

April—May
2021



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The Newsletter for South Orange and Maplewood Residents 60+

The Year Under COVID

Last year, the April/May issue of this newsletter went straight to the recycling bin. All events were cancelled, we did not know how COVID would affect us or for how long. A lot changed last year, and as the vaccines roll out and things start to return to “normal” we can start to explore what the new normal will be.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has begun to issue advice on who and how to resume in person activities. If you have been vaccinated, it is important to continue to practice COVID safety protocols such as wearing a mask, keeping physical distance and frequent handwashing while other wait for vaccines. Once we build herd immunity, which will begin to happen when at least 70% of the population is vaccinated, we will dramatically reduce the ability of the virus to spread.

When things go back to “normal” they will still be different. We would like to know what activities you will be comfortable doing again, and what should be changed. To help us plan for the year to come, please take a survey that asks about you, your experience under COVID and your comfort level and plans about re-engaging with events and activities. You can fill it out by going to our website and clicking the link for “COVID Survey” or by calling (973) 558-0863 to have one mailed to you.

In the meantime, for those still waiting for a vaccine, please use the following to find an available appointment. We expect that many more appointments will open up by mid-April as more vaccines are produced and delivered to New Jersey.

Go to www.EssexCOVID.org or call 973-877-8456 to schedule an appointment at one of the Essex County Vaccine Sites. Residents age 75+ may receive a call from the NJ State COVID registration in the next few weeks for appointments.



We are thrilled to announce that Repair Cafe goes on! Adapted to be COVID-safe, our next Repair Cafe will be held outdoors at the Skate House in South Orange (parking on Meade Street or on the middle school parking lot). Our volunteer repair people will be there to stitch, glue, screw, replace, tape or whatever they can do to fix your broken and beloved items on Saturday, May 1, 1-4pm. Repairs will be done outside with scheduled time slots to avoid crowding. To schedule your repair, call (973) 558-0863 or email SOMA2towns@gmail.com and let us know what needs to be fixed. We will tell you what time to join us at the Skate House.

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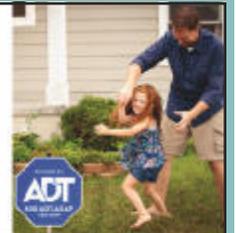


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SOMA Two Towns for All Ages, Maplewood, NJ

06-5292

Home renovation can be a most exciting yet sometimes harrowing process – let alone a pricey one. The question has arisen: Does addressing safety concerns and following the principles Universal Design when renovating increase the market value of a home? Let's explore.

By its definition, Universal Design aims to create an environment that can be used in the widest possible range of situations to include as many people as possible and allow them to live independently. We often assume that this speaks to senior citizens and/or individuals with physical limitations. However, most of us experience reduced functioning at one point or another in life. How many families have welcomed a teenager home from a ski trip with a leg in a cast? Suddenly there is a scramble to accommodate his or her mobility and day to day activities.

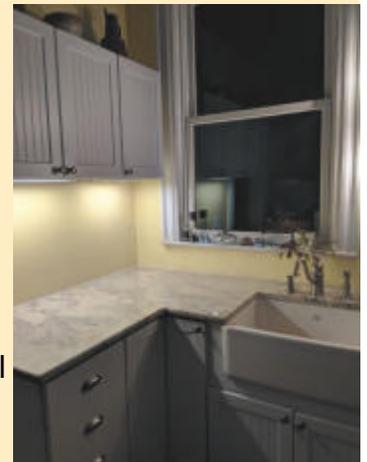
On the exterior, most SOMA homes have entries with any number of steps, posing an issue for wheelchair or "on crutches" access – be it a temporary need or a long-term one, as perhaps in a multi generational household. Most often, we see ramps constructed with strictly function in mind. They are usually basic in form, color and building material and thus tend to detract from the curb appeal of the home and perhaps even stigmatize it. A more attractive design would replicate an architectural detail from the existing home's façade, like the railing on a front porch. This provides a seamless solution with aesthetic appeal and enhances that all important first impression – crucial when determining a home's market value. Additionally, pruning mature landscaping and trees in front of a home to create a line of sight from the front door to the street enhances safety as well as desirability.

