

Healthy Lifestyles

April 23, 2025

Cooking – an evolving dynamic & learning from the generations

By Eric Stritt, Chef
Bookmeade Community

As the imminent harbingers of Spring begin to manifest themselves, we eagerly await the endowment of nature's new life that surrounds us, seemingly embraces us, and calls us to its bounty. Whether a chef, "foodie", homemaker or any culinary aficionado, our Creator calls us to share that bounty as well.

I, myself as a chef, have had the privilege of various culinary avenues traveled - endeavors that have taught and perpetually edify me as exploration continues. Where I presently am, I will continually evolve into a greater lexicon of understanding as my chosen profession is not one of stagnancy, but of dynamics.

As a post-secondary student, it was rather difficult for me to focus on a specified route of study, because my interests were so varied. I was partial to so many influences that I could not find one that would define or nurture my passions - history, biology, chemistry, music, art, mathematics, literature, social sciences, religion - all encompassing.

I remember working in restaurants at the age of 15 and while progressing through my college years pondering in the kitchens what I was "gonna be when I grow up."

These perspectives bore genesis and focus when I realized I could not wait to leave my classes to enter that kitchen. As busy as they were, they were simultaneously my comfort. Therein lied the blending of cultures, meeting new people, the sights and smells and tastes of the food that was created. The on-the-spot mathematics required to compensate for how many patrons may arrive, the chemical reactions that take place watching the chefs transforming raw beef chuck cubes into an Estouffade of Beouf with Morel Mushrooms or a cut up chicken and a bottle of red wine into Coq au Vin Rouge. I cannot remember the exact moment, but it was then that I knew I had found my "calling" when I consequently realized culinary arts addressed all my interests and so much more.

I withdrew from college and

"In all professions without a doubt, but certainly in cooking, one is a student all his life."

-Fernand Point, Chef Owner of La Pyramide in Vienne, France



Chef Eric Stritt is busy at work in the kitchen at the Brookmeade Community in Rhinebeck. Photo by Melissa Lasher

enrolled at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) and I was pursuing my life's endeavor and since then, the worth has been priceless to me.

A little background

Food and the study of it, has always been a very significant part of my life, as evidenced by my somewhat portly stature, and the result of my perception of the meaning of "six-pack" morphing from a tight muscle bound stomach into a quarter case of Corona and lime.

My paternal grandfather was a chef, and my grandmother was an excellent baker. My mother always had a wonderful dinner for us as the comraderie of siblings grew around the dinner table through our progressing years. My dad learned my grandma's babka recipe and we couldn't wait for that hot loaf of rich egg bread to come out of the oven and slather it with butter. I learned too - watching, wanting to know how to make it myself.

As I grew older, the passing of those loved ones, with the exception of my beautiful mother, still with us thank God, was imminent. Their presence may not be tangible, but the memories are so engrained inside me that they will never pass. I think of Grandpa when I make his baklava, or Grandma when I make stuffed cabbage, or Dad when I make the babka or his lebkuchen that is a comfort to me. Even now, myself, presently receiving an education from my beautiful mother-in-law, Kathy and Aunt Lisa, benefactors of the mid-eastern cuisine they passionately create and pass on to those who are lucky and blessed enough to receive. The thanksgiving is endless and there will be more I am sure.

I have worked in restaurants, hotels, catering venues and other places, but it wasn't until I became employed in healthcare that I found my true environment, especially at The Community at Brookmeade. You see, unlike

See Spring recipes, page 3

other places, like restaurants and such, we maintain a captive geriatric population that is our mandate, our privilege, to care for. We have a clientele that are not afforded their mobile freedom anymore as the specter of age takes affect on them, our loved ones, and eventually on us all.

It is a challenge to meet their dietary needs, the structured meal periods, and the changes in requisite eating patterns. But the rewards are so great. To experience an elderly gentleman saying "thank you" for a good manicotti or a grandmother of 12 tell you "when I made that chicken soup, I added more onion, but it was still good," holds an intrinsic value to me. They have memories of their own and I can only hope and pray that the sights, and smells, and tastes that they experience resulting from myself and my staff's hands, trigger those same childhood memories I enjoy.

They have so much to offer and - at a risk of being selfish - I presently and perpetually extract every tidbit of information I can get out of them, because I miss what I once had when my loved ones were still around. We must learn from the generations who preceded us, so that we may be staunch in our convictions in passing on that knowledge to those generations who follow. We are defined by our own contributions, as well, hoping to augment that wisdom we have obtained. That is what I have learned.

