

A circle is a group of people in which everyone has a front seat.

Senior Focus:  
Ginny Miller, Lifelong Front Desk Volunteer  
By Ann Bohman, Front Desk Manager at Lifelong

Lifelong could not function well without the time and support of helpful volunteers. A recent addition to our front desk roster is Ginny Miller, who offers her time on Monday mornings with enthusiasm and a smile. Ginny has become an integral part of Lifelong in other ways, as well, and we’d like to highlight her contributions, as well as her life journey.

Ginny was born in Lake Forest, Illinois, where she grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago, which were mostly corn fields at that time. At sixteen, she discovered yoga and became a vegetarian. Her traditional Midwest family served meat and potatoes most nights, and in the mid-to-late 70s, yoga was not common or well-known.

“My parents were dismayed when they would arrive home to find me standing on my head in the living room!” Ginny remarked.

Ginny was eager to travel and escape the Midwest, so she chose a college that was as far away and as inexpensive as she could afford. She spent a few years at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, “attempting to sort out what I wanted to do with my life.”

It turned out her favorite college course was yoga! Ginny decided she wanted to become a yoga teacher and travel the world. She dropped out of school and moved to an Indian ashram.

“An ashram is a yoga retreat center, or monastery, where people live within a yoga community,” Ginny explained.

There she became a certified yoga and meditation instructor. For the next three years, Ginny traveled to fascinating places like India, the Bahamas, Canada, and all over the US teaching yoga.

“Those years were a great way to travel and see the world!” Ginny said with a smile.

Ginny met her husband, who is also a yoga teacher, during that three-year period at a large yoga center in Toronto. They married, had a son, and her husband completed his Master’s degree at the University of Toronto. Ginny and her husband made the decision not to raise their son in the city, so they joined close friends from the ashram, moved to the Ithaca area, and attempted to “live off the land.”

“Unfortunately, I didn’t realize that living off the land would include no electricity or running water. While the other members of our community were working in Ithaca, I was on a 100+acre undeveloped property 20 miles from town without a car, and with an active toddler. My experiment with homesteading was short-lived.” commented Ginny.

Ginny summed up her life journey this way: “As a kid, I wanted to be a psychologist when I grew up. I thought it would help me figure out my family dynamics. By the time I graduated from high school, I wanted to become a lawyer. My time in the ashram detoured that plan. However, I did end up working for 28 years as a paralegal in Family Court on behalf of children, and later with NYS prison inmates.”

Ginny has lived in the City of Ithaca since the mid-80s, where her son, Chris Barkley, attended BJM Elementary School when it was still called Central School. Chris graduated from Ithaca High School in 2000 and went on to graduate from Iona College, where he played Division 1 soccer. After college, he was recruited to play professional soccer in Africa.

Ginny loves Ithaca but has devised a wonderful escape from our harsh winters. For the past fifteen years, she has spent winters in South Africa with her son and his family. “Being able to skip Ithaca winters and enjoy some of the most gorgeous weather on the planet is a real treat. I



Ginny is a Monday morning Lifelong Volunteer along with being a certified Sivananda Yoga teacher and a Senior Fitness Specialist. Join her for one of her Chair Yoga or Fitness classes at Lifelong.

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Flu Clinic at Lifelong



Everyone Every Year!

Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>  
from 9:30am-12:30pm

- Please call Lifelong 607-273-1511 to make an appointment.
- Please have all your insurance cards handy when calling
- Please pre-register by Tuesday, September 30th
- Active Lifelong membership not required

# Senior Services

## NY Connects



NY Connects Tompkins County Office for the Aging provides information, assistance, and referrals for Long Term Services and Supports for people of any age and any income. Long Term Services and Supports are for medical and non-medical needs.

**NY connects can provide information about:**

- Personal Care Services
- Caregiver Supports
- Respite Care
- Financial Benefits
- Education and Counseling
- Care Coordination
- Transportation
- Health and Wellness
- Plus, other services to help you remain as independently as possible

NY Connects staff can assist you between 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. By phone: (607) 274-5482 or 1-800-342-9871  
Or visit us on the web at: [www.tompkinscounty.gov/all-departments/Aging](http://www.tompkinscounty.gov/all-departments/Aging)

*Free language assistance (interpretation and translation) services available.*

### Joy for All Companion Pets

The Office for the Aging has several cats and dogs available for “adoption”. These interactive pets offer support, comfort, and companionship to older adults. If you or someone you know would be interested in a companion pet, please contact the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482

### Gadabout Tickets Through COFA

If you are 60 and over with transportation needs, contact the Office for the Aging for free Gadabout tickets. The Office for the Aging has purchased Zone 1 and Zone 2 tickets from Gadabout, and they are available at our office. There are no income guidelines. There is a -ticket 10 cap for each individual within a 12-month period. Call our office today at 607-274-5482 for more information or to receive tickets.

### The Registry

The Finger Lakes Independence Center administers the Registry Program. The Registry is a free referral service linking individuals seeking independent employment to people who need care in their home. Opportunities include elder companion, housekeeper, run errands, do yardwork, cook, personal care aide, home care aide, LPN, RN. People looking for help can call and receive names of people who are willing to provide those services. Payment and other arrangements are made by the person seeking help with the person willing to provide the services. If you either need assistance or if you would be interested in listing your name as a caregiver, please call FLIC at 607-272-2433 or email: [info@fliconline.org](mailto:info@fliconline.org). This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

### Help with yard work

Maintains a listing of people who are willing to do yard work for older adults on either a paid or volunteer basis. If you need some help with your yard work, please give us a call 607-274-5482. Likewise, if you are interested in assisting older adults with yard work, on either a paid or volunteer basis, please call our office at 607-274-5482.

## Planning for Aging in Place

**Andrea Davis – Tompkins County Office for the Aging**

Aging in place is the choice to remain in your home as you age, surrounded by friends and family. When planned carefully, it can contribute to happier, healthier lives. Several factors should be considered: Is your home safe, livable, and accessible? Are you financially prepared? Do you have access to health and personal care services you may need? What supports are currently in place? Thoughtful planning can help you determine whether aging in place is the best option for your situation, whether it is feasible, or if other options should be explored.

When evaluating your home for aging in place, the goal is to maintain the ability to use all areas and functions of your home regardless of changes in your abilities. For many homes, this may not be possible without modifications. Common barriers include staircases, bathrooms, multi-story layouts, and narrow doorways. Depending on your home’s current design, modifications may be needed to accommodate future physical or cognitive changes. Affordability and practicality should be considered. Examples of potential modifications include:

- Zero-step entry into the home
- One-story living
- Non-slip flooring in bathing areas
- Flush thresholds
- Wide doorways and hallways
- Accessible controls for appliances
- Lever-style door and cabinet handles
- Additional floor space
- Rocker light switches

Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) can evaluate your home and help determine which modifications are best suited for you. To access a list of CAPS professionals in Tompkins County, visit our website at: [tompkinscountyny.gov/Aging](http://tompkinscountyny.gov/Aging) and scroll to the bottom of the page to find the Falls Prevention Resource Guide. This guide includes the CAPS list and other valuable safety resources. Printed copies are available at our office or can be mailed upon request.



