



Project Independence (P.I.) is a program designed to support residents 60 and over to continue to enjoy good health and a rewarding quality of life in their own homes and communities. Call 311 or (516) 869-6311 for more information.

YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE!

Thanks to a grant from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council New Freedom Funds, administered by the NYS Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Authority, Project Independence has been able to maintain and expand transportation services for Town residents age 60 and older. These include (please call 311 a day in advance to make reservations):

- **Shopping Taxi Rides:** Free rides, two days a week between the hours of 10am and 2 pm to a designated, local supermarket center.
- **Non-emergency Medical Transportation:** Steeply discounted taxi rates to your North Hempstead doctor, dentist or treatment appointments. Service available 24/7.

- **CarFit:** A certified CarFit specialist will assess your comfort and safety in your own vehicle and suggest adjustments, devices and more – to keep you safe behind the wheel.
- **Mobility Management:** Call for any transportation related question or issue and PI’s mobility managers will help you get to where you need to go.
- **PI Transportation Resource Guide For Seniors:** Call to arrange to pick up a copy of this invaluable 90-page guide detailing local transportation resources, maps, driving tips, applications for Handicapped Parking Permits, MTA reduced-fare MetroCards, Able Ride, Driver License or Non-Driver ID Card and more.

THE CARING CORNER – 99 AND COUNTING!

“I don’t know what I would do without Project Independence!” The declaration comes from an active, 99 year old PI member, Mrs. B., whose family lives out of state. A PI social worker and nurse have been visiting Mrs. B. for more than a year, and even though she has full time assistance at home, she finds PI services necessary and invaluable. With the nurse’s help, Mrs. B. selected a personal emergency response system. Her blood pressure is monitored, medications managed and doctors referred as needed. Recently, Mrs. B. became a bit unsteady when she stood and the PI

nurse worked with her personal physician to address this issue. The PI social worker has helped Mrs. B. handle complicated family and financial matters. Through the Help at Home program, PI staff arranged to have her mailbox secured, grab bars installed, a heating problem fixed and light bulbs changed. Mrs. B. also uses the PI taxi transportation program to get to her medical appointments. Mrs. B. appreciates the support from Project Independence, but according to the PI staff, it is they who get the most out of the relationship!



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Receiver of Taxes

A MESSAGE FROM FORMER SUPERVISOR JON KAIMAN



After ten years as North Hempstead Supervisor, in September of this year I accepted an appointment from Governor Andrew Cuomo to serve as his Special Advisor for Long Island Storm Recovery. In addition, I agreed to serve as Chairman of the Nassau Interim Finance Authority (NIFA), an unrelated volunteer post. I offer my congratulations and best wishes to Supervisor-Elect, Judi Bosworth. Judi has been a great supporter of Project Independence in her tenure as a Nassau County Legislator and I know she will continue to fulfill the mission of this great program.

It is with tremendous pride and gratitude to you, the reader, and to the staff of the Town Department of Services for the Aging, that I write my final message for the Pioneer newsletter. Together we crafted an aging-in-place program – Project Independence (PI) – which won national acclaim and which has become a model for communities across the country dedicated to assisting their older residents to remain in their own homes with optimal health and self-sufficiency. We did it efficiently, economically and quickly. Our program has saved millions by averting nursing home placements, hospital stays and emergency room visits. Almost 90,000 taxi trips for food shopping and medical visits have been provided to our seniors. Thirty thousand 311 calls each year are fielded by Project Independence staff – calls for home repairs, nursing services, social work support, registrations for PI fitness classes and community education events, information and referral services. Our belief in and commitment to Project Independence is validated by studies conducted by our program evaluator – the Hofstra University Center for Suburban Studies. Those reports are available to all.

My family and I remain residents of the Town of North Hempstead because we love it here, and my wife, Kim, and I hope to be here when we become eligible for Project Independence ourselves! So this is really not a farewell message, but a “so long” – and hope to see you soon.

Jon Kaiman



**Tune in every Friday morning from 10 a.m. to noon
for the Project Independence Radio Show
on WCWP 88.1 FM!**

You can also visit the LIU-Post website, wcwp.org, to hear the program live,
or catch up with past shows at tonhprojectindependence.net.



Visit our website: www.tonhprojectindependence.net.
Email us at: projectindependence@northhempsteadny.gov.