So I will leave you with one more quote from the esteemed Fernand Point who was noted to have a great sense of humor: "I have been so well nurtured throughout my life that I'm sure to die completely cured!"

Keep Cooking and Bon Appetit!

Eric Stritt is a 1994 graduate of The Culinary Institute of America and has been cooking professionally for over 28 years. He has served as the Executive Chef and Food Service Director at The Brookmeade Community since 2009, bringing his passion for culinary excellence and resident satisfaction to the dining experience.

Mental Health Awareness Month – Prioritizing mental health in older adults



Raeanne Lambert

Mental Health Awareness Month in May serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of mental well-being across all ages.

While discussions often center on younger populations, the mental health needs of older adults deserve equal attention. The geriatric population faces unique challenges that can significantly impact their mental health, making access to mental health services essential. Prioritizing mental health care for older adults, addressing stigma, and promoting resilience can vastly improve their quality of life.

Prevalence of Mental Health Issues in Older Adults - Mental health conditions are common among older adults, yet they often

BROOKMEADE SENIOR CONCEPTS

go undiagnosed or untreated. According to the World Health Organization, around 15% of adults aged 60 and older suffer from a mental health disorder. Depression and anxiety are among the most prevalent conditions, with dementia-related concerns also affecting cognitive and emotional well-being. Suicide rates among older adults, particularly men over the age of 75, remain high, highlighting the urgent need for early intervention and supportive services.

Unique Circumstances Contributing to Mental Health Challenges - Older adults experience life transitions that can contribute to emotional distress. Retirement, the loss of loved

ones, physical health issues, reduced mobility, and social isolation can lead to increased feelings of loneliness, sadness, and anxiety. Chronic illnesses, such as heart disease and arthritis, further compound these mental health challenges by limiting independence and increasing stress. Additionally, cognitive decline can add another layer of emotional difficulty, making mental health care even more critical.

Stigma and Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Care - Despite the high prevalence of mental health conditions in older adults, stigma remains a significant barrier to seeking care. Many older individuals grew up in

an era where mental health struggles were seen as a sign of weakness rather than a medical condition. This generational stigma often prevents them from seeking help, even when experiencing severe symptoms.

Barriers such as lack of access to mental health professionals trained in geriatric care, financial constraints, and transportation difficulties also make it challenging for older adults to receive appropriate support. Additionally, mental health symptoms in older adults are sometimes dismissed as a normal part of aging, leading to missed opportunities for treatment.

The Importance of Early Intervention and Access to Care - Early detection and intervention are essential in addressing mental health concerns in older adults. Proper screening, increased awareness, and encouraging open discussions about mental health can help identify issues before they escalate. Access to counseling, psychiatric care, support groups, and community-based programs can improve mental health outcomes and overall well-being.

Promoting resilience through social engagement, physical activity, and meaningful connections can also play a vital role in maintaining mental health in aging populations. Encouraging older adults to participate in community activities, maintain relationships, and seek professional help when needed can foster a sense of purpose and belonging.

Conclusion - During Mental Health Awareness Month, it is imperative to recognize and address the mental health needs of the geriatric population. By acknowledging the unique challenges they face, breaking down stigma, and ensuring access to mental health services, we can create a more supportive environment for older adults. Investing in their mental well-being not only enhances their quality of life but also fosters healthier, more resilient communities. Prioritizing mental health care for older adults is not just an act of compassion—it is a necessity for a society that values the well-being of all its members.

Raeanne Lambert, LMSW, is the Social Work Director at Meadows at Brookmeade. With a strong background in clinical social work and a deep commitment to resident advocacy at Meadows, Raeanne supports individuals and families through transitions in care. Her compassionate approach ensures that each resident's emotional and psychosocial needs are met with dignity and respect. For more information about Meadows at Brookmeade please email info@brookmeadecommunity.org



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Balance matters! Get tested and prevent falls

By Christine Flewelling PT



Christine Flewelling

Falls are a significant health risk, particularly for older adults, often leading to serious injuries such as fractures, head trauma and even death. The good news is that

many falls are preventable, and one of the most effective ways to reduce fall risk is by maintaining good balance. Balance plays a crucial role in helping us stay steady and avoid dangerous accidents.

Balance refers to the body's ability to remain stable, whether still or in motion. It is controlled by the brain, which processes information from the eyes, inner ear, muscles, and joints. As we

BODY KNOWLEDGE

age, balance can decline due to factors like muscle weakness, decreased flexibility, and changes in our sensory systems, which increases the likelihood of falls.

