

Senior Circle

In the Spotlight: Family values and life lessons lead to a passion of giving and caring: Lisa (Grimm) Campbell

By Dawn Sprague, Aging Services Specialist, Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Growing up in Lansing, a rural farm town, in the 60's and 70's, certainly looked different than it does today. Technology such as cell phones, computers, video calls and social media didn't exist when we were children. Customer service was a real person that was friendly and that your family probably knew. What we did have was a sense of family and community. Neighbors were well known and if one had a problem or illness, the rest of the community pitched in however they could, helping on the farm, bringing food, offering rides, and the local doctor would make house calls. Children knew each other and spent their days from morning to dinner time swimming in Salmon Creek, Ludlowville Falls, and Cayuga Lake at Myers Park. We spent our days riding bikes, playing kickball, ice skating on the frozen water holes, building snow forts, and having sleep overs. Growing up was not all fun and games, it was a time when we learned life lessons such as sense of community, inclusion, respect, responsibility, kindness, empathy, faith, and to help where we can, even if we were too young to realize this.

Lisa (Grimm) Campbell learned these lessons, and more, during her early life and if you are blessed enough to know her, you know that she has carried these qualities throughout her lifetime. She shows this to us in her words of encouragement and comfort for others, her visits and relationships with older adults, her ongoing community support, her kindness, and her humor, which she inherited from her



parents. They loved to laugh, amusing each other and being corny, a common occurrence in their home.

Lisa grew up in Lansing, New York, the oldest child of Thomas and Nora Grimm. She has one sister, Amy, who she is very close to. Lisa's grandparents were farmers and they stressed the value of work, family, and

community. Lisa recalls the joy of extended family visits and gatherings, often at church or the local grange hall. Her parents, Tom and Nora, are one of the great love stories of all time. Lisa's father had lost his parents as a child, but when he married the love of his life, the beautiful Nora, he embraced the new family he was given. He always

embraced his life, never took it for granted, and honored it. As Lisa says, he took his childhood grief and channeled it into love. Tom worked with students at Cornell University and was known to open his home to them, feeding them, bringing out lawn games to play, giving them a sense of family while they were away from

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Exciting Changes Are Coming to Your Quarterly Publication!

The quarterly **Senior Circle**, a publication of Tompkins County Office for the Aging in partnership with Lifelong, is getting a refresh—and we're expanding our distribution throughout **Tompkins County** so more readers can enjoy the resources, stories, and inspiration you love.

As part of this transition,

we're inviting **YOU** to help us choose a new name for this quarterly publication. We want something that reflects positivity, connection, and empowerment for older adults.

Here are the top three options we're considering:

- 1. Vital Connections**
Keeping older adults informed, inspired, and engaged.

- 2. Prime Connections**
Aging Better Together
- 3. Our Time**
Insights and resources helping older adults thrive.

We'd love your input!
Which name speaks to you the most? Send us your choice—or share your own creative idea by January 31! Weigh in with your choices using the link or QR code

below, or by stopping by Lifelong to vote in person.
<https://tinyurl.com/SeniorCircle>
Refresh



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 independent as possible

NY Connects staff can assist you either on the phone or in

person between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.
In person: Tompkins County Office for the Aging, 214 W Martin Luther King Jr. Street Ithaca, NY
By phone: 607-274-5482 or 1-800-342-9871
Or visit us on the web at www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging

Free language assistance (interpretation and translation) services available

Joy for All Companion Pets

The Office for the Aging has several animatronic 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.

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.

This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

Let it Snow

With winter weather upon us, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging is updating its listing of snow shovelers. Deep snow and icy sidewalks are dangerous for everyone but can be especially problematic for older adults and people with mobility problems. Many are not able to remove the snow from their sidewalks or driveways without assistance. If you need assistance with this task, please contact the Tompkins County Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482. Likewise, if you are interested in assisting older adults by shoveling or plowing, on either a paid or volunteer basis, please call our office at 607-274-5482.

Aging in solitude: How Isolation Shapes the Lives of Older Adults

Article by: Brian Lear, Ithaca College Class of May 2026, Public & Community Health

Social isolation among older adults has emerged as a major public health concern as populations age and life expectancy increases. Social isolation refers to having limited social contact, few meaningful relationships, or infrequent engagement in social activities. Although it is closely connected to loneliness, the two are not identical; isolation is an objective lack of contact, while loneliness is the subjective feeling of being alone. Regardless, both can occur simultaneously and contribute to significant physical, emotional, and cognitive consequences for aging individuals. Understanding the roots and effects of isolation is essential for improving the health independence, and quality of life of older adults across communities.

There are many factors that

increase the likelihood of isolation in later life. As adults age, they often experience functional limitations, chronic illnesses, or disabilities that make it difficult to leave the home or participate in social activities. Hearing and vision impairments can also create communication barriers, reduce enjoyable interaction, and cause individuals to withdraw. Social networks naturally shrink with age due to retirement, relocation of family members, and the loss of spouses or close friends. For many older adults, the death of a life partner significantly reduces daily companionship and emotional support, leaving them vulnerable to long-term isolation. Environmental factors such as limited transportation, poorly designed communities, and inaccessible housing compound

the issue by making it difficult for older adults to engage with others. Finally, socioeconomic challenges including; low income, lack of digital literacy, and reduced access to community resources, can prevent older adults from participating in activities that might otherwise help them remain connected.

The effects of social isolation on older adults are profound and far-reaching. One of the most serious consequences is the impact on physical health. Research shows that isolated older adults face a significantly higher risk of premature death, with the effects comparable to major risk factors such as smoking or obesity. Chronic isolation elevates stress hormones such as cortisol, which can damage the cardiovascular system and increase the risk of hypertension, stroke, and heart

disease. The immune system also weakens in the absence of social connection, making isolated individuals more susceptible to infections and slower to recover from illness. Additionally, older adults who lack social engagement are less likely to stay physically active, contributing to muscle loss, frailty, and a greater risk of falls and chronic diseases.

Mental and emotional health are also strongly affected by social isolation. Depression is one of the most common consequences, as isolated individuals experience persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, and diminished motivation. Anxiety often accompanies feelings of disconnection, especially when older adults worry about safety, health, or coping alone with

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HEAP

After a four week delay due to the recent federal government closure, the Home Energy Assistance Program opened on December 1, 2025, and our office is now accepting applications for assistance with home heating costs this Winter. The Office for the Aging accepts applications for applicants 60 years of age and above. Applications can be picked up (and filled out) at our office, still located at 214 W.

MLK Jr./State Street, at the corner of West State and Albany Streets. We can be reached at 607-274-5482. For those applicants under the age of 60, please call the DSS HEAP Unit to apply at 607-274-5264. The income guidelines are listed below, and those applicants who are eligible will receive a HEAP benefit that will go directly to their heating vendor as a credit on their account. For more

information, please call our office at (607) 274-5482. HEAP is expected to close on April 7, 2026, or when the designated funds run out.

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Maximum Gross Monthly Income</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>\$3,473</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>\$4,542</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>\$5,611</u>

Caregiver’s Corner

Winter Blues & the Family Caregiver

BY: AMY JACKSON

Caregiving is enough of a “heavy lift” on its own, without the dreariness of winter. The cold, the gray skies, the holidays and the challenges these present, can really make a caregiver feel down and depressed. Winter can be beautiful with the snow on the trees, watching snow fall, and all the magical things the season brings us. But what do you do when it gets dark so early, it’s cold outside, and you are stuck inside for lengths of time? Winter can lead to isolation and loneliness.

