



BERKSHIRE SENIOR



**What is an
Ombudsman**
and What Do They Do?

**Do You Believe
in Ghosts?**

**Community Transition
Liaison Program**

**November is National
Caregivers Month**

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The mission of Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc. is to provide Berkshire elders, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities the opportunity to live with dignity, independence, and self-determination, and to achieve the highest possible quality of life.

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Elder Services practices non-discrimination in employment practices and service delivery. Embracing diversity, our in-home and community-based services are available to all without regard to race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or lifestyle.



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State and federal funds provided to Elder Services are limited. Elder Services welcomes charitable donations to help meet the growing needs of Berkshire seniors, and gratefully acknowledges all donations.

Lanesborough Kitchen Celebrates its 30th Anniversary



By Christopher McLaughlin, Executive Director of Elder Services



2024 is not only Elder Services of Berkshire County's (Elder Services) 50th Anniversary, but also the 30th Anniversary of the operation of our commercial kitchen in Lanesborough, MA.

Elder Services' kitchen has been in one of the brick buildings on Route 7 in Lanesborough (just before the Dollar General) since 1994. Though there are twenty-six other elder service organizations like Elder Services throughout the Commonwealth, only two

others operate their own kitchens. The other twenty-four organizations purchase meals from large commercial food vendors.

There are advantages to operating our own kitchen, not the least of which is that we can control the quality and variety of the meals we offer. The fact that our employees control every step in the process gives us a real advantage in a county where geography and distance (950 square miles) require us to operate efficiently. We are proud of the staff in our kitchen who prepare between 900 and 950 meals each weekday. Our dedicated transportation provider and Meals on Wheels drivers ensure those meals find their way to senior community dining sites and into the hands of seniors living at home throughout Berkshire County. By the end of this September, the kitchen will have prepared more than 7.1 million meals since 1994!

Activity in the kitchen begins early each morning in Lanesborough. Cooking staff arrive around 5:00 a.m. Office, prep, and other staff arrive a bit later with transporters and drivers beginning to arrive around 9:30.

The head chef and second cook begin packing meals at 8:30 for the county congregate meal sites, who get their food delivered in assorted sizes of hotel pans. These sites serve their diners right from their own steam tables.

Production on the "assembly line" begins around 9:00 and lasts until around 10:30. Producing and packaging so many meals results in a fast and furious flurry of activity when everyone works smoothly and efficiently as a team. Everyone knows their role and what is expected of them to produce so many meals under such a tight deadline.

The kitchen has two rooms of about 3,000 square feet – a small office space and the much larger commercial kitchen. The office is the logistics center, where every morning lists and route sheets are adjusted and edited for the last-minute changes from the Nutrition Staff in our central office. Phones are ringing and printers work continuously while the office staff adjust the final orders to the kitchen.

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ESBCI Meals on Wheels/Kitchen staff.

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County seniors
FREE

Lanesborough Kitchen

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The kitchen is comprised of three areas. The cooking area is active with chefs and cooks working ovens, stoves, and large electric kettles, which shine from having been cleaned the previous afternoon. There is plenty of noise from spoons banging and mixing and from the office staff shouting orders and changes as the food moves to the assembly line. On the assembly line, four "servers" don their aprons, hats, and gloves as they scoop portions of each food offering into black plastic trays. The last assembly line process is one in which individual meals are slid across a stainless-steel table to the sealing machine. The sealing machine hermetically seals each tray with clear cellophane which eliminates spills and helps keep the meal warm until it reaches its destination. It also accurately counts the meals. The person operating the sealing machine then slides each sealed meal to the packers, who, using lists provided by the office, pack the meals into insulated containers that have been prearranged for packing. They work efficiently with an occasional last-minute change order coming from the office.

First out are two vans driven by the transporters who head to North and South County. They load up to prepare to drop off at distribution centers at their respective ends of the Berkshires, where drivers meet them then drive to the communities where each typically delivers 12-20 meals to the homes of seniors. The Central County drivers are next. They anxiously wait for their orders to be ready so they can begin making their deliveries.

The last area of the kitchen, where the walk-in coolers are, one or two other staff prepare the brown bag portion of each meal, which includes a drink, fruit, dessert, bread, and condiments as needed. The drivers deliver these bags with each hot meal.

By 10:00 or 10:30 kitchen staff begin preparing the large pans of bulk food which are delivered to

congregate meal sites throughout the county. When this process is complete, the tables are cleaned, the pots are washed, and preparations are made for the beginning of a new morning the next day.