Falls can have serious consequences, including injury, long-term disability, and a loss of independence. Additionally, the fear of falling often leads people to reduce physical activity, which only worsens muscle weakness and balance issues, creating a dangerous cycle. Improving balance can help break this cycle and lower the risk of falling.

Maintaining good balance improves coordination, stability, and reaction time. It helps the

body adjust quickly when navigating obstacles or making sudden movements, preventing trips or slips. This is particularly important when walking on uneven surfaces or standing up too quickly, as balance allows the body to stay steady and avoid a fall.

To improve balance, regular physical activity is essential. Exercises that strengthen the legs, core, and lower back, like strength training or yoga, can increase stability. Balance exercises, such as tai chi, are also effective in improving coordination and flexibility.

Wearing supportive shoes with non-slip soles, maintaining good posture, and keeping your living environment safe by removing hazards can further reduce the risk of falls.

The Center for Physical Therapy in Hyde Park has a newly established Balance Program designed to assess your strengths and vulnerabilities to create a custom treatment plan to improve balance, coordination, and confidence in movement. Our specialized exercises, activities, and expert guidance will help you regain control and reduce the risk of falls and injuries.

If interested, please call our Hyde Park office at 845-233-4960 or visit centerforphysicaltherapy.com.

Spring Recipes from Brookmeade Community Chef Eric Stritt

Stuffed Mushrooms

(A family favorite compliments to my sister Betsy)

Yield: 12 servings

— 24 large white mushrooms, remove the stems, mince the stems and set aside, set aside the caps

— 12 Tbsp. clarified butter, melted, divided (4 Tbsp., 4 Tbsp., 4 Tbsp.) I use a bit more because chef Fernand Point also exclaimed quite frequently (Butter! , Butter! Give me more Butter!) ... and he was right !

— Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

— ½ cup minced white onion

— ½ cup minced shallots

— ½ cup cream sherry

— ¾ cups dried bread crumbs (or use Stovetop brand cornbread stuffing mix, ground to a crumb, but be light on the salt if you use this!)

— 2 cups grated Gruyere cheese or Jarlsberg cheese, plus more if needed (divided 1 ½ cups, ½ cup)

— ½ cup minced fresh parsley

— A generous pinch of dried tarragon.....or use fresh but 3 times as much

— ½ cup heavy cream

Procedure:

1. Clean caps and brush with at least 4 Tbsp. butter all around. Season with salt and pepper and place on parchment lined sheet pan.

2. Saute onion and shallot in 4 Tbsp. butter...or a bit more butter

3. Add minced mushroom stems and saute until almost dry.

4. Add sherry and simmer until almost evaporated.

5. Remove mixture from heat

and add bread crumbs, 1 ½ cups of the grated cheese, parsley, tarragon, and salt and pepper to taste.

6. Blend in the cream 1 Tbsp at a time, adding just enough to hold shape.

7. Fill caps, top with remaining cheese plus more if needed, and drizzle with remaining 4 Tbsp. butter plus more - if needed.

8. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 25 minutes plus, until golden. Enjoy !

Deviled Eggs

Yield: 12 servings

— 16 large eggs

— 1/3 cup mayonnaise, plus

— 1 Tbsp. softened butter

— 3 tsp. yellow mustard

— 2 tsp. spicy brown mustard

— 2 tsp. juice from sweet pickles

— 1 tsp. sugar

— Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

— A good 4 shakes of hot sauce

— Smoked paprika

— Rendered diced pancetta

Procedure:

1. Hard Boil the eggs: Place the eggs in a steamer basket (set aside). The basket should fit inside a pot with a fitting lid. Put 1 inch of water into the pot making sure the water doesn't come into contact with the base of the basket. Bring water to a boil. Insert basket with eggs in it. Place lid on pot and reduce heat to medium low. Cook 14 minutes. Remove eggs carefully and shock in an ice water bath for 20 minutes. (you can use a hard boiled egg method you are comfortable with, but I find this


steaming method works great as the shells do not stick to the egg as easily when peeling.)

2. Slice 12 eggs in half lengthwise. Remove yolks to a processor with 4 remaining whole eggs. Pulse to chop finely. Or use a mixing bowl and grate finely.

Add mayonnaise, butter, mustards, pickle juice, sugar, salt,

pepper, and hot sauce. Adjust consistency with mayonnaise as needed.

3. Spoon the filling into each egg with half. Sprinkle with paprika and pancetta or bacon bits....maybe some chopped fresh parsley or herbs of choice too....Enjoy !