FIVE ESSENTIAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS FOR SENIORS

by Ronald Fatoullah, Esq., CELA

As we grow older, it is imperative that we make sure to have certain legal documents in place for our protection and security. The following are the five legal documents seniors should have:

1. Health Care Proxy

A Health Care Proxy is a document whereby an individual (the “principal”) appoints an individual (the “agent”) to make health care decisions on his or her behalf in the event that the principal is unable to do so. Health Care Proxies are governed by New York State statute. Generally, a Health Care Proxy empowers an agent to make any and all health care decisions on behalf of the principal. However, unless the agent knows the principal’s wishes regarding artificial nutrition and hydration (feeding tubes), the agent will not have the authority to make decisions about these measures. Therefore, it is critical in the process of choosing an agent and signing a Health Care Proxy, that you discuss your wishes with your agent.

2. Living Will

A Living Will is an advance health care directive in which an individual sets forth his/her health care wishes. This document is used in conjunction with a Health Care Proxy to provide written instructions to the named agent as to the health care wishes of the individual. A Living Will is often utilized when there is a medical diagnosis of a persistent vegetative state with no hope of recovery.

3. Last Will and Testament

A Last Will and Testament will ensure that an individual’s assets will pass to his/her intended beneficiaries upon death. These beneficiaries may include family members, friends or charitable organizations. If a person dies without a Will, assets will pass according to New York State law of intestacy at the time of death. This means that the State will determine to whom and in what proportion

the assets will be distributed, which often leads to unintended consequences.

4. Power of Attorney with a Statutory Gifts Rider

A Power of Attorney is a legal document which allows the principal to appoint an agent to act on his or her behalf with regard to financial matters. As of September 1, 2009, a Statutory Gifts Rider must be signed simultaneously with a Power of Attorney in order to authorize an agent to make gifts on behalf of the principal of over \$500 in any given year. Without a properly drafted and executed Power of Attorney, a guardianship petition may be required in order to make any financial decisions for a person who is incapacitated. It is essential to consult with an experienced elder law attorney to ensure that the Power of Attorney and Statutory Gifts Rider are drafted with sufficient additional powers to allow estate and Medicaid planning.

5. Living Trusts

Living Trusts can be revocable or irrevocable. Trusts are useful tools which may be created for a variety of reasons depending on the needs of an individual. Trusts may be used to avoid probate, preserve assets for Medicaid planning purposes, minimize estate taxes, plan for disabled individuals, etc. Trusts can be signed while the individual is living (“living trust”) or trust language can be drafted into a will (“testamentary trust”).

It is important to note that these documents can only be signed when an individual has capacity. Therefore, seniors should not procrastinate. An experienced attorney will be able to guide you in the preparation and execution of these essential documents.

Ronald Fatoullah, Esq., CELA is a lecturer for Project Independence and has been a guest on Project Independence and You/Senior Talk Radio on WCWP. His practice is in Great Neck.



Visit our website: www.tonhprojectindependence.net.
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Your Deadline is December 31, 2013!

All homeowners receiving the **Basic STAR** property tax exemption must re-register with the New York State Tax Department by December 31, 2013 in order to continue to get the exemption in 2014 and beyond. **This is a new requirement.** According to Town of North Hempstead Receiver of Taxes, Charles Berman, the State Tax Department sent letters to all homeowners currently receiving the Basic STAR exemption with instructions for reapplying. The letters include a STAR Code which you will need in order to do the application. If, for some reason, the letter hasn't reached you, call (518) 457-2036 or visit the tax department website at www.tax.ny.gov.

Laugh Out Loud

The members of Project Independence actively participate in the many "Health Chats" the program sponsors about medical issues that commonly arise with aging. But now, PI social worker Mark Meltzer offers the opportunity to get together just to laugh and have fun.

Mark begins with an introduction and history of *The Honeymooners*, the classic Jackie Gleason TV series. Participants are asked what they know about the show and the various performers. Then, he shows the group a Honeymooners episode and they talk about why it remains so funny, albeit politically incorrect in spots, almost 60 years later. They compare *The Honeymooners* with shows of today and Mark invites audience members to share a joke or funny story to see if there's a budding Jackie Gleason among them.

The program has been a great success with PI groups in Great Neck, New Hyde Park and Westbury. Watch for announcements about *The Honeymooners* Comedy Chat coming to a PI location near you! Or call 311 or 869-6311 for info about this or the Health Chat series. Information can also be found on the PI website – www.tonhprojectindependence.net.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff – Call 311

by Otto Lohse

Many times it's the small stuff that makes our lives more difficult. Recently, a Project Independence member took advantage of our free Help at Home program by having a few small items checked off his "to-do" list. He needed a ceiling light bulb and batteries replaced in his smoke detectors. Due to a shoulder problem, the member is unable to reach over his head. After hearing about the Help at Home program, he decided to call 311. Within a matter of days, workers came to his house and took care of various tasks. The Help at Home program is a partnership with The Rehabilitation Institute (TRI) of Westbury, where adults with disabilities are trained for jobs in the community. As part of their on-the-job training, the students are dispatched to PI homes, always in the company of a TRI Supervisor, where the minor household repairs or other tasks are done. Arrangements are made via 311.

