

April 2021

# Vitality

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO AGING WITH  
GRACE, PURPOSE AND WELL-BEING

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**On the cover:** Local senior softball teams Guns & Hoses and Patrick Parrott Realty compete in June 2019. While the NMDSSA canceled its season last year due to COVID-19, the Shelby Township Senior Men's Softball League continued to play.

PHOTO BY DAVID DALTON — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

## VITALITY

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## SENIOR LIVING

### MACOMB COUNTY

**Centerline Towers:** 8033 10 Mile, Centerline, 48015

**Chesterfield Library:** 50560 Patricia, Chesterfield, 48047

**Chesterfield Senior Center:** 47275 Sugarbush, Chesterfield, 48047

**Macomb Daily Building:** 19176 Hall Road, Suite 200, Clinton Township, 48038

**Macomb County Seniors:** 21885 Dunham, Clinton Twp, 48036

**Pine Ridge Assisted Living:** 36333 Garfield, Clinton Twp, 48036

**Clinton-Macomb Library:** 35891 S. Gratiot, Clinton Twp, 48035

**Clinton Twp Senior Center:** 40730 Romeo Plank, Clinton Twp, 48038

**Heritage Senior Place:** 15430 18 Mile/ Hayes, Clinton Twp, 48038

**Eastpointe City Rec:** 16435 8 Mile, Eastpointe, 48021

**Fraser Senior Center:** 34935 Hidden Pine, Fraser, 48026

**Tucker Senior Center 26980 Ballard, Harrison Twp, 48045**

**Macomb Senior Center:** 19925 23 Mile, Macomb Twp, 48042

**Mt Clemens Library:** 150 Cass, Mt. Clemens, 48043

**New Baltimore Library:** 36480 Main, New Baltimore, 48047

**Romeo Park and Rec:** 361 Morton, Romeo, 48065

**Roseville Senior Center:** 18185 Sycamore, Roseville, 48066

**Roseville Library:** 29777 Gratiot/ Common, Roseville, 48066

**Shelby Senior Center:** 51670 Van Dyke, Shelby, 48316

**Sunrise Assisted Living:** 46471 Hayes, Shelby, 48315

**Utica Senior Residence:** 7650 Greeley, Shelby/Utica, 48317

**St Clair Shores Library:** 22500 11 Mile, St. Clair Shores, 48081

**SCS Parks and Rec:** 20000 Stephens, St. Clair Shores, 48080

**Sterling Heights Senior Center:** 40200 Utica, Sterling Heights, 48313

**Henry Ford Medical:** 3500 15 Mile Rd/ Ryan Rd, Sterling Heights 48310

**Andreas Rest:** 12/Bunert, Warren 48088

**Warren City Hall:** 29500 Van Dyke between 12 & 13, Warren, 48093

**Warren Community Center:** 5460 Arden, Warren, 48092

### OAKLAND COUNTY

**Auburn Hills Senior Center:** 1827 N. Squirrel, Auburn Hills, 48326

**Orion Center:** 1335 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, 48360

**OPC Rochester:** Letica Rd, Rochester, 48307

**Troy Senior Center:** 3179 Livernois, Troy, 48064

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## MONEY &amp; SECURITY

# What is a construction lien and other real estate questions answered

**Q**: We are in the process of buying a house and on the title work it mentions a construction lien that a heating and cooling company put on the property six months ago. What exactly is that and how does it get removed? We don't want to pay somebody else's bill.



**Steve Meyers**  
Columnist

**A**: The brief definition of a construction lien (some refer to it as a mechanics lien) for this purpose is a lien (a charge against a property making it security for the payment of a debt) that permits a person / company who supplies labor or materials for a construction project to claim a lien against the improved property. So, in short, the heating and cooling company did work at the house and did not get paid. The good news is that the title company will require the seller to pay off the lien out of their proceeds at closing in order to complete the sale. As always, I recommend consulting

with an attorney when it comes to legal matters.

**Q**: I am just starting to look at vacant land to build our retirement home on. The listing of a property says that buyer has to pay for a percolation test. What is that? I'm new to this whole thing.

**A**: A percolation test is a procedure to measure how the soil drains water for a future septic system when no city sewer system is available. Normally if the soil is sandier it will have good drainage and a non-engineered septic field can be used. If it's clay soil with poor drainage then you will need an engineered septic field which costs more money.

*Steve Meyers is a Realtor at RE/MAX Metropolitan in Shelby Twp. and is a member of the RE/MAX Hall of Fame. Contact him with questions at 586-997-5480 or at Steve@AnswersToRealEstateQuestions.com You can also visit his website: AnswersToRealEstateQuestions.com.*

## Market Update

February's market update for Macomb County and Oakland County's housing market is as follows. In Macomb County prices were up by more than 10% and Oakland County prices were up by more than 10% for the month. Residential home/condo on market inventory was down again. Macomb County's on market inventory was down by almost 61% and Oakland County's on market inventory was down by almost 52%. Macomb County average days on market was 32 days and Oakland County average days on market was 35 days. Closed sales in Macomb County were up by more than 2% and closed sales in Oakland County were up by more than 2%. (All comparisons are month to month, year to year.)



## Brian J. Kurtz

AIP FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.  
2041 East Square Lake Road, Suite 200  
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**401k ROLLOVERS:** This is one of my specialties. Rolling over a 401k into an IRA can provide you with more choices, including many that aren't available in your current plan. IRAs also tend to have more distribution options when they pass on to your kids. Call me to discuss your pension or 401k rollover at no charge!

**LIFE INSURANCE:** It's a good idea to have your old policies evaluated from time to time (even if they're "paid up") to see if they are still fitting your needs. I'll do an analysis for you at no cost and see if you're getting the best possible coverage available to you.

**LTC COVERAGE:** Should you buy long-term care insurance? Maybe... or maybe not. I can inform you of ALL the options available to set aside funds for your own care, and help you make an informed decision on which method is best for you.

**ESTATE PLANNING:** Our attorney will prepare your Trust, Powers of Attorney, Medical Powers of Attorney, Last Will and Testament and all other necessary documents for an extremely reasonable fee. And I'll personally make sure all your assets are properly titled!



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## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# PACE Southeast Michigan opens sixth center

**By Jane Peterson**  
For MediaNews Group

A new Pontiac center is seeking to make it easier for local people to stay in their homes as they age.

PACE Southeast Michigan expanded its services in Oakland County with the opening of a new center in Pontiac. A ribbon cutting ceremony to commemorate the event was held on March 24. The center is located at 823 Golf Drive in Pontiac, just east of Telegraph Road.

The facility is 26,000 square feet and includes a day health center, clinic and rehab gym as well as day rooms for planned activities, music and food. It provides medical, social and community-based services for 300 seniors who qualify for nursing home care, but live on their own.

"As many seniors age, they want to remain in their home. It's what they love," said Laurie Arora, PACE vice president – public affairs, philanthropy & organizational development.

PACE, which stands for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, offers coordinated care for seniors. A team of health care professionals, including a nurse case manager, community nurse, social worker and others work with each senior. The team helps them manage their health-care conditions at home and tends to their medical, physical and social needs. Care may include health care provider visits, prescription drugs, home care, dental, vision, hospital visits, rehabilitation, transportation and other services as needed. The social worker can assist with other needs and family concerns. A reverend on staff and spiritual coordinators are available to provide spiritual care.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PACE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held last month at the new 26,000-square-foot center in Pontiac.