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How to tell if your allergy meds are working

By Nicola McAnuff, MD



Nicola McAnuff, MD

Did you know nearly 26% of adults and 20% of children in the U.S. suffer from seasonal allergies?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC), pollen is one of the most common allergens. With so many over the counter (OTC) and prescription options available, it can be tough to understand which allergy medication(s) you need, and which will help provide relief.

How to tell if you have allergies and which medications can help you feel better

- Sneezing, a runny nose and itchy, watery eyes are a few ways your body is trying to tell you it doesn't like something. Allergy symptoms are often triggered by pollen, dust, mold and pet dander, just to name a few. Thankfully, allergy medications can help reduce unpleasant symptoms and help you get through the day.

You might ask yourself: "How do I know which allergy medication I need?"

Antihistamines help reduce sneezing and itching in the nose and eyes. They also help reduce a runny nose and nasal stuffiness.

Nasal corticosteroids help reduce nasal inflammation and congestion.

Nasal sprays and rinses with saline can help reduce mucus and rinse allergens out of your nose.

Eye drops can relieve redness, itchiness, burning and swelling.

Decongestants help relieve

PATIENT FIRST

nasal stuffiness and are generally used for a short period of time.

Leukotriene receptor antagonists help block allergic reactions and are used to manage asthma.

If you think you may be experiencing allergies but you're not quite sure, discuss your symptoms with your primary care provider and they can help determine whether you have allergies or not.

Signs your allergy meds aren't working

If you're still battling allergy symptoms despite regular medication use, you're not alone. Here are some common signs your allergy meds may not be doing their job:

1. Lingering symptoms: If you're still sneezing, sniffing or dealing with watery eyes hours after taking your medication, it may not be effective for your specific allergens.

2. Short-lived relief: Allergy meds should provide several hours of symptom relief. If you find yourself constantly needing more doses, your body may be metabolizing the medication too quickly.

3. Increased drowsiness or side effects: If you feel groggy or experience dry mouth, your medication may be causing more side effects than relief. You also want to make sure you take a nondrowsy medication during the day or during the hours you're awake.

4. Worsening symptoms during peak season: Pollen counts spike during spring. If your usual medication stops working, you might need a

stronger or different treatment.

5. Worsening congestion: Overuse of decongestant nasal sprays can cause rebound congestion, making your symptoms worsen over time.

If your allergy medications aren't working, speak with your primary care provider, and they can help recommend an alternative.

Why allergy meds can stop working - Even if a medication has provided relief in the past, it may become less effective over time. When you take allergy medications for an extended period, they can become less effective because your body builds a tolerance.

If you're exposed to higher pollen levels or new allergens, your medication might not be strong enough. There's also a possibility chronic sinus issues like asthma can mimic allergy symptoms and make medications seem like they're not working.

It's important to follow directions on the package and to take the proper dose. If you're not taking the right amount or skipping doses, it can reduce the medication's effectiveness.

When to switch allergy medications - If your allergy meds aren't cutting it, consider these options:

- **Try a different antihistamine.** Not all antihistamines work the same way. If loratadine isn't effective, cetirizine or fexofenadine might provide better relief.

- **Consider combination therapy.** Combining an antihistamine with a nasal spray or decongestant can offer all-around symptom control.

- **Switch to a prescription.** If OTC options fail, your doctor may recommend stronger prescription antihistamines, nasal steroids or even allergy shots.

- **Take allergy medications one to two weeks in advance.**

Allergy meds work best when taken before exposure. Start taking them about a week or two before allergy season peaks — about late February to early March for spring and late August to early September for fall.

How to reduce your exposure to allergies - While allergy medication can ease symptoms, you can also reduce your exposure to allergens by taking a few proactive steps:

- Limit outdoor activities when pollen counts are high.

- Keep your household and car windows closed when pollen counts are high.

- Remove your shoes before entering your home.

- Shower before going to bed and change/wash your clothes after wearing them outside.

- Wash your bedding and floors once a week and vacuum often.

- Dust often, especially ceiling and standing fans.

The bottom line: If your allergy medications aren't providing the relief you need, it might be time for a change. Whether it's switching to a different type of medication, trying a proactive approach or getting help from your primary care provider, there are plenty of options to help you breathe easier this allergy season.

Nicola McAnuff, MD is a Family Medicine Resident with Nuvance Health Medical Practice. For more information, visit nuvancehealth.org.



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Manage stress, boost resilience: Insights for Stress Awareness Month

By Premier Medical Group

April is Stress Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the impact stress has on our lives and explore strategies to manage it effectively. Stress is an inevitable part of life, but when left unchecked, it can take a toll on our physical and mental well-being. In honor of Stress Awareness Month, we're highlighting the bodily signs and symptoms of stress, shedding light on the long-term effects it can have on the body, and sharing some tips for how to keep it in check.

