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## Celebrate, Appreciate!



### Gift-Giving without Breaking the Bank

The holiday season brings out the giver in many of us. Even if finances are tight, we may be tempted to spend beyond our means to show our loved ones how much we care.

Instead, try giving less expensive, homemade, or creative gifts to celebrate the holiday season. Chances are good your friends and family will appreciate the gesture more than the price tag.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

**Homemade Goodies-** Few things will light up a family member's face at the holidays like an old family recipe. Bake a batch and wrap them in a decorated box. Another option is the gift of your time—bake bread, decorate cookies, or find other ways to pass time together in the kitchen and make special memories.

**Stovetop Potpourri-** There are countless recipe ideas online for this fragrant and beautiful gift. Fill a small mason jar with items like cranberries, cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, and a few sprigs of herbs. Add a tag with instructions for simmering these on the stovetop to fill the home with the scents of the season.

**Festive Throw Pillow-** Take a plain throw pillow from “ho-hum” to “ho-ho-ho” by simply wrapping it with a bow like you would a present. Use wide fabric ribbon for the best look. Add a sprig of faux greenery or a festive ornament for a little extra flourish.

**Salt Dough Ornaments-** These are a classic for a reason: they are simple to make and easy to customize. Use cookie cutters to make simple shapes like mittens, stars, or snowflakes. Here is a simple recipe for a basic salt dough:

2 cups all-purpose flour - 1 cup salt - 1 cup cold water

**Step 1:** Mix flour and salt together in a bowl. Slowly mix water, a few tablespoons at a time, into flour mixture until dough is smooth and easy to handle. Knead dough for 10 minutes and let rest for 20 minutes.

**Step 2:** Preheat oven to 250 degrees F.

**Step 3:** Form dough into desired shapes and arrange on a baking sheet. Use a toothpick to create a hole at the top of each shape, so a string can be run through it once baked.

**Step 4:** Bake in the preheated oven until dry and hard, about 2 hours. Allow to cool completely.

Once your ornaments are baked, you can paint them as you like or leave them plain white. Use ribbon, string or yarn—whatever you have—to make loops for hanging on the tree.

*continued on page 2*

### Celebrate the Season with a To-Go Meal from Your Local Senior Center's Drive Thru

**Holiday To-Go Luncheon, Wednesday, December 16 around 12 noon**

Enjoy a holiday to-go meal featuring beef stroganoff over buttered noodles, green beans, a dinner roll, beverage, and éclair for dessert. Please make your reservation by Tuesday, December 15 at 12 noon by calling the center you wish to pick up at. The suggested contribution for this holiday meal is \$4 for those age 60+ and spouse of any age. For those under age 60, the charge is \$5.

**New Year's Eve To-Go Luncheon, Thursday, December 31 around 12 noon**

Ring in the new year by treating yourself to a savory to-go meal including rotisserie chicken, mashed potatoes, Italian blend vegetables, dinner roll, beverage and orange cranberry bar for dessert. Please make your reservation by Wednesday, December 30 at 12 noon by calling the center you wish to pick up at. The suggested contribution on this day is \$3.50 for those age 60+ and spouse of any age. For those under age 60, the charge is \$4.50.

Phone numbers for local centers may be found on page 10 of this paper. Those age 60+ and their spouse of any age will not be denied service due to an inability or unwillingness to contribute.

**PLEASE NOTE:** all Senior Center and Office for Aging programming is subject to change depending on the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please call the Office for Aging at (607) 778-2411 if you have questions.

Broome County Office for Aging  
County Office Building  
60 Hawley Street, PO Box 1766  
Binghamton, NY 13902

### Like Us! Follow Us!

Don't miss out on any Office for Aging events & news!



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[www.facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeForAging/](http://www.facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeForAging/)



Follow us on Twitter:  
<https://twitter.com/BroomeCountyOFA>

## Gift-Giving without Breaking the Bank

*continued from page 1*

**Hug in a Mug-** This gift can be a warm, friendly hug when the receiver needs it most! Fill an oversized mug (available at the dollar store) with their favorite tea, coffee, or hot cocoa. Add a few peppermint sticks or marshmallows to top it off.

**Anything Knitted or Crocheted-** Are you a master of the needles or the hook? Everyone appreciates a pair of homemade socks, a scarf, a hat, or anything your creative mind can dream up!

*Recipe adapted from [www.allrecipes.com/recipe/240641/salt-dough](http://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/240641/salt-dough)*

## Office for Aging Caseworkers Complete CADER Courses

Recently, six Office for Aging staff members completed certifications offered online by Boston University's Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research (CADER). The certifications recognize the completion of 5 or more courses in a concentrated subject area.

Congratulations to the following staff members:

Mark Franks, who earned a certification in Assessment of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities.

Patti Guenther, who earned a certification in Interdisciplinary Teams and Healthcare.

Kira Blake-McRae, who completed a certification in Case Management.

David Wasson, who completed a certification for Ethics, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.

Megan Horton and Alicia Detrick, who both earned certifications in Behavioral Health and Aging.

Other case managers also completed course work related to care transitions, hoarding disorder, and learned more about new best practices. Seniors in our area are fortunate to benefit from the skills and knowledge of Office for Aging's dedicated case workers.

Congratulations to all!

## Bandera Family Delivers Christmas Day Meals

The Bandera Family and their dedicated volunteers have a long tradition of serving thousands of meals throughout the community on Christmas Day. While this year's festivities will look different than in years past, we are pleased to announce The Bandera Family will once again be able to bring the community together to provide Christmas Day meals. As in previous years, Christmas Day meals can be delivered to the doors of those people who have difficulty leaving their homes. New this year, and to maintain the camaraderie while complying with social distancing, take-out is available in place of a sit-down dinner.

If you are unable to leave your home, you can order a festive Bandera Family meal with all the trimmings to be delivered to you by volunteers on Christmas Day – Friday, December 25. For those who participate in Meals on Wheels, note that while the Meals on Wheels program will be closed, the Bandera Family Meal is available.