"It's person-centered, 24/7 care," she said. "The entire team takes care of the person."

Robert Kemerer, an 85-year-old Oxford resident, said PACE definitely makes his life easier. He appreciates how the team knows him and his medical history. He said when he has a problem, they work together to solve it.

"They treat me like I'm part of the family. I'm someone special to them," he said. "The people are very nice."

Kemerer was enjoying services through the Southfield center, but switched to the Pontiac center when it recently opened. He enjoys visiting on Thursdays.

In addition to the center, 12 low-income housing units, called the PACE Southeast Michigan Community Living and located on the second floor of the Pontiac center, are sched-

uled to open soon.

Part of the national PACE programs, PACE Southeast Michigan is a unique model of care serving as both the health plan, funded by Medicare and Medicaid, and the provider of comprehensive, coordinated services. To be eligible for PACE services, residents must:

- Be age 55 or older.
- Live in a PACE service area.
- Be in need of nursing home care, as determined by the state of Michigan.
- Be able to safely live on their own with assistance from PACE.

The Pontiac PACE center opened after it was determined that the Southfield center was too far away for seniors in the Pontiac area, said Arora. It is the second center in Oakland County, in addition to its corporate office. Its other centers are in Detroit, Eastpointe, Ster-



The center is located at 823 Golf Drive in Pontiac, just east of Telegraph Road.

ling Heights and Dearborn. Established in 1994, PACE Southeast Michigan is the pioneer PACE program in Michigan and continues to be the largest and

fastest growing in the state. The organization employs around 600 people throughout its six centers and corporate office. The Pontiac center currently has 30

employees and the organization is looking for additional staff. Job opportunities and more information are available at [pacesemi.org](http://pacesemi.org).

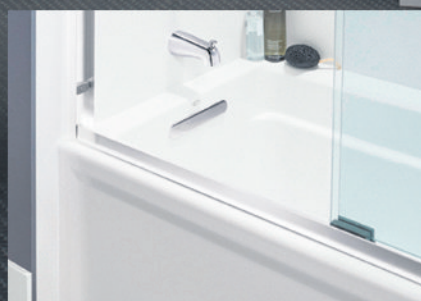




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## MONEY & SECURITY

# Ask the Financial Doctor: Traditional 401(k) or ROTH 401(k)? What's best for you

**Q** : What is the new age for the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)?



**Richard Rysiewski**  
Columnist

**A** : The new age is 72. You must take an RMD after you reach age 72 (70½ if you were 70½ before 1/1/2020). You must take the first RMD by April 1 of the following year. If you defer till April 1 then you must take 2 distributions in that year.

**Q** : Can I contribute to a ROTH 401(k) and a ROTH IRA?

**A** : Yes, you can provided that you are within the income limits for the ROTH IRA.

**Q** : Is it better to contribute to a traditional 401(k) or a ROTH 401(k)?

**A** : That depends on your personal situation and financial goals. ROTH 401(k) accounts may be withdrawn tax-free if certain requirements are satisfied, this works well for workers who expect to be in a higher income tax bracket during retirement.

High-income earners who are ineligible to contribute to a Roth IRA would find the ROTH 401(k) attractive, as there are no income limitations. Traditional 401(k)s, are more appropriate for workers who want a tax break now and expect to be in a lower income tax bracket during retirement.

**Q** : What are the rules regarding the STIMULUS 1, 2 and 3 received by deceased taxpayers?

**A** : If a taxpayer died in 2019 they are not entitled to any STIMULUS payments. If they died in 2020, they are entitled to STIMULUS 1 and STIMULUS 2 only. If they died in 2021 they are entitled to STIMULUS 1, 2 and 3. The IRS accidentally had sent STIMULUS 1 payments to about 1.1 million dead people totaling nearly \$1.4 billion.

The IRS wants that money back and have asked the beneficiaries to return it. However, there is no "clawback" method available to the IRS to collect on payments for deceased taxpayers that were improperly paid.

**Q** : I understand that I can reimburse myself from my Health Savings Account (HSA) for qualified medical expenses that I pay out-of-pocket. Is there a time limit? Do I need to reimburse myself in the same year?

**A** : There is no time limit and the reimbursement does not have to be in the same year as the medical expense. As long as you had your HSA established at the time of the medical expense and it was not reimbursed, you can pay yourself from your HSA, even years later.

**Q** : Can I claim my cousin as a dependent if he has no income and I pay for his living expenses and he lives in my house.

**A** : Yes, you can as long your cousin is not a dependent of another person. Many filers think only young children can qualify as dependents — and they miss out on big deductions as a result. Qualified dependents can include grandchildren, parents living with you as well as living in their own home, and even non-relatives who made less than \$4,300 in income during the tax year.

**Q** : I forgot to deduct some state taxes on schedule A of my 1040 tax return. What forms do I need to correct this mistake?

**A** : You need form 1040X. Specify the amended tax year and include an explanation. The Internal Revenue Service will send you a refund.

*Submit your tax and finance questions to Richard Rysiewski, Certified Financial Planner, at Richard Rysiewski, Financial Doctor, 3001 Hartford Lane, Shelby Twp., MI 48316 or call (248)651-7710.*



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## WORK &amp; PURPOSE

# Navy names ship after Korean War veteran

By Jane Peterson  
For MediaNews Group

Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite announced earlier this year that the Navy was naming five future vessels: Three after ships steeped in naval history, one after a Native American tribe and another after an Oakland County Medal of Honor recipient.

Joining the fleet will be the USS Robert E. Simanek, officially known as the first Expeditionary Sea Base USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7). It is named for Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipient Private First Class Robert Ernest Simanek, 90, a longtime Farmington Hills resident.

Simanek was just 22 years old when he joined Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines in May 1952. He was honored to be a Marine, continuing a family tradition.

"I had two uncles who were Marines who fought in the South Pacific," he said. "I really admired them."

In the Marine Corps, Simanek served as a rifleman and a radioman. He earned the nation's highest medal for valor for his actions in the Korean War during a day he will never forget. After a long night on patrol, Simanek said he was headed back for some sleep when he was sent to an outpost instead. Traveling with tank personnel, they took the wrong route. When they were spotted, fighting broke out.

When two grenades were hurled in his direction, he kicked one out of the way, but there was no time with the other one, so he courageously and without hesitation threw himself on a deadly grenade to shield his fellow Marines from serious injury or death. He survived, although he did sustain serious leg wounds. After a 6-month recovery period, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

He still has a scar to remind him of that day, not that he could ever forget it. Simanek describes what happened just as vividly as

if it occurred yesterday. After he was discharged in 1953, he returned to his vocation as an accountant, met his wife, Nancy, and the pair raised their daughter in Farmington Hills, where they were residents for more than 50 years. Nancy passed away last 4th of July after 64 years of marriage.

In addition to the Medal of Honor and Purple Heart, Simanek was also awarded the Korean Service Medal with two bronze stars.

Oakland County Executive David Coulter described Simanek

as the epitome of an American hero.

"I'm in awe of his selfless act of bravery nearly 70 years ago and so happy for him and his family today. Not only did he receive the Medal of Honor for his valor, but now a Navy vessel with his namesake will be supporting Marines across the globe," he said.

The phone call from the commandant of the Marine Corps about plans for naming the ship after him came out of the blue for Simanek.

"He asked, 'Would you want

that?'" recalled Simanek. "I said, 'My goodness, what a great honor.'"

