



Rockland County  
AGING

# MOVING FORWARD

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING  
ED DAY, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

MAY / JUNE 2024



*Spring has finally arrived!*

It seems that we have awaited this season even more than usual this year! I hope you are all ready to get outside and take advantage of the many services and activities that our county provides for you. Now is the perfect time to get out of your house, go for a walk and enjoy the weather. Or try a new hobby like yoga or painting or learn a new language!

Please remember that all of Rockland County Government is here to serve you. If you need help

finding things to do to stay busy this spring and summer, give the Office for the Aging a call. Remember, they have moved to the ground floor of Building F and are enthusiastically settling into their new location.

Hoping everyone stays well and enjoys the beautiful springtime.

All the best,

*Ed*

*Ed Day,  
Rockland County  
Executive*



## COMING SOON



### New York State Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The NYS Farmers' Market Nutrition Program helps you buy locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at nearby farmers' markets. The produce is:

- Fresh picked, flavorful, and nutritious
- Sold directly by the farmers
- Reasonably priced
- Seasonal and vary each month

Eligibility for this program is determined by age and income.

NYS Farmers' Market booklets should be available for distribution in early July. More information will be available in our July/August 2024 issue of *Moving Forward*.

### Stay Informed! Join our email list

Give us a call at **845-364-2100**  
or email us at  
**ofa@co.rockland.ny.us**



### Follow us on Facebook



# News From the OFA!

Greetings! The Office for the Aging is relishing the excitement and optimism of springtime, and we hope you are, too!

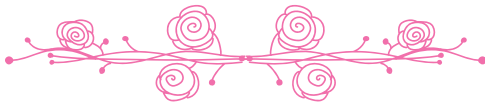
May is Older Americans Month, a time to acknowledge the contributions of older persons to our country and community. Each year the Advisory Council of the Office for the Aging presents two awards to Rockland County senior citizens for their wonderful work in the community. Congratulations to awardees Libby Mains, “2024 Senior Citizen of the Year” and John Allen Murphy, “2024 Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen.” Read their biographies on page 4.

Our collaboration with Rockland BOCES and Rockland County Information Technology Services continues as we provide free technology classes for older adults. We plan to offer this helpful program again in the near future.

We are looking forward to Senior Day at Clover Stadium on May 15th and spending time with you at a New York Boulders game. The month of June brings us World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15), when we focus on promoting a better understanding and awareness of abuse and neglect of older persons.

We hope you enjoy this issue with its articles on nutrition, consumer protection, healthy living, and more. Reach out to us with your questions and concerns at 845-364-2100 or 845-364-2110.

*~ Best Regards From the OFA Team!*




**NEW YORK STATE**

**NY Connects**  
Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

NY Connects is a service that provides information and assistance about long-term services and supports in Rockland County. This includes a child or an adult with a disability, an older adult, a family member or caregiver, a friend or neighbor, and helping professionals.

**CONTACT NY CONNECTS:**  
Rockland County Office for the Aging  
845-364-3444 or 800-342-9871

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Westchester Independent Living Center  
914-682-3926



County Executive Ed Day at MOW Community Champions event.



OFA staff at Meals on Wheels Senior Boot Camp.



Above: OFA's Beyond the Table Nutrition Presentation.



OFA tech class with participant and BOCES intern.



# WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY IS JUNE 15TH

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

## Signs of Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is an intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult. Common types of elder mistreatment include physical, sexual, emotional/ psychological, or financial abuse, neglect, or self-neglect. Elder abuse impacts people of all ages, identities, and backgrounds.

