



From Megan's Desk

What a different spring this has been! Who could have imagined, just a few short months ago, how our lives and lifestyles would change in response to COVID-19.

While this is a challenging time for our communities locally and globally, we are heartened and inspired by the incredible response and support we're seeing on a daily basis as we pull together to meet the needs of older adults in Southern Maine.



SMAA Continues to Serve Clients and the Community

You may be wondering what has changed at SMAA as we adapt to COVID-19. Our primary goal is to keep our clients, volunteers, staff, and communities safe, and with this in mind we've taken the following steps in accordance with CDC guidelines to modify our services and programming:

- We continue to answer questions and provide information and support to community members, as we always do. You can still reach us by email, phone (1-800-427-7411), and fax (207-883-8249)—we would love to hear from you! Many staff members are working from home to continue to meet the needs of our clients.
- Our Scarborough office is not currently welcoming in-person visitors or clients. Instead, one-to-one meetings and support groups are being conducted via the phone conference call, webinar, or other technology. Our Welcome to Medicare seminar can now be accessed as a virtual presentation on our website.
- Meals on Wheels (MOW) continue to be delivered—And we've taken steps to ensure that our clients have extra

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An Interview with Dr. Shah

A few months ago, very few Mainers knew the name Dr. Nirav D. Shah. That all changed in March when Covid 19 arrived in Maine. Dr. Shah, Director of Maine's Center for Disease Control quickly became a trusted source for information offering daily in depth briefings. People immediately responded to his ability to share complex scientific information wrapped in compassionate commentary about Covid 19's often devastating impact on our friends, neighbors, first responders and even our way of life. Dr. Shah has emerged as one of the true and trusted heroes of the pandemic.

Who is Dr. Nirav Shah?

Last June, Nirav Shah, MD, JD, was appointed as the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC). He brings broad experience in public

health to Maine serving most recently as director of the Illinois Department of Public Health. While in Illinois, he implemented key initiatives to address the State's opioid crisis, reduce maternal and infant mortality, and reduce childhood lead poisoning.

In addition to being a physician, Dr. Shah is also an attorney and public health economist. He has advised professionals and governments around the nation and globe on improving the delivery of health care. Earlier in his career, he worked for the Ministry of Health in Cambodia, where his work included investigating and managing disease outbreaks as an epidemiologist.

Shah received both medical and law degrees from the University of Chicago. He also studied economics at Oxford University.

We thank Dr. Shah for taking precious time out of his busy schedule to answer some of our questions.



Senior News: None of us has a crystal ball to help guide us in the next few months. What advice would you give to Maine's elders as we emerge (whenever that may be) from the stay at home order?

Dr. Shah: This pandemic reminds us all of the importance of taking care of ourselves. Eat a healthy

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Thanks to all the Generous Helpers!

When the news broke that COVID-19 had arrived in Maine, SMAA received an outpouring of support from the southern Maine community. Many foundations and businesses contacted SMAA offering to support us during this challenging time. Knowing that this pandemic is hit-



South Portland Meals on Wheels Site Coordinator, Liz Engel preparing to deliver donated stew from McLoon's.

ting our elders especially hard, these generous organizations wanted to help support the greatest needs we are facing.

Since March 15, we have received well over \$130,000 combined from the following organizations:

- Bank of America Charitable Foundation
- Central Maine Power /United Way of Kennebec Valley
- Central Maine Power/United Way of York County
- Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation
- Horizon Foundation
- Machias Savings Bank
- Maine Community Foundation
- Maine Community Foundation
- Meals on Wheels America
- NextEra Energy Resources LLC
- People'sChoice Credit Union



Candice Simeoni (MOW driver/ Kennebunk police officer) getting ready to head out with her meals!

- Piscataqua Savings Bank
- Portland Provident Association
- Saco and Biddeford Savings Institution
- Sam L. Cohen Foundation
- Summit Natural Gas
- Town and Country Federal Credit Union
- Virginia Hodgkins Somers Foundation

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Have questions about Senior News?
Call 396-6594 or email seniornews@smaa.org

Southern Maine Agency on Aging
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MEDICARE

Medicare Savings Program Increased Income Eligibility for 2020

Have you heard about the Medicare Savings Program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)? This program is also referred to as the “Buy In” even though you are not buying it. If you are on Medicare and meet certain income and asset eligibility, you may be eligible. This program helps pay for your part B premium (being taken out of your Social Security check), your drug plan and prescriptions and will prevent you from going into the dreaded “donut hole.” Depending on your income, you may also be eligible for help with the 20% Medicare does not cover. The estate recovery does not apply to this program.

