



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik
Agencies and
General Health

JULY '19 • ISSUE NO. 171



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A ROOT CANAL?

A: NEVER; B: ONLY 1; C: SEVERAL



HEALTH STAT

POORER ADULTS FEEL GREATER PAIN, MORE OFTEN

Family income level:	Percentage of adults 18-plus reporting a lot of pain on some days:	Percentage of adults 18-plus reporting a lot of pain most days/every day:
Lowest	28.6%	71.4%
Highest	55.9%	44.1%

Source: National Health Interview Survey, 2016-2017, CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, May 17, 2019



HEALTH TIP

EAT FAT. "EATING FAT MAKES YOU FAT" IS TRUE—IF YOU CONSUME "BAD" FATS, THAT IS. SO, BEAT THE COMMON MISCONCEPTION BY CONSUMING "GOOD" FATS: NUTS, SEEDS, OLIVE AND COCONUT OILS, AVOCADOS AND FISH EVERY DAY.

Source: Study, International Archives of Allergy and Immunology

INSIDE

HEALTH

04 "Shocking" find: Electrical pulses boost seniors' working memory

PUBLIC HEALTH & POLICY

02 Report: Patient harm by medical devices in hidden FDA records

10 Research links teen depression to explosion in social-media usage

11 More healthcare systems now testing older docs for competence

HAMASPIK

06 In Brooklyn, mastering popular computing at Achosainu Academy

08 Hamaspik Rockland's Pre-Voc program getting people good jobs

09 New 'Health Home' program supports parents of kids with medical/mental diagnoses

HOSPITALS

14 Hospital-common bacteria found on International Space Station

AUTISM / DISABILITY

08 SeaWorld Orlando now certified autism-friendly by global group

HAMASPIK NEWS

TAKING MAINSTREAMING RIGHT TO THE VERY EDGE SUPPORTED BY ACCOMPANYING DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSPS), THE GENTLEMEN OF HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY'S DAY HAB PROGRAM PAY A SUMMERTIME VISIT TO NIAGARA FALLS, AMONG NORTH AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR NATURAL FEATURES AND TOURIST DESTINATIONS



STRADDLING THE U.S./ CANADA BORDER, NIAGARA FALLS ACTUALLY CONSISTS OF THE AMERICAN, CANADIAN, AND BRIDAL VEIL FALLS—WITH 750,000 GALLONS OF WATER PER SECOND RUSHING OVER THEIR 3,600-FOOT-LONG BRINK TO DROP ABOUT 170 FEET

SEE PAGE E5 >>

HAMASPIK NEWS

Not just for "Hamaspik kids"! Call Hamaspik Rockland for Resources Info For Your Child

SEE PAGE E6 >>

HAMASPIK HOMECARE NEWS

New Hamaspik HomeCare Regional Office Opens For Bronx Community

SEE PAGE E15 >>

AUTISM NEWS

Aarhus University Research Finds Autism Diagnosis Often Followed by Identification of Other Conditions

SEE PAGE E8 >>

Non Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID

NYSHA Inc.
Published and Copyrighted July, '19
1 Hamaspik Way
Monroe, NY 10950

Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

OPWDD

COMMUNITY HABILITATION (COM HAB)

Providing: One-on-one personal aides to help individuals achieve valued outcomes by means of helping them improve their activities of daily living (ADL) skills and long-term life goals

HOME-BASED RESPITE

Providing: Relief for parents of individuals with special needs

AFTER-SCHOOL RESPITE

Providing: A respite program for after school hours and school vacations

DAY HAB PROGRAM

Providing: A day program for adults with disability

SUPPLEMENTAL DAY HAB PROGRAM

Providing: An extended day program for adults with disability

CAMP NESHOMAH

Providing: A day program for children with disability over summer and winter school breaks

INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

Providing: A supervised residence for individuals who need out-of-home placement

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Apartments and supports for individuals who can live independently

ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS

Providing: Home accessibility additions

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

Providing: Coaching and support for people with disabilities to get and keep suitable jobs

ENHANCED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Providing: Job developing and coaching for people with any type of disability

COMMUNITY PRE-VOC PROGRAM

Providing: One-on-one employment preparation day program for high-functioning individuals

PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Providing: One-on-one employment discovery program for high-functioning individuals

CARE COORDINATION

Providing: An advocate for the individual to access and coordinate available benefits

FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

Providing: A family to care for an individual with special needs

INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY (ICF)

Providing: A facility for medically involved individuals who have developmental disability

INTENSIVE BEHAVIOR SERVICES (IBS)

Providing: Interventional services for people with behavioral issues and their family members

PLAN OF CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Support for families of individuals with special needs

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Reimbursement for qualifying items or services not covered by Medicaid

PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

SELF DIRECTION

Fiscal Intermediary (FI) — providing: Accounting and billing for vendors supporting individuals who self-direct their own supports

Broker — providing: One-on-one, independent brokering of all necessary services and supports to individuals who self-direct their own supports

DOH

CARE AT HOME

Providing: nursing · personal care aides ·therapy · respite · medical supplies · adaptive technology · service coordination

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Providing: Full evaluations · home-based, community-based and center-based services · parent/child groups · ongoing service coordination · therapy (PT, OT, SLP, vision, nutrition, play, etc.) · special ed · social work · family training/counseling · bilingual providers

NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD) PROGRAM

Providing: Service Coordination · assistive technology · moving assistance · community transitional services · home/community support services · E-mods · independent living skills · positive behavioral interventions · structured day program

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM

Providing: Service Coordination · independent living skills training · day programs · rent subsidies · medical equipment · E-mods · transportation · community transitional services · home/community support services

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

Providing: Breakfast · lunch · supper · snack

HEALTH HOME SERVING CHILDREN (HHSC)

Providing: Intensive, comprehensive care management and family/community support services for children with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care

SENIOR DINING/SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM (SHNOIS CHAIM)

Providing: Daily onsite lunches and social/ educational activities for community seniors (Orange County only)

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

Providing: Behavior modification for children with autism covered by private insurance

LHCSA - HAMASPIK HOMECARE

PERSONAL CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Home health aides · personal care aides · housekeepers · HCSS aides

COUNSELING SERVICES

Providing: Diet/nutrition counselors · social workers

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Providing: Physical therapy · speech therapy · occupational therapy

PACE-CDPAS

Providing: Personal care aides for people in need

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS

Providing: Minor maintenance for those qualifying

SOCIAL MODEL

Providing: A social day program for senior patients

NURSING SERVICES

Providing: Skilled observation and assessment · care planning · paraprofessional supervision · clinical monitoring and coordination · medication management · physician-ordered nursing intervention and skill treatments

