

BY PROGRESSIVE CENTER *Forward*

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1996.

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VOLUME 79



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SUPPORT PERSON ALLOWED IN HOSPITALS AGAIN

The mother who was undergoing cancer treatment couldn't be in the hospital with her daughter with disabilities during her most recent hospitalization for the first time in her life. The daughter is medically fragile and also has autism. The mom was on the phone with the father, who told her the nurse was kicking him out because visiting hours were over. She told him, "Hold on, in the left pocket of your folder of her medical records is a memo from the NJ Dept. of Health, which allows a patient with a disability to have a support person with them at any time. You are not a visitor."

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This publication is brought to you by staff of Progressive Center for Independent Living and Mercer County ADRC

SUPPORT PERSON ALLOWED IN HOSPITALS AGAIN

▪ *Continued from previous page.*

During the COVID pandemic, initially hospitals and doctor's offices were only allowing the patient in. This meant that people with disabilities were on their own, even if they were unable to communicate with medical professionals for any reason. Disability advocates pushed back and now people with disabilities can have a "support person" with them at all times if needed.

It is important for families and friends not to just say they are the parent or caregiver, but rather a "support person" for the individual with a disability.

In the story above, the patient was refusing medications because she knew what she was supposed to take, and the doctors kept changing meds in the hospital. She was not cooperating with labs and bloodwork because she was tactilely defensive. This young adult with autism was also refusing to hold still for any testing like EKGs or CT scans due to anxiety, rendering testing useless.

The next day, the father showed the security guards the same memo, and although it took 45 minutes to clear him for whatever reason, he was allowed in earlier than visiting hours to support his daughter. Once there, he explained the medication changes

to her and she took her meds. He asked for Emla (numbing) cream, and she did her bloodwork. He kept her calm during medical testing so they could find the cause of her severe illness (which was sepsis).

It is mutually beneficial for the hospital/doctor and the patient/family to have the support person there, and the outcomes are better.

Disability Rights NJ has a section on their website devoted to this issue. Indeed, if families or self-advocates are having problems allowing a support person into a medical facility, they can call DRNJ at (800) 922-7233. In addition, they can also file a complaint with the Office on Civil Rights.

Fortunately for this patient, her mother was ironically a healthcare advocate and knew her rights. But if it happened to this family, it must be happening to other families.

The author of this article wishes to remain anonymous.





NEED HELP PASSING THE WRITTEN DRIVING TEST?

■ STEPHANIE WILMOT

The Progressive Center for Independent Living strives to assist our consumers in achieving and maintaining independent lifestyles. With that being said, for many this includes achieving access to transportation. In effort to assist those in need, we created a free Division of Motor Vehicle Preparatory class here at PCIL's Mercer office. This course is designed to help individuals within Mercer County who are currently struggling to pass the written state exam for the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. Through seven weeks of sessions, these individuals will receive course material based on the New Jersey Driving Manual. This preparatory class will cover all chapters found within the driving manual.

If interested, please contact Stephanie at 609-581-4500, ext. 129.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

- individual living with a disability
- ages 16 and up
- have own reliable transportation
- punctual attendance
- reading comprehension abilities
- comfortable in group setting.

SERVICE DETAILS

- free program
- 7 week course schedule with coverage of NJ driving manual
- materials provided
- various activities to promote engagement.
- assistance with scheduling written test.

CELEBRITIES WITH DISABILITIES

■ ILMA NALIC

Disability affects human beings all around the world. No part of the world is completely void of disability. When it comes to people who have disabilities, public attitudes can crush self-determination and confidence. These negative attitudes can reduce the empowerment that self-determination offers. At Progressive Center for IL, we prefer to highlight those who have proven that their disability won't prevent them from being successful within their passions. As part of the celebration for Disability Employment Awareness month, here are some interesting stories of those living with disabilities who didn't allow their disability from keeping them fulfilling their career path.



Frida Kahlo contracted polio during her childhood and according to some sources, had spina bifida, which caused dysmetria (lack of accuracy in voluntary movements) in her right leg. In addition, her spinal problems were aggravated by an accident suffered in her adolescence, which left her with physical issues for her entire life. Frida spent much of her life in bed

suffering from severe pain. Even so, she became one of the most famous artists of all time and an icon of the twentieth century.



Another example of a celebrity with a disability who broke the mold is Aaron “Wheelz” Fotheringham. In addition to being one of the most inspirational

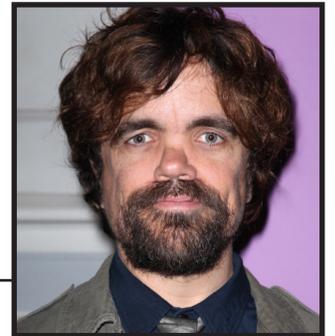
disabled celebrities, Aaron Fotheringham is also one of the most famous extreme skaters in the world. His specialty? Wheelchair moto-cross (WCMX). During his childhood, Aaron underwent several failed hip operations that forced him to use a wheelchair permanently. Even so, he continued to practice a sport he was passionate about adapting to his disability. In 2005, Aaron Fotheringham landed a wheelchair ramp jump with a 180° turn, and in 2006, he made the first wheelchair backflip in history. Since then, his achievements and challenges are an example for millions of people.

