



*If you need
something,
just ask!*



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

As we look ahead to 2022, we wish you all a new year filled with the gifts of joy, love, and good health. As we look back on 2021, we would like to express our gratitude to our many dedicated volunteers who make life easier for our members and also serve our wider community in so many ways.

At the end of November, volunteers (pictured above from left) Laura Impastato, Diane Yadow, Colette Ballew and Cass Collins decorated a holiday tree at "Trees for a Cause," an event organized by the Hawley Hub. The tree was on display for two weeks to coincide with Hawley's Winterfest.

In 2022 Board member Diane Yadow will step down from her position as president of Wayne County PA WIN/Link, but not step away. Diane will begin the new year as secretary of that organization. WIN/Link collects and disseminates long-term care information for older adults and younger people with disabilities and the families that support them, regardless of age or income.

*Hand in Hand:
Linking Lives*

Board member Jane Luchsinger was one of two recipients recognized by the New York State Office for the Aging as an “outstanding community service volunteer in Sullivan County.” Each of the 57 counties across the state choose an individual or individuals worthy of this honor. At the annual Older New Yorker’s Day celebration held virtually in November, NYSOFA Director Greg Olsen congratulated and thanked Jane for her “selfless service and ongoing commitment to help others.” He acknowledged all the recipients for “their wisdom, their talents, their mentorship, and their service.”

His words hit the mark: we are deeply grateful for the wisdom, talents, and selfless service of all our Growing Older Together volunteers.



ANTI AGE-ISM

By Marcia Nehemiah

Take a moment to honestly respond to these questions: What does it mean to be old? How do you feel about yourself as you age? How do you talk about growing older? What feelings come up when you see a person who is younger than you are?

Tracey Gendron, gerontologist and author of “Ageism Unmasked: Exploring Age Bias and How to End It,” strives to “understand, raise awareness and disrupt the deeply embedded, normalized and invisible ageism that is within us all.” She says that we need to recognize and understand how “our unexamined views about aging impact our behaviors, thoughts, and actions.”

Internalized negative attitudes about aging has been called a public health crisis because people who hold these negative attitudes tend to suffer harmful health outcomes such as increased risk for chronic disease, higher cortisol levels, increased inflammation, decreased cognitive ability, reduced recovery from illness, and decreased longevity. On the other hand, those who have positive views of growing older live 7.5 years longer than those with negative views.

Because of constant media focus that emphasizes looking younger and that discounts older people, many of us have unacknowledged beliefs that we are somehow diminished because we are older. Gedron calls this “internalized ageism,” and one way it is manifested is in the euphemisms we use to describe our age. Because we are made to feel ashamed of our age by the dominant cultural narrative that to be old is to be useless, irrelevant, replaceable, and unproductive, we try to avoid the reality of our aging by using euphemisms to describe ourselves. We say we are “mature,” “vintage,” “senior,” “experienced,” rather than stating our actual age or using the word, “old.”

What can we do to counteract internalized ageism? Gedron has these suggestions:

- Before you use language to disparage others because of their age, pause and remind yourself why you want to disrupt ageism. Avoid these kinds of statements: “You don’t look 70!” or “You look great for your age.”
- Listen. Pay attention and think about the language you use to describe yourself. For example, instead of saying, “I feel so old,” be more accurate. Say, “I’m tired right now,” or “My hands hurt.” Instead of saying, “I’m having a senior moment,” say “I can’t think of that word right now.”
- Learn. Equip yourself with knowledge about the serious consequences of ageism for you and others. You can start [here](#) and [here](#).

Each one of us is multidimensional—our age is only one part of who we wholly are. Instead of the one-dimensional story that aging is solely a state of decline, we can think of growing older as a process of evolving, changing, adapting, and living a full and long life.

As Gedron says, “There is no one alive who is not aging. Aging is living, and living is about growing.”

[Marcia Nehemiah is a co-founder, member, volunteer, and president of Growing Older Together.]



MEET VOLUNTEER MARJORIE YOUNG

By Marileta Robinson

Growing Older Together volunteer Marjorie Young seems to be brimming with energy. "I'd rather be busy than not," she says.

Marjorie moved from New York City to Lake Ariel, PA, 30 years ago, and now works from home as an insurance broker. She prefers this alternative to the hours-long commute that she used to make. But the extra time she gained doesn't go to waste. She loves to weave, knit, and sew, and also enjoys exploring the outdoors, especially the beautiful areas around Lake Ariel. In addition, she takes care of her husband.

Contemplating retirement sometime in the future, Marjorie began looking for other worthwhile activities to fill her time. When she attended a talk in Lake Ariel on the Growing Older Together program, Marjorie liked what she heard and decided to sign up as a volunteer. Explaining why the program attracted her, she says, "It sounded interesting and fun, and the people are really nice. I also felt that it would give my life a purpose."

Now Marjorie lends her talent and energy to Growing Older Together members who need a little help. She regularly picks up mail for a member, and "I found myself fixing an answering machine on another occasion," she says, laughing. "It was fun!"



MEET THE MEMBERS—BOB AND CISSY BRUCE

By Marileta Robinson

It wouldn't be hard to strike up a conversation with Growing Older Together members Bob and Cissy Bruce. Their interests are wide and varied, and their attitude radiates positivity. Bob is originally from Brooklyn, and Cissy is from western Pennsylvania. After marrying and settling in New York, they raised two sons and worked in graphic design and art direction. Then, as the familiar story goes, they visited a friend with a vacation home here, fell in love with this area, and relocated in 1998. They dived into the community, selling antiques and books at the Hawley Antique Exchange for a time. Bob is an avid collector of vinyl records and is a member of the Wayne County Arts Alliance. Cissy enjoyed classes in Tai Chi and tap dancing, but these pursuits are currently on hold, pending a hip replacement. (Cissy confided that she does try a few tap steps now and then, holding on to her walker.)

Cissy first heard about Growing Older Together from a Tai Chi classmate at the senior center in Honesdale. After looking at the GOT brochure, she and Bob decided that the services offered were ones they could use, either now or in the future, and decided to become members. One week, a volunteer took a load of laundry to the laundromat and brought the clean laundry to their home, and a volunteer comes weekly to take their trash and recycling bins to the curb. Cissy has thought about asking a volunteer to walk through the house with her and

help her put things away, a task that is no longer easy now that she uses a walker. She said she has found everyone they've met through GOT to be kind, helpful, and responsible.

[Volunteer Marileta Robinson is a frequent contributor to this newsletter.]

JUST FOR LAUGHS

When someone asks what I did over the weekend, I squint and ask, "Why, what did you hear?"

Growing Older Together is grateful to our sponsors for their generous support.

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Your **tax-deductible donation** will go a long way in sustaining GOT as we continue to fulfill our mission: to provide residents aged 60 and older in Wayne and Pike counties, PA, and western Sullivan County, NY, and adjacent areas, both the practical means and the social connections to live independently in their homes. GOT is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Any amount, large or small, is welcome. Please mail your check to GOT, 830 Main Street #574, Honesdale, PA 18431. Thank you in advance for your support.

Please help spread the word about the benefits of becoming a member and/or volunteer for GOT. If you know a friend or neighbor who might want to offer a helping hand or might benefit from one, share our phone number, 570-630-0509, and/or our web address, **got.clubexpress.com**. Thank you!

Growing Older Together is supported in part by grants from the Wayne Memorial Health Foundation and the Barbara J. Buchanan Fund.