

SENIOR SCOOP

SERVING TIOGA COUNTY SENIORS

The Senior SCOOP is a bi-monthly newsletter published for all Tioga County Senior Citizens by Tioga Opportunities, Inc.'s Family Services Department and volunteer Senior Citizens.



Stay Safe From COVID-19 When Workers Enter Your Home

Contractors, appliance repair specialists, and cleaning crews should take precautions by Nancy Dunham, [AARP](#), January 7, 2021

As people spend more time at home, they're creating long lists of home improvement projects that range from painting a room to a kitchen overhaul. For those who aren't hard-core do-it-yourselfers, it's likely the services of contractors, repair specialists, or even cleaners will be needed. But with the coronavirus pandemic raging, it's challenging to feel safe opening the door wide to people outside a household.

Precautions to prevent transmission of COVID-19 are essential when it comes to ushering in workers, says Anthony Harris, associate medical director of WorkCare, a physician-directed occupational health company in Chicago. "They need to follow official COVID precautions," he says. "Just because someone is wearing a mask doesn't mean you're safe. If they're not wearing it properly, that's a problem."

Inquire about COVID precautions- Precautions start with the homeowner wearing a mask while in their own space. Studies have shown that if all parties are wearing masks, there is significantly less risk of transmission of COVID-19. (Continued on Page 2).

In This Issue

- 1 COVID-19 Safety, Volunteers Needed
- 2 COVID-19 Safety
- 3 Bingocize, Fun Fact
- 4 Stay Connected
Virtual Links, COVID-19 Scams, Home Appliance Loan
- 5 Recipe, Wellness
- 6 Community News
- 7 Memorial Gifts and Subscriptions
- 8 Grocery & Prescription Delivery Service



Have you been wondering how you can help make a difference during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Are you a friendly, reliable, and compassionate person looking to help older adults in our community?

We are looking for new volunteers to join our team!

Available Volunteer Assignments include:

Medical Transportation— Assist with transporting older adults to critical medical and COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

Home Delivered Meals Delivery— Deliver nutritious meals to homebound older adults residing in Tioga County.

Volunteers will receive pre-service orientation, assignment-specific training, and supplemental insurance while on duty.

Mileage and meal reimbursement will be provided. COVID-19 safety protocols are in place to protect volunteers and clients.

Call 687-4120 ext. 315 for more information on volunteer opportunities and to apply today!



(Continued from Page 1) In addition, talk to anyone coming into your home about the safeguards they will take. Some people feel timid bringing this up, but they shouldn't, says Jeff Yoder, owner of ShelfGenie, a national shelving installation company in Washington, D.C. He says customers regularly ask him about the COVID-19 prevention steps his company mandates. "I take my temperature every morning," he says. "I bring a thermometer with me and my whole team has thermometers" and daily checks. He also developed a checklist for his crews to ensure they follow proper COVID-19 prevention rules. Customers should create a list of questions for contractors, Yoder says.

Those might include:

1. Are workers required to wear masks over nose and mouth?
2. Will workers wash their hands before entering a home? Are they provided with hand sanitizer?
3. Are workers tested regularly for COVID-19 or have daily temperature checks?
4. Do workers try to maintain 6 feet of distance within a home?

Yoder advises homeowners to talk with a supervisor beforehand to ask about pre-visit testing and screening.

Ask about contractors' COVID precautions: Make sure you are comfortable with who is coming into your house and the steps they have taken to ensure everyone is safe. Contractors should wear shoe covers and gloves when they're in the house, and put on a fresh pair whenever they enter, says Ashley Wood of Atlanta, author of *Demystifying Your Health*.

In addition, homeowners should interact with contractors or workers only when required, and stay 6 feet away. Close doors between the work being done and your location, if possible, and make sure workers wear masks at all times — even if you're not in the room. "You shouldn't spend more time than necessary in the same room, since the virus is spread via exposure over a period of time," Wood says. "The longer you're in a space with someone, the higher your chances of contracting the virus." Keep a window open and use a fan to direct air out. This type of ventilation can help decrease the amount of virus droplets that stay confined in a space, Wood says. In addition, ask contractors to wash their hands regularly, and provide hand sanitizer if they don't bring any, Harris says.

