



AGE FRIENDLY
ITHACA & TOMPKINS COUNTY

Age-Friendly Programs in Tompkins County



A REPORT COMPILED BY SERENA STERN, BEST PRACTICE SPECIALIST
MARCH 2021

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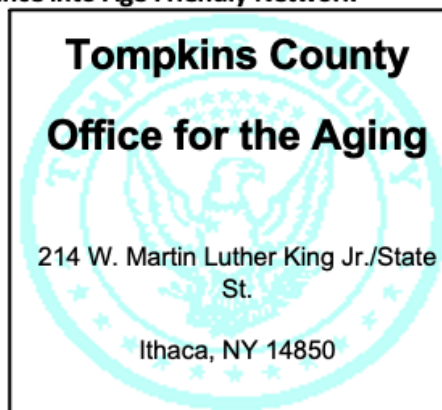
1. What is an Age-Friendly community?

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is an affiliate of the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program, an international effort launched in 2006 [to help cities prepare for rapid population aging](#). The program has participating communities in more than 20 nations, as well as 10 affiliates representing more than 1,000 communities (Mid-year report, TCAFCFE, September 2020).

Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca were accepted into AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities in May 2015. The following release from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging outlines the wide perspective of the project.

March 2015

Acceptance into Age Friendly Network



TO: ALL MEDIA

FROM: TOMPKINS COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING

CONTACT: LISA HOLMES, DIRECTOR, 274-5482

RE: ACCEPTANCE INTO "AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES" NETWORK

DATE: MAY 14, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca have been accepted into AARP's network of Age-Friendly Communities. An international effort of the World Health Organization, the Age-Friendly Community network includes localities where leadership and residents have committed to making their community a great place to live for people of all ages. The announcement was made at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging's 40th Annual Luncheon May 14.

"It's no wonder that Ithaca and Tompkins County is consistently voted one of the smartest and best places to live—with its gorges and institutes of higher education. Now, the City and County are committing to making their community friendlier to an aging population, the largest growing demographic in that area," said William Armbruster, Associate State Director for AARP in western New York. "Today, AARP applauds the addition of one of New York State's most beautiful and progressive areas to AARP's Network of Age-Friendly communities."

"Tompkins County is home to over 16,000 people age 60 and over, and that number will increase dramatically over the coming two decades," said Office for the Aging Director Lisa Holmes. "The Age-Friendly Community initiative will help to further many efforts which are already underway to plan and prepare for our aging population in Tompkins County, and to engage local residents in the process. And we know that changes that are good for older adults—like walkable streets—benefit people of all ages."

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging will lead the local Age-Friendly Community efforts, together with many community partners, including the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, municipal leaders, and human service organizations. "This will provide the opportunity to leverage the unique strengths of students, faculty and staff from Ithaca College and Cornell to make our community a place where people can age with dignity and support," said Ithaca College Gerontology Institute Director Dr. Rhoda Meador, co-founder of this initiative.

In March, the Tompkins County Legislature adopted a resolution supporting the County's participation in the global Age-Friendly network. Mike Lane, Chair of the Legislature, expressed his support of the initiative: "The 65+ population is Tompkins County's fastest growing demographic. By becoming part of the Age-Friendly Community network, Tompkins County is demonstrating its commitment to promoting policies to make our community friendly to an aging population."

The City of Ithaca is another municipality participating in the Age-Friendly network. "Ithaca has been named one of the top cities to live and we are proud of that," said Svante Myrick, Mayor of the City of Ithaca. "More importantly, we are proud to be a diverse community that addresses the needs of our population. Through the Age-Friendly initiative we look forward to continually improve our City so all citizens can age with dignity."

The involvement of older adults in every step of the planning process is key to its success. Community members interested in becoming involved in the Age-Friendly Communities Program should contact the Office for the Aging for more information at 274-5482.

2. What is the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence?

The team at the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence is working to give older and younger people in Tompkins County a community that supports their needs and lets them thrive.

The primary goal of the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence (TCAFCFE) is healthy aging, which means transforming the social and physical environment to support health and well-being for community members across the lifespan. This goal is achieved through cross-disciplinary organizational partnerships and stakeholder input.

The TCAFCFE works directly with County agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions and private partners to advance systems change and solutions at the county level, and to share best practices state-wide.

The TCAFCFE is one of five regional Centers in New York State funded to support the NYS Health Across All Policies Initiative by promoting Age-Friendly, NYS Prevention Agenda and Smart Growth principles.

- *Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence
Statement of Purpose*

Best Practices: Our Community's Best

Sharing our community's successes is a key element of the work going on through the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence.

In this case, teams from more than twenty local initiatives and organizations have shared the ways they help residents of this community thrive and age well.

Their stories are told in the coming pages.



With three institutions of higher education, natural wonders, and small businesses of all types, Tompkins County is uniquely set up to host a population of all ages, abilities, and identities, which can make it difficult to meet the needs of everyone.

But that same barrier that makes it difficult to excel in all areas also proves fruitful when finding gems from organizations and leaders who work tirelessly to make Tompkins County a safe place for older adults and children to flourish.