HAMASPIK CHOICE

Providing: A managed long-term care plan (MLTCP) approved by New York State

HCR

ACCESS TO HOME

Providing: Home modifications for people with physical disabilities

HOME REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Providing: Remodeling dilapidated homes for low income home owners

NYSED

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Providing: Employment planning · job development · job placement

JOB COACHING

Intensive and ongoing support for individuals with physical, mental and/or developmental disabilities to become employed and to maintain employment

NYSHA

ARTICLE 16 CLINIC Providing: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · nursing · nutrition

TRAINING SESSIONS

Providing: SCIP · CPR and first aid · orientation · MSC CORE · AMAP · annual updates · Com Hab/ Respite · Family Care · Supported employment

CENTRAL INTAKE

Providing: The first contact for a person or family in need of Hamaspik services

THE HAMASPIK GAZETTE

Providing: A bilingual monthly newspaper keeping the community up-to-date on all major news in medicine, public health, disability, hospitals, senior care, and general Hamaspik news

OMH

HEALTH AND RECOVERY PLAN (HARP)

Providing: long-term social, emotional, employment, peer-support and other mental-illness recovery supports

HEALTH NEWS

Hidden FDA Reports Show Harm From Medical Devices

Menlo Park, California — A lengthy investigative report by Kaiser Health News (KHN) finds that the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) maintains a “vast and hidden repository of reports on device-related injuries and malfunctions.”

The FDA is the federal government’s watchdog on medical device safety, presiding over the approval and usage of thousands of devices.

“Since 2016, at least 1.1 million incidents have flowed into the internal ‘alternative summary reporting’ repository,” KHN reports, “instead of being described individually in the widely scrutinized public database known as MAUDE, which medical experts trust to identify problems that could put patients in jeopardy.”

According to the FDA as quoted in the report, the hidden database has included serious injury and malfunction reports for about 100 medical devices, many implanted in patients or used in countless surgeries. These include surgical

staplers, balloon pumps snaked into vessels to improve circulation, and mechanical breathing machines.

An FDA official told KHN that the program is for “well-known and well-documented” issues. But the program, in all its iterations, has been so obscure that it is unknown to many of the doctors and engineers dedicated to improving device safety. Even a former FDA commissioner contacted by KHN said he knew nothing of the program.

The medical-news agency pored over reams of public records for oblique references to reporting exemptions. After months of questions to the FDA, the agency confirmed the existence of reporting-exemption programs and thousands of never-before-acknowledged instances of malfunctions or harm.

According to KHN research, lawsuits and FDA records show that amid the blackout in information about device risks, patients have been injured, hundreds of times in some cases.



NYSHA
Article 16
THERAPY CLINIC
SERVING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Certified by OPWDD

NYSHA's Article 16 Clinic provides clinical services to individuals who are developmentally disabled. Following a comprehensive evaluation, we offer a full range of clinical services. Our professional service team develops specialized treatment planning based on each individual's needs.

NYSHA, INC.
New York State Hamaspik Association
Therapy Centered Around You



Counseling



Psychological Evaluations



Psychiatry



Nutrition Services



Speech Therapy



Physical Therapy



Occupational Therapy

We accept Medicaid

For evaluations, appointments and to schedule a visit to the clinic call
718.26.NYSHA
6 9 7 4 2

NYSHA Clinic locations: 293 Division Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11211
1Hamaspik Way. Monroe, NY 10950

●► NYSHA NEWS

‘Going Green’ All the Way! Tri-County Care Holds First Leadership Summit

Never resting on its laurels, Tri-County Care (TCC) marked nine months of continuous operation by hosting its first Leadership Summit.

Present at the gala all-day event was the agency’s entire leadership team, with Directors and Supervisors from the Albany and Long Island regions—and everywhere between—convening at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut.

The purpose of the event was to bring agency-wide leadership up to speed, and to set the agenda for the four months to follow, explains TCC Executive Director Yoel Bernath.

More specifically, the event laid out agency goals and targets—and how staff can get there.

Most of the 60-plus attendees arrived with at least some green in their attire.

The color scheme symbolized their collective desire to boost the company’s ranking to an across-the-board “Green” level in the New York State OPWDD’s three-level Technical Assistance Review—and their drive to hit the open road and get there.

The event began at 9:30 a.m., with participants socializing over breakfast and many meeting co-workers for the first time.

Opening remarks by Executive Director Bernath set the agenda, followed by several panel events.



Taking a noontime lunch break, the group enjoyed restorative fare—and an amusing “get to know you” game that further boosted the atmosphere of camaraderie and shared mission. The lunch break was capped with a morale-boosting group photo shoot.

Morning sessions had essentially laid out successes (and, yes, shortcomings) until then. With the group reconvening for afternoon sessions, the essential theme was the bottom line: How do we take it from here?

Specifically, each TCC Care Manager had been rated with a 1-to-100 “Scorecard” for their results-

based performance up to that point; much of the discussion thus revolved on practical plans on bringing scores of under 100 up to that golden (or is that “Green”?) number by September of 2019.

As the event’s 4:00 p.m. wrap-up approached, the Leadership Summit turned more informal, with attendees benefiting from a Q&A session followed by free networking.

Closing the day was an in-house employee satisfaction survey—for completion of which participants received a delightfully-appropriate themed gift: an umbrella emblazoned with “TCC” (for Tri-County Care, of course).

So, outside of its prepared agenda, what unexpected positive result emerged from the event?

“I knew we had a great team, but I didn’t expect such an embrace,” says Mr. Bernath, complimenting the enthusiasm and commitment he felt among staff for Tri-County’s mission.

“The support for each other, the sharing and forthrightness, and the sense of pride,” he elaborates. “Some traveled for hours!”

And at the end of the day, then, it was that pride in belonging to Tri-County Care that saw participants head out the door still decked out in green—and driven more than ever to “go green” all the way. ★

●► HEALTH NEWS

Study Finds Activity Trackers Help Predict Length of Post-surgery Hospital Stay

Los Angeles, California — Early *ambulation*—medical jargon for light movement-based activity like standing or walking around—is a vital indicator of how long a patient will stay in the hospital after he or she undergoes major surgery.

That assertion was made recently by researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in L.A.

According to the researchers, how quickly patients are able to get back on their feet after such procedures as gastric bypasses or hip replacements is a top indicator of how long they’ll be in the hospital before being well enough to be discharged back home.

For this study, published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, researchers enrolled 100 major-surgery patients from July 2016 to August 2017. Each was given a Fitbit Charge activity tracker after their operation, which



STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION? POST-OP WALKING IS TIED TO DISCHARGE, SAYS STUDY

they were encouraged to wear throughout their hospital stay.

The researchers found that tracking those patients’ step counts helped predict their length of stay after surgery. According to their results, patients with high step counts on the first day after surgery were significantly less likely to have a prolonged length of stay.

