

Dive deep into some obscure local history

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# Big changes signal a promising season for the home team



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# focus on health



## AGING WELL...

*...and the community programs that help you get there*

BY JINELLE SHENGULETTE

**I**t's about eating right, staying physically fit and engaged in social activities, and continuous mental stimulation. Regular doctor's visits are paramount as well.

As an affiliate of the University of Rochester, the Highlands at Pittsford is able to focus on the interest of lifelong learning for residents of the retirement community as well as seniors around Rochester. "It's been proven that keeping your brain active, alive, and challenged is good for all of us as we age," says Ann Julien, director of sales and marketing at the community. The Highlands offers a variety of lecture series, focusing on

liberal arts topics, health and wellness, music, and more.

Lifespan also tackles the topic of health and wellness with its evidence-based workshops, notably A Matter of Balance, designed to decrease the likelihood of falls in older adults. Falls can lead to personal injury, resulting in a lack of independence. "Usually, once an older adult falls for the first time, they tend to limit their activities, which makes them more prone

to falling again," says Mary Rose McBride, vice president of marketing and communications at Lifespan. The workshop increases activity levels in the elderly and works on improving flexibility, balance, and strength, as well as decreasing the fear of falling. The two-hour courses last six to eight weeks and are open to the public at no cost.

While physical fitness is an important component to aging well, the



gym can be intimidating for seniors, and home exercise can prove dangerous. Regain Physical Therapy has created an exercise program specifically for seniors called Greatfit. Physical therapists and physical therapy assistants are the muscular/skeletal experts, and they never leave the client's side during a session.

The assessment portion of the program focuses on specific tests of strength, balance, endurance, and flexibility. The facility is outfitted with workout equipment, but most of the clients use exercise bands and other

simple tools. "If we can simply get seniors to keep moving, studies show they will increase their chances of enjoying life and living independently longer," says owner and physical therapist Heather Nichting.

Also in an effort to keep seniors independent, in-home care offers assistance with housework, cooking, laundry, bathing, and medication reminders.

Living Well Companion Care at Jewish Senior Life is one service that works hard to match the right caregiver with each client. It starts with

a client assessment to find out what their needs are and what they're looking for in a caregiver. For employees, it means thorough background checks, interviewing processes, drug screening, and more. Building client/caregiver relationships is key. "Socialization in the home helps with mental stimulation, which is good for health," said Lori Smith, office manager for says Well Companion Care.

Nothing provides a more youthful glow than a warm and welcoming smile. As we age, it is important not to forget the role a healthy smile plays in our appearance and our physical well-being.

According to Dr. Jill Nikas, a dentist in the Brighton-Henrietta area, "Missing teeth can affect our speech, our diet, even our facial muscles. Proper functioning teeth support our facial muscles and keep them toned." Tooth loss can also lead to jawbone loss, which can alter our facial appearance significantly.

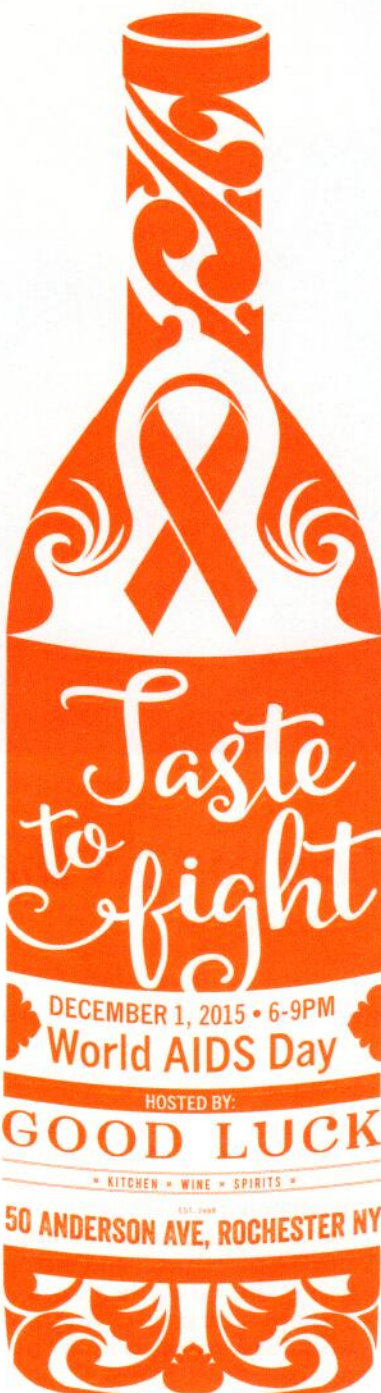
Gum disease, the most common cause of tooth loss among adults, doesn't just stop at the mouth. There is increasing evidence of a link between gum disease and many health conditions more predominant later in life, such as heart disease, stroke, pneumonia and diabetes.

"Having healthy teeth and gums are vital to our overall health," says Nikas. "They also help support good nutrition, which is especially important as we age." According to Nikas, brushing twice a day, flossing at least once a day and regular visits to the dentist are all it takes to have a smile that lasts a lifetime.

For the chronically ill, Trillium Health offers its HIV program, which has been in operation for thirty years. The aim of the program is to keep the participants living and aging well and managing their disease. Of Trillium's 800 patients with HIV, half are over the age of fifty. With advances in technology and medicine, senior vice president and staff physician Bill Valenti says the disease has become a more manageable chronic condition, and patients are living longer, fuller lives than when the program first started decades ago. Trillium even offers medications for HIV-negative people at risk of contracting the disease.

Make use of these community services and many more designed to keep you healthy and living well for decades to come.

*Jinelle Shengulette is a Rochester-based freelance writer.*





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