The team at the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence has put the call out to all corners of our region to better understand and catalog these elements of our community that make this area uniquely safe, accessible, and vibrant.

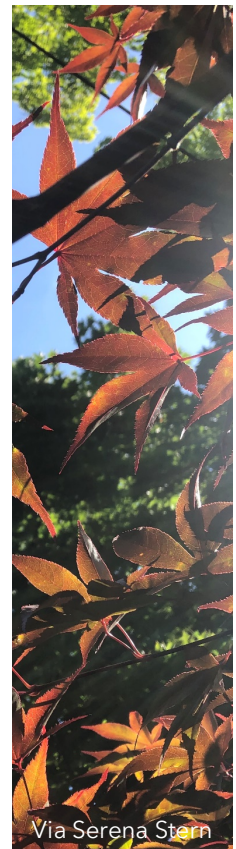
When tackling the challenge of cataloging our community's best practices, the team at the TCAFCFE has worked to extend their reach and collect examples of age-friendly organizations, events, and procedures across all seven of the domains outlined in their action plan.

The team collected geographically diverse best practices to exhibit the breadth of support for older and younger residents of our area and to share our success with other communities across New York state who hope to become even more Age-Friendly.

Once they were edited, these entries became pieces of a puzzle, slowly highlighting connections and partnerships that formed a web of support for older adults and children in our community.

Tompkins County, in particular, excels at coordinating partnerships across all domains to promote the health and wellbeing of our older and younger people, as evidenced by the breadth and depth of these example cases of best practices.

Overall, the project proved successful and further outreach projects are on the horizon for highlighting these gems to our own communities. Thank you all for your support of the best parts of our community.



3. Community Programs

Our Community

The community members who make these programs possible have been invaluable to this work, and we would like to thank them for their time and energy.

As Tompkins continues to grow more age-friendly, these teams will be recognized for their early dedication to serving residents of all ages and helping them thrive in our community.

Many of their contributions to this community are highlighted in the coming pages. They are organized on the following pages by the domain under which their work falls.

Transportation

Way2Go
Gadabout

Housing

Finger Lakes Independence
Center Temporary Ramp
Program
Ithaca Neighborhood Housing
Services Home Improvement
Programs

Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

McGraw House Roof Deck Garden
Friends of Stewart Park Accessible Playground Project
Ithaca Children’s Garden



Employment and Civic Engagement

Next Chapter Resources: Life After 50

Wonderful Wheelchairs

Tompkins County Chapter of StateWide Senior Action Council

Information and Communication

NY Connects Disability & Elder Law Fair Series

Tompkins County Office for the Aging Local Resource Guides

Senior Living Expo

Culture of Respect and Social Inclusion

Love Living at Home

Greater Ithaca Activity Center Senior Program

Lifelong

Community Support & Health Services

Cancer Resource Center


Slaterville Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

Home and Personal Aide Celebration

Planetree Person-Centered Care Certification
for Cayuga Medical Center



Our Community: Highlights



Transportation Gadabout

What is Gadabout?

Formed in 1976, Gadabout began as a grassroots effort by community organizers who were concerned about the lack of transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities in the Tompkins County community.

Today, Gadabout has a fleet of 26 lift-equipped vehicles that are operated by 14 staff drivers, and a pool of 5 volunteer drivers. In one year, volunteer drivers can account for over \$68,000 in donated services.

Gadabout partners with Tompkins County, Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit and the United Way to provide service to as many residents as possible all around the county.



How does the program work?

Anyone over fifty-five years old in Tompkins County or anyone with a disability that cannot get to, board, or ride the bus is eligible to use Gadabout's services. They have worked to expand the corridor for ADA service to include more people who need support, especially to best serve the County's older residents who may not live near town centers.

From the Source: Kristen Wells, Director

"Tompkins really did a great job with becoming compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The County was really ahead of the game with partnering with Gadabout to fulfill those requirements."

For more information

Kristen Wells, Director: kw1@tcatmail.com

Phone: (607) 273-1878

Website: gadaboutbus.org/

Transportation Way2Go

What is Way2Go?

According to their website, “Way2Go operates as Tompkins County’s transportation information and learning hub that connects riders with transportation options and facilitates new community solutions.” Their vision “is for all people and communities to have the transportation they need to thrive.”

The program was born out of a local need from the Tompkins County Department of Social Services and has historically and continually focused on providing information and education on accessible and useful solutions for populations with the most need, which includes youth and older adults.

“Through its broad range of programming, Way2Go educates individuals, decision makers, and organizations about mobility challenges and solutions in Tompkins County and beyond, to bring about the changes necessary for a transportation system that works for all.”

Fun Fact: According to Team Leader Dawn Montanye, no other New York State Cooperative Extension has a transportation program, making Way2Go a fairly unique initiative!

What kind of work do they do for the community?

Ways they support youth:

One major partnership includes the Ithaca City School District, which now hosts “transportation solutions” on its website, offering a hub where students and their families can get information on accessing free public bus passes and learn more about transportation options that allow youth in the community to participate in afterschool activities.