Members of Project Independence look on as a TRI Trainee assists in PI's Help at Home Program.



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“Woman of the Year” Volunteers for PI Seniors

by Christine Weber

PI partners with EAC, one of Long Island’s major human service agencies, on several initiatives including an important respite program for family caregivers. Betty Ann Pristupa of Williston Park was recently named Nassau County Senior Woman of the Year, and caregivers in the PI/EAC Senior Respite Program know why. Since 1986, EAC’s respite program has served as a lifeline for family caregivers through the helping hands of companions like Betty Ann. For the past seven years, she has brought critical relief to these caregivers, often on weekends. She visits with frail older people so that their devoted helpmates can take much needed breaks – time to relax, enjoy a day at the park or spend time with grandchildren. To find out how the PI/EAC Respite Program can help you, or if you would like to become a companion, call (516) 539-0150 ext. 218, or simply dial 311.



*Senior Woman of the Year
Betty Ann Pristupa.*

Advocacy for Federal Retirees and Others

by Mark Bernstein

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the earned pay, retirement and health care benefits of federal employees, retirees and their survivors. And NARFE advocacy activities benefit many retired seniors whether they were federal employees or not. Founded in 1921, NARFE’s legacy spans more than 90 years.

NARFE’s mission is both critical and timely, as Congress and the administration consider unprecedented cuts to federal pay and benefits. Contact NARFE at (516) 621-6207 or mjbern19@yahoo.com for information about local membership and meetings.

Dear Mr. President...

Long time PI member Hazel Pachtman of New Hyde Park, throughout her many years of advocacy on behalf of causes, has proven time and again that one voice can be heard, whether that voice is raised to demand a traffic signal at a dangerous local intersection, or on behalf of world peace!

Recently, Hazel wrote a letter to President Obama detailing her concerns about climate change and the upheaval she and her family experienced in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. Shortly thereafter, Hazel and her husband Sheldon received a reply – a thoughtful, three-page, detailed, supportive response from the President. For Hazel, that letter is more than a scrapbook entry; it’s proof that passion and persistence pay off.

The Project Independence *Pioneer* newsletter is issued four times a year, in March, June, September and December. Send your releases and announcements to:

Pioneer Editor

Project Independence • 470 Old Westbury Road • Roslyn Heights, NY 11577



Visit our website: www.tonhprojectindependence.net.
Email us at: projectindependence@northhempsteadny.gov.



SECOND AGING IN PLACE IN SUBURBIA CONFERENCE – A SUMMER SMASH HIT

The Second Regional Aging in Place in Suburbia Conference – Living Better with Technology, attracted almost 100 exhibitors and 800 guests. In partnership with the National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University and the North Shore/LIJ Health System, the Town of North Hempstead hosted the conference at the spectacular Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury. And the facility, with its huge double gym, beautiful meeting rooms, state-of-the art computer labs, fitness center and TV studio, and inviting PI Senior Lounge, was the conversation piece of the day.



An aerial view of the Expo at the PI Aging in Place in Suburbia Conference.

Conference speakers included former Town Supervisor Jon Kaiman, who discussed Project Independence – its past, present and future; U.S. Representative Steve Israel, who provided the Washington D.C. perspective on aging issues; Dr. Marc Silver of Hofstra, who shared the findings of his “Impact Analysis” of PI and its mission (all good!) and Abby Stokes, author of “Is This Thing On? A Computer Handbook for Late Bloomers....” Lawrence Levy, Executive Dean of the Suburban Studies Center, was an able and entertaining program host.

If you missed it and want information, call 311 or 869-6311. The future is here!

Perhaps the most fascinating feature of the event was the stunning array of futuristic technological advances on display – especially for seniors and people with special needs: tele-medicine, long-distance monitoring, talking watches and scales, TV listening devices, adaptive computer products, “smart” communication devices, motion sensors, and transport and ambulatory aids.

SENIOR SCAMS AND SCHEMES – SAFE AT HOME

Bernard Hardy is a retired New York City police detective-turned security consultant who instructs as he entertains senior groups at our centers, and on our radio show, about scams and schemes aimed at separating us from our money. Awareness and alertness is your best protection. This is the last in a three-part series.