Other Famous People with Disabilities:

Stephen Hawking, considered one of most influential scientists acquired amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) in his early twenties.



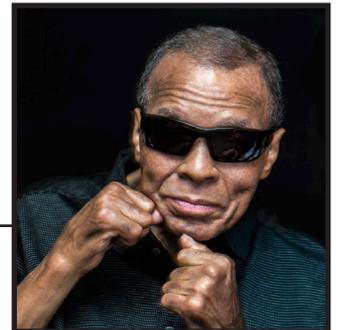
Peter Dinklage, best known for playing the role of Tyrion Lannister in the HBO series Game of Thrones was born with a form of dwarfism, achondroplasia.



Michael J. Fox, who is well known for his acting, lived with Parkinson's disease.



Muhammad Ali, considered as one of the greatest sportspersons ever and respected as an icon worldwide lives with Parkinson's.



Johnny Depp, well known as Captain Jack Sparrow, is blind in one eye and near-sighted in the other.





MVP Thomas Valois and his father at the softball game.

RECREATION CORNER

ILMA NALIC

Happy Fall season everyone! We have had a busy few months and still loads to do before the end of the year. During the month of August, we gathered again at the YMCA Sawmill to host our annual participant softball game on the fully accessible Miracle League field. Participants playing the game enjoyed complementary game t-shirts donated by Killarney's Publick House. Everyone appreciated the camaraderie this event offered and not to mention, free hotdogs and chips. Congratulations again to Thomas Valois who was awarded the game ball for Most Valuable Player! The fun continued during our virtual activity for this month. PCIL hosted A Plus Tutoring and Learning Center where their gifted artist demonstrated the steps in creating Waterlilies by Claude Monet.

In September, virtual attendees enjoyed a few rounds of Bingo with PCIL staff. Our in-person event was the PCIL Picnic hosted at Mercer County Park. We were happy to

have artist Barbara Thornton return again to create very impressive caricatures for our participants. We ended the picnic with a visit from Jim Gaven of Key to Awesome Music who conducted a drum circle having participants utilize the instruments they created at the event.

We have launched our first RECREATION COMMITTEE! Welcome to our members Chris Freels, and Tina Provost. We look forward to working with you both this upcoming year and sharing new ideas for future recreation events.

We also changed our times for our monthly virtual meetings. All virtual events now run from 6PM-7:30PM on the first Tuesday of every month.

Let us know if you would like to be added to our e-mail blast by reaching out to 609-581-4500 or reservations@pcil.org.



Above: Staff at the annual softball game.



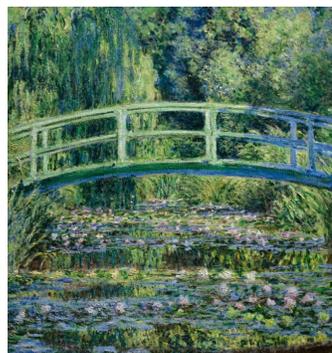
Above: Blue and tan teams at the softball game.



Above: Participant Kindra sitting for a caricature drawing by Barbara Thornton.



Above: Participant Chris enjoying a burger at the picnic.



Above: Example of the waterlilies being created during our virtual activity.

HAVE IDEAS FOR UPCOMING REC EVENTS?

We are always looking for suggestions for future events, either virtual or in-person so if you have ideas, feel free to contact us!

ARE YOU A PCIL MEMBER?

A PCIL membership has many benefits that can be enjoyed throughout the year. Join now and enjoy your benefits until the end of 2022. Members receive reduced rates on recreational events and are invited to a Members Only Dinner.

PCIL MEMBERSHIP PRICING

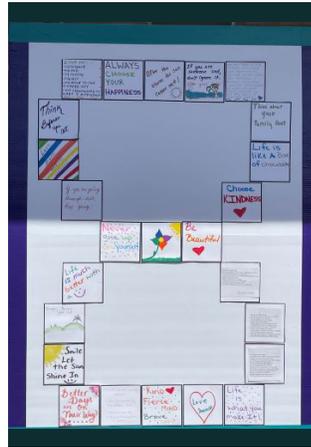
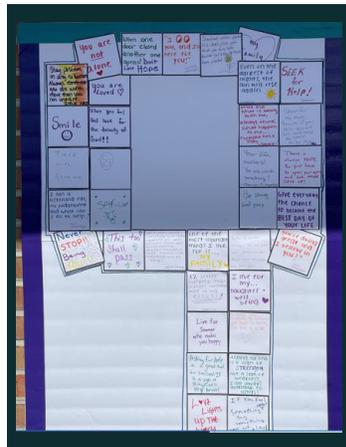
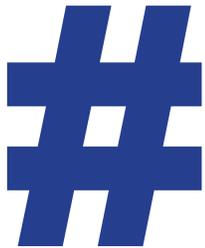
Individual --- \$15.00
Couple --- \$25.00
Family --- \$50.00
Organization --- \$100.00



