



A Citizen Voice for the
Aging Experience

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ENGAGING NH NEWS

GUEST OPINION:

(Editor's note: As we come to the end of this campaign season, many of us are feeling drained by the level of attacks, speeches and ads with a focus on unworthiness. It's time for a little balance!

The EngAGING Board of Directors is offering 2 articles for your consideration. The first, below, is from a website The Daily Good. The second, in Board Notes, talks about Two Words that can change your life.)

Why Leaders Need to Grow Authentic Self Esteem

by Homaira Kabir

Over the years, we've had a love-hate relationship with self-esteem, writes Homaira Kabir. There was a time when we believed self-esteem to be the royal road to flourishing. We had Stuart Smalley on Saturday Night Live provide us with Daily Affirmations to make us feel special. We tried to reinforce it in our children by letting them know how exceptional they were when they failed.

However, later studies showed that such increases in self-esteem did little for our happiness or performance, but ample for our egos. Professor Roy Baumeister's work with self-esteem showed that we'd been raising a generation of narcissists who went on to wreck havoc in their lives and in their workplaces.

It now appears that we'd been building the wrong kind of self-esteem – the kind that is contingent on external factors such as social approval, success or attractiveness. And as Professor Kristen Neff has shown, this comes at a price. Feeling better about ourselves as a result

In an increasingly uncertain world, having a sense of self-worth that stems from being a human worthy of respect, leads to courageous decisions

of social comparison ensures that our self-esteem takes a nose dive every time someone more popular, successful or attractive crosses our path. And in the global and competitive world we live in, it also sets us up for negative competition, unethical behaviors and a dearth of empathy.

However, authentic self-esteem is different. It's a feeling of worth in our abilities and qualities. As such, it's not conditional upon external evaluations – instead it's an inner security that provides us with the courage to step out into the world and do the right thing. And research shows that people with this form of self-

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esteem go on to live happy and productive lives where they are able to cope effectively with challenges and rise to their full potential.

This is especially important for leaders of today. In an increasingly uncertain world, having a sense of self-worth that stems from being a human worthy of respect, leads to courageous decisions that may not always win other people's approval. It also leads to investing energy in people and their growth, rather than in feeling superior and infallible, and safeguarding a faltering sense of self-worth.

A Skill of Resilience

Leaders with authentic self-worth come from a place of congruence where their daily activities are tied to long-term meaningful goals. Momentary failures are taken in stride as they encourage their people to continue striving towards a higher purpose that brings them hope and meaning. Dr. Richard Davidson's work in neuroscience shows that the ability to recover from adversity through a positive outlook builds the neural structure of resilience and leads to well-being.

A Culture of Compassion

Authentic self-worth and self-compassion go hand in hand. People who compassionately accept their imperfections are tolerant of those of others. As such, they recognize a common humanity and feel connected with others in the experience of life, rather than critical of their failings. This instills an environment where employees

Pickles. by Brian Crane



are motivated to do what they do best rather than push themselves beyond their window of tolerance and become disengaged at work.

A Practice of Mindfulness

Leaders with high self-esteem are able to be present in the moment rather than preoccupied with perceived personal slights, the need to be right all the time and other unhealthy behaviors to protect an inflated ego. They are also able to appreciate the vast flow of life and take perspective every so often to return to a state of homeostasis when caught in the stress response. Research shows that these skills are what integrate the neural fibers of the brain towards greater wisdom.

There is one caveat though. For better or for worse, authentic self-esteem grows in our very early years through the interactions we have with our primary caregivers. When those interactions are not attuned with our inner worlds, we grow up with feelings of self-worth that are contingent upon whatever external influences we grow up with. And studies over the past 30 years that led to the attachment theory have shown that sadly, that makes up more than half of us.

The good news is that the three qualities of self-esteem also build self-esteem. When we practice the skills of resilience, compassion and mindfulness, we step out of what Professor Jennifer Crocker, who researches this construct, calls the “ego-system “ of contingent self-esteem into the “eco-system “ of authentic self-worth.

And there is more. In their book *Resonant Leadership*, professors Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee show how these three traits are also indispensable for compassionate leadership. They not only bring out the best in employees, but also allow leaders to sustain themselves through the relentless demands of work and life and renew themselves physically, mentally and emotionally.

Now that's an upward spiral worth aiming for!

Homaira Kabir, wearesalt.org,
10/18/16

NH Updates

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

(Some of the following information comes courtesy of the NH Secretary of State's website)

WHO ARE WE?

EngAGING NH is an all-volunteer not-for-profit organization registered with the State of NH. We work to support and promote activities, policies, planning and values that respect and include ALL older adults.

This issue marks the first of a series of special Voting Edition Advocacy Alerts leading up to Election Day on Tuesday, November 8th. To start things off, we'll be covering the process of registering to vote in our state. Who is eligible to register to vote in NH? New Hampshire residents who will be 18 years of age or older on the day of the next election, and are a United States Citizen, may register to vote in NH. There is no minimum period of time you are required to have lived in the state before being allowed to register. You may register as soon as you move into your new community.

There are a number of ways to register to vote in New Hampshire: If you meet the state's voter requirements and qualifications and are unable to register in person because of physical disability, religious beliefs, military service, or because of temporary absence, you may register by mail. You should request an absentee voter registration affidavit and a standard voter registration form from your town or city clerk. The absentee voter registration affidavit

must be witnessed and then both the affidavit and the voter registration form are to be returned to your town or city clerk. You may register at your town or city clerk's office up to 10 days before any election. You will be required to fill out a standard voter registration form and will be required to show proof of age, citizenship and domicile. You may also register with your community's Supervisors of the Checklist. By law, they are required to meet on the Saturday 10 days prior to each election. Check the local newspaper(s) or call your clerk's office for the date and time of such meeting. Lastly, you may also register to vote at the polling place on election day at all elections. You will be asked to show proof of age, citizenship and domicile. Out-of-state college students who are attending a New Hampshire educational institution and who wish to register to vote in New Hampshire have some additional things to keep in mind. For that information, [please follow this link](#).

How to Find your Local Polling Place

Each town or ward in New Hampshire has its own polling place to conduct elections. Polling places are mandated by law, specifically the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), to be readily accessible for all people, including people with disabilities. Finding out where your polling place is located is quick and easy!

One way of finding out is to [follow this link](#). Simply select your town, street name, and the range of numbers (either odd or even numbers) that your street number falls into. You will then be given:

- The date of the upcoming election.
- The address of your local polling place.
- The hours of operation for the polling place.
- The location of the polling place via Google Maps, as well as
- A sample ballots in PDF and Plain Text formats.