With the added stress of holidays, you may feel like you’re barely holding everything together and are stretched very thin. Your mental health as a caregiver is very important! I’m sure you’ve heard the adage, “if you don’t take care of yourself, how will you take care of others?” But it’s true! If you are in a state of burnout and/or isolation due to your caregiving responsibilities, and feeling like you don’t know how you can get by another day, it’s time for a change.

What are some things you can

do? Try going for a brief walk, whether it’s inside or outside. Getting bundled up for the cold weather outside may not seem appealing or worth the effort, but for some people it can be refreshing, relaxing and rejuvenating. Of course, if it’s too cold, you may not be able to do that for long or at all. But can you just find somewhere in your home to retreat to briefly? Even if it means just going in a quiet room and taking a few deep breaths or doing a brief meditation, that time can be a reset that you need to keep going.

Is what you are doing enough? Yes!! You need to tell yourself you can only do so much, and you are allowed to feel overwhelmed, have bad days, and even say things you may not mean sometimes. It’s all part of being human and having feelings that cannot be shut off. Positive self-talk may be of some help. Saying things to yourself such as, “I am doing the best I can,” or, “I am strong,” and/or, “My efforts are making a big difference in the life of my care receiver.” These statements can help reinforce that your job as a caregiver is

important and valued.

Do you have to do everything yourself? No! Support can come from many places, such as friends, church members, family, and other caregivers. Make a list of things that may be helpful to you. They can be small things such as one meal a week brought to your home, so you don’t have to cook that night, and possibly have leftovers for another night. Or it could be someone staying for a short time with your loved one so you can run to the store for a few things, or have that person go to the store for you. Also make a list of people you can ask to help you in small ways. Don’t hesitate to reach out to those around you! You’d be surprised who is willing to help with a small task that may ease your burden.

Also, acknowledge that you’re under stress. Just admitting this to a counselor, a friend, or a family member can be the first step in getting some assistance. If we don’t speak about the burdens we carry and just say everything is fine, how will anyone know what we’re going through? If you have social connections, try to keep them as

active as you can. You can also join a caregiver support group either online or in- person in our area. It is worthwhile to connect with other caregivers, even if their situation isn’t exactly the same as yours. Feeling supported can help lower the stress and feelings of isolation. If you don’t have the option of someone you can talk to, write your feelings out. Just getting them on paper can be enough to help you feel some relief. It’s an individual choice, but any way you can express your stress is beneficial.

All of the above being said, please remember that you are important, you are loved, and you are allowed to take a break! Take care of you!

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has many resources available including pamphlets, a lending library, a quarterly newsletter, a caregiver group, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, caregiver packets, and monthly presentations of interest to caregivers. Reach out to Amy Jackson, the Caregiver Resource Coordinator today at 607-274-5486 or ajackson@tompkins-co.org

Tompkins County Office for the Aging has launched a new ‘Age-Friendly Business’ certification program

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) has launched a new initiative to recognize local businesses and organizations and their efforts in creating, and maintaining, inclusive environments for people of all ages, and to further Tompkins County’s commitment to being an Age-Friendly community.

An “Age-Friendly Business” refers to businesses and organizations that take intentional steps ensuring their services, spaces, interactions, and practices among their employees and customers are inclusive across the lifespan.

Local businesses and organizations that are interested in applying for the “Age-Friendly Business” certification, can access the program details and certification form

directly on COFA’s website- Age Friendly Business Certification | Tompkins County. The certification is a fillable PDF form that is available for both general and healthcare businesses. Once the certification form is completed, it can be submitted via email to cofa@tompkins-co.org with the subject line, “Age-Friendly business certification”. Staff at COFA will review the completed certification form and follow up with materials for each business/organization that is deemed an “Age-Friendly Business”.

COFA is encouraging businesses/organizations of all types and sizes throughout Tompkins County to participate. Please feel free to reach out to the Tompkins County Office for the Aging for more information.

PERS

Ranging from \$25/month to \$50/month, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has three Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) unit options to assist in keeping vulnerable-to-falling (and other medically vulnerable individuals), safe at home and in the community. We partner with Doyle Medical Monitoring, a security company that was founded in 1919, and ventured into Medical Monitoring in 2008. Doyle offers systems that work solely in the home, as well as a GPS unit that works anywhere in the 48 contiguous United States where there’s a reliable cellular signal. For an additional \$5 monthly, fall detection can be added to any of these systems. These home-based and GPS PERS offer both pendant and wristband options. These

pendants and wrist-worn buttons are lightweight, can be worn in the shower, and have an easily identifiable button that can be pressed if the client has a fall or a medical emergency. When the button is pushed, an alert is activated on the unit. Within 10-90 seconds, a Doyle response center representative will respond through the console (or directly through the GPS unit), and the Doyle representative then calls emergency services (or a designated relative, friend, or neighbor), depending on the seriousness of the fall or medical emergency. For any questions, or to sign up for one of these units, clients can call the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482. Low-income individuals may be eligible for a discounted land line or cellular, home-based console system.

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](#).

(Click on the orange Resources for Caregivers booklet cover about 2/3 down on the home page.)

“Six Habits for a Happy Retirement” (Kiplinger)

1. **Prioritize Health**
Engaging in regular physical activity—like walking, swimming, or golf—and maintaining a balanced diet are essential. Even simple routines such as walking 7,500 steps daily can boost physical and mental health.
2. **Foster Strong Social Connections**
Close relationships and community engagement vastly improve happiness. Joining clubs, attending events, or using tools like FaceTime or Zoom helps combat loneliness.
3. **Find a Sense of Purpose**
Meaningful pursuits—whether part-time work, volunteering, or new projects—provide structure and significance. Research shows retirees with clear purpose report higher happiness levels (97% vs. 76%).
4. **Embrace Lifelong Learning**
Keeping the mind active through classes, hobbies, or challenging puzzles can delay cognitive decline. Options include community college courses, Coursera classes, or library visits.
5. **Cultivate Optimism**
A positive outlook is linked to longer life, better cardiovascular health, and emotional well-being. Practicing reframing and surrounding yourself with positive influences builds resilience.
6. **Practice Gratitude**
Regularly acknowledging what you’re thankful for (via journaling or voice notes) enhances mental and physical health—boosting satisfaction and reducing material focus.

LISA

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home. Nora loved her time at the Tompkins County Public Library as a page in the children’s room. Tom and Nora loved life and family. They were always proud of their daughters and would be proud of their grandchildren and great grandchildren for carrying on their values and the importance of family, no matter how far the distance. Lisa honors her parents every day and misses them tremendously. She lovingly helped care for her parents as they grew older.

Lisa has been married to Fred Campbell since 2003. As she states, “The third time is the charm.” Their blended family consists of Lisa’s two daughters and Fred’s son and two daughters. In 2005, they welcomed a mutual son who is currently in college. Their version of yours, mine, and ours, includes six children, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Fred’s first wife, a friend to many growing up in Lansing, was introduced to him by Lisa. She passed away in 2001. Her death at an early age was devastating to all who knew her and left a large hole in all our hearts. Fred and Lisa reside on Cayuga Lake in Lansing. Lisa travels throughout the year, especially to visit family. A trip to Ireland was a lifetime dream for her and her sister, and they were able to check that off their bucket list not too long ago.