On the interior, open floorplan design is a concept currently in vogue. Of all renovation projects this is the most disruptive and costly, but delivers most contribution to a home's value. When completed it offers ease of movement by eliminating the need for expanding aisles and doorways to allow safe passage for wheelchairs and walkers. There are though smaller, inexpensive modifications to increase both safety and appeal in a home. An example would be installing motion sensor lighting in closets. Incorporating "smart home" features, such as remote control dimmer switches and thermostats

and handsfree door locks distinguishes a home adding perceived value.

Bathroom renovation offers many possibilities to create a space that is safe, reachable and can be used independently regardless of size and mobility. Many options exist today that accomplish this goal and enhance the desirability and thus market value of a home. The "wet room", where the tub and shower are enclosed in one space, accessed through a curbless entry, is a great example of melding safety with stylish design. Multiple water sources add visual appeal and flexibility to bathing arrangements. Installing a rain shower in the center, a traditional shower head on one side and a handheld shower next to a teak seat with a separate valve for control from a seated position on the other, creates a sense of luxury while safely accommodating all individuals with varying mobility (Tub is generally at the back). An electronically adjustable washbasin, a lavamobile, is another consideration when planning a bathroom renovation. Its design makes it convenient for wheelchair users as well as children. On the flip side, it can be lifted to a higher position to ease access for taller individuals.

A kitchen renovation too presents options for stylish yet safety-oriented design. Multiple counter heights, such as 40, 34 and 30 inches accommodate a diverse population while creating visual interest. Under cabinet lighting, shown here, enhances safety during meal preparation while adding ambiance to the room.



Design with safety, convenience and access in mind in a stylish manner will be perceived as desirable by the buying public and thus add value to a home. When embarking on a major project enlist a reputable architect and designer. For further guidance there are a number of books available such as "Universal Design Toolkit: Time-saving ideas, resources, solutions and guidance for making homes accessible" by Rosemarie Rosetti.

Daria Knarvik is a member of HEARTH Realty Group. (973) 913-5055 office

ARE YOU LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE?

By Dr. Monique Hamilton

Have you ever asked yourself: “Am I living my Best Life? Am I making health and wellness a priority in my life?” Addressing these questions more commonly starts as a New Year’s Resolution but it should actually be a way to view your quality of life.

Lifestyle modifications (MODS) also known as integrative health & wellness services are a great way to start. This includes, among other things, adopting a plant-based (also called vegan) lifestyle. A vegan lifestyle consists of fruits, vegetables, whole grains (bread, rice, pasta), legumes (lentils, peas, beans), nuts, seeds and dairy alternatives such as soymilk, almond milk, oat milk, etc. A vegan lifestyle does NOT include eggs, dairy products, fish/seafood, meat or poultry. Transitioning to a plant-based lifestyle can help to improve your life in many ways by promoting weight loss, normal blood pressure, low cholesterol, and normal sugar levels. Adopting this new way of living is easier than ever because of all the vegan products, goods, & services that are available today.

There are many myths about plant-based eating which may prevent you from living your best life. Below are a few common myths that together we can dispel.

Myth: I will not meet my daily protein requirements with plant-based eating.

Fact: As Americans, we consume more than the required amount of protein in our daily foods.

There are many plant-based recipes that have a significant amount of protein, which include soy, lentils, broccoli, peas, spinach, quinoa, peanuts, and many others.

Myth: Soy protein leads to rising estrogen levels.

Fact: Soy contains isoflavones that bind with the same receptors in the body as estrogen, but they are not the same. Plant-based estrogen, phytoestrogen is different from animal-based estrogen (found in milk in large amounts) and is very beneficial to female health. Phytoestrogens have been used in foods to help patients fight breast cancer. Soy also does not affect testosterone in men.

Myth: Plant-based lifestyles are nutrient deficient.

Fact: It is very easy to get all of the nutrients and tasty foods we need without eating meat. Imagine

receiving these nutrients while eating appetizing foods!

Myth: It is expensive to adopt a vegan lifestyle.

Fact: Have you compared the price of meat to tofu or seitan (vegan meat), fresh fruits and vegetables when making your supermarket run? There are many items that can be purchased from the supermarket that are less expensive than the animal-based products. Also, there are local and online vegan grocers and meal prep services. This is an investment you are making in yourself. For example, if adopting a plant-based lifestyle means reversing Type 2 Diabetes or heart disease, you can expect a return on your investment long term compared to purchasing test strips and medications, not to mention the benefits to your health.

Myth: Vegan food is flavorless and does not taste as good as animal-based foods.

