



# Golden Nuggets



Timely News For Older Adults and their Families

**Spring 2011**

## Low Vision Solutions

Tracy Andrews, a representative from Vision Dynamics in Cheshire, CT, will present an interactive program on living with low vision with ideas for living a productive and independent life on Wednesday, May 18, at 1 p.m., at Lapham Center. She will demonstrate strategies and products to help with doing tasks such as reading prescription bottles, doing crossword puzzles, playing cards, writing checks, seeing price tags and reading menus. She will discuss proper lighting and the importance of wearing sunglasses, including the different colors that should be worn based on eye condition.

She will also bring adaptive equipment which you will be able to try out.

Tracy has Macular Degeneration and has been legally blind since the age of seven. Nevertheless she graduated from college, and is married with two children and working. "Working at Vision Dynamics has given me the opportunity to learn from individuals who just need a little help seeing the newspaper to folks who are completely blind."

The public is welcome; please make a reservation at 203-594-3620.

## Medicare Wellness Exams

As of 2011 Medicare includes a new comprehensive annual Wellness Exam for its members. Now, if you're on Medicare, instead of waiting until you are sick to see the doctor, you can make an appointment to talk about all the ways you can avoid getting sick. The new coverage is part of federal health care reform, and reflects the thinking that medicine needs to focus more on keeping people well rather than just treating them once they are ill.

On Thursday, May 19 at 10 a.m. at Lapham Center Mercedes Papaharis, an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse who practices at Soundview Medical in New Canaan, will review the new Medicare wellness exam and answer questions about how it differs from a routine physical examination.

"The new Medicare Wellness Exam is a wonderful opportunity for individuals to receive a comprehensive health assessment," says Mrs. Papaharis, "It includes a very broad set of parameters that allow your doctor or primary health care provider to gather a valuable health assessment and construct a long term health plan that will establish or update a health screening schedule for the next 5-10 years. It can also include health education or preventive counseling services designed to reduce risk factors that have been identified during the visit."

Mrs. Papaharis will talk about the information that patients should collect and bring to their exam. "We need to know about your family history, all of your medications, and we will talk about mental health, your level of exercise, diet, your hearing and vision, and the issue of safety."

There is no charge for this program but registration is requested at 203-594-3620.

## Senior Health Fair



Wednesday, June 22

10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

at the New Canaan YMCA

Watch local papers for more information.

## Tax Relief for Seniors

For information on local tax relief for seniors, contact the Assessors office at 203-594-3005 to get updated information on income guidelines and qualifications. Before you make the call, however, you should know that your income for calendar year 2010 has to be less than \$60,000. Also, if you think you might be eligible, call now as you must apply before May 15th.

## Local Medical Alert Service

A medical alert service can bring safety and peace of mind for those living alone.

Family & Children's Agency, a non-profit agency based in Norwalk, will send a trained case worker to your home to install the equipment and teach you how to use it. They will also come to your house to repair or replace equipment, should you have any problems. A free home fall safety assessment, reviewed by a registered nurse, is also part of their service. Fees are based on a sliding scale.

Call (203) 853-3116 to learn more.

## Half Price Transit Fares for Seniors

You can ride all trains and buses in Connecticut for half the peak price simply by showing your Medicare card to the conductor. Senior citizens and disabled persons who show the proper ID may purchase tickets on board the train without paying the higher on-board price. For example, your fare to Grand Central would be \$6 rather than \$12.25 peak or \$9.25 off-peak. Half-fare is not valid on inbound morning peak trains.

If you are 65 or older and do not have a Medicare card, you can apply for a CT Transit Senior/Disabled Reduced Fare ID Card. Call Lapham Center at 203-594-3620 and we will mail or email you an application.

## Gas Price-Tracking Websites

Enter your zip code on these websites to find the best gas prices:

GasBuddy.com or  
ConnecticutGasPrices.com.

# F

### FACE:

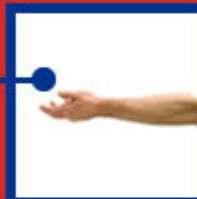
Ask the person to smile.  
Does one side of the face droop?



# A

### ARMS:

Ask the person to raise both arms.  
Does one arm drift downward?



# S

### SPEECH:

Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?



# T

### TIME:

If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.



## May is Stroke Awareness Month

The National Stroke Association emphasizes that you should think FAST and call 9-1-1 immediately if you or someone else have **any** of the symptoms described in the FAST box.

It is important to note the time when any symptoms first appear. If given within *three hours* of the first symptom, there is an FDA-approved clot-buster medication that may reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

Call 9-1-1; do NOT drive yourself to the ER if you suspect a stroke.

## Free Museums, Zoos, Gardens and more

Many of us who weathered the storms this past winter are feeling a little stir-crazy and ready to get out and do something interesting. Here are some free and low-cost ideas to get you inspired.