PCIL BRINGS AWARENESS TO SUICIDE PREVENTION IN SEPTEMBER

▪ STEPHANIE WILMOT

PCIL celebrated Suicide Prevention Month throughout September with the help of staff, consumers and members within the community. Collectively, we gathered a series of inspirational messages and words of affirmation to uplift spirits and help spread support to those who may be in need. Displayed outside of the office for all to see, PCIL wished to highlight the new National Suicide Hotline number “988” to spread awareness. If you or anyone you may know is struggling with mental health issues, please do not hesitate to contact them or your local chapter today!



Images shared in PCIL's window offices to bring awareness during Suicide Prevention Month.

WHAT'S NEW WITH THE PCIL STAFF?

MEET PATTY



Hi there! My name is Patty Stauss. I am a Support Coordinator at PCIL. Although I joined PCIL in June 2022, my career for the past 30 years has been in the field of working with children and adults with intellectual and physical challenges. My motto throughout my career: “we are all capable of learning new things, we just need someone to take the time to guide us.” I enjoy guiding individuals and families down the path of daily life to show them how to learn about themselves, what they and their loved one’s capabilities are and how to move forward in life to attain their short-term and long-term goals. My goal at PCIL is to offer all the guidance and assistance that I can to every one of you who is a part of PCIL. As a Support Coordinator, I will make myself available to listen to your needs, wants, and desires, and assist the best way I can to help you to make life easier for you.

CHANGES FOR SAMANTHA



Hi! Most of you know me, my name is Samantha. I've been a Support Coordinator here at PCIL for six years. I've recently moved into a new position; I'm now the Assistant Supervisor of the Support Coordination department. I am here to support and train the Support Coordinators with all processes relating to services and the DDD budget. My role is to ensure all individuals are comfortable and confident with their Support Coordinator and the services being delivered. I look forward to continuing to work with everyone.

MEET MAMADI



Hello, my name is Mamadi Kaba, and I am the new Support Coordinator at PCIL. I started working here on June 27th, 2022. I enjoy working here so far and the teamwork atmosphere is great. I provide resources to individuals with developmental disabilities to become more independent and connected to their local communities. I enjoy playing soccer and spending time with my family in New York. I enjoy visiting museums and traveling to discover new cultures and foods. I look forward to my first years here at PCIL and being able to provide effective resources to my clients to better assist them with their goals of becoming independent.

MEET STEPHANIE



Hello everyone! My name is Stephanie Wilmot and I am happy to now be a part of the PCIL Transition Team as the new RAMP Coordinator. I assist with Access Link, help run the DMV Preparatory course we offer, and actively work as a Transition Specialist assisting through DVR, with my main focus being the Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program. I am proud to say I am a first-generation college student. Before arriving at PCIL, I attended Rowan University, where I received my Associate's Degree in Elementary Education with a dual major in American

Studies. I am now working towards my Bachelor's in psychology.

From a very young age, I always had a passion for working with others, I strived to always lead with my heart and make a difference. My experiences have helped mold and prepare me for this position today. I have worked with both youth and adults. I was an active preschool teacher and full-time nanny, then transitioned into positions working with adults, where I worked with the DDD population as a Group Home Manager and School to Employment Program Manager. In each experience, I was given the opportunity to assist those in need, gave guidance to encourage others to live to their full potential, and was blessed with many rewarding moments I will forever cherish. My past experiences brought to light a realization that I believed I was destined to do more. This is exactly

what I hope to accomplish here.

As RAMP Coordinator, I am working hard to expand the program throughout the urban communities, encouraging students to make a difference within their own communities, and guiding those in need of support to create an independent life. I want the students involved within the program to take away life lessons and apply them within their own experiences, to gain strength and confidence with seeing their own value, and strive to be the best versions of themselves. I believe the effort put forth in making this program shine will soon be seen. I live every day with the goal in mind to “create a brighter tomorrow” and that's just what I'll do. I am grateful to be a part of this PCIL family and am very much looking forward to the journey ahead. I hope you come along for the ride!

VIRTUAL RINGCENTRAL MEETINGS
ARE SWITCHING TO THE FIRST
TUESDAY OF THE MONTH!