If you are not able to use this online tool, you may also call your town clerk's office, which will have the necessary information on hand. For even more information on these subjects and more, [you can visit the NH Secretary of State's Election Division website](#).

Granite State Independent Living

YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED

My name is Zoe Yu and I am a sophomore studying engineering at Dartmouth. I'm currently working with a team of other students to design a wheelchair attachment

that will prevent wheelchair users from slipping on snowy and icy terrain.

We have a couple of concepts in mind and would like to get some feedback from wheelchair users on their ability to use wheelchairs in the winter and thoughts on our two favorite designs.

Would it be possible to distribute this survey via email to people subscribed to Engaging NH?

Here is the survey link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKABc78D4C22mGfkuHY-Mom2eVwYWabt1g6RuxrnJ_Fr6pw/viewform

PROPOSED MEDICARE LEGISLATION

NH Rep. Kuster cosponsored H.R. 3308, *_Seniors Have Eyes, Ears, and Teeth Act_* [1]. This bill would expand Medicare coverage to include eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental care.

21ST ANNUAL NHHPCO FALL CONFERENCE

The Best Care Possible
Communities of Care

Thursday November 10, 2016
8am – 4pm
SERESC Conference Center
29 Commerce Drive, Bedford, NH
03110

Featured Speakers Include: Joanne Lynn, MD, MA, MS :Caring for Frail Elders/Getting What We Want and Need; Kate Lally, MD, FACP/ Developing Community Palliative Care; Becky Field, Photographer/ Different Roots, Common Dreams: New Hampshire's

Cultural Diversity; Jennifer Ballentine; and MA/ Ethical Reflections on Physician Assisted Suicide and Hospice Values. Online registration at

<http://www.nhhpc.org/>

NEW AG UNIT TO PROTECT NH SENIORS FROM SCAMS

Deborah Walsh is the first to be indicted by the Attorney General's Office under a new state law aimed at protecting seniors from being scammed. The 59-year-old Merrimack woman allegedly stole \$22,700 over three years from a man who is now 86-years-old, according to court records. She is charged with financial exploitation of an elderly, disabled, or impaired adult — a felony charge that took effect in January 2015; the punishment is measured by the amount stolen. If convicted, Walsh faces up to 15 years in prison.

Walsh did not answer her door or respond to a phone call seeking comment, but her lawyer, Charles Keefe, did.

“At this point, Ms. Walsh vehemently asserts her innocence and disputes the accusations,” Keefe said.

Scamming the elderly has become big business in the United States, with TrueLink Financial estimat-

ing the cost of elder fraud at \$36.48 billion a year in 2015, with \$6.67 billion of it being stolen by caregivers or relatives. In New Hampshire, the Attorney General's Office has dedicated a new unit to fighting this crime, which in the past has oftentimes gone unreported and unchecked by law enforcement — especially when it's a family member doing the scamming.

“Nobody is prosecuting these cases. A lot of police officers do not yet see this as a crime. They see it as a civil matter,” said Brandon Garod, the prosecuting attorney for the attorney general's new Elder Abuse and Exploitation Unit.

“It's not that no one wants to prosecute these cases. They are just not aware of this law,” said Sunny Mulligan Shea, a victim-witness advocate assigned to the unit.

Garod and Mulligan Shea are now on a mission of educating people, police and prosecutors about New Hampshire's elderly exploitation law to “stop the bleeding, stop the scam,” said Mulligan Shea. They've been working together for about three months and have indicted one case, have one case in Rockingham County and another in Carroll County about to go before grand juries, and are actively investigating 20 to 30 other cases, Garod said.

“We've looked at more cases than we can possibly count,” Garod said. “In the worst cases, there is neglect and the person is deceased because of the neglect.”

ENH welcomes all points of view and invites your submissions.

To send articles or to add your name to our newsletter mailing list, contact:

engagingnh@gmail.com

WE WANT YOU TO KNOW

EngAGING NH promotes citizen leadership and the active involvement of New Hampshire's older adults in the development of communities and public policies that support all individuals as we age. We are a COMPLETELY VOLUNTEER organization with no paid staff, and a limited budget.

We actively partner and work with other NH advocates.

Formal Partnerships

- NH State Independent Living Council
- State Committee on Aging-Vaughan Awards
- Disabilities Rights Center—NH
- NH Cares
- UNH Center for Aging and Community Living
- Oral Health Care Expansion, Children's Alliance of NH
- Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT)
- Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council
- Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

Active Collaborations & Groups:

- Elder Rights Coalition
- Department of Health & Human Services

Other Groups we work with:

- AARP
- NH Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
- NH State Committee on Aging
- NAMI
- NH Alliance for Retired Americans
- DD Council
- UNH Institute on Disabilities
- NASW-NH
- Area Committees on Aging
- NH Association of Senior Centers
- NH Statewide Independent Living Council
- NH Legal Assistance
- ServiceLink

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The con artist

There are mainly two groups of scammers targeting the elderly. There are those professional con artists who hit seniors up for money, iPhones, iTunes cards and other items of value by claiming they are from the IRS or kidnapped a relative; they demand immediate payment.

The other group is caregivers and family members who take advantage of a senior, usually over a longer period of time. They may take over paying an elder's bills or be given power of attorney and "one day their account is empty," said Mulligan Shea.

"These are people who have some sort of power of trust," Garod said.

These are the types of crimes the new attorney general's unit is focused on, said Garod. Until the passage of this law, police and prosecutors had no teeth to go after caregivers and family members who stole from elders or used their influence to their personal advantage, Garod said.

Those cases were handled in civil court, such as the 2015 civil case of a Portsmouth police officer who was found by a probate judge to have used "undue influence" over a senior with dementia to will him the bulk of her \$2.7 million estate.

The new law

Sue Staples is a member of the group Coalition Against Later Life Abuse (CALLA), the group that developed and fought to get this law on the books. The group of

police officers, prosecutors, lawyers, business leaders and elder service providers came together in 2011 as part of a grant received by the Attorney General's Office to look at ways to fight elder abuse.

Staples said the issue of elder exploitation is more far-reaching than people think.

"It happens too fast and too quickly and one day the money is gone," said Staples. "It's the people the elders expect to trust. It may be a friend, a family member, or a paid caregiver, but they are expecting them to care for them, not steal from them."

New Hampshire Legal Assistance attorney Cheryl Steinberg was also a member of the group pushing for this law. She said few states have laws specifically addressed elder exploitation.

"It's a priority area for us. We feel that it is a growing problem and it really adversely affects our seniors," Steinberg said.