- Single – Income is less than \$2,043 monthly and your liquid assets are less than \$58,000
 - Married – Income is less than \$2,758 monthly and your liquid assets are less than \$87,000
- Your income can be higher if you are working or if only one spouse applies for the program. Please call SMAA today at (207) 396-6500 or 1-800-427-7411 to learn more. We encourage people to apply if they are close to income and asset guidelines as some programs may have a disregard when determining eligibility. You can apply directly by reaching out to DHHS in person, online or calling (1-855-797-4357). The Southern Maine Agency on Aging does not determine eligibility for programs

Welcome to Medicare Seminar is Now Online

We're happy to announce that we now have an online version of our Welcome to Medicare Seminar. Individuals new to Medicare, or those who could benefit from a refresher, can attend our online-only version of our Welcome to Medicare Seminar. This seminar offers participants

valuable information presented in plain and understandable language. These seminars will cover all of the important basics you need to know as well as options that may be useful as you make your enrollment decisions.

Sign-up today at <https://www.smaaa.org/resources/medicare.html>

What Can YOU do to Stop COVID-19 Fraud?

Scams related to the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, are rapidly increasing as the public health emergency develops. Scammers are targeting older adults and those with serious long-term health conditions who appear to have a higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Fraudsters are attempting to bill Medicare for sham tests or treatments related to the coronavirus and are targeting individuals to illegally obtain money or Medicare numbers.

- Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone other than your doctor, health care provider, or other trusted representative.
- Protect your Medicare number and treat your Medicare card like a credit card.
- Never provide your Medicare number to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.
- Be cautious of anyone who comes to your door offering free coronavirus testing, treatment, or supplies.

- Don't click on links from sources you don't know, which could put your computer or device at risk. Make sure the anti-malware and anti-virus software on your computer are up to date.
- Be cautious when purchasing medical supplies from unverified sources, including online advertisements and email/phone solicitations.
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. If you see ads touting prevention products or cures for COVID-19, they are most likely a scam.
- Do your homework before making a donation to a charity or crowdfunding site due to a public health emergency. Be particularly wary of any charities requesting donations by cash, by gift card, or wire transfer.
- Be alert to “investment opportunities.” The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is warning people about online promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure COVID-19 and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result.



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MEDICARE

What does Medicare cover in relation to COVID-19?

- Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers COVID-19 tests when ordered by your doctor or health care provider on or after February 4, 2020.
- Medicare covers all medically necessary hospitalizations, including extra days in the hospital for patients who had to stay longer under COVID-19 quarantine.

- There is no vaccine for COVID-19 at this time; however, if one becomes available, Medicare will cover it.
- Medicare also recently expanded coverage of telehealth services to enable beneficiaries to access a wider range of services from their providers without having to travel to a facility.
- o This includes access to doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers.
- o During this emergency, there are also more options for the ways your providers can talk with you under this provision.
- For Medicare coverage questions, contact your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at SHIPTA center.org or 1-877-839-2675. Locally, you may also call the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) at 207-396-6500.

In Need of a Mask? Looking to Donate a Mask?

Wearing a face mask if you need to be around other people is now best practice as recommended by the CDC. In an effort to help our communities' access masks and comply with this advice to protect themselves and others—we'd love to know:

- If you an older adult who needs a mask
- A community organization or group that is looking to collect and get masks out to those who need them
- A volunteer who is currently looking to make and donate masks

If so, please contact us at Referral@smaaa.org or call the 207-396-6565, as we want to help our communities stay safe and healthy!

A MEDICARE NUGGET from Stan Cohen #645, May – 2020

Did you know that you can look-up your own history of Medicare claims and payments to your doctor or hospital?

It's called the MYMEDICARE site. It is a great way to make sure that all health-related charges made on your behalf to

Medicare are, in fact, legitimate. Also, you can view the following information about your preventive services:

- **Two-Year Calendar of Preventive Services**, which show the services for which you are eligible in the current and following year.
- **You are Eligible for These Services Now**, which list all preventive services available to you immediately.

The site also tells you what Part D (drug) plan you currently have and when your Part A and Part B coverage started. You can even print-out another copy of

your Medicare card. So how do you sign-up for MYMEDICARE? On the internet, log onto www.MyMedicare.gov. Then register with a user-name and password. If you don't have a computer, your local library or senior center may be able to help you with one of their computers (depending, of course, on if and when those services are now available).

To all my readers—please follow the state guidelines regarding the coronavirus pandemic and stay healthy.

Need help? Get some unbiased advice by calling 1 800 427-7411.

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Need help?
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136 U.S. Route One,
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e-mail: info@smaaa.org
Web site: www.smaaa.org

Editor: Kate Putnam
kputnam@smaaa.org or 207-396-6590

Advertising: Janet Bowne
jbowne@smaaa.org or 207-396-6533

Article Submission: Jessica LeBlanc
jleblanc@smaaa.org or 207-396-6520

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Circulation: 9,000 issues are distributed in public places from Kittery to Bridgeton and Brunswick. Another 1,000 are distributed through Agency on Aging events and locations. Total: 10,000

For details on advertising in "Senior News," log on to www.smaaa.org and see Senior News on home page and/or send an e-mail to seniornews@smaaa.org. You may also reach "Senior News" representative Janet Bowne at 396-6533.

Marketing options include, full color ads, advertorial columns and inserting pre-printed materials into the newspaper. Reach your potential customers with Maine's only newspaper specifically for people age 50 and older!

