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College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture_UMaine Center on Aging Silverwire Newsletter

Jennifer Crittenden

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Jennifer Crittenden <jennifer.crittenden@maine.edu>

UMaine Center on Aging Silverwire Newsletter - May 2020

1 message

UMaine Center on Aging <info@mainecenteronaging.org>
Reply-To: UMaine Center on Aging <info@mainecenteronaging.org>
To: jennifer.crittenden@maine.edu

Mon, May 4, 2020 at 11:33 AM

[View this email in your browser](#)



Newsletter of the UMaine Center on Aging

May 2020

Fighting Isolation and Loneliness

Amidst the Coronavirus Pandemic

Through research, education, and community service programs, the Center on Aging and partners are working to help older Mainers to stay informed and connected

As a research center with a strong focus on community engagement, the Center on Aging has moved to meet the needs of older Mainers that have arisen from the Coronavirus pandemic, while continuing to implement research, education and community service programs that help to maximize the quality of life of older citizens and their families. The Center has launched initiatives helping to address issues of isolation and loneliness that result from the pandemic, as well as adapting its programs to meet the new realities we face as a community.

The task is a great one and it has required a re-imagining of how the Center does research and supports community service. The Center on Aging hosts two National Service programs, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Senior Companion Program, which will be crucial in the coming months to combating isolation in homebound Mainers and providing volunteer support to nonprofits. In a recent [Bangor Daily News](#) article, Directors Paula Burnett and Donald Lynch talked about the challenges of service provision in a time of social distancing.

From the research arm of the Center on Aging, we are making the necessary changes with partners to ensure research with crucial implications for health and human services is still able to be undertaken in a way that is safe for participants and staff. We are particularly pleased that a randomized controlled trial of a meals delivery and telehealth intervention will be launching this spring in partnership with St. Joseph Hospital, Eastern Area Agency on Aging, and Sencio Systems, which will not only test an innovative intervention, but provide critical nutrition and health supports to people in the home.

Events

**Health Connection
Chat: Issues Relevant
to Those with Cancer &
Caregivers of Those
with Cancer**

[Click here for event flyer
\(PDF\)](#)

Date: May 6

Time: 11am - 12pm

Via Zoom or telephone

Presenter: Matt Dexter,
President and Executive
Director, Christine B.
Foundation, Inc.

For call-in information or
Zoom connection link,
please contact Kelley
Morris at
kelly.morris@maine.edu
or 207.262.7925

Quick Links

Center on Aging Director
Len Kaye had an opinion
guest column published
in the Bangor Daily
News titled "Older adults
are facing dual public
health emergencies"
which speaks to the
challenges of isolation
and loneliness that older
adults are facing amid
the global Coronavirus
pandemic. [Click here to
view the column at the
Bangor Daily News
website.](#)

If you would like to listen

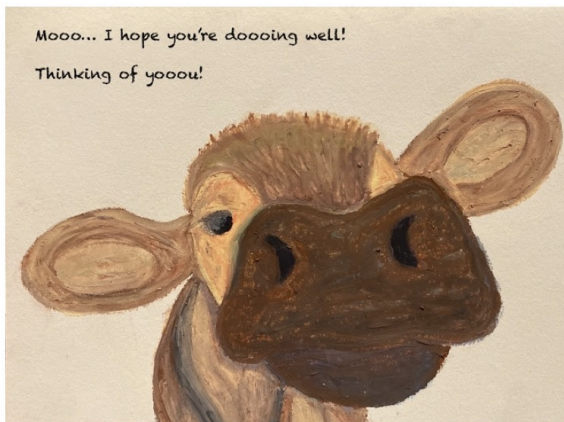
This issue of the Silverwire shows several ways in which the Center on Aging and partners are responding to the needs of Maine's older population during the pandemic.

to archived recordings of the Health Connection Chats described in this Silverwire, you can click here to go to the UMaine Center on Aging website.