Tough to prosecute

Garod said cases of family or caregiver exploitation involving seniors are not always the easiest to prosecute. Sometimes it is a matter of pride for the victims, who don't report crime or don't want to go forward with a trial. Sometimes the victim is in a state of physical or mental decline; other times the victim is dead, Garod said.

"In some cases, we have victims reporting their own kid is a felon and they don't want to do that," Mulligan Shea said.

Even in those cases, Garod said, there are ways to get justice.

"Bank records don't lie. Bank records don't change," Garod said.

Most of their current cases are being referred to them by other state agencies, such as the Bureau of Adult and Elderly Services, and have yet to be investigated. Garod and Mulligan Shea work with local police departments to issue subpoenas obtain search warrants and build a case.

Hudson police would not provide further details about how Walsh allegedly stole the money from the man, how she knew him, or who reported the case. Court records state she took the \$22,700 to benefit herself and that she neglected to provide her victim "with basic needs as an elderly adult. "She is also charged with theft by unauthorized taking.

Getting help

Garod and Mulligan Shea said there are signs to watch for and ways to protect yourself if signing over power of attorney or giving up finances to a caregiver or family member. They suggest checking utility bills to make sure they are being paid, checking bank statements for any irregularities, and to ask questions about their money.

"And it there is a relentlessness to defensiveness about it, let someone else know," Garod said.

Garod said if a senior is suspicious, report it.

"If you are ever questioning whether something is suspicious, call us," Garod said. "We want to be a resource."

How to get help

- Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services: (800) 949-0470.
- Attorney General's Office: (603) 271-3658.
- New Hampshire Legal Assistance: (888) 353-9944.

Gretchen Grosky, Union Leader, 10/12/16.

To reach her about issues and stories of interest to you, contact her at ggrosky@unionleader.com or (603) 668-4321, ext. 339

From Our Readers

POLITICAL PLATFORMS

Fabulous coverage on the presidential candidates stands on the important issues facing families. I will make copies to share with the residents here, showing each side's stands on family issues. Thank all of you for the effort and time that must have gone into this.

Your work is more than local and/or state coverage. It helps us down here in Fairfield, Ct.

Gratefully,

Antoinette

FORMER MOVIE STAR AND VETERANS ADVOCATE GETS WARM WELCOME AT NORTH COUNTRY VETERANS CONFERENCE

<http://www.berlindailysun.com/news/local-news/59637-former-movie-star-and-veterans-advocate-gets-warm-welcome-at-north-country-veterans-conference#/>

Great event! Helped a lot of people. The vendors like Service Link and Emergency Services and of course Jo Moncher did a great job supported the effort. Reached 200 all at once! They felt the support!

There were a lot of senior Veterans in the crowded - maybe we should have a senior conference for seniors at the Senior Centers in every county? - Just saying

Mark Frank

THE NETHERLANDS PROJECT

Thank you for the interesting article in the October issue on the pilot project to provide apartments for students within nursing homes. I'm glad to see the interest in intergenerational approaches is growing and hope to see the outcomes.

ML

TRI-STATE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE ON AGING EVENT

Do you have thoughts on...How employers can better support family caregivers? How communities can become more "dementia friendly?" How communities can develop volunteer respite and care programs? How we can start conversations about dying and how we can best prepare for our deaths? How we can build new models of facility care that are local and person-centered?

If you have even one idea you want to share on these and the many other topics we'll be discuss-

How to Contact Your State Committee on Aging Representatives

County	Name	Email
Belknap		
Carroll	Dr. Norma J Brettell	pastorbrettell@roadrunner.com
Cheshire		
Coos	Mark M. E. Frank	maxfra@aol.com
Grafton	John Acker	John.Acker3@va.gov
Hillsborough	Kathy Baldrige	kathy@lifetimeliquidations.com
	Joan Schulze	joanschulze@myfairpoint.net
	Russ Armstrong	equlzr@gmail.com
Merrimack	Herb Johnson	clairhonda@msn.com
Rockingham		
Strafford	Candace Cole-McCrea	snowyowl@metrocast.net
	John Kennedy	jjkrha@yahoo.com
Sullivan	Larry Flint	wrecman@comcast.net
<i>State Reps & Senators</i>		
Cheshire	Rep. Susan Emerson	semerson435@aol.com
	Sen. Molly Kelly	molly.kelly@leg.state.nh.us
Website:	http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/beas/aging/	

ing, please lend your voice to these critical conversations. You will be helping us build a policy roadmap to better support care partners across our region. Registration will be closing soon for the [Cross-Border Conversations on Caregiving](#) hosted by the Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging (TSLCA)--and we really want *you* to be at one or more of these unique events! We've made it easy for you to attend by having 3 events throughout November in

northern New England border towns:

November 4th in Portsmouth New Hampshire, November 15th in White River Junction, Vermont, November 17th in Bethel, Maine.

Each upcoming Cross-Border Conversation on Caregiving will be a day-long event with over 100 people coming together to focus on informal caregiving from a multifaceted point of view. Facilitators will guide small group conversations on 13 different caregiv-

ing topics and help connect participants to existing resources, policies and tools that currently support care partners.

Collectively engaging over 300 care partners, community providers, researchers, policy experts and municipal, business and community leaders, these events will help build a roadmap for collective action to address the many challenges care partners face. Make sure your voice is heard as we come together!

Please don't miss out! Space is limited to only 100 participants at each event!

Visit our website to secure your spot, view an agenda, and learn more about the process and topics to be covered. **Exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities are also available.**

[Learn more about the Cross-Border Conversations on Caregiving and Register Today!](#)

Come to one event – or come to all! We're better when we share, learn and grow together as a region.

Note: Communities engaged in aging/thriving in place and age friendly community initiatives are invited to come early to connect in person with each other about what they're doing. This is one of the few times you'll have a chance to connect with each other in person, so please make sure to join us!

Jessica L. Maurer, Esq.

Focus on Community

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

The Village of Granisle, British Columbia has been through some huge changes in its relatively short life. Built in the early 1970s by a mining company, it was an active community until last of the mines closed in 1992. The population dropped from 2000 residents to 350, 65% of whom are seniors. The pristine wilderness surrounding the village remained beautiful, but the village's aging population had trouble getting out to appreciate it. Granisle was becoming a retirement community but it had not been designed for retirees. As the community demographics changed, increasing numbers of residents began to have challenges getting around, using the village amenities and socializing.

Thanks to innovative planning and multi-sectoral collaboration, Granisle is a thriving community as well as a vivid demonstration of how age-friendly policies improve health and wellness for community members of all ages.