Understanding Stress: The Body's Response - Stress is the body's natural response to perceived threats or challenges, triggering the release of hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. While this response can be beneficial in short bursts, chronic stress can wreak havoc on our health. Identifying the signs of stress is the first step toward effective management.

Bodily Signs and Symptoms of Stress

1. Physical Symptoms:

Chronic stress can manifest in various physical symptoms, including headaches, muscle tension, and digestive issues. Pay attention to persistent bodily discomfort, as it may indicate underlying stress.

2. Emotional Signs: Stress can also impact our emotional well-being, leading to feelings of anxiety, irritability, or sadness. If you find yourself experiencing mood swings or heightened emotional responses, stress may



be a contributing factor.

3. Behavioral Changes: Notice any changes in behavior, such as increased procrastination, changes in appetite, or difficulty concentrating. These behavioral shifts can be indicative of underlying stressors affecting daily functioning.

4. Sleep Disturbances: Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep can be a common symptom of stress. Disrupted sleep patterns can exacerbate feelings of fatigue and contribute to a cycle of heightened stress levels.

Long-Term Effects of Stress on the Body

While occasional stress is a natural part of life, chronic stress can have severe long-term consequences on our health including, but not limited to, the following conditions:

1. Cardiovascular Health:

Prolonged stress can contribute to hypertension, heart disease, and increased risk of stroke due to elevated levels of stress hormones impacting the cardiovascular system.

2. Immune System

Suppression: Chronic stress weakens the immune system,

making individuals more susceptible to infections and illnesses. It can also slow down wound healing and increase recovery time from illnesses.

3. Digestive Disorders: Stress can disrupt digestive processes, leading to conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), acid reflux, and ulcers. Persistent stress can exacerbate gastrointestinal symptoms and worsen existing conditions.

4. Mental Health Concerns: Chronic stress is closely linked to mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. Prolonged exposure to stress hormones can alter brain chemistry, contributing to mood disorders and cognitive impairment.

Managing Stress for Resilience

There are various strategies that individuals can use to mitigate the effects of stress and build resilience against it. Finding stress management techniques that work well for you can improve your overall health and well-being.

1. Practice Mindfulness:

Incorporate mindfulness techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or yoga into your daily routine to promote

relaxation and reduce stress levels.

2. Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle: Prioritize regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep to support overall well-being and resilience to stress.

3. Set Boundaries: Learn to say no to excessive commitments and prioritize self-care. Establishing boundaries can help prevent feelings of overwhelm and burnout.

4. Seek Support: Don't hesitate to reach out to friends, family, or mental health professionals for support. Talking about your feelings can provide perspective and alleviate emotional distress.

5. Engage in Stress-Relieving Activities: Find activities that bring you joy and relaxation, whether it's spending time in nature, pursuing hobbies, or listening to music.

As we observe Stress Awareness Month, it's vital to prioritize mental and physical health by acknowledging the signs of stress and taking proactive steps to manage it effectively. It's important to remember that you are not alone in your journey toward stress management and well-being.

Take the first step toward a healthier, more resilient tomorrow by talking to your Premier Medical Group primary care provider about how you can mitigate stress to improve your overall health today. Contact our team at 1-888-632-6099.

5 tips for self-empowerment after bladder cancer diagnosis

(StatePoint) Bladder cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers, yet many patients face delays in diagnosis or struggle to find the right care.

Are you navigating a bladder cancer diagnosis or unsure of what your symptoms could indicate? Patients are sharing what they wish they knew earlier—and five tips for taking control of your care, including seeking out the advanced diagnostics procedure called Blue Light Cystoscopy (BLC).

1. Advocate for Yourself - Early diagnosis saves lives, and routine check-ups and proactive testing can lead to earlier diagnoses and better outcomes. It's important to stay organized by keeping track of medical records, test results and appointments. It's also important to trust your gut. According to one patient, you may need to be persistent and proactive in order to get the right diagnosis.

"I knew something wasn't right, but it took multiple visits before I got a proper diagnosis," says Karen S. "If there's one thing I'd tell others, it's to act early and push for answers."

Like many patients, Karen first received White Light Cystoscopy, a simple procedure for diagnosing bladder cancer, and the traditional diagnostic approach in most urology offices. While WLC remains a valuable tool, incorporating BLC enhances the process and, as a result, can lead to improved detection of cancerous lesions that can drive improved outcomes for bladder cancer patients. This was the case for Karen, who gained greater peace of mind and more confidence in her diagnosis and care through this advanced procedure.