As you can see, a great deal of effort and planning goes into

ensuring seniors in an area about the size of Rhode Island receive nutritious meals and well-being checks every day.

Sincerest thanks to all the individuals who work or have worked in our kitchen and Nutrition Department, as transporters and drivers or

in senior community dining sites throughout Berkshire County during the past 30 years. Congratulations on three decades of service and providing more than seven million meals to Berkshire seniors!

Until next time be good, be kind and be careful.

Annual Meeting

Please join us as we celebrate
a remarkable 50 year milestone!

October 11, 2024 | 11:30AM

Country Club of Pittsfield
639 South Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Featuring guest speakers Dr. Cynthia Murphy
and Dr. Diana Michalczuk from the Memory Clinic
in Bennington.

Invitation and registration to follow.

What is an Ombudsman, and What Do They Do?

by Peter Olsen

I am a Long-term Care Ombudsman myself. Rarely, however, as I make my rounds at my assigned nursing home do I run into people who know what an ombudsman is, much less what they can do for residents. Much of my time is spent just informing folks about the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program. Perhaps the best way to get a picture of the Ombudsman's role in long-term care facilities is to listen to the actual stories of those who serve.

"A resident who has resided in a residential care facility since 1999, used all her savings to pay for the care facility. Now, she was being evicted. We were able to help her identify state programs that helped pay

for her care. In addition, we provided the care facility with the licensing regulations that stopped them from evicting her." ... (Anonymous Ombudsman)

"During a visit to a nursing home, the Ombudsman observed that several residents used oxygen concentrators. The filters were clogged and failed to provide sufficient oxygen to the residents. The Ombudsman ensured that the facility staff cleaned the filters, avoiding a life-threatening situation."... (Anonymous Ombudsman)

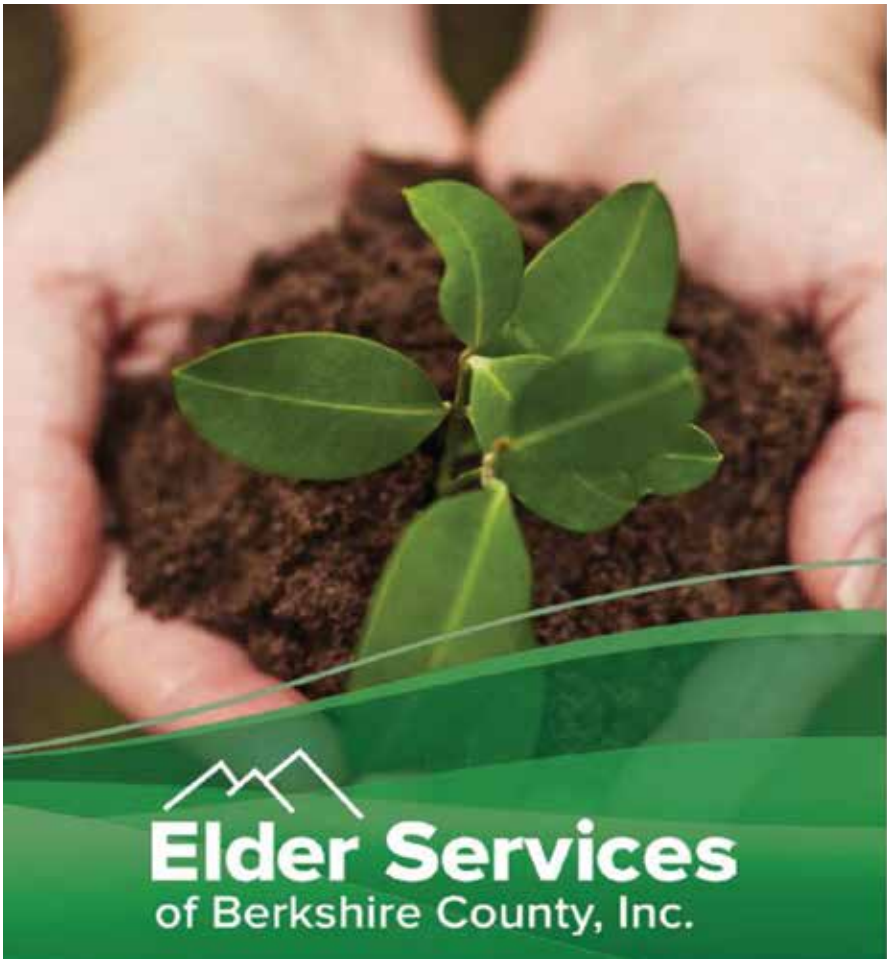
"During my visit to the nursing home, I discovered the facility staff placed padlocks on the outside patio gates. The staff said it was to prevent dementia residents from wandering away. I discovered that locking outside gates without proper federal permits was a fire

and safety violation in my state. We notified the fire marshal, who quickly arrived and corrected the problem,"... (Anonymous Ombudsman)