Lisa was an exceptional student and friend all through grade school and into college. She has always been passionate about social sciences, and she earned a degree in Human Development, with a concentration in Family

Studies. This has not only served her well over the years, but also all of the families she has endlessly helped and assisted empowering their lives. She herself weathered life as a single mother of two for many years. She did it with grace and fierceness and an abundance of love. She is strong and determined, and much of that is carried over from her upbringing.

The sense of community modeled to her growing up has led her to volunteering and giving back to the Lansing and Ithaca community. She has served on the Lansing Youth Council, the Tompkins County Youth Services Advisory Board to the Legislature, the Library Marketing Committee, and many more family and health related committees. Her current volunteer passions are supporting children’s literacy and food security. In her own words, “I get pretty revved up about food security, healthcare education and human rights. I feel strongly about ending the stigma surrounding mental illness”. She supports causes related to her volunteer work, mental health, and suicide prevention. She has been a member of Team Hope for the AFSP Greater Ithaca Out of the Darkness Walk for many years. She is motivated by the children and families she has interacted with, as well as all the incredible helping people out there. You can always find her engaging in her community, making someone smile, offering a hand, or engaging in friendships with older adults over caring and humor. If you know Lisa, you could identify her anywhere by the giggling sound of her contagious laughter.

When asked about her views on

aging, she lists lessons learned, and positive aspects of aging along with the negative aspects of aging. Her belief is that you should embrace aging in whatever way works for you. She is thankful for it! Her philosophy is to laugh when you can, and don’t be afraid to ask someone to help you up off the floor! I also asked what she believes affects older adults so that we can, and should, do better. She believes there are still so many things we could be better at. Healthcare and good nutrition are at the top of her list, especially since neither seem to be affordable, nor adequate, for so many people. She also lists transportation, accessibility, and combating loneliness and social isolation in our aging population.

When she is not traveling or volunteering, you can find Lisa posting on the Lansing New York Cares and Connects Facebook page, or on her own, regarding information for the community in areas such as food giveaways, blue food cabinets, social and outreach program information, information on grief, suicide prevention, finding someone a ride, and much more. She also loves developing and engaging in programming related to her volunteer work, enjoying the outdoors, especially the lake and walks in the woods, dancing in her kitchen, reading, attending family events such as her son’s plays and of course, spending time with family and friends. I can vouch for all of this, as I am fortunate enough to call Lisa my friend from the age of 4. I find her inspiring every day, and yes, I think that giggle of hers is a national treasure.

Office for the Aging Advisory Board



Tompkins County is looking for enthusiastic and diverse older volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds to fill immediate vacancies on the Office for the Aging Advisory Board. Members would represent the interests of older adults in their respective communities and review and comment on community policies, programs, and actions, which affect older adults with the intent of assuring maximum coordination and responsiveness to older adults. The Advisory Board is a key link between the community and Office for the Aging in communicating the needs and concerns of older residents of Tompkins County. Responsibilities include attending monthly meetings which are offered as a hybrid option and members are able to attend in person or via Zoom, participating in one or more subcommittees, and assisting the County in promoting greater public awareness of aging issues, programs, and services.

We have a number of vacancies, and are particularly interested in representation from Enfield, Ulysses, Dryden, and Caroline. If you are interested in this opportunity, we would love to speak with you.

Visit the Tompkins County Office for the Aging Website to learn more about this board.
<https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging/Advisory-Committee>



“Tompkins County Government centers diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to the empowerment of employees and residents to dismantle systemic barriers that inhibit inclusive governance and the provision of government services to all.”

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 or call 607-274-5499**
- **Information and volunteer requests also at <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging/Services-of-Our-Office/Project-CARE>**

Staying Safe During the Cold Months

Article by: Brian Lear, Ithaca College Class of May 2026, Public & Community Health

As winter settles across Ithaca bringing lake-effect snow, icy sidewalks, and brisk winds funneling down Cayuga Lake, staying safe becomes especially important, particularly for older adults. While the season offers plenty of beauty, the cold months also bring unique challenges. Below are practical, local-minded tips to help keep you stay healthy, warm, and prepared as the temperatures dip.

Keeping your home warm is essential, especially on those sub-zero nights that are all too common in Tompkins County. Make sure to seal drafts around windows and doors with weather stripping or draft stoppers. If you haven’t had your heating system serviced this year, schedule a quick check-up to ensure it’s running safely and efficiently. Space heaters should be used cautiously, keep them at least three feet from anything flammable, and only plug them directly into the wall.

It’s also wise to keep an emergency kit in the house with blankets, flashlights, batteries, bottled water, and any essential

medications. Winter storms in Ithaca can occasionally lead to power outages, and dangerous streets. Having supplies on hand can make these moments safer and less stressful

One of the biggest winter dangers is icy sidewalks, steps, and driveways. Even a thin layer of ice can cause serious injuries. Before heading outside, check whether driveways and walkways have been salted or sanded. If you rely on assistance, consider arranging help from a neighbor, family member, or local volunteer service to keep your steps and walkways clear.

Footwear can make all the difference. Choose boots with good ankle support and non-slip soles. Ice cleats, or traction devices, that attach to shoes, can also provide extra stability. These are especially useful in areas with uneven sidewalks near Cornell and downtown.

Ithaca winds can make temperatures feel much colder than they are. Dressing in layers can help trap warm air and makes it easier to adjust when going between indoor and outdoor environments.

Begin with a moisture-wicking base layer, add an insulated middle layer, and finish with a waterproof outer layer.

Older adults lose body heat quickly, so hats, scarves, and warm gloves are essential. A scarf or mask covering your nose and mouth can help warm the air before you breathe it in, reducing strain on the lungs during very cold days.

Icy roads, blowing snow, and poor visibility are common across the Finger Lakes region. If you drive, have your vehicle winter-ready; check tire tread, top off antifreeze, and keep your gas tank at least half full during the coldest months. Pack a car emergency kit with blankets, a small shovel, ice scraper, and snacks.

If roads are particularly hazardous, such as black ice on roads or heavy snowfall along West Hill, consider postponing errands or arranging alternative transportation through TCAT, Gadabout, or community ride services.

Cold weather doesn’t cause illness, but it does make it easier for viruses to spread when we spend more time

indoors. Getting your flu shot, COVID-19 booster, and RSV vaccine (if recommended by your doctor), can significantly reduce your risk.

Additionally, stay hydrated. While you may not feel as thirsty in the winter, heating systems can dry out indoor air, making hydration just as important as it is in the summer.

Ithaca winters can be isolating, especially when weather makes travel difficult.

Staying socially connected whether by phone, zoom, or safe in-person visits is very important and can support mental health and help others check on your well-being during storms or cold snaps.

With a little preparation and awareness, older adults in Ithaca can enjoy the quiet beauty of winter while staying warm, healthy, and safe. As the snowflakes begin to fall, take the time to safeguard your home, plan ahead, and reach out to neighbors and loved ones. Winter in the Finger Lakes may be long, but with the right steps, it doesn’t have to be dangerous.

AGING

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daily challenges. The absence of meaningful relationships deprives individuals of emotional support during stressful events, intensifying feelings of hopelessness or despair. Isolation also undermines self-esteem and personal identity; as social roles change or disappear, older adults may struggle to find purpose, which worsens emotional decline.

Cognitive functioning is another area deeply influenced by social isolation. Social interaction provides essential mental stimulation that keeps the brain active, engaged, and resilient. When these interactions decrease, cognitive decline can accelerate,

leading to memory loss, weakened attention span, and slower processing speed. Studies show that socially isolated older adults face a higher risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, due to reduced cognitive engagement and increasing stress. Without regular communication and mental activity, the brain loses opportunities to practice skills that preserve independence, such as decision-making, problem-solving, and planning.