Fact: Vegan food is not only delicious but can be more delectable, juicy, and savory than meat alternatives. It is amazing how the spice, taste, and consistency of some common Caribbean, Soul, French, Italian etc. animal-based dishes can be matched by its vegan versions. Have you ever tasted vegan macaroni and cheese, ‘oxtail’, BBQ chkn, lasagna or cheesecake? You will be amazed!

If you are experienced, just started, or considering a plant-based lifestyle or would like more information about CERTS or MODS to live your best life, you can contact Dr. Monique Hamilton for a consult at www.DRMONIHAMI.com, info@drmonihami.com or call 973-846-4881.

Medical Marijuana as Treatment Option

In addition to lifestyle modifications, medical marijuana may be an alternative to treating chronic conditions and help you live your best life. The NJ Medical Marijuana Program (NJMMP) registers patients for medical marijuana use via physician certifications (CERTS). The program requires registrants to have a “Bona fide relationship” with a physician. Information on the NJ state program can be found at <https://njmmp.nj.gov/njmmp>.

If you missed the February presentation on medical marijuana, you can find it on our homepage at www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org to see the video and slides by our presenters.

Scam Alerts

The Amazon Scam: This scam starts as an email sent to you with the details of an Amazon purchase that you did not make. It looks very much like a real Amazon email and is usually for an expensive item, which is meant to scare you into thinking someone hacked your Amazon account. DO NOT respond to this email or call the customer service listed on the email. If you get something suspicious, go to your Amazon account - not through the suspicious email - and check your order history. You can also call the customer service number on your credit card to make sure nothing has been charged to you.

The Vaccine Survey Scam: Recently, scammers have started calling people pretending to be doing a survey about the Pfizer vaccine and offering \$90 if you complete a survey. They then ask for your credit card or bank info to send you the "money." There are no surveys being done about the vaccine and any information you gave to register for vaccines IS NOT shared with the pharmaceutical companies.

How to Protect Yourself from Scams: Always pause, take a breath and think if you receive an email or call that gets you rattled or nervous. Scammers try to get you scared so you follow their instructions before you have time to think. Do not give out any personal, bank, credit card or social security info over the phone or email unless you initiated the call. If you get something suspicious, do not use the number or email provided. Instead, look up the real number on something you know is true, like a bill, a bank statement or by searching on the company website. Never buy gifts cards to read to someone over the phone for payment. Never feel embarrassed about falling for a scam - these are professional thieves and they are very convincing. Instead, share your experience, tell your friends and neighbors to spread the word so it doesn't happen to someone else.

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Local Events		April 2021		
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Check out the events page at www.somatwotownsforallages.org for the most up-to-date listings of local events			1	2
5 Maplewood Garden Club, 7pm (G)	6 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am Hot Topics:Cool Conversations,4pm (X)	7 Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)	8 Classic & Contemporary Bookclub, “The Sound and the Fury” 7pm (M)	9 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm
12 Film Discussion Group “I Capture the Castle” 7pm (S)	13 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am Hot Topics:Cool Convers. 4pm(X)	14 Read around the World—Thailand, “ Bangkok Wakes to Rain “ (M) 7pm <i>Operation Blue Angel & Safety 7pm(X)</i>	15	16 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm (S)
19	20 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am Hot Topics:Cool Convers. 4pm (X)	21 <i>Cohousing Webinar, 10am (X)</i> Creative Writing Workshop 1pm (S)	22 Earth Day! <i>Cohousing Webinar, 7pm (X)</i> <i>Virtual Trivia 7:30pm, SOPAC</i>	23 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm (S)
26 Book Discussion Group, “Homegoing”7pm (S)	26 Caregivers Support group (MC) 9:30 am Hot Topics:Cool Convers.4pm (X) <i>Lionel Hampton Big Band free virtual concert, 7pm, SOPAC</i>	28 <i>SOMA on the Move Walking, 10:30 am (X), Meet at Yale Corner</i>	29 Let’s Talk About Clutter 4pm (X)	30 Special Conversations with Special People 1pm (S)

