

Senior Gram

News for Seniors in the Town of Freedom, NH
August 2021 Edition

Note from Renée:

It looks like we have finally turned the corner with the COVID pandemic. The weather is getting nice, things are starting to open up and after many months of meeting via Zoom, it looks like we can begin planning activities in person.

In May we had the wine tasting activity that was well attended and I was able to talk to many of the attendees to see what they would like to have offered to activities and I have been working on getting them planned. See what is coming up in this Senior Gram and the importance of getting out and socializing.

More services are becoming available with the change in the CDC guidelines so your needs might be changing. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need assistance.

Renée can be reached at:

(802) 424-2074, coordinator03836@gmail.com

<https://townoffreedom.net/>

and by contacting the Freedom Town Offices.

Other ways Renée can help:

- point of contact for services available to seniors
- assist with
 - connecting for services in different areas of need (examples include: food affordability, food pantries, homelessness, legal services, social security, tax assistance, veterans programs and many others)
 - health
 - housing and residential care
 - nutrition
 - recreation, fitness
 - transportation
- provide educational opportunities
- coordinate regular health screenings
- Coordinate social activities – see the next page on the importance on social activities as we age
 - if there is an activity you would like to have offered, please let Renée know.

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Broadband Benefit

Are you wanting to stay informed regarding activities, services available and important events in the community? Do you have doctor appointments which you would like attend via Telemedicine but do not have internet access? There is a Broadband benefit from the FCC to help families and households struggling to afford internet service. This new benefit will connect eligible households to jobs, critical healthcare services and so much more.

The Broadband benefit will provide a discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households. Please check out the details at: <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>

There are discounts available to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet. If you cannot afford the device, devices can be obtained from the Gibson Center (603) 356-3231

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Here is the continuation on the article on isolation and what can be done to reduce isolation.

Facts About Senior Isolation and the Effects of Loneliness That Will Stun You

by Claire Samuels –

Help for seniors living alone

Before the pandemic, many seniors living alone maintained active social lives, regularly visiting community centers and friends. Additionally, routine interactions like checking out at the grocery store or chatting with the mail carrier offered much-needed socialization. Now more than ever, it's vital for friends, family members, and acquaintances to reach out to seniors. Even 15 minutes of interaction a day — in person or virtual — can mitigate the effects of loneliness on seniors, according to the Administration on Aging (AoA).

Reaching out makes a difference. Social distancing from the coronavirus has made senior isolation more prevalent, but it's also demonstrated how well we can communicate from afar. If you have aging relatives, call them, and encourage your family to do the same. If you run out of conversation topics, try asking these 20 questions seniors never get tired of hearing.

Volunteering decreases loneliness. The more volunteer associations to which a senior belongs, the lower their collective loneliness, according to the Administration on Community Living. Volunteering gives seniors a sense of purpose, and it allows them to engage in personal interests. The good news is that volunteering is possible even without social contact: Intergenerational programs allow seniors to help young children with reading over the phone or via pen pal letters, for example.

Technology solutions address loneliness. From Zoom video chats to innovative products designed especially for seniors, technology can bridge gaps between socially distant friends and family. Look into easy-to-use phones and tablets that offer additional features, such as brain games and digital assistants like Alexa and Siri. However, too much screen time can lead to fatigue and eye strain, so consider alternating between technology and good, old-fashioned phone calls. Other ways friends and families can use technology to connect include:

- Having a “movie night” where everyone rents the same film, or uses an app like Netflix party or Gaze to watch and chat at the same time.
- Playing games together, like online chess or scrabble. Apps like Kahoot and Drawful allow you to customize games and quizzes with your own family facts and interests.
- Sharing memories through photos. Family members can use a shared photo app, like Family Album or Google Photos, to upload new and old memories. If your senior loved one is less tech-savvy, send pictures via email or snail mail.
- Exploring keepsakes and heirloom treasures. Social isolation has given seniors plenty of time to clean out closets and attics of keepsakes. Get the family together to look through photo albums and old treasures on Zoom, and see what stories and memories they inspire.

Exercise feels good physically and emotionally. Brisk movement helps ward off anxiety and depression in addition to offering physical health benefits. If you live in a neighborhood with socially isolated seniors, suggest taking a short walk together or spending time outside. During this time of social distancing, remember to wear a mask and stay 6 feet apart.

Learning and exploring reduces cognitive decline. There are hundreds of online resources for seniors who want to learn from home. From video livestreams of zoos and museums to open online courses, there are mentally stimulating resources available to fit every senior's interests.

Used by permission from a Place for Mom Samuels, Claire. “Stunning Facts About Senior Isolation.” *A Place for Mom*, 7 Jan. 2021, www.aplaceformom.com/caregiver-resources/articles/senior-isolation-facts.

For more information:: <https://www.aplaceformom.com/caregiver-resources/articles/senior-isolation-facts>

Upcoming Events

Old Home Week
July 30 – August 8

United in Freedom, 2021



There will be two opportunities to see what is happening and what is available to seniors.

United in Freedom Social

Saturday, July 31 – 3:30 – 6:00

Freedom Elementary School Ballfield at 40 Loon Lake Road

BYO Picnic Basket, blankets, lawn chairs.

Stop in at the booth and meet Renée, your Senior Resource Coordinator. Find out what services are available.