The researchers suggested that such wearable activity trackers as Fitbits could one day be used to identify patients at risk for prolonged length of stay, by tracking which patients are not engaging in high step counts after surgery. ★

Hamaspik Gazette

Published and Copyrighted July '19 by:
NYSHA, Inc., 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1, Monsey, NY 10952
Distributed free. USPS Presorted Non-profit Mail
Postmaster: Return service requested
© All Rights Reserved



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Meyer Wertheimer

WRITER: Mendy Hecht

TEL: 845-655-0613

FAX: 845-655-5613

MAIL: Hamaspik Gazette, 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1,
Monsey, NY 10952

Happening in Health Today

CONTROLLED SHOCKS BOOST WORKING MEMORY IN SENIORS: STUDY

Boston, Massachusetts — According to psychology researchers at Boston University, firing controlled electrical pulses into the brain for just 25 minutes reversed the decline in working memory that comes with aging.

Working memory is the brain's sketchpad, where information is weighed, considered, manipulated, and fed into cognitive tasks, from following a conversation to doing mental math. The brain writes on this sketchpad with the *oscillations* (rises and falls) in neuronal firing known as *brainwaves*. Brainwaves carry signals

inside the *prefrontal cortex* (where intense thinking occurs) and from the prefrontal cortex to the *temporal lobes* (where memories are stored).

For their experiments, the BU scientists tested the working memories of 42 younger adults (aged 20 to 29) and 42 older ones (60 to 76). People saw an image of, say, an accordion, and three seconds later saw it or something else, and then were asked to indicate whether they'd seen it before. Older adults answered correctly about 80 percent of the time and younger ones 90 percent.

The younger participants then got fake alternating current (AC) electric pulses while older adults got the real deal, each for 25 minutes. No one could tell the placebo from the real kind.

Researchers found that the older

adults' accuracy improved almost immediately—quickly reaching the 90-percent accuracy level of their younger counterparts, and staying at that level for 50 minutes after the stimulation stopped. What's more, EEG tests on the older adults after the stimulation showed their brain waves had the same degree of coordination as the younger adults.

By stimulating the brain in precise regions with AC electrical pulses, "we can bring back the superior working memory function you had when you were much younger," psychology researcher Robert Reinhart of Boston University told reporters.

"The negative age-related changes [in working memory]," he said, "are not unchangeable."

NEW RESEARCH: POOR RESULTS FOR PEANUT ALLERGY PATCH

Aurora, Colorado — Recent international research finds that peanut "exposure therapy" via a patch to help curb kids' peanut allergy is somewhat effective, but not as good as delivering it by mouth.

The international trial involved 356 children, aged four through 11, from five countries. All had been diagnosed with peanut allergy and were asked to wear either a skin patch with a very tiny amount of peanut allergen (250 micrograms) or a placebo patch without any allergen.

They were later gradually fed increasing (but still tiny) doses of peanut, from 1 milligram up to 300 milligrams.

The result: About a third of the kids who'd been wearing the patch (35.3 percent) seemed to have benefited, with a lessening of response to the peanut challenge. That was true for just 13.6 percent of children who'd worn the placebo patch.

PROBIOTICS MAY BE BAD FOR IMMUNOTHERAPY PATIENTS: STUDY

Houston, Texas — The ever-popular *probiotics*, or harmless live microorganisms sold increasingly over-the-counter in pill form by many retailers nowadays, are supposed to improve health by balancing irregularities in the body's *microbiome*, or "good" gut bacteria.

However, a new study of several dozen cancer immunotherapy patients at two hospitals finds that those taking probiotics seemed to have far less-successful immunotherapy than patients not consuming the otherwise-harmless bugs.

According to researchers at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas and the Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy in San Francisco, melanoma patients were 70 percent less likely to respond to cancer immunotherapy if they were also taking probiotic supplements.

The study group was small (just 46 patients) but the findings support broader suggestions that probiotics might actually upset the balance of so-called "good" bacteria in the gut and interfere with the immune response.

The trillions of distinct bacteria that flourish in every single gut are now believed to play a substantial role in regulating a person's overall health. In 2013 alone, the global probiotics market was valued at \$36 billion.



DAMAGED BRAIN CELLS APPARENTLY REPAIRED IN SMALL PARKINSON'S DRUG TRIAL ON SEVERAL DOZEN PATIENTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

London, England — Parkinson's disease researchers at Bristol University report that an experimental drug called Glial Cell Line Derived Neurotrophic Factor (GDNF) seems to have significantly repaired damaged cells in the brains of people with Parkinson's.

In the small trial of a few dozen patients, half had their brains directly infused with GDNF while the other half received a placebo. Treatments were given monthly for nine months, followed by both groups

getting GDNF for another nine.

After the 18-month period, participants did not report any improvements in health or movement.

However, curiously enough, scans of their brains found significant repair of damaged neurons, or brain cells, called in a part of the brain called the putamen, whose main function is to regulate movements.

Parkinson's causes tremors, muscle stiffness and movement and balance problems. Some medicines can improve symptoms.



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Hamaspik of Kings County Men's Day Hab Program takes Exciting, Picturesque Trip to Niagara Falls

For the gentlemen who had asked for it, a two-day trip to the legendary Niagara Falls was exciting, picturesque and memorable for a lifetime.

But for the staff who had executed it, it was Hamaspik at its standard best.

PERSON-CENTERED

In keeping with the “person-centered” ethos sweeping the special-needs community in recent years, in which daily decisions are based on individuals’ personal choices to the extent possible, Hamaspik of Kings County Men’s Day Hab Manager Mr. Simcha Einhorn and staff approached their charges first to ask what sort of a trip they’d prefer. That question had been prompted by the fact that previous group outings had been regional day jaunts at most. “We wanted to do a major trip,” explains Mr. Einhorn, in keeping with those enjoyed by young adults in the mainstream—and those in other Hamaspik programs.

In response, the “boys” opted for anything nature-based—any venue that would bring them to the wilds of the world untamed by development. Niagara Falls fit the bill.

“We settled on the falls because of its nature and history,” Einhorn said.

And so, it was another beautiful morning—but a different one—at Hamaspik of Kings County Men’s Day Hab, when Manager Einhorn broke the news that they’d be going on a major overnight trip. The gentlemen were all so happy and excited, reports one staffer.

For well over a week, then, the individuals—supported by staff—planned and plotted every step, including their route, the rental villa they’d be staying at (and activities at the villa), and the food. Throughout that week, staff described a festive and holiday-like atmosphere filled with excitement and anticipation.

Thus, after significant logistical planning, eight individuals and four Hamaspik Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)—Abe Cohen, Nesanel Halevi, Ari Klar, and Simcha Einhorn—boarded a Hamaspik Transport Van and hit the road.