2. Educate Yourself and Others - If you're experiencing symptoms that could be bladder cancer,

learn more about bladder cancer, treatment and diagnostic tools such as BLC.

"Bladder cancer wasn't even on my radar until I was diagnosed. Now I talk about it to help others," says Mary Beth M., who spent time researching her options as a patient. "I had no idea there were different types of cystoscopies—until I researched it myself."

To learn more, you can lean on trusted resources, such as <https://rebrand.ly/Tips-BLCprocedure-website>.

3. Build a Support System - The cancer journey can be challenging and stressful. Surround yourself with family, friends and support groups who can help you advocate for the best care.

4. Communicate With Your Health Care Team - When communicating with your health care team, patients say that being proactive is essential. "I learned to

ask my doctors direct questions. It made all the difference," says Mary Beth.

Some questions you can start with include:

- What technology do you use to diagnose and monitor bladder cancer?
- How often do you perform blue light cystoscopy?
- What are my options to ensure the most thorough diagnosis and treatment?
- Am I candidate for BLC?

5. Find a Urologist Who Offers BLC - Don't be shy about seeking out the best care possible. If you are interested in exploring BLC, speak with your urologist. If your current provider doesn't offer BLC, consider exploring other options. For information about locations that offer BLC, visit <https://rebrand.ly/Tips-BLC-Locations>

National Prescription and Safety: Promoting medication safety and proper disposal

National Prescription Awareness and Safety is a powerful initiative designed to raise awareness about the importance of safe medication practices and the proper disposal of unused or expired medications. With Drug Take Back Day scheduled for April 26, it's more important than ever to highlight ways our community can work together to prevent prescription misuse and protect public health.

What is Drug Take Back Day?

Drug Take Back Day, hosted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), provides a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of unwanted medications. This nationwide event aims to reduce the risk of prescription drug misuse and environmental contamination caused by improper disposal.

For more information about Drug

Take Back Day and to find a drop-off location near you, please visit the DEA Take Back Day website www.dea.gov/takebackday.

The Year-Round Initiative:

Practicing Medication Safety Daily - While Drug Take Back Day is a critical event, promoting medication safety and awareness is a year-round effort. The concept of 365 Awareness encourages everyone to be proactive in ensuring medications are safely stored, properly used, and responsibly disposed of. Here are some ways to practice medication safety every day:

- **Store Medications Safely:** Keep medications in a secure, dry place, preferably locked away, and out of reach of children and pets.

- **Follow Prescription Guidelines:** Take medications exactly as prescribed and never share them with others.

- **Track Your Medications:** Regularly count your pills to detect any discrepancies and prevent potential misuse.

- **Dispose of Medications Responsibly:** Use authorized drug drop boxes, attend take-back events, or follow FDA-recommended disposal methods if these options are unavailable.

Accessing Harm Reduction Resources:

To find a medication drop box near you or to access more resources, visit <https://medtakebacknewyork.org/> or contact your local community coalition.

Our coalitions offer valuable resources, education, and support to help you practice medication safety and prevent potential misuse.

If you're interested in learning

more about harm reduction, accessing medication safety supplies, or finding additional support, please reach out to our coalitions:

- Northern Dutchess Community Coalition (NDCC) ndcc@capedc.org

- Southern Dutchess Community Coalition (SDCC) sdcc@capedc.org

Join the Movement Towards Safer Communities: By actively participating in National Prescription Awesomeness and Safety and adopting medication safety practices every day, you are contributing to a healthier, safer community. Together, we can reduce the risk of medication misuse, promote harm reduction, and prevent overdose deaths in Dutchess County and beyond.

Making outdoor spaces more inviting with Candles



LIFE IS BETTER WITH CANDLES

With Sonya, the Candle Lady

that guests do not have to stretch to see or speak to the person across the table. Avoid scented candles near where people will be eating and instead use unscented tealights or votive candles.

Scented candles with the citrus scent of Mandarin or the herb scent of Eucalyptus are excellent choices but avoid Floral or Linen scented candles in close proximity of your guests. If you want to show off your tall candles and floral arrangements, place them in the corners or side tables of your outdoor space.

Flame-less candles have come a long way for they look "almost" real and most are made with real wax, timers and flicker like a real flame. You can never have too many flame-less candles so place as many as you can on the far corners of the entrance stairs to your outdoor space or on the ledges of your deck for a glowing effect.