Ways they support older adults:

Way2Go helps educate the community on older adult driving safety. They collaborate on workshops regarding the “fit” of a vehicle for its driver (in partnership with CarFit and Cayuga Medical Center). They also organize semiannual AARP-sponsored Smart Driver courses. Finally, they produce educational and useful content including videos, checklists, and infographics regarding the issues surrounding driving safety for older adults.

From the Source: Dawn Montanye, Team Leader

“Transport access is often the elephant in the room. Way2Go’s work directly challenges barriers through education and problem solving.”

For more information

Dawn Montanye, Team Leader: dm773@cornell.edu

Phone: (607) 272-2292, voicemail #199

Website: cctompkins.org/community/way2go

Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS) Home Improvement Programs

What are these programs?

INHS is dedicated to helping people of modest incomes find—and stay in—quality housing throughout central New York. INHS accomplishes this by providing low-interest loans to first-time home buyers, managing well-maintained rental units, rehabbing old homes, providing home-repair assistance to seniors and persons of any age with disabilities, building new LEED-certified green buildings, and more.

How do these programs work?

INHS offers homeowners affordable, low-interest, no-interest, and potentially forgivable loans for home repairs and accessibility modifications. The INHS Construction Services department currently works in Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Tompkins and Chemung Counties. Funding availability varies from year to year and is awarded on a first-eligible, first-serve basis.

Health, safety and weatherization are top priorities for the Minor Home Repair program for seniors. Typical repairs include fixing or replacing deteriorated steps, improving lighting, alleviating trip hazards, adding handrails and grab bars, fixing leaky faucets, replacing broken windows, and installing wheelchair ramps and walk-in showers.

The Major Home Repair program also focuses on health, safety and weatherization; however, these homes are typically in need of a much higher level of rehabilitation. Major home repair projects may include installation of new windows and doors, repairs to foundations and roofs, furnace and hot water heater replacement, repairs or replacement of decks, porches, and stairs, interior and exterior painting, installation of new flooring, bathroom modifications, accessibility accommodations, wheelchair ramps, plumbing, electrical, wells and septic systems.

For more information

Lorelee Morrow, Director of Construction Services: lmorrow@ithacanhs.org

Phone: (607) 277-4500 x223

Website: ithacanhs.org/



Finger Lakes Independence Center Temporary Ramp Program

What is the Temporary Ramp Program?

The Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) works to empower all people with disabilities while creating an inclusive society through the elimination of social and architectural barriers.

Sometimes people acquire a disability unexpectedly through illness or accident and getting in or out of their house can be a major obstacle. A temporary ramp can be a great solution. People with permanent disabilities are also eligible for the program. People who own or rent homes or mobile homes are eligible.

People of moderate and low income in Tompkins County are eligible to apply for the ramps.

How does the program work?

FLIC employs a part-time ramp installer who visits each home for an initial assessment. Because of ADA requirements for the slope of the ramp, not all homes have enough space to install a ramp. However, in areas where there is enough room, the ramps install easily and are very sturdy and weather resistant. On average, an installation takes one to three days. When the client no longer needs a ramp, FLIC will come and deconstruct the ramp so that another household can use it.

For more information

Brian Yonkin, Ramp Specialist at FLIC:

brian@fliconline.org

Main phone: (607) 272-2433

Website: fliconline.org/FLIC/



Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

McGraw House Roof Deck Garden

What is the McGraw House Garden?

McGraw House is a six-story apartment complex with 105 apartments for income-eligible Senior Citizens, 62 years of age and older. McGraw House features a hidden gem on its roof top where residents can garden, socialize, and enjoy the stunning views of Ithaca and the surrounding hillsides.

The roof deck garden area provides a source of pride and joy for the residents of McGraw House, and an inspiration to all who visit.

Gardening has both physical and mental benefits for our residents. It provides good exercise, strengthens muscles, improves the immune system, and greatly reduces stress and anxiety.



The space, which also includes tables, chairs, and glider swings, provides a beautiful space for our residents to gather to socialize with each other, and with family and friends. Each day, people can be found sitting together, sipping on coffee, watching others garden, laughing, and sharing stories. The roof deck gardens facilitate a true space of peace and happiness.

For more information

Viki McDonald, Executive Director:

viki@mcgrawhouse.org

Main phone: (607) 272-7054

Website: mcgrawhouse.org/



Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

Friends of Stewart Park Accessible Playground Project

What is the Accessible Playground?

The new playground at Stewart Park in the city of Ithaca is a highly-accessible playground. As part of a Stewart Park Revitalization Plan funded for tourism purposes, a playground upgrade came up as a main goal, and accessibility quickly became the grounding element of the project.

Fun fact: Physical and occupational therapists from the Racker Center are often out walking and exercising with their clients in a beautiful setting near a play structure and community gathering spot at the playground!



In addition to adding benefit for locals, the playground is also an accessibility attraction, bringing attention from a distance as an aspect of an accessible, engaging trip. The long-term goals are to continue creating more universal accessibility all over the park, leading to a more holistic trip plan for all people, especially children with disabilities and their caregivers.