This ship is currently scheduled to be completed in 2024. Weighing 100,000 tons when fully loaded, the USS Robert E. Simanek will perform a variety of missions, including launching helicopters, small boats, unmanned surface vehicles, special operations, troop transportation and maintenance services.

"I didn't think having a ship named after me would happen," Simanek said. "I was tickled to death when I found out about it."



U.S. NAVY GRAPHIC

A graphic illustration of the future expeditionary sea base USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7).



Robert Simanek, 90, is a longtime Farmington Hills resident.



## TECHNOLOGY

# COVID-19 showed that technology can be the great equalizer

But in the pandemic, some older adults were on the wrong side of the digital divide

By Tom Kamber

Next Avenue

Horace Mann, the noted 19 century education reformer, once described education as “the great equalizer — the balance wheel of the social machine.” He argued that instead of being a benefit reserved for privileged elites, education should serve as a universal force for social cohesion and be universally available as well as valued as a civic necessity.

Today, after our pandemic year, we might ask whether the digital age is at a similar crossroads, with technology becoming our primary architect of social outcomes.

Technology has the potential to be a “great equalizer,” but it is currently an accelerant of social divisions. The severe inequities that burden so many Americans — and older adults in particular — are in many ways made worse by a technology-driven culture and economy that favors individuals from privileged backgrounds.

**What the Pandemic Revealed About the**

## Digital Divide

While the tech boom has made it possible to overcome many distinctions of geography, physical capacity and demography, COVID-19 has revealed the digitally disconnected (and again, older adults in particular) suffering from extreme isolation and lack of access to social and economic resources, while the digitally privileged have remained comparatively better connected, informed and cared for.

In January, with support from the Humana Foundation, my Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP released a landmark report, “Aging Connected,” analyzing disparities in technology access and use among older adults. The study noted that nearly 22 million older adults do not have wireline broadband access at home. It also found disturbing correlations between digital disengagement and race, disability, health status, educational attainment, immigration, rural residence and income.

As America seeks to provide equal opportunity for all, this lack of internet ac-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEXT AVENUE/VIRGINIA HAMLIN

Artist and entrepreneur Virginia Hamlin learned how to conduct all her business online in the pandemic.

cess at home threatens to widen already serious divides between the nation’s privileged and disadvantaged.

Much attention has recently been paid to the “homework gap” among students who lack access to the tools they need for schooling during the pandemic. Comparable challenges exist for older adults whose barriers are twofold: a lack of access combined with a technology education gap.

## Lack of Technology Can Be Life-Threatening

The consequences for older adults can be life-threatening, as we’re now seeing. A recent University of Michigan National Poll

on Healthy Aging revealed that “45% of adults over 65 lack online medical accounts that could help them sign up for COVID-19 vaccinations.”

Despite the digital divide and the problems it creates, technology itself is unbiased and provides equal access to the world’s digital library. If older adults are given access to technology and taught how to use those tools, nothing stands in the way of them using the internet to build a small business, find ways to save money by comparison-shopping online or schedule vaccine appointments necessary to help return our society to normal life.

Just ask Virginia Hamlin. She’s a 76-year-old artist and entrepreneur in Brooklyn, N.Y. who specializes in

creating custom ceramic art and unique scarves. During the pandemic, Hamlin — along with many other artists — was forced to move her business online. She learned how to conduct all her business virtually and continued operating her business safely and efficiently in unprecedented circumstances.

Hamlin is an example of how technology can improve the lives of older adults. But more older adults need access to technology and its extraordinary potential for social change. The Aging Connected campaign aims to bring together people and

organizations over the next two years to measurably help close the technology gap for older Americans.

Horace Mann said something else worth remembering in a speech just days before he died in 1859: “Be ashamed to die before you have won some victory for humanity.” The problem is clear and the solutions are within our reach. We must work together to make sure the digital age is one that fulfills its promise.

*Tom Kamber is the founder and executive director of Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) and Senior Planet.*

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**Deadline is May 5, 2021**

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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# Running with a purpose

## Sterling Heights man completes over 50-mile run in single day to help ‘spread good cheer’

**By Debra Kaszubski**  
For MediaNews Group

Earlier this year, Stephen Klaskowski, 53, ran more than 52.5 miles throughout Macomb County to visit every Utica Community Schools (UCS) facility by foot. Klaskowski has worked for UCS since 2016 in various roles. In addition, he is a 1985 graduate of Utica High School and his daughter graduated from the same high school in 2019.

UCS is Michigan's second-largest school district with 25 elementary schools, seven junior high schools, and four high schools. On January 9, Klaskowski completed the run, which lasted from 5 a.m. to nearly 5 p.m. and included a handful of UCS auxiliary buildings.

"This was my biggest run yet and it was kind of a last-minute thing that I thought of after New Year's. Everyone (at UCS) was affected by COVID, from the warehouse all the way to the IRC (Instructional Resource Center). I felt like I wanted to do something to spread some good cheer, so I planned out this route," he said.

Throughout the day, Klaskowski posted selfies in front of each of the school's signs. He ran along the main road, on sidewalks, and throughout subdivisions accompanied by his wife. The community and local television news media cheered him on throughout the journey. Some students even took part in a small part of the run. "The support was amazing," he said, noting some passers-by beeped support.

Although this was his longest run, this was one of several themed runs Klaskowski has participated in throughout the past two years. He also participated in the Detroit Turkey Trot and Paczki Run. When COVID-19 struck shut down organized races, Klaskowski planned his themed runs, many of them centered around local businesses, holidays, and events.

Klaskowski's themed runs have featured Christmas themes (he visited several local churches and took selfies near their nativity displays), Hanukkah, St. Patrick's Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Easter, Passover, Chinese New Year, Taco Tuesday, and oth-

ers. For his birthday, he ran 6.66 miles in Hell, Michigan.

"I like to run with a purpose. Through many of my runs, I will stop and feature a local business," he said, noting that he doesn't accept gifts or rewards from the businesses he features. "I just want to do what I can to help the community."

Along with helping the community, Klaskowski is helping to improve his health. Since he started running just a little more than two years ago, he has lost more than 75 pounds in two years through diet and exercise.

Klaskowski was a student-athlete, but like many people, he gained weight as he advanced in age. A diet high in calories and fat coupled with a lack of physical activity lead to increased weight and high blood pressure and cholesterol. A doctor's prescription for high blood pressure medication served as the catalyst for Klaskowski to change his habits.

"I thought to myself, what would it take to just lower the dosage (of the blood pressure medication)," he said. "So, I started watching what I ate and I would take walks with my wife. After a while, I wanted to go a little faster, so I started interval training, which is running for a little while then walking."

Interval training eventually led to distance running, and after a short while, Klaskowski was taken off the blood pressure medication. His time is now a little over eight minutes a mile. "I push my body and I always challenge myself to go further," he said. "I'm not saying this is something everybody should do, but it works for me."

Along with running, Klaskowski said he enjoys yoga, aerobics, and weight training. Since he started working out, he said he feels better, his blood pressure is above average, he's stronger and more flexible.

"This has been such a blessing to me," he said. "Not only do I feel better, but my wife is also more active. Plus, I'm helping the community. I've always wanted to make a difference. If I'm helping the students or the small businesses in the area by doing this, then I'm happy, especially during this time."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEPHEN KLASKOWSKI

Stephen Klaskowski, 53, has worked for Utica Community Schools since 2016 in various roles.