Here in Berkshire County, all nursing homes and assisted living residences have assigned Ombudsmen. As designated by the Massachusetts State Ombudsman's Office, each Ombudsman has been thoroughly vetted and trained. Ombudsmen work to resolve problems between residents and long-term care facilities as they relate to health, welfare, and the rights of those they serve. The Ombudsman is an advocate visiting facilities regularly, empowering residents to voice their concerns and work toward resolution.

Elder Services of Berkshire County hosts the Long-term

Care Ombudsman Program here in Berkshire County. The State Long-term Care Ombudsman Program provides oversight of the Program. They are always seeking new volunteers and provide comprehensive training and support to ensure the Ombudsman service is available to all long-term care facilities and for all residents who call these facilities their home. The Ombudsman wants residents and family members to know that they are available. There is no more worthy venture than to volunteer as an Ombudsman. Contact information for the Ombudsman is posted in each Long-term Care facility or you can contact Elder Services and to speak to the Ombudsman Program Manager (413)499-0524 Ext. 726.



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Do You Believe in Ghosts?



by Susan Guerrero

October is a month that has the distinction of having spooky Halloween on its calendar. There are definitely bands of clowns, hobos, princesses, and video game characters who march down streets during “trick or treat” nights. For decades, as soon as days turn to night, and the moon comes out in a dark sky, trick-or-treaters have been traipsing through neighborhoods. They are looking for sweet treats from generous souls.

One’s thoughts may also turn eerily, this month, to ghosts. However, these spirits are referred to at all times of the year, rather than just at Halloween.

Are there such things as ghosts? Has anyone ever experienced the presence of ghosts in their lives? David J. Pitkin certainly has. He’s the author of the book “New England Ghosts,” published in 2010 by Aurora Publications in Chestertown, New York. “During the four decades during which I have studied ghost phenomena through the particulars of more than thirteen hundred cases, I am more and more persuaded that we must approach these entities with compassion and not fear,” he wrote in the book’s Introduction. “Speak to them as friends or fellow seekers, tell them their true state of being,” he wrote. “Encourage such beings to move onward into light, which is the representation of truth in our lives.”

Jana Polly, a Pittsfield native, has lived for many years in Georgia. The whole family moved south when her late father was transferred by the

General Electric Company where he worked. Jana spent summers with her late Ukrainian grandparents who lived in Pittsfield. Now in her 70s, Jana still clearly remembers one very scary night of her childhood. “I suppose you could say I believe in supernatural occurrences,” Jana, a retired English teacher, said. “Have I ever seen a ghost? No, but my grandmother’s house was haunted in my opinion and I did have something happen to me that scared the ‘bejesus’ out of me as I was staying there over the summer when I was a teenager.”

“My grandmother’s house had an upstairs that could and was used as separate living quarters from their space downstairs,” she explained. “This is where my parents and I lived until December of my sixth year. One of the bedrooms was mine and it had nursery rhyme linoleum on the floor which was still there throughout the time I went up for the summers.” As a teenager, Jana would stay and sleep in the upstairs apartment.

“I went to bed one evening and was awoken by the scariest feeling I had ever experienced so far in my life,” she said. “I literally could not move because there was an invisible force pressing me to the mattress. I was paralyzed (literally) and could not move.” She also was unable to even turn on a light because it was a ceiling fixture with a pull string and whatever was holding her down wasn’t letting her up, she said. “When it did, I picked up my pillow, went down the stairs, and spent the rest of the summer sleeping on the couch in my grandmother’s living room.”

Jana said her mother and two aunts also had some unexplained experiences there.

"I learned much later that my grandparents rented out the upstairs before my parents lived in it," she said. "A man was living there who committed suicide in that very bedroom. He rigged the gas stove somehow so that the fumes would go into the bedroom and there he died."