Building Connection Through Letters of Positivity and Hope

Collaboration between Center on Aging and UMaine students supports connection during pandemic

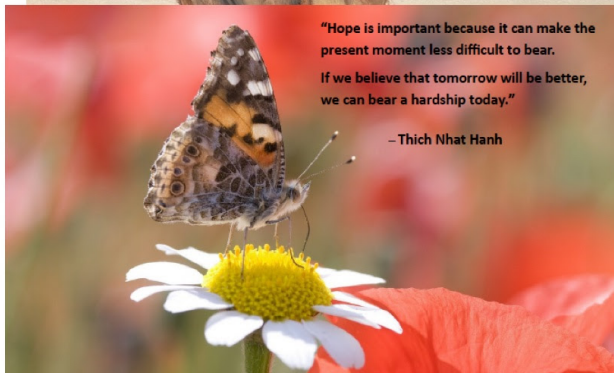
Social isolation, a very real risk for many older adults, can be further amplified by the practice of physical distancing. As a result of the current pandemic, there are many older adults self-isolating in our communities who are missing contact with family and friends. Jennifer Crittenden, Associate Director, recently worked with Gerontology Certificate and social work students to prepare letters of positivity and hope that were shared with over 400 older adults statewide through our Senior Companion Program, RSVP, and a local assisted living facility. Several older adult recipients have sent letters back to our students expressing their gratitude and, in turn, shared positive thoughts with our students.



Mooo... I hope you're doooing well!
Thinking of yoooo!



Winter fights to stay.
Sweet Spring always wins her way.
Flowers bloomed today!



"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

— Thich Nhat Hanh



Kindness
changes
everything

Hi,

I hope you are doing okay. Things have been more challenging lately, and I know it has been stressful for everyone. This social distancing is a tough thing. It has changed our world for a time, but I know this too will pass. Please take care of yourself.

What do you do when you're feeling stressed? Do you like music, reading, drawing, talking on the phone? As I write this letter, it is raining out, and I enjoy listening to the sound of the rain hitting the tin roof. It is relaxing and makes me think of my childhood, the quiet summer days, sitting inside, reading, listening to the rain. I hope that there is something that you enjoy doing that helps you relax, or that you can recall a favorite moment in time, that brings a smile to your face.

I love a great bunny photo, hopefully this brings a smile to you too.

Take Care,



UMaine Launches Health Connection Chats

Weekly chats offer an opportunity for connection and accessing reliable health information for older Mainers

The UMaine Medicine Initiative and the Center on Aging have partnered to launch a series of weekly Health Connection Chats that began on April 15th. These one hour chats every Wednesday from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon are tailored toward 60+ Mainers and those who are at high risk from the COVID-19 illness. These free presentations and Q&A sessions are available to community members both by Zoom video conferencing technology and by phone, allowing older adults with or without internet access to be able to access the Chats. People who sign up for the chats are encouraged to send questions ahead of the calls for speakers to address.

In a time of rapid change, finding reliable information can be a challenge. Through the Health Connection Chats, experts from UMaine and the community bring science and practice-informed advice on topics such as health & wellness, nutrition, stress management, cancer care, and much more.

All Chats will be archived at the following link for listening: <https://mainecenteronaging.umaine.edu/home/stayhealthy/>

UMaine Health Connection Chats

Second Round of Sessions May-June

Wednesdays from 11am – 12 Noon

LIVE, practical information and tips for staying healthy for Maine's 60+ citizens and other high risk residents during COVID-19. Chats are held by Zoom (internet) or by telephone. No cost to attend. **THOSE JOINING BY PHONE CAN SEND IN QUESTIONS TO OUR SPEAKERS AHEAD OF TIME.**

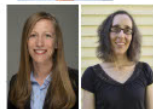
For call-in information or Zoom connection link, please contact Kelley Morris at kelley.morris@maine.edu or 207.262.7925

For questions and suggestions for future topics, contact Len Kaye at len.kaye@maine.edu or 207.262.7922

SCHEDULED SPEAKERS (May 13th – June 3rd)



May 13th - ***Keeping your Mind Active***: Presented by **Cliff Singer**, M.D., DFAPA, AGSF, Chief of Geriatric Mental Health & Neuropsychiatry, Northern Light Acadia Hospital



May 20th - ***How to Know When Social Media Information is Real***: Presented by **Judith Rosenbaum**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Communication & Journalism, University of Maine and **Jen Bonnet**, Social Sciences & Humanities Librarian, University of Maine



May 27th - ***Staying Safe & Healthy in Assisted Living Communities***: Presented by **Angela Hunt**, RPT, MS, Administrator, Chief Operating Officer, The Cedars



June 3rd - ***Building Personal Resilience***: Presented by **Susan Wehry**, M.D., Chief of Geriatrics, Primary Care, University of New England

Each session will include a resource person from the University of Maine Center on Aging and Eastern Area Agency on Aging. Sessions will be recorded and be made available at: <https://mainecenteronaging.umaine.edu/stayhealthy>

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