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## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program: A long-term care alternative



Katy Kay

Nursing homes throughout Michigan have been hit hard by COVID-19, accounting for more than a third of all deaths related to the virus. The disease has taken an awful emotional toll on their residents, who were unable to see their families for more than a year.

There is a long-term care alternative for people who want to stay in their home, be it an apartment, house or senior community. The MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program is an in-home, long-term Medicaid-based program that provides comprehensive care for seniors and adults with disabilities who meet financial and medical eligibility requirements.

MI Choice turned out to be a perfect fit for Katy Kay, who has been a participant for 15 years. The services it



PHOTO COURTESY OF AREA AGENCY ON AGING 1-B

The MI Choice program turned out to be a perfect fit for Katy Kay, 51, of Rochester Hills, who has been a participant for 15 years.

provides to Kay, who lives in a senior apartment complex in Rochester Hills, enables her to live her life on her own terms.

Kay, 51, gets two home aides who split shifts to help her get in and out of bed, wrap her legs (she has lymphedema as a result of

being confined to a wheelchair for her MS), help her to take a shower, do laundry and some light house cleaning. Kay lives next to a shopping center that has a Kroger, dollar store and other amenities.

"It's awesome. I go to the grocery store by myself to pick up my own food. I go to the library myself. MI Choice gives me the opportunity to get out and to have the comfort of being in my own home and staying independent. I will even go two miles out of my way if I choose. I have the freedom to do what I want," says Kay, who was enrolled in the program by the Area Agency on Aging 1-B.

AAA 1-B enrolls residents from its six-county service area region (Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair and Washt-



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PHOTO COURTESY OF AREA AGENCY ON AGING 1-B

After her aunt left a nursing home following years of rehabilitation from a stroke, Shawn Mullin learned that she could become her paid primary caregiver.

enaw counties). Other MI Choice “agents” in the region include Macomb Oakland Regional Center.

The program is available statewide (there are about 12,000 total participants in Michigan).

MI Choice is person-centered, so a support coordinator from the agency will help build a plan of care tailored to a person’s needs. As a result, it is far less expensive for the state, which pays an average of \$200 per day for a nursing home resident compared to about \$80 for a MI Choice participant.

After her aunt left a nursing home following years of rehabilitation from a stroke, Shawn Mullin learned that she

could become her paid primary caregiver. She took the training and became certified, and over the past two years, Mullin has cared for her aunt as a so-called ‘umbrella employee.’ That means she is paid by a home health care agency to take care of one person. Mullin, of Clinton Township, cooks, cleans and dresses her aunt, does her laundry and the grocery shopping.

MI Choice, says Mullin, is “amazing.”

“It keeps somebody in their own home with their loved ones, where they should be,” she says.

*Content courtesy of Area Agency on Aging 1-B*

### Services offered to MI Choice participants

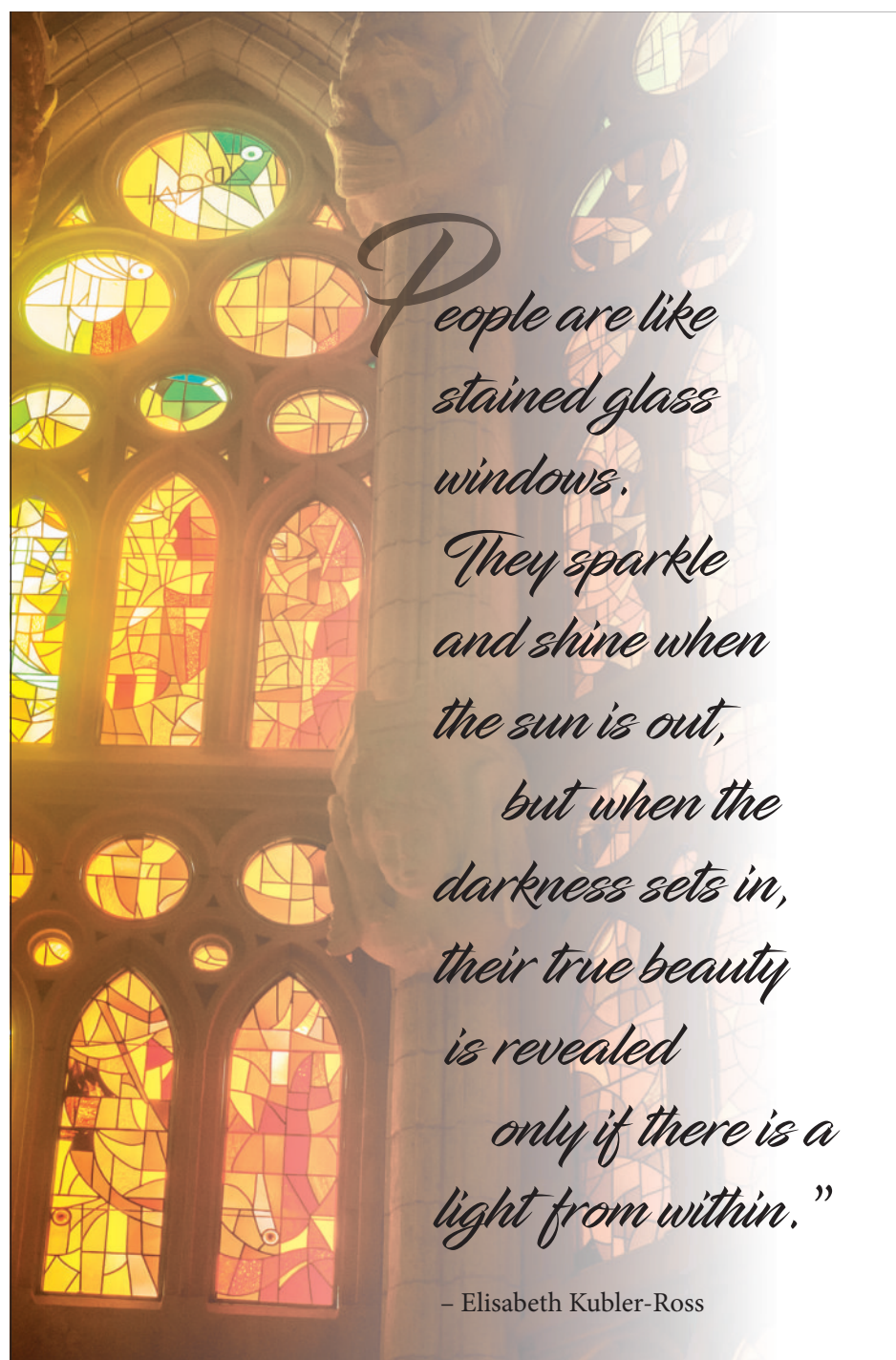
- Personal care (help with bathing, toileting and personal hygiene)
- Help transferring (getting into and out of bed)
- Nursing care
- Housekeeping/meal preparation
- Adult day services
- Respite care for family members
- Transportation
- Service/care coordination
- Home modifications
- Home-delivered meals
- Personal emergency response systems
- Relief for family caregivers
- Specialized medical equipment and supplies

### To qualify for the program, a person must:

- Be at least 65 years old or be an adult with a disability
- Need a nursing home-level of care
- Meet Medicaid financial eligibility criteria

### Other facts about MI Choice:

- You can get MI Choice in your own home or in a licensed or unlicensed assisted living community.
- A relative may be designated as a primary caregiver (and receive training and certification) and be reimbursed. Spouses are excluded.
- After a person or his loved one calls AAA 1-B at 800-852-7795, a screening and telephone assessment will be completed (after it is safe to do so, the agency will go back to in-person assessments).