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Mission Statement

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging's mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities, and the people who care for them.

Commitment to Reasonable Accommodation:

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging will, with adequate notice and upon request, provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to persons with disabilities, to assist in effective communication and to participate equally in programs, services and activities. Call 1-800-427-7411 x503 or from the Portland calling area call 207-396-6503 to make your request.

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) is a non-profit, charitable organization. Services of SMAA are supported in part by state and federal funds provided through the Office of Aging and Disability Services of the Maine Department of Human Services. Learn more at www.smaaa.org or by calling 207-396-6500 or 1-800-427-7411.

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging is committed to providing a safe and welcoming space for everyone regardless of his/her race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, economic status, faith tradition, veteran status or life situation.

Need Help? Call SMAA Today

Wondering who to call if you have a question about aging, caregiving, or living with a disability? Struggling with resources and information related to the impact of the Coronavirus?

Call SMAA – we’re here to help.

SMAA helps older adults and adults with disabilities—and their families—sort through the many programs and services available to help older adults live independently well into their elder years. Our Resource Specialists work with seniors—and their families—to provide information, support, and referrals. Our staff is knowledgeable about resources related to the Coronavirus. SMAA also provides general resource information for older adults and adults with disabilities on topics such as housing, Medicare, transportation, etc.

Please call us at 207-396-6500 or email us at referral@smaaa.org to connect with a Resource Specialist.

Access Updated COVID-19 Resources

SMAA is committed to aggregating and updating resources regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on our website. Resources are regularly updated and include state and local resources (including resources by town), caregiving resources, mental health resources, legal services, and more.

Visit <https://www.smaaa.org/covid19-resources.html> to learn more.

Have you Heard... About Senior FarmShare?

Spring is here and it is time to apply for the Senior FarmShare. This is a program for those over the age of 60 whose income is less than \$23,107 for a one-person household or is less than \$31,284 for a two person household. The Senior FarmShare is a voucher for \$50. You must apply through a participating farmer. To learn more, you can call the Maine Senior FarmShare program at (207) 287-7526, go on web at <https://www.getrealmaine.com/>, or call SMAA and ask for a Resource Specialist.

www.smaaa.org

Meals on Wheels are Available in Southern Maine

Meals on Wheels are available through SMAA for York and Cumberland Counties (except Brunswick and Harpswell). While we’ve been very busy adjusting to the increased demand, staff is working diligently to receive and process Meals on Wheels requests ensuring that hungry, older Mainers have access to safe, nutritious food. There is currently NOT waitlist for Meals on Wheels.

As a result of COVID-19, the current eligibility requirements for Meals on Wheels are:

- 60 and older AND homebound due to illness or social distancing.
- Under 60, on SSDI and having difficulty preparing meals and homebound due to illness or social distancing.
- Under 60, on SSDI and living with someone who is receiving Meals on Wheels and homebound due to illness and social distancing.

Traditionally, you may qualify for our Meals on Wheels program if you are:

- Age 60 or older
- Primarily homebound or getting out with difficulty
- Unable to regularly prepare nutritious meals
- Able to accept meals during the delivery time frame
- Agree to an in-home nutritional assessment (An in-home nutritional assessment will be completed within 9 business days of the first delivery to determine full eligibility.)

If you would like to apply for Meals on Wheels, or if you are unsure if you qualify, please call SMAA at 207-396-6500. You may also visit our website at www.smaaa.org.

If you do not qualify for Meals on Wheels, but are interested in re-

ceiving delicious and nutritious meals delivered right to your doorstep, please inquire about our Simply Delivered for Me program. For more information or to order, please visit our website at www.smaaa.org or call us at 207-396-6507.

Additionally, some of our “As You Like It” restaurants have remained open, are providing meals for take-out and are still honoring the vouchers. Please call the location ahead of time to confirm hours and availability.

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Programming Updates from Agewell

Here in the Agewell programs our busy spring season sure has been impacted by COVID-19 and physical distancing practices. While we had initially hoped that we would be returning to our normal operations quickly, it is now seeming more likely that it will still be weeks or months before we return to our traditional programming.

During this time, we are working hard to adapt our offerings to continue to meet your needs and interests. Unfortunately, due to some program guidelines, we can only offer certain classes in person (like A Matter of Balance and Healthy Steps). While we know nothing is quite like in-person connection, we want to offer options that continue to help you stay active, engaged, and healthy. Here are some alternative program offerings we've established:

- Weekly e-Newsletter – if you aren't already, **subscribe to Agewell Weekly**, a great source for ideas to keep your mind, body, and spirit well. Also, includes regular updates on event and program offerings. Email agewell@smaaa.org for more information.
- Social Connections – Join us for weekly Zoom Coffee Hours with discussion topics. We know part of what makes our classes so popular is the chance to socialize with others.
- Welcome to Zoom sessions – As many of us are relying so heavily on Zoom for connection these days, we're committed to helping you get up and running! We're all learning together, and if we can do it, you can too! Join in a practice session to master the basics.
- Stress Management and Relaxation – We're offering weekly Zoom sessions that provide guided relaxation, mindfulness, breathing, and other practices that help manage stress.