How does the Accessible Playground work?

Features of the playground as it stands (post- Phase II) include:

- accessible rubber safety surfacing
- covered swings
- boulder net climber
- natural sand play area
- accessible pathway to the Cayuga Lake overlook
- accessible carousel in summer
- accessible improvements to parking and pathways
- wide aisles and low step-ups
- preschool area with play structures referencing Stewart Park history



Specifically, the accessible walk to the summit of playground serves several purposes, as children, caregivers, and older adults who want to accompany their group to one of the flattest, most accessible natural areas in the community are able to do so.

For more information

Rick Manning, Friends of Stewart Park: info@friendsofstewartpark.org

Main phone: (607) 319-4766

Website: friendsofstewartpark.org/

Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG)

What is the Ithaca Children's Garden?

Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG) is a unique 3-acre public garden in the City of Ithaca, that is free and open to all every day of the year. ICG, a nonprofit organization dedicated to equitable access to nature, operates with generous community support. ICG employs staff, works closely with community partners, and relies on volunteers to run events, camps and programs, field trips, a preschool program, teen employment program, professional development, and more.

According to their website, "Ithaca Children's Garden is an award-winning, 3-acre public children's garden designed for kids, enjoyed by all, and driven by a mission to connect children to nature to create a more beautiful, resilient and just world. More than 500 community youth contributed ideas for the conceptual design, and countless youth have been involved in shaping its continued growth."

From the Source: Erin Marteau, Executive Director

"From the beginning of ICG's existence, more than 20 years ago, ICG has been working to help children connect to nature. Our unique collaborations and partnerships - and approaching our work with an innovative spirit - have helped us strengthen our reach and impact over time, yet there is still a great deal of work to do so that nature's benefits are truly available to all children."



By the Numbers

- *ICG reaches about **8,000+ people** annually through direct programming.
- *The organization hosts approximately **400 volunteers each year**.
- *The garden receives **70,000+ casual visitors** per year.
- *An estimated **25% of program users and visitors** are from outside the county.

For more information

info@ithacachildrengarden.org

Main phone: (607) 319-4203

Website: ithacachildrengarden.org/

Employment and Civic Engagement

Next Chapter Resources: Life After 50


What is the Next Chapter resource?

The Next Chapter: Life after 50 site is a landing-page style resource directory meant to help local adults around the ages of 50-60 years old begin planning for retirement and organizing their lives around the aging process regarding the categories of “Health & Longevity,” “Rightsizing Home & Finances,” “Learning & Connection,” and “Family & Caregiving.”

The site is hosted by the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute with a local focus on resources relevant to Tomkins County residents interested in beginning their research into the aforementioned categories.


The Next Chapter: Life after 50 site was organized by a subgroup of the Long-Term Care Committee of the Health Planning Council of the Human Services Coalition. The site is a collaborative effort between staff of the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, the Human Services Coalition, and several other local organizations and universities.

HEALTH AND HOME



Health & Longevity


Explore compelling articles to support good health or to learn the secrets of blue zones, where longevity is the highest



Rightsizing Home & Finances


Research retirement options that align with your goals from living more simply to planning for your ideal lifestyle

PEOPLE AND PURPOSE



Learning & Connection

Discover ideas for living with passion and purpose from lifelong learning, recreation, and travel to volunteering



Family & Caregiving

Find thoughtful articles and resources to support family dynamics or your new or continuing role as a caregiver to a loved one

For more information

Explore The Site: www.ithaca.edu/gerontology-institute/next-chapter-resources-life-after-50

Employment and Civic Engagement

Wonderful Wheelchairs

What is Wonderful Wheelchairs?

Wonderful Wheelchairs is a volunteer based, non-profit organization that seeks to help members of the community gain access to mobility equipment and thus their communities. They are a program of Lifelong. Their services can be beneficial to individuals in the community that may be struggling with insurance coverage, are under insured, experiencing economic hardship or are dealing with an unexpected injury.

They accept donations of unneeded, or unused manual and power wheelchairs and walkers, and their staff of volunteers (consisting of retired engineers, occupational therapists, electricians and more) work to refurbish, clean, restore and fix up those donations to working and useable chairs.

Wonderful Wheelchairs then provides the equipment at a reduced cost and make repairs and adjustments to individual's existing wheelchairs and walkers.

Details

On average, their charge for manual chairs is approximately from \$50-100, power chairs from about \$200-\$400, and walkers vary from no cost to \$25.

Partnerships within the community

According to the team, they also make available for trial different types of equipment that seniors commonly ask for so they can try the device before they buy it. For example, with the help of Sustainable Tompkins, they purchased a Go-Go foldup scooter for trial. Thanks to the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence, they also have a Grit Freedom All Terrain Chair for trial. This manual, all-terrain wheelchair is built for every type of adventure. Developed by MIT engineers, this easy-to-push, lever-driven wheelchair comes armed with rugged mountain bike wheels, a big, sturdy front wheel that doesn't get stuck, and optional trail handles.