Behavioral and lifestyle changes further illustrate the negative effects of isolation. Many isolated older adults struggle to maintain healthy eating habits, either due to lack of motivation to cook for themselves or due to depression-related appetite changes. They may also be less likely to seek

preventive health care or manage chronic conditions effectively, missing medical appointments, or failing to follow treatment plans. This avoidance of healthcare systems can result in unmanaged illnesses and increased hospitalizations. Social isolation can also increase vulnerability to elder abuse, as individuals with limited connections have fewer people checking on their well-being or noticing signs of mistreatment.

Ultimately, the cumulative effects of physical decline, emotional distress, cognitive impairment, and unhealthy behaviors significantly reduce overall quality of life for isolated older adults. Many experience a diminished sense of purpose, decreased independence, and

lower life satisfaction. The cycle of isolation becomes self-reinforcing: poor health leads to withdrawal, and withdrawal worsens health. Addressing isolation is therefore essential not just for improving emotional well-being, but for supporting healthy aging across communities. Strategies such as increasing access to transportation, expanding community programs, promoting digital literacy, encouraging intergenerational activities, and improving mental health support can help older adults build and maintain meaningful connections. As society continues to age, combating social isolation becomes not only a matter of individual well-being, but also a pressing public health priority.

Tis’ the Season to Get Vaccinated!

Vaccinated! Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself from severe respiratory illness.

- **Flu Vaccine:**
 - Everyone age 6 months and older should get the 2024-2025 flu vaccine.
 - Everyone age 65+ should get the “high dose” vaccine formulated for seniors.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine**
 - Everyone ages 6 months and older can now also receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Local pharmacy information can be found online at: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/>

- [vaccinationconversations/](#)
[local-vaccine-locations/](#)
- COVID-19 vaccines can be taken at the same time as a flu shot.
- **RSV Vaccine**
 - Everyone age 75 years and older, and higher risk adults over age 60, should get the RSV vaccine (consult your healthcare provider).
- **Shingles Vaccine**
 - Everyone age 50 years and older should receive the two-

- dose Shingles vaccine.
- More than 99% of adults born before 1980 had Chickenpox, whether they recall having it or not. No screening is necessary to confirm prior chickenpox infection before receiving the Shingles vaccine.
- You should still get vaccinated even if you have already had shingles, to prevent future occurrences. Wait until the current shingles rash has

completely gone away before getting the shot.
Tompkins County Whole Health offers in-home vaccinations to homebound Tompkins County residents. Please call 607-274-6604 to get more information about this service. TCWH also provides free vaccines to those eligible for the NYS Vaccines For Adults program. Visit our website or call our office to learn more: 607-274-6604.

Who We Are: The Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a resident-centered advocacy service dedicated to protecting the rights, safety, and dignity of individuals living in nursing homes, assisted living residences, and adult care facilities. As an independent resource, the program exists to ensure that every resident has a voice, and that it is heard, respected, and supported.

Ombudsmen are trained professionals and volunteers who visit facilities regularly to meet with residents, listen to concerns, and help resolve issues. Whether the concern relates to care, food quality, personal rights, communication with staff, or overall quality of life, the Ombudsman Program works to address the matter promptly and collaboratively.

In addition to individual advocacy, the program provides education for residents and families, supports resident and family councils, and promotes policies that strengthen resident rights and protections across long-term care settings.

Our core mission is to advocate, empower, and ensure that every resident's voice matters.

How We Help

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program provides support in several key areas to ensure residents receive quality care and experience dignity, respect, and safety in their daily lives.

1. Resolving Concerns and Complaints

Ombudsman representatives assist residents and families with concerns related to care,

rights, communication, food and nutrition, environmental issues, and overall quality of life. All conversations are confidential, and the resident is always at the center of the decision-making process.

2. Advocating for Resident Rights

We help residents understand their rights and work to ensure those rights are upheld. This includes issues such as privacy, autonomy, choice, visitation, and freedom from abuse or neglect.

3. Supporting Resident and Family Councils

The program provides guidance to resident councils and family councils, helping them strengthen communication with facility leadership and advocate for positive changes within the facility.

4. Providing Education and Information

Ombudsmen offer information on long-term care options, facility policies, and resources available to residents and their families. We also provide education to staff and community members about resident rights and best practices in long-term care.

5. Promoting Systemic Change
Beyond individual advocacy, the program monitors broader trends and concerns within facilities and contributes to local and statewide efforts to improve long-term care policies and standards.

If you or a loved one has questions, concerns, or simply needs someone to talk to about life in long-term care, the Ombudsman Program is here as a free, confidential resource.

Contact Kate Lyon at 607-274-5498 or klyon@tompkins-co.org.

Tompkins County Public Library offers book clubs for all ages! Check out www.tcpl.org/book-clubs.

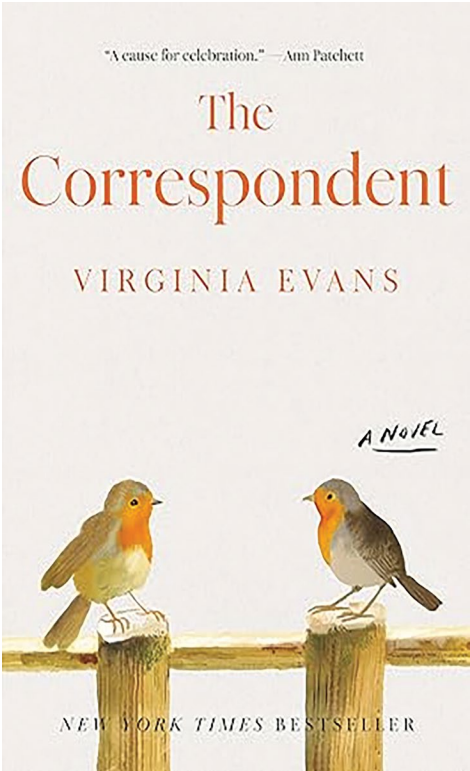
Library programs are always free and open to the public.

The Correspondent by Virginia Evans

Is letter-writing a lost art? Author Virginia Evans proves otherwise in this epistolary novel of connection, finding oneself and the capacity for acceptance, whatever age you are.

Septuagenarian, widow and retired attorney, Sybil Van Antwerp writes letters to people she knows and those she doesn't – Ann Patchett, Joan Didion, Larry McMurtry. She writes letters she sends and letters she does not until an opportunity for forgiveness finally arises.

An **NPR Best Book of the Year**, Virginia Evans imagines the puzzle of a life through letters of a multi-faceted character, one sure to be beloved by many.

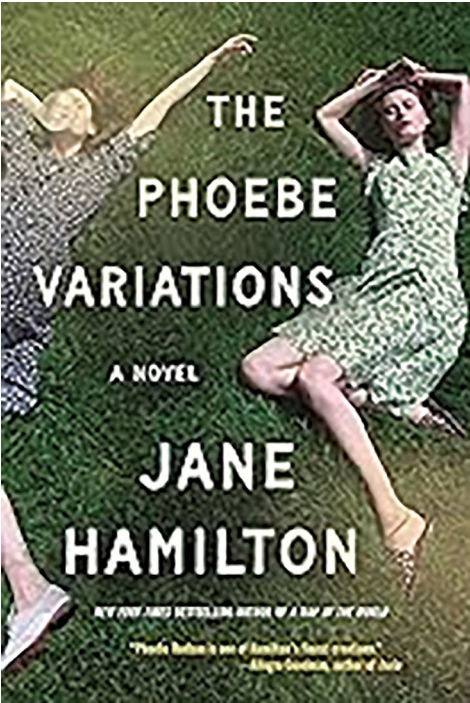


The Phoebe Variations by Jane Hamilton

A coming-of-age novel by the celebrated author of, *A Map of the World*, this book will charm and tug to unravel memories of what it was like to be a teenager again.

