



Golden Nuggets



Timely News For Older Adults and their Families

Spring 2009

Unemployment Help

In response to Connecticut's rising unemployment rate, 2-1-1 and the United Way have updated their online report, "Where to Turn in Connecticut When you Become Unemployed" which offers many resources to those seeking employment, job training and basic needs services while they are unemployed. You can access the report at www.211ct.org/.

2-1-1 is a free service administered by the United Way of Connecticut. It is supported by the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways. You can call 2-1-1 to get information, or to seek help in a crisis. They are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Simply dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-203-1234 any time of day or night.

Free Memory Screening

In November nurses from the New Canaan Department of Human Services offered free memory screenings at Lapham Center as part of National Memory Screening Day, an effort spearheaded by the Alzheimer's Foundation.

Memory screenings are advised for anyone concerned about memory loss, experiencing warning signs of dementia, or believing they are at higher risk due to a family history of Alzheimer's.

On Thursday, April 30th Nurses Carol McDonald and Susan Klehm will administer short questionnaires designed to uncover early signs of Alzheimer's and related illnesses. They will also have information on resources for those with dementia.

Call 594-3620 to make an appointment.

Senior Stimulus Payments to Start in May

AARP Bulletin Today advises that the check is almost in the mail. In May, retirees and other Social Security beneficiaries will get an extra \$250 per person from Uncle Sam, as part of the economic stimulus bill signed into law in February.

The so-called senior payment – \$250 for individuals, \$500 for couples who both receive some Social Security benefit—will go to retirees, older veterans, SSI beneficiaries, and people with disabilities.

Recipients won't have to fill out a tax form or do anything—unlike the stimulus rebate of 2008. You will just wait for the money to show up—you'll get the money the same way you get Social Security—either through direct deposit or a check in the mail.

Free Annual Credit Reports

A credit report can give you a snapshot of your financial situation as well as alert you to any unauthorized use of your credit. The ONLY authorized online source for you to get a free credit report under federal law is AnnualCreditReport.com. At that site you can get a free report from each of the three national credit reporting companies every 12 months. Some other sites claim to offer "free" credit reports, but may charge you for another product if you accept a "free" report.

If you are not a computer user, call 594-3620 to schedule an appointment at Lapham Center with one of the TRIAD NCPD officers, John Milligan or Roy Adams.

Top 25 Ways to Prevent Falls

Each year about one-third of all adults over the age of 65 will fall. Falling, particularly falling repeatedly, increases risk of injury, hospitalization, and death.

Here's a list of things you can do to prevent falls from the National Osteoporosis Foundation:

1. Remove all loose wires, cords and throw rugs.
2. Keep floors free of clutter.
3. Be sure all carpets and area rugs have skid-proof backing or are tacked to the floor.
4. Do not use slippery wax on bare floors.
5. Keep furniture in its accustomed place.
6. Install grab bars on the bathroom walls beside the tub, shower and toilet.
7. Use a non-skid rubber mat in the shower or tub.
8. If you are unsteady on your feet, you may want to use a plastic chair with a back and non-skid legs in the shower or tub and use a hand-held shower head to bathe.
9. Use non-skid mats or rugs on the floor near the stove and sink.
10. Clean up spills as soon as they happen (in the kitchen and anywhere in the home).
11. Place light switches within reach of your bed and a night light between the bedroom and bathroom.
12. Keep a flashlight with fresh batteries beside your bed.
13. Keep stairwells well lit, with light switches at the top and the bottom.
14. Install sturdy handrails on both sides.
15. Mark the top and bottom steps with bright tape.
16. Make sure carpeting is secure.
17. Cover porch steps with gritty, weatherproof paint.
18. Install handrails on both sides of porch steps.
19. Place items you use most often within easy reach. This keeps you from having to do a lot of

bending and stooping.

20. Use assistive devices to help avoid strain or injury. For example, use a long-handled grasping device to pick up items without bending or reaching. Use a pushcart to move heavy or hot items from the stove or countertop to the table.

21. If you must use a stepstool, use a sturdy one with a handrail and wide steps.

22. If you live alone, you should consider wearing a personal emergency response system (PERS). Also consider buying a portable telephone to take from room to room so you can call for help immediately if you fall.

23. Don't get up too quickly after eating, sitting or lying flat.

24. Talk to your healthcare professional or pharmacist about the side effects of drugs you take. Some can make you feel dizzy or drowsy.