Modifications are just one aspect of aging in place. Conducting your own research, talking with family, friends, and agencies, and consulting your primary care provider can help you plan effectively and identify the supports you already have. Various agencies in Tompkins County provide services and resources to help you remain in your home, including:

- INHS 607-277-4500 – Home accessibility modifications and repairs
- FLIC 607-272-2433, Wonderful Wheelchairs 607-444-2817– Assistive and adaptive equipment
- COFA 607-274-5482, Medicaid 607-274-5278, FLIC – Personal care aide services
- COFA – Personal emergency response systems
- DSS 607-274-5680 – Financial assistance programs
- Gadabout 607-273-1878, 211, GO ITHACA 607-391-1389 – Transportation options

For more information on these agencies, their programs, and possible eligibility requirements, please contact them directly.

The *Senior Circle* is published four times a year by Lifelong, 119 West Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850, and contains information on activities and services which add to the quality of life for older adults and assists them to maintain an independent lifestyle.



The *Senior Circle* is funded by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.



Sign up to receive our monthly COFA Newsletter and/or the quarterly Caregiver Newsletter by email.

To sign up visit:

<https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging>

# Caregiver’s Corner

## Caregivers: What Tools are in Your Toolbox?

By: Amy Jackson

For a caregiverhings change daily, and sometimes even by the minute. Therefore, caregivers need to have as many tools available to them as possible. Building these tools, or in other words, resources, is important so that in times of stress a caregiver can apply different strategies depending on what is needed for specific circumstances. In addition, having a variety of tools at the ready can assist caregivers in caring for themselves as well as for the care receiver.

There are two resources that caregivers should be aware of that have been funded by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) for caregivers. The first one is called Tualta, which is an online digital database for caregivers. To access this program, a caregiver can go to [www.newyork-caregivers.com](http://www.newyork-caregivers.com). The Tualta platform is a free, comprehensive, user-friendly way for caregivers to have support at their fingertips. When caregivers log in, they are asked to complete some information about their caregiving situation so suggested information can be tailored to them. The large variety of topics presented on the platform is comprehensive and very useful! It varies from topics specific to health conditions to self-care for the caregiver.

The second tool that is being funded by NYSOFA is found online at The Caregiver Intensity Index from [ARCHANGELS - Anycare Counts NY](http://ARCHANGELS-AnycareCounts.NY). The link will take you to the ARCHANGELS website, which is useful for people who may not even identify as a caregiver, to discover that they are, in fact, caregiving. It asks several survey questions and then gives the caregiver an intensity level score that lends a better understanding of where they are as far as stress. After a caregiver has their score, they are offered tips and resources from NYSOFA. Both Tualta and ARCHANGELS tools are wonderful for caregivers!!

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging also has many caregiver tools available, in the Caregiver Resource Center. The first one is a caregiver support group that is currently held via Zoom every-other-week on Tuesdays. Caregivers may join when they are able. The second tool is the caregiver library that contains books that can be borrowed about all types of caregiver issues. In addition, there are two types of packets in the caregiver library that are useful to caregivers. One is more for caregivers of Alzheimer’s patients, and the other is a general caregiver packet that has many tools to assist a caregiver with planning and other important processes. The third caregiver tool is the quarterly caregiver newsletter that contains many local resources, as well as articles of interest to caregivers. In addition, there are monthly caregiver presentations by guest speakers on a broad range of topics. The announcement for these presentations is sent to those who are on the e-mail newsletter list. One more resource that COFA offers is Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes that are held at least twice a year. These classes teach skills regarding taking care of oneself while caring for someone else. The next Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class is scheduled to begin Tuesday, September 9th and runs for 6 consecutive Tuesdays from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm.

If a caregiver is interested in any of the above, they can stop into the Tompkins County Office for the Aging at 214 West State Street in Ithaca or call Amy Jackson, the Caregiver Resources Coordinator at 607-274-5486 to discuss the options.



farmers.webp



### POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

**Feeling Overwhelmed?**  
Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, Parkinson’s disease, stroke, or cancer can be stressful physically, emotionally, and financially.

PTC is an interactive, evidence-based course designed to equip caregivers with the tools they need to balance caregiving with self-care.

**When you take care of yourself, everyone benefits.**

**REGISTER NOW FOR UPCOMING CLASSES**

**Next In-Person Session:**  
**Tuesdays for 6 weeks**  
Sept. 9, 2025 - Oct. 14, 2025  
10:30 am -12:00 pm

**CALL ANDREA TO REGISTER:**  
607-274-5484

 TOMPKINS COUNTY  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING  
*Aging Better, Together*



### Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program

While summer may be winding down, the Senior Farmer’s Market Coupon Program (SFMNP) still has coupons available until September 30th. The SFMNP gives eligible recipients a \$25 coupon booklet that they can use at participating farmers markets to purchase fresh, local, unprocessed fruits and vegetables. To be eligible for the SFMNP, recipients must be 60 or over and meet the income guidelines which are listed below. Coupon booklets can be picked up at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging during normal business hours. For more information, give the office a call at 607-274-5482.

- 1 Person Household \$2,413/month
- 2 Person Household \$3,261/month
- 3 Person Household \$4,109/month



For a free copy of the 54-page booklet, Resources for Caregivers in Tompkins County, call the **Office for the Aging** or view it online at [resources-for-caregivers-guide\\_2025\\_edits-finals.pdf](http://resources-for-caregivers-guide_2025_edits-finals.pdf).  
(Click on the orange Resources for Caregivers booklet cover about 2/3 down on the home page.)

Medicare Open Enrollment

October brings us the beauty of fall, football games, hot chocolate, cooler temperatures, apples, pumpkins, Halloween, and **Medicare Open Enrollment**.

Medicare Open Enrollment starts on October 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on December 7<sup>th</sup> every year. During this time, you are able to join, drop or switch your Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C), or add or drop a prescription drug plan (Part D). All changes are effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

You can meet with a certified Health Insurance Information, Counseling, & Assistance Program (HIICAP) counselor who will review your current coverage and compare your coverage to other options for the following year. HIICAP counselors listen to what is important to you regarding your health coverage and help you understand your options. HIICAP counselors are able to enroll you in Medicare Advantage Plans and prescription drug plans.

HIICAP counselors work with Tompkins County residents of any age that are currently enrolled in Medicare or soon to be eligible. This program provides free, accurate and objective information, counseling, assistance and advocacy on Medicare, private health insurance, and related health coverage plans.

HIICAP counselors are able to provide information, screen and assist with applications for low income programs such as the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), Extra Help (prescription assistance and pharmacy discount programs), Medicaid, and Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program. These programs help with paying part of your monthly costs, offer discounts, or provide full medical coverage.

If you would like to schedule an appointment, have questions, or you are new to Medicare and would like to know how to apply or what your options are, you can speak with a HIICAP counselor by contacting Tompkins County Office for the Aging at (607)274-5482 or Lifelong at (607)273-1511. This service is available all year long, but some changes to your Medicare coverage can only be made during certain enrollment periods. Please be aware that if you are planning to meet with a HIICAP counselor during the fall Medicare Open Enrollment period, appointments fill up fast. We look forward to assisting you with your health insurance needs.