Long story short—we miss you, and we look forward to seeing you again in-person! Until then, we hope you'll stay connected by taking advantage of one of our virtual options.

Upcoming Virtual Programs

Pre-registration is required for all programs. Check our listing of all upcoming Agewell programs and register at <https://www.smaaa.org/wellness/agewell-calendar.html>. Additional programming will be added regularly.

Relaxation and Stress Relief Sessions – Weekly, Mondays 2PM
Coffee Hour – Weekly, Fridays 10:30AM

Welcome to Zoom – Thursday May 14 10-10:45AM. Check our website for more sessions!

Special Virtual Program Freedom From Fractures™ 2020

Knowing and Managing Your Risk of a Fracture

Here at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) we talk a lot about falls prevention and offer many workshops that teach skills and strategies to keep people active and independent. One reason we feel that it's so important to prevent falls is the risk of injury, sometimes life-changing that

just one fall can present. Two million preventable fractures occur each year and 50% of women and 20% of men over the age 50 will have a life-altering fracture in their lifetime. A wrist or rib fracture may seem trivial, but it can portend a more devastating event—like a hip fracture.

That's why SMAA is partnering with American Bone Health this May in honor of National Osteoporosis Awareness Month to present *Freedom from Fractures 2020*, a free one-hour workshop to help adults assess their risk of a fracture and create a road map to improve their bone health.

The workshop explains how medical conditions, medications and family history can affect the risk of fracture and what participants can do to prevent fractures.

Participants will learn about how they can change risk factors associated with bone loss and what they can do to minimize their risk from factors they can't change. This information will give them the tools to generate an individualized report of their own bone health. Participants will leave with a planning guide to manage their fracture risk.

Program Details: Wednesday May 13, 2-3:30PM Zoom. This program is offered at no cost to participants, but registration is required. To sign up for this valuable program, please register on our website at www.smaaa.org or call 207-396-6578.

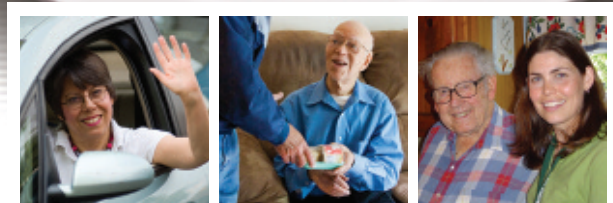
Please visit our online calendar for the most up to date listing of workshops!
www.smaaa.org/events.html

Need Help Balancing Your Monthly Bank Statement?

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging offers **MONEY MINDERS...** a **FREE** program to assist people age **55** and older who need help balancing a checkbook and writing checks.



To learn more or to see if you are eligible, Call: **1-800-427-7411**



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—Senator George Mitchell

Donate or Volunteer—Either Way, YOU Deliver!

Contact the Southern Maine Agency on Aging at www.smaaa.org or call 1-800-400-6325 or (207) 396-6583



Soothing Strategies: Tips for Managing and Relieving Stress

No matter what your situation is with COVID-19, there's no question that our lives and routines have been disrupted. We've been asked to set aside commitments, pursuits, and connections that are meaningful to us, and have adapted and modified in various ways. All this change and uncertainty is bound to cause some level of stress. We're all in this together, and we want to share some strategies than can help manage during these unusual times.

- Create structure and routine – Shoot for specific times each day for wake up and bed times, meals, and other goals you may have. Move around your environment, and break the day up into various tasks. (Exercise, reading, meal preparation, relaxation, etc.)
- Set a goal for each day –Focus on personal and achievable, something you want to do and can feel successful about! Small goals are best.
- Move your body – Take time each day to move your body with an activity you enjoy – clean your home, dance, walk, find an exercise video.
- Get outside safely – Connect with the joys of spring by going out for a walk or just standing on your doorstep to soak up the sun and hear the birds singing. Be sure to wear a face mask if you'll be around other people.
- Unplug from the news – Keeping informed is important, but give yourself space from constant updates.
- Listen to music – Tuning in to your favorite music is a great way to impact your mood and relieve some stress. Shoot for anything that lifts your spirits and makes you want to move!
- Connect with others – Although we're physically distancing, we don't have to lose our connections with others. Pick up the phone and call a friend or loved one, set up a video chat, or join one of our Agewell programs. Hearing from others is more important than ever.
- Ground in your body – If you don't already have one, now is a great time to develop a mindfulness practice like deep breathing, body scanning, or meditation. Simply becoming more aware of your breath is a powerful tool for impacting your mind-body connection and relieving stress.
- Acknowledge and be kind – These unprecedented times are challenging each of us in unique ways. There is power in acknowledging our experiences

and emotions (from grief to anger to joy and gratitude) without judgment. We are seeing extraordinary kindness in the world, be sure to share some of that with yourself.