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and shine when  
the sun is out,  
but when the  
darkness sets in,  
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only if there is a  
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– Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# SENIOR SOFTBALL PLAYERS TAKE THE FIELD DESPITE PANDEMIC

By Debra Kaszubski  
For MediaNews Group

**S**oftball is finally back in full swing for two leagues of anxious players.

For the first time since 2019, the Shelby Township Senior Men's Softball League, which is made up of 12 teams comprised of players who reside in Shelby Township and nearby communities, will play against teams from the North Metro Detroit Senior Softball Association (NMDSSA), an Oakland County-based league made up of 18 teams.

Last year, the NMDSSA canceled its season due to COVID-19. The Shelby league continued to play and even added four new teams to their league from the NMDSSA. For 2021, those teams have re-joined the Oakland County league.

"I see excitement in all of the managers in wanting to start play again. We are getting back to being normal with most players being vaccinated, safety measures are in place, and everyone is looking forward not just to playing ball, but getting back with their teammates," said Steve Vrnak, who is a member of the NMDSSA Executive Committee and a team manager.

For both leagues, there are three divisions, with the first being made up of the most competitive players in their 50s and 60s. Division 2 is the largest made up of players of multiple skill levels, while the third division is a bit slower. Although there are some slight variations in the rules, the game is pretty



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SHELBY TOWNSHIP SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE

There are more than 1.5 million active senior softball players in the country, and that number continues to grow.

much the same. In 2021, the top two teams from Shelby's first division have joined the NMDSSA for Division 1 play. This move allows the teams the ability to play

each other using the same

gameplay restrictions. Other divisions have implemented this change as well, allowing for greater competition among players.

"This will create a highly competitive Division 1 for 2021," said Ted Vander Putten, manager of the Guns & Hoses team.

Players in both leagues will be required to follow

mandatory Centers for Disease Control (CDC) restrictions designed to curb the spread of COVID-19. Procedures are also in place should a player contract the virus.

Play starts in May and extends through late July. Playoff games are planned as well. New players interested in trying the sport should do so, as there are openings available.

"There is absolutely no reason why a player who is even remotely interested in playing should not do so," Vrnak said. "Getting out on weekday mornings, playing some ball, and then getting together afterward and/or between games with teammates has truly contributed to making this stage of my life the best stage."

Softball is the top men's team sport overall, with more than 1.5 million active senior players in the country, according to the Senior Softball USA (SSUSA) website. The sport allows players the opportunity to work on their aerobic endurance, agility, and flexibility.

"Shake off all of those stay-at-home blahs and play ball," Vander Putten said. "It's a guaranteed great time."

Leagues play at either Clintonwood Park in Clarkston or at Mae Stecker Park or Ford Field in Shelby Township.

Macomb County residents ages 55 who are interested in playing may register via the Shelby Township Parks and Recreation website. Oakland County residents may contact Vrnak at [sgvrnak@aol.com](mailto:sgvrnak@aol.com) or by calling 248-330-9247.





PHOTOS BY DAVID DALTON — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Leagues play at either Clintonwood Park in Clarkston or at Mae Stecker Park or Ford Field in Shelby Township.

**“There is absolutely no reason why a player who is even remotely interested in playing should not do so. Getting out on weekday mornings, playing some ball, and then getting together afterward and/or between games with teammates has truly contributed to making this stage of my life the best stage.”**

— *Steve Vrnak, North Metro Detroit Senior Softball Association Executive Committee member and a team manager.*



Players in both leagues will be required to follow mandatory CDC restrictions to help curb the spread of COVID-19.



After more than a year spent confined to our homes, participating in, or coming out to watch a game can help shake off the stay-at-home blahs, Guns & Hoses team manager Ted Vander Putten said.



## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THERAPY

By Jackson Rainer

For Next Avenue

As a psychologist practicing psychotherapy, I've been receiving calls that sound like this: "My primary care physician says I need to see you. I'm depressed, anxious, lonely and feeling crazy. I know I need help, but I don't even know what I'm asking for." These types of vague requests have become the norm this last year.

Primarily because of pandemic uncertainty, isolation and social unrest, a greater number of people are asking for psychological help. We are in a mental health crisis in this country and like most of my peers, I am struggling to accommodate everyone who is requesting therapy.

Considering what we are living through, we are all probably due for counseling. However, many of those seeking help are unsure of what that even means.

The stereotype of someone lying on a couch, recounting dreams, disclosing dark secrets and talking about toilet training is an outdated notion that contributes to the stigma of therapy.

Known colloquially as counseling or therapy, psychotherapy is like having a series of deep conversations with a close friend where you only talk about yourself.

A well-trained therapist/counselor listens carefully through the lens of research-based principles and offers tools that help patients modify their behaviors, thoughts, emotions and other personal characteristics that are disruptive and require closer attention.

Psychotherapy is a reasonable option to explore following a troubling life event, such as a shift of relationship, work, health, family or personal status that becomes disruptive to activities of daily living. When those tried-and-true ways of problem-solving fail, a course of therapy may be indicated.

For example, a 55-year-old man requested help when he was identified as a "long hauler" after suf-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Primarily because of pandemic uncertainty, isolation and social unrest, a greater number of people are asking for psychological help.

fering from persistent symptoms of COVID-19. "I am arguing with myself that I'm chronically sick. The more I fight it, though, the worse I get," he said. "I just can't push through like I've always done before when I've had any kind of illness."

A course of psychotherapy helped him examine strategies he was using that were ineffective and helped him form new ways of caring for himself as a result of the virus's lasting effects.

Similarly, a woman in her mid-50s requested therapy when she was terminated from her company during the height of the pandemic shutdown. "I survived two downsizings from different companies and was able to rebound and find other good jobs. This time, I feel like I've been put out to pasture and I'm just defeated," she said. "I'm too young to retire, but can't mobilize the energy that I need to work."

Therapy helped her marshal the strengths and resources necessary for a challenging job

search.

A psychotherapy patient, typically referred to as a client, will be encouraged to discuss whatever is most relevant and distressing. The therapist listens for patterns, rhythms and themes that are upsetting and beyond obvious understanding.

As a rule, psychotherapy is a step toward a healthier version of the self and living a meaningful life, whatever challenges become burdensome. Through a successful course of therapy, self-destructive habits and thoughts can be changed. Painful feelings can be resolved. Relationships can improve.

### What Will I Talk About?

A client can expect to talk about here-and-now feelings and experiences as well as to examine previous times where they felt similar distress. Proper psychotherapy is insight-oriented, striving to increase the personal awareness of unconscious motivations, historical explanations,

irrational thoughts and dysfunctional behaviors that are revealed through current problems.

Depending on the form of therapy, the level and type of conversation and direction varies between the therapist and client:

- Psychodynamic therapy is structured for talk about feelings and experiences and how the past shapes the present. It is suitable for depression, anxiety and a wide variety of issues.

- Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) tends to be a shorter-term form of therapy with a specific goal to be achieved, such as challenging irrational beliefs. It works best for those with specific anxieties, phobias, obsessive-compulsive thinking and substance abuse.

- Humanistic therapies, such as gestalt and experiential, is a whole-person approach to empower choice. It is particularly beneficial for self-esteem concerns or issues with self-trust and decision making.

Regardless of mode and style of treatment, the therapist and cli-

ent are collaborative. Good therapy offers specific research-based techniques to help change negative thinking, manage stress, improve mood and enhance relationship quality.