Looking for space to hold a community group meeting or a gathering of friends and family?

- Lifelong rooms are available for rent outside of business hours.
- The spaces available include a large activity room, smaller conference rooms, kitchen, and even the community room at Library Place!
- Interested parties should contact Robin Tuttle:  
rtuttle@tclifelong.org or 607-273-1511



The 2025 Medicare Open Enrollment Clinics  
Annual Election Period at Lifelong  
119 West Court Street, Ithaca



Ask questions about Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans, Medigap, and coordination of benefits. Explore ways to save money on premiums and medications. Compare options and select the best match for YOU!

Certified HIICAP counselors offer **free**, non-biased 1:1 health insurance counseling on a first-come, first-serve basis, on the following clinic dates:

**Monday, October 27, 1 to 4pm**

**Tuesday, November 4, 9am to noon**

**Monday, November 10, 1 to 4pm**

**Monday, November 17, 9am to noon**

**Monday, December 1, 1-4pm**

**NEW WALK-INS NOT ACCEPTED 30 MINUTES BEFORE A CLINIC ENDS**

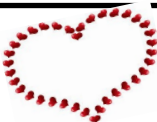
Limited scheduled appointments also available on the following dates:  
10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3

Call Lifelong at 273-1511 for more information.

Please bring the following with you:

- \* List of your prescriptions, dosages/frequency
- \* Your Medicare card
- \* Any other health insurance cards or information
- \* Documentation of monthly or annual income

Tompkin’s County HIICAP is funded by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging



Project CARE / Project Generations

*"I define connection as the energy that exists between two people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship." --Dr. Brene Brown*

**Project CARE** is a free friendly visiting program that helps to alleviate loneliness and social isolation among Tompkins County residents aged 60 and over. Volunteers provide older adults with companionship and assistance while sharing a unique bond. Participants are matched one-on-one with a volunteer. Volunteers are Tompkins County community members. **Project Generations** is the same program as Project CARE, but volunteers are local undergraduate college students from the local educational colleges.

What having a volunteer can offer you:

- Weekly friendly visits (conversation, games/crafts, walks, gardening, and more)
- Weekly telephone friendly reassurance calls
- Short Caregiver breaks
- Running errands
- Organization
- Technology assistance
- One-time special requests

For more information, to request a volunteer or become a volunteer:

- Dawn Sprague, [Project CARE Coordinator at dsprague@tompkins-co.org](mailto:dsprague@tompkins-co.org) or call 607-274-5499
- Information and volunteer requests also at <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging/Services-of-Our-Office/Project-CARE>

## Understanding Your Options: Skilled Nursing Facilities, Assisted Living, and Family-Type Homes in the Southern Tier

As we or our loved ones age, deciding on the right kind of care and housing can feel overwhelming. In New York’s Southern Tier, families have several long-term care options, each offering different levels of support, independence, and medical care. Whether you're planning ahead or navigating a sudden health change, understanding these choices can help you make informed, empowered decisions.

The goal of this article is to bring clarity to these choices, grounded in respect for your dignity, independence, and rights as a resident. In this article, you’ll find a breakdown of the three main types of care settings available locally and what makes them different:

**(1) Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)**, also known as nursing homes. These are the most medically intensive options:

- i. Level of Care: 24/7 skilled nursing care, rehabilitation (physical/ occupational therapy), medication management, meal service, and help with daily living activities.
- ii. Best For: Individuals with complex health needs, those recovering from surgery or hospitalization, or those who require frequent medical monitoring.
- iii. Resident Rights Focus: Protected under federal and state law, residents have the right to participate in their care plans, voice concerns, and receive respectful, person-centered care.
- iv. Local Availability (Chemung, Schuyler, and Tompkins County): Beechtree Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing, Cayuga Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Groton Community Health Care, Kendal at Ithaca, Oak Hill Manor, Seneca View, Bethany Manor, Chemung County Nursing Facility, Elcor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, St. Joseph’s Hospital SNF

**(2) Adult Care Facilities (ACFs)**. These settings offer a balance of independence and daily support in a community-like environment:

- i. Level of Care: Provides supervision, and helps with bathing, dressing, medications, meals, housekeeping, and some health monitoring. Many also offer recreational activities and transportation.
- ii. Best For: Older adults who are mostly independent but need help with daily routines or want a social, supportive community.
- iii. Resident Rights Focus: ACFs are regulated by the NYS Department of Health and must support residents' autonomy, privacy, and ability to make decisions about their routines and services.
- iv. Local Availability (Chemung, Schuyler, and Tompkins County): Bridges Cornell Heights, Brookdale Ithaca, Kendal at Ithaca, Longview, The New Falls, Bethany Village, Woodbrook

**(3) Family-Type Homes (FTHs)**. These are small, home-like settings.:

- i. Level of Care: Personal care and supervision in a family environment with a maximum of 4 residents. No medical services are provided.
- ii. Best For: Seniors who prefer a close-knit setting and don’t need medical care but want support and companionship.
- iii. Resident Rights Focus: Regulated by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Residents have the right to privacy, participation in decisions, and safe, respectful care in a family setting.
- iv. Local Availability (Chemung, Schuyler, and Tompkins County): Evergreen House, Old Hundred, Brook-Haven

Choosing between these options depends on medical needs, personal preferences, budget, and location. It’s always a good idea to:

- Visit facilities in person
- Ask about staffing, activities, meals, and emergency care
- Review resident rights and complaint processes

### Need Help Navigating Long-Term Care?

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is here to support you. We advocate for the rights, dignity, and safety of residents in all adult care settings. We offer free, confidential guidance to individuals living in these facilities experiencing concerns. Your care should always reflect your needs, values, and rights. We're here to help every step of the way.

**Contact your local Ombudsman Office (Chemung, Schuyler, and Tompkins Counties) at 607-274-5498 or [klyon@tompkins-co.org](mailto:klyon@tompkins-co.org).**

## Tompkins County Office for the Aging Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)

The fear of falling may be present with many older adults, even if they have never fallen before. This fear may lead many to avoid several different day to day activities and have an impact on their social, physical, and mental wellbeing. There are several steps that can be taken to prevent falls. Some of these steps include-

- Finding a good balance/exercise program.
- Talking with your health care provider and family members.
- Regularly reviewing your medications with your doctor.
- Getting your vision and hearing checked annually.
- Keeping your home safe.
- Wearing proper footwear.
- Do physical activity regularly.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Improve the lighting in your home.
- Paint a contrasting color on the top edge of all steps.
- Look out for pets who may get underfoot or are resting on the floors or stairs.