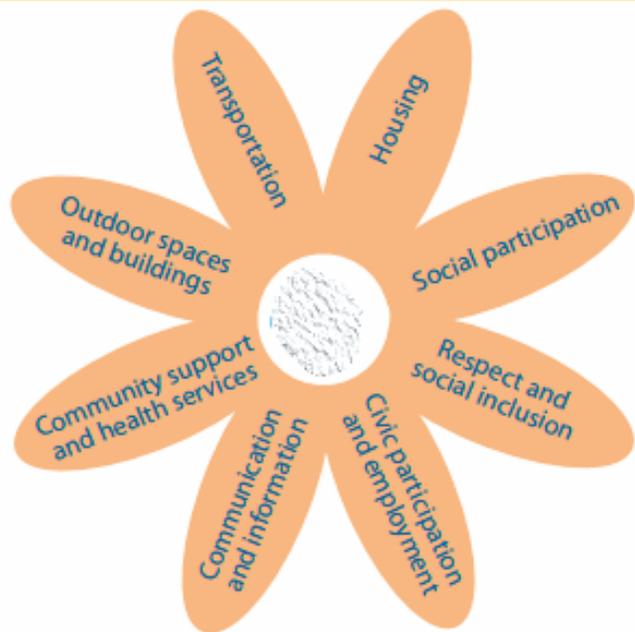
For information on these events, use this key:
 A = <http://www.maplewoodartsandculture.org/>
 G = www.maplewoodgardenclub.org
 M = www.maplewoodlibrary.org or call (973) 762-1622

MC = Morrow Church <https://morrowchurch.org/>
 S = www.SOPL.org or call 973-762-0230
 SOPAC = www.SOPACnow.org
 X = www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org/events

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<p>Daria Knarvik 973- 704-6718 (mobile) 973- 913-5055 (office)</p> <p>Your SOMA neighborhood specialist with a global reach For all your real estate needs call Daria today DariaHomeDelivery@gmail.com</p> 	<p>Serving ALL of Union, Morris, Essex, Passaic and Hudson Counties</p> <p>SYNERGY HomeCare <i>Care for Everyone</i></p> <p>Companionship • Meal Preparation Bathing Assistance • Memory Care Errands & Shopping • Transportation Medication Reminders & More!</p> <p>Call Today! 973.808.3475 synergyhomecare.com/parsippany Owners Casey Holstein & David Katz</p> 
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Did you know that both South Orange and Maplewood have been designated by AARP as age-friendly livable communities? What does that mean you ask? Well, following the eight domains outlined by the World Health Organization, an age friendly community is one that strives to improve the livability of a community for older adults and seniors in 8 domains, represented in this graphic:



SOMA Two Towns for All Ages is the joint initiative to help both towns incorporate these domains into our community.

In every issue we will address one or more of those domains with articles or informational websites that can provide resources for age-friendly living. In this newsletter, we will discuss the "Communication and Information" domain and the many ways to stay connected to the Maplewood and South Orange communities.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

This past year has illustrated the importance of staying in touch with family, friends and our community. We have had to work from home, had virtual visits with family and friends, and learned quickly how to use social media and virtual meeting sites in order to stay connected and informed. Technology, social media, and traditional communications, like newsletters and newspapers, were our source of information, were critical to our well-being and instrumental in preventing social isolation.

If you are reading this newsletter, you are already aware of this great resource for Maplewood and South Orange residents, but we have more. We are on Facebook at somatwotownsforallages; on Twitter at @soma2t; and on Instagram at soma2towns. Our website also provides a wealth of information on transportation, technology, social events, exercise classes, and much, much more. You can sign up for eblasts and the Community Calendar by following the instructions under "Sign me up" on www.somatwotownsforallages.org.

STAYING CONNECTED

Maplewood and South Orange each has its own alert systems where you can stay on top of current news and events within the community. Simply go to their websites and choose the areas or departments you want to hear about. To sign up for Maplewood alerts, go to: www.twp.maplewood.nj.us/subscribe. For alerts from South Orange go to: www.southorange.org/list.aspx. We are working hard to keep you connected and informed so check our SOMA Two Towns website regularly for the latest in our two towns. Please feel free to send us your suggestions and comments to soma2towns@gmail.com We are here to help you stay connected and Informed!



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Weekends

Saturday May 1

Repair Café, 1-4pm. Call (973) 558-0863 or email SOMA2towns@gmail.com for details.

Sunday May 2

River Day Cleanup at Meadowland Park, 11am-3pm

Sunday May 15

Painting en Pleine air Memorial Park, 10am—3pm

Sing for Hope offers Online Daily Events

Join Sing for Hope every day and Explore, Immerse, Engage, all from the comfort of your own space. Sing for Hope brings you art lectures, concerts, movement classes, improv and visual arts classes led by Artists from the world's stages. There are arts experiences every day of the week, several times a day. So now is your chance - Explore new sounds, Immerse in culture, Engage in artmaking –It's the perfect time to recenter, refocus, challenge yourself and Enjoy! See the calendar of events and access all arts experiences at www.singforhope.org/hap/soma2towns Activities are updated frequently and include Opera Classic, Afternoon Doodle, Art Lectures, Mindful Meditation and Wake Up and Stretch, among many others.