The "2-1-1 / First Call for Help" call center will take reservations for the Bandera Family Christmas Day meals. To request a meal, call "First Call for Help" by dialing either 2-1-1 from a landline, or 1-800-901-2180 from a mobile phone, beginning Tuesday, December 1 at 8 am. Tell the operator that you would like a home-delivered Christmas Day meal. Reservations will be taken M – F, 8 am – 5 pm. Reservations must be made by 3 pm on Wednesday, December 23. Watch your local news stations for additional details to come.



## Survey Participants Needed!

Binghamton University, in collaboration with Office for Aging, is looking for older adults age 65+ who are interested in participating in a survey. In appreciation of your time and effort, Binghamton University researchers will send a \$40 gift card to everyone who fully completes the survey and mails it back.

The purpose of this survey is to explore the factors related to acceptance of technology by adults over the age of 65. The findings of this study will be used to develop and improve technology items and services that can enrich the quality of life of older people. All the information collected through the survey will be kept confidential. All gift cards will be mailed after completed surveys are received by Binghamton University.

If you are interested in having a survey mailed to you, please call Office for Aging at (607) 778-3806 and leave your name, mailing address and phone number. We will be collecting names in December and the survey will be mailed to you in early January 2021. You will receive a pre-paid envelope to mail the survey back to Binghamton University School of Social Work. For any questions regarding the survey please call (607) 778-2411 or email: [ofa@broomecounty.us](mailto:ofa@broomecounty.us).



## Downsize & Declutter via Zoom

Not sure if you can get help or suggestions about your clutter by participating in a Zoom meeting? Rest assured, it's worth giving it a try. We talk about our challenges, learn about online links that may help, and yes, we laugh about our attempts.

Join the upcoming Zoom Downsize and Declutter meeting with Joan, Jo Ann & Lida on **Tuesday, December 8 at 3 PM.**

For this video program, you will need access to the internet if you would like to join us on video. An email address is also helpful (but not necessary) so that we may email invitations to you in advance. For those who do not have internet access, a call-in option will be available so that you can join the conversation on a basic phone line.

**Advanced registration is recommended.**

**For more information and to sign up, please call Joan at (607) 754-1230 or email [joan.sprague@broomecounty.us](mailto:joan.sprague@broomecounty.us) or [spraguejm@verizon.net](mailto:spraguejm@verizon.net).**

### Successful Aging



## Help Spread the Word

Follow the Office for Aging's Facebook page to stay up to date with important information on programs, events, and services for older adults in our community. Plus – you'll help inform the community about programs and services for older adults every time you like or share a post.

You can find our page by typing [facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeforAging](https://facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeforAging) in your address bar, or just do a simple search for the Broome County Office for Aging Facebook page. Once there, you will see options to either 'like' or 'follow' our page under the cover photo. In order to receive the most up-to-date information, please choose to follow our page.

Another option to keep up to date: follow the Office for Aging on Twitter. You can find our page at [twitter.com/BroomeCountyOFA](https://twitter.com/BroomeCountyOFA)

Broome County  
Office for Aging 

## Scam of the Month

### *Jury Duty Scam*

A new trend that emerged in 2020 is a jury duty scam. This scam involves the scammer calling and advising the person that they talk to that they missed their jury duty and that they will be arrested for missing it. The person calling then asks for your Social Security Number. Local government workers will never ask for your social security number or make threats on an unsolicited call.

If you would like more information about scams, or would like to report a scam, please call the Office for Aging at (607) 778-2411.

## Manage Your Weight During the Holidays by Including Healthful Snacks

by Kathleen Cook, Nutrition Educator at  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County

Although over the holidays many people tend to gain weight from all the special baked goods and treats, you can help yourself manage that by making a concerted effort to have healthier foods readily available. Make a point of eating these healthier options in addition to the occasional special treats. If your diet is one that includes a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean proteins daily, you will be able to healthfully enjoy some treats, too—without tipping the scales.

In keeping with being festive, create eye-catching fruit and vegetable platters to satisfy your snacking urge. Research has shown that each color offers your body different nutrients, so be sure to use a rainbow of colors: slices of purple cabbage, yellow and green peppers, deep orange carrot sticks, green broccoli trees, and red radishes or cherry tomatoes. Keep your platter ready to eat in the fridge with a container of healthful hummus or make the Greek yogurt herbed dip recipe below.

### Greek Yogurt Vegetable Dip

- 32 oz Greek yogurt
- 6 tablespoons dried parsley
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 tablesppon green onion

Combine all the dry ingredients, then stir into the yogurt conatiner with the green onions. A half cup serving will give you about 6 grams of protein, and a good serving of fiber from the vegetables you dip, and it will keep in your refrigerator for about 3 weeks!

For fruit, slice an apple, firm pear, or strawberries and dip them into a mixture of equal parts vanilla yogurt and creamy or crunchy peanut butter. This dip will give you servings of protein and dairy, and you'll reap the benefits of a third food group when you dip a fruit or vegetable into it!

These options make for satisfying snacks that help to keep you from overindulging on the sweets.

In addition to vitamins and minerals, fruits and vegetables will give you another bonus – water! All that crisp produce will help you to have a well-hydrated holiday season, too!

*Healthy Holidays to you!*

## Did You Know?

### Mobile Apps

With technology becoming a bigger part of our lives every day, it is important to know what types of technology are available to you that can truly impact your day to day life.

Do you have a smart phone or a tablet? Have you downloaded any apps that are helpful to you?

Here are some suggestions for apps that might interest seniors:

- Social Media apps: these help you stay connected to family and friends.
- iBooks and Kindle: these apps bring unlimited numbers of books right to your hands.
- Pandora or Spotify: these are free music services that allow you to listen to music that you love at no cost (they can be upgraded to ad-free versions for a monthly fee, if you wish).
- Games/puzzles: there are countless puzzle apps that are free. These can include solitaire, poker, sudoku, pitch, word finds, and many others.
- Skype and Facetime: These apps allow us to see family and friends “face-to-face” rather than just hearing their voices over the phone. These are both free services and you can use them to contact many people.