44th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair

Sponsored by the Freedom Community Club

This is another opportunity to see Renée. This is a great opportunity to find out what services are available and sign up for some upcoming activities.

Go to www.freedomoldhomeweek.net to see the schedule of events and find out more about Freedom Old Home Week

Are you looking for a relaxing morning with a cup of coffee or tea and a pastry or maybe a full breakfast? Let's gather at Traditions Restaurant at Purity Springs on Thursday, August 12th with others from Freedom for a time to sit back and enjoy the view. Come with your friends and neighbors or come alone and meet new friends and neighbors. I look forward to seeing you there.

Breakfast/Coffee

Thursday, August 12

7:00 - 11:00



John Davidson Performance – August 13

Tickets for the John Davidson performance on August 13 are sold out. If you have tickets, the doors open at 6:30 and the performance begins at 7:00. It promises to be a great show. See you there.



How to Combat Depression and Isolation Through Volunteering

By Kimberly Fowler May 4, 2018

It might be considered an unconventional treatment for depression, but the effects are well documented. Researchers at Exeter Medical School looked at evidence from over 40 studies on the health of volunteers and concluded that volunteering leads to lower levels of depression and increased mental and physical wellbeing.

In fact, the research around the benefits of volunteering is so well developed that the United Kingdom's National Health Service has now included volunteering as one of their five recommended steps to mental wellbeing.

Lowering Levels of Depression and Isolation Through Volunteering

The many benefits of volunteering make it an appealing pastime. The people you volunteer your time with get the help they need and you get to enjoy some of the health benefits, which include:

1. **Better health:** One study on adults over 50 who volunteered found they had fewer issues with high blood pressure and better psychological well-being.
2. **Increased self-esteem:** You'll be appreciated, but you'll also develop new skills.
3. **Increased sense of accomplishment and purpose:** An article in Psychology Today argues that this is key to combating depression.
4. **Positivity:** According to Harley Therapy Counselling volunteering interrupts negative thought patterns and can even change your overall perspective for the better.
5. **Social connectedness:** Getting out and interacting with other people in the community combats depression and loneliness.

Used by permission from a Place for Mom. Fowler, Kimberly. "How to Combat Depression and Isolation Through Volunteering." *A Place for Mom*, 4 May, 20201, <https://www.aplaceformom.com/caregiver-resources/articles/combat-depression-isolation-volunteering>

Where can you volunteer in the community?

Food Pantry

The Freedom Food Pantry provides food for those in need who reside in the towns of Effingham, Freedom, and the Ossipees. Volunteers are needed on Saturday mornings from 9-12 when we hand out food. However, we can fit only about 8 or 9 into jobs each week. Space is a consideration. Volunteers must be physically fit (able to lift somewhat heavy boxes and bags of groceries and able to stand for up to 3 hours). We ask that a volunteer plans to work one Saturday a month (if snowbirds, then for the time they are in Freedom). Sometimes, due to having snowbirds leave, we have an extra need during the winter months. The jobs needed to be filled are filling clients' orders, running the lift to bring the food from the basement upstairs, carrying the orders out to shopping carts and then to clients' cars. We would welcome your attending some Saturday to see how it all works (as well as any potential volunteer). Contact Peg Nichols, co-director (603 - 539-1602), if you have additional questions.

You can also check out and sign up for volunteer opportunities in the state by checking out Volunteer New Hampshire at <https://volunteernh.org/>

Stay tuned for additional opportunities.

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Medical Equipment Loan

Are you having a knee or hp replaced and need crutches or a walker while you recuperate? For those in need of medical equipment such as canes, walkers, crutches. These items are available for loan for as long as it is needed and at no cost. Contact Renée for more information.



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Home Garden Opportunity

The Mount Washington Valley Age Friendly Community and AARP are pleased to be able to partner with Lowe’s to provide a Gardening Bucket to our community. The purpose of this bucket is to provide you with the opportunity to create a kitchen, patio, porch, or small lawn garden for you to enjoy this summer and beyond.



The buckets contain 4 tools: hoe/cultivator, a hand trowel, sharp pruner and a hand weeder and it includes potting soil, a few packets of seeds and four pots. These are for you to keep and will be replaced when needed. We hope you can get your hands dirty and enjoy the plants you are able to cultivate.

The bucket will be loaned out for no more than four days by contacting Renee at coordinator03836@gmail.com or 802-424-2074

Coming Up:

2022 Medicare Part D Dates

- **October 1, 2021** - Medicare Part D Prescription Drug plan Marketing Activities can begin for the 2022 Part D plans - At this time you will be able to once again gather information and evaluate the various Part D plan alternatives.
- Please note, no enrollments may be accepted before October 15, 2021 for 2022 plans.
- **October 15 to December 7, 2021** - Annual Coordinated Election Period - Here is your chance to join a Medicare Part D plan for the 2022 plan year (however your plan will not take effect until January 1, 2022). If you already have a Medicare Part D plan, this is your time to look back over 2021 and make an enrollment decision for your coverage for 2022. Should you stay with your existing coverage or make a change? If you make no decision, you will remain in the same plan as you elected in 2021. There is no enrollment required to renew your present coverage. (If you do not enroll during this period, your next chance for coverage is January 2023.)

During this time there will be an opportunity for residents to visit with a trained specialist regarding the different plans and how to choose the one best suited for individual needs. Stay tuned for dates and times.