If contractors are landscaping, roofing, or making exterior home repairs and don't need to enter your home, the main form of protection is masking for both of you when interacting, Wood says. The next best practice is to socially distance, she adds. "After the contractor leaves, it's a good idea to wipe down any surfaces that they've touched with disinfectant wipes," Wood says.

Kathryn Vernon, 64, of Austin, Texas, recently had new flooring installed throughout her home. She hired contractors recom-

mended by a trusted interior designer. Although they were in her home and did have to use the bathroom, she and the contractor teamed up to stay safe. She and the workers wore masks, kept the front door open, and ensured a ceiling fan was on when they worked. Vernon allowed them to use the guest bathroom, but kept the window open and sanitized it with bleach and other cleaners each day. They touched very few items or surfaces in the home, so she only had to minimally sanitize other areas. Vernon says she felt safe with her approach, but acknowledged others might not. "I think it's a personal comfort level," she says. "You have to decide what is right for you."

Same rules apply to house cleaners: If you have a house cleaner that comes in regularly to tidy up, it's important not to get complacent and let your guard down, just because that person is not a stranger. Take the same type of precautions you would when other contractors come into your home, says Roman Peysakhovich, CEO of Onedesk, a national cleaning company headquartered in Minneapolis. His company consulted with officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on safety measures. "They told us masks the whole time, while you're cleaning, while you're talking, anything. The whole time from when you enter the home to the moment that you leave," he says. The health experts also advised that Peysakhovich's staff clean their tools between clients' homes.

If a contractor doesn't wear a mask properly or declines other COVID precautions, politely but firmly ask them to leave and reschedule the appointment, says Harris. That can be uncomfortable for some people, but it's essential to prevent transmission of the virus, Harris says. "It's important to educate people," Harris says, "and let them know we need to follow those rules."

What to do When Workers Come Into Your Home

Best practices for dealing with contractors, repair people and cleaning services doing work in your home:

- Talk with managers before workers enter your home to determine what type of safety precautions they will take.
- Have a list of questions to ask contractors, repair experts and anyone else coming in to do work in your home around practices regarding masking, handwashing, COVID-19 testing and temperature checks.
- Maintain social distancing as much as possible. Only share a room with workers when necessary.
- When workers are in your house, keep a window open for ventilation and use a fan to direct air out and lower the risk of virus transmission.

Are you looking for a fun and safe way to stay more active?



Bingocize® is a 10-week virtual program that combines a bingo-like game with exercise and health education.

Our certified Bingocize® leader will guide you through gentle exercises that will help you maintain fitness and mobility, reduce falls, and increase your health knowledge. Come play bingo and meet new people from the comfort and safety of your own home!



- Classes will be held weekly on Thursdays at 1:30PM from March 11th- May 13th, 2021.
- There is no cost to attend or for the program materials.
- Program materials will be available for pick up at the Countryside Community Center in Owego prior to the start of class.
- Spaces are limited and registration is required.

Please call 607-687-4120 ext. 331 for more information and to sign up today!

Tioga County Fun Fact:

E. Jennie Steele 1842 – 1935

Miss Steele was a dedicated teacher who taught for more than fifty years in one-room schoolhouses throughout Tioga County and at Owego Free Academy. She retired in 1916 and was recognized as one of the outstanding educators of NYS.



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Resources to Stay Connected

Connect2Affect – <https://connect2affect.org/>

Connect2Affect is an online resource that offers a network of resources to meet the needs of anyone who is isolated or lonely and helps build the social connections older adults need to thrive.

AARP Community Connections -
<https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/>

Online mutual aid groups (informal groups of volunteers) that stay connected, share ideas, and help those most affected by the coronavirus. Whether you want to start a group, find a group, or get assistance yourself, the directory can help you connect with people in your community.

OMH Emotional Support Line - 1-844-863-9314

The Emotional Support Line provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency. The Help Line is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling.

SAGEConnect -
<https://www.sageusa.org/sageconnect/>

Links LGBT elders with their broader community, reducing isolation, and promoting well-being. Interested individuals can register at the link provided or call the registration line at 929-484-4160.

