



Senior Connection

An E-Newsletter of B/S/S/T Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

February 2021

"In the coldest February, as in every other month in every other year, the best thing to hold on to in this world is each other."

-Linda Ellerbee



What's Happening

[Announcements & News Highlights](#)

Upcoming Events

[Free Educational Webinars](#)

Meals on Wheels Endless Mountains Menus

We're currently operating on an alternative menu and delivery schedule. Please call 1-800-982-4346 for more information.



PEERs Send Valentines

Some Pennsylvania Empowered Expert Residents (PEERs) under the Ombudsman program are working diligently to make Valentines to send far away. The cards and notes will be sent to residents in Colorado, the second state in the nation to embrace the PEER program, in hopes the groups might become pen pals.

Groups participating in this project in the B/S/S/T Area Agency on Aging area are: Country Terrace Personal Care Home, Guthrie Towanda Memorial Personal Care Home, Forest City Skilled Nursing Unit, and Gracious Living Estates Personal Care Home.

The Second Most Famous Groundhog in PA

Punxsutawney Phil has had his day, and love it or hate it, we're apparently in for 6 more weeks of winter. The second most famous groundhog in PA though, Gus the "spokesgroundhog" for the Pennsylvania Lottery, has a message everyone can



love: the Pennsylvania Lottery directs all proceeds to programs that benefit older residents.

Since ticket sales began in 1972, the Pennsylvania Lottery has contributed more than \$31 billion to benefit programs that include property tax and rent rebates; free and reduced-fare transportation services; the low-cost prescription programs PACE and PACENET; care services; and local services provided by the 52 Area Agencies on Aging – like us!

We are proud to be part of a Commonwealth that not only shares our view on the value and importance of older adult lives, but “puts the money where the mouth is”!

PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE: 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537)

[LEARN MORE](#)

February Virtual Family Council Meetings

In response to the forced isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virtual Family Council (VFC) began in May 2020 as an online forum for families that could not have in-person visits with their loved ones living in long-term care facilities. Led by ombudsmen and family members, the biweekly meetings bring families and advocates together for sharing, support and learning.



The VFC meetings will be held from 4:30 to 6 p.m. and will discuss selected topics on the following dates:

- Tuesday, February 9, the Center for Loss and Bereavement will be presenting. The center provides professional counseling, support services and education for families, individuals, and organizations dealing with loss and bereavement.
- Tuesday, February 23, the topic involves the Pen Pal Project and Pennsylvania Empowered Expert Residents (PEERs) Perspective. The discussion will begin with an upcoming new project designed to connect long-term care residents with school-aged children to become pen pals. Then, a panel of six PEERs will share their experience from inside Long-Term Care facilities. One of the panelists selected is a participant of the B/S/S/T Area Agency on Aging Ombudsman PEER program.

In addition to the discussions on the featured topics, the VFC offers families a chance to virtually connect with a local ombudsman and other experts to ask questions and discuss protocols, rights, and procedures for their loved ones in long-term care facilities. The meetings do not address specific issues regarding a resident or a facility.

To get VFC connection information, email LTC-Ombudsman@pa.gov and in the subject line, indicate Virtual Family Council.

Make Heart Health Part of Your Self-Care Routine

Devoting a little time every day to care for yourself can go a long way toward protecting the health of your heart. Simple self-care, such as taking a moment to de-stress, giving yourself time to move more, preparing healthier meals, and not cheating on sleep can all benefit your heart.



And that's a good thing, because heart disease is largely preventable and focusing on improving your heart health has never been more important. Heart disease is a leading cause of death for women and men in the United States, and many Americans remain at risk of getting it, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). People with poor cardiovascular health are also at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

"Studies show self-care routines, such as taking a daily walk and keeping doctor's appointments, help us keep our blood pressure in the healthy range and reduce our risk of heart disease and stroke," said David Goff, M.D., NHLBI's director of cardiovascular sciences.

It may be easier than you think to "put your heart" into your daily routine. Each Sunday, look at your week's schedule and carve out 30 minutes daily for heart-healthy practices. Take an online yoga class, prepare a heart-healthy recipe, schedule your bedtime to get at least seven hours of sleep, or make a medication checklist. Then seek out support from others, even

if it's online or via a phone call, to help you stick to your goals.

Daily Heart Health Self-Care Routine

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