### Did you know?

**1 in 10** community-dwelling older adults experiences abuse every year.

**1 in 2** older adults with cognitive impairment experiences abuse.

### What are the signs of mistreatment?

#### Physical Signs



Dehydration or unusual weight loss



Missing daily living aids (glasses, walker, or medication)



Unexplained injuries, bruises, cuts, or sores



Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing



Unattended medical needs



Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases

#### Emotional & Behavioral Signs



Increased fear or anxiety



Isolation from friends or family



Unusual changes in behavior or sleep



Withdrawal from normal activities

#### Financial Signs



Fraudulent signatures on financial documents



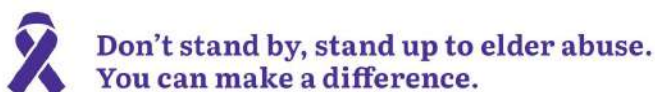
Unusual or sudden changes in spending patterns



Unpaid bills

### Report known or suspected abuse as soon as possible:

Programs such as Adult Protective Services (APS) (845-364-3574) and the Long-Term Care Ombudsmen (914-500-3406) are here to help. For additional reporting numbers, contact Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 or visit [www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov). In cases of urgent danger, call 911 or your local police or sheriff.



# THE OFFICE FOR THE AGING CELEBRATES ROCKLAND COUNTY OLDER ADULTS

## For Their Dedication and Service to the County of Rockland

### 2024 SENIOR OF THE YEAR

## LIBBY MAINS



Libby Mains, a dedicated resident of Rockland County, has spent over 40 years serving her community. As an active leader in various organizations, including the Girl Scouts and 40 years with the Wayne Hose Company Ladies Auxiliary, her commitment to service is a

shining example in Rockland County. Whether coordinating fundraisers or supporting emergency responders, Libby's dedication has left an indelible mark on her community.

In her capacity as a volunteer with the Stony Point

Ambulance Corps Auxiliary, Libby serves as co-treasurer. She is an active volunteer who never hesitates to support the mission of the corps, whether it be serving warm beverages and food during prolonged responses, fundraising, supporting community-based events, and attending meetings.

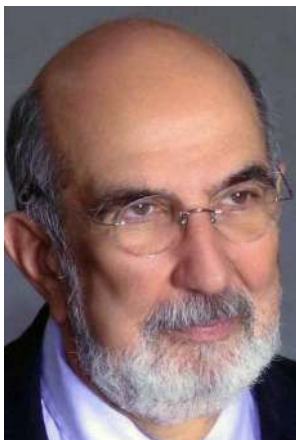
In the last few years, Libby joined the Stony Point Seniors group. When they needed someone to step up to serve in the 1st Vice President position, she didn't hesitate. Since taking on this leadership role, she has organized guest speakers, recreational activities and led meetings.

Libby began her life at Camp Shanks and then Stony Point, New York. As a single parent, she struggled financially; but once her three children were in school, she began working in a factory for minimum wage, providing a model of work ethic for her children.

Reflecting on her years of service, she emphasizes the joy and fulfillment she finds in volunteering.

### 2024 OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION BY A SENIOR CITIZEN

## JOHN ALLEN MURPHY



John Murphy, a beloved figure in Rockland County, has dedicated his life to serving others. From volunteering at orphanages to founding organizations supporting mental health and youth advocacy, John's impact on his community is immeasurable. His leadership roles span over four decades.

John's most singular contribution is creating homes for the county's special needs

population as an unpaid volunteer for individuals who are intellectually disabled, mentally ill and homeless. He has done so as president of Camp Venture for 42 years, president and co-founder of Loeb House for 35 years, and currently in his role at Joseph's Home and Rockland Homes for Heroes.

John was also instrumental in the creation of 14 homes on Western Highway in Tappan, New York for homeless veterans through his vision and leadership role as founder of "Rockland Homes for Heroes," a 501c3 not-for-profit charity he created.

From his years in the Marines to his later roles in local government and advocacy, John's tireless efforts have touched countless lives. His commitment to supporting vulnerable populations underscores his belief in the importance of giving back to others. He is an inductee of the Rockland County Civil & Human Rights Hall of Fame.

Reflecting on his extensive service, John emphasizes the profound impact of collective action in building stronger, more compassionate communities. He inspires others to join him in making a positive difference in the lives of those in need.

"If you are blessed to be healthy of body and mind, help others," he says. "Helping others is a gift from heaven that has brought me much joy."