In its broadest sense, therapy guides people toward greater self-awareness, self-empowerment and toward happier and more fulfilling lives.

At the onset of therapy, treatment directions are established, including the steps needed to reach a mutually defined outcome. Whether individual, group or family therapy, the relationship with the therapist is focused on both the content and process of the problem.

The therapeutic process – how an individual shares feelings, thoughts and experiences – is just as important as the specific issues and concerns discussed. A client can expect the therapist to be supportive, listen attentively with appropriate feedback and follow standard ethical guidelines. A client can expect absolute



privacy, confidentiality and support for making reasonable steps that may be enacted and practiced in day-to-day activities.

A therapy session typically lasts 45 to 50 minutes with the expectation that return visits will be scheduled on a regular, frequent basis (weekly or bi-weekly is the norm). The number of sessions is discussed as treatment goals are set.

The fee for a psychotherapy session varies by provider. Many insurers cover the cost of psychotherapy, either through major-medical assignment or a company's employee assistance program (EAP). Should a client fall outside of insurance subsidies, some practitioners will negotiate fees on a sliding scale.

Psychotherapy is different from psychiatry, which is provided exclusively by a physician and most often oriented only to medication management.

### How Will I Know if My Therapist Is Competent?

Beginning therapy may be a bit anxiety provoking. A client



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NEXT AVENUE/GETTY

Considering what we are living through, we are all probably due for counseling.

will want to know the counselor's general philosophy and approach to helping. A competent therapist will approach others

in compassionate and optimistic ways.

The therapist will encourage a client's personal independence,

and as I frequently tell my clients, to "become your own best therapist." A capable therapist will have a body of experience dealing with the kinds of problems a client brings. All psychotherapists have specialties of practice that can be discussed to ensure a good fit for resolution of the problem at hand.

A trained therapist holds a graduate degree from a reputable university. It takes years of education and supervised experience to effectively help people. You should look for a therapist with a master's or doctoral level training in psychology, social work, counseling or marriage and family therapy.

Graduate education involves academic acquisition of skills needed for diagnosis and treatment using effective, scientifically proven methods. Following degree completion, the therapist must pass a state licensing examination and agree to participate in continuing education throughout their professional career. Without proper training, there is great risk of causing harm.

### What Should Therapy Accomplish?

A course of psychotherapy helps to resolve the presenting complaint and symptom. Therapy can let a person be more creative, learn and heal. A client will feel relief and a renewed sense of personal strength to meet the demands of living.

Good psychotherapy will help a client integrate and incorporate the presenting symptom into thoughtfully understood emotional, cognitive and behavioral ways that encourage well-being.

As one of my clients said, "I thought I was coming into something mysterious. The hardest part was getting started. Once I began, I was not scared or overwhelmed. I started feeling better and more in charge."

*Jackson Rainer is a board-certified clinical psychologist practicing with CHRIS 180 Counseling Center DeKalb in Atlanta. He may be contacted at [jacksonprainer@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonprainer@gmail.com).*

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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# Report: 94% of older Americans take medications that could increase their likelihood of falling

By Linda Searing

Special to The Washington Post

The vast majority of older adults, 94% of those 65 and older, are taking medications that are known to increase the likelihood of falling, research has found.

Though prescribed to treat such conditions as high blood pressure, depression, sleep problems or pain, the drugs often come with potential side effects that can lead to falls, including lightheadedness, reduced alertness, slowed reaction times and drowsiness. The research notes that, in an 18-year span, older adults filled more than 7.8 billion prescrip-

tions for such medications, increasing how many take these drugs from 57% in 1999 to 94% in 2017.

In that same time period, the rate of deaths caused by falls among older adults more than doubled.

Each year, about 1 in 4 older adults report falling, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and about 20% of those falls result in a serious injury, such as a hip fracture or head trauma. The agency says that falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries in older adults.

Among drugs that increase the likelihood of falls, blood-pressure drugs

known as antihypertensives are prescribed the most often, according to the research published in the journal *Pharmacoepidemiology & Drug Safety*.

But prescriptions for antidepressants also have "increased dramatically," the researchers wrote, going from 12 million to 52 million filled prescriptions and from 7 to 16% of older people taking them by 2017.

Other drugs that raise the risk for falling include anticonvulsants, antipsychotics, opioids, sedatives, antihistamines and some tranquilizers. Besides being aware of the pros and cons of medications being taken by older adults, the ways to

reduce their risk for falling include exercising to improve balance and muscle strength and making living space changes, such as improving lighting, removing throw rugs, adding grab bars in the bathroom and wearing an electronic pendant that can be buzzed for help if needed.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The vast majority of older adults, 94% of those 65 and older, are taking medications that are known to increase the likelihood of falling, research has found.



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## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# HOW TO BE MORE OPTIMISTIC

After a year fraught with health, social, racial and economic challenges, what we can do to become hopeful again

**Jackson Rainer**

*For Next Avenue*

2020 was precarious due to the pandemic, racial unrest and contentious political divides. Everywhere in the world, doubt, skepticism and the lack of surety came with waves of discomfort. Psychologically, when in the presence of the stress of such uncertainty, the hardwiring of the brain directs attention toward the perception of threat. Threat implies danger. This last year has been one threat after another.

We are at the beginning of a new social and community order, particularly evident with vaccination distribution and a different political administration. To focus and reorient to a more upbeat and encouraging outlook, a person makes intentional cognitive shifts toward the positives rather than focusing on the struggles.

Optimism is defined as the cognitive ability to understand the current situation as it is and work for changing things in favor of ourselves. Rather than naively focusing completely on the positive, the psychological task is to counterbalance the bias toward the negative. What we pay attention to and how we interpret an event or situation essentially is up to us.

This is especially true when considering the future. The more we orient toward ways of increasing positive emotions sensed in day-to-day life, the healthier and happier into the re-entry of the coming world changes we'll be.

## Optimism Promotes Well-being

Hamid Mirsalimi is a clinical psychologist practicing in Atlanta. He says, "We view the future as if we have a crystal ball that can make predictions. Much is unknown about our future, leaving it largely to our imagination."

In future-oriented thinking, an



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

To focus and reorient to a more upbeat and encouraging outlook, a person makes intentional cognitive shifts toward the positives rather than focusing on the struggles.

individual's natural disposition plays a considerable role in looking forward. Some people effortlessly maintain a sunnier outlook than others. For nearly everyone, the last year has presented a challenge to looking on the bright side.

Mirsalimi continues, saying, "We've been protective of ourselves and have come to assume that the struggle of being open to positive possibilities holds the potential to be sick or hurt. The long-term cost for this sense of over-protection weighs heavily, much more than the potential cost for occasional disappointment if we are more optimistic."

There is ample science giving evidence to the role of optimism as promoting mental health and well-being. Any psychological condition that accompanies negative

thinking and unbearable distress, as has been characteristic of the last year, may be the right place for applying a cognitive shift toward optimism.

## 3 Steps to Counter Pessimism

Many now find it natural in this day and time to expect the worst. There are three simple and applied cognitive steps that can be taken to counter pessimistic thoughts and increase the tendency toward optimism.

1. Analyze your thoughts and give yourself credit. Think of your best possible self.

When a challenging event happens, stop and think. Ask and answer these personal questions: How much influence do I have

over the outcome? Where am I in charge? Which of my personal strengths have been employed to make it through this difficult time? What are the ways I've directly and indirectly contributed to make the event unfold?