Try something new today!

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## E-ZPass: NYS Thruway Goes Cashless

Effective November 1, 2020, traditional toll booths throughout New York State will be replaced with large, electronic overhangs equipped with cameras and scanners. The New York State Thruway will be entirely cashless, and you will need to purchase and use an E-ZPass from this point forward. If you do not purchase an E-ZPass by November 1, you will be sent a toll bill in the mail whenever you pass under toll readers on the thruway.

The good news: drivers using E-ZPass typically save 10-30% on every toll.

You can purchase an E-ZPass for \$25 at the following locations:

- Broome County Clerk's Office
- Binghamton DMV (Cash only)
- Endicott DMV (Cash only)

For more information, visit <https://www.e-zpassny.com/> or call the E-ZPass Customer Service Center: 1-800-333-8655.

## Snow Day Closing Procedure for Senior Centers and Meals on Wheels

Winter is here and with that comes inclement weather and unsafe road conditions. When the weather takes a turn for the worst, the Senior Centers To Go Meals and Meals on Wheels delivery may be cancelled.

A good rule to follow is: when schools in your area are closed, no meals will be available.

If the weather looks questionable, check for closings on the Office for Aging website at [www.gobroomecounty.com/senior](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/senior), watch your local news stations, check Broome County Office for Aging's Facebook page, or call the Office at (607) 778-2411.

## Add Your Phone. Stop the Spread.

Get COVID-19 Exposure Alerts from the NYS Dept of Health

To stop the spread of COVID-19, New York needs each of us to do our part. One way you can help yourself and your community is by participating in our newly launched mobile contact tracing app COVID Alert NY.

COVID Alert NY is a voluntary, anonymous, exposure-notification smartphone app. You will get an alert if you were in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19. Knowing about a potential exposure allows you to self-quarantine immediately, get tested and reduce the potential exposure risk to your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and others.

The more people who download COVID Alert NY, the more effective it will be. Help protect your community while maintaining your privacy. The free mobile apps—available to anyone 18 or older who lives, works, or attends college in New York or New Jersey—are available for download from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. COVID Alert NY is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Bengali, Korean, Russian and Haitian Creole.

Download the free app to your smartphone to receive an alert if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. For more information, visit [www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-alert-ny](http://www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-alert-ny)



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-Julie S., Binghamton

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### Just For Laughs

What kind of music do Santa's elves prefer?  
"Wrap" Music

### Time Warp!

What happened this month 55 years ago?

Dec 9, 1965- "A Charlie Brown Christmas," the first Peanuts animated special by Charles M. Schulz, premieres on CBS in the United States.

Dec 12, 1965- The Beatles play the last show of their final UK concert tour.

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## Health and Wellness Opportunities

### With the Broome County Office for Aging

Though local senior centers remain closed for in-person activities due to the Pandemic, there are other convenient ways that you can be part of exercise programs and workshops. Getting involved is easy because you can participate from home. So consider one of these opportunities and invite your family and friends to join along with you.

Because our programs will be shared remotely using either postal mail, computer or telephone access, you can look for these symbols next to our activities to understand how that program will be offered:



**Postal Mail Program:** You can receive printed materials for this program by postal mail, delivered to your home address. You will not need internet access or a phone line to participate.



**Zoom Program:** For this video program, you will need access to the internet at home, and either a smartphone, laptop, tablet, or computer. An email address is also helpful (but not necessary) so that we may email invitations to you in advance. Where noted, some Zoom programs offer a call-in option for those who do not have computer and internet access.



**Phone Program:** You will only need a basic phone line to access this program. No computer or internet access is necessary to join.



**Facebook Program:** Facebook access is encouraged for this program but not required. You are invited to visit the Office for Aging Facebook page for updates at <https://www.facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeForAging>. Anyone who chooses not to use Facebook can still participate and have a great experience.



### At-Home Exercise Program Booklet

This program is perfect for those who would like to stay active without using the internet or a computer. Simply call Sofia at the Office for Aging at (607) 778-2115 to receive a printed at-home exercise booklet through the mail. The booklet will include activities with picture demonstrations so that you can follow along at home without any special exercise equipment. You will learn convenient ways to keep moving each day, such as doing chair exercises and stretches.



### Zoom Chair Exercises Monday through Thursday, 10-10:30 am

Chair exercises are a low-impact way for you to burn calories and move your joints and muscles. You can remain seated in a comfortable chair during this video program. In just 30 minutes of chair exercise, you can burn up to 250 calories! Remember to consult a healthcare professional before beginning this or any new exercise program.

If you do not have access to the internet, a phone number will be provided so that you may call into this class with a basic phone line.

**Advanced registration is required for Zoom chair exercise. To obtain more information and sign up, please call Sofia at (607) 778-2115 or email [Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us](mailto:Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us).**



### Zoom Laughter Exercises Monday, December 14, 9:30 am

**Advanced registration is required for Laughter exercise. To obtain more information and sign up, please call Sofia at (607) 778-2115 or email [Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us](mailto:Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us).**



### Preventing Falls this Winter While Staying Active Tips Available Every Friday on Facebook in December

Moving across snowy, icy and wet surfaces can increase our risk of falling, especially if we enjoy outdoor activities during the winter months. The good news is that many falls are preventable, and this can help us avoid injuries and trips to the Emergency Room.

Check our Senior Games Facebook page every Friday in December for tips on how you can prevent a winter-weather fall and move more confidently outdoors this season.

Just visit us at: <https://www.facebook.com/broomecountyseniorgames>



### "Move through Winter" Challenge Ongoing through Friday, January 29

*With Optional Zoom Chat & Chair Yoga on Fridays, 10-10:30 am*

With blustery winter temperatures right around the corner, it can be difficult to continue our favorite outdoor exercise routines. Consider joining the "Move through Winter" Challenge at the Office for Aging, and form a personalized indoor activity plan for winter that feels achievable! Just remember to consult your healthcare provider before joining this or any new exercise program.