WITH A NEW TIME 6PM-7:30PM



PROGRESSIVE CENTER  FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

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Kiara Boyd

Samantha Culbertson,
Assistant Supervisor

Mamadi Kaba

Teresa Pirretti

Patty Stauss

Kim Such,
Supervisor

HUNTERDON STAFF

Program Specialist & Support Coordinator

Laura Tapp

Support Coordinator

Christine Hanneken



your DOORWAY

QUARTERLY

A quarterly publication written by the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection to help support older adults, those living with disabilities, and their caregivers

ARTICLES BY ADRC

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- PG 16 Resource Connection Supports Caregivers
- PG 20 Interfaith Caregivers
- PG 22 Annual Picnic
- PG 24 Free Food Finder
- PG 26 New ANCHOR Program
- PG 27 ADRC Staff List

Mercer County Office on Aging/ ADRC

McDade Admin. Building
640 South Broad St.
P.O. Box 8068
Trenton, NJ 08650



ADRC (609) 989-6661
Nutrition (609) 989-6650
TOLL FREE 877-222-3737

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD



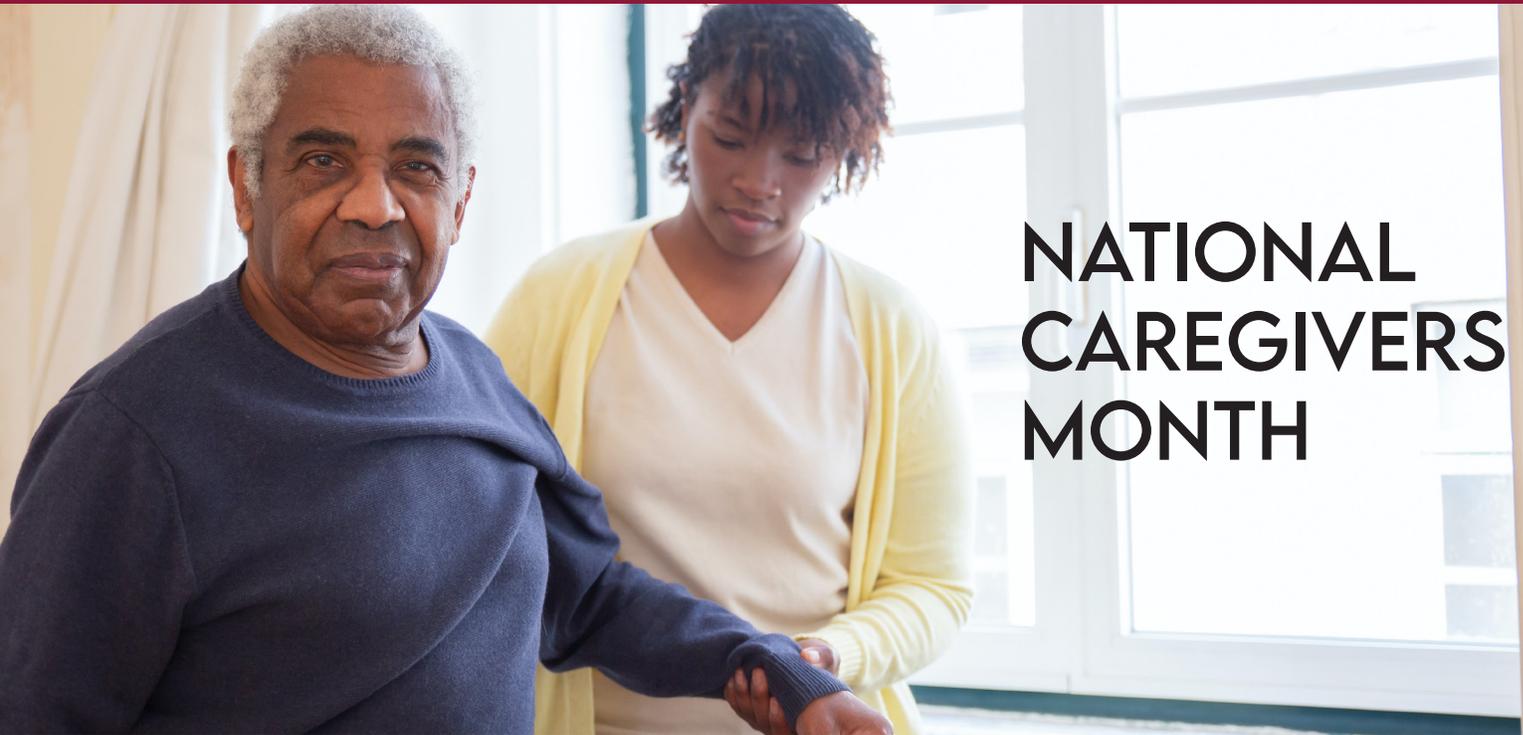
For easy access to the new survey, use your mobile phone camera app to scan the QR code.



The Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC has recently updated its Needs Assessment Survey (formerly known as the “20 Questions Survey”). It is available at www.mercercounty.org/OOASurvey.

It is through this assessment that we can assist our older adult community with their needs today and plan and advocate for resources to cover unmet needs going forward. It is more detailed than years past but should only take between 8-12 minutes to complete. The survey is open to older adults in Mercer County and those who care for and about them.

Paper copies can be requested by calling 609-989-6661 or emailing adrc@mercercounty.org.



NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH

The Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection Supports Caregivers

By Lauri Harbison

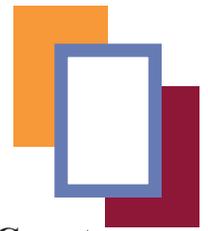
November is National Family Caregivers Month, and here at the Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC, we don't just support older adults and those living with disabilities, we also provide services for their caregivers. As a caregiver, you have access to our information, referral, and assistance services to help you and your loved one connect to programs that can support your loved one's well-being and independence, and we also provide relief, education, and support to you. We support multiple community programs such as:

- **Active Day of Hamilton**, which provides a day program where adults can socialize,

eat, and engage in activities and exercise safely with supervision from nursing, social work, and other trained professional staff to assist and support them. For more information, contact Peg Barone at 609-883-0200 or pbarone@activeday.com.

- **The Advancing Opportunities Youth with Disabilities Respite Program**, which allows parents of children with disabilities a break from the stresses of caregiving and time to take care of other responsibilities. For more information, contact Chevron Brackett at 609-882-4180.

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- **Mercer County Special Services School District: Special Child Health Case Management**, which provides coordinated and comprehensive services, regardless of financial status, for children ages birth to age 21 who are physically challenged, have congenital conditions or chronic illnesses, developmental delays, or the potential for disabling conditions. The coordination of services covers the areas of medical, educational, developmental, rehabilitative, social/emotional, and economic needs. Services also are provided to the families of these children to help provide a stable environment from which a child can grow and learn. To find out more, contact Susan Danch, Unit Coordinator, Mercer County Mercer Special Child Health Services, at 609-631-6594 or sdanch@mcsssd.us.
- **Mercer County Special Services School District: Project ADULTS**, which assists young adults with disabilities who are graduating from high school to transition into employment, day programs, or other vital services. Services available to young people with disabilities while in school differ greatly from those in adulthood. Project ADULTS helps families navigate this transitional period with experienced caseworkers who educate on the availability and help apply for and connect to important programs to support the individual's independence in adulthood. To learn more, contact Ann-Marie Salerno, Project ADULTS/MAP Coordinator, at 609-570-1168 or asalerno@mcsssd.us.
- **Meals on Wheels of Mercer County**, a comprehensive nutrition program committed to providing nutritious meals and related services that are designed to promote the independence, dignity, health, and well-being of its homebound participants. As a comprehensive nutrition program, Meals on Wheels of Mercer County also offers nutrition counseling and education, shelf-stable groceries once a month, "Blizzard Bags" for inclement weather, and pet food for its recipients' furry companions. Contact them at 609-695-3483 or visit their website, www.mealsonwheelsmercer.org, for more information.
- **The Mercer County REASSURANCE Program**, which provides a daily phone call at a designated time to a senior to check on their safety, security, and well-being. Available to those 60 or older who are living alone, caregivers can be put at ease knowing a loved one gets not only some social contact daily, but also a wellness check. For more information, call 609-883-2880 or visit www.contactofmercer.org.
- **Oaks Integrated Care Senior Well-being Program**, which provides interactive workshops, presentations, and supports groups to adults ages 60 or older and their caregivers on topics related to mental health and wellness. The program also provides short-term assessment,

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consultation, and referrals for older adults or caregivers who may need to access mental health or other resources. For more information, contact Steven Guarino at 609-694-2595 or steven.guarino@oaksintcare.org.

• **Interfaith Caregivers Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program**, which provides

free caregiving services to elderly and disabled residents in greater Mercer County. Using a generous volunteer force, the program provides support services that include friendly visiting; transportation to medical appointments, shopping, and other service needs; light housekeeping, including occasional meal preparation and indoor/outdoor chores; and telephone reassurance. For more information, call 609-393-9922 or visit www.icgmc.org.

• **Central Jersey Legal Services**, which

provides legal advice, document preparation, and representation in court to Mercer County residents. This can include simple last will and testament and power of attorney documents. For more information, call 609-695-6249 or visit www.lsnj.org/cjls.

• **Mercer County Nutrition Program for Older Adults**, where caregivers are

welcome to accompany their loved ones and share a meal at their local nutrition site. For more information, visit www.mercercounty.org/nutrition or call 609-989-6650.