Departing before 6:00 p.m. on a Wednesday evening (after making its Brooklyn rounds to pick up individuals at their own homes), the accessibility vehicle—loaded with cooler-packed fresh food, suitcases with sufficient changes of clothing and all other vitals—drove upstate for several hours before stopping mid-route for dinner.



WHEN FALLS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH: HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP) ARI KLAR SHARES THE LOVE WITH TOURIST YANKY



BAND OF BROTHERS: IMPROVISING ON INSTRUMENTS BROUGHT ALONG BY STAFF, THE TRAVELERS SING AND PLAY ALONG IN A FREEWHEELING IMPROMPTU JAM SESSION



WHEN DOWN IS UP: AT A PRIME VIEWING SPOT, MOISHE INDICATES APPROVAL

Shortly after 10:00 p.m., the Hamaspik contingent pulled into the private driveway of a country home one hour’s drive from the falls. They’d be staying there for the next two nights. They opened the front door to a rustic residence paneled in fresh-scented real wood and featuring huge bedrooms centered on comfortable beds. All were shortly fast asleep, recharging for an exhilarating day ahead.

IN AWE OF NATURE

The following morning, the group practically had to double-check that the natural views through the oversized picture windows were real, and not floor-to-ceiling photos—injecting more than the usual inspiration into their standard morning prayers.

After a delicious breakfast and packing of snacks for the road, the guys got in the vans and were ready for “take-off”—a wheeled “flight” that took them past stunning views of mountains, rivers, farms and gardens alike... and finally, to one of the greatest natural treasures of North America: Niagara Falls!

The iconic waterfalls, one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world, have been visited by Hamaspik groups in the past. For the gentlemen at hand, it was a first.

Before actually seeing the falls, the group took in a short documentary on the site’s history and development; that film is shown regularly to tourists at the site’s welcome center.

After learning about Niagara Falls’



FEELING RIGHT AT HOME: THE GENTLEMEN ENJOYING DINNER

history, from discovery to modern site development, the Hamaspik group went out to see the real thing.

They stood in awe of the mighty rushing waters—taking in the sheer majesty and magnitude of the natural feature and soaking it in (although, thankfully, not literally) for the next several hours. Of course, tons of requisite photos were taken.

After spending over half of the day seeing God’s amazing handiwork for themselves, the gentlemen and staff took one last look before heading back to the van to their country home for accommodations for the night.

HEADING HOME

On the way back to their rental home, the group stopped at a local synagogue for the afternoon Minchah prayer services—furthering not just person-centered programming but faith-based person-centered programming.

They next enjoyed a fresh hot lunch at a nearby kosher pizza shop.

Later that evening, once safely back at the rental home, the group enjoyed a delicious barbeque dinner followed by a warm kumzitz (informal Yiddish for “singalong”) with DSP and talented guitarist Ari Klar.

Early the next morning, a Friday, the group packed into the van and made the six-hour trip back to Brooklyn. Once there, the gentlemen were driven directly to their own doors and homes, where parents and family were eagerly awaiting their returns.

The following Monday, the young men—and their staff—were back at Day Hab for another regular day. But visible on their faces and palpable in their vibes was the excitement at having experienced Niagara Falls first-hand, like so many in the mainstream have for centuries. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



Happenings around Hamaspik

Art and soul



LIFE IN FULL COLOR: THE GENTLEMEN OF HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY'S DAY HAB PROGRAM ENJOY A CRAYON-BASED ACTIVITY—PROOF POSITIVE THAT SIMPLEST IS BEST

The Road to literacy



BOOKED: MENDY LOOKS EAGERLY ON AS AVROM STUDIES FROM A TRADITIONAL TEXT; NEITHER IS ONE TO WASTE PRECIOUS TIME EN ROUTE TO ANOTHER DAY HAB OUTING

Hamaspik of Rockland County Intake Standing By with Wealth of Information on Available Resources

"If you have a kid struggling with A, B, C or D, we have something for you," begins Mrs. Elky Eger, a longtime Hamaspik of Rockland County employee who currently serves as Intake Coordinator.

"We have a lot of programs for them," she insists, "but we need you to come forward!"

The discussion at hand involves children with any special needs—not just those stereotypically associated for children with special needs.

"There are a lot of them out there—eight-year-olds, ten-year-olds," Mrs. Eger goes on. "The point is that you can be mainstream and still get services."

The Hamaspik veteran mentions a recent meeting with local private-school principals, at which they talked about the plethora of services available for children presenting a variety of behaviors and/or bearing a number of diagnoses.

Such behaviors and diagnoses, reported the educators, include autism

spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or simply lower IQ than typical.

Mrs. Eger found herself explaining that "a lot" of such students are eligible for a number of supports and services—with most of the educators not even aware of the fact.

At the same time, due to recent additions and changes to services provided through Hamaspik by the New York State OPWDD, a significantly broader range of children now qualify.

But does Hamaspik want everyone calling about all sorts of issues?

Mrs. Eger smiles a knowing response born of experience and authority: "We can handle it!" ★

For more information on the wide range of programs, supports and services available through Hamaspik for children, please contact Mrs. Eger directly at 845-503-0200 or eeeger@hamaspikrockland.org.

Logging in to Higher Technology, Higher Aspirations

Every Monday morning, Mrs. Chani Klar enters 293-295 Division Ave. in Brooklyn. Inside, a group of young women are sitting at desks, eagerly awaiting her arrival, minds—and fingers—at the ready.

Mrs. Klar is their computer instructor. This is Achosainu Academy, Hamaspik of Kings County's day program for the community's high-functioning members. And today is their weekly computer instruction class.

For the next hour, Instructor Klar walks through yet another simple function—a simple and straightforward task that, with sufficient practice, the young women will eventually master, and with the pride that comes with authority.

Mrs. Klar reports "wonderful" progress since the introduction of the class.

Students first gained familiarity with Windows operating-system basics. From there, they moved to two parallel tracks: One, a practical approach to Microsoft Word and two, the still-popular Mavis Beacon typing program.

In Word, Mrs. Klar elaborates,

the group took its time to master that program's main toolbar—learning to set fonts, point sizes, styles and other formatting features. After such basics, they went on to Word's multi-purpose functionality—creating mailing labels, a custom-designed calendar, and even an actual yearbook to record the 2018-2019 "school year."

Students even mastered basic photo editing techniques with Word's surprisingly useful image adjusting tools.

At the same time, students "really made progress" via regular practice with Mavis Beacon—especially with its amusing drill games, Mrs. Klar says, in which "some even completed Level 3!"

In June, the group gathered at Achosainu for a grand graduation ceremony.

After that, it was on to summer camp and other seasonal programming.