For more information

Website for the Program and Contact Information: tclifelong.org/wonderful-wheelchairs/
Lifelong main phone: (607) 273-1511

Employment and Civic Engagement

Tompkins County Chapter of StateWide Senior Action Council

What is StateWide?

The Tompkins County chapter of StateWide Senior Action Council provides education on issues relating to seniors and advocates on those issues in meetings with legislators.

According to member Wil Lawrence, the organization discusses things at the local level and then bring them forward to a wider audience that includes diverse people from all across the state. Some examples of topics of interest include scams, Medicare, and the NY Health Act and other actions that are advancing single payer systems for New York State.

Additionally, the group encourages individuals to share personal stories about their life as a senior, including experiences with health care services, senior living, and more. Members advocate for each other within elements of life that are difficult for seniors to navigate, creating a social bond on top of an existing collective goal for advocacy and change.

The group also partners with local organizations to further their mission, including when bringing the chapter's message to more counties through presentations that provide more information on issues affecting older adults in the region.

Fun fact

Once per year, the group heads to Albany together to meet with local legislators. Lawrence is clear that the trip to Albany is one that can feel out of the comfort zone of many seniors but that is incredibly educational, engaging, and empowering. Members who have experience talking to lawmakers help to mentor those with no experience by smoothing out logistics and offering ideas of what to say while leaving flexibility to the individual to say what matters to them. Altogether, Lawrence calls it a “phenomenal” experience for seniors interested in advocating for their community and carving out space to be heard.

For more information

Wil Lawrence: wilma_lawrence@yahoo.com

Parent Organization Website: nysenior.org/

From the Source: Wil Lawrence, Member
“Once you become educated about the issues, it makes it easier for you to provide facts: first you start with what the legislation is, then how to talk to legislators, and, in the end, you end up being their education. You get educated and then end up being the educator in the process.”

Culture of Respect and Social Inclusion

GIAC Senior Program

What is GIAC?

According to their website, GIAC is “a center for all ages” that serves “the immediate neighborhood and the greater Ithaca area by providing multicultural, educational, and recreational programs focused on social and individual development.”

The very first element of their mission statement emphasizes “all ages”. This age-friendly value reaches all levels of the work going on throughout GIAC, especially within their Senior program.

How does the program work?

This outings and social program is for any adult over 60 years of age. The general cost is \$55/year for a membership, with fees waived for those over 90 years old. No one will be turned away because of an inability to pay. Some events include performances by musicians and speakers, visits by university groups, theatre trips, and meals together. Transportation is provided.

By the numbers

**Anyone 60+ can join*

**150 current members*

**\$55/year, with no one turned away because they cannot pay*

**8-10 events per month, including recurring ones, like:*

*Arts and Crafts group, Exercise group,
Monthly celebratory meals, and Tai Chi.*



From the Source: Zack Nelson, Program Coordinator

“The Senior Program is primarily an outing program for senior citizens in our community. Once a month, members receive a calendar of activities and outings to choose from. They can choose to attend as many or as few as they like. One of the unique features of the program is that transportation is available to and from all of the events on the schedule—whether they take place at GIAC, somewhere in Ithaca, or out of town.” No more wintertime and nighttime driving just to stay engaged and have fun!

For more information

Zack Nelson, Program Coordinator: ZNelson@cityofithaca.org

Phone: (607) 272-3622, ext. 2233

Check out their website: cityofithaca.org/338/Adult-Program

Culture of Respect and Social Inclusion

Love Living at Home

What is Love Living at Home?

According to their team, Love Living at Home (LLH) is a nonprofit organization governed by community volunteers and launched in 2016. They provide services, activities, and programs for their members, helping them continue living safely, confidently and independently in their homes. LLH is a member of the national Village-to-Village Network and is modeled on the village concept started in 2001 in Boston, Massachusetts.



“Membership is not just for that time when you need assistance. Programs and social activities comprise the majority of the membership benefit. Some members join as a form of insurance against the day when they will have needs. Many members join because they value being part of a mutually supportive community. Some members may also choose to volunteer, discovering new contacts in their neighborhoods and beyond. Still, other members join in developing new social connections.”

An exciting calendar of programs includes social meetups around activities, which help reduce isolation and loneliness. Also, services for members include transportation, home maintenance, and references to neighbor-suggested providers for medical, home, other various services.



Details

Any person over 62 years old in Tompkins County is eligible for LLH membership. According to Director Cheryl Jewell, there are currently about 180 members.

LLH has always offered scholarships for people who cannot afford the membership, but they also received a grant from the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York to assist memberships for people who cannot afford the membership.

For more information

Cheryl Jewell, Executive Director: ExecutiveDirector@lovelivingathome.org

Phone: (607) 319-0162

Website: lovelivingathome.org/

Culture of Respect and Social Inclusion

Lifelong

What is Lifelong?

The mission of Lifelong is to enhance the lives of older adults in Tompkins County, and they have been running community programs for over 60 years. Through partnerships and memberships, they provide wellness, social, educational, and advocacy programs for older adults age 50 and older.