Solar Lanterns and string lights are also another good investment to consider that will make your outdoor space more inviting whether there is a gathering or it's just you enjoying the outdoor space.

Candles will make your evening under the stars a memorable one.

Don't forget the music and your

favorite beverage!

SAFETY

As beautiful as your outdoor candle setup may be, safety should always be your first concern. While we encourage the use of creative candle holders, always use one that is specifically designed for candle use. The holder should be heat resistant, sturdy, and large enough to contain any drips or melted wax. Always place your candles on a stable, heat-resistant surface to avoid heat damage and prevent glass containers from breaking.

Always practice safety when burning candles. Never leave unattended and keep away from children and pets. Never burn a candle for more than 4 hours and trim the wick to ¼ inch before lighting to promote proper flame height. Additionally, keep candles away from drafty areas to avoid flame flickering; pool debris and black marks from forming on sides of the candle holder.

ABOUT

Sonya, the Candle Lady established herself as a trusted source for soy and beeswax candles when she opened Ye Olde Candle & Gift Shoppe in 2015 at Pleasant Valley with late husband, Dominick and relocated to Eastdale Village in 2020.

Ye Olde Candle & Gift Shoppe transitioned in May of 2024 from storefront to focus on candle-making workshops; art galleries, local libraries, restaurants and schools. However, you can now visit her new showroom suite; order on her online store and place orders through Door Dash.

The Carriage House at 42 Catharine Street, Suite C108 in Poughkeepsie.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 2:30PM to 6:30PM

Saturday: By Appointment ONLY

Sunday & Monday: Closed

It is best to call in advance just in case there has been a change in my hours

To set up appointments to visit or to inquire about candle-making workshops, call (845) 818-6280

I can be of assistance to you with planning your wedding with ceremony and reception candles and with wedding invitations. You may view and order wedding invitations at

candlehousegiftshoppe.carlsoncraft.com

Email Address: candlehousegiftshoppe@gmail.com

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One of the best things about using outdoor candles is that you can mix and match different styles, colors, and scents that reflect the theme of the occasion. There are ways to incorporate candles to your outdoor spaces that are beautiful but functional.

Outdoor candles provide an attractive ambiance, but citronella candles will also repel insects. Your guests will comfortably enjoy the food, music and festivities with very minimal effort on your part. Citronella is made from a grass plant called "Lemongrass." When it is mixed with candle wax, it will mask the scent of humans from insects. However, it must be used properly in order to be effective, so you must burn it around the area you want to repel insects. It is also important that the candle stay burning for the entirety of the event in order to be effective at repelling insects.

If you are setting your table with centerpieces, keep them low so

'Vital Women' talks with Sue Serino, Delilah Martinez

Podcasters Iris Douglas and Ivette O'Sullivan, hosts of the "Vital Women" podcast from Washington Heights living in Dutchess County, recently shared their unique perspective on two remarkable and resilient women who appeared as guests on their show in April.

The term "Vital Women" refers to women who are Valiant, Inspiring, Tenacious, Ambitious, and Leading. Their stories of resilience, overcoming challenges, and determination are truly inspiring and serve as a motivation for all of us.

County Executive Sue Serino's story is truly inspiring. Since age 15, she has supported her family and continues to assist her constituents. As a female leader in a male-dominated political landscape, her journey underscores the urgent need for more women in leadership roles, which have historically been underrepresented.

While the gender gap is narrowing, women still hold fewer positions, highlighting the importance of boosting female representation for a more inclusive and hopeful future. Ivette feels young girls must see women in leadership roles, as this demonstrates that women can drive innovation and achieve long-term success. For instance, women are often more empathetic and collaborative, which is crucial in leadership positions. Despite significant progress in the workforce, corporate leadership, and political representation, a gender gap in politics has persisted for the last 40 years.

Even a century after women won the right to vote, they still hold less than one-third of all elected positions at local, state, and national levels combined. We need more young girls to pursue political careers to bridge this gap and achieve true gender equality in leadership. This crucial call to action can lead to a more inclusive

and diverse future.

Talking with Delilah Martinez, the Associate Center Director at the Poughkeepsie Behavioral Health Center, part of Family Services, was uplifting. Delilah understands the importance of family connections. Her compassion and love for people were evident during our meeting.

Iris has her own experiences and felt reassured that our Dutchess County community is being thoughtfully considered. Delilah's energy was attentive, caring, and driven to support her team and the community further. She was receptive to our discussions, which helped Iris better understand the programs provided by Family Services.