Take it a bit further, as optimistic self-talk works. Consider exchanging simple thoughts with a friend or loved one about what was enjoyable, productive and meaningful in the day. Discuss plans for making the most of the next day. Imagine everything works out for the best, even when these thoughts feel foreign or contrived.

2. Minimize the negative when it is realistic to do so.

When negative events happen, consider the extenuating circumstances that could have contrib-

uted to its occurrence. What did you influence and what was beyond your capacity?

For example, Dr. Steve Rigdon, a Georgia internal medicine physician, says of several clients who were sick with COVID-19, "They did everything asked: Masks, social distance, exceptional hygiene. They got sick anyway. There is an element of luck that is beyond understanding the disease."

As one of these patients said, "I did all that I could, and it still got me." Recognizing the limits to his influence, the fellow was able to turn his thoughts toward recovery.

3. Put away the to-do list. Focus on effort, rather than results.

The right attitude builds optimism. Positive thinkers focus more on the process than the results. Consider what is good enough and follow emotions through to a deeply felt personal "settling place."

As Mirsalimi says, "Emotions that are left unprocessed, unspoken or pushed to the side always have a negative effect. Once we can acknowledge how we are looking forward, rather than what has caused emotional exhaustion, worry lessens."

The Serenity Prayer, considering what we can change, what we cannot and using our own wisdom to know the difference, can be encouraging, according to Mirsalimi.

"Optimism is one of the characteristics highly related to life satisfaction. Approaching the future as positive and viewing ourselves as capable of creating more positive outcomes helps us take steps toward leading to a more fulfilling and meaningful life," he says.

*Jackson Rainer is a board-certified clinical psychologist practicing with CHRIS 180 Counseling Center DeKalb in Atlanta. He may be contacted at [jacksonrainer@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonrainer@gmail.com).*



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## Calendar of activities, events and trips

**Editor's Note:** With the cancellations of community events due to COVID-19, The Vitality calendar listings will begin with events beginning in September. The ongoing monthly events will also be listed. Before attending an event, contact the organizers to find out if it has been cancelled.

To submit information for the calendar, email [jgray@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:jgray@medianewsgroup.com).

**New groups forming in the New Baltimore/Chesterfield area:** Widowers, Widows and Divorced Seniors On With Life. This group offers socializing, activities and rap sessions. For more information or to be placed on the contact list, call 586-6465636.

### APRIL

**April 12-17, 2021:** This is a wonderful trip SHOW to Nashville, Tennessee. We

will see two great shows, The Grand Ole Opry and the Nightlife Dinner Theater. We will enjoy 5 nights lodging three consecutive in Nashville, a guided tour of Nashville and the Belle Meade plantation, admission to country music Hall of Fame, a ride on the Delta Flatboats, etc. The trip is \$709 per person with double occupancy and it includes 8 meals: 5 breakfasts and 3 dinners. The trip is expected to sell out. For questions or to make a reservation, call Mary Ann at 586-530-6936.

**April 15:** Friends & Family Game Night: Pictionary online, sponsored by the Roseville Public Library, 29777 Gratiot, at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 15 on Zoom. Meeting ID: 99837131826. Use Zoom's white board feature to create works of art and see if your teammates can guess what they are. No registration neces-

sary. For more information, call 586-445-5407.

**April 18:** Octagon House Spring Open House from 1-4 p.m., 57500 Van Dyke, Washington. Self-guided tour with docents to assist. Mask wearing is mandatory: hand sanitizing and social distancing as much as possible. Admission \$5 per person. Additional information call 586-781-0084.

**April 20:** Take & Make Craft: Cardinal Button, sponsored by the Roseville Public Library, 29777 Gratiot on Tuesday, April 20 (registration open). Register for your materials to make these fun crafts. An instructional video demonstrating how to put the craft together will be posted to Facebook and YouTube at the date listed above. Supplies are limited so please register. You will need a valid Roseville library to do so. For more information, call 586-445-5407.

### MAY

**May 3-13:** The Friends of the Octagon House will be accepting used books, CD's, DVD's and puzzles for their upcoming Octagon House Used Book Sale. Donations will be accepted May 3 through May 13. All the books will be quarantined for a minimum of three day and most of them longer. Items can be left on the porch in the designated BOOK BOX at 57500 Van Dyke, Washington. The sale will take place in the Milk House Sunday, May 16 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.. Donations of \$5 or more will have free entry into the Octagon House. All other visitors will have a \$5 per person entrance fee. Docents will be on hand to assist all visitors. There will be a minimum of 6 visitors at a time in the Milk House. Mask wearing is mandatory; visitors will be asked to hand sanitizers and

social distancing as much as possible. For additional information, call 586-781-0084 or [info@octagon-house.org](mailto:info@octagon-house.org)

**May 16:** Octagon House Open House and Used Book Sale from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., 57500 Van Dyke, Washington. Items purchased in the Milk House with a minimum donation of \$5 will have free entry into the Octagon House. All other visitors will have a \$5 per person entrance fee. Docents will be on hand to assist all visitors. There will be a minimum of 6 visitors at a time in the Milk House. Mask wearing is mandatory; visitors will be asked to hand sanitizers and social distancing as much as possible. For additional information, call 586-781-0084 or [info@octagon-house.org](mailto:info@octagon-house.org)

### AUGUST

**Aug. 30-Sep. 3:** MHL

PRESENTS the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, the life-sized Noah's Ark Experience will certainly amaze you. Ark Encounter features a full-size Noah's ark built according to the dimensions given in the Bible. Spanning 510 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 51 feet high this modern engineering marvel amazes visitors young and old. We will also visit the Creation Museum's 75,000 square feet of state of the art exhibits, stunning botanical gardens, petting zoo, etc. This evening enjoy a dinner party with entertainment. The next day after our morning continental breakfast, we stop at a casino for some gaming. Afterwards, you'll enjoy a BBBB Riverboat's sightseeing cruise on the Ohio River. All this and the price is only \$579 double occupancy and it includes 4 breakfast, 4 dinners, admis-

CALENDAR » PAGE 24

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### MORNING BINGO Mondays

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# Adoption Page

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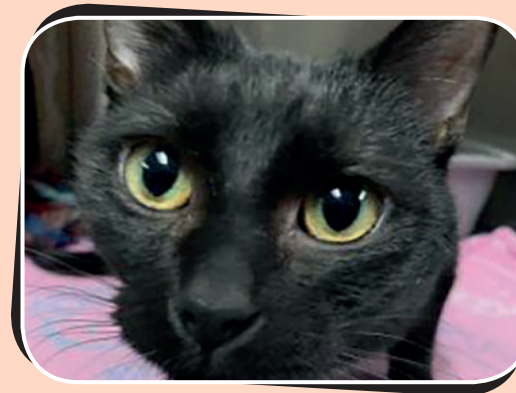
### NUGGET

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- Spayed/Neutered
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- Up-to-date with routine shots
- Adult Female/Large



### AMBER

- Domestic Long Hair
- Spayed/Neutered
- Housebroken
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# Calendar

## FROM PAGE 22

sion to all attractions, sight-seeing cruise and visit to a Casino. Contact Mary Ann at 586-530-6936 for more information and details.

## MONTHLY EVENTS

■ **Octagon House:** Sit and Stitch is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 1-4 p.m., 57500 Van Dyke, Washington. For more information, call 586-781-0084.