# Lifelong Rocklander and Meals on Wheels Recipient Continues to Volunteer at 95

*Contributed by Meals on Wheels Rockland*

Meals on Wheels Rockland would like to make our community aware of an amazing senior who inspires us, Mike Toto of Nanuet. He is a role model for resiliency and volunteerism.



Mike has been a community volunteer for over seventy years, volunteering since the 1940s. He has given so much to the community with involvement in the Ambulance Corps and Little League, as

a foster parent, and more. That a community-based organization can help him now is only fitting. Mike explains, “As a diabetic, the food that I eat is extremely important. As you may know, many diabetics do not live active lives at this age. I give much of the credit to Meals on Wheels with helping me keep to a diet that is critical to my health.” As a diabetic, it is especially important for Mike to have medically tailored meals that help maintain his health. We are thrilled that he reports, “I have not had a diabetic episode since moving to Meals on Wheels a few years ago.” In Mike’s pursuit to improve his health, he is also highly motivated by his drive to continue to show up every day at Nanuet Little League, run the concessions, and help the kids in the community, something he has been doing since he moved to Nanuet in the 1960s.

Last fall, at Meals on Wheels Rockland’s annual gala, Cornucopia, Mike was a distinguished guest and gave an amazing speech to the 250 attendees. His speech concluded with this heartfelt statement: “Next month I will be 95 years old, and I hope to continue to volunteer full-time for many more years. The Little League President and VP said I can retire from full-time volunteering and go part-time when I become 100.”

Meals on Wheels Rockland is appreciative that Mike lent his name, his face and his story to our annual appeal, which goes a long way in increasing awareness, volunteers and donations to assist more seniors. Because of him, more people may see how Meals on Wheels could help them, a family member or neighbor.

If you or someone you know would like more information or would like to volunteer, please contact us at 845-624-6326 or via our website, [www.mealsonwheelsrockland.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsrockland.org).



## Rockland County Senior Club

Join or re-join Rockland County’s only county-wide senior club! Monthly meetings that are interesting, entertaining, and fun!

**ROCKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
TECHNOLOGY BUILDING, ELLIPSE (Room 8180)**

We look forward to the return of many previous and new members!

**(845) 540-9739 • [rocklandcountyseniorclub.org](http://rocklandcountyseniorclub.org)**



# Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Lottery

May 13, 2024 through May 24, 2024

**New City, NY** – County Executive Ed Day and Commissioner of Social Services Joan Silvestri announce that the Rockland County Department of Social Services (RCDSS) will be having an on-line Housing Choice Voucher Program lottery for specialized programs. The lottery will take place from 8:00 AM, May 13, 2024, through 5:00 PM, May 24, 2024. To apply for the wait lists listed below, use this link: <https://info.affordablehousing.com/rocklandcounty>



**Mainstream Wait List:** Applicants must find their own housing in Rockland County (300 applicants randomly chosen to form a Wait List). Verification of disability and homelessness is required.

**To be eligible for this application, a person must be:**

- under 62 years of age
- disabled, and
- homeless, at risk of homelessness or transitioning out of segregated care

**Youngblood Senior Housing Building Wait List:** There are 10 units within this complex on a Project Based Voucher Contract located at 201 N. Main Street, Spring Valley, NY (100 applicants randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- 62 years of age or older

**Walnut Hills Senior Housing Wait List:** There are 94 units within this complex involved with the Project Based contract located on Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY (200 applicants randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- 62 years of age or older

**Depew Manor Senior Housing:** There are 45 units within this complex involved with the Project Based contract located on Depew Avenue, Nyack NY (100 applicants randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- 62 years of age or older

**Spring Valley Preservation:** There are 58 units within this complex involved with the Project Based voucher contract located at Lakeview Village and Highview Apartments, Spring Valley, NY (100 applicants randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- There is no age requirement as some units are for 62+ and some units are 1-5 Bedrooms.