Set in the latter half of the 1970s, Phoebe Hudson comes to terms with both her birth family and adoptive mother, when she learns the truth of her infancy. Shattered by the facts, Phoebe reinvents herself in “The Asylum,” a house full of children, who are as entertaining and quixotic as Phoebe herself. As high graduation comes and goes, she also learns who her real friends are and who they are not.

Described as Hamilton's “best invention ever,” Phoebe Hudson will remind you of what it was



like to be seventeen!
Reviews by Joyce Wheatley, TCPL Librarian

Tompkins County Office for the Aging Seeks to Recognize the Contributions of Older Volunteers in Our Community

Do you know of an older adult (age 60 +) who has done something special for the community?

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging is now accepting nominations for volunteers who have made significant contributions to the community through civic engagement. Awards will be presented during the Office for the Aging's Annual Luncheon in May as well as during Older New Yorker's Day which will be held in person on May 26, 2026, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel-Desmond in Albany.

Nominations should be

in the form of a letter and should include activities, achievements, and the reasons that the individual should receive the award. Please include contact information for both the nominator and the nominee in the letter.

Send your nominations to the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., Ithaca, NY 14850 or email: cbullis@tompkins-co.org by Friday, February 20, 2026. Contact the Tompkins County Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482 for more information.

* Past awardees include:

Joel Abrams, Barry Adams, Bill and Sherry Alberta, Phyllis Allen, John Anderson, Fred Antil, Irene Asay, Joan Barber, Barbara Barry, Ardie Bennett, Nancy Bereano, Arthur Berkey, Beverly Blanchard, Lucy Brown, Mary Cambreco, Mary Chapman, Joseph Cimmino, Betty Conger, Joe Anna Deas, Mary Pat Dolan, Elizabeth Doppel, Ann Doren, Frances Eastman, William Eisenhardt, Rebecca Elgie, Charles Elliot, Carina Emerson, Martha Ferger, Bernie Fetterly, Fred Fladd, Richard Flaville, Sue Ford, Helen Garvey, Gertrude Gray,

Lisa Gould, Gladys Hamilton, Beth Harrington, John "Holly" Holingsworth, Brigid Hubberman, Jean Hyde, Nancy Istock, Leon Lawrence, Wil Lawrence, Debra Levine, Ilma Levine, Harriet London, Louise Matosich, Paul McGraw, Mary Mente, John O'Connell, Ray Oglesby, Joan Ormondroyd, Jim Quest, Jean Robinson, Ken Robinson, Theresa Robinson, Marie Romano, Frank Schaefer, Nancy Schaff, Bill Sherwood, Margaret Snow, Ted Sobel, Robert Spaulding, Phyllis Stout, Richard Tabor, Eunice Tabor, Amanda Ufford, and Jack Warren



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.

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

Hello Lifelong Friends,
I'm so excited to share what's happening at Lifelong this season! First, we're absolutely thrilled to welcome back Karen Koyanagi to our team. Karen is joining us as our part-time Communications Coordinator, and she'll be helping keep our website fresh, sending out our weekly email newsletters, and spreading the word about all the wonderful programs and services we offer. We're lucky to have her back!

Our Spring 2026 catalog is

here, and it's packed with opportunities to learn, connect, and have fun. Take a peek—you're sure to find something that sparks your interest.

And yes, tax season is upon us! Thankfully, Lifelong's amazing team of certified volunteer tax preparers and tax greeters is gearing up to provide free tax preparation services. It's one of the many ways we're here to support you.

Behind the scenes, we're continuing to make improvements to our building to enhance safety and accessibility.

We've recently joined other local businesses and certified as an Age-Friendly Business through the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, and our eye is always on creating accessible spaces that feel warm, welcoming, and truly yours

Thank you for being part of Lifelong. Your energy and support make this community so special. We can't wait to see you soon—whether it's for a class, a cup of coffee, or just a friendly hello!

Warmly,
Liza Burger
Executive Director, Lifelong



What is ZumBaBoo @ Lifelong?

A Revolutionary Fusion Dance Fitness Class. Let's dive into the details.

In a world where fitness routines can often feel monotonous, ZumBaBoo emerges as a refreshing and exhilarating approach to staying active. This innovative dance fitness program seamlessly blends three distinct dance traditions—Zumba's energetic salsa and aerobic movements, Ballet's graceful strength-building techniques, and Bollywood's vibrant choreography rooted in Bharatanatyam, Punjabi, and traditional folk dances. The result is a comprehensive workout that strengthens different muscle groups while keeping participants engaged and entertained.

The Perfect Fusion

ZumBaBoo's unique

structure draws from the best of each dance style. The Zumba component brings cardiovascular intensity through dynamic Latin-inspired movements that improve endurance while burning calories. The Ballet element introduces controlled movements focusing on core stability, posture, and elongation, developing lean muscle tone and flexibility. Bollywood choreography adds cultural richness through Bharatanatyam's intricate footwork, Punjabi bhangra's explosive energy, and folk traditions that work the lower

Is it accessible for everyone?
Absolutely!!

Designed for low to intermediate fitness levels,

ZumBaBoo welcomes participants regardless of their dance background. The program's progressive structure allows newcomers to learn at a comfortable pace while keeping experienced dancers engaged. Each session includes warm-up, intensity periods, and cool-down sequences that prioritize safety and effectiveness.

Why will your body thank you?

What sets ZumBaBoo apart is its comprehensive approach to fitness. Zumba targets cardiovascular health, Ballet focuses on core strength and postural alignment, and Bollywood emphasizes lower body power and hip flexibility. Together, these

components create a balanced workout addressing multiple fitness goals—from weight management and muscle toning to improved coordination and mental wellbeing.

Whether you're looking to break free from traditional gym routines, explore different cultural dance forms, or simply find a more engaging way to stay active, ZumBaBoo offers an inclusive, effective, and joyful path to fitness. It is a fun workout—celebration of movement, culture, and personal strength.

Join Instructor Shanthi Mariappan for this fun new health & wellness offering on Tuesdays from 10:30-11:30am at Lifelong (Library Place Community Room)!

LIFELONG LIBRARY NEWS

I'm excited to tell you about our new collection of books which was primarily picked up at the TCPL Book Sale in October. The goal is for our members to peruse books that are not only interesting, but fun and exciting too! The current topics are:

Adventure - nature, travel, science, art

Biography - stories of people's lives

Food & Nutrition - emphasis on simple, healthy eating

Fiction - mystery, thriller, romance, western

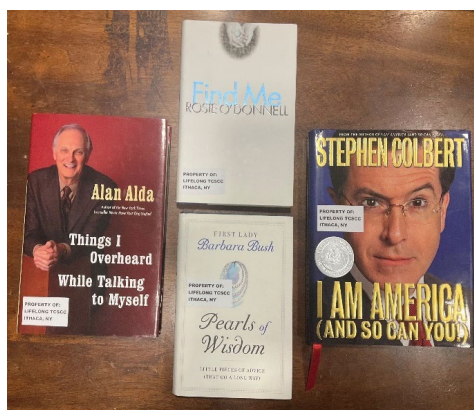
Non-Fiction - history, politics, economics, community

Self-Care - health, aging, meditation, recovery, joy

Miscellaneous - everything else

Here are some samples of books in the current collection:

Please note that our library is a wonderful benefit of Lifelong



membership. We are on the honor system, so take out a book at your leisure, keep it out for 1 month max, and then return it to the approximate spot where you found it. Also, we are not accepting donations at this time. When you have books you're ready to part with, get them over to our local charities for others to enjoy.