Cultural & Educational Activities

Smithsonian's National Zoo Animal Webcams -
<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/webcams>
Watch live video streams of elephants, lions, giant pandas, and naked mole rats at the National Zoo.

NASA-Image of the Day -
<https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/iotd.html>

NASA- Videos -
<https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/videogallery/index.html>

Headspace – www.headspace.com/NY
Free guided meditation for New Yorkers

YMCA 360 - <https://ymca360.org/>
Free, online workout videos including yoga, Tai Chi, and active older adults

Three Ways to Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

While vaccination details are getting worked out, here's what you can be sure of:

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine. **That's a scam.**
- You can't pay to get early access to the vaccine. **That's a scam.**
- Nobody legit will call about the vaccine and ask for your Social Security, bank account, or credit card number. **That's a scam.**

Ignore any vaccine offers that say different, or ask for personal or financial information.

Learn more at

ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams



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Tuscan Style Roasted Asparagus

This nutritious and easy recipe brings the taste of fresh seasonal produce to your dinner table!

Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed
- 1-1/2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
- 3 tablespoons pine nuts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Place asparagus, tomatoes, and pine nuts on a baking sheet.
3. Mix oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Pour over vegetables and toss to coat.
4. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until asparagus is tender.
5. Drizzle with remaining oil and lemon juice. Sprinkle with cheese and lemon zest. Toss again to combine.

For easy clean up, place aluminum foil on your baking sheet.

Prep Time	10 mins
Cook Time	20 mins
Total Time	30 mins
Yield	4-6 servings



*Recipe from Taste of Home
www.tasteofhome.com*

"THE GREATNESS
OF A COMMUNITY
IS MOST
ACCURATELY
MEASURED BY THE
COMPASSIONATE
ACTIONS OF ITS
MEMBERS."

CORETTA SCOTT KING

3 Simple Ways to Spread Gratitude

- 1) Send a card to someone you know to brighten their day. Mention a time when they influenced or impacted your life— and thank them. Everyone loves to get mail!
- 2) Offer a kind word to someone who is facing a difficult challenge. Encouraging others lifts their spirits, and can also lift yours.
- 3) Challenge yourself to go 24 hours without complaining. Focus on the good in every situation. You'll feel better, be less stressed, and have a new outlook on any situation.

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Tioga County Rural Ministry Offers Spring Clean Up

Be among the first to sign up for **SPRING CLEANUP!**

If you are 65 years of age and older and live in the town of Owego or Apalachin, you qualify. On Saturday, April 17, adult volunteers from our community will assist residents. Due to the pandemic, volunteers will only assist with outside yard work. You must be available between the hours of 9:30AM – 3 PM.

While we know it's hard to "think Spring" amidst our piles of snow, we encourage early signups since we are limiting registration to the first 40 applicants.

To register, contact Sr. Mary or Rachel at Tioga County Rural Ministry at 687-3021, no later than April 1.

What's for Lunch?

Pick up a delicious "Grab & Go" lunch at the **Countryside Community Center**
9 Sheldon Guile Blvd., Owego



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EMAIL CAITLIN AT CM847@CORNELL.EDU TO REGISTER!

February Dates and Time:
Tuesday's: February 16th, and
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March Dates and Times:
Monday: March 1st 5-6pm
Tuesday's: March 2nd, 9th, 16th
6-7 pm



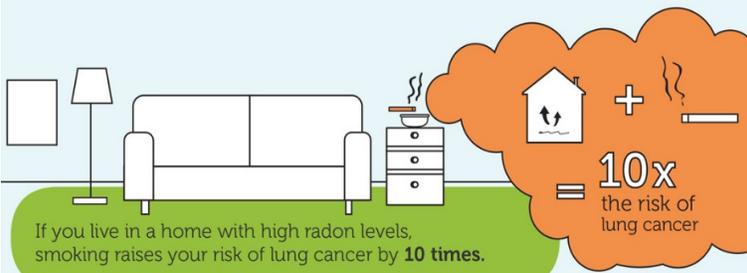
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