Seton Hall Students Offer Technology Classes

In the month of April, we have partnered with Seton Hall University to provide virtual technology classes and social activities to our older adults. Learn how to use zoom, download documents, shop online, make the most of your technology, interact with students and have fun. Check our website for class offerings at www.SOMAtwotownsforallages.org Classes will start April 12 and run through April 30.

Operation Blue Angel & Senior Safety

Join us on April 14, 7pm, for a Zoom with local police about Operation Blue Angel and other safety programs. You can join through the link on our website calendar, or open Zoom on your device and enter Meeting ID: 834 4953 2062, Passcode: 813712.

To talk to the police about Blue Angel, South Orange residents can call the South Orange Police at (973) 763-3000 x7802 and leave a message for the Community Policing Unit; Maplewood residents can call the Maplewood Police at (973) 762-3400 and ask for Community Policing .

Painting in the Park - Call for Artists.

If you are an artist who enjoys painting en plein air, consider joining local artist Lara Tomlin in Maplewood Memorial Park for the first ever "Painters in the Park Day" on May 15 from 10am- 3pm. Set up anywhere in the park, get out your supplies and enjoy the day. The community will be invited to stroll through the park and observe the artists while they work. Please contact Lara to apply at laratomlin.art@gmail.com.

If you need painting supplies, a limited number of canvasses and paints are available by calling (973) 558-0863.

Interested in joining a virtual book club?

Meet with other mature residents to share good books and good conversations. Just call (973) 762-8120x 4006 or email SOMA2towns@gmail.com with "book club" in the subject line or and we will help organize anyone who is interested.

Let's talk about clutter! April 29, 4pm

Join this mini-workshop on how to deal with the many types of clutter. Get practical tips and insights. Presented by Curated Spaces. We specialize in organizing, downsizing and preparing for moving. Join through the link our website calendar or by opening Zoom on your device. Meeting ID: 880 1554 1162, Passcode: 194096. You can listen by phone at (646) 558 8656 . For more info, contact the speakers at website: <https://www.curatedspaces.art> email: info@curatedspaces.art



Come Out for a Walk

Spring is finally here! After a long and cold winter it's time to get out, get exercise and some fresh air. Want to get out of your neighborhood? Join South Mountain Rehab for a series of walking events. For 4 Wednesdays in a row, come to the meet-up sites listed below between 10:30 and 11:30am. Physical Therapists from South Mountain rehab will show you how to stretch out and loosen your muscles with giveaways, reflective gear and copies of the SOMA on the Move walking maps. You can enjoy the mapped walks on your own or with a group of friends - with masks, appropriate spacing and COVID safety in mind - or get advice on proper stretching techniques.

Join us on Wednesdays between 10:30 - 11:30am
April 28 - Yale corner (Yale & Springfield Ave) to enjoy the Springfield Avenue Murals walk.

May 5 - The Baird Parking lot for the Village Art Trail

May 12 - Spiotta Park (S. Orange Ave & Kroll Plaza) for the South Orange Historic Walking Tour.

Age Has its Benefits - Discount Programs!

Many companies offer service discounts or payment plans to older adults and seniors so why not inquire next time you contact them. Companies like Waste Management, NJ Water Company (payment plans), New Jersey Transit (half price on train tickets), EZPass (discounts on off-peak travel), Kohl's, Walgreens (Senior Days 55+); and some organizations like AARP, AAA, and Amazon/ Whole Foods also offer discounts to their members. Some communications and Internet providers (AT&T, Verizon) provide discounts on services to older adults so don't hesitate to ask! Locally, we are currently revitalizing our Classic Card program, a free card for residents 65+ that offers discounts at local restaurants and businesses. So next time you go shopping, ask if they offer discounts for older adults and seniors since like they say, "a penny saved is a penny earned!"

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Being the caregiver for a loved one suffering with dementia is challenging. When a loved one with dementia begins to wander the challenge increases. The caregiver and the team caring for the individual with dementia may try to figure out reasons for the wandering. Often the individual with dementia is wandering from feelings of nervousness in certain places or seeking something. They may think it's time to go to work or want to go to the grocery store and get lost. To help prevent wandering, try to identify the time of day that wandering seems to be occurring and be prepared.