#### Here's how it works:

- **Get Tips on Ways to "Move When You Can, Where You Can":** You'll receive information on creative ways to move and be active inside your home. Pick from a variety of options, such as:
  - joining our Zoom chair exercise classes or requesting a print copy of our at-home exercise program booklet
  - walking around your home with a daily step goal
  - finding an exercise video to follow along with in your living room
  - riding a stationary bike and trying a virtual biking trail on YouTube
- **Make Your Own Weekly Wellness Plan:** Form your own weekly exercise goal that will work best for your lifestyle. You will be encouraged to write out your plan and chart your progress throughout this challenge.
- **Push Past the Stumbling Blocks:** If you run into an obstacle along the way such as a busy schedule, you'll receive ideas on how to make adjustments and still keep active.
- **Give Your Hearty Winter Recipes a Makeover:** Consider reducing added sugar, calories and fat by giving your favorite winter recipes a healthy makeover. You'll receive tips to make meals more nutritious as you winterize your pantry and start enjoying more hot soups, stews, casseroles, and more.
- **Celebrate Your Success With Us Each Friday:** Each Friday from 10-10:30 am, you are invited to a Zoom check-in with chair yoga to share your progress, get encouragement, and celebrate your weekly success! Participation in the Zoom check-in is not required, so you can still enjoy this challenge even if you do not join us over a Zoom video.

#### To Sign Up and Enter the Prize Drawing:

- Just ask your local Senior Center Site Supervisor for a packet to sign up, or call Sofia at (607) 778-2115.
- When the challenge ends on January 29, enter to win our prize drawing by sending in a short testimonial to the Office for Aging: Broome County Office for Aging, PO Box 1766, Binghamton, NY, 13902, Attn. Sofia. Or, send your testimonial by email to: [Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us](mailto:Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us).



### Zoom Travel Presentation: "Let's Visit Dresden, Germany" Thursday, December 10, 3 pm

Join history and travel presenter Bruce Ressler for this Zoom video exploration of Saxony's capital. We will take a close look at the wonders of art and nature as we travel to Germany together, right from the comfort of our own homes.

If you do not have access to the internet, a phone number will be provided so that you may call into this presentation with a basic phone line.

**Advanced registration is required. To obtain more information and sign up, please call Sofia at (607) 778-2115 or email Sofia.Rittenhouse@broomecounty.us.**



### Zoom Craft Class Thursdays, 12:30 pm

This weekly Zoom video class will guide you through a simple and fun craft project to make at home.

If you do not have access to the internet, a phone number will be provided so that you may call into this class with a basic phone line.

**Advanced registration is required. To obtain more information and sign up, please call Desirae at the Northern Broome Senior Center at (607) 692-3405.**

## Snow Shoveling Safety and Resources

Snow removal from walks and driveways is inevitable in Broome County. As we age, this chore can be more difficult and dangerous. Below are some safety tips to keep in mind in order to avoid injury if you decide to do-it-yourself or if you need to find someone to shovel for you.

### FOR THE DO-IT-YOURSELFER:

- Warm up and stretch your muscles before starting.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands from blisters and frostbite.
- Pace yourself and take plenty of breaks.
- Even though it is cold out, drink fluids to stay hydrated.
- Push snow instead of lifting it.
- Keep an eye out for any warning signs of injury.
- Stop and get help immediately if you experience shortness of breath, chest discomfort, weakness or excessive sweating.

### SNOW REMOVAL RESOURCES:

Every winter, some senior citizens in Broome County have trouble finding reliable help for snow removal. To assist with this search, the Office for Aging compiles a list of vendors and individuals who are willing to provide snow and ice removal for older adults in Broome County for a fee.

The Broome County Office for Aging provides this information as a courtesy to residents. We realize that there is a need for such a list locally, however we do not assume responsibility for anyone's experience with providers. If you are interested in obtaining information on snow removal, please contact the Office for Aging at (607) 778-2411.

## December Word Search

Circle the words below which are hidden from left to right, top to bottom, right to left, and bottom to top. Happy Puzzling! Answers on Page 9



- |        |           |         |           |
|--------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| SNOW   | CHIMNEY   | SHOVEL  | DECEMBER  |
| FLAKE  | FIREPLACE | FLANNEL | CELEBRATE |
| DRIFT  | ICY       | SOCKS   | GIFTS     |
| WINTER | BLANKET   | FREEZE  | SKATE     |
| COLD   | MITTENS   | TREE    | LIGHTS    |

## CUTE PET PHOTO CONTEST

*Stay tuned!*



Office for Aging's Cute Pet Photo Contest is well underway—but there is still time to vote! Photo submissions were accepted between November 16 and 20. To cast your vote for the cutest, most "purr-fect" pet, visit [www.facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeForAging](http://www.facebook.com/BroomeCountyOfficeForAging) to "like" the photo of the pet you think is the cutest! Voting ends December 2. Winner to be announced in the January issue of Senior News.

## Do You Know Which Moles Are Deadly? We Do!



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**Nail and Hair Problems**

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*We Promise to See You the Week You Call!*

# Guard your card

## Follow these tips to prevent Medicare ID fraud:

- Keep your Medicare and Social Security cards secure.
- Don't share your numbers with anyone but your health care team.
- If someone calls and asks for your Medicare information, hang up. Medicare will only call you if you've called and left a message or if a representative said that someone will call you back.
- Check your statements carefully and log into [MyMedicare.gov](https://www.mymedicare.gov) to spot possible fraud and billing mistakes.
- Report suspicious activities by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).



## Go Green: Receive *Senior News* by Email

Would you like the option to receive the *Senior News* electronically?

### Why Should I Go Green?

**You will help preserve Earth's natural resources**, such as the paper we print on, the energy it takes to produce printed copies, and the gasoline it takes to deliver paper copies.