Iris has faced mental health challenges within her family, making it a profoundly personal matter. Her goal is to raise awareness about mental health and to share her experiences to help others feel better and more

hopeful about their situations. She appreciated the chance to listen, understand, and learn. She feels connecting with advocates and getting involved is essential, as we can make a difference.

Iris believes mental illness exists within us all. If we begin to support those seeking healing or answers before they become confused, depressed, or disillusioned, we can help prevent another beautiful mind from being lost.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Dahlia and Sue for their unwavering commitment to healing families and empowering our community. Your dedication is not only inspiring but also a source of hope and inspiration. We are deeply grateful for your contributions to our community.

Authored by Iris Douglas and Ivette O'Sullivan, "Vital Women" from Washington Heights Living in Dutchess County. For information, visit hvhhealingcenter.com or call 845-849-0838.

Remember the power of encouragement for your children

It is difficult to believe that May is almost here and we are nearing the end of another school year. Although there are only a few weeks remaining and many spring activities consume a lot of after-school hours, we cannot allow this to interfere with our children's academic responsibilities. We must find the time to assure that they are completing their assignments and achieving.

We want our children to end the year ready to enjoy the summer. Parents, you will, too, if you know that your children have succeeded and are prepared to move on to the next grade. During these last few weeks, make sure that they have time to complete assignments accurately and study for their tests. Now that the days are longer and warmer, the temptation is to go outside and play. There will be time for fun when the work is done.

Continue to consult with teachers when necessary. This is particularly important if your children have any special needs regarding learning or behavior. Discuss the strategies they are using to help them achieve and recommendations for the following year. Offer your own suggestions. Even if your children have an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan) your suggestions may be more specific. As the parent, you know your children best. Make a list of your areas of concern and share this with the teacher. She can add her own comments and suggestions. This will be quite helpful to your children and the new teacher. Be sure to get a copy of the strategies and recommendations you discuss.

I hope that your children have experienced a productive and successful school year. I hope that your interaction with them has been positive and you are building

MAKING EDUCATION WORK with Diane Fulves

a bond of love, friendship, and trust. Our children need to know that we are committed to them now and forever. How do we do this?

Remember the old adage, "If at first we don't succeed, try, try again!" This is a good motto to live by. So we must be persistent. As we work with our children, we cannot give up. Our children have tremendous potential so we must persist. We must find a way to unlock that potential to help them overcome any problems and work through them and succeed. They are counting on us.

I know how difficult this can be, but we must be patient. After years of working with children with emotional deficits, I didn't give up and the children knew this. I wouldn't allow them to give up so they had no choice but to work with me. The end result was that they not only achieved the skills, but they were happy.

That's the point! Our children are not finished yet! (Are we?) There may be times when they become overwhelmed and frustrated. A quiet response from you may diffuse the issue and help them regain composure.

When I taught a class of children with emotional and learning disabilities, I had a simple strategy. I would let them know that when they saw my eyes closed and my lips moving, I was praying for patience. Whenever this happened, the response was immediate. Everyone got back to work. I said nothing. When I look back on these moments, I have to smile. Sometimes silence is really golden!

Remember that words of praise encourage our children. There is power in words of encouragement and praise. These words build trust and show respect for their effort. I remember how my students responded to encouraging words. There were times when I watched them quietly completing independent assignments at their desks. As they worked I would tell them that I loved the way they were working. They would look up at me, smile, and resume their work. It doesn't take much to encourage our children.

About 20 years ago I had lunch with a former student. He was now in his 30s and working as a police officer. He was in a class that was so chaotic that the teacher was removed and I was

asked to take over in January. As we chatted, I asked him this question. "Did I raise my voice a lot in class?"

I will never forget his response. "You didn't have to. We didn't want to upset you!"

You see - persistence, patience and praise work wonders. Pour in pounds of love and what may have seemed impossible becomes a reality. Our children are a gift. They need us to guide them along the windy road to success so they will unleash their potential and reach the stars. Then we will know that we have shared in their success!

Diane Fulves is a retired educator and advocate for children and parents. She is director of Empowering Our Parents, which offers information and support to parents. She is the director of Nurture the Spirit and Shakespeare Odyssey, programs that enrich children with the magic of the arts. For more information, please contact her at dee076@verizon.net.

Hudson Valley Holistic Healing Center



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The Hudson Valley Healing Center is a space for the community to experience the essence of whole body wellness. Services offered are meant to rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. Some of these services include an immersive salt cave, a therapeutic infrared sauna, Reiki, yoga classes, breath work workshops, meditation groups and more--children/families welcome!



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