**Spring Valley Site III:** There are 15 units within this complex involved with the Project Based voucher contract at 46 N. Madison Ave. Spring Valley, NY (100 applicants randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- 62 years of age or older

This lottery is for the above programs **only**. There are **six separate lotteries which will be conducted simultaneously and will result in six separate lists. Applications will NOT be provided or accepted at any RCDSS office. Only one application per household will be accepted. If multiple applications are received for same household, both will be void.**

Applicants who are elderly or require assistance completing an application because of a disability, may call 845-364-3949 or email [rocklandhcv@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:rocklandhcv@co.rockland.ny.us) between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday during the open application period. Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities using TDD or TTY technology may call New York Relay Services by dialing 7-1-1 for assistance.

“We are encouraging anyone who believes they are eligible to apply to this program,” said County Executive Ed Day. “Remember that there is no cost to apply, and no one will ask an applicant for any payment. We also ask that applicants please keep in mind that there are a limited number of vouchers available.”

For more information about income limits and other program requirements visit:

[Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher \(HCV\) | Rockland County, NY \(rocklandcountyny.gov\)](https://www.rocklandcountyny.gov)



# The Medicaid and Medicare Savings Programs have expanded their income guidelines for 2024

If your monthly income is under \$2,355 individual / \$3,189 couple, please give us a call to discuss eligibility. If your income is above these limits but you are paying monthly premiums towards your medical coverage, you may still qualify for benefits.

## Medicare Savings Program, Extra Help, and Medicaid Programs

If you have a limited income, you may be able to get assistance with your health care costs.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Program Benefits</u>	<u>Monthly Income Limits</u>	<u>Asset Limits</u>
Medicare Savings Program: QI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pays Part B premium</li> <li>• Extra Help included</li> </ul>	\$2,355 Individuals \$3,189 Couples	No Limit
Medicare Savings Program: QMB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pays Part B premium</li> <li>• Recipients are not responsible for deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments</li> <li>• Extra Help included</li> </ul>	\$1,752 Individuals \$2,371 Couples	No Limit
Extra Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps reduce or eliminate Part D premium</li> <li>• Lowers prescription drug copayment amounts</li> </ul>	\$1,903 Individuals \$2,575 Couples	\$17,220 Individuals \$34,360 Couples  *No Limit when applying via Medicare Savings Program
Medicaid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health coverage for certain people with limited income and assets</li> </ul>	\$1,752 Individuals \$2,371 Couples	\$31,175 Individuals \$42,312 Couples

Please note income limits are subject to change.

For more information or assistance applying call  
 Rockland County HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program) at:  
 (845) 364-2110/2100

## May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Think someone is having a stroke? Call 9-1-1 right away! Treatment needs to be given FAST. It can lower a person's risk of dying.

**"FAST"** can help you recall stroke's most common signs and symptoms.

**F—Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**A—Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S—Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

**T—Time:** Time is critical. Very important: Note the time when stroke symptoms first appear. Call 9-1-1 right away. Anyone who may be having a stroke should let an ambulance drive them to the hospital.

A stroke happens suddenly when oxygen-carrying blood is blocked from reaching the brain. Brain cells begin to die. Strokes can be treated but every minute counts. Call 9-1-1 at the first sign of a stroke. You may not know you're having a stroke because a stroke damages the brain. Someone near you may notice and should call 9-1-1 right away. A stroke does not often cause pain. It should still be taken seriously and taken care of at once!

For more information about stroke visit <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/cardiovascular/stroke/>.

## TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH!

The Rockland County Department of Health offers the following workshops to help you feel better, take charge of your life, and connect with others. Call (845) 364-2500 to find out which is right for you!

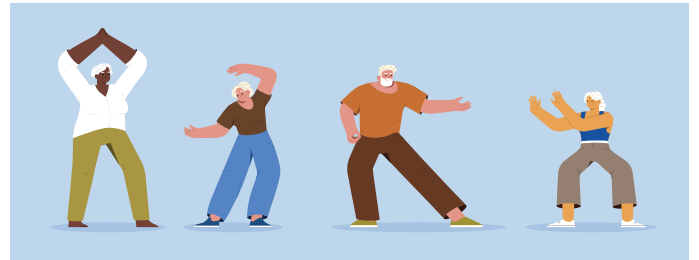
**A Matter of Balance:** Learn to reduce your fear of falling and improve your strength and balance.