Lifelong keeps the community informed through a weekly e-newsletter, a quarterly publication called Senior Circle, and postings on their website.

Over four hundred volunteers are involved with Lifelong, and they represent over fifty local not-for-profits. Lifelong's *Volunteers, Connected* program helps link seniors with volunteer opportunities throughout Tompkins County, keeping seniors engaged in the community and helping nonprofits secure volunteer support.

Two of Lifelong's cornerstone programs are HIICAP (Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program) and TCE (Tax Counseling for the Elderly). Certified HIICAP counselors offer free health insurance counseling for Medicare-eligible individuals, provide outreach and presentations on "Medicare Basics," and respond to cost, coverage and enrollment questions. The TCE program provides free tax preparation from IRS-certified volunteer preparers for individuals age 60 or older, as well as for all individuals with a disability, and for individuals of any age who meet income eligibility guidelines for the program.

Details

Any person age fifty or older is eligible for Lifelong membership, and scholarship funds are available. Currently, there are about a thousand Lifelong members whose membership benefits include access to creative and language arts, health and wellness, and learning opportunities, as well as discounts to local events and services.

For more information

Email: lifelong@tclifelong.org

Phone: (607) 273-1511

Website: tclifelong.org/



Information and Communication

Local Resource Guides: Tompkins County

Office for the Aging (COFA)

What are the guides?

The resource guides were created to have something that was easily accessible and contained all of the important information and contacts related to Long Term Care services in our County. Caregiver Supports, Long Term Care, and Housing are some of the broader issues that the Office for the Aging handles. They often mail these guides to individuals and caregivers who are both local and those who live out of the area. The guides are updated annually with input from the community agencies as well as staff at COFA. Throughout the year, staff will keep track of new services or organizations that should be added to the guides at the annual update. The new guides are “unveiled” each Spring at the Senior Living Expo.

For more information

Caryn Bullis, COFA: cbullis@tompkins-co.org

Lisa Monroe, COFA: lmonroe@tompkins-co.org

Phone: (607) 274-5482

Falls Prevention Resource Guide

<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/cofa/Falls%20Prevention%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

Housing for Seniors in Tompkins County Guidebook

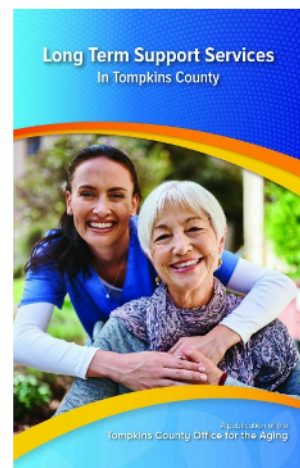
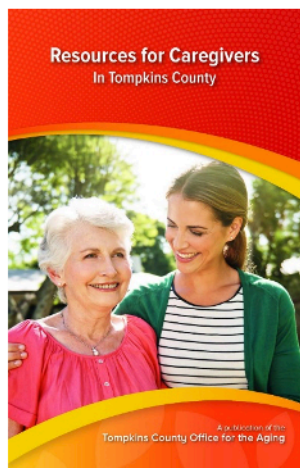
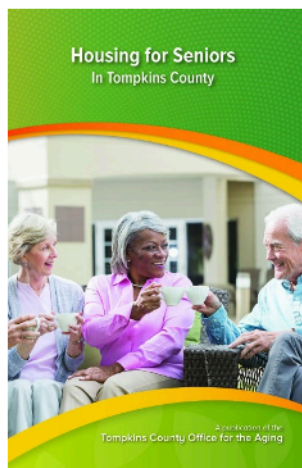
<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/cofa/Housing%20for%20Seniors%20Guide.pdf>

Long-Term Support Services in Tompkins County

<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/cofa/Long%20Term%20Support%20Services%20Guide.pdf>

Resources for Caregivers in Tompkins County

<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/cofa/Resources%20for%20Caregivers%20Guide.pdf>



Information and Communication

NY Connects Disability & Elder Law Fair Series

What is the series?

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the Finger Lakes Independence Center partnered in August 2019 to host the first Disability and Elder Law Fair at Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). The half-day event featured 21 presentations on financial and legal topics of interest to people with disabilities and older people. The Fair also included approximately 25 organizations who tabled throughout the event. Some examples of topics that were covered include Planning for Long Term Care and Understanding Credit Reports.

In 2020, due to the covid-19 pandemic, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the Finger Lakes Independence Center decided to try a virtual series. The first three sessions— Basic Estate Planning, SSI/SSD Work Incentives, and Pooled Trusts— were very well attended. The presentations were set up via Zoom and ranged in time from 1 to 2 hours.

Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the Finger Lakes Independence Center are County partners in the statewide NY Connects information and referral system. NY Connects provides free and unbiased information for people of all ages seeking long-term care services.

For more information

Caryn Bullis, NY Connects, Tompkins County Office for the Aging: cbullis@tompkins-co.org

Lisa Monroe, Tompkins County Office for the Aging: lmonroe@tompkins-co.org

Teri Reinemann, NY Connects, Finger Lakes Independence Center: teri@fliconline.org



Information and Communication

Senior Living Expo

What is the expo?