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## 8 Shopping Tips for the Holiday Season

*From the desk of Thomas F. Duffy, MS-ISAC Chair*

It's that time of year again; holiday shopping has begun! Everyone is looking for those unique gifts, hot toys, and cool electronics. Whether it is a hard-to-find toy for kids or the latest 4K smart TV. Black Friday sales seldom fail to pique the interests of even the most casual shoppers. Yet even after the chaos of Black Friday lies both Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. While it's clear that businesses are after your dollars during the holidays, you should be aware that cybercriminals are on the lookout, too.

When it comes to holiday shopping, you need to be careful that you don't fall prey to these criminals. Here are some tips to following for your holiday shopping:

### Online Shopping Tips

#### 1. Do not use public Wi-Fi for any shopping activity.

Public Wi-Fi networks can be very dangerous, especially during the holiday season. Public Wi-Fi can potentially grant hackers' access to your usernames, passwords, texts and emails. For instance, before you join a public Wi-Fi titled "Apple\_\_Store," make sure you first look around to see if there's actually an Apple Store in your vicinity, and thus, confirm that it is a legitimate network. To help stay secure, you should always be on the lookout for the lock symbol on your webpage.

#### 2. Look for the lock symbol on websites.

When visiting a website look for the "lock" symbol before entering any personal and/or credit card information. The lock may appear in the URL bar, or elsewhere in your browser. Additionally, check that the URL for the website has "https" in the beginning. These both indicate that the site uses encryption to protect your data.

#### 3. Know what the product should cost.

If the deal is too good to be true, then it may be a scam. Check out the company on "ResellerRatings.com". This site allows users to review online companies to share their experiences purchasing from those companies. This will give you an indication of what to expect when purchasing from them.

#### 4. One-time use credit card numbers.

Many banks are now offering a single use credit card number for online shopping. This one-time number is associated with your account and can be used in place of your credit card number. This way, if the credit card number becomes exposed, it cannot be used again. Check with your credit card company to see if they have this option available.

#### 5. Keep your computer secure.

When using your computer to do your holiday shopping, remember to keep your Anti-virus software up to date and apply all software patches. Never save usernames, passwords or credit card information in your browser and periodically clear your offline content, cookies and history. You will want to keep your computer as clean as possible for online shopping. The world of online shopping can bring lots of new products to your door step and can prove to be a lot of fun finding that special gift. Just remember to be careful so that you don't make your data a special gift to cybercriminals.

### In-Store Shopping Tips

#### 6. Always use credit cards for purchases.

Avoid using your ATM or debit card while shopping. In the event that your debit card is compromised, criminals can have direct access to the funds from your bank account. This could cause you to miss bill payments and overdraw your account. When using a credit card, you are not using funds associated with your bank account. This means you are better protected by your credit card company's fraud protection program. If you pay off the credit card balance each month, you won't pay interest and your banking information will be protected.

#### 7. Don't leave purchases in the car unattended.

Criminals can be watching and will consider breaking into your car to get the merchandise you just purchased. If you must leave some items in your car, consider leaving them in the trunk or glove compartment rather than in a visible location.

#### 8. Beware of "porch pirates."

When shopping online and receiving purchases by mail, make sure you are always tracking your packages. The US Postal Service, FedEx and UPS all have systems to track your packages, and all three utilize tracking numbers that can be used to figure out where your item is and when it should be delivered to your home. However, the only surefire way to thwart porch pirates is to not have packages delivered to your home at all. Consider having your holiday packages delivered to a family member, your workplace, or a trusted neighbor!

Remember, always trust your instincts. If an email or an attachment seem suspicious, don't let your curiosity put your computer at risk! ~ Happy Holidays and safe shopping!

*Center for Internet Security/Multi-State Information Sharing & Analysis Center, October 2019, Volume 14 Issue 11*

## Changing Your Address?

Please Let Us Know!

Whether your move is temporary or permanent, the Office for Aging appreciates knowing your new address. This will keep our information up to date, will help to avoid the expense of returned mail and will ensure you receive any communication from our office as promptly and efficiently as possible. Any information you provide is kept confidential and is stored in a secure database maintained by New York State.

To notify the Office for Aging of your change of address, or another change such as name, phone number, or other information, please contact us by phone at (607) 778-2411, by email at [ofa@broomecounty.us](mailto:ofa@broomecounty.us), or in person at the Broome County Office Building, 60 Hawley St, 4th Floor, Binghamton, NY 13901.

### **Just For Laughs**

**What does a gingerbread man put on his bed?**

*Cookie sheets.*

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## Sharing Your Home with a Pet is Also Good for Your Health:

University of Michigan-AARP survey finds dogs and cats boost well-being  
by Sarah Elizabeth Adler, AARP

We love our pets — and it turns out they might be good for us, too. According to the results of a new University of Michigan-AARP poll, pet owners say their furry friends help them de-stress and stick to a routine. Pets also provide many people with a sense of purpose.

These findings are the latest from the National Poll on Healthy Aging, sponsored by AARP and Michigan Medicine, the University of Michigan’s (U-M) academic medical center. According to the survey, 55 percent of older adults ages 50 to 80 have at least one pet. Dogs are the most popular (owned by 68 percent of respondents), followed by cats (48 percent) and then small pets such as birds, fish and hamsters (16 percent).

Regardless of which pets they own, the vast majority of owners agree that having a pet offers physical and mental benefits. Nearly 9 in 10 owners say that pets help them enjoy life and feel loved, while nearly 8 in 10 say that pets help reduce stress. About two-thirds say their pets help them stay physically active and stick to a routine.

“This study highlights the many physical, psychological and social benefits that pets can have for older adults,” says Alison Bryant, senior vice president of research for AARP.

Those benefits seem to be even more pronounced for older adults who live alone or struggle with their health, 72 percent of whom say pets help them cope with physical or emotional symptoms. Nearly half (46 percent) of older adults who say they are in fair or poor physical health report that their pets help take their mind off of pain, as do 43 percent of pet owners who live alone.