25. If you are unsteady on your feet, use a cane or walker, even if you are going only a short distance.

More Audiobooks at the Library

Here's another great service from the New Canaan Library that makes listening to books easier for computer users. Netlibrary's new Media Center puts audiobook users only a mouse click away from their favorite titles. Media Center is a desktop application for searching, managing, transferring and listening to Netlibrary's extensive collection of audiobook titles. Whether you're just getting started, or already have a Netlibrary account, Media Center will make it faster and easier to connect and listen. And it's free!

To access Media Center start by clicking on the Downloadable Audiobooks icon on the main page of the Library's website, newcanaanlibrary.org. Enter your library barcode number to enter the Netlibrary page. Create an account or if you have an existing account, login. Click "Learn more about the Media Center" which provides instructions and a link to install the software. After the software is installed you can use the Desktop Icon, your one-click gateway, to access the NetLibrary database.

DTV Switchover Delayed

Congress has extended the deadline for television stations to switch to digital signals until June 12. Congress approved the extension in response to the 3.2 million people who are still on the waiting list for government-issued converter box coupons, as well as a Nielsen report showing that at least 6.5 million Americans rely on analog TV sets and remain unprepared for the switch. The bill delaying the deadline also permits people whose converter box coupons expired to apply for new ones.

If you subscribe to a paid television service such as cable or satellite TV, you will not need a digital-to-analog converter box, and all TVs connected to your paid service will continue to receive local broadcast programming. However, consumers are advised to check with their provider to see if they will need any additional equipment in the future.

For more information, call the FCC at 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322) or visit their DTV Web site at www.dtv.gov.

Renters' Rebate For Elderly/Disabled Renters

State law provides a reimbursement program for Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Persons renting an apartment or room, or living in cooperative housing may be eligible for this program. Renters' rebates can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons. The renters' rebate amount is based on a graduated income scale and the amount of rent and utility payments (excluding telephone) made in the calendar year prior to the year in which the renter applies.

Application may be made at the Department of Human Services (Vine Cottage) between May 15 and September 15th.

Whittle Your Waist: Your Heart Will Thank You

People who have excess body fat — especially if a lot of it is at the waist — are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors. Excess weight increases the heart's work. It also raises blood pressure and blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and lowers HDL ("good") cholesterol levels. It can also make diabetes more likely to develop. Many obese and overweight people may have difficulty losing weight. But by losing even as few as 10 pounds, you can lower your heart disease risk.

Managing your nutrition is all about knowledge and making good personal choices. You have the power to learn and eat healthier. By following the nutrition tips below you can help lower your blood cholesterol level and reduce your weight.

- Eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods.
- Eat a diet rich in vegetables and fruits.
- Choose whole-grain, high-fiber foods.
- Eat fish at least twice a week.
- Eat fewer nutrient-poor foods.
- Read the nutrition facts label and ingredients list.
- Limit how much saturated fat, *trans* fat and cholesterol you eat.
- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1 percent fat and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce *trans* fat in your diet.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation.

These tips are from the American Heart Association. See more at www.goredforwomen.org.

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Discounts to CT Attractions

Connecticut Open House Day is an annual event scheduled the second Saturday of June, when cultural organizations and tourism attractions throughout the state open their doors to Connecticut residents with a variety of special incentives. Last year over 230 organizations welcomed Connecticut residents to visit free of charge or at a reduced rate. Connecticut Open House Day is sponsored by the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.

For more information, call 1-888-CTvisit or go to CTvisit.com for a complete list of participating venues. This website also lists dozens of other discounts on hotels, museums, restaurants and other Connecticut attractions.

Restaurant.com has \$25 coupons which you can buy online for \$10, print and take to the restaurant. A search of restaurants within a ten mile radius of New Canaan brought up 34 who accept these coupons.

Tax Relief for Seniors

For information on local tax relief for seniors contact the Assessors office at 594-3005; they will have the updated information on for income guidelines and qualifications. This program runs from February 1st through May 15th.

It's Your Money

President Obama pledged to let us see how every dollar from the economic stimulus package—the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—is being spent, and Recovery.gov will let you do that. Currently, you can see things like how many jobs are expected to be created or saved in each state. As the money begins to reach state and local governments, the web site will be updated with detailed state maps showing how it's being spent in each area. Check back often for new information.

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