But wherever the students go, their hard-earned computing skills will now go with them. ★

For more information on Achosainu, please contact Mrs. Taub at 718-302-3333, ext. 5201 or etaub@hamaspikings.org.

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

‘Rapid Growth’—on More than One Level

Hamaspiik of Rockland County’s Pre-Vocational Services (Pre-Voc) Program Growing

Since late 2017, one of Hamaspiik of Rockland County’s most significant frontline programs has quietly racked up an impressive string of successes.

Through the Pre-Vocational Training and Volunteering (Pre-Voc) Program, led by Hamaspiik of Rockland County Director of Supported Employment Yaakov “Yanky” Grunwald and his devoted staff, more individuals than ever are gaining employment skills in internships with local companies—with each partnered with a one-on-one support staffer from Hamaspiik.

That Hamaspiik employee, functioning as a coach of sorts, helps the individual acclimate to whatever workplace it is where he or she will ultimately attain paid employment.

“My job is to make the match,” smiles and explains Beri Oberlander, a Hamaspiik Pre-Voc Job Coach/Coordinator.

The soft-spoken, hard-driving agency stalwart describes one such success story.

A young man with minimal disabilities had completed a training course on the high-end AutoCAD software—then looked for work.

With Hamaspiik’s intervention, a local architect took the gentleman on. And with a Hamaspiik coach provided to ensure success, the architect took a 90-day period to train him in. He’s now acclimating to the powerful industry software in a real-life work environment, actual blueprints and all, Oberlander notes.

What about the others?

One such individual enjoys physical labor—getting out in the field and otherwise not being tied down to an office. “I got him into kitchen contracting,” Coordinator Oberlander says. He’s now working residential construction sites, installing indoor plumbing hardware.

But lest you think it’s an uneven transaction, rest assured that it’s a two-way street.

“The individuals gain social skills,” says Mr. Oberlander, “and employers gain skilled, motivated and driven employees.” ★

For more info on Pre-Voc, please contact Yanky Grunwald, Dir. of Supported Employment, at 845-503-0236 or ygrunwald@hamaspiikrockland.org.

Farming Out Springtime Reinvigoration

Hamaspiik of Rockland Men’s Day Hab Program Visits Regional Farm

Trees have always been a source of metaphor in Jewish tradition. And with trees bursting into full foliage and bloom with the arrival of spring season, those metaphors come once again to mind—especially after the gentlemen of the Hamaspiik of Rockland County Men’s Day Hab program once again visited Lawrence Farms Orchards in rural upstate Newburgh, New York.

The gentlemen of the program he helms has long been visiting, reports Manager Pinchas Knopfler—where Lawrence Farms staff have always appreciated and respected their faith, he notes.

The gentlemen boarded Hamaspiik vans and headed some 45 miles north to the working agricultural production site

where hundreds of apple trees are now being actively tended to, in the months-long run up to the fall harvesting season (in addition to the vegetables, grapes and other natural produce grown in its fields).

Traversing the well-maintained rows of trees, the gentlemen took in the natural bounty, expressing appreciation for God’s rustic and beautiful handiwork.

The individuals also spent some time petting, feeding and otherwise interacting with the farm’s miniature zoo of live goats of all sizes, colors and ages.

Most important of all (and invoking the tree metaphor once again), the gentlemen came away with what is perhaps the most mainstream of valued outcomes: personal growth. ★

Got their goat—in a good way



OUT IN THE FIELD: HAMASPIK AT UPSTATE LAWRENCE FARMS’ MINIATURE PETTING ZOO



TRYING THE RIGHT APPROACH: A STAFF MEMBER DEMONSTRATES PETTING PROTOCOL



HORNING IN: A FURRY FELLOW SAYS HI



THE FEEL OF IT: MOTTY’S GOT HIS BACK



TAKING STOCK: MOISHY AND MOTTY MINGLE WITH THE CURIOUS ANIMALS



FROM THE GROUND UP: MOSHE SHMIEL ENJOYS AN UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

LEARNING ABOUT ALL BRAINS FROM RESEARCH ON AUTISM

Palo Alto, California—In an essay about autism for *Knowable Magazine*, writer Emily Willingham notes explains at length that “studying the roots of autism also is providing new insights into the development of all human brains, autistic or not.”

According to Willingham, general neurological information gained by research into autism covers several areas, including:

- A general identifiability of autism based on symptoms, despite its many root causes;
- Strong evidence for a genetic cause of autism’s common symptom of not making eye contact;
- Insights into genetic causes of other genetic diseases like Fragile X, Rett syndrome, or the lesser-known Phelan-McDermid syndrome; and
- Exposure to environmental pollutants as correlating factor worth further research for both autism and other neurological disorders.

PERSONAL FITNESS TRAINER WITH ASD OPENS GYM FOR PEOPLE ON SPECTRUM

Tampa, Florida — Professional fitness coach and trainer Mark Fleming boasts two college degrees in fitness-related fields, plus special training in fitness for people with autism.

This past February, he opened Puzzle Piece Fitness, a gym that caters to people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Mr. Fleming would know a thing or two about fitness and autism, as he’s not just a professional trainer, but also an individual with ASD, too.

In a recent profile, Fleming said, “I think it is important to help others on the spectrum to achieve the life that they desire. And exercise is a great way to do that. I have them do this exercise to get the brain working... Coming to a new place can be challenging to an individual with autism.”

Fleming’s motivation for eventually launching the Puzzle Piece Fitness gym (Puzzle Piece Fitness began as one-on-one coaching) was working as a volunteer for the Special Olympics volunteer.

There, he told recently, “There was nothing for people with autism to stay active [after the Special Olympics ended]. And they would end up regressing. A lot of the time, people with disabilities stay at home a lot and become sedentary.”

“I have to cater to their individual needs,” he said. “Just because I have



BRITISH AUTISM COMMUNITY OPPOSING CHANGE IN DRIVER-LICENSE POLICY

London, England—A subtle but critical change in British government policy has a number of British licensed drivers with autism upset at the change, calling for its reversal.

According to a report in British media, England’s National Autistic Society (NAS) has challenged a decision by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)—the British equivalent of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)—to require people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to inform the DVLA of such diagnoses even if they do not affect their driving.

The surprise change in policy, according to the report,

was not communicated to any people with autism, or associated non-profits or professionals. It emerged after a person with autism contacted the NAS and told them that the DVLA website now said that drivers must disclose if they are on the spectrum.

Until recently, the website simply stated that drivers must inform the DVLA about any ASD that “affects your driving”—a key phrase that’s now been removed.

Labour MP Jess Phillips announced that he’d be asking the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to look into the matter. ★

autism doesn’t mean I know everything they are going through. I’m very open with them about that.”