If a fall does occur, the next step is to find the best way to get help if needed. A couple ideas are always carrying a phone or having a wearable alarm device that will call for help when needed. The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) has Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) that are available to clients in Tompkins County for a monthly monitoring fee. COFA partners with Doyle Medical Monitoring to provide clients in Tompkins County with PERS units that can connect the client to a responder within minutes. The PERS unit can work with either a landline phone or cell phone towers. The unit has a two-way speaker system, allowing the client to speak directly with a responder from the Doyle call center. There is a pendant that is included with the unit, which can be worn around the neck or on the wrist. Whether you are in/ around your home, this PERS unit will notify a responder with the push of the button on your pendant. Here’s how it works:

- If you have a fall or a medical emergency, press the button on your pendant.
- An alarm will sound on the unit and Doyle will answer within minutes.
- If you are not alright and need assistance, Doyle will call an emergency contact to come and assist you.

Standard pricing starts at \$25 a month, please call our office at 607-274-5482 for more information or to speak with an Outreach Worker who can assist you.



**Supporting Our Non-Profit Community Since 1945**



**Legacy is a private foundation that builds its resources from donors like you. For more information on how you can help visit:**

**[www.tclegacy.org](http://www.tclegacy.org)**



**Lifelong News**

*All events listed are held at Lifelong unless noted.* For more information and full listings of programs please check our website at [www.tclifelong.org](http://www.tclifelong.org).  
*You may register for classes through our online calendar or catalog, or by call Lifelong at 273-1511!*

*A Line from our Executive Director,  
Liza Burger*

It’s hard to believe that Lifelong’s Fall semester is already upon us, and by now any current Lifelong members should have received their catalog in the mail! Hard copies will also be available at Lifelong and at Tompkins County Office for the Aging, as well as at various other spots around town. With a wide variety of classes, activities, day trips, social groups, and events from which to choose, there’s surely something that will appeal to everyone! In addition to programming, any Medicare-eligible community members might want to stop in at a walk-in clinic during Medicare’s Fall Open Enrollment Period which begins October 15 and runs through December 7th, giving you a chance to review any new offerings and make sure that your current coverage meets your needs.



Looking ahead to Fall, we welcome the kickoff of Lifelong’s better-than-ever Silent Auction. This year's auction will run through September 11 and includes everything from travel packages to gluten-free macaroons. Check it out- bid high and bid often to support our small nonprofit! Go to <https://tinyurl.com/LLSilentAuction> to participate!

Lifelong’s team has been hard at work this summer implementing and onboarding new software to help us manage everything from online class registrations to memberships to our auction platform and more! Thank you for your patience with us as we make any tweaks to this new system, which will allow us to better serve our members moving forward.

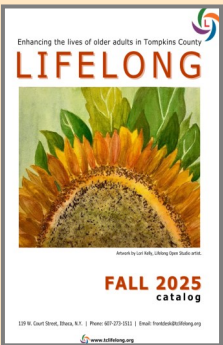
Just before the start of summer, Lifelong thanked outgoing board member Kirk Tolhurst and welcomed returning board member Joe Sammons. Under the leadership of Board President Sheila Squier, Lifelong’s board has blossomed and continues to be a great support to our team as we continue to grow and expand on all there is to offer older adults in our community. If you have interest in serving on a committee as a non-board member, or in joining Lifelong’s board in the future, please reach out to Sheila Squier: [sheila.squier@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.squier@gmail.com). We are especially interested in adding diverse voices to our current board!

Whether you’ve been away this summer, are new to the area, are longtime residents but haven’t yet checked out Lifelong’s array of offerings and services, or have been a regular presence here, we’re looking forward to seeing you all this Fall!

*Warmly, Liza*

**Exploring Autumn  
Classes at Lifelong**

Fall is about change, and while we can’t control the changing of green leaves into hues of yellow, orange, red, and brown, there are changes we can control. We can implement small actions to change our family, community, or planet for the better; volunteer, use less plastic, give a compliment each day, or visit someone lonely.



We can change ourselves by actively seeking out and engaging with opportunities for learning and personal growth. Lifelong offers a wide array of classes, workshops, events, day trips, and opportunities to learn. After all, learning is a form of change and change inevitably involves learning.

Artificial Intelligence can feel intimidating, so Lifelong is launching a new Living with AI series of workshops, taught by an AI expert from Stanford University who will demonstrate how artificial intelligence can simplify daily tasks and spark creativity. Is your property assessment too high? Lifelong is featuring a “How to do it” class on lowering your taxes. Are you preparing to buy or sell a home or property? Choose from two classes on how to get the most money out of your sale and the best value on your purchase.

As we age, falling becomes a concern. In addition to a free Falls Screening and Prevention workshop, learn how to improve balance, gain strength, and what to do if you fall with Stay Upright, Stay Independent and a gratis Strong

Legs, Better Balance workshop. With colder weather on the horizon, don’t forget to schedule your appointment for our annual Fall Flu Clinic.

Theater lovers will rejoice in two film series this semester: Ron Krieg’s World Cinema and Preston Wilson’s Eight Films in the Key of Time. We’re also delighted to announce that published author Edward Hower is back with a six-session series called Opera: Watch, Listen, Discuss.

For the many artists and art lovers among us, Lifelong is presenting a full schedule of Art & Creativity classes, including The Gentle Art of Clowning, Just Collage, Fearless Drawing with Mixed Media, Creating Art with Wool, The Magic of Calligraphy, and Extra! Extra! In this six-series workshop, members will create and publish a tabloid newspaper for “oldsters.”

We’re also bringing back a few favorites, including Everyday Self Defense for Seniors, and launching part two in our laughter yoga series, More Laughter Yoga for Health & Happiness. Steve Sierigk, owner of Hawk Meadow Farm, is returning for an additional workshop on medicinal mushrooms. We’re also offering two Musical Memories Café events with free live music and lunch for caregivers, care-receivers, and isolated adults.

Ongoing learning presents the opportunity to grow knowledge and skills, build confidence, and connect with like-minded people. Lifelong connects you with others who share your interests, expanding your network and potentially leading to new friendships and collaborations.

Register for classes in person, online, via the mail, or by calling (607) 273-1511. We look forward to seeing you at Lifelong!

**LIFELONG LIBRARY GETS A MAKEOVER**

As many of you may have noticed, the Lifelong’s lounge is bordered with four large bookshelves filled with a variety of books. They are a collection donated by our members throughout the years and are available for member use.

This treasure is now being given a makeover by Marie Benedetti, a longtime member of Lifelong, who recently began volunteering at the front desk on Tuesdays. Having been both a professional librarian and English teacher, Marie couldn't help but extend her volunteer work to include giving our library a sorely needed makeover. With patience and a love for books, Marie is carefully removing outdated and damaged books, offering them to either the Friends of the Library or the Recycle Center. Categories will include: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Biography, Self-Care, Cookbooks, Travel, and Miscellaneous. Easier access and organized shelving should make regular book reading a wonderful treat for all! Lifelong’s Lending Library is open to any members of Lifelong and is on an honor system. *We are **not** in need of any new books at this time.*



*Marie Benedetti at work in the Lifelong Lending Library.*

Lifelong appreciates Marie’s current work on the library, as well as Emily Johnson’s efforts in the past on organizing that space. Please be sure to thank these valued members when you see them.