- **Home Health Services**, which can provide a certified home health aide to assist with activities of daily living through two agencies: Mercer Home Health Care, which can be reached at 609-227-2727, and Mercer County Board of Social Services, which can be reached at 609-989-4346). The Board's program also can provide access to personal emergency response systems.

In addition, the Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC helps people understand eligibility and connect to programs that provide direct care, helping either relieve uncompensated caregivers of some of the stresses that come with caregiving or even allow them to be paid for the services they provide. These programs include:

• **The Statewide Respite Care Program (SRCP)**, which provides respite care

services to relieve caregivers of stress from providing daily care. This respite may be provided for a short time or once in a while. For example, services could be provided to allow the caregiver to take a vacation; cover care when a caregiver needs surgery or has an emergency; or give the caregiver time to take care of him/herself, run errands, etc. For more information, call 609-969-6661.

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- **Medicaid’s Managed Long-Term Services & Supports (MLTSS)**, which is designed to expand home-based and community-based services, promote community inclusion, and ensure quality and efficiency and to deliver long-term services and supports through New Jersey Medicaid’s NJ FamilyCare managed care program. Intended in large part to allow people to age in their homes and avoid facility living, MLTSS can provide a significant amount of in-home care, including a self-directed option through NJ’s Personal Preference Program (PPP), which allows a recipient to hire whomever they’d like to provide their care, including friends and/or family. For more information, call 609-989-6661.
- **Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving (JACC)**, a State-funded program that provides in-home and community-based services to individuals age 60 or older who meet clinical eligibility for nursing home level of care and who desire to remain in their homes within the community. JACC aims to strengthen participants’ networks of informal caregivers and to maximize autonomy by providing participants with the opportunity to direct their own care, including hiring their own providers, if desired. For more information, call 609-989-6661.
- **Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP)**, a State of New Jersey program that provides entirely self-directed services to those 18 or older with permanent physical disabilities who are working, preparing to work in education or training programs, or significantly involved in community volunteerism. Participants must not be eligible for any of New Jersey’s Medicaid programs and they must need assistance in at least one activity of daily living. Participants use a provided budget to hire caregivers, which can include friends and family. The program is coordinated through the Mercer County Aging & Disability Resource Connection. For more information, contact Reed Thomas, Mercer County PASP Coordinator, at 609-989-6459 or rthomas@mercercounty.org.

Do you provide care for a loved one? Has it taken a toll on? Do you need more information on how both you and the care recipient can be better supported? If you or someone you love could benefit from these services, call us Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 609-989-6661 or contact us by e-mail at ADRC@mercercounty.org. We are happy help.

Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County: Neighbors Helping Neighbors

*By Carla Winters, Grant Manager Interfaith Caregivers
and Linda Gyimoty, Executive Director Interfaith Caregivers*

The mission of Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County (ICGMC) is to promote the independence, dignity, and wellness of homebound older adults and adults with disabilities by matching them with supportive and caring volunteers who assist with the tasks of everyday life.

For over 28 years, the Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) program has been at the heart of these efforts. With supportive funding, including continuing grants from the Mercer County Office on Aging, and a dynamic interfaith coalition, hundreds of volunteers are mobilized each year to provide free caregiving services to our county's older adults struggling to remain independent in the comfort and familiarity of their homes.

As we age, we all face both the potential for physical and cognitive decline, creating difficulties in our daily routines from caring for one's home to caring for one's self. It can also become more difficult to stay connected to friends and family. This lack of physical activity and social connections can accelerate physical, cognitive, and emotional decline creating negative health outcomes for what is a growing portion of our population.

When asked, a large majority of Americans consistently express the wish to stay in their homes as they age (AARP, 2021). This same group also expressed doubts that they would be able to do so due to a lack of affordable options or the inability to find someone to help. ICGMC's services provide an option for those in our communities who have the need but no means to address it.

The residents who call ICGMC for help often have no other option. They may be without family support, struggling to meet basic living costs, or both. Linda Gyimoty, ICGMC's Executive Director, states that "Providing these caregiving services free of charge ensures that our most vulnerable older adults, often those with limited means, do not have to choose between getting some help and paying for food or medication this month." Further, she notes that the agency's generous and compassionate volunteers help these care receivers know that are valued and are still an important part of the larger world around them. "Every day our volunteers complete small, kind, and loving tasks: providing a ride to a doctor's appointment, assistance with grocery shopping, help with a home chore, or perhaps they just offer a friendly visit," shares Gyimoty. Volunteers

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**Neighbors
Helping Neighbors**

You Can Make A Difference!

VOLUNTEER TODAY

INTERFAITH
Caregivers
GREATER MERCER COUNTY

609-393-9922
icgmc.org

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are asked to provide just an hour or two a week, but when combined in common purpose, the agency is able to provide thousands of hours of service each year to hundreds of neighbors in need.