Among older adults who don’t have a pet, 42 percent cite not wanting to be tied down as the reason, while 23 percent say cost is an issue. The findings suggest that those who want to experience animal companionship without the responsibilities of pet ownership should consider pet sitting, pet therapy or volunteering at a local animal shelter as alternatives. And, Bryant says, pets are increasingly welcome at assisted living facilities in light of the health benefits they provide for residents.

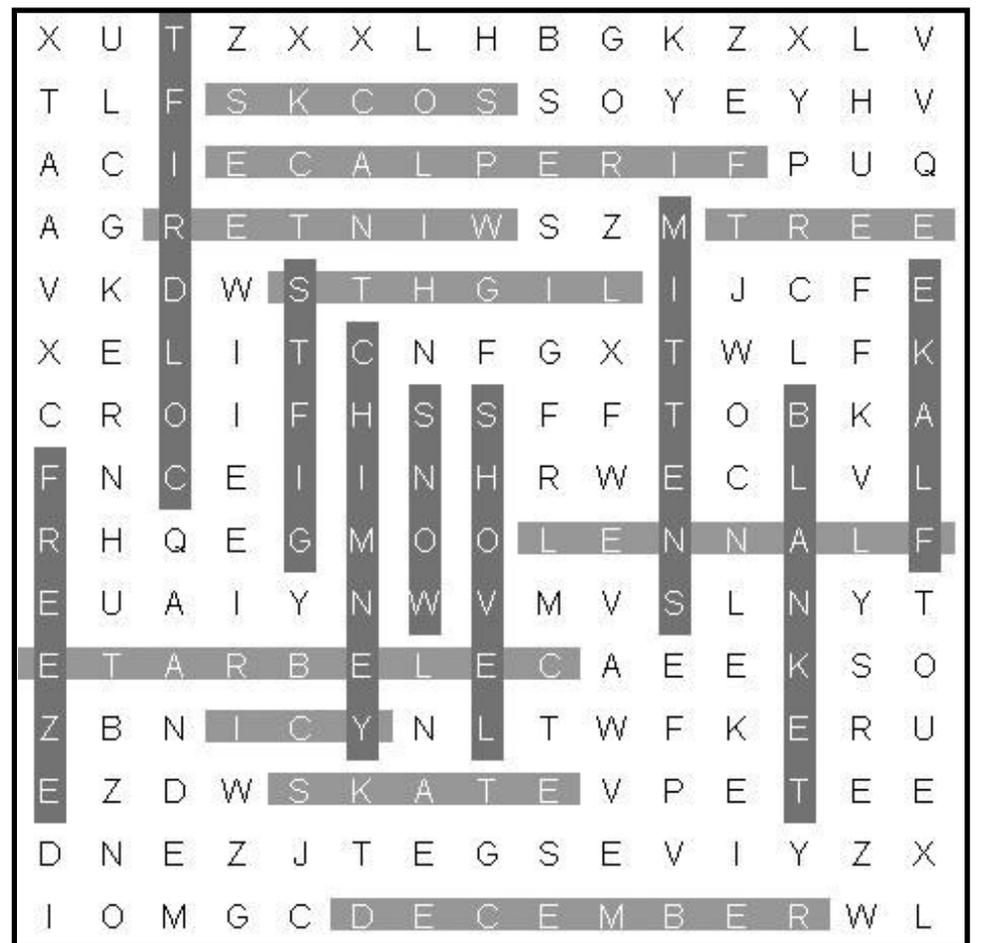
“We have long known that pets are a common and naturally occurring source of support,” says Cathleen Connell, a professor at the U-M School of Public Health. “Helping older adults find low-cost ways to support pet ownership while not sacrificing other important relationships and priorities is an investment in overall mental and physical health.”

In fact, pet ownership may even benefit human relationships: 65 percent of the pet owners surveyed say that having a pet helps them connect with other people.

The poll results are based on responses from 2,051 people ages 50 to 80, with a margin of error of plus or minus 1 to 3 percentage points, higher among subgroups. The full report, along with past surveys, is available on the National Poll on Healthy Aging website.

Article originally published by AARP, April 3, 2019 / [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

## December Word Search Answers



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## Just For Laughs

Which hand is it better to light the menorah with?  
Neither, it's best to light it with a candle.

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## Senior Center Contact Information

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### **DEPOSIT**..... **467-3953**

14 Monument Street, Deposit, NY 13754 (Located in Christ Episcopal Church)

### **EASTERN BROOME**..... **693-2069**

27 Golden Lane, Harpursville, NY 13787

### **FIRST WARD**..... **729-6214**

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### **JOHNSON CITY**..... **797-3145**

30 Brocton St., Johnson City, NY 13790

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12 Strongs Place, Whitney Point, NY 13862

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24 Isbell St., Binghamton, NY 13901

### **VESTAL**..... **754-9596**

Old Vestal Junior High School Cafeteria / 201 Main St., Box #4, Vestal, NY

## Is Your Blood Pressure Too High?

A new study found that awareness, control, and treatment of high blood pressure has dropped among U.S. adults.

Nearly half of adults live with high blood pressure, also called hypertension. It's defined as a blood pressure reading of 130/80 mm Hg or higher, or by taking medication for the condition.

High blood pressure increases your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

Many people don't know they have the condition. Symptoms usually appear only after damage to your heart and blood vessels. By identifying high blood pressure early, you can work with your doctor to control it.

Researchers examined how many people with high blood pressure knew they had it and how many were receiving treatment. They looked at data from a large national health survey on high blood pressure.

More than 50,000 adults were surveyed from 1999 to 2018. Researchers found that high blood pressure affected 30% of adults in 1999 and 32% in 2017.

Twenty years ago, about 70% of adults with high blood pressure were aware they had the condition. This increased to almost 85% in 2013. But by 2017, awareness dropped to 77%.