The Senior Living Expo is an annual event held each Spring that convenes over 30 vendors who provide services to older adults. In addition to the vendors, presentations are offered on relevant topics. Attendees are invited to walk the room and speak with various service providers.

The Expo includes vendors who represent an array of services: from Foodnet Meals on Wheels, to housing options, to in home assistance. Along with these vendors, there are speakers who provide short presentations on specific topics of relevance. In 2019, they incorporated a fall prevention screen that attendees could participate in in coordination with Cayuga Medical Center.

For more information

Caryn Bullis, Tompkins County Office for the Aging: cbullis@tompkins-co.org

Lisa Monroe, Tompkins County Office for the Aging: lmonroe@tompkins-co.org

A flyer for the Senior Living Expo 2020. The background features a photograph of three smiling elderly people. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image. The title 'SENIOR LIVING EXPO 2020' is in large, bold, orange letters. Below it, the subtitle 'Working Towards an Age-Friendly Community' is in a smaller, italicized font. The date and time 'Saturday, March 28th, 10-1 p.m.' are in large, bold, orange letters. A list of bullet points follows, each starting with a right-pointing triangle. The first bullet point is 'Clarion Inn (Formerly Ramada Inn) 2310 N Triphammer Rd., Ithaca NY'. The second is 'Free event with over 30 exhibitors'. The third is 'Stay Steady Fall Risk Screening' with sub-points: 'Brief Balance and Mobility tests with CMC and IC Physical Therapy' and 'Medication review with a pharmacist'. The fourth is 'Presentations' with two sub-points: 'How to Recognize and Avoid Frauds and Scams' by Michael Danaher, Acting Assistant Attorney General-in-Charge, and 'Community Supports for Aging in Place' by Lisa Monroe, Director Tompkins County Office for the Aging. At the bottom left, it says 'Sponsored by Ithaca College Gerontology Institute & Tompkins County Office for the Aging', 'Info: 607-274-1607 or 607-274-5450', and 'Visit ithaca.edu/gerontology-institute/news-and-events-for-details'. At the bottom right is the Ithaca College logo and name, including 'School of Humanities and Sciences' and 'Gerontology Institute'.

Community Support & Health Services Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (CRCFL)

What is the CRCFL?

The mission of the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes is to create and sustain a community of support for people living with and affected by cancer. They have an office in downtown Ithaca to coordinate and access resources and support for the community.

What kinds of programs do they offer?

CRCFL offers many free services, including support groups, peer to peer and 1:1 support, wellness classes, wig and head covering boutique, mastectomy bras, travel assistance, and financial advocacy.

The community also knows CRCFL for their creative and diverse events, and fundraisers, including their annual Walkathon & 5K Run.

CRCFL supports clients and families affected by cancer at every age. The team understands the diversity of needs and interventions by age group, and peer-to-peer and different support groups have been a valuable way for clients of any age and background to meet others with their same concerns and questions and to form relationships.

Community partnerships of interest

- *Cornell University community partnership* which engages community members and Cornell cancer researchers (blogs.cornell.edu/cancercommunitypartnership/)
- *Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) partnership* providing volunteer support in the chemotherapy and radiation suites at CMC, along with collaborative support for financial advocacy, free wig boutique, education and resources, and wellness programming for community members affected by cancer.

For more information

Email: info@crcfl.net

Phone: (607) 277-0960

Website: crcfl.net/



Community Support & Health Services Slaterville Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

What is the Slaterville Fire Company?

The company supports public safety in terms of fire protection, fire suppression, fire prevention and education. They also...

- Provide fire prevention education to the Caroline Elementary School
- Partner with Mutual Aid Tompkins County to host mini-food pantry on-site
- Offer CPR classes and first aid classes to various organizations and assisting with setting up AED programs, such as the Brooktondale Baptist Church, the Caroline Church, the public, Brooktondale Community Center Camp counselors, Tompkins County Search & Rescue Team
- Sponsor the Tompkins County Search & Rescue Team and partners with them in public education on wilderness survival
- Provide preparedness information to the public through various methods; provide emergency operations facilities to the Town of Caroline as needed
- Provide space to any community organization hosting community activities

From the Source: Beth Harrington, President

“I believe that fire departments that have become underutilized now have an opportunity to seek partnerships with community-based organizations that they have previously not interacted with, to the benefit of their community. Fire departments have facilities that could be utilized for community events and volunteer members who generally have many diverse skills. They could function as change leaders in and supporters of age-friendly communities by partnering with organizations that already have missions to address the domains that characterize an age friendly community.”

For more information

Beth Harrington, President: bharrin1@twcny.rr.com

Phone: (607) 539-7193

Address: 2681 Slaterville Road – PO Box 190
Slaterville, New York 14881



Community Support & Health Services

Planetree Person-Centered Care Certification for Cayuga Medical Center (CMC)

What is the certification?