It is important to prepare for a wandering incident before it happens. Two things to focus on are identification and preparing the home. Both are essential to planning ahead.

Identification:

- Keep a recent, close-up photo of the person on hand to give to police, should the need arise.
- Create a list of places the person might wander to, such as past jobs, former homes, places of worship or a favorite restaurant. Have the person carry an identification card or wear a medical bracelet and place labels in the person's garments.
- Consider enrolling in the Medic Alert and Alzheimer's Association Safe-return Program which offers identification bracelets or clothing tags and access to 24-hour support in case of emergency. Learn more by going to www.medicalert.org/alz or call (800) 432-5378 and use the promo code ALZ.
- Talk to the police department about the Special Needs Registry.
- Help police, neighbors and anyone who might know your loved one understand that if they see your loved one wandering, they need to contact you.
- You also might have your loved one wear a GPS or other tracking device.

Prepare Your Home

- Hide car keys, shoes, coats, hats and anything that might signal leaving the house.
- Place deadbolts out of the line of sight, either high or low, on exterior doors.
- *Do not* leave a person living with dementia unsupervised in new or changed surroundings, and never lock a person in at home.

- Cover doorknobs with cloth the same color as the door or use safety covers.
- Camouflage doors by painting them the same color as the walls or covering them with removable curtains or screens. A large sign that reads "STOP" or "DO NOT ENTER" may help.
- Use black tape or paint, or a black rubber doormat to create a two-foot black threshold in front of the door. It may act as a visual stop barrier.
- Install warning bells above doors or use a monitoring device that signals when a door is opened.
- Place a pressure-sensitive mat in front of the door or at the person's bedside to alert you to movement.
- Put hedges or a fence around the patio, yard or other outside common areas.
- Use safety gates or brightly colored netting to prevent access to stairs or the outdoors. Label all doors with signs or symbols to explain the purpose of each room.

It is so difficult for caregivers to watch loved ones decline and handling the stress and emotional toll on the caregiver is a job unto itself. If you are or know a caregiver, please encourage them to ask for help. Turn to other family members, friends, even agencies that are set up for respite care for periods where the caregiver can tend to some of their own personal needs. Perhaps someone else can help manage and administer medications or make doctor's appointments-anything that allows the caregiver a brief period of time to take care of themselves. Lastly, there are caregiver support groups in our area that are a wonderful resource for support.

If you are a caregiver, please know that you are not alone. Contact me for caregiver support group opportunities - sosocialworker@southorange.org or (973) 986-4321

There are many resources to help support people living with dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org; (800) 272-3900

Alzheimer's NJ www.alznj.org; (888) 280-6055

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

www.alzfdn.org; (866) 232-8484

These and other resources are listed on the new "Dementia Resources" page on our website.

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Free Cohousing Webinars April 21, 10am & April 22, 7pm

Have you heard of Cohousing?

Are you intrigued by “Intentional Community”?

According to the Cohousing Association of the United States “Cohousing is a community designed to foster connection. Physical spaces allow neighbors to easily interact with others just outside private homes. Common areas including kitchen, dining space and gardens bring people together. Collaborative decision-making builds relationships.” from www.cohousing.org/

Architect Lynn Gaffney and Certified Cohousing Facilitator Patricia Jacobs will lead this webinar to introduce cohousing and explore the design and development process, group formation and organization, and dynamics of group interaction. At the conclusion of the webinar, next steps will be offered for interested participants.

Whether or not there is opportunity for cohousing here in South Orange and Maplewood, you can be part of the discussion for bringing this

age-friendly housing option to NJ. The Cohousing Opportunities Group is a resource, gatherer, and networker for future cohousing residents, mainly in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut tri-state area. They will initiate potential communities by researching feasible locations, collaborating with top consultants, and cultivating interested developers.

Please register in advance and you will receive an email with a zoom link to the presentation a few days before the meeting.. Register at www.SOMATwoTownsforAllAges.org on the homepage and choose the day and time that works best for you.

To learn more about cohousing before the webinar, go to www.cohousing.org or search www.AARP.org for “cohousing” to read “The Cohousing Movement and Its Position as an Option for Older Adults “ and “20 Questions and Answers About Cohousing”.