In 2010, the Village Council decided to take action to improve the quality of life for all residents, passing an age-friendly resolution. The next step was the formation of an Age-friendly Committee, including Northern Health, members of the Granisle Senior's Association, Lion's Club, Red Hat Society, Curling Club, and Village Council.

Emily Kaehn, Local Government Management Intern, explains the goals of the committee: "They were to serve as an age-friendly champion for the community. They would help develop a vision, gather momentum and support from the community, and encourage action."

The goals were large, but the community was up to the challenge and began planning immediately. They knew that engaging and involving all residents was the key to success. "Cooperation is the secret – cooperation from everyone: clubs, organizations, council and residents," enthused Mayor Linda McGuire.

Granisle's Age-friendly Resolution

"It is recognized that with an aging population, our communities will face both new opportunities and challenges in responding to older people's needs and wishes, AND Whereas, the 2006 Census showed that 1/3 of the population of Granisle is over the age of 45; Therefore, be it resolved that the Village of Granisle will endeavor to become a more age-friendly community, AND Further, be it resolved that the Village of Granisle will strive to promote and implement age-friendly policies & practices in the community of Granisle."

The changes brought about by the age-friendly resolution have gone deeper than just alterations to infrastructure and social routines. The initiative has built a culture of optimism and enthusiasm among Granisle residents of all ages. Andersson explains, "Here in Granisle being an age-friendly

community means we are inclusive, although a significant percentage of our population is over 65. As a community we are not just interested in our seniors, we are interested in our community as a whole and how we can create an environment that is healthy and inclusive for all members of the community.”

Today, thanks to innovative planning and multi-sectoral collaboration, Granisle is once again a thriving community. Becoming age-friendly has attracted visitors and given families a reason to stay – by helping people access the natural amenities and enjoy the quality of life the Village offers. Granisle is a vivid demonstration of how age-friendly policies improve health and wellness for community members of all ages.

<http://planh.ca/success-stories/age-friendly-innovations-granisle-create-healthier-community-all>

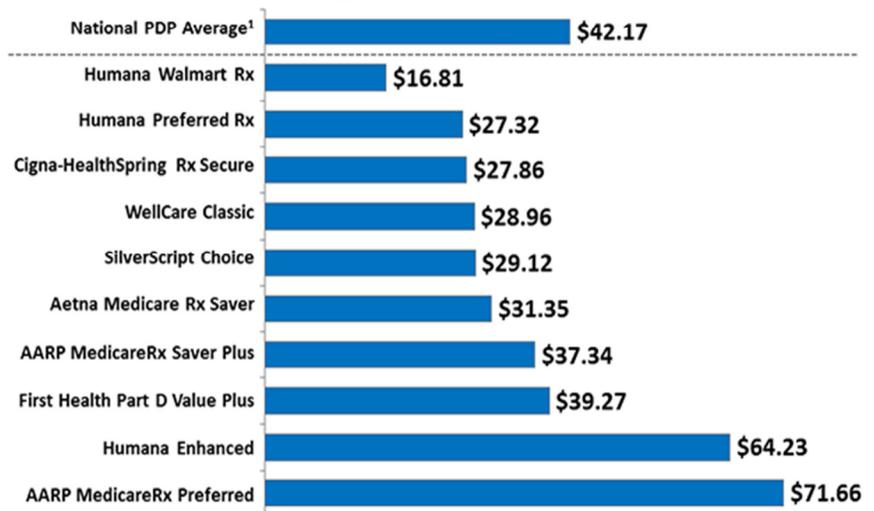
News You Can Use

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS THAT MORE LIFE EXPERIENCE GENERALLY BRINGS MORE HAPPINESS

Why might seniors have overall better mental health? No one knows the answer definitively, but Dilip V. Jeste, a psychiatry professor at the University of California, San Diego and senior author of the study, has a hypothesis.

“Brain studies show that the amygdala in older people responds less to stressful or negative images than in a younger person,” he told

Average Monthly Premiums in 2017 for Ten Medicare Part D Stand-alone PDPs with Highest 2016 Enrollment



NOTE: PDP is prescription drug plan. Estimates weighted by enrollment. ²Estimate includes premiums for basic and enhanced PDPs; assumes current PDP enrollees remain in their same plan; makes no assumptions about plan choices by new enrollees for 2017. SOURCE: Georgetown/Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services 2016-2017 Part D plan files.



the *Times*. Or to put that in everyday language: “We become wise. Peer pressure loses its sting. Better decision-making, more control of emotions, doing things that are not just for yourself, knowing oneself better, being more studious and yet more decisive. “

In addition to that wisdom it also suggests that there are plenty of attitudes and skills people of any age could learn from senior citizens to benefit their mental health. It's also worth noting that this study adds to a growing body of research on the relationship between well-being and age. Several other studies has found a similar pattern in which happiness increases as the years pass, while another fascinating branch of investigation has uncovered the way the very definition of happiness changes are we age.

According to these findings, happiness for the young is often excitement and success relative to one's peers -- relatively rare and contingent occurrences that are

frequently out of our control. Meanwhile, older folks tend to equate happiness with savoring life's pleasures and finding meaning in their time here on Earth, both of which are internally controlled by the individual and available nearly 24/7. These differing definitions of happiness could go a long way to explaining why seniors have an easier time finding mental peace than striving, comparing young people.

Click [here](#) to read more.

KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION RELEASES FIRST LOOK AT 2017 PART D PLAN OFFERINGS

The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) recently released an issue brief analyzing the 2017 prescription drug (Part D) plan offerings based on recently released data from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The key findings in KFF's analysis come at an important time as millions of people with Medicare are

weighing their plan choices during Fall Open Enrollment, which lasts from October 15 to December 7.

NEW NURSING HOME RULE

Nursing homes have long blocked abuse and harassment claims from reaching courts. A major new federal rule puts a stop to that. The federal agency that controls billions of dollars in Medicaid and Medicaid funding has moved to prevent nursing homes from forcing claims of elder abuse, sexual harassment and even wrongful death into the private system of justice known as arbitration. The agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, on Wednesday issued a rule that bars any nursing home or assisted-living facility that receives federal funding from inserting an arbitration clause into its contracts. *The rule, which would affect 1.5 million nursing home residents, promises to deliver major new protections.* [Read more »](#)

FIVE HEARING TECH ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT COULD BENEFIT OLDER ADULTS

Hearing technology advances -- the hearing aid industry considers changing. It's a positive when you see disruption of industries that have too tight a lock on the consumer, whether it is in categories of [health insurance](#), [telecom carriers](#) or hearing aids. You spend time with people everywhere you go -- those with significant hearing loss but no hearing aids; they have hearing aids, but hate to wear them.