**Tai Chi for Arthritis and Well Being:** Learn the ancient Chinese practice to increase strength, balance, posture, prevent falls and improve mind, body, and spirit.

**Put It Out Rockland:** Get help to quit smoking or vaping.

**Better Choices, Better Health:** Learn ways to better manage your health conditions.

**Living Well with Diabetes:** Learn to manage your diabetes and prevent complications.



## May is Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, with over 5 million cases diagnosed yearly. Melanoma is the deadliest and most aggressive form because it is more likely to invade nearby tissues and spread to other parts of the body. Most cases of skin cancer are caused by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun and tanning beds. Fortunately, skin cancer is also one of the most preventable cancers.

**To lower your skin cancer risk, follow these important safety tips:**

- **Wear sunscreen:** Put on broad-spectrum sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays and has an SPF of 30 or higher before you go outside. Don't forget to put a thick layer on all exposed skin and reapply every 2 hours, and after swimming or sweating.

- **Wear a wide-brim hat** that shades your face, ears, and the back of your neck, and wear sunglasses.
- **Stay in the shade:** stay under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter, especially between 10 am and 4 pm when the sun is strongest.
- **Know how to recognize changes in your skin,** such as a new growth, a sore that doesn't heal, or a change in a mole. Talk to your doctor if you notice any changes..

Also remember to protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses that block UV rays. Research has shown that long hours in the sun without protecting your eyes increase your chances of developing certain eye diseases. The ideal sunglasses should block 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

For more information visit the [American Cancer Society \(ACS\)](https://www.americancancer.org/).

**STAY UP-TO-DATE ON IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT!**

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rockhealth](https://www.facebook.com/rockhealth) • Twitter: [www.twitter.com/rockhealth](https://www.twitter.com/rockhealth) • Website: [www.RocklandCountyNY.gov](https://www.RocklandCountyNY.gov)



## NUTRITION

# The Role of Nutrition in Mental Health

by James Lowery, OFA Registered Dietitian

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. There is a body of growing research showing associations between our diet and our mental health, including depression and anxiety. A 2020 review from the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health analyzed 20 studies and found that adherence to healthy dietary recommendations, such as fish consumption, exclusion of processed foods, and adequate intake of folic acid & magnesium, were associated with a reduced risk of depression.

There is a strong connection between our gut and brain, known as the gut-brain axis. The foods we eat may be influencing our mood, levels of anxiety and play a role with depression. Decreased consumption of omega-3 fatty acids from foods like salmon, mackerel, tuna, flaxseeds, and walnuts have also been associated with depression. Make sure to follow all recommendations from your doctor or related medical professionals for treatment of depression or any related mental illness. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends a

diet including complex carbohydrates (whole grains), omega-3 fatty acids, fruits and vegetables, and foods limited in added sugars.

It may feel overwhelming to eat a healthy diet with the stress of daily living. Try setting realistic nutritional goals. For example, set a simple goal of adding just 1 more serving of fruits and vegetables to your plate each day. Focus on that one goal, and you will see that it can become a simple, stress-free habit, part of your daily routine.



## El papel de la nutrición en la salud mental

Mayo es el Mes de Concientización sobre la Salud Mental. Existe un conjunto de investigaciones cada vez mayores que muestran asociaciones entre nuestra dieta y nuestra salud mental, incluidas la depresión y la ansiedad. Una revisión de 2020 de la Revista Internacional de Investigación Ambiental y Salud Pública analizó 20 estudios y encontró que el cumplimiento de recomendaciones dietéticas saludables, como el consumo de pescado, la exclusión de alimentos procesados y el consumo adecuado de ácido fólico y magnesio, se asociaban con un riesgo reducido de depresión.