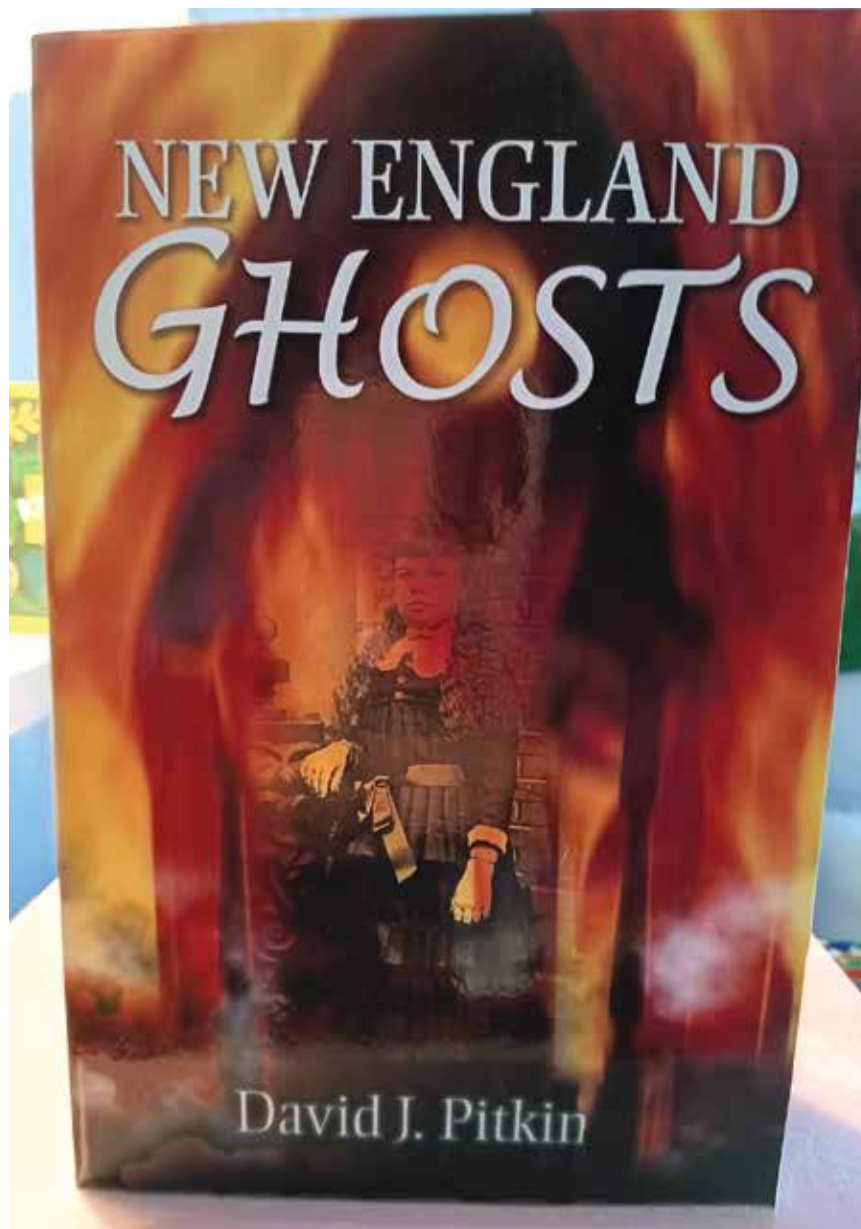
"Was it his presence that paid me a visit?" Jana asked. She added she will never really know. "After my grandmother's death the house was sold," Jana said. "The man who bought it was ripping out the nursery rhyme linoleum and found old newspapers under it that were used as padding and insulation. One of the newspapers had an article with his own mother's picture in it. How weird is that?"

Rosie Keefe, a retired Pittsfield resident, was asked if she believed in ghosts.

"Yes, I believe in ghosts," she said. "I saw one when I was probably five or six years old." Rosie and her father were on their way home at dusk in her native Peru, South America. Her father was giving her a piggyback ride on his shoulders. They were approaching a bridge, over a river that had to be crossed, in order to get to their destination. Rosie said she looked on the other side toward the river and saw a "white, cloudy shape. Inside of it was the figure of a little girl." The white cloud and the little girl were moving toward the bridge. Her father also saw the cloud and little girl's figure. He stopped walking and started whistling. Nearby neighborhood dogs started barking then howling, Rosie said.

She emphasized that she and her father were not afraid of the image they saw.

"The image was like an angel," she said, "peaceful and not scary." It eventually just disappeared and Rosie and her father continued walking. They crossed the bridge and made it safely home. Even today, many decades later, Rosie clearly remembers that night. She believes what she and her father saw was "the spirit of a small child from another side of life." "The image was a gentle, kind



*"The image was like an angel," she said,
"peaceful and not scary."*

spirit, rather than scary," she said. However, it was after that experience and ever since, that she has believed in ghosts.