AUTISM DIAGNOSIS OFTEN FOLLOWED BY IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER CONDITIONS

Aarhus, Denmark — A review of data on nearly six million people reveals the onset and prevalence of nine other diagnoses that often accompany autism, according to a report.

According to the research by Aarhus University, behavioral conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) crop up in about one in three people with autism within 15 years of their diagnosis. Also, about 20 percent of people with autism are diagnosed with anxiety during that time period.

The data review, which included 30,423 people with autism, is the largest to focus on psychiatric and developmental conditions that occur together.

Most of the findings fit with prior research. For example, the ADHD finding jibes with several smaller studies reporting that roughly one in three people with autism has ADHD. But the new analysis draws on an unprecedented amount of data.

Experts hail the study as a technical feat.

According to Paul Lipkin, director of the Interactive Autism Network at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, the research “was a huge data repository that gave us unique abilities to look at the relationships between these disorders,” as he described the study.

ORLANDO’S SEAWORLD NOW CERTIFIED ‘AUTISM-FRIENDLY’

Orlando, Florida — If you’re the proud parent of a child with autism and you’re looking for a quality family vacation venue, your options just underwent another major expansion: SeaWorld Orlando is now a certified

autism center.

As of this past April, the theme park is more accessible to people with disabilities—including people with autism.

To earn the designation, SeaWorld Orlando now offers two on-site quiet rooms that help young people with autism relax and recalibrate after the often-overwhelming sensory input of a major theme park. One is located at the park’s front and the other is in the “Sesame Street” area.

The park now also provides a special guide to families affected by autism that rates rides by the five senses, giving parents a heads-up on what to expect sensory-wise. Employees have also undergone training to better connect with guests with autism.

The certification was granted by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, which works with tourism and hospitality venues to become certified in autism and special needs. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

In Brooklyn, New Hamaspik 'Health Home' Program Supports Kids with Diagnosed Chronic Medical Conditions or Serious Emotional Disturbances

It goes without saying how hard it is to care for a child with mental-health and/or chronic medical diagnoses. Parents can easily get overwhelmed—homing in on one and neglecting the others.

But that's exactly why New York State's Medicaid program runs its Health Home Servicing Children (HHSC) program—to support parents of children who have at least one diagnosed mental illness or two chronic physical conditions.

Parents of such involved children need all the help they can get. And while community non-profit partners like Hamaspik are rising to the challenge, the need out there is formidable. Says Hershel Wertheimer, Hamaspik of Kings County's Executive Director: "We can't keep up with the demand."

For now, at least.

ON THE FRONT LINES

In recent months, Hamaspik of Kings County has begun offering this vital program—another color in the palette of mental health-related programs the agency provides under the leadership of its very own Director of Mental Health Programs, Mordechai Solomon, LMHC.

Responding to an ever-growing demand by first obtaining approval to provide the program, Mr. Solomon hired Mrs. Dini Freund, a veteran social-services pro, to helm its efforts.

Today, the Brooklyn-based agency—which services the entire Borough Park and Williamsburg districts and beyond—has been supporting parents of such children with the critical care-management and personal advocacy services of Health Home.

The Health Home program is specifically designed for families of a child with mental-health and/or chronic medical problems (more details later)—helping not just with healthcare coordination for the child, but also with wider support for parents and family.

Take a kid with a serious case of major depression, and diabetes, too—or a child with chronic vision weakness along with a gastrointestinal diagnosis. The effect, whether on the child or the family, is two-fold.

His devoted parents are worn down to the bone. They try their best for their helpless child—securing the best care, taking him to all sorts of doctors and therapists, making sure that everything is coordinated right, and seeing to it that the household doesn't fall apart.



BRINGING THE HEALTH HOME, HOME: HAMASPIK'S MUTTY SOLOMON, LMHC ON THE JOB

With such weight on their shoulders, it's impossible for them to ensure that he's getting every resource in a timely fashion, while also staying on top of keeping appointments from conflicting, keeping everything on schedule, and keeping insurance in order.

WHO'S COVERED?

A child must have two specific chronic medical diagnoses to qualify for Health Home.

Here's a sampling: Asthma, blindness, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, glaucoma, heart disease, migraines, psoriasis, or ulcers.

In the category of serious emotional disorder (SED), a qualifying child must have at least one diagnosis. For example: anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression, eating disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or severe attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The Health Home model, actually operated by the state since 2012, is built around the *Care Manager*, a patient advocate armed with each patient's full medical history that is shared among all the patient's caregivers.

"A Health Home is a care management service model whereby all of an individual's caregivers communicate with one another so that all of a patient's needs are addressed in a comprehensive manner," reads official state literature. "This is done primarily through a 'care manager' who oversees and provides access to all of the services an individual needs to assure that they receive everything necessary to stay

children and young people with one qualifying mental-health condition or two chronic medical conditions.

Unlike Hamaspik's original suite of services and supports, the initiative has nothing to do with developmental disabilities, or people with developmental disabilities. It simply provides qualifying families with comprehensive care management and support—essentially, a compassionate and competent liaison who handles all doctor appointments and a lot more.

For Hamaspik and the thousands of fathers, mothers and children in the communities that it serves, it's yet another first.

And with its Health Home program, Hamaspik of Kings County is parlaying its leading community support position into yet another vital service for the entire Five Boroughs. ★

For more information and/or to learn if your loved one(s) qualify for HHSC in Brooklyn, call Hamaspik of Kings County at 718-408-5400.

**YOUR ULTIMATE
SOURCE FOR GROUP
INSURANCE SOLUTIONS!**



Reliable Brokerage, Inc.

We get you protected.



888.783.6286

CALL FOR YOUR NO-OBLIGATION INSURANCE QUOTE

HENRY KELLNER & ASSOCIATES

E-mail us at: info@reliablebrokerage.com

Visit us on the web at: www.ReliableBrokerage.com

Public Health and Policy News

RISING DEPRESSION IN YOUNG PEOPLE POSSIBLY LINKED TO SOCIAL MEDIA: STUDY

San Diego, California — According to a recent study by San Diego State University, the percentage of U.S. teens and young adults reporting mental distress, depression and harmful thoughts and actions has risen significantly over the past decade.

According to lead researcher Dr. Jean Twenge, the findings suggest a generational shift. She thinks the rise in smartphone and social media use is a significant factor.

By 2012, smartphones had become widespread, she says, and it's around that same time that social media began to dominate young people's lives. For example, about half of high school seniors reported using social media every day in 2009. Today, however, it's about 85 percent.

Most significantly, it's not just the phone or social media itself—it's the amount of time teens and young adults spend with it, according to Dr. Twenge. In her earlier research, she found that the more time spent, the greater the risk of depressive symptoms.