**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR**

**Lifelong Closures**

- **Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>:** Lifelong closed for Indigenous Peoples’ Day
- **Thursday—Friday, November 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>:** Lifelong closed for Thanksgiving
- **Wednesday December 24<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup>:** Winter Break

Sign up for our [Holiday Open House:](#)  
**Thursday, December 18th**  
**2 till 4 p.m.**

*Goodies, good cheer, and a performance from  
Lifelong’s  
Play it Again Theatre Troupe!*

Mosaic Programming: Lifelong Celebrates Diversity

by Susan Weiner, Lifelong Program Manager



Did you know that Lifelong offers free programs that foster the understanding and appreciation of different cultures and backgrounds? With support from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Lifelong offers Mosaic classes, events, and activities designed to create a more connected world.

Right now, it’s more important than ever to understand and accept those who are different from us. Every person deserves to feel welcome and safe, and by celebrating the richness of human differences, Lifelong hopes to contribute to recognizing, appreciating, and valuing these differences.

On September 25, Lifelong is presenting [Stories from People of the Longhouse](#) with Perry Ground, a Turtle Clan member of the Onondaga Nation of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. This storytelling presentation will demonstrate traditional legends that have been told for hundreds of years, and teach about the beliefs, customs, and history of the Haudenosaunee culture.

Life in a wheelchair presents unique challenges, including societal perceptions that often involve stigmatization, misconceptions, and a focus on limitations rather than abilities. Sam Swartz is in a wheelchair, but his enthusiasm and humor shine through. [Join Sam on November 6 for Why Is He in a Wheelchair?](#), an honest talk about what it’s like to live life in a wheelchair. The talk will be followed by a Q&A.

Let’s celebrate our differences. **All Mosaic programs are free and open to the public, but registration is required. Please register online, in person, or on the phone at (607) 273-1511.**

Why Is He In A Wheelchair?

Thursday, November 6, 3-4:30 p.m.

Life in a wheelchair presents unique challenges, including societal perceptions that often involve stigmatization, misconceptions, and a focus on limitations rather than abilities. Sam Swartz is in a wheelchair, but his enthusiasm and humor shine through. Join Sam for an honest talk about independence and resilience, and what it’s like to live life in a wheelchair. Followed by a Q&A.



Samuel Swartz, Instructor

In addition to appreciating the availability of wheelchair seating at sporting events, Sam has a large collection of stories, some funny and some not so funny, to share about the accessible and not so accessible world around us.

**All Mosaic programs are free and open to the public, but registration is required. Please register online, in person, or on the phone at (607) 273-1511.**

Stories from People of the Longhouse

Thursday, September 25th, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Perry Ground is a Turtle Clan member of the Onondaga Nation of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. This Storytelling presentation is filled with traditional legends that have been told for hundreds of years, and teach about the beliefs, customs, and history of the Haudenosaunee culture.



Perry has been a storyteller for over 25 years and enjoys working with people of all ages to teach about the history and culture of Native Peoples.

**All Mosaic programs are free and open to the public, but registration is required. Please register online, in person, or on the phone at (607) 273-1511.**

FREE | OPEN TO PUBLIC



**Musical Memories Café**  
25FALL009 Tuesday, October 21  
25FALL010 Tuesday, November 18  
12:30 - 2:00 p.m. | FREE

**Held at Library Place, 105 W. Court St. Please use N. Cayuga St. entrance**  
Musical Memories Café is a shared musical experience designed to enrich the lives of caregivers, care-receivers, and isolated adults. We offer a simple meal, musical entertainment, and a welcoming space.



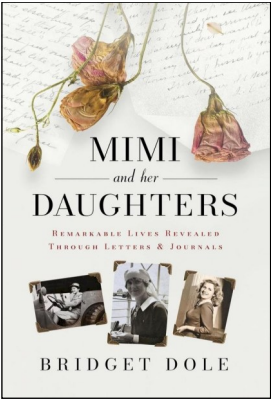
Musical Memories is open to all at no cost, but registration is required. Please call Lifelong at 607-273-1511 or register online.  
*Musical Memories Café is free, thanks to support from the Health Foundation of Western NY*

Book Launch

Reading and Signing,  
Friday, October 3<sup>RD</sup>

4:00-6:00 p.m. at Library Place

*Mimi grew up in Britty, France, sailed to New York on the Lusitania, and started a new life in America as a nanny. She shared her story with her granddaughter, Bridget Dole, who has captured it here, together with the adventures of her daughters.*



*French Benton cakes and cookies will be served, along with suggestions on ways to preserve your own stories!*  
**[Free, but please register in advance.](#)**



Citizen Preparedness

Thursday, November 13 | 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at Library Place

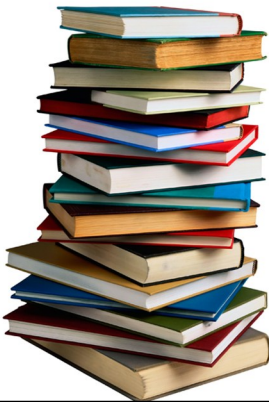
Learn how to prepare for any type of disaster or emergency and recover as quickly as possible. The Citizen Preparedness Corps (CPC) training courses are led by New York National Guard with the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) in addition to local emergency management. Each household that attends receives a disaster preparedness kit.

**[Free of charge, but registration is required.](#)**

Instructor | Geoff Dunn

*Geoff is the Community Preparedness Coordinator at Tompkins County Dept. of Emergency Response.*

FRIENDS OF THE TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



FALL SALE Begins Saturday, Oct 11!

**Saturday-Monday: Oct 11\*-13**  
**Saturday-Monday: Oct 18-20**  
**Saturday-Tuesday: Oct 25-28**  
**\*First Day, Sat. Oct 11 Only: 8am-8pm**  
**10am-8pm all other days**

**Wed, Oct 22: Open 10am-4pm for older adults (age 60+) & anyone with a disability**

**509 ESTY ST, ITHACA**  
**[www.booksale.org](http://www.booksale.org) 607-272-2223**



## Lifelong’s Upcoming Trips with Collette Tours!

**PLAN AHEAD** to join Lifelong and Collette Tours on one of the amazing upcoming trips offered in 2026 and 2027! Take the stress out of travel and let us take care of the details. Travelers are picked up and returned to Lifelong - all you need to do is pack!