Thanks, and see you soon.

Marie Benedetti, Lifelong Library Monitor



Volunteer Fair

Tuesday, April 28 | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Connect directly with local nonprofit organizations, explore opportunities, and find a good fit. Discover the different ways you can contribute your time and talent. Volunteering keeps us young at heart. Don't retire from the things you're passionate about! Visit every vendor to be eligible for the grand prize raffle.



Lifelong Closures

- Monday, January 19 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Monday, February 16 – President's Day
- Monday, May 25 – Memorial Day



Note: Lifelong's on and off-site programs are cancelled when the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) is closed due to weather. If ICSD has a delayed opening due to weather, Lifelong will cancel all programs scheduled before noon. Any weather-related closures will be announced by 7:30am on Lifelong's website (www.tclifelong.org) or facebook page.

New! Lifelong Health & Wellness Classes You'll Love

(\$5 drop-in fee or \$40/month for unlimited Health & Wellness classes for Lifelong members)

Aging brings unique challenges, but it also brings opportunities to focus on what truly matters: Our well-being and independence. In addition to Enhance Your Fitness, Strength Training, Tai Chi, Chair Yoga, and Breathe and Flow Yoga, Lifelong is thrilled to introduce several new year-round, weekly Health & Wellness programs.


Qi Gong: This ancient Chinese practice blending gentle, flowing movements, deep breathing, and focused awareness, cultivates and balances the body’s vial energy (qi or chi) for improved health, vitality, and inner calm.

While similar to Tai Chi, there are significant differences between the two practices. Tai Chi is a complex martial art form, while Qi Gong is a simpler, more free-form wellness system for cultivating energy. Qi Gong benefits include stress reduction, improved mood, better sleep, increased flexibility, improved balance, and overall well-being. Guided by new Lifelong instructor Sasha Salayda, the class will meet on Fridays at Library Place, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

ZumBaBoo: This energetic, one-of-a-kind class, was created specifically for Lifelong

LIFELONG SPRING 2026

HEALTH & WELLNESS
2026 Health and Wellness Sponsor

 *Proudly supporting Lifelong Health & Wellness initiatives.*

Classes are offered year-round for a drop-in fee of \$5 per class. Alternatively, Lifelong members may pay \$40/month for unlimited Health & Wellness classes. On-site Activities require Lifelong membership; Off-site Activities do not. Open to all fitness levels.

Enhance Your Fitness | Stretching, low-impact cardio, strength, balance


Location & Instructor	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong / Library Place Shanthi Mariappan Ginny Miller	Wednesday/Friday	10:30 - 11:30 AM
Brooktondale Fire Hall Chris Dunham Karen Koyanagi	Tuesday/Thursday	9:30 - 10:30 AM
Trumansburg Fire Hall Chris Dunham Caryn Sheckler	Monday/Wednesday/Friday	10:00 - 11:00 AM

Strength Training | Strengthens bones and muscles, improves balance

Location	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong / Library Place Debbie Bosanko	Monday	1:30 - 2:30 PM
	Thursday	12:30 - 1:30 PM
Varna Community Center Chris Dunham	Monday	9:30 - 10:30 AM

Tai Chi | Fluid movements to ease tension, increase fitness, strength


Location	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong / Library Place Chris Dunham	Wednesday	12:45 - 1:45 PM
Lansing Library Chris Dunham	Friday	10:30 - 11:30 AM

 www.tclifelong.org

activities

LIFELONG SPRING 2026

HEALTH & WELLNESS
2026 Health and Wellness Sponsor

 *Proudly supporting Lifelong Health & Wellness initiatives.*

NEW **Qi Gong | Mindful movement to cultivate healing, resilience, vitality**

Location	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong / Library Place Sasha Salayda	Friday	12:30 - 1:30 PM

Breathe & Flow Yoga | Gentle postures for flexibility, strength, balance

Location	Day of Week	Times
Lifelong / Library Place Erica Shockley	Monday	12:00 - 12:50 PM

Chair Yoga | Tune into your body and relax using breath and basic yoga

Location	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong Ginny Miller, Caryn Sheckler	Wednesday/Friday	11:45 AM - 12:45 PM
Lansing Library Sam Swartz	Monday	9:45 - 10:45 AM
Jacksonville Methodist Caryn Sheckler	Tuesday	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM


Square, Round & Line Dancing | Fun fitness, the caller will guide you

Location	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong Caller - Katy Heine	Friday	2:00 - 4:00 PM

NEW **ZumBaBoo | Dance fitness fusion of Zumba, Ballet and Bollywood**

Location	Day of Week	Time
Lifelong / Library Place Shanthi Mariappan	Tuesday	10:30 - 11:30 AM

Lifelong Activities are open to all! Drop in to try one for \$5. No advance registration needed.

 www.tclifelong.org

activities

members by Enhance Your Fitness and yoga instructor, Shanthi Mariappan. Shanthi, who has also taught Artificial Intelligence, Indian cooking, and is offering a Warli Art workshop this semester, is excited to teach this dance fusion of Zumba, Ballet, and Bollywood. Tuesdays at Library Place, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Laughter Yoga: Instructor Sam Swartz is excited to offer Laughter Yoga as a year-round Health & Wellness class. Sam

is certified in many types of yoga, including Laughter Yoga, an exercise practice combining intentional laughter with yogic breathing and playful movements. The practice encourages childlike playfulness and deep diaphragmatic breathing for physical and mental well-being. As Sam says, “Come join us to laugh for no good reason.” Wednesdays at Lifelong, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., starting January 21.

Guided Meditation: A

certified meditation teacher, Sam adapted the Guided Meditation series he taught during the Fall Semester into a year-round series. Relax as Sam guides you through weekly meditation, helping you focus, by providing instructions on breathing, body sensations, visualizations, and thoughts. Routine meditation has been proven to aid stress reduction, better sleep, and focus. Wednesdays at Lifelong, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.



Wonderful
Wheelchairs

Wheelchairs & Repairs
at Affordable Prices!

WONDERFUL WHEELCHAIRS

Lifelong serves as a fiscal sponsor for Wonderful Wheelchairs, a volunteer-run program that seeks to help members of the community gain access to mobility equipment. We provide quality and

affordable mobility devices, and maintenance of those devices to those who need them. Email us at wwcith2@gmail.com or call us at 607-444-2817. *On-site service hours are available on Wednesday*

and Friday from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. in the basement of the Cayuga Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. For more information, visit <https://wonderfulwheelchairs.info/home>

Advertise in the Senior Circle!