To arrive at her conclusions, Dr. Twenge and colleagues analyzed federal survey responses for over 200,000

adolescents ages 12 to 17, and almost 400,000 young adults ages 18 and over between 2005 and 2017. She found that reported symptoms that were consistent with major depression over 12 consecutive months had dramatically increased over a decade—52 percent in teens and 63 percent in young adults.

FEDERAL MEDICAID BUDGET CHANGES CRITIQUED ON CAPITOL HILL

Washington, D.C.

— The White House's Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposal has been sharply criticized by a number of Congress members shortly after it was released, with many expressing concern over its several significant proposed cuts to various parts of Medicaid and Medicare, the respective healthcare programs for the poor and seniors.

At a hearing of the House Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee hearing, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar was grilled over proposals to reduce Medicaid funding by \$1.4 trillion and Medicare by \$460 billion, and increase work requirements for Medicaid recipients.

Some \$1.29 trillion of the \$4.7 trillion annual budget is marked for HHS alone—meaning that health-related funding consumes over 25 percent of federal taxpayer spending.

Within that \$1.29 trillion is: \$6.1 billion for the FDA, \$12 billion for the



VIRTUALLY NOT GOOD FOR YOU: A STUDY LINKS EVER-INCREASING USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITH RISING RATES OF DEPRESSION AND OTHER DETRIMENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

CDC, \$34.4 billion for the 27-division National Institutes of Health (NIH), and \$6.3 billion for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which covers most Medicaid/Medicare costs.

COURT STRIKES DOWN ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLANS

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Labor had recently issued a proposed rule that would allow associations and employers to join forces to launch so-called *association health plans* (AHPs).

The AHPs, which provide limited healthcare coverage, are exempt from the extensive compliance rules of the landmark Affordable Care Act (ACA) due to several legal and technical loopholes. They are intended to enlarge the private-sector healthcare market by encouraging competitively-priced plans.

But a judge ruled recently that the Labor Department's attempt to expand AHPs is outside of its authority.

According to the ruling by District of Columbia District Judge John Bates, "the final rule was designed to expand access to AHPs in order to avoid the most stringent requirements of the

ACA."

The expansion of association health plans has been controversial, as critics argue these plans amount to "junk" coverage because they're not required to meet ACA coverage standards and lack consumer protections.

But proponents of the plans say that those on the market are often fairly comprehensive, and that the plans can save employers and employees significant money on benefits.

SPAIN #1 ON BLOOMBERG 2019 HEALTHIEST COUNTRY INDEX

New York, New York — According to the 2019 edition of the *Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index*, Spain is now the world's healthiest country.

That western European country was followed on the 2019 list by Italy, Iceland, Japan and Switzerland. For its part, the U.S. took 35th place, down one place from 2017's 34th.

By deriving and comparing public-health data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Division and the World Bank, the Healthiest Country Index rates nearly 170 countries for their average national health. ★



WHERE SPAIN DOES REIGN IS PLAINLY IN THE MAIN: BLOOMBERG'S 2019 HEALTHIEST COUNTRY INDEX PUTS MADRID ATOP THE WORLD

● ► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

Calif.’s Scripps Health Embracing Older-Doctor Screening Trend

San Diego, California — The 3,000-physician, San Diego-based Scripps Health system is now embracing health and competence screenings for all doctors age 70-plus.

The concept of ensuring that older doctors are still physically and mentally sharp enough to continue practicing is a relatively new one; it’s now a nationwide trend that’s slowly picking up steam. But the Scripps program is one of the largest of its kind.

Under the new program, physicians 70 and older will require screening for cognitive impairment, among other things. They will also need to undergo screening every following two years to renew their credentials.

The screening consists of each doctor sitting in a room alone,



ARE MOST-EXPERIENCED DOCS BETTER? UP TO A POINT, SAYS A CAL. HEALTH SYSTEM

with no pencil or mobile aid, while answering dozens of questions from

the MicroCog, a computer-based test which is also used by the U.S. Air Force.

MicroCog tests for thinking skills using simple math problems, finding similarities among images or shapes, or even counting backwards from 100.

The computer test is followed by screens of the doctor’s history, physical, and mental health. The doctor also fills out a form about sleep patterns, continuing medical education, patient load, and typical work hours. The entire process takes up to four hours.

“This is pretty new. I do think Scripps is leading in trying to understand how to manage the aging physician,” said Scripps Health chief medical officer (CMO) James LaBelle, M.D. “I hope it’s going to be easier than I think it’s going to be.”

According to a recent American Medical Association (AMA) report, 300,752 U.S. physicians were 65 years or older in 2017.

That number was up from 2013’s 241,641 older doctors—with 120,000 “actively engaged in patient care.” ★



KABOCHA SQUASH

EASY

YIELDS: 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:20

READY IN: 1:30



Kabocha Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium Kabocha squash
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 clove garlic, crushed
- 8 cups water
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon consommé soup mix
- Salt to taste
- Pinch black pepper
- Parsley flakes for garnish

DIRECTIONS:

- Sauté onion and garlic
- Peel and cube squash (microwave for 5 minutes first for easy peeling)
- Add to the onions; sauté for a few minutes
- Add water and soup mix; bring to boil, stirring every few minutes
- Once boiling, reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes or till squash is soft
- Purée soup with stick blender
- Stir in heavy cream and bring to boil
- Season with salt and pepper
- Garnish with parsley flakes

BENEFITS:

One cup of Kabocha squash contains only 40 calories! Kabocha squash is high in beta-carotene, the antioxidant also known as Vitamin A—essential for healthy white blood cells, good immunity, and healthy eyes, skin and hair.

EASY

YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:15

READY IN: 0:45



Roasted Kabocha

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium Kabocha squash
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Garlic powder
- Paprika
- Nutmeg (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 420°
- Rinse squash, and pat dry
- Slice squash in half with sharp knife; scoop out seeds with spoon, then cut into wedges. Microwave squash for 5 minutes for easier cutting
- Place wedges in bowl; toss with oil and seasoning
- Place wedges in a single layer on a lined baking sheet
- Roast for 30 minutes; turn over halfway
- Squash is ready when soft on the inside and crunchy on the outside

CHEF’S TIP:

For easier peeling, first poke some holes with a knife; microwave squash for 5 minutes, or bake for 45 minutes at 400°.

MEDIUM

YIELDS: 4-6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:15

READY IN: 0:45



Mashed Kabocha

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium Kabocha squash
- Water
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

- Peel and cube squash
- Place in a pot, fill with water and bring to boil
- Reduce flame; continue cooking till squash is soft
- Sauté onion while squash is cooking
- Drain water
- Mash squash; stir in sautéed onions
- Season with salt and pepper

In the Know

ALL ABOUT... NEARSIGHTEDNESS

Information sources: Mayo Clinic, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Nearsightedness is another one of those non-life-threatening medical conditions that most people have—as far as most people can see, that is.