**Southern Italy and Sicily featuring Taormina, Matera and the Amalfi Coast**



**April 10 -22, 2026** 13 days and 20 meals

Palermo, Monreale, Agrigento, Valley of the Temples, Piazza Armerina, Giardini Naxos, Taormina, Strait of Messina, Winery Tour & Tasting, Matera, Sorrento, Positano, Pompeii

For more information and to register: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1268089>

**Discover Switzerland, Austria & Bavaria**



**May 13-22, 2026** 10 days and 13 meals

Bern, Alphorn Maker, Yodeling Demo, Fondue, Lucerne, Austrian Alps, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Mirabell Gardens, St. Peter’s Restaurant, Bavaria, Linderhof Palace, Tyrolean Folklore Show

For more information and to register: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1239097>

**Iceland’s Midnight Sun: Glaciers, Geysers, and the Golden Circle**



**August 23-September 1, 2026** 10 days & 15 meals

Reykjavik, Golden Circle, Thingvellir Natl Park, Akranes, Breidafjordur Bay Cruise, Lava Exhibition Center, Vik, Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon, Sky Lagoon

For more information and to register: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1239099>

**Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park**



**October 14-23, 2026** 10 days, 16 meals

San Diego Harbor Cruise, Carlsbad Walking Food Tour, Los Angeles City Tour, Old Mission Santa Barbara, Pismo Beach, Paso Robles Wine Country Lunch, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

For more information and to register: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1369954>

**Discover South Pacific Wonders- New Zealand & Australia**



**January 26-February 9, 2027** 15 days & 22 meals

Christchurch, Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu Cruise & Sheepdog Demonstration, Milford Sound, Cairns, Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Opera House

For more information and to register: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1326446>

**Treasures of Egypt**



**February, 2027** 12 days  
(more information coming soon!)

Pyramids of Giza, Great Sphinx, 7-Night Nile River Cruise, Luxor, Temple of Karnak, Valley of the Kings, Queen Hatshepsut Temple, Kom Ombo, Aswan, Philae Temple

[Information session with Collette on Italy, Switzerland and Iceland: September 24th from 2:30-4pm](#)  
[Information session with Collette on Sequoia and Kings Canyon Natl Park, South Pacific Wonders, and Egypt on October 30th from 12-1:30pm](#)

**Ginny Miller** (Continued from page 1)

try not to brag about it too much with my Ithaca friends!” Ginny said with a smile.

Ginny’s spare time is filled with gardening in her large, downtown backyard vegetable and flower garden. She also loves leading the Dances of Universal Peace, a spiritual practice that has had a robust circle in Ithaca for the past 45 years.

Something about Ginny that may be surprising is that she studied opera for three years in school and loves to sing. She also plays the harmonium, a musical instrument mostly used to accompany Indian chanting. A harmonium is a box-like instrument that sits on the floor, containing both a keyboard and bellows. Ginny explained, “The player uses one hand to pump the bellows, and one to play the keyboard.”

An accomplishment that Ginny is especially proud of is the creation and management of a small grants program for the Dances of Universal Peace International (DUPIN).

Ginny explains, “About six years ago, while I was a member of the DUPIN Board of Directors, we received a very generous bequest of almost one million dollars, with the stipulation that we create a small grants program to support worldwide projects that promote peace through music and dance. I was part of the team creating the program and was hired to manage it. The program has been operating successfully for several years now, and it has awarded grants to hundreds of meaningful peace projects throughout the world.”

Another somewhat related accomplishment is the creation of a Dances of Universal Peace circle in Cape Town, South Africa in 2016. The Dances have been around for 50 years, and are well-known in North America, South America, and Europe. However, they had been virtually unknown on the continent of Africa.

“With the help of two South African friends, I began a circle that meets approximately every other month to sing, dance, and pray for peace in our communities and on Earth. We have been invited to offer this spiritual practice in Buddhist meditation centers, Hindu temples, Christian churches, yoga ashrams, and Cape Town’s beautiful Sufi temple.”

Five years ago, Ginny was recovering from a minor knee injury. She looked for low impact exercise that would help heal and strengthen her knee and discovered Lifelong.

“At Lifelong, I discovered a whole lot! The fitness and yoga classes offered every week, the arts, educational and social programs, courses, and events are diverse and affordable. Lifelong has been a wonderful place to meet interesting people and engage in the community. I enjoy my time there so much that I began volunteering in the front office earlier this year. Lifelong also inspired me to obtain my certification as a Senior Fitness Specialist. I now teach yoga and fitness classes every week,” explained Ginny. “I sometimes feel like a walking advertisement for Lifelong! It is such a special place, and I’m grateful to be part of its vibrant, caring community.”

The staff and members of Lifelong are likewise appreciative of Ginny, her enthusiasm, and her expertise. You can look forward to seeing her at Lifelong activities and events, at the front desk, or in one of the exercise classes.



The Book Nook

A feature from the Tompkins Public Library

Find out what’s happening at Tompkins County Public Library!  
Visit [www.tcpl.org](http://www.tcpl.org) or call 607-272-4557.

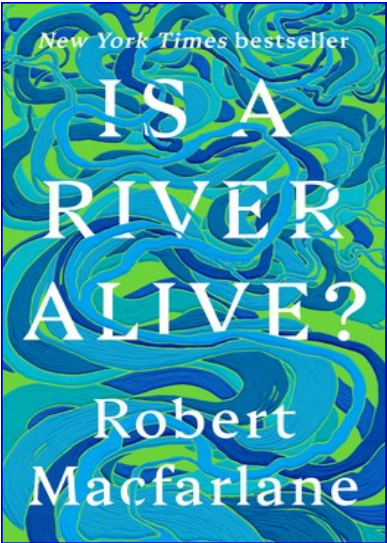
TCPL offers a variety of book clubs for all ages. Find information at [www.tcpl.org/book-clubs](http://www.tcpl.org/book-clubs). All Library programs are free and open to the public.

Is a River Alive?

An Ecological Journey of  
Language, Law, and the Living  
World

By Robert Macfarlane

British nature writer Robert Macfarlane embarks on a deeply personal exploration of whether rivers should be considered living entities, worthy of legal rights and personhood. Known for lyrical and philosophical writing on landscapes, Macfarlane turns to water—tracing rivers in Ecuador, India, and Canada—and weaving through reflections from springs near his Cambridge home. The result blends travel writing, poetic prose, legal inquiry and spiritual musing, rooted in a global movement to bestow legal rights on land and water known as the ‘Rights of Nature.’



Macfarlane journeys to places where threatened rivers are fiercely defended. In Ecuador’s cloud forests, he meets conservationists protecting the Río Los Cedros, aided by the nation’s groundbreaking 2008 constitutional recognition of nature’s rights. In India, he documents the pollution of Chennai’s rivers, where creeks have been erased from government maps in a process he calls “annihilation cartography.” In Quebec, he undertakes a treacherous whitewater expedition down the Magpie River—recognized in 2021 as a “legal person” thanks to Indigenous leadership. Alongside these physical travels are emotional and philosophical ones, culminating in his son’s emphatic answer to the book’s central question: “Yes.”

Macfarlane’s prose flows like the rivers—unfurling long, ecstatic sentences filled with vivid metaphor and wordplay. Fireflies are “slow tracer bullets,” sunsets become “a kingfisher sunset of orange and blue.” Macfarlane’s bold poetic style reflects the lush, unruly vitality of the natural world, turning what could have been a dry scientific read into evocative and contemplative verses. Yet this is no romantic fantasy. Macfarlane is aware of his rationalist upbringing and wrestles with doubts: is believing a river is alive just “cos-play animism”? Can legal discourse and ecological enchantment coexist? Throughout, he is guided by Indigenous wisdom, such as the Innu poet Rita’s advice to “think less with your head” and let the river speak through you. He ultimately surrenders to the flow—physically, emotionally, philosophically—emerging “rivered,” as he puts it, no longer merely observing nature but participating in it. The book’s quiet epilogue, imagining his ashes scattered at a chalk spring by his children, reveals its deeper currents of grief, memory, and belonging.