The New Canaan Library Friends have purchased passes for 16 museums and parks in Connecticut and New York, including the Maritime Aquarium, Mashantucket Pequot Museum, Stepping Stones Museum, Mystic Seaport and more. Most offer free or deeply discounted admission fees. All passes can be checked out at the Library's Reference Desk; if a pass is unavailable, you can put it on hold to be checked out later. Each pass can be borrowed for three days. There is a \$2.00 a day late fee fine. A complete list of museums can be found on the Library website by doing a keyword search for "museum pass".

Museums on Us gives Bank of America customers free general admission to zoos, museums, science centers and botanical gardens during the first full weekend of each month simply by presenting a BoA credit or debit card at the participating institution. In Connecticut you can visit the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport, Yale Peabody in New Haven and the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. In NYC the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bronx Zoo, Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, New York Aquarium and others participate in this program. Get more information and the list of all participating museums online at [museums.bankofamerica.com/](http://museums.bankofamerica.com/).

Many NYC institutions have free or make a donation days. On Wednesdays you can get into the grounds of the NY Botanical Gardens for free and into the Bronx Zoo by making a donation. MOMA is free on Friday evenings as is the American Folk Art Museum, the Morgan Library, and the Whitney Museum of American Art (pay what you wish).

The Forbes Magazine Galleries, the Fashion Institute of Technology Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian in NYC are always free. In Connecticut the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Nautilus and Submarine Force Museum in Groton, and Weir Farm in Wilton are also free.

## Free Collection & Disposal of Unwanted Medication

Do you have unwanted medications in your home? Help protect your family, community and the environment by properly disposing of them.

On Saturday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., there will be a free medicine disposal for residents. The collection will take place at the Police Station at 174 South Avenue.

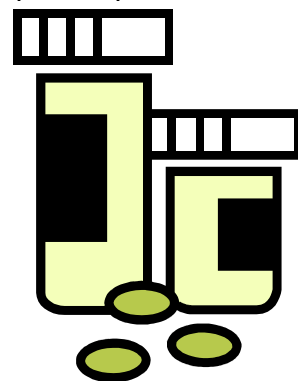
You can bring:

- Expired or unwanted prescriptions
- Vitamins
- Over the counter medicines
- Veterinary medications

*Do NOT bring thermometers, needles, or medical waste of any type.*

Keep the medicine in its original container. Please use a marker to cross off your name but be sure to leave the name of the medication visible.

Participants will be directed to drive up and drop off their medications to a designated volunteer. It will be fast and easy, no need to leave your vehicle. All medicine will be sent to a hazardous waste facility for secure incineration.



## Shingles Vaccine Recommended for 60+

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that people aged 60 and older be vaccinated against shingles, or herpes zoster, a condition often marked by debilitating chronic pain. The CDC recommends a single dose of the zoster vaccine, Zostavax, for adults aged 60+, even if they have had a prior episode of shingles.

Researchers have found that, in people aged 60+, the vaccine reduces the occurrence of shingles by about 50% and lessens the pain associated with the disease.

The risk of contracting shingles increases with age starting at around 50. Ask your doctor whether you should get this vaccine.

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### IN THIS ISSUE

Low Vision Solutions  
Senior Health Fair  
Medicare Wellness Exams  
Local Medical Alert Service  
Tax Relief  
Gas Price Tracking Websites  
Stroke Awareness  
Half-price Transit Fares  
Medicine Disposal Day  
Free Museums, Gardens and Zoos  
Shingles Vaccine  
Renters Tax Relief Program

### Renters' - Rebate For Elderly/ Disabled Renters Tax Relief Program

State law provides a reimbursement program for Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Applications will be taken May 15 - September 15, 2011 at the Department of Health & Human Services. Call Aggie Aspinwall at 203-594-3076 to set up an appointment or get more information.

#### Items needed to apply:

- Proof of identification
- Social Security Card
- 2010 Social Security 1099
- 2010 Tax return (if you filed)
- Verification of all taxable and non-taxable income
- Proof of expenses for 2010 for the following Rent, Electricity, Gas, Water, and Home Heating Oil.

#### Income Limits:

- Single Applicants: \$32,300.00
- Married Applicants: \$39,500.00

### Senior Driving Pamphlets

Medical conditions can affect your driving. If you are concerned, first speak to your doctor. A medication change may make you feel more comfortable behind the wheel.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a series of pamphlets that address "Driving When You Have . . ." various conditions such as arthritis, cataracts, macular degeneration, diabetes and more.

Go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov), click on Senior Driving, then go to "Additional Resources," on the right, and click on "Driving when you suffer from". Click on the appropriate condition and you can read or print the brochure.

If you don't use a computer call 1-888-327-4236 and press 2 for publications when prompted.

Golden Nuggets is published in Spring and Fall by the Senior Center of New Canaan at Lapham Community Center with support from the Department of Human Services.