Reach an active, engaged, and loyal audience by advertising in the Senior Circle, a trusted quarterly publication for older adults that reaches more than 5,000 readers in our local

community. Whether you’re promoting services, events, or products tailored to mature readers, the **Senior Circle** offers affordable, flexible ad sizes, print and digital availability, and multiple

issues each year to help your message stand out. Join other local businesses that use the **Senior Circle** to build visibility, strengthen community connections, and reach customers who value

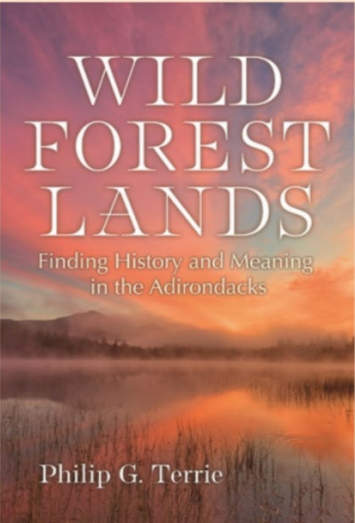
quality, reliability, and local engagement. Call or email Robin Tuttle, Lifelong Business Manager, for further information. 607-273-1511, ext. 227 rtuttle@tclifelong.org

FREE

Book Launch
READING & SIGNING

Tuesday, February 3 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Library Place | FREE, OPEN TO PUBLIC

Philip Terrie is a professor emeritus of American culture and environmental studies, author of six books on Adirondack history, and served as an expert witness in litigation guaranteeing wilderness protection in the Adirondacks. Join Philip as he reads from *Wild Forest Lands*, a meditation on wilderness and an investigation of the constitutional and judicial history (and future) of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. Enjoy warm apple cider and treats. Please register in advance.



Lifelong Ladies Senior Golf Group
Are you ready to tee off?

Lifelong Ladies Senior Golf Group opens for registration January 2 and the first golf outing is scheduled for May. Players must be current Lifelong members with some golf experience and clubs. Once registered, you will receive a digital packet of information with schedules and guidelines prior to the **kickoff meeting on April 14 at 12:00 p.m.**

If you enjoy a friendly round and making new friends, join us! **Sign up before mid-April online, in-person, or on the phone.** \$10 registration fee. Members are responsible for all golf fees, transportation, and meals.





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!

Join Collette for information sessions at Lifelong on the following trips:

[Monday, February 2, 11am-12pm: Iceland and Sequoia and Kings Canyon](#)

[Tuesday, April 7, 11am-12pm: South Pacific Wonders: New Zealand and Australia, and Treasures of Egypt](#)

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 and 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 and 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 25- March 9, 2027 13 days and 28 meals

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

For more information and to register: <https://groups.gocollette.com/en-US/link/1326449>

Coming Soon: Magical Rhine and Moselle River Tour

September, 2027- more information will soon be available!

BURLESQUE BUFFET

OLD ENOUGH To Know Better!

PERFORMANCES BY:

GHULA MORTISSE
CHRISSY BUNZ
DEE LIGHTFULL
LORELAI LEROUX

FEATURING
DJ RDF

MARCH 12 | 5 PM

LIBRARY PLACE, ITHACA, NY

BURLESQUEBUFFET.COM

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Staying Sharp and Connected: What's New at Lifelong

By Susan Weiner, Lifelong Program Manager

What does it take to rewrite the narrative around aging? Lifelong believes the answer lies in opportunity, purpose, creativity, and connection, which is why we're launching an array of new, inspirational classes starting in January.

From art workshops to insurance, from cinema to wellness classes, Lifelong programs are designed to empower older adults to stay active, explore new passions, and thrive through holistic well-being initiatives. Here is just a sample of our upcoming semester.

Art & Creativity

Opportunities for self-expression and creativity are abundant.

- **Learn to Paint, Love to Paint!** Accomplished local artist, Isa Goico, will work with each painter. Unwind, pick up a brush, and express yourself. All materials provided.
- **Learn Warli Art:** Warli Art is a traditional art form drawn in simple, symbolic forms. Learn basic geometry shapes and types of lines used to create this symbolic art form.
- **Manifest Me! Quilted Art Journals:** Create a personal historical art journal using collage, layered materials, and magazine pictures. All materials are provided.

Body & Mind Health

Target your brain-body interactions and promote health with mind and body practices.

- **Introduction to the Meridians:** Meridians are pathways believed to maintain balance and vitality. Learn hands-on techniques to keep your energies flowing for optimal health.
- **Golden Spa Day:** Relax, rejuvenate, and get pampered by a licensed cosmetologist. Enjoy hand scrub and massage, manicure, and beauty treatments.
- **Japanese Superfoods for Longevity:** The Japanese have long been revered and studied for their long life expectancy. Learn about these sought-after superfoods and how to integrate them into your diet.

The Natural World

Understanding that human health, culture, and

survival are tied to a healthy environment.

- **How to Grow Native Plants for Your Garden:** Learn the importance of integrating native plant species in your garden and leave with a take-home collection, ready to overwinter and germinate in your garden this spring.
- **Compost 2 Cultivation:** Learn how to produce compost alongside Tompkins County Cooperative Extension Master Composters. The class series includes two field trips.

Culture, Lifestyle & Film

Weaving creativity, history, and community into everyday life.

- **Reintroducing Shakespeare:** Reacquaint yourself with Shakespeare the man, his poetry, and his theatre. Novice and nervous Shakespeareans are welcome, as well as more confident readers.
- **Narrative Perspectives on Love:** A Film and Discussion Course: A series of honest films that can help us understand the power of love and its absence.

Planning, Finance & Tech

Open yourself to new ideas, technologies, perspectives, innovations, and understanding.

- **Living With AI:** Trying to figure out how Artificial Intelligence fits into your life? Caroline Alemany is back to explain how you can utilize AI as a helpful everyday tool.
- **Insurance Insights:** Protecting What Matters Most in Your Golden Years: Understand the most common types of insurance, why they are important, and how your insurance should change as you advance through life.
- **Living Trusts & Estate Planning Essentials:** Get the basics of estate planning, including wills, living trusts, and preparing for incapacity. This workshop will guide you in protecting your assets.

Lifelong programs reflect a commitment to enhancing the lives of older adults, helping them to remain active, engaged, and vibrant. For more information, drop by our offices at 119 W. Court Street weekdays between 9 am and 4 pm, give us a call at 607-273-1511, or visit our website at <https://tclifelong.org/>



Yamatai, Cornell Japanese Drummers

Friday, March 20 | 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. at Library Place

Yamatai is a Japanese drumming group founded by Cornell undergraduates in 2009. The name "Yamatai" is a metaphor for pure primal human energy and is meant to project the image of a tribe of fierce tattooed warriors and beautiful female shamans with supernatural powers. Yamatai wants the audience to feel as if they have traveled 2,000 years back in time and are witnessing that magic. Yamatai performs high-energy arrangements, traditional taiko pieces, and original compositions. Please register to attend.

Don't miss this powerful, rhythmic performance!

FREE | OPEN TO PUBLIC



Tuesday, March 17
Tuesday, May 19
12:30 - 1:30 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



Friday, May 1 | 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Library Place | \$12

Mark the arrival of spring with lively dance tunes from Radio Yardvark and delicious treats and beverages. Reserve your ticket in advance.

Sponsored in part by:



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Featuring RADIO YARDVARK



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Spring Renewal Gong Bath with Caryn Sheckler

Friday, April 17, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
at Library Place | \$15 advance/\$20 at door

Join Gong Master Caryn Sheckler for a restorative session combining soothing gong bath vibrations with guided meditation. The vibrations of the gongs will wash over you, leading to a state of profound relaxation and healing. Disconnect from the world and reconnect with nature and your inner self. Please bring a mat and small blanket to make yourself cozy.