Is a River Alive?, a passionate ecological call to action and a literary achievement makes a compelling case that the health of rivers is inseparable from our own. Macfarlane’s travels show us high stakes: not just the survival of water systems, but the survival of wonder, reciprocity, and our moral imagination. At a time when many rivers are dying, Macfarlane urges us to listen, protect, and believe. His answer to the title’s question isn’t just “yes”—it’s a transformative invitation to rethink what it means to be alive.

Meghan Molloy, Local History Librarian  
Tompkins County Public Library



Free Caregiver Tool!

Notebook

In

Case of

Emergency

These notebooks are available in our  
office to keep track of all your care  
receiver’s vital information!

Stop in at our office at 214 West State Street,  
Ithaca to get one!



## Virtual Senior Center:

Staying connected at home

**CONNECT** with new friends online, learn and discuss new things, and explore all that the internet has to offer!

**PARTICIPATE** in unlimited live, interactive discussions on art, history, current news, exercise, music, museum tours, wellness and more!

**ENJOY** a flexible class schedule, curated games... all offered 7 days/week, 365 days/year, including holidays!

Looking to connect with others or learn something new, all with a click of your computer mouse? Check out the [Virtual Senior Center \(VSC\)](#), an online community that allows older adults to connect and engage with each other through virtual classes and groups at NO cost to you!

The VSC is an easy-to-use website that brings a vibrant community and a wide range of interactive, facilitator-led programs straight to you in your home. There are programs 365 days a year on a variety of topics, giving you the opportunity to meet new people, make friends, have fun, and learn something new.

Learn more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbFEBQSha2M>

What do you need to join?

- Any up-to-date desktop/laptop computer, Android tablet, or an iPad
- A web camera and microphone (if not built into your device) and an internet connection
- Current Lifelong membership (sliding scale)- a limited number of free Lifelong memberships are available for this program!

If you or someone you know is interested, set up your account [with this link](#). Or, call Lifelong for more information at: 607-273-1511.

Once you set up your account, you will get an approval to access the site (within 48 hours), as well as information on how to familiarize yourself with the program. Tech support is available from VSC to get you started and support you.

### Autumn Activities for Seniors

Compiled by Ann Bohman,  
Lifelong Front Desk Manager

- What a glorious time of the year! Beautiful colored leaves, pumpkin spice, caramel-covered apples! There are so many activities associated with the fall season, even for seniors. Try one or more of the following:
- Bake a Pie: Pies are a big part of the autumn season, especially ones that are made with apples or pumpkins. Making a pie together can be such a joy, so invite family members to join you. Then you can enjoy that finished pie out on the patio as you enjoy the colored leaves.
- Go for a Hike: Going for a leisurely nature hike can be one way you and your loved ones bond together as you observe the changing landscape and wildlife. Take along a camera!
- Apple Picking: The Ithaca area is surrounded by local farms where folks can pick fresh apples right off the trees. After picking, you and your family can bake a pie, cook an apple fritter, make applesauce, or squeeze apple juice.
- Pumpkin Carving or Painting: Carved pumpkins are a popular way for people to decorate their porches. Sharing creative ideas for faces can be fun.
- Have a Backyard Campout: Backyard campouts are a great way to enjoy the cooler weather while spending time together. You can set up a complete campsite with a tent, bonfire, and of course s'more supplies! You can also gather everyone around the campfire and play a game or share stories
- Go on a Hay Ride: One way for folks of all ages to enjoy the fall scenery is to take in a hay ride. There are many hay rides available at different farms and festivals that can take you through the breathtaking autumn landscape.
- Have a Friendsgiving: A Friendsgiving is similar to a Thanksgiving where you can enjoy a meal together, except it will only include your family's closest friends. Seniors will enjoy a Friendsgiving because it will give them a chance to reconnect with their friends, especially those that they have not seen for some time.
- Have a Fall Picnic: Eating outside during the fall is always a treat! You can eat in your own backyard or at a park.
- Have a Tailgate Party: Tailgate parties are a popular way folks celebrate both football and autumn! You don't have to go to the big game. Create one in your own home and invite friends to come watch the game. Even people who don't like sports will go to tailgate parties to see their families and friends.
- Enjoy a Board Game Night: Board games are a great way for family members of all ages to bond and enjoy a bit of competitiveness
- Visit the Farmer's Market: Support your local farms and crafters by attending the Farmer's Markets held in and around Ithaca.
- Create New Items Fitting the Season: Knitting, crocheting, and needlepoint are perfect cool weather activities. Making fall wreaths with autumn-colored decorations such as leaves, pumpkins, flowers, leaves and pinecones is one way you and your senior can get creative this time of year.
- Rent a Cabin: A great family excursion in the fall could be to rent a cabin for a night or two, where family members of all ages can enjoy the outdoors, take hikes, fish and relax.
- Plant Bulbs for the Spring: Fall is the time to prepare for some spring flowers. Planting bulbs for flowers such as tulips, daffodils and others can provide a sense of anticipation for the changing of the seasons.
- Check out all the programing at Lifelong this Fall: experience a Health and Wellness Class, go on a One Day Trip, register for a Lifelong Learning Course or join one of the 20 social groups that are on-going this fall. Register for classes in person, online, via the mail, or by calling (607) 273-1511. We look forward to seeing you at Lifelong.

OPEN TO PUBLIC!



#### Lifelong DAY TRIP OPEN TO PUBLIC!

[Montezuma Wildlife Refuge & Lunch & Shopping at Sauders Country Store](#)

Wednesday, November 5, 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

\$89 member & non-member

Experience a bald eagle presentation in the Visitor's Center and a short chaperoned nature walk, followed by a guided bus tour on Wildlife Drive. Next, we'll drive to nearby Sauders Store for a shopping adventure and lunch at the Country Cookin' Cafe. Includes a \$10 shopping/lunch voucher.

Register [HERE](#) or by calling Lifelong at 607-273-1511

## Oktoberfest

[Oktoberfest Meets the Blues](#)

**Blues & Brews**

featuring

**Erin & Backwoods Blues Project**

Friday, October 10, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Library Place \$12



Get ready for a unique fusion of Bavarian tradition and the soulful sounds of the blues! This Oktoberfest event brings together the hearty spirit of Germany's most beloved festival with the electrifying energy of live blues music. Enjoy a delicious variety of beers from Grist Iron Brewing Company and traditional soft pretzels with spreads, along with fun, creative, free pictures by Jyl's Photo Booth. Reserve your ticket in advance [HERE](#) or by calling Lifelong at 607-273-1511

## Scam Pyramid

Report Scams for Optimal Outcomes

A Healthy Serving of Prevention

Red Flags: Stop! It's a Scam!

Common Scams



This project was supported, in part by grant number 90MPPG0010-01-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201

### I Got Myself A Senior GPS..

Not only does it tell "Me" how to get to my destination it tells "Me" why I wanted to go there to begin with



The Baby Who Already Knew the Secret to Wellness:

How Smile, Breath, and Step Became Our First (and Best) Tools for Health

By Shanthi Mariappan

Once upon a time, in the soft, warm darkness of the womb, a baby floated no noise, no stress. Just rhythm — heartbeat, warmth, and comfort.