Take care of yourselves – you can find many more resources for nurturing your mind, body, and spirit in our handout or by subscribing to our Agewell Weekly eNewsletter by emailing agewell@smaaa.org

Tips for Current Challenges

Covid 19 is changing the way we do everything and the prolonged isolation and fear can take its toll on all of us but especially those of us who are retired and/or living alone. Here are some tips to help find the silver linings of our collective situation:

Learn New Technology

If you've been resistant to embracing new technology, now is the time. As stay at home rules are relaxed, take the time to learn about social connection options like FaceTime, Zoom, and Skype. You don't have to be a tech expert. Doing the basics is easy, and fun. If setting up an account is daunting, ask a neighbor, or relative for help.

Stay Active in the Community from Home

Look for ways to remain a part of the community even from home! Many organizations — political parties, faith-based groups, nonprofits — rely on volunteers to make phone calls. The best part is you can do it on your schedule and right from your home!

Turn off the News!

It's important to stay informed, but don't binge on news. Constant news streaming really heightens needless anxiety. Do a quick check in when you get up and again later in the day.

Send a Note or Letter to an Old or New Friend!

Most of us grew up writing notes. And we all know how fun it is to get something in the mail that is not a bill! Keep it simple, newsy and positive. If you're online, a cheery email is also an option.

Buy a Bird Feeder!

Most area home and garden stores have curbside pick up, some even have home delivery. Consider buying an inexpensive bird feeder and seed and watch the birds. If you're in an apartment building, you may be able to get a hummingbird feeder to attach to a window.

continued on page 13





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of Maine

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Family Caregiver Support Program



Are you helping an older adult manage bills, prepare meals, manage medical services? Do you help with bathing or dressing, household chores, transportation to appointments, or companionship? Are you a senior who is raising someone else's child? **Then you are a Caregiver.**

Is caring for a family member or friend leaving you feeling tired, isolated, sad, guilty, stressed? Caregiving may be the most difficult and rewarding thing you'll ever do. The Family Caregiver Support Program can help.

The Family Caregiver Support Program is Here for You

We understand that this is a trying time for everyone, but being a family caregiver of an older adult or a person of any age with dementia can add an extra layer of stress. We want you to know that although our Scarborough office is closed to visitors, the Family Caregiver Support Program Resource Specialists are working remotely and are able to offer caregiver support and resource information over the phone or via email. Please call the Family Caregiver Support Line at 207-396-6541 if we can be of help!

Trualta: Providing Education and Support at a Distance

Trualta is an exciting new interactive eLearning platform designed especially for family caregivers and tailored to their particular caregiving journey. Caregivers select topics of interest to them, but have access to hundreds of learning modules—with more added each month. Topics include: cognitive decline and dementia, personal care, challenging behaviors, safety, and caregiver wellness—just to name a few! SMAA is making Trualta available at no charge to interested family caregivers thanks to a grant from Har-

vard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation. Call 207-396-6541 to learn more!

Support Group Updates

The Family Caregiver Support Group (Biddeford) is continuing on the second Monday of the month 3:00-4:30PM via phone. Barbara Alberda asks caregivers to call her at 713-3723 ahead of time to get the call-in information.

The Family Caregiver Support Group (Scarborough) will be held via Zoom on May 21 from 4-5PM. Anyone interested in joining should call Lori Campbell at 396-6540 or email lcampbell@smaaa.org for more information.

Thanks for Listening

by Becky Delaney

As someone who has recently been relied on as a caregiver, I can tell you that the Corona Virus only amplifies the stress on all those involved. Reaching out to friends and family (as well as a good night's sleep) has helped me immensely!

I'm hearing that, because of the social distancing that we are practicing, many people are picking up the phone a bit more than usual to call their loved ones. If you're on the other end of the phone when someone in need calls remember to be a good listener. Listening is a skill we as humans have had to develop and practice. I believe Einstein said the reason we have two ears and one mouth is so that we can do more listening than talking. There's a type of healing that occurs when someone feels heard.

Helpful Resource

The Family Caregiver Alliance has helpful information for all caregivers and older adults at <https://www.caregiver.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-and-articles-family-caregivers>



Call SMAA Today!

Our Scarborough office may be closed to visitors, but our staff is ready to help. Contact a Resource Specialist regarding resources and information related to the impact of the Coronavirus. We can also provide general resource information for older adults and adults with disabilities on topics such as housing, Medicare, transportation, etc.

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Interview with Dr. Shah
continued from page 1

diet. Exercise regularly. Maintain a regular sleep pattern. Get a flu shot. These basic elements of self-care might have seemed a bit mundane before COVID-19 put the focus on public health. But they really are essential.

The other insight I've had is that it's so important to stay connected with loved ones. Don't put off that call or wait for someone to reach out to you. The emphasis on staying at home to limit potential spread of the virus has also raised awareness about the ill effects of isolation.

Senior News: It seems like most people who get Covid 19 have a mild case. What, if anything, can we do as older individuals to improve our health that might help improve our chances of getting a more mild case?