Treatment declined, too. Almost 54% of those with hypertension had their blood pressure under control in 2013. By 2017, that had dropped to 44%.

"The reversal in hypertension awareness is a real setback in the fight to reduce heart disease and stroke," says study author Dr. Paul Muntner from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Source: NIH News in Health, November 2020

### **Just For Laughs**

**What did the snowman's hat say to his scarf?  
You hang around while I go on ahead.**

## FIRE SAFETY FOR OLDER ADULTS

Winter is a good time to think about fire safety. Holiday candles, seasonal lights on old extension cords, and space heaters all present potential dangers in the home.

Adults age 65 and older are more than twice as likely to die in fires than the Nation's population as a whole. Below is information on how you can prevent fires in the home.

### INSTALL AND MAINTAIN SMOKE ALARMS

- Have working smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Test each smoke alarm monthly by pressing the test button.
- Replace the entire smoke alarm every 10 years or sooner if it does not work when tested.
- Smoke alarms that flash a bright light or shake beds are available for those with hearing problems.

### FIRE SAFETY IF YOU SMOKE

- Smoking is the leading cause of home fire deaths in those over age 65.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Never smoke in bed, while drowsy, or under the influence of medication or alcohol.
- Use deep, sturdy ash trays. Put used, cool cigarette butts in a can of water or sand.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used, even when it is turned off.

### FIRE SAFE COOKING

- Prevent cooking fires by being watchful and alert when you cook.
- Stay in the kitchen while cooking.
- Use a timer to remind you when to check food or when it should be done.
- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Keep cooking surfaces clean and free of anything that can catch fire.
- Check to make sure the oven, all burners, and other appliances are turned off.

### HEAT YOUR HOME SAFELY

- Heating equipment is essential in winter but can cause fires if not used properly.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from things that can burn.
- Turn off space heaters if you are leaving home or going to bed.
- Never use an oven, stovetop, dryer or grill to heat your home.
- Have a licensed professional install heating equipment and inspect it annually.
- Store propane and other heating fluids outside.

### ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Older homes are more likely to experience an electrical fire than newer homes.
- All electrical work should be done by a professional.
- Check appliances for damaged, cracked or loose cords.
- Replace outlets if plugs do not fit securely or the outlet does not accept plugs with one blade larger than another.
- Major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, one per outlet.
- Avoid using extension cords. If needed, have a professional install additional outlets.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or light fixture.

### CANDLE SAFETY

- Candles are pretty to look at, but remember that a candle is an open flame and can easily ignite anything that burns around it. Keep them 12 inches from anything that burns.
- Only burn candles if you are in a room and use glass containers to protect flames.
- Never light candles when you are feeling sleepy and do not use in bedrooms.
- Never use candles where medical oxygen is used.
- Battery-operated candles have become a popular, safe, and attractive alternative. Many look, feel, and smell like real candles.

To learn more about fire prevention, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

## 7 Things Medicare Doesn't Cover

*You'll need to plan ahead to pay for some common medical expenses*

by Dena Bunis, AARP

Medicare covers the majority of older Americans' health care needs — from hospital care and doctor visits to lab tests and prescription drugs. Here are some needs that aren't a part of the program — and how you might pay for them.

### 1. Opticians and eye exams

While original Medicare does cover ophthalmologic expenses such as cataract surgery, it doesn't cover routine eye exams, glasses or contact lenses. Nor do any Medigap plans, the supplemental insurance that is available from private insurers to augment Medicare coverage. Some Medicare Advantage plans cover routine vision care and glasses.

**Solution:** For some people, it makes sense to buy a vision insurance policy for a few hundred dollars a year to defray the costs of glasses or contact lenses.

### 2. Hearing aids

Medicare covers ear-related medical conditions, but original Medicare and Medigap plans don't pay for routine hearing tests or hearing aids.

**Solution:** If you are in a Medicare Advantage plan, check your policy to see if it covers hearing-related needs. If it doesn't, or if you have original Medicare, consider buying insurance or a membership in a discount plan that helps cover the cost of such hearing devices. Also, some programs help people with lower incomes to get needed hearing support. Or you can pay as you go. Congress passed legislation in 2017 that allows some hearing aids to be sold over the counter without a prescription. The Food and Drug Administration has until August to issue proposed guidelines for the sale of these devices.

### 3. Dental work

Original Medicare and Medigap policies do not cover dental care such as routine checkups or big-ticket items, including dentures and root canals.

**Solution:** Some Medicare Advantage plans offer dental coverage. If yours does not, or if you opt for original Medicare, consider buying an individual dental insurance plan or a dental discount plan.

### 4. Overseas care

Original Medicare and most Medicare Advantage plans offer virtually no coverage for medical costs incurred outside the U.S.

**Solution:** Some Medigap policies cover certain overseas medical costs. If you travel frequently, you might want such an option. In addition, some travel insurance policies provide basic health care coverage — so check the fine print. Finally, consider medical evacuation (aka medevac) insurance for your adventures abroad. It's a low-cost policy that will transport you to a nearby medical facility or back home to the U.S. in case of emergency.

### 5. Podiatry

Routine medical care for feet, such as callus removal, is not covered. Medicare Part B does cover foot exams or treatment if it is related to nerve damage because of diabetes, or care for foot injuries or ailments, such as hammertoe, bunion deformities and heel spurs.

**Solution:** If you face these costs, you may want to set up a separate savings program for them.

### 6. Cosmetic surgery

Medicare doesn't generally cover elective cosmetic surgery, such as face-lifts or tummy tucks. It will cover plastic surgery in the event of an accidental injury.

**Solution:** If you face these costs, you also may want to set up a separate savings program for them.

### 7. Nursing home care

Medicare pays for limited stays in rehab facilities — for example, if you have a hip replacement and need inpatient physical therapy for several weeks. But if you become so frail or sick that you must move to an assisted living facility or nursing home, Medicare won't cover your custodial costs. (Nursing homes average about \$90,000 a year for a semiprivate room and

more than \$100,000 for a private room. Costs vary based on where you live and what facility you choose.)

