

Please provide your name, address, and telephone number. (Optional)

Please use the QR code to respond to this survey or return your form to: Clinton County Office for the Aging

Mail: 135 Margaret St, Suite 105 Plattsburgh NY 12901

Fax: (518)565-4812

Email: Raymond.Alexander@clintoncountygov.com

Surveys may also be turned into your Home Delivered Meal Driver or Congregate Site Manager. Thank you for your feedback.

Make Half of your Plate Fruits and Vegetables

Why is it important to eat fruit?

- Most fruits are low in fat, sodium and calories.
- Fruits have many essential nutrients such as potassium, fiber, vitamin C and folate.
 - Diets rich in potassium may help maintain healthy blood pressure. Fruit sources include bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches/apricots, cantaloups, honeydew, orange juice and kiwi.
 - Dietary fiber helps reduce cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. Fruit juices however, have little or no fiber.
 - Vitamin C is important for the growth and repair of all body tissues and helps your body absorb iron more easily.

Why is it important to eat vegetables?

- Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories.
- Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate, vitamin A and vitamin C
 - Vegetable sources of potassium include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products, beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, lentils, kidney beans, acorn squash, kohlrabi and yuca.
 - Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.
 - Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy.

Daily Recommended Intakes: People 60+ years old

Fruits:

Men= 2 cups

Women= 1 ½ - 2 cups

Vegetables:

Men = 2 ½ - 3 ½ cups

Women= 2-3 cups



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you would like to request reasonable accommodations to participate in events, please contact Alexandra Hooker at (518) 481-1532 or by email at alexandra.hooker@franklincountyny.gov

MEALS ON WHEELS
45 Veterans Lane
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
(518) 561-8320

January

This menu is approved by a registered dietitian.
Menu is subject to change.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 CLOSED	
DINE-IN				
SITES				
SENIOR CENTER 518-561-7393	5 Sausage, Peppers, & Onions on a Bun Home Fries Peas Fruit Cocktail	6 Sweet & Sour Chicken w/ Rice California Blend Veggies Wheat Bread Peanut Butter Cookie	7 Marinated Chicken Rosemary Potatoes Capri Blend Veggies Wheat Bread Fruited Jello	8 Roast Beef w/ Gravy Mashed Potatoes Diced Carrots Birthday Cake
BEEKMAN TOWERS 518-561-5360	12 Spanish Rice Peas Whole Wheat Bread	13 Roasted Turkey w/ Gravy Mashed Potatoes Harvest Blend Veggies Pumpkin Pie	14 Chicken Parmesan Casserole Wax Beans Italian Bread Chocolate Pudding	9 Honey Mustard Pork Chop Red Potatoes Peas & Carrots Fresh Fruit
ELLENBURG 518-594-7311	19 CLOSED	20 Macaroni & Cheese Stewed Tomatoes Dinner Roll Mandarin Oranges	21 Turkey Burger on a Bun Oven Browned Potatoes Broccoli & Corn Salad Jello Cake	15 Scalloped Potatoes w/ Ham Spinach Oatmeal Raisin Cookie
DANNEMORA 518-310-9089	26 Baked Fish Red Smashed Potatoes Corn Whole Wheat Bread	27 Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce Tossed Salad Sourdough Bread Sugar Cookie	28 Chicken a la King Rice Spiral Noodles Peas & Carrots Chocolate Cake	22 Meat Loaf w/ Gravy Mashed Potatoes Mixed Veggies Lemon Mousse
LAKEVIEW 518-561-8696			23 BBQ Pork on a Bun Oven Browned Potatoes Creamy Coleslaw Butterscotch Pudding	24 Herb-Baked Pork Chops Roasted Potatoes Green Beans Fresh Fruit
ROUSES POINT 518-534-1852	26 Baked Fish Red Smashed Potatoes Corn Whole Wheat Bread	27 Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce Tossed Salad Sourdough Bread Sugar Cookie	28 Chicken a la King Rice Spiral Noodles Peas & Carrots Chocolate Cake	29 BBQ Pork on a Bun Oven Browned Potatoes Creamy Coleslaw Butterscotch Pudding
			30 Broccoli & Cheese Quiche Sliced Carrots Blueberry Muffin Fresh Fruit	



Funded by Clinton County Office for the Aging
and New York State Office for the Aging.

Senior Citizens Council of Clinton County, Inc. Nutrition Program



January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

Glaucoma is a leading cause of vision loss and blindness in the United States. But as many as half of people with glaucoma don't know they have it.

Glaucoma has no early symptoms. The only way to check for it is to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam. There's no cure for glaucoma, but starting treatment as early as possible can help stop vision loss. Anyone can get glaucoma, but some people are at higher risk, including people who:

- Are over age 60
- Are Black/African American and over age 40
- Are Asian American
- Are Hispanic/Latino
- Have a family history of glaucoma

This Glaucoma Awareness Month, join our National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) in encouraging everyone at higher risk for glaucoma to get a dilated eye exam. It's the best way to protect their vision!

DID YOU KNOW THAT GLAUCOMA IS CALLED “THE SNEAK THIEF OF SIGHT” AND IS A COMMON CAUSE OF BLINDNESS?

SINCE THERE ARE OFTEN NO SYMPTOMS, IT CAN ONLY BE DETECTED BY A DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY DURING AN EYE EXAMINATION. FIND A DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY NEAR YOU AT AOA.ORG.



AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

AOA.ORG

3.36 MILLION
AROUND 3.36 MILLION PEOPLE
IN THE U.S. HAVE GLAUCOMA



6 TO 8 TIMES
AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE SIX
TO EIGHT TIMES AT HIGHER
RISK FOR GLAUCOMA.



3RD MOST
GLAUCOMA IS THE 3RD MOST
COMMON CAUSE OF BLINDNESS
IN THE UNITED STATES



Valentine's for Older Adults

Valentine's Day will be here soon!

We have many isolated older adults who would LOVE to receive a Valentine's Day card. If you or your children would like to send a friend a card, please send them or drop them off (unsealed) to the address below by February 6th. Our staff will distributed them in time for Valentine's Day to older adults in the community.

Thanks for helping us spread some joy!



Send or Drop Off Valentine Cards to:

Clinton County Office for the Aging

135 Margaret St, Suite 105

Plattsburgh, NY 12901



Clinton County Office for the Aging

135 Margaret St, Suite 105

Plattsburgh, NY 12901

The Clinton County Office for the Aging assists people and caregivers to empower and sustain their independence and to advocate for themselves by developing a continuum of opportunity, support and care.