Atty. Michael Hashim, of Hashim & Spinola Attorneys in Pittsfield, has his own thoughts about ghostly phenomena. "I don't believe in ghosts," he succinctly said. "I don't believe in the supernatural. I am a realist." One of his employees, however, Shannon Tarjick, a paralegal, does believe in ghosts. Former owners of the Lanesboro home she lives in died there. Their first names were Betty and Dece, Shannon said. The house was built in 1937. She said all kinds

of odd things have happened since she bought the home. One of them is that usually once a month, near a full moon, the doors of spice cupboards in the kitchen are found open and spices are scattered all over the floor.

The front door also opens and slams shut by itself a few times a year, she said, sometimes when Shannon and her daughters are watching television.

Both of her daughters, Serenity and Wyllow, as well as Shannon, all have the ability to detect signs of spirits, she said. They have even been selected from the audience when visiting psychics, she said. Once in the

Lanesboro house, her daughter, Wyllow, was singing in the bathroom. She called out to her mother and asked, "Mom? Are you singing with me?" Her mother was not singing with her but someone else was! "I thought she was making it up," Shannon said.

Another time, her daughter, Wyllow, saw the image of a man wearing a red bandana on his head, at the end of her bed, Shannon said. A neighbor was asked if, Dece, the former male owner of the house, ever wore a red bandana. "The neighbor said that Dece wore a red bandana every day," Shannon explained.

Sometimes she hears big band music coming from her bedroom. She found out that was the style of music the former owners liked. The late Dece and Betty completed and framed a puzzle of a Japanese scene that still hangs in the house at the top of the stairs. "Perhaps they come to visit," Shannon said. "They are good spirits. They just want to have me know they are there."

Marianne Rennie of Pittsfield, is the widow of Dr. Robert P. Rennie, who was a well-known and respected optometrist in town. The couple once lived in Glens Falls and Marianne worked in a bookstore there. There was a back room where very old books were kept. One day she was walking into that back room and bumped into something. However, there was nothing visible in front of her. "I could not pass," she said, so she quickly exited the room. Perhaps it was a spirit who, when alive, liked old books. On another occasion, after Dr. Rennie died, Marianne said she was sitting on a couch in an apartment into which she had moved. Her dog, Lexi, was nearby. She heard "strong footsteps" coming up the cellar stairs. Lexi heard them, too, as she lifted up her head and was listening, Marianne said.

"That was it," she said. The footsteps stopped. All the doors in the basement were closed to the outside of the house and the kitchen door to the basement was also shut tight. "I don't know what it was," she said, adding, "but I'd rather have a spirit than a neighborhood robber any day."



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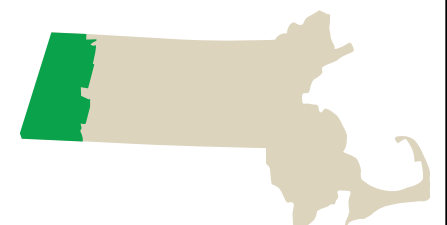
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Do you look forward to reading *Berkshire Senior* every other month? Do you have a passion for issues that are important to seniors? Are you creative? If you'd like to have input into the format and content of *Berkshire Senior* we'd love to have you serve on our editorial board! We meet once every other month for about 60 minutes via Zoom.

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Enhancing the lives of people living with dementia and their families.

We all need to have a sense of belonging in a community where we feel safe, secure, and valued. Home Instead's Dementia Day Program, known as Friends Club, is a place where all people can be themselves, and where we build relationships to know the person beneath the dementia.

Come and see what the Friends Club has to offer:

- Located in our newly-renovated space in the former Stanley Club at 66 Wendell Avenue, Pittsfield.
- Nutritious meals, snacks, shared mealtime experiences.
- Activities and events based on personal interests, needs and abilities.
- Social connectedness to our community.
- Music, movement, creative arts, conversations, volunteering, special events and more.

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Call (413) 442-0907 or visit [HomeInstead.com/Berkshire](https://www.HomeInstead.com/Berkshire)

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Do You Have Questions About Medicare Open Enrollment?

Free local help is available. Trained, Certified SHINE counselors can answer your questions, compare your options, and potentially save you money.

Contact the SHINE Program at 499-0524 for unbiased Open Enrollment help you can trust.