**Solution:** Planning for nursing home care is a big issue, with lots of choices and decisions. But for those with limited income and savings, Medicaid might help fill in the gaps.

*Article originally published by AARP, October 1, 2020 / www.aarp.org*

## Baked Tofu

Ginger, soy sauce, and garlic fill this tofu with flavor. This dish is protein-packed and friendly to a vegetable-based diet.

*Makes 4 servings.*

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic (minced, or 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder)
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger (minced, optional)
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 package tofu (firm or extra firm, water packed, 14 ounces, drained)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
2. Drain water from tofu. Wrap tofu in paper towels. Let set for about 5 minutes.
3. While tofu is draining, combine soy sauce, garlic, ginger and vegetable oil in a small bowl.
4. Slice tofu into 1/2 inch thick slices. Place tofu slices on foil lined baking sheet.
5. Pour soy sauce mixture over tofu. Using a spatula or pancake turner, gently turn slices over to coat both sides with sauce.
6. Bake tofu for 15 minutes. Turn slices over and bake for another 15 minutes. Tofu should be light golden brown and firm. Serve hot in place of meat or cut into slices or cubes and add to a stir-fry, fried rice, soup or salad.

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/baked-tofu>

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### Celebrate!

The Office for Aging will be closed on **Friday, December 25** in observance of Christmas, and **Friday, January 1**, in observance of New Year's Day.

Drive-thru meal service at Broome County Senior Centers will be unavailable on these days.



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# December Menu - Bon Appétit!

For Broome County Senior Centers. **Reservations are needed by noon the day before.** Menu subject to change. A contribution of \$3.50 is requested for people age 60+ and spouse of any age. Those under age 60 are charged **\$4.50 per meal.**  
*No one age 60+ shall be denied a meal due to an inability or unwillingness to contribute.*

**Senior Centers will be closed for activities and dining until further notice. Centers are offering meals to-go.**  
**Please contact your local senior center to learn more about to-go meals with curbside pickup during the month of November.**

	<b>Halupki OR Rotisserie Chicken</b> Mashed Potatoes Peas Orange Cranberry Bar	<b>1</b>	<b>Sausage &amp; Cheddar Omelet Bake</b> O'Brien Breakfast Potatoes Fruit Cocktail Blueberry Muffin	<b>2</b>	<b>Chicken Thigh w/Cranberry Glaze OR Breaded Fish</b> Roasted Potatoes Brussels Sprouts Gingerbread Cake	<b>3</b>	<b>Chinese Pepper Steak OR Citrus Rubbed Pollack</b> Brown Rice Broccoli Florets Mandarin Oranges	<b>4</b>	
<b>Meatball Sub</b> Wax Beans w/Parsley Fruit Cocktail Snickerdoodle Cookie	<b>7</b>	<b>Macaroni &amp; Cheese</b> Italian Green Beans Stewed Tomatoes Raspberry Ribbon Bar	<b>8</b>	<b>Herb Rubbed Pollack OR Chicken Thigh Marengo</b> Roasted Potatoes Carrots Applesauce	<b>9</b>	<b>Meat Chili Over Brown Rice</b> Broccoli Florets Peanut Butter Cookie	<b>10</b>	<b>Salisbury Steak OR Lemon Pepper Pollack</b> Mashed Potatoes Sonoma Blend Vegetables Banana Muffin	<b>11</b>
<b>Bacon &amp; Cheddar Omelet Bake</b> O'Brien Breakfast Potatoes Fruited Yogurt Cup Oatmeal Raisin Cookie	<b>14</b>	<b>Pub Burger OR Egg Salad Sandwich</b> Three Bean Salad Chocolate Chip Cookie	<b>15</b>	<i>Holiday To-Go Meal</i> <b>Beef Stroganoff Over Buttered Noodles</b> Green Beans Éclair	<b>16</b>	<b>Liver w/Onions OR Rotisserie Chicken</b> Mashed Potatoes Peas Fruit Cocktail	<b>17</b>	<b>Meatloaf OR Broiled Fish w/Lemon</b> Scalloped Potatoes Hot Beets Apple Spice Muffin	<b>18</b>
<b>Chicken a la King Over a Biscuit</b> Broccoli Florets Gelatin Cup	<b>21</b>	<b>Meat Lasagna</b> Spinach Chocolate Mousse	<b>22</b>	<b>Halupki w/Tomato Sc. OR Kielbasa w/Onions</b> Mashed Potatoes Peas & Carrots Sugar Cookie	<b>23</b>	<b>Spinach Parm Pollack OR Herb Chicken Thigh w/Gravy</b> Brown Rice Pilaf Sonoma Blend Vegetables Vanilla Pudding	<b>24</b>	<i>Christmas Day</i>  <i>Centers Closed for To-Go Meals</i>	<b>25</b>
<b>Pierogi w/Onions</b> Peas Warm Spiced Peaches Double Chocolate Cookie	<b>28</b>	<b>Sweet &amp; Sour Pork OR Salmon Patty w/Dill Sc.</b> Brown Rice Pilaf Green Beans Blondie Bar	<b>29</b>	<b>Chicken Salad Croissant</b> Pickled Beet Salad Applesauce Pumpkin Cookie	<b>30</b>	<i>New Year's To-Go Meal</i> <b>Rotisserie Chicken</b> Mashed Potatoes Italian Blend Vegetables Orange Cranberry Bar	<b>31</b>	<i>New Year's Day</i>  <i>Centers Closed for To-Go Meals</i>	<b>1/1</b>

Funded by: NYSOFA, US Dept. of Health & Human Services – Administration on Community Living and Broome County Office for Aging



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The Broome County Office for Aging website can be translated into over 100 languages through Google Translate on the left column of the web page, [www.gobroomecounty.com/senior](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/senior).

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can use NY Relay System 7-1-1.

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