According to a [recent NY Times article](#), two-thirds of adults over 70 have hearing loss that warrants hearing aids, but only 15-30% of those wear them -- and at \$5000 a pair, no wonder. In recent years, [personal sound amplification products](#) (PSAPs) that are not classified as hearing aids and thus do not require the audiologist role, though the FDA may change that. Just asking, if the device is called a 'Wearable', does [Silicon Valley find it more worthy of funding?](#) But anyway.

In July, [Consumer Reports published](#) an explanatory guide that should be required reading for organizations that serve older adults. It would seem to be the [wild west of innovation](#). Here is a sampling of five recent product announcements:

ReSound

The firm "introduced a new model to the award-winning ReSound LiNX²™ family: the world's only mini behind-the-ear (BTE) model to feature Made for iPhone. In addition, the mini BTE also features telecoil capabilities. ReSound LiNX² is the world's first internet-connected hearing aid, connecting to the internet to locate misplaced hearing aids. This new model enhances the award-

winning ReSound Smart Hearing portfolio, giving users even more choices to meet individual preferences and hearing loss needs. "Learn more at [Resound](#).

Oticon

"Technological limitations of current hearing aids have led to the use of tunnel directionality: Speech coming from the front is clear, whereas the rest of the sound environment is suppressed. This results in a limited, narrowed and artificial listening experience. With new, groundbreaking technology, Oticon Opn™ is fast and precise enough to analyze and follow the soundscape and differentiate between sounds. Even in complex listening environments, this allows Oticon Opn™ to constantly open up and balance individual sounds to deliver a rich and meaningful soundscape, empowering the brain to choose on which sounds to focus. "Learn more at [Oticon](#).

Eargo

Silicon Valley based startup that "offers an entry-level rechargeable **hearing aid** (FDA class I medical device) that it sells directly to consumers. Eargo is a near-invisible in-the-canal device offering four volume settings. Developed by a French ENT, it features patented silicone "flexi-fibers" that enable the device to sit comfortably deep in the ear canal while letting air and natural sound flow freely to the eardrum. At \$1,980 per pair, the Eargo hearing aids are *more expensive* than many of the new off-the-shelf "hearables" (classified as personal sound amplification products, or PSAPs, by the

Raise Your Voice!
Please let us know what's on your mind and what's important to you.
engagingnh@gmail.com

FDA), but *less expensive* than the higher end hearing aids fitted by audiologists. “Learn more at HearingTracker.com.”

Cochlear

“Cochlear Limited (ASX: COH), the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, announces today it has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for its newest innovative hearing loss solution, Kanso. The Kanso Sound Processor provides a distinct new way for cochlear implant users to hear. Unlike most hearing aids and current cochlear implant sound processors that are worn on the ear, Kanso is a small, off-the-ear hearing device that provides a more discreet hearing solution and delivers the same hearing experience as a behind-the-ear sound processor. “Learn more at Cochlear.”

iHearMedical

“iHear® Medical announced today the launch of the world’s first online hearing solutions platform. The company begins taking orders today for its flagship invisible iHEARHD® hearing aid, and the iHearTest™, which recently received landmark FDA approval as the first and only home hearing screener. Delivery of iHear products starts July 15, 2016. The company also plans to launch the iHEARMAX™, a mini behind-the-ear hearing device, on August 15, 2016. iHear’s products are currently being offered in the U.S., with plans to introduce them in China and other markets in 2017. “Learn more at iHearMedical.”

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the Word!**

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friends and col-
leagues.**

Forward it on!

Laurie Orlov,
<https://www.ageinplacetech.com/>

NURSING HOME COMPARE

One question caregivers and family are often faced with when their loved one can no longer live independently due to illness or frailty is: How do we choose a nursing home?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to this question as every individual case is different. Do you select the nursing home just down the road that isn’t as nice as the one two towns over but would allow for more family visits, for example? What about a facility that has the friendliest, most capable staff but fewer resident activities?

One resource that lets you compare unbiased information about nursing homes in your area is Medicare Nursing Home Compare. It contains quality of care and staffing information for all 15,000 plus Medicare-and Medicaid-participating nursing homes. This has the capacity to be one

way to help with a difficult decision-making process.

Stay mindful that the Nursing Home Compare data, including star ratings, does not reflect an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services of any health care provider’s products or services.

Star ratings on Nursing Home Compare are intended to be a public service. Star ratings are limited in scope to the data sources they are derived from. You can find details on Nursing Home Compare data sources and an explanation of the Nursing Home Compare star ratings methodology. Star ratings on individual measures or domains do not reflect a provider’s overall star rating.

Visit data.medicare.gov – Opens in a new window to get the downloadable data.

As always, to the extent possible, the loved one should be involved in the decision making.

Your loved is still able to live at home but needs a safer home? Check out *Staying Home: A Caregiver’s Guide to Making Your Home Alzheimer’s Safe*.

Health & Wellness

CANADIAN RESEARCHERS REAFFIRM THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE FOR A HEALTHY BRAIN

It’s easy to understand the links between exercise and bodily health. You can see muscles grow, or – if you’re a scientist – slice out a tiny sample of muscle and meas-

ure the molecular changes triggered by your workout!

In contrast, it's not intuitively obvious why or how lifting weights or going for a bike ride should boost brain health. But as evidence of the strong links between physical activity and brain function keeps piling up, scientists are finding new ways of peering into the brain to unravel the mechanisms – and they're discovering that exercise has more ways of improving your neural wiring than previously suspected.

The latest finding, published this week in the journal *Cell Reports* by researchers at the Ottawa Hospital and the University of Ottawa, is that exercise helps kick-start a repair process that strengthens existing brain connections, in part by fixing the myelin “insulation” that protects nerve fibres in the brain. *That's particularly intriguing because myelin damage is a hallmark of certain brain diseases such as multiple sclerosis.*

The Ottawa study isn't the only one pointing to links between exercise and healthy myelin, and multiple sclerosis isn't the only condition in which myelin plays an important role. Last month, South Korean researchers published results in the journal *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair* showing that running helped gerbils who had suffered a stroke to recover their memory, in part through the repair of myelin around neurons.

Of course, myelin isn't the only part of the brain that benefits from exercise. Other studies have linked exercise to changes such as in-

creased blood flow and decreased inflammation in the brain. Perhaps most significantly, a review this month in the journal *Behavioural Brain Research* concludes that exercise likely plays a role in the growth of new neurons in the hippocampus, a brain region associated with memory, in adults – a regenerative process widely thought to be impossible until the 1990s.