Community Transition Liaison Program

by Kara Graziola

The Community Transition Liaison Program (CTLTP) is a program that supports residents of skilled nursing facilities with transitioning to the community. Each Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) in Berkshire County is assigned to one of two teams which includes two dedicated Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc. (ESBCI) staff members. A team is comprised of a Community Transition Liaison and an administrative support professional. The teams meet with residents, their families, caregivers and nursing facility staff to discuss options available to the consumer to assist with a discharge to the community and help navigate the barriers that may come with it.

The CTLTP team can work with any nursing facility resident age 22 and older with any insurance type. The CTLTP can provide assistance with discharge planning, connecting the resident to state and local programs and assist with the successful transfer into the community. The CTLTP is able to assist with locating suitable housing along

with participating in discharge planning meetings.

Since the program began in July 2023 the CTLTP teams have engaged with 133 nursing facility residents with 28 successfully discharged to the community. I recently spoke with a 67 year old individual who returned to her home after a one year stay in a local nursing facility. She told me that CTLTP was “wonderful” and she felt that they “helped me mentally as I was struggling being in the facility.” She felt like “something was going to be done” once the CTLTP team became involved with her discharge. The resident was admitted to the nursing facility for rehab after a brief hospital admission.

Prior to her admission she was living at home with family and was receiving home care services through Elder Services. The CTLTP team worked collaboratively with the staff of the nursing facility and her assigned ESBCI case manager to ensure her discharge was successful. Two of the barriers preventing her from returning to her home were that she was unable to manage her medications safely and unable to

prepare nutritious meals. This individual also did not receive her renewal paperwork for Section 8 housing due to being in the nursing facility. The CTLTP staff advocated and worked with the local housing authority and was able to ensure her Section 8 was renewed prior to her discharge home. The CTLTP team also helped her secure an adjustable bed for her once she returned to her home. This individual told me that the adjustable bed allows her to raise her head and legs which helps her find relief from many medical conditions. This client has now been home for six months and also receives assistance from ESBCI’s Home Care Program, which includes home delivered meals 5 days a week, pre-packaged medications that are delivered to her home, an emergency response button, foot care and assistance with cleaning, laundry and shopping.

To learn more about the CTLTP program please call Elder Services of Berkshire County at 413-499-0524 or visit our website at ESBCI.org. You can also find information at all of Berkshire County’s Skilled Nursing facilities.



Join over 1,500 of the most creative, engaged, and active adults in the Berkshires (and beyond) for courses, events, and community. Online and in-person!



Learn more at berkshireolli.org or call 413.236.2190



Beware of Scams!

The Berkshire District Attorney’s Office is alerting residents to an overall increase in scams that target senior citizens. The most recent scam to occur is the Grandparent Scam. AARP defines a Grandparent scam-- “The Grandparent Scam typically starts with a call from someone claiming to be your grandchild or a person reaching out on their behalf who needs your help urgently. They will state that your grandchild was in an accident or is in jail and they need money right away. They may ask for you a wire transfer or gift card, but there is a rise in requests for cash – cash that caller says they will pick up from your home.”

The scammer sometimes will use artificial intelligence to impersonate people to create a sense of urgency of fear. They use this tactic to make people act quickly without being able to critically think about the situation.

Legitimate agencies will not ask for cash or gift cards; they will not send a courier to your house to pick up money; they will not ask for cryptocurrency; and they will not request wire transfers.

Never give information or money to unknown individuals or organizations in-person, over the phone or online. Law informant agencies will never ask you to send money, any form, or come to your house to collect money. If you are targeted by this scam hang up the phone, call your family and contact law enforcement.

Tips for not falling victim to the grandparent scam

1. If someone unknown to you calls stating that a family member has been arrested, verify with someone you trust. Call another relative or call the relative who the caller claims to be (VERIFY EVEN IF THE CALLER ASKS YOU NOT TO).
2. If someone calls from an unknown number and claims to be a loved one, even if it sounds like them, ask the person questions that only your real family member would be able to answer.
3. Share information carefully on social media. Make sure your privacy settings prevent strangers from accessing information about you and your family.
4. NEVER wire, hand over or send money in response to a phone call, email or online message. Once the money has been received by the fraudster, it’s almost impossible to get it back. Hang up and call law enforcement immediately. (REMEMBER, law enforcement would never request someone to send money via electronic transfer or send a courier to pick up cash for bail of a loved one).

More about scams in our next issues of Berkshire Senior.

Information provided by the Berkshire District Attorney’s Office.



Autumn

Find and circle all of the Autumn words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - an Albert Camus quotation.