Tax Counseling for the Elderly program – our 45th year!

Lifelong provides free tax return preparation for many local residents

- Sixty years of age or older or
- Disabled or
- Limited English Proficiency or
- With family incomes \$69,000 or less

Call 607-379-4045 to schedule an appointment between January 28 and April 11

- beginning January 5 if you are 60+ or had your return completed by Lifelong last year
- beginning February 2 all eligible taxpayers

Make your appointment now for a future date when you expect to have received all your tax documents. Appointments are available this year at Lifelong in Ithaca, Ulysses Philomathic Library in Trumansburg, and Southworth Library in Dryden.

Organized tax records make preparing a complete and accurate tax return easier – help us help you! It also helps avoid errors that can lead to delays that may slow down your refund and can help find all the deductions or credits you are entitled to.

Packets with information and forms to complete before your

appointment will be available by January 19 at Lifelong, Ulysses Philomathic Library in Trumansburg, Southworth Library in Dryden, the Groton Library, and electronically on the Lifelong website www.tclifelong.org.

For joint returns, both taxpayers must be present at the appointment.

If you need a disability-related accommodation to fully utilize our services, call 607-273-1511 x258 or email TCE@tclifelong.org. If you have any concerns about meeting, reading, writing, or communicating with us or completing your forms, please let us know so we can help you successfully complete this year’s process and make sure you understand your tax return. Call 607-273-1511 x258 or email TCE@tclifelong.org.

In January, information will be available on the Lifelong website at www.tclifelong.org including contact-free and self-prep tax return options.

This program receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and additional financial assistance from Lifelong, the Triad Foundation,

Tompkins County, and the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. We do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, and/or reprisal. Lifelong TCE will make every effort, at no cost to the taxpayer, to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and language assistance to persons who are limited English

proficient. If you believe you have been discriminated against based on any of these categories and/or reprisal, you may file a complaint with the Operations Director, Civil Rights Division, Internal Revenue Service, Room 2413, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224 or email civil.rights.division@irs.gov.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

MILKWEED at the Kitchen Theatre

Sunday, March 15 | 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
\$25 member | \$30 non-member

A physics student falls in love with acting. A theater student yearns to grasp the mechanics of the universe. This poetic, multilayered premiere by Ithaca’s own Wendy Dann explores the complicated, tender acts of teaching and learning, and will exquisitely unravel your understanding of time and space. Meet at noon for an optional “on your own” group lunch at The State Diner. Performance starts at 2:00 p.m., followed by an exclusive post-show talkback with the director and playwright.

A WORLD PREMIERE BY WENDY DANN

MILKWEED

FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 15, 2026

KITCHEN theatre company

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

MAY 6-24, 2026
FEAST.
BY MEGAN GOGERTY

KITCHEN theatre company

FEAST. at the Kitchen Theatre

Thursday, May 14 | 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
\$25 member | \$30 non-member

You’ve never been to a dinner party like this. A reimagining of Beowulf from a female perspective, FEAST. serves up a visceral, tour-de-force solo performance that grapples with grief, power, and justice. Come curious and hungry for change; leave galvanized and satisfied. After the final bow, Lifelong will join the artistic crew for a private talkback session to discuss the creative process, characters, and themes.

Medicare 2026

Medicare premiums that will go into effect in January 2026:

- Medicare Part B premiums will increase from \$185 to \$202.90.
- The annual deductible for all Medicare Part B beneficiaries will increase from \$257 to \$283.
- If your Medicare Advantage drug plan or your standalone Part D plan requires a deductible, you will pay 100% of your prescription drug costs until you spend \$615. – the maximum Part D deductible for 2026.
- Some plans may have lower,

- or no deductible, with the standard benefit kicking in after this amount.
- After meeting the deductible, you will generally pay 25% of the drug costs until out-of-pocket spending reaches the new annual cap of \$2,100.
- After you have hit the \$2,100 threshold for out-of-pocket spending on your medications, you pay nothing else out-of-pocket for 2026.
- No more Part D “donut hole” coverage gap.

If you have any Medicare questions, call Lifelong at: 607-273-1511 or Tompkins County Office for the Aging at: 607-274-5482. We offer Medicare counseling with certified Medicare counselors - free of charge!

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

There is no cost for this valuable service.

23 South Street, Trumansburg
(607) 387- 8151

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period – January 1st to March 31st

If you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C), this period is a chance to switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage). You may also drop your MA plan and return to Original Medicare (Part A & B) during this time. If you are returning to Original Medicare, you may also join a separate Medicare Part D (prescription drug plan). Any changes made during this enrollment period will take effect on the first day of the

month after your new plan receives your request. For example, a change made in January will take effect on the first day of February. The key difference from the Fall Open Enrollment Period (October 15th – December 7th) is that the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period is specifically designed for those who already have a Medicare Advantage Plan. Please note: this period does NOT allow you to shift from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.



Join Lifelong for a free virtual **Medicare Basics** presentation on
Wednesday, April 22, 2026 from 4:00-5:15pm

Medicare Basics is an introduction to the federally administered health insurance program that provides coverage to persons 65 and older, and persons under 65 who are disabled. Our presentation will cover the different ways you can receive your Medicare benefits, how Medicare works with other health insurance, and financial-assistance options that may be available to you. Be your own advocate! This presentation will provide you with some clarity on how to be an informed consumer.

Presented by Liza Burger, Executive Director of Lifelong, and certified Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) counselor. In addition to offering presentations, certified HIICAP counselors offer free, non-biased 1:1 health insurance counseling at Lifelong. Telephone, zoom, and in-person HIICAP appointments are available.

Medicare Basics—Spring 2026

Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 4:00-5:15pm

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89185150308>

Enhancing the lives of older adults in Tompkins County

LIFELONG



Artwork by Pam Mading, Lifelong Open Studio artist.



SPRING 2026 catalog

119 W. Court Street, Ithaca, N.Y. | Phone: 607-273-1511 | Email: frontdesk@tclifelong.org

www.tclifelong.org



FREE TAX PREP

Federal and New York State returns

LIFELONG @ 119 West Court Street, Ithaca
(additional parking behind the building, enter off Buffalo St.)
TRUMANSBURG @ Ulysses Philomathic Library
DRYDEN @ Southworth Library

- Taxpayers age 60+ (with spouse of any age)
- Taxpayers with disabilities or Limited English Proficiency
- Families with incomes below \$69,000

Returns are prepared by IRS trained and certified volunteers.
Some returns may not qualify for this service.

Appointments available January 28 through April 11



- Call OR text **607-379-4045** OR
- Access an appointment request form on our website at www.tclifelong.org OR using this QR code

Taxpayers aged 60+ or whose return we completed last year
may request an appointment beginning January 5

All eligible taxpayers may request an appointment beginning February 2

See our website www.tclifelong.org for more information and
for contact-free and no cost self-prep options



This program receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and additional financial assistance from Lifelong, the Triad Foundation, Tompkins County, and the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. We do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, and/or reprisal. Lifelong TCE will make every effort, at no cost to the taxpayer, to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and language assistance to persons who are limited English proficient. If you believe you have been discriminated against based on any of these categories and/or reprisal, you may file a complaint with the Operations Director, Civil Rights Division, Internal Revenue Service, Room 2413, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224 or email civil.rights.division@irs.gov.

Lifelong Catalog Word Search

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