The identification of VGF as the active molecule by the Ottawa researchers raises hopes that targeted pharmaceutical treatments can be developed for these and other conditions. While there's a big gap between experiments in mice and applications in humans, this is a long-term goal that Picketts and his colleagues are now pursuing with funding from the MS Society and the Canadian Partnership for Stroke Recovery.

Click [here](#) to read more.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND ALZHEIMER'S RISK

People who regard the prospect of aging negatively are more likely to develop brain changes linked to Alzheimer's disease than those who have a more positive outlook. On the plus side, changing those downbeat views may help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.

The findings that views of aging can influence Alzheimer's come from a Yale study that looked at healthy individuals enrolled in the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging. The researchers elicited the participants' views on aging and followed up years later with MRIs – and in some cases brain autopsies – to see if a person's outlook

FYI . . .

This newsletter is intended as a forum for you to share personal experiences, information and points of view.

In our media driven world of skillful marketing and political spin, we believe that diversity is critical to discernment and therefore the EngAGING NH Board of Directors welcomes all points of view, expressed with civility!

While the opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Board members, our intent is to include material that assists you in forming your own opinions.

To send articles or to add your name to our newsletter mailing list, contact:

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on aging correlated with brain changes associated with Alzheimer's.

The MRIs showed a greater decline in the volume of the hippocampus, the brain area that is key to memory, among people whose views of aging were negative than among others in the study. The brain autopsies showed a significantly greater number of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles - both brain changes indicating Alzheimer's - in participants with negative views of aging. In some cases these views were expressed

Looking for a back issue of an ENH newsletter?

Check our website:
www.engagingnh.org

28 years before the plaques and tangles were seen.

Study leader Becca Levy, Ph.D., associate professor of public health and psychology, suggested that stress generated by negative views on aging might be responsible for the brain changes. Replacing negative beliefs with positive ones might help head off the impact of the pessimistic views, Dr. Levy said.

Dr. Andrew Weil's take?

“This is an interesting study. What it found about the outcome of negative views of aging squares with earlier findings about the health risks associated with pessimism. We know that pessimism has been linked to a higher risk of dying before age 65, while positive emotions – such as optimism – are associated with lowered production of the stress hormone cortisol, better immune function, and reduced risk of chronic diseases. We also know that optimism is at least partially learned, which suggests that Dr. Levy is right – it is possible to replace negative views with positive ones.”

www.drweilblog.com 9/22/16

**20 MINUTES OF THIS
SIMPLE BREATHING
TECHNIQUE COULD LOWER
YOUR INFLAMMATION**

Ever struggle to keep up with the heavy yoga breathing that everyone around you seems to do effortlessly? Well, it's time to hone in your skills—in the name of gut health.

According to a new study, pranayama—AKA the Ayurvedic breathing technique practiced in yoga—may lower stress-related inflammation in the body, *Psychology Today* reports. Inflammation can lead to GI conditions like Celiac disease, as well as allergies, skin issues, headaches, and chronic diseases, doctors say. And Frank Lipman, MD, even argues that you can slow down the aging process by lowering inflammation in your body.

In the study, published in *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, researchers gathered 20 participants and told half to read for 20 minutes, while the other half focused on yoga breathwork—10 minutes of *om* chanting and 10 minutes of rhythmic breathing. The researchers tracked levels of biomolecules in the body called cytokines in the participants' saliva every five minutes and found that by the end of the session, three stress-related biomarkers had decreased in the yogis, while none had changed for the readers.

In just 20 minutes, the participants were able to relax and let go of stress—which allowed their inflammation to go down instantly—by breathing in for two counts, holding for eight counts, and exhaling for four counts. Yoga has already been associated with serious health benefits—from a longer life and lower risk of heart disease to stress-free happy vibes—but it turns out that, with yoga breathwork, you can now add gut health to that list.

(Need a refresher? Find out [how to breathe properly during any workout](#). Or [stress-proof your mind instantly with this five-minute meditation sequence](#).)

Click [here](#) to read more.

BRAIN PROTEINS AND CEREBRAL INFLAMMATION

Alzheimer's disease (AD), Parkinson's disease (PD) and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) are all characterized by clumped, misfolded proteins and inflammation in the brain. In more than 90 percent of cases, physicians and scientists do not know what causes these processes to occur.

Robert P. Friedland, M.D., the Mason C. and Mary D. Rudd Endowed Chair and Professor of Neurology at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, and a team of researchers have discovered that these processes may be triggered by proteins made by our gut bacteria (the microbiota). This new understanding of the potential role of gut bacteria in neurodegeneration could bring researchers closer to uncovering the factors responsible for initiat-

ing these diseases and ultimately developing preventive and therapeutic measures.

“These new studies in two different animals show that proteins made by bacteria harbored in the gut may be an initiating factor in the disease process of Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and ALS,” Friedland said. “This is important because most cases of these diseases are not caused by genes, and the gut is our most important environmental exposure. In addition, we have many potential therapeutic options to influence the bacterial populations in the nose, mouth and gut. “

Click [here](#) to read more.

Tech Tips

SCHOOLGIRLS DESIGN AN APP TO HELP WITH DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER

Schoolgirls unveil new app which aims to help elderly Alzheimer’s patients

Five schoolgirls from Sydney’s west have designed an app they hope will help elderly people who are living with dementia and Alzheimer’s in aged care homes.

The 14-year-olds, who are in Year 9 at Riverside Girls High School, presented the app – which they designed in two days – as part of a pitch session this week organised by social entrepreneurship organisation Young Change Agents.

Given the challenge of creating social change in their community, around two dozen students from Year 9 (and some from Year 8)

broke off into groups then came back with a four-minute pitch spruiking solutions in sectors including healthcare, homelessness and pollution.

The ideas were then judged by a panel including entrepreneurs, scientists, university lecturers and a representative from the Westpac bank, and put up for a public vote.

Parents and members of the community who watched the presentations chose Mindmate as their favourite: the dementia app pitched by Scarlet Orrin, Ellen Rowley, Sarah Blanks, Anastasiya Potapenko and Emma von Thomann.

The group explained their smartphone application would provide music from each decade, which has been shown to have a positive impact on Alzheimer’s patients; a schedule to remind them of activities; soothing nature sounds; and a weekly memory test to track the user’s improvement.

Inspired by a family member of one of the girls who had Alzheimer’s; the girls envisioned the app to be specifically used in aged care, where carers could guide elderly people through using it.

To research their idea, they quizzed a connection who used to work in aged care policy and confirmed nothing like their app exists yet and it could make a difference.

They also approached Alzheimer’s Australia by calling the national peak body’s general hotline to further refine their idea and get up-to-date information, statistics and resources.