Dr. Shah: As I mentioned above, self-care provides the intrinsic benefits of feeling better as we live each day, but it also better positions us to cope with symptoms when we get sick. And if you have a chronic illness or other condition that requires regular care, communicate regularly with your medical provider. COVID-19 has changed some aspects of the way medical care is provided, but we shouldn't let the virus do secondary harm by disrupting or delaying necessary care for ongoing conditions. Work with your medical provider to stay on top of conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure.

Senior News: Going forward, do you recommend individuals with compromised immune systems wear fabric masks during future seasonal flu season?

Dr. Shah: Influenza differs from COVID-19 because a flu vaccine is available. Face coverings are part of the response to COVID-19, in part, because there is no vaccine. So getting a flu shot is the best thing you can do each year to protect yourself from influenza. In general, face coverings prevent the wearer from spreading respiratory droplets that contain viruses. Wearing a mask can help you from spreading a virus, but please be aware that wearing a mask won't necessarily prevent you from contracting a virus.

Senior News: How do you manage the stress of being Maine's doctor during this difficult time?

Dr. Shah: I take long walks with my dog. My family is very supportive, and we have an excellent team at Maine CDC that bolsters each other during challenging times.

Senior News: You are such a clear and compassionate communicator. How did you develop this ability?

Dr. Shah: Mentors in previous jobs emphasized to me the importance of clear and honest communication. One great mentor used to mark up my legal briefs with a red pen to help me understand the importance of using the right word every time



and being direct. Compassion is part of effective leadership, especially in public health, so it guides the work we do.

Senior News: What are you looking forward to doing after we get back to relative normal life?

Dr. Shah: I very much look forward to exploring more of Maine. I'd like to eat poutine in Aroostook County and visit more of Maine's lighthouses.

Senior News: What about this unprecedented situation has been the biggest surprise to you?

Dr. Shah: I hope this does not sound smug, but one of the biggest surprises might be that we haven't had any really big surprises so far. Maine CDC has an entire team within the agency devoted to emergency preparedness, and they have been on top of every development since early January.

Senior News: Many of us, feel that despite the suffering and loss, there will be many positives that will result from our shared experience of Covid 19. What positives do you think we will benefit from when we look back on this time?

Dr. Shah: I hope people will hold onto a greater appreciation for the work that epidemiologists, emergency preparedness professionals, and others in public health do.

Senior News: From watching the briefings, it looks like your go to drink is diet Coke. During this stressful time, do you have a favorite comfort food?

Dr. Shah: It's more the act of sitting with family and eating together than any single recipe that gives me comfort. We like to try recipes from different cultures, and we recently made a West African soup that was really tasty.

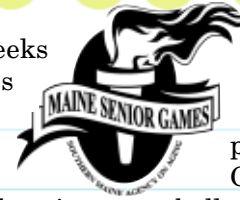
Thank you, Dr. Shah, for sharing your insights with our readers and for all you are doing to help us navigate the uncharted waters of Covid 19.



www.smaa.org

From Jo Dill's Notebook

As the days and weeks go by we find ourselves in a place most of us have not been before. Many of us are work-



Eastern Trail, Steve B. just broke the 13 minute mile after his knee replacement and Alan and Genny have their Pickleball net set up in their yard so they can practice and stay fit.

ing from home which has its own set of challenges, isolation from our friends and family, gyms, pools, lanes, courts, parks and beaches closed, being bombarded by the news of the Coronavirus - to say nothing of the fear that surrounds it all. Many of you have shared how you are staying fit, working out and still able, although somewhat altered, to practice your sport. You are all so inspiring with your dedication to staying fit and healthy and your "we can do this" attitude. Many, like myself, are connecting with family, friends, co-workers and teammates through zoom or video chats through messenger.

I have heard from so many of you both athletes and volunteers that are doing your best to stay fit by exercising, walking, running, video work outs and the list goes on. Steve is a runner who wants to run 2,020 miles in 2020 and so far has run 740, Donna and her husband are walking the

Governor Mills outlined a plan for reopening the State month by month, which as she said could change at a moment's notice if our cases of Covid-19 spike due to reopening. It gave me hope that there is a chance that we may eventually return to our daily lives, although at a new normal. As you can imagine all of the MSG events in May and June have been postponed and I am working on rescheduling the remaining two events in July. I will follow the guidelines of the Governor as well as my office, Southern Maine Agency on Aging, as the safety of the athletes and the volunteers are my top priority.

Our MSG website will have up to date schedules as they change. www.mainesrgames.org

Stay safe, stay well and hope we can be together again even if at a distance.



Stay connected with SMAA

Receive updates about new classes and workshops being offered, when Senior News is available on newsstands and online, along with the latest information about SMAA happenings via email.