Existe una fuerte conexión entre nuestro intestino y nuestro cerebro, esto se conoce como eje intestino-cerebro. Se teoriza que nuestra salud intestinal puede afectar nuestra salud cerebral. Los alimentos que comemos pueden influir en nuestro estado de ánimo, niveles de ansiedad y desempeñar un papel en la depresión. La disminución del consumo de ácidos grasos omega-3 provenientes de alimentos como el salmón, la caballa, el

atún, las semillas de lino y las nueces también se han asociado con la depresión. Asegúrese de seguir todas las recomendaciones de su médico o profesionales médicos relacionados con el tratamiento de la depresión o cualquier enfermedad mental relacionada. La Academia de Nutrición y Dietética recomienda una dieta que incluya carbohidratos complejos (cereales integrales), ácidos grasos omega-3, frutas, verduras y alimentos con un contenido limitado de azúcares añadidos.

Puede resultar abrumador llevar una dieta saludable con el estrés que conlleva la vida. Intente fijarse objetivos realistas que pueda alcanzar con su nutrición. Por ejemplo, fíjese el objetivo sencillo de añadir simplemente 1 porción más de frutas y verduras a su plato al día. Concéntrese en ese objetivo y verá que con el tiempo se puede convertir en un hábito del cual ni siquiera tendrá que estresarse ya que simplemente pasará a formar parte de su rutina diaria.

- ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION -

# Protect the Beautification of Your Home Renovation With a Written Contract

by Julie Ann Glazer, Inspection Specialist III



Many homeowners are contemplating the renovation or updating of their current homes and premises. Including all aspects of your project in the contract with your General Contractor will protect you and your home.

The Office of Consumer Protection can guide you through this process to help your project run smoothly. Under Rockland County Law Chapter 286, every home improvement contract exceeding \$250.00 is subject to contract requirements.

Key elements needed in your contract:

1. The company name, address, and license number of your contractor. Hiring a licensed contractor will ensure your contractor has the proper experience and insurances. If the contractor is not licensed and one of his workers is injured at your jobsite, they might pursue your homeowner's insurance! In addition, if the homeowner is not satisfied with the quality of work performed, they can file a complaint with our office to help assist with mediating a resolution, free of charge!
2. The approximate start date and end date of the job. This will ensure your contractor stays on schedule to finish your project. Delays are inconvenient and might cost extra money.
3. A description of the work to be performed and all the materials needed, so that you know what is and is not included in your project, and you are not charged for anything additional.
4. A schedule of payments, including the down payment to secure and schedule the job. The deposit cannot exceed more than \$1,000.00 or 15% of the total job cost, whichever is less. The subsequent payments should not exceed 100% for the value of the work

performed on the project at any time. In other words, your payments should not be in advance of the work performed or material delivered to your premises. Many consumers are not aware of this provision and wind up over-paying on their deposit to secure their job.

5. No additional work should be performed without prior written authorization from the homeowner. This is a change order and protects the homeowner from any additional work being performed and charged without their knowledge.

6. A one-year warranty shall be included in all contracts. This protects the homeowner with the quality of workmanship for the job for at least one year.

7. The contract shall require the contractor to secure all necessary permits and to provide the homeowner with the certificate of occupancy when the job is completed. This is extremely important so that you can be assured the required inspections have been performed by the local building department and you have the proper certificate of occupancy. If you do not, you may incur additional expenses to bring your newly renovated home up to the local building codes in your municipality.

8. The homeowner has the right to cancel the contract within three business days, and this should be outlined within the contract.

9. At the time the contract is signed by both parties, the contractor shall deliver a legible copy of such contract to the homeowner.

By following these simple contract guidelines found in Rockland County local law section 286-12, you as the homeowner are protected and can avoid problems with your project which could delay the completion and result in additional costs to you. You will also have the confidence that you hired a contractor that is licensed with the expertise and insurance required in Rockland County to complete your home improvement project.

If you have any questions regarding a contractor's license when you are signing a contract for work, call the Rockland County Office of Consumer Protection at 845-364-3901 or email [CPLCAL@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:CPLCAL@co.rockland.ny.us).

# Mindful Meditation

by Raghunath M. Mehta, M.D.