It is not just older adults and those living with disabilities who are positively impacted by these services; caregivers can be provided much needed respite as well. As we all live longer, the portion of the population needing care continues to grow. Often it is family members who fill that role with as many as one in five adults reporting that they provide uncompensated care to a loved one (Kirzinger et al., 2021). These family members report an increase in stress, a decline in their mental health, a decline in their physical health, and additional financial strain, with many reporting a combination of these effects. Even a small reprieve can help a caregiver recharge, take time to handle personal business, and ease their mind knowing that their loved one is still receiving the help they need.

As ICGMC works to enhance our ability to address the needs of the most vulnerable in the community, we find the community, as a whole, is strengthened. When the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we all work, ICGMC worked with experts to develop enhanced safety protocols and help those in the greatest need continue to receive services. Today, we continue to build capacity while prioritizing health and safety. Elderly and disabled care receivers are able to remain safe and supported, family caregivers receive respite and comfort, and of course volunteers themselves benefit, as the mental and physical health gains from volunteering are well-established.

For those interested in learning more about the services provided by Interfaith Caregivers or if interested in becoming a volunteer, staff may be reached by calling the office at 609-399-9922 or by checking out the agency's website at www.icgmc.org.



The Mercer County Older Adult Nutrition Program Annual Picnic Returned With A Bang!

By Reed Thomas

After canceling this beloved event in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, I'm happy to report that the 2022 Nutrition Program for Older Adults picnic was a smashing success! Hundreds turned up to enjoy dancing, food, popcorn, root beer floats, a photo booth, hula hooping lessons, and more. We at the Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC would like to thank the multitude of staff and volunteers who came together to make this event great for the communities we serve. The Mercer County Division of Public Health provided COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters to anyone present who wanted one, volunteers came from all over the community to pitch in, and County Executive Brian M. Hughes enjoyed the festivities and addressed the

nearly 500 people that afternoon. Special praise is due the Nutrition Program staff members, as their months of planning and hard work were directly responsible for the overall success of the day.

Want to learn more about how you or a loved one can participate in the daily meals as well as events like the annual picnic? Simply visit the program's website at <https://www.mercercounty.org/nutrition> or go to www.mercercounty.org and enter "senior nutrition" into the search bar, and the first result is the page you need. For further details and to sign up for the program, you can call 609-989-6650 or email nutrition@mercercounty.org.

So Much Fun!

VOLUME 79
FALL
2022





MERCER COUNTY FREE FOOD FINDER

By Reed Thomas

Food insecurity has long been a problem in the United States. The recent difficulties in supply chains, increasing cost of fuel and transport, and inflating prices on necessities have only made a bad problem worse.

As we approach the time of year where food-focused holidays cause many of our thoughts to turn to those who don't have the access to the food they need, let alone the excesses of holidays like Thanksgiving, it is good to know that there are people focused on connecting those in need to food resources year-round.

One such group of people dedicated to addressing food insecurities is the Trenton Health Team (THT). They have a committee working on spreading the word to the community on how, where, and when anyone can access food resources. That committee, along with the help of computer science students at Princeton University, has recently launched the Mercer County Free Food Finder! This online directory is

maintained by the Trenton Health Team as part of their effort to improve health equity in our region. It lists meals sites, food pantries, and meal distribution sites serving children, families, seniors, and adults.

Features include:

- A searchable directory of food distribution sites
- An interactive map display
- The ability to filter by day of the week, time of day, eligibility requirements, and more
- Embedded Google translate support
- Events tagging one-time opportunities, such as farm markets and special distributions
- A PDF export of food site search for print distribution

To use this resource, visit <https://mercerfoodfinder.herokuapp.com/>.