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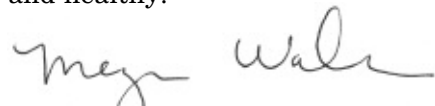
From Megan's Desk
continued from page 1

meals in the event that delivery needs to be temporarily suspended for safety reasons. Did you know that MOW eligibility requirements have changed during this time? Expanded eligibility covers people 60 and older who are unable to obtain nutrition because the individual is homebound by reason of illness or practicing social distancing due to the emergency.

- Our Volunteer Services department has assembled an emergency response volunteer team to assist with emerging community needs, including our Phone Pal (phone reassurance) program. Contact us for more information about volunteer opportunities.
- Operations at our Sam L. Cohen Adult Day Center have been temporarily suspended. We know that this is a challenging time for our caregivers and are doing our best to offer remote support and resources to families.
- While some of our in-person community events and workshops have been temporarily suspended, we are still communicating weekly to prevent social isolation and promote wellness. Looking for tips on how to nurture your wellbeing during this time of physical distancing? Send us your email address to subscribe to our Agewell Weekly e-newsletter – agewell@smaaa.org

During these times of physical distancing, community connections are more important than ever. Stay up to date with SMAA news by visiting www.smaaa.org, following us on Facebook or checking our COVID-19 Resource page.

I'm looking forward to the day when we can all gather again safely but in the meantime, stay safe and healthy!


Megan Walton
Chief Executive Officer

Lisa J. Friedlander
Attorney at Law

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Oldies Dance Ticket Holders Donate to Ronald McDonald House

C OVID-19 Stay at Home orders prevented organizers from hosting the sold-out 18th Rock n' Roll Oldies Dance at the Eagle's Hall in Biddeford this spring, but it couldn't halt the generous spirit of the popular dance's ticket holders.

More than 300 tickets were sold for \$10 each in five days prior to the March 21 dance date, but according to Bruce Martin, Oldies Dance Group organizer, 271 ticket holders requested that their ticket costs be donated to the Ronald McDonald House.

"With all the people and businesses donating, the total amount raised and donated to Ronald McDonald House now stands at \$70,835," Martin said. "This spring's dance netted \$4,635 without us even holding the dance."

Martin said although many participants were disappointed that the

event was not held, their generosity was inspirational.

"I've never felt so close to people in my life," Martin said. "It restores my faith in people's warm heart and their concern for the Ronald McDonald House."

Conducted twice each year in March and October, the dance has become the largest community fundraising effort for Ronald McDonald House of Portland, which provides comfort for the families of pediatric patients and supports programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children. It provides access to quality health care and enables family centered care ensuring families are fully supported and actively involved in their child's care.

Martin said that the Oldies Dance Committee would like to thank the following businesses who donated to the 18th Rock n' Roll

Oldies Dance including Southern Maine Specialties, Inc.; Saco/Biddeford Savings Institution; Black Bear Promotions Inc.; Coastal Tech Heating; Superior Electric Inc.; Tractor Supply; Lowe's; NAPA Shop Works; Beth Martin; Beachology Maine Gifts; Gorham Sand & Gravel; Bill Dodge; Get Fired Up; Old Orchard Beach Campground; Old Orchard Beach Edgewater

Motel; Champagne Energy; Neil Weinstein; Peter Barricelli; and Joe Loughren.

"All of us at the Oldies Dance Committee would especially like to thank the wonderful 271 ticket holders with big hearts who generously donated their ticket costs to the Ronald McDonald House," Martin said.

The 19th Rock n' Roll Oldies Dance is scheduled to be held from 7 p.m. to midnight Saturday, Oct. 10 at the Eagles Hall in Biddeford. Tickets are \$10 and sell out quickly.

Call 284-4692 for more information and to purchase tickets.

CARES Act Offers Charitable Giving Incentives for Individual and Corporate Donors

T he landmark CARES Act passed by Congress and signed into law amid the pandemic is designed to offer economic relief to all of us during the pandemic. However, it also includes a provision offering tax incentives for donors.

- People who don't itemize their deductions can take a one-time deduction of up to \$300 for gifts made to charitable organizations in 2020, and possibly beyond. The deduction is only for gifts of cash (not stock) and does not cover contributions made to donor-advised funds or private foundations.
- In a typical year, individuals can only take a charitable


deduction of up to 60 percent of their adjusted gross income, no matter how much they give. For 2020, there is no limit, making cash contributions (not stock) fully deductible.

- Corporations have a greater incentive to make charitable gifts. The cap on how much corporations can deduct for charitable gifts has increased from 10 percent of taxable income to 25 percent for 2020.


If now is not the right time for you to make a gift, you might consider a provision for your favorite charities in your will or retirement plan. Legacy planning allows you to retain access to your

resources now, while ensuring your charitable vision can continue to make an impact beyond your lifetime. If you would like to discuss how a gift now or in your estate plan can benefit SMAA, please call or email, Kate Putnam, Chief Advancement Officer, 207-396-6590 or kputnam@smaaa.org

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Volunteer Corner

In each issue of the Senior News we will feature a Southern Maine Agency on Aging/Retired Senior and Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteer. Hopefully, learning about our volunteers will inspire readers to contact Volunteer Services at 207-396-6595 to learn about the diverse volunteer opportunities available in Cumberland and York counties through SMAA/RSVP.