Using some free time in the school holidays, Scarlet put together some concept art for the app, which the group says could be trialled as a website before a developer takes the time to build it.

Emma said the aim of the app was to help people with dementia express themselves.

“The main aim of it was to get Alzheimer’s patients to express their thoughts creatively, so they can hopefully develop a deeper identity and connect themselves to the community,” she said.

Georgina Mitchell, theage.com.au, 10/3/16

SMARTPHONES CAN DUMB YOU DOWN

Researchers from the University of Waterloo in Canada recently published a study in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior* concluding that most people “for-go effortful analytical thinking” and let their smartphones do their thinking for them. Apparently, folks who think more intuitively (emotionally) and less analytically even use their smartphones when it comes to reasoning out problems. Another study declared that most folks use their smartphones for “cognitive offloading.” And those researchers found that the more people rely on smartphones for answers -- even the folks who at first preferred to rely on memory -- the more reliant they become on the device to do their thinking for them. Sounds like an addiction.

So while we say “bravo” to phones that can provide directions, medical records and phone numbers, it's not doing your brain any favors to let a machine do your thinking for you. Keeping your cognitive powers sharp as you age depends on expanding your intellectual horizons, learning new things, challenging yourself. Read a map the next time you take a trip to a new city. Memorize it, and look around! Play brain-training games on your smartphone. Don't let your smartphone be smarter than you!

Michael Roizen, M.D. and Mehmet Oz, M.D., Oct 10, 2016

SENIORS LAGGING IN INTERNET HEALTH RESOURCES USE

Many older Americans aren't taking advantage of e-health resources, a new study suggests.

Internet use has “become part of the social norm,” said lead researcher Dr. Yan Hong of Texas A&M University in College Station, who specializes in human health behavior. But there's still a “digital divide “between those who have access to the internet and those who don't, Hong told Reuters Health by phone.

“Older adults are particularly vulnerable to digital inequality because they're often the last group to get on board with the latest technology,” she said.

The Pew Research Center reported recently that while only 1 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds don't go online, the same is true for about 41 percent of adults older than 65.

CAN YOU HELP?

You may make a donation to ENH through our fiscal agent, Disabilities Rights Center-NH, Inc. which is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation.

Make your check out to Disabilities Rights Center-NH, Inc. and note “EngAGING NH” on the memo line. DRC's mailing address is 64 North Main Street, Suite 2, 3rd Floor, Concord, NH 03301-4913.

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For their new study, Hong and colleagues examined data from a nationally representative survey of U.S. adults age 18 and older.

Overall, they had information from nearly 15,800 participants collected in 2003, 2005 and 2011-2012.

The study focused on the roughly 6,600 adults who were older than 55. These participants were split into three age groups - 55-64, 65-74 and over 75 - and were compared to those younger than age 55.

From 2003 to 2011, online use for all purposes increased in all of the over-55 age groups.

For example, in 2003, only 16.5 percent of participants over 75 were using the internet; by 2011, that proportion was up to 33.6 percent. Rates of internet use went

from 33.7 percent to 62.6 percent among 65- to 75-year-olds and from 58 percent to 73 percent among the 55- to 64-year olds, the authors report.

But still, as of 2011, none of these groups came close to matching the 87 percent rate among the 18- to 54-year-olds.

Among seniors who did use the internet, only 57 percent were going online for health information in 2003, compared to 80 percent in 2011, according to the findings published in *Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences*.

The proportion of internet-using seniors who bought medicine online rose from about 14 percent in 2003 to about 21 percent in 2011. And in 2011, 22 percent were contacting their doctors online, compared to 8 percent eight years earlier.

Patterns of increased internet use were similar across all the older age groups.

The research team also found that among seniors over age 75, those with less than a high school education and those earning less than \$25,000 a year “continuously lagged behind their counterparts in all aspects “of health-related internet use.

Although Americans have benefited from the e-health movement, there are still those, especially the underserved, that haven't caught up, Hong noted.

“We still need to be mindful of other groups that are being left out in this digital era,” she said.

“Despite an overall increase in health-related internet use and a narrowed digital divide, significant variations . . . in different demographic groups persisted; therefore, we call for more senior-friendly online resources and culturally appropriate interventions to bridge the digital health divide for vulnerable older adults,” Hong and her coauthors conclude.

The reason behind the digital divide boils down to politics, according to Dr. K. Viswanath, a researcher who studies communication, health disparities and poverty at Harvard University’s School of Public Health in Boston.

“There’s no reason why people don’t have access,” Viswanath, who was not involved with the study, told Reuters Health. “The government should create policies that subsidize internet connection to ensure equitable access.”

Viswanath asks, “If we can subsidize heating in the winter for people who can’t pay, why not look at the internet as an essential service?”

Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences, online 8/24/16

Dollars & Sense

SELLING YOUR HOUSE WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

If you own a house, its equity value can be considerable. Being brick rich and cash poor is not unusual. Being averse to downsizing, which is often a financial wash, or close to it, there is the temptation

to sign over your home in return for a cash payout.

You, in fact, are selling your house for the right to continue to live in it while actual ownership goes to the reverse mortgage holder.

The terms and conditions can be daunting and, as with most financial strategies that require expensive television advertising to develop prospects, that becomes a “buyer beware” signal in itself.

Any major financial decision involving an 800 number and a free booklet should be researched from second sources. A complex product in search of people looking for simple answers is a formula you don’t want to get mixed up in.

If family members are at hand who can help and give advice that is not a bad place to start. They will know you and, hopefully, have your best interests at heart. Next in line to look at your situation is a third-party adviser who has nothing to gain from the transaction. Getting clean information is not easy, and multiple sources are a lot of work. Having friends who have gone the reverse mortgage route are not the best information sources. They are committed to their strategy win, lose or draw, and will seldom share downside results.

Think about the qualifications. Age is one. The older the better for the lender, as they take full title earlier rather than later. Rules are set by the federal government only to reduce fraud and are not an endorsement of the process. A red,

white and blue eagle logo should be a red flag.

Friendly television personalities from an older generation, often with celebrity pedigrees, are used to gain credibility. Keep in mind these are hired actors reading a script for a fee, who often receive a residual payment for each time their image is used. You are being asked to help pay their fees with your fees!

A warm feeling for the pitch person is not a good reason to consider a major financial strategy.

Jack Falvey, Union Leader, 9/11/16

Laugh & Live Longer

MEET SARA!