L O N G E R N I G H T S N A A U C N
T O R U E S T U N Y R O K C I H R I
M S O A Y Q E N I S I A O T R W O K
R C Y H N E U V S T E R F H E O P P
C E A A C G K I A S N O A A B R S M
K N D N D S E R N E D S R N M C O U
S C Y L N R G L U O L P M K E E C P
Q R A K E I E R E T X G I S V R T S
U Y D T M A N T S A E F N G O A O E
A D Y D S I V G R T V S G I N C B P
S N R N G Y W E H O E E N V W S E T
H I E L P P A E S P H A S I V O R E
B W T Y L L I H C T E S P N R F L M
F T S E V R A H Y E L O I G C R E B
A A U H A L L O W E E N E F I O S E
A F L S E V A E L W O L L E Y S L R
L O B L W E C H E S T N U T S T R D

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| ACORN | EQUINOX | NOVEMBER | SEPTEMBER |
| APPLE | FALL | OCTOBER | SHORTER DAYS |
| BIRD MIGRATION | FARMING | ORANGE LEAVES | SQUASH |
| BLOWING LEAVES | FEAST | PIE | SWEET POTATOES |
| BLUSTERY DAY | FROST | PUMPKIN | THANKSGIVING |
| CANNING | HALLOWEEN | RAKE | TURKEY |
| CHESTNUTS | HARVEST | RED LEAVES | WINDY |
| CHILLY | HAYSTACK | SCARECROW | YELLOW LEAVES |
| COLD | HICKORY NUTS | SCHOOL | |
| CROPS | LONGER NIGHTS | SEASON | |





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Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc.

NUTRITION PROGRAM SENIOR COMMUNITY DINING CENTERS

The status and offerings of the Senior Community Dining Centers are likely to evolve. Please call for the latest update.

CITY/TOWN PHONE	ADDRESS	MEAL TIMES	DAYS MEALS SERVED
ADAMS 743-8333	ADAMS VISITOR CENTER 3 Hoosac Street	11:30 am	Mon thru Fri
BECKET 623-8934	TOWN HALL Route 8	11:00 am	Tue, Thu
CHESHIRE 743-9719	SENIOR CENTER 119 School Street	11:30 am	Mon thru Fri
DALTON 684-2000	SENIOR CENTER 40 Field Street. Ext.	12:00 pm	Mon, Thu
GT. BARRINGTON 528-4118	CLAIRE TEAGUE SENIOR CTR. 909 South Main Street	11:30 am	Mon thru Fri
LANESBORO 448-2862	TOWN HALL 83 North Main Street	11:30 am	Tues, Thu
LEE 394-4160	SENIOR CENTER 21 Crossway Village	11:45 am	Mon thru Fri
LENOX 637-5535	COMMUNITY CENTER 65 Walker Street	12:00 pm	Mon thru Fri
NORTH ADAMS 662-3125	SPITZER CENTER 116 Ashland Street	11:45 am	Mon thru Fri
PITTSFIELD 499-9346	RALPH J. FROIO SENIOR CTR. 330 North Street	11:30 am	Mon thru Fri
PITTSFIELD- KOSHER* 442-2200	CONG. KNESSET ISRAEL 16 Colt Road	12:00 pm	Mon, Tue, Thu
SHEFFIELD 229-7037	SENIOR CENTER 25 Cook Road	12:00 pm	Wed & Fri
STOCKBRIDGE 298-4170 x263	SENIOR CENTER 50 Main Street	11:30 am	Tues, Wed
STOCKBRIDGE 298-3222	HEATON COURT 5 Pine Street	11:30 am	Thu
WILLIAMSTOWN 458-8350	HARPER CENTER 118 Church Street	11:30 am	Mon, Wed, Fri

Eligible seniors 60 years or older are welcome to attend any Senior Meal Site. Reservations are requested 24 hours in advance. The suggested donation is \$3.00 per meal. All contributions are returned to the community toward the cost of the Senior Nutrition Program. Those 59 or under are welcome at the required fee of \$8.00 per meal.

MEDICALLY TAILORED MEALS

Elder Services now provides medically tailored meals (MTMs). MTMs help meet the nutritional needs of seniors with health conditions that require specific diets such as diabetes and heart or kidney disease.

MTMs can be delivered to individuals at their home five days a week. Menus are developed by our registered dietician and trained staff.

Call Elder Services (413) 499-0524 to request a special meal such as pureed, cardiac, diabetic, renal and vegetarian.

November is National Caregivers Month

by Kara Graziola, Elder Services Client Services Supervisor

Caregivers Month allows for raising awareness of caregiver issues, celebrating caregivers and increasing support for caregivers.