Cindy Williams, Phone Pal Project Manager

Cindy Williams joined the Phone Pal program in March of 2019 as a volunteer. A former teacher and current tutor in the Gorham school system, Cindy quickly developed a strong connection with her phone pal match. In fact, the friendship they developed was so impactful that the client in turn was inspired to become a Phone Pal himself. Her strong relationship with her phone pal is a benchmark that fellow volunteers should aspire to.

Cindy also attended multiple Phone Pal Case Reviews, and her unique insights and ideas for Phone Pal engagement led Volunteer Services to identify her as a poten-

tial replacement for Deb Baginski. Cindy ultimately agreed to replace Deb in December, and spent two months training alongside her.

Cindy's ability to connect with both clients and fellow volunteers has been a tremendous asset to the Phone Pal program during the recent COVID-19 health crisis. She checks up on current volun-

Her strong relationship with her phone pal is a benchmark that fellow volunteers should aspire to.

teers, follows up on client well-being, and matches all the new volunteers. She does this all while maintaining a wonderful sense of humor and engagement that people positively respond to.

Cindy's leadership and support has been especially needed during

these uncertain times. The Phone Pal program will continue to be a crucial service by providing companionship and support to clients who are likely to be feeling more isolated than usual. In the past month, the program has added

over 30 volunteers, with more to come at the next training. Phone Pals will continue to rely on Cindy's leadership and support as the program grows to meet the needs of Meals on Wheels clients.



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A New Columbarium—offering an above ground alternative to in-ground burial of cremated remains.



Thanks to the Helpers! continued from page 1

In addition, we have scores of individuals who have made donations to support our programs. While the future reopening of our economy is uncertain, this financial support ensures that we can continue our work.

Renee Longarini, Director of SMAA's Nutrition Programs said, "SMAA is working hard to make sure that every nutritional need of our clients is met—whether that means delivering the usual five meals a week or up to 14 meals a week if someone needs the additional support." Renee added, "We are encouraging people to call SMAA if they have any questions about their eligibility to receive Meals on Wheels. We can help."

"We are so grateful for all of the assistance we've received enabling us to continue our programs during this uncertain time," stated Kate Putnam, SMAA's Chief Advancement Officer.

We'd also like to express our gratitude to the following businesses, civic groups, and individuals who have donated items to help support our staff, volunteers, and clients:

- Corner Cupboard
- Dizzy Bird Rotisserie
- Dunkin Donuts
- Girl Scout Troop 635
- McLoon's Lobster Shack
- Michele Grivois

- Olivia Longarini, HS Student from Eliot
- Seacoast Mask Makers
- Shains of Maine
- Taylor George, College Student from Wells
- The Rock Church
- Wentworth Elementary School

A Volunteer Emergency Response Team (AVERT)

As a direct response to the COVID-19 Health Crisis, SMAA formed the AVERT volunteer team to assist with meal delivery and support during this uncertain time.



Biddeford Meal Site practicing safe social distancing while picking up meals to be delivered.

The response to this team was overwhelmingly positive. 45 volunteers (current and new) responded immediately to this need. Two successful trainings were held and the new AVERT members were quickly assigned to their respective meals sites. These volunteers have all been trained and cleared to assist with packaging and meal delivery whenever they are needed.

SMAA and Volunteer Services are truly appreciative for the support of volunteers who are willing to be out in the community, despite the risks. Outside of AVERT, over 200 individuals have reached out to support Meals on Wheels in any way they can. As Mr. Rogers famously said, in times of crisis we should "look for the helpers". SMAA is grateful for the helpers on the AVERT team and many others who are willing to assist during this pandemic.

Adapting to Serve

SMAA's staff continues to work from home. Our office in Scarborough is closed but we are responding to calls and inquiries. Many of our programs are using new technologies to hold support groups and classes. All of our online programs and workshops are listed on the calendar on our website. If you need us, please call 207-396-6500 or contact us via our web site: www.smaaa.org.

Tips for Current Challenges continued from page 1

Refresh your houseplants!

What a great time to give your houseplants the spa treatment. Potting soil and fertilizer is readily available. Your plants will love it!

Monitor your feelings.

Do you notice that certain times of day are particularly hard? If so, make a plan and be ready when that sad feeling comes.

- Set a goal to clean or reorganize a drawer or closet every day.
- Pull out that craft project that's been languishing and try again.
- The idea of meditating can be intimidating if you've never done it. Sit with intention for 10 minutes and recall a pleasant memory from the past or look through a photo album.
- Exercise is always good to improve a mood! Most of us don't have a home gym, but we do have canned goods that can be used as weights for bicep curls. If you can get outside, take a short walk safely. If you can't be outside, walk inside. Stretch and breathe deeply. If walking is hard, do some exercises sitting in a chair.
- The weather is improving. And while the air can still feel chilly, sitting by an open, light filled window for a few minutes.



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