How often are you fully and completely present in the moment with all your senses, fully focused on what you are doing? If you are not fully focused, aware and present, you are not alone. We live in a world of constant distractions where the mind is constantly shifting to think about different things. But

it is entirely possible to train yourself to become more focused on what you are doing in the present moment and to be more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and immediate environment, and to do it all without judgement. It is a concept called mindful meditation and it has been shown to help reduce symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression. It also has been shown to improve memory.

Mindful meditation is one of many types of meditation. It is distinctive and different from other forms of meditation. Spiritual or devotional meditation aims to connect you to higher power or your higher self. Transcendental meditation is a form of silent meditation that induces peace and calm. Movement meditation includes yoga, tai chi and other activities that helps you find a deeper connection with your body. Mantra meditation uses a repetitive sound such as a word like “om” to help clear the mind of extraneous thoughts. Mindful meditation is about practicing calm awareness of all your senses without judgement.

Mindful meditation is a practice that encourages you to gently focus your awareness on the present moment, repeatedly. It involves grounding yourself in your body and senses.

**Here’s how to practice mindfulness meditation formally:**

**1. Find a Comfortable Spot:** Choose a quiet place with minimal distractions. Sit on a chair, cushion, or bench, ensuring a stable and solid seat. If sitting on the floor, cross your legs comfortably in front of you. Keep both feet touching the ground if you’re on a chair.

**2. Straighten Your Upper Body:** Maintain a natural curvature in your spine. Let your head and shoulders rest comfortably on top of your vertebrae.

**3. Set a Practice Time:** Decide how long you’ll practice. Start with a short duration, like five or ten minutes. Gradually extend it as you become more comfortable. Use a timer to keep track.

**4. Focus on Your Breath:** Pay attention to your breath. Feel the rise and fall of your chest or the sensation of air passing through your nostrils. When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath.

**5. Notice Thoughts and Emotions:** As thoughts arise, observe them without judgement. Acknowledge any emotions that surface. Return to your breath or sensations whenever you get distracted.

**6. Be Present in Daily Activities:** Mindfulness isn’t limited to formal meditation. Apply it to everyday tasks. When taking a shower, eating, or talking with friends, be fully aware of the experience.

So much unhappiness and anxiety occur because we are constantly judging everything and getting overwhelmed by emotions. In reality, it does not help us. Mindfulness is about learning to accept life as it is and to accept situations with calm, so that when problems come up, you do not panic but find calm ways to deal with them. You can learn to act from a place of love and kindness. Over time you appreciate the chance to live more calmly in the present moment. The more you practice, the easier it gets. Eventually, you become calm, perceptive, poised and in control of your emotions.

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads the nation’s observance of Older Americans Month (OAM). The 2024 theme is Powered by Connection, which recognizes the profound impact that meaningful relationships and social connections have on our health and well-being. We will explore the vital role that connectedness plays in supporting independence and aging in place by combatting isolation, loneliness, and other issues. Join us in promoting the benefits of connecting with others.

**Here are some ways you can participate:**

Share facts about the mental, physical, and emotional health benefits of social connection and how it contributes to



overall well-being. Promote resources that help older adults engage, like community events, social clubs, and volunteer opportunities. Connect older adults with local services, such as transportation, that can help them overcome obstacles to achieving or maintaining meaningful relationships. Encourage

partners to host a connection-centric event or program focused on older adult mentors to youth, peer-to-peer support, or similar efforts. Challenge professional and personal networks to prioritize meaningful social connections and share the benefits. Inspire older adults to share what connection means to them on social media using the hashtag **#PoweredByConnection**.



# RSVP

## Rockland Senior Volunteer Program



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

**CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS! WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

The Office for the Aging is looking for dedicated individuals to join us in our mission to make a positive impact in our community.

**Independence Project** - Drive older adults to and from medical appointments

**Program Support** - Volunteer at one or more community work sites

**Music Makers** - Join fellow singers and instrumentalists to entertain community groups

**Clowns "R" Us** - Become a clown and put a smile on people's faces!

**Telephone Reassurance** - Call isolated older adults in need of friendly conversation

**and more!**

Contact us to learn more about exciting **RSVP** volunteer opportunities!

**(845) 364-2773**

**ofa@co.rockland.ny.us**