■ **Volunteers needed:** Volunteers are needed to help immigrants with conversational English during English workshops at the Troy Community Center. Neither educational qualifications nor experience is required, but volunteers should be natural-born Americans who speak the standard American dialect. Volunteers may sign up for one or both schedules, 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays and 10

a.m. to noon Saturdays. For more information, contact Ed Lee at 248-926-2288 or edlee@toee.org.

■ **Confident Communicators Club:** Meets monthly for people that need self improvement skills in public speaking and confidence with leading people confidently, in any clubs, schools, travel, families, churches and it is a free non profit club the first three visits. The group meets at Washington townships senior center 57900 Van Dyke upstairs level on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 8-9:30 a.m.

■ **Senior Card Playing:** Come and join a fun group of card players who play a wide range of card games. Everyone brings a snack to share while playing. Free. Mondays from 1-4 p.m. at 35248 Cricklewood Blvd. (Cricklewood Recreation Building). Call 586-725-0291.

■ **New Baltimore Senior Club:** Tuesdays from 10 a.m.

to 2 p.m. This welcoming group of seniors has all sorts of fun. We play bingo, hold luncheons, go on trips, and play cards. Monthly dues, \$2. Location 35248 Cricklewood Blvd. (Cricklewood Recreation Building). Call 586-725-0291.

■ **Zumba Gold:** from 10:30-11:30 a.m. every Monday and Wednesday at the Washington Center, 57880 Van Dyke, Washington Twp. Cost depends on how many punches purchased. 4 punches \$23 resident, \$29 NR; 11 punches \$60 resident, \$66 NR. For more information, call 586-752-6543.

■ **Line Dancing:** Join us for line dancing every Thursday at our Washington Activity Center (57900 Van Dyke, Washington) Intermediate/Advanced starts at 10:30 and Beginners starts at 11:30. Call for more details 586-752-6543

■ **Pickleball:** is played from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at the

Romeo Activity Center, 361 Morton St. Drop in to play or call 586-752-9601 for more information.

■ **The Warren/Center Line Senior Connection:** invites adults ages 55 and older to join Macomb County's vibrant senior group. The group meets on the second Monday of the month at DeCarlo's Banquet & Convention Center, 6015 E. 10 Mile Road in Warren, just east of Mound. Doors open at 5 p.m., and programs start at 6 p.m. Dues are \$10 per year, and members receive the following: free refreshments, coffee, soft drinks, juices, and snacks; music by a disc jockey and dancing; and information from guest speakers. Featured speakers throughout the year include officials from federal, state, county, and city governments; doctors of all specialties, from internal medicine and gerontologists to cancer specialists; elder law attorneys; and fraud prevention speakers. For

more information, call 586-268-9452, 586-264-5657, or 586-755-6112.

■ **Pickleball:** is going strong at the Romeo Activity Center (361 Morton Street, Romeo) every Tuesday and Thursday from 10-11. Please call for more details 586-752-6543.

■ **Volunteers needed:** Volunteers are needed to help immigrants with conversational English during English workshops at the Troy Community Center. Neither educational qualifications nor experience is required, but volunteers should be natural-born Americans who speak the standard American dialect. Volunteers may sign up for one or both schedules, 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays. For more information, contact Ed Lee at 248-926-2288 or edlee@toee.org.

■ **Euchre parties:** Disabled American Veterans 129 and Operation Yellow Ribbon hold euchre parties from 4 to 6

p.m. on the second Sundays and 7 to 9 p.m. on the fourth Thursdays of every month at 47326 Dequindre Road in Shelby Township. The cost is \$7 (plus quarters for euchre). Refreshments will be available. Reservations are needed one day in advance. Call 248-425-2722 or 248-953-4901 to register or for more information.

■ **The Mi Stitchin' Time Crochet Group:** meets from 5:30 to 7 p.m. every Tuesday at the Romeo District Library's Kezar Library, 107 Church St. For more information, call 586-752-2583.

■ **Detroit region retirees:** If you live in the metropolitan Detroit area, are retired, and would like to meet new people from other walks of life, the Detroit region retirees group meets five times a year at various restaurants in the area. For more information, contact Stanley Hreneczko at 586-268-3656.



Vitality publishes every month, and is specially written and produced for older adults 55 and over. Monthly features include • Health Care

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# Poetry PAGE

## Spring Season

Snow beginning to melt  
Spring is near  
Off that lazy boy  
and out of the house.  
Start breathing that fresh air.

You know its spring  
when the red, red robins  
are in town, we all assume.  
Our state flower  
the apple blossom  
is in bloom.

The Detroit Tigers  
New manager  
Promising rookies  
Stands to reason  
Looking ahead  
For a better season.

On the golf course this morning  
Thought I was there for hours  
Then remembering the words  
of Walter Hagen,  
relax enjoy the day and don't forget  
to stop and smell the flowers.

By John Cameron  
of Shelby Twp, MI

## Time For Green

Icicles melt in the afternoon sun,  
watering the earth below.  
There lies the green, soon to be seen  
as everyone knows.

You'll be dancing to the music and singing the tunes,  
and raising a glass with a smile;  
When you hear the Irish songs,  
you'll feel like you belong  
to a "wearing-of-the-green association.

Happy faces with hearts that care,  
in spirit of the season.  
In the friendship of the moment,  
find peace to share.

Read the poets that know it,  
Sing from your heart;  
A spell of good cheer will you cast;  
If luck is on your side,  
you'll smile with pride,  
finding friends that last and last....

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

By Margherita J. Wiszowaty  
of St. Clair Shores, MI

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# Poetry CORNER

## Orphan

Fidelia patiently stands in her rack by the bus stop at Fourteen Mile  
Waiting to carry her master back from his job to their domicile.

Full many a year she has done this task; she regards it still as fun.  
Now she waits and waits and waits and waits; her mission as yet half done.

She's stood in place through the winter cold, the ice and the chilling storm  
Now Spring has come, a redeeming grace, perhaps she'll again be warm.

Her pedals long for his sturdy feet to propel her along the road  
Her handlebars ache for his gentle hands to guide her to their abode.

Passers-by gawk at the rusting hulk, which once was a thing of beauty  
I fear, alas, he will never come; she'll never fulfill her duty.

By Al Rosie,  
of Birmingham, MI

## Cumberland Spring

Springtime comes early in Tennessee.  
It's not just the flowers or even the trees.  
The air feels new..and light...fresh..and clean.  
She arrives somehow unexpected ~ sometimes in the midst of snow.  
Colors are bright as they push through the earth, reaching upward for sunbeams and rainbows.  
Soft mists of rain encourage new life to emerge from its long frozen sleep  
and cover our world with new green.

Spring comes in March to these Cumberland hills ~ she comes to the mountains, to the fields and the woods.

'Tis not only "St. Pat's" for the greening, but the hill and the farm and the vineyard.  
There's a softness I feel ~ in the breeze, in the sun ~ the touch of the mist, the sweet song of a bird.  
There's a newness to see in the pinks of the dawn ~ as the earth comes alive once again.

It's dusk in the mountains ~ just before sunset ~ can you feel the dark shades of the night?  
They herald the moon, they cushion the stars ~ as the sun retreats to her bed.  
Great camel-backed ridges march past the horizon ~ smoked purple shadows take solace in the midst.  
Amethyst skies shimmer and glow with shaded opal clouds.  
And suddenly it's dark.  
Even in spring there is rest.

By Elizabeth Prechtel McClellan  
of Warren, MI



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