Caregivers are spouses, partners, adult children, in-laws, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends or neighbors. If you provide help to a person in need on a regular basis you are a caregiver. It may be as simple as calling someone on the phone, assisting them with transportation to medical appointments or helping them with daily care needs such as meal preparation, companionship and medication assistance. Caregivers are caring for parents, children, other relatives, friends or grandchildren.

Admitting you need help can be difficult for both the caregiver and the care receiver. It's okay to say you need a break or I cannot

do this alone. Communication is important. If you notice changes such as memory loss, weight loss, unpaid bills and behavioral changes speak with your loved one and discuss your concerns. Ask what they would like help with or if they have any concerns. These conversations are difficult to have, but keep trying.

Tips for Caregivers:

1. Taking care of your own health is important. Pay close attention to physical and emotional symptoms that can affect your overall health and well-being. If you become sick or unable to provide caregiving to your loved one, who will take your place?
2. Ask for HELP. If another family member or friend offers to make a meal or help with errands, let them. If you need help with something, don't be afraid to ask.
3. Take respite on a regular basis.
4. Research the illness your loved


one has. Better understanding of the illness can bring understanding and compassion to the caregiving role.

Call Elder Services Information and Referral Department and ask about services offered including the Family Caregiver Support Program. Our Family Caregiver

Support Coordinators can speak with you individually or you may wish to attend a support group. For more information please call Elder Services of Berkshire County 413-499-0524.

If you are a caregiver, you are not alone. Thank you for all you do.






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 Date Married _____ Place Married _____
 Occupation _____ Mother's Name _____
 Father's Name _____ If a veteran, Date of Service _____

These are just some of the things asked in our full, comprehensive Pre Planning guide.

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AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is Looking for Volunteers

We are looking for compassionate and friendly people to join our volunteer team. We'll provide the training and support to help you learn new skills, and you'll get a great feeling from helping those in need. The program is looking for individuals to volunteer virtually or in person in a number of roles to provide help to taxpayers. Our volunteers come from a variety of industries and span from retirees to college students.

Volunteers fill a variety of roles:

- ✓ **Counselors** work with taxpayers directly by filling out tax returns. If you have no previous experience, you'll get the training you need and will also receive IRS certification.
- ✓ **Client Facilitators** welcome taxpayers, help organize their paperwork, and manage the overall flow of service.
- ✓ **Technology Coordinators** manage computer equipment, ensure taxpayer data is secure, and provide technical assistance to volunteers.
- ✓ **Leadership and Administrative** volunteers make sure program operations run smoothly, manage volunteers, and maintain quality control.
- ✓ **Communications Coordinators** promote the program to prospective volunteers and taxpayers.
- ✓ **Speak a second language?** We have a big demand for bilingual speakers in all roles, especially dedicated interpreters who can assist other volunteers.

For more information or to volunteer go to the following site:
<https://aarpfoundation.org/taxaidevolunteer>

Or call 413-446-7483 for information regarding Berkshire County

AARP Foundation®
Tax-Aide

Falls Prevention

5 Steps to Reduce Risk of a Fall

Take part in an exercise program.

Whether it's joining a walking club or participating in a Tai Chi class in your community, physical activity is a great way to improve your balance, mobility and flexibility. This will decrease your risk of falling.

Talk to your doctor and take a falls assessment.

This will help your provider understand how your lifestyle might impact your falls risk and recommend different activities to keep you safe. The assessment may recommend that you slow down when moving from place to place, or that you try using an assistive device like a cane when walking longer distances.

Review your medication list with your doctor or pharmacist.

Some drugs, or drug interactions, make you less physically stable and may contribute to a fall. By reviewing your full medication list, the doctor or pharmacist can best advise on how and when to take medications. Be sure to include any over the counter or nonprescribed medications you take.

Get your eyes and ears checked every year.

Your hearing and vision are critical to understanding the world around you and can help you be more aware of things that may cause you to fall. Don't be afraid to get an updated

prescription for your glasses or start wearing a hearing aid if you need it.

Look for hazards in your home.

Each year, many falls happen right in our own homes. Some things that cause these falls include loose rugs or carpets, broken handrails on stairs, or missing grab bars in the shower. Even our pets can cause falls when they are regularly under our feet. There are lots of easy fixes for falls hazards in our home, like nailing down our carpets or putting a bell on our cat's collar so we know where they are.

Taken from an article provided by AgeSpan (Elder Services of Merrimack Valley & North Shore)



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