Person-centered care focuses first and foremost on the needs and humanness of patients, their caregivers, and health staff. According to Planetree International, “Planetree provides healthcare organizations...with a plan, a process, the construct for caring needed to join the vanguard of the person-centered excellence revolution. All of these steps lay a pathway to Certification — a mark of achievement, of quality, of commitment to patients, family, and the community.” (Learn more at planetree.org/certification/planetree-certification/)

Why does it matter?

The certification highlights CMC’s commitment to supporting every patient at CMC. When practices are designed with the patient’s needs in mind, person-centered care can flourish. With staff trained in compassion and attentive care, there can be reduced isolation and nervousness when someone has to come to the hospital.

There are many examples as to how Planetree has helped CMC to make the hospital a safer, more comfortable place for older adults and their caregivers to receive care. One example includes plans to change discharge procedures, leading to less confusion for patients and their loved ones once they get home about how to begin with follow up appointments and medications. This work is being spearheaded by the Patient Family Advisory Council made up of community members and hospital staff.

Another example includes the Care Partner program, which Director of Customer and Patient Relations Jacki Barr says “allow[s] family and friends to learn side by side with the patient to enhance support from hospital to home, trained by staff with compassion, promoting preparation and confidence in care.”

For more information

Jacki Barr, Director of Customer and Patient Relations
at CMC: jbarr@cayugamed.org
Phone: (607) 274-4624
More about Planetree: planetree.org/certification/about-planetree/



A Member of Cayuga Health System

Age-Friendly Services in Tompkins County



Via Planetree International

Community Support & Health Services Home and Personal Aide Celebration

What is the event?

Home Health and Personal Care Aides in Tompkins County and the Region are in high demand, especially with an increase in our older population, sixty-five and higher, but they are also in short supply, especially as the population of younger workers has shrunk. And yet, these frontline health care workers are critical to care plans for our aging relatives or someone recovering from an illness. They keep loved ones living independently and at home.

November is designated as Home Care Month and the Long Term Care Committee of Tompkins County/Health Planning Council and Visiting Nurse Service (VNS) in collaboration with local home care providers, Office for the Aging, and other community-based organizations host a recognition celebration for personal and home health care aides. Preparation begins at least three months prior to the November event and includes locating space, identifying funding sources, and soliciting door prizes and donations from local businesses. In addition, the planning group members request proclamations from the City, County and area elected officials.

Beyond recognition, the second purpose of the event is to provide a training opportunity for aides to earn continuing education credits. So, the celebration events often revolve around a specific theme. For example, in 2019, the event focused on nutrition and included an educational presentation on “Fill Your Plate” to improve the nutritional and health literacy of aides. Trained instructors from Visiting Nurse Service presented, and aides received laminated placements for themselves and a few of their patients that provide nutritional tips. They learned valuable tips about designing meals that incorporate a rainbow of nutritional foods, which they can incorporate into their work with patients.

Another year’s event featured a presentation on the use of art and music to connect with patients, who have dementia or other cognitive issues, with examples of how to incorporate art and music in their work with patients.

The event’s third purpose is related to aides’ expressed desire to have the opportunity to network with other aides.

For more information

Human Services Coalition: (607) 273-8686



Meet the Team

The Age-Friendly Center for Excellence Steering Committee

Lisa Monroe, Director, Office for the Aging

Caryn Bullis, Deputy Director, Office for the Aging

Esther Greenhouse, Built Environment Strategist

Teri Reinemann, NY Connects Coordinator, Finger Lakes Independence Center

Mildred Warner, Professor, Cornell City and Regional Planning

Xue Zhang, Postdoc Associate, Cornell City and Regional Planning

Lynn Gitlow, Professor, Ithaca College Occupational Therapy

Karen Brown, Programs Manager, Ithaca College Gerontology Institute

Elizabeth Bergman, Professor, Ithaca College Gerontology Institute

Beth Harrington, Town of Caroline

Wilma Lawrence, Town of Caroline

Bev Chin, Director, Human Services Coalition Health Planning Council

Serena Stern, Best Practices and Communications Specialist, Age-Friendly Center for Excellence

Janet Loebach, Professor, Cornell Design and Environmental Analysis

Kate Shanks-Booth, Director, Tompkins County Youth Services

Sue Dale Hall, Director, Child Development Council

Kenneth Clarke, Director, Tompkins County Office of Human Rights

For comments or inquiries regarding this document:

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AGE FRIENDLY
ITHACA & TOMPKINS COUNTY



TOMPKINS COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING
Aging Better, Together

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Appendix: Template for Future Work

Domain
Name of Program

What is *program*?

Could include...

- Mission statement
- Description of program, parent program

How does the *Program* Work?

Could include...

- Logistics of program
- Fees, transportation, examples

TEMPLATE

The *Program*: By the Numbers

Could include...

- # of participants
- How long the program has been running
- # of events/gatherings/other statistics



From the Source: _____, Program Source (from interview or other)

Could include...

- Quote from program contact
- Highlights in a different, complementary color text to show special points

TEMPLATE

For more information

Check out their website: [website](#)

Call or Email *Program* source: [email and phone number](#)