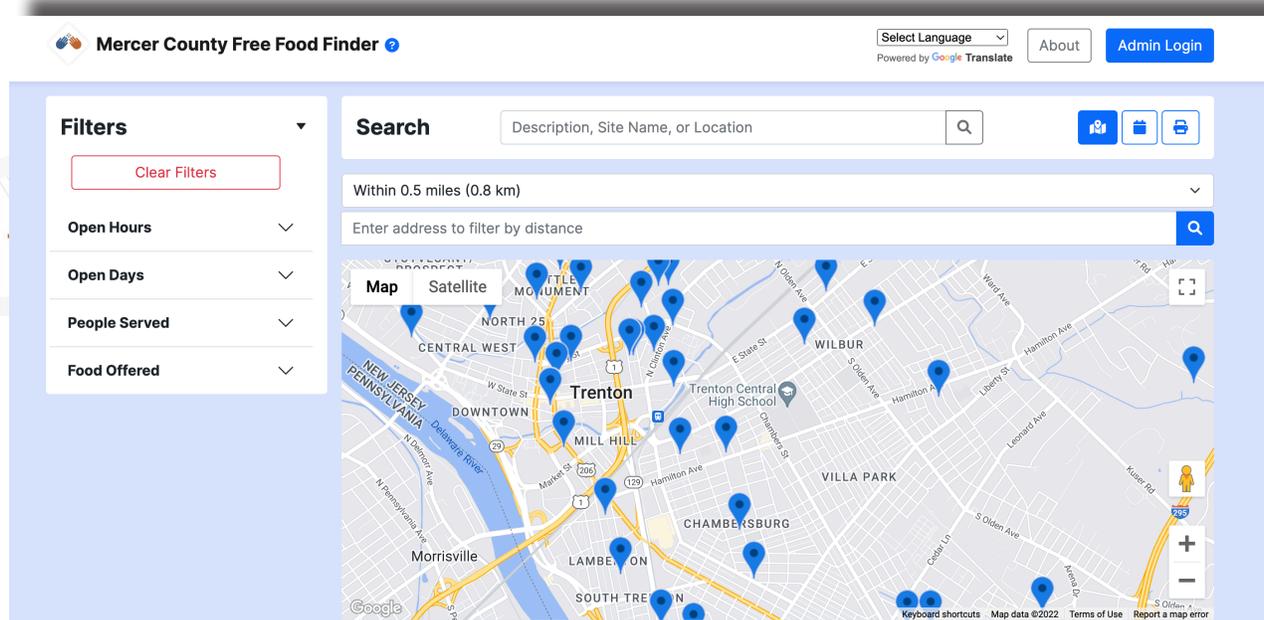
Whether you need a hot meal, access to fresh and non-perishable food for day-



to-day needs, or you're looking for food events like holiday hot meals, one-time distributions, or pop-up farm markets, the Mercer County Free Food Finder aims at putting them all in one easy-to-search place.

or older or living with a disability, please contact the Mercer County office on Aging/ADRC at 609-989-6661 or at ADRC@mercercounty.org; we're happy to help.

If access to the internet or understanding of how to navigate the directory are barriers to using this resource, there are options locally to help you take advantage of this fantastic new compilation of community food providers. All Mercer County Library System branches offer computer and internet access and have staff to assist you if needed (if you require assistance, please call your local branch to arrange help from library staff). If you are 60 years old



Pictured above is a sample of what the free food finder online directory looks like.

What is the New ANCHOR Program?

By Lauri Harbison

You may have received something through the mail about a new property tax relief program, which could provide a rebate between \$1,000 to \$1,500 if you are a homeowner or \$450 if you are a renter.

The Affordable New Jersey Communities for Homeowners and Renters (ANCHOR) program provides property tax relief to New Jersey residents who owned or rented their principal residence on Oct. 1, 2019, and meet the income limits. This benefit replaces the Homestead Benefit offered to N.J. homeowners in prior years. It is different, however, because it extends the benefit to N.J. renters as well as homeowners.

The filing deadline for the ANCHOR Application is Dec. 30, 2022, and the income you provide should reflect your income from 2019, not your more current income. The type of application you

submit, too, should reflect your housing status in 2019—if you owned a home at that time, you apply as a homeowner; if you were a renter at that time, you should apply as a tenant. Tenants only qualify to apply if their name appears on the lease.

Keep in mind that the New Jersey Division of Taxation will begin paying ANCHOR benefits in late spring 2023. ANCHOR payments will be paid in the form of a direct

deposit or check, not as credits to property tax bills. It is also important to note that ANCHOR benefit payments are not reportable as New Jersey income on your income tax return.

For any questions, call the ANCHOR hotline at 888-238-1233. You also can find more information, including how to access the online application system, at <https://www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/anchor/index.shtml>.



ANCHOR
AFFORDABLE NJ COMMUNITIES
FOR HOME OWNERS & RENTERS

HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
\$1,500 FOR HOMEOWNERS EARNING \$150K OR LESS
\$1,000 FOR HOMEOWNERS EARNING >\$150 - 250K
\$450 FOR RENTERS EARNING \$150K OR LESS

**This year's benefit is based on residential status as of Oct. 1, 2019*

Apply Today!
[NJ.GOV/TREASURY/TAXATION/ANCHOR](https://www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/anchor)

DEADLINE TO APPLY:
DEC. 30, 2022



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP)

ESTADO DE NJ DEPARTAMENTO
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Programa De Servicios De Asistencia Personal

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CONTACT US NOW!

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PASP ofrece a los consumidores opciones, flexibilidad, control y la oportunidad de administrar sus servicios de cuidado personal a través del recibo de una asignación en efectivo.

CONTACTANOS AHORA!



Mercer County ADRC
Reed Thomas 609-989-6459
rthomas@mercercounty.org
640 South Broad St, P.O. Box 8068
Trenton, NJ 08650-0068



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