When coming home alone – especially late at night – you should:

- Avoid shortcuts that are not well traveled or well lighted
- Know what stores are open in your neighborhood late at night. If you suspect that you are being followed, stay away from lonely blocks and head for the store you know to be open; if it’s a bar, don’t hesitate to go in
- If someone drops you off at home by auto, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside
- If a motorist bothers you while you are walking, turn around and walk in the opposite direction. Keep reversing direction until you get to a safe space

Safe at Home continues on next page



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SENIOR TALK RADIO

by Gerry Peretsman

Project Independence's foray into radio broadcasting some two years ago is the classic story of a small acorn growing into a mighty oak.

The concept of using radio to provide value-oriented programming to serve the needs and interests of seniors in North Hempstead arose at one of PI's volunteer Advisory Committee meetings. Dan Cox, station manager at LIU-Post's radio station, WCWP (88.1 FM), an initial supporter of the idea, arranged for PI to have two hours of airtime every Friday from 10 a.m. to noon and enlisted LIU-Post students to provide the necessary technical support. PI's professional staff, Evelyn Roth, your host, and Kristina Lew, who makes the behind-the-scenes programming arrangements, continue to work diligently with the PI radio committee and PI-member co-hosts to ensure that Senior Talk Radio remains a success.

How do we measure success? In many ways: comments to PI from residents of North Hempstead, the decision by two local businesses (North Shore Honda and iCracked.com) to underwrite the show, and, significantly, the decision by the station to commit WCWP's 10 a.m. to noon time slots, Monday through Friday, to more programming for seniors. So now, tune in to 88.1 FM or visit WCWP.org every weekday morning. And if you tune in a bit earlier, you'll hear music from the 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's. Project Independence and You is also available at the PI website a few days after it airs at www.tonhprojectindependence.net. If you have difficulty getting the station on 88.1 FM or WCWP.org, call 311 for some tips, including using your old TV antenna! Finally, you too can be a radio co-host on Friday mornings. Just call 311 and help make Senior Talk Radio even more valuable and interesting for your neighbors. We want your ideas for guests, too!



Shown from left to right, at the second anniversary broadcast of Project Independence and You/Senor Talk Radio, are producer Kristina Lew, program host Evelyn Roth and station manager Dan Cox, at LIU-Post's WCWP - 88.1 FM.

SENIOR SCAMS AND SCHEMES – SAFE AT HOME

- Have your key ready before you get to the front door
- Make sure your entrance area is well lit
- If you live in an apartment building, don't be polite and hold the lobby door for a stranger
- List only your last name and first initial on your mailbox
- Don't buzz someone inside unless you know him/her
- If a stranger wants to use your phone for any kind of call, whether it's for business, personal or "emergency" use, keep him outside and make the call for him. Any problem or doubt, call the police
- If you arrive home and find your door open, DO NOT GO INSIDE! Call the police from your cell phone or your neighbor's house
- Don't get on the elevator with a stranger if your own good judgment warns you against it. If you need an excuse to avoid embarrassment, say something like, "Oh, I forgot my mail."

* Learn more or schedule a presentation for your group at www.interstateincorporated.com or (516) 338-2840.



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Articles for The PIONEER Newsletter are suggested by an editorial committee made up of PI members from all areas of the Town. They recently asked that we reprint a still-relevant article from the Fall/Winter 2007 issue of the PIONEER, entitled Plan Ahead for Main-Level Living. All suggestions and requests for articles are welcome.

PLAN AHEAD FOR MAIN-LEVEL LIVING

Is your washer/dryer in the basement? Is your bedroom up a flight of stairs? What about a full bathroom – is there one on the main level of your home? After visiting with almost 400 families and individuals in the Project Independence area,* PI staffers say a major obstacle preventing residents from remaining in their own homes and familiar surroundings as they grow older is the physical layout of their homes.

“Most of the folks talk about increasing difficulty navigating stairs,” says Town Supervisor Jon Kaiman, “especially when one member of a couple is coping with a disability and the other is the primary caregiver.” In fact, falls are the number one cause of injury and lost mobility for seniors. Project Independence members report increased pressure from worried children to move into an assisted living situation or nursing home. “Yet most of our folks want to remain at home,” Kaiman said. Before reaching the point at which obstacles at home become serious health or safety issues, seniors are advised to plan ahead for “main-level living” – for modifications to their homes to make them safer and more accessible and convenient.

Main-level living can be accomplished by turning a main-level half-bath into an accessible full bath, converting a main-level guest room into a master bedroom, and moving the basement laundry room into the attached garage or even the kitchen. Home renovations needn’t be traumatic if planning is done well enough in advance.

Project Independence has been helping some people find out if they are eligible for financial assistance with renovations. Others are looking into second or reverse mortgages. For more information, or just to discuss main-level living, call PI at 311 or 869-6311.

** This article was written before the Town-wide expansion of Project Independence.*



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