A buddy of mine has two tickets for the 2017 Super bowl. Box seats plus airfares, accommodation etc. But he didn't realize when he bought them that this is going to be on the same day as his wedding – so he can't go. If you're interested and want to go in his place, it's at St Peter's Church, in New York City, at 5pm. ... Her name's Sara. She's 5'4", about 125 lbs., good cook, makes \$130,000 a year! She will be the one in the white dress.

BRITISH HUMOUR

Actual Ads from UK Papers:

JOINING NUDIST COLONY!

Must sell washer and dryer £100.

WEDDING DRESS FOR SALE .

Worn once by mistake. Call Stephanie.

FOR SALE BY OWNER.

Complete set of Encyclopedia Britannica, 45 volumes. Excellent condition, £200 or best offer. No longer needed, got married, wife knows everything.

DADDY HOW WAS I BORN?

Never mind “the birds & the bees” -- there’s a newer version:

A little boy goes to his father and asks, “Daddy, how was I born?”

The father answers, “Well, son, I guess one day you will need to find out anyway!

Your Mom and I first got together in a chat room on Yahoo.

Then I set up a date via e-mail with your Mom and we met at a cyber-cafe. We sneaked into a secluded room, and googled each other.

There your mother agreed to a download from my hard drive. As soon as I was ready to upload, we

discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall, and since it was too late to hit the delete button, in 9 months later a little Pop-Up appeared that said:

You got Male!”

YOU ONLY NEED TWO TOOLS IN LIFE

WD-40 and Duct Tape.

If it doesn't move and should, used WD-40;

If it moves and shouldn't use Duct Tape.

Purposeful Living

Bruce and Pat Dawson are in their mid-eighties. They have been volunteering for Dial-a-Ride Hopkinton for the past 25 years. Both volunteer as drivers for this important program that provides rides to seniors in the areas of Contoocook and Hopkinton. Dial-a-Ride takes requests from local seniors and matches them up with volunteers who can drive them to doctor’s appointments, medical



Bruce & Patricia Dawson

tests, grocery shopping, errands, and more.

This service makes it possible for seniors to remain in their homes even after they've stop driving. It not allows them access to the support and services that they need to stay healthy and connected, it gives them a sense of independence and autonomy. This free service is a great benefit to the community.

In addition to driving, Pat also volunteers in the office to support the day-to-day operation of Dial-a-Ride Pat’s support of Dial-a-Ride extends to leadership as well. She has been on the Board of Directors for Dial- a- Ride for many years. She has mentored the new board members, *including the new Co-Chair of the Board*, to ensure that the program remains strong over time and responsive to changing needs.

In addition to their service supporting senior transportation, both Bruce and Pat volunteer to support regular activities at the Slusser Senior Center as well. Pat is a volunteer receptionist. She warmly greets seniors, answers their questions and directs them to various programs. Every week, Bruce and



Contact Information For NH Members of the U.S. Congress				
Name	Mailing Address	Phone	Fax	E-Mail Contact Form
U.S. Representative Frank Guinta	326 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202) 225-5456	(202) 225-5822	https://guinta.house.gov/contact/email
U.S. Representative Ann Kuster	137 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	(202) 225-5206		https://kuster.house.gov/contact/email-me
U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte	144 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC, 20510	(202) 224-3324	(202) 224-4952	http://www.ayotte.senate.gov/?p=contact
U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen	520 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	(202) 224-2841	(202) 228-3194	http://shaheen.senate.gov/contact/

Pat set up the Dining Room for the Senior Luncheons on Wednesdays. They decorate the tables beautifully. The Dining Room is always a welcoming and cheerful place for local seniors to connect with each other and share companionship. The many seniors who attend these luncheons are very appreciative of the welcoming environment that Pat and Bruce help to create.

Together, Pat and Bruce served more than 200 volunteer hours last year. Their leadership and service make the Slusser Center and Dial-a-Ride stronger and better programs. They add value to the services offered to seniors in Hopkinton and Contoocook. We believe that they are very deserving of this award.

Board Notes

TWO WORDS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Let's pick up from how this newsletter began and the words of Homaira Kabir, "authentic self-esteem is different. It's a feeling of worth in our abilities and quali-

ties. As such, it's not conditional upon external evaluations – instead it's an inner security that provides us with the courage to step out into the world and do the right thing." And let's add to that something else to ponder: Two Words that can change your life. Wonder what they are?

A little background, in a story from Cheryl Rice:

I was standing in the checkout line behind a woman who looked to be in her 60s. When it was her turn to pay, the cashier greeted her by name and asked her how she was doing. The woman looked down, shook her head and said,

"Not so good. My husband just lost his job and my son is up to his old tricks again. The truth is, I don't know how I'm going to get through the holidays."

Then she gave the cashier food stamps. My heart ached. I wanted to help but didn't know how. Should I offer to pay for her groceries, ask for her husband's resume? I did nothing – yet. And the woman left the store.

As I walked into the parking lot, I spotted the woman returning her shopping cart, and I remembered something in my purse that could help her in a different but hopefully profound way. It wasn't a handful of cash or a lead on a job for her husband, but maybe – just maybe – it would make her life better. My heart pounded as I approached the woman.

"Excuse me," I said, my voice trembling a bit. "I couldn't help overhearing what you said to the cashier. It sounds like you're going through a really hard time right now. I'm so sorry. I'd like to give you something."

And I handed her a business-sized card. When the woman read the card's only two words, she began to cry. And through her tears, she said,

"You have no idea how much this means to me."

I was a little startled by her reply. Having never done anything like this before, I hadn't anticipated the reaction I might receive. All I could think to respond was,

“Oh my. Would it be OK to give you a hug?”

After we embraced, I walked back to my car -- and began to cry too. The words on the card?

“You Matter.”

“Is it possible that two words can change someone’s day, someone’s life? What if those same two words could change the world?”

But here's something else for consideration here. We're all familiar with and probably even have said, “As yee sow, so shall yee reap.” If two words and a gesture recognizing another person's worth change his or her life, could it also help in building authentic self-esteem?

And why is this important? Research shows that that the media representations of aging are both skewed and inaccurate. According to the FrameWorks Institute, older adults are represented as either:

(1) Frail, diseased, senile and in need of constant and expensive care, or

(2) Active, healthy, wholly independent and requiring no support.

The first view reflects a small percentage of the older adult population. The second may give the impression of being unrealistic and therefore discouraging.

And what we need to remember is such external messaging can significantly influence us, even unconsciously. Being aware of these facts can be the first step in making a change.

And if you are looking for a way to take action, you can check out the You Matter Marathon (<https://youmattermarathon.com/>) No running required!

EngAGING NH

9 Gleneagle Drive
Bedford, NH 03110

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