And though no one could see it, something magical was already happening...

The baby smiled.

Yes — scientists have found that babies begin to smile in the womb as early as 26 weeks. Before we breathe, before we cry, before we take our first step —we smile.

The First Hidden Tool: SMILE

That smile in the womb wasn’t for Instagram or to charm grandma. It was the baby’s natural, inbuilt wellness tool.

The shocking truth? Children smile 400 times daily, but adults smile only 20 times. We've forgotten our first gift—the one we perfected before birth.

Why? Stress. Pressure. Busyness.

But the tool never left — it just got hidden under the noise.

Science Says:

- Smiling releases dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins — your natural mood boosters.
- It lowers heart rate, blood pressure, and stress.
- Even a smile can shift your mood and others. A smile is powerful.

Remember: The first wellness tool we ever used was a smile.

Why not we use it now, with intention?

The baby grew and it’s time to enter the world. Bright lights. Cold air. Baby cried — not because the baby was upset, but because their lungs had just done something extraordinary: Breathed in.

The Second Hidden Tool: BREATH

That first breath was more than biology. Breath — the invisible tool that calms the mind, centers the body, and reclaims control.

The surprise? We've had this superpower since our first independent moment, but we rarely use it consciously. As we grow older, our breath becomes shallow, rushed, unconscious. But deep within us is the same ability to breathe like we did on day one — slow, full, present.

Science Says:

- Deep nasal breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system.
- It improves focus, lowers cortisol, and regulates emotion.
- Just 6 deep breaths can shift you out of stress mode.
- Breathe like a baby again. Inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth. Repeat. Reset.

The baby kept growing. And one day — with wobbly legs and wide eyes — baby did something incredible...

Took a step.

Is it in a car or a bike or a fancy stroller? No. Moved with their own two feet.

The Third Hidden Tool: STEP

Before we could talk, read, or drive — we walked.

The incredible surprise? Our legs are our first transportation—our most powerful health tool.

But as we grow up, we start walking less. We sit more. We ride more. And with that, we begin to lose our natural rhythm.

Science Says:

- Just 10 minutes of walking a day improves mood, boosts brain function, and lowers risk of disease6.
- Walking after meals improves blood sugar control.
- Walking boosts creativity by 60% 7(Stanford study).

I recently wrote a science-backed blog titled Walk Strong, Live Long: The Evidence-Based Benefits of Walking for Women, highlighting the powerful impact of walking on women's health and well-being.

10 minutes a day — in a park, at the mall, or around your house — is all it takes.

And so, the Baby Had All Three Tools All Along...

- A smile to shift the mood and open the heart
- A breath to calm the mind and connect to the body
- A step to create momentum and move forward

Our 10-Minute Daily Ritual

Here’s how we bring the baby’s wisdom back into your adult life:

- ◆ Smile — even if it’s forced at first. Let your nervous system follow.
- ◆ Breathe — in through the nose slowly and out through the mouth, repeat 5 times.
- ◆ Step — walk for 10 minutes, phone-free, present, moving forward.

“Take a step with deep breathing and a big smile.” It’s simple yet powerful.

Do you want to change your life? I see you are nodding and smiling.

ONE SMILE, ONE BREATH, and ONE STEP AT A TIME.

Shanthi Mariappan is a product leader, AI champion, and storyteller who blends human-centered technology with timeless wellness principles. As the founder of NeuroBlossom, an Alzheimer’s and caregiver support app, she champions solutions that enhance both emotional and cognitive well-being. She is a Group Fitness Instructor at Lifelong. Through her writing, coaching, and speaking, she inspires people to change their lives—one smile, one breath, and one step at a time.

McGraw House Senior Apartments



- Studio & One Bedroom Apartments for Income Eligible Seniors (age 62 and older)
- Located in Downtown Ithaca - close to shopping, library, restaurants, places of worship, medical offices, etc.
- Access to Public Transportation
- Dining Facility with Evening Meals
- Preference provided to eligible Veterans/Surviving Spouses residing in NYS
- Roof Deck, Gardening, Laundry Facilities, Off Street Parking
- WELCOMES DIVERSITY & ENCOURAGES INDIVIDUALITY



(607)-272-7054  
221 S. Geneva Street, Ithaca  
www.mcgrawhouse.org



Ness-Sibley Funeral Home




Alison M. Weaver

Pre-arrangement eases the burden of those you leave behind. We invite you to learn more and to begin your planning at [www.ness-sibley.com](http://www.ness-sibley.com)

There is no cost for this valuable service.

23 South Street, Trumansburg  
(607) 387– 8151



### Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE)

The TCE program gives you an opportunity to learn while providing a much-needed service to highly appreciative individuals in our local community during the annual tax season.

Training and support are provided, and volunteers work collaboratively to support each other and the taxpayers.

What are the best things about working with the program?

- Interaction with and appreciation from clients
- Support and camaraderie with your fellow volunteers
- Problem solving satisfaction
- Increased understanding of many of the challenges faced by seniors in our community


Are you comfortable with numbers? Would you like to better understand basic tax issues? Are you looking for an opportunity with a finite timeline? Do you have basic computer skills? Think about joining us as a preparer.

Not sure you're comfortable preparing tax returns? Volunteers also welcome people to the tax clinics, help them get ready to meet with a preparer, and provide other supports to the program.

*"I've even had people hug me because their refund was going to make something important happen for their family."*

Think you might be interested in joining us? Let's talk about it. Email [TCELifelong@gmail.com](mailto:TCELifelong@gmail.com) or call 607-273-1511 and leave your name and phone number. We will get back to you.

Certified and grant funded by the Internal Revenue Service with additional support from Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Park Foundation, and Lifelong





TO APPLY: Call (607) 277-4500 x511  
email [rehab@ithacanhs.org](mailto:rehab@ithacanhs.org)

## Make Your Home Safer, because that's what you deserve.

### Accessibility Modifications

INHS has funds available to help low- and moderate-income homeowners make your home safer with modifications, including:

- Wheelchair ramps and lifts,
- Handrails, expanded doorways, and stair glides
- Roll in showers with grab bars, bathtub grab bars and seats,
- Relocate a bathroom or bedroom to the first floor

*\*Program for Tompkins & Cortland County homeowners only*



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LIFELONG FALL 2025

Silent Bid. Loud Impact.

# ONLINE AUCTION

Lifelong's Annual Silent Auction kicks off on Friday, September 5 at 6 p.m. during our Fall Fling and closes on Thursday, September 11, at 6 p.m.


Funds raised from Lifelong's Silent Auction directly advances our mission of enhancing the lives of older adults in Tompkins County. Your silent bid supports vital programming, ensuring Lifelong continues to be a vibrant hub of activity, friendship, and support.

*Bid to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who rely on Lifelong's resources.*

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SCAN QR CODE or visit <https://tinyurl.com/LLSilentAuction>

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