That's because nearsightedness, or myopia in “medical-ese,” means having to wear glasses because you can't see that far without them.

But are there any other options besides glasses? And what can you do to prevent ever needing glasses? Let's take a good look at all of that.

DEFINITION

Nearsightedness (myopia) is a common vision condition in which you can clearly see objects that are close by, but objects farther away get blurry—and the further they are, the blurrier they appear.

(It's not to be confused with *farsightedness*, or hyperopia, another common vision condition in which objects both farther away and close by get blurry.)

Nearsightedness, by far the most common vision condition (and perhaps even the most common medical condition of any kind), affects millions of people in the United States alone. Worldwide, millions more wear glasses or contact lenses, or have had refractive surgery (more on that later) to correct their vision.

Nearsightedness is caused by your eye not being in the exact shape needed for images to focus sharply. Each eyeball is supposed to have a specific curve. When they don't, light rays entering the eyes bend incorrectly, causing images to focus in front of the retina instead of directly on it. (The retina is the part of the eye that collects images.)

Nearsightedness may develop gradually or rapidly. It often gets worse in childhood and young adulthood. It also tends to run in families.

A basic eye exam can confirm nearsightedness. You can compensate for the blur with eyeglasses, contact lenses or refractive surgery.

SYMPTOMS

Nearsightedness symptoms may include:

- Blurry vision when looking at distant objects
- The need to squint or partially close the eyelids to see clearly
- Headaches caused by eyestrain
- Difficulty seeing while driving a vehicle, especially at night (night myopia)

Nearsightedness is often first detected during childhood and is commonly diagnosed between the early school years through the teens. A child with nearsightedness may:



- Persistently squint
- Need to sit closer to fronts of classrooms to be able to see clearly
- Seem to be unaware of distant objects
- Blink excessively
- Rub his or her eyes frequently

When to see a doctor

If your difficulty clearly seeing things that are far away (distance blur) is pronounced enough that you can't perform a task as well as you wish, or if the quality of your vision detracts from your enjoyment of activities, see an eye doctor. He or she can determine the degree of your nearsightedness and advise you of your options to correct your vision.

Seek emergency medical care if you experience:

- The sudden appearance of many floaters—tiny specks that seem to drift through your field of vision
- Flashes of light in one or both eyes
- A curtain-like shadow over your visual field

These are warnings signs of *retinal detachment*, which is a rare complication of myopia. Retinal detachment is a medical emergency, and time is critical.

CAUSES

Your eye has two parts that focus images:

- The cornea is the clear, dome-shaped front surface of your eye.
- The lens is a clear structure about the size and shape of a chocolate lentil candy.

In a normally shaped eye, each of these focusing elements has a perfectly smooth curvature, like the surface of a marble. A cornea and lens with such curvature bend (refract) all incoming light to make a sharply focused image directly on the retina, at the back of your eye.

A refractive error

If your cornea or lens isn't evenly and smoothly curved, light rays aren't refracted properly, and you have a refractive error.

Nearsightedness usually occurs when the eyeball is longer than normal or the cornea is curved too steeply. Instead of being focused precisely on the retina, light is focused in front of the retina, resulting in a blurry appearance for distant objects.

Risk factors

Some risk factors that may increase likelihood of becoming nearsighted are:

- Genetics. Nearsightedness tends to run in families. If one of your parents is nearsighted, your risk of developing the condition is increased. The risk is even higher if both parents are nearsighted
- Reading and close-up work. People who do a lot of reading, writing or computer work may be at increased risk of myopia. The amount of time you spend using electronic screens, both at work and at home, also can play a role. Even holding reading material too close has been associated with increased myopia.
- Environmental conditions. Some studies support the idea that a lack of time spent outdoors, especially in today's indoor-heavy day and age, may increase the chances of developing myopia.

Complications

Nearsightedness is associated with a variety of complications from mild to severe, such as:

- Reduced quality of life. Uncorrected nearsightedness can affect your quality of life. You might not be able to perform a task as well as you wish. And your limited vision may detract from your enjoyment of day-to-day activities.
- Eyestrain. Uncorrected nearsightedness may cause you to squint or strain your eyes to maintain focus. This can lead to eyestrain and headaches.
- Impaired safety. Your own safety and that of others may be jeopardized if you have an uncorrected vision problem. This could be especially serious if you are driving a car or operating heavy equipment.

DIAGNOSIS

Nearsightedness is diagnosed by a basic eye exam, which includes a refraction assessment and an eye health exam.

A refraction assessment determines if you have vision problems such as nearsightedness or farsightedness, astigmatism, or presbyopia. Your doctor may use various instruments and ask you to look through several lenses to test your distance and close-up vision.

The eye doctor likely will put drops in your eyes to dilate your pupils for the eye health exam. This may make your eyes more light sensitive for a few hours after the exam. Dilation enables your doctor to see wider views inside of your eyes.

TREATMENT

The standard goal of treating nearsightedness is to improve vision by helping focus light on the retina by using corrective lenses or refractive surgery. Managing nearsightedness also includes regular monitoring for complications of the condition, including glaucoma, cataracts, retinal tears and detachments, and damage to central retinal areas.

Regular eye exams

Since it may not always be readily apparent that you're having trouble with your vision, the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) recommends the following intervals for regular eye exams:

Adults

If you're at high risk of certain eye diseases, such as glaucoma, get a dilated eye exam every one to two years, starting at age 40.

If you don't wear glasses or contacts, have no symptoms of eye trouble, and are at a low risk of developing eye diseases, such as glaucoma, get an eye exam at the following intervals:

- An initial exam at 40
- Every two to four years between ages 40 and 54
- Every one to three years between ages 55 and 64
- Every one to two years beginning at age 65

If you wear glasses or contacts or have a health condition affecting the eyes, like diabetes, you'll likely need to have regular eye checkups. But if you notice any vision problems, see an eye doctor anyway, even if you've just had a checkup. Blurred vision, for example, may suggest you need a new prescription, or even a sign of another problem.

Children and adolescents

Children need to be screened for eye disease and have their vision tested by a pediatrician, an ophthalmologist, an optometrist or another trained screener at the following ages and intervals:

- Age 6 months
- Age 3 years
- Before first grade and every two years during school years, at well-child visits, or through school or public screenings

Prescription lenses

Wearing corrective lenses treats nearsightedness by counteracting the increased curvature of your cornea or the increased length of your eye. Types of prescription lenses include:

- Eyeglasses. This is a simple, safe way to sharpen vision caused by nearsightedness. The variety of eyeglass lenses is wide and includes

first cuts a thin, hinged flap into the cornea. A laser is then used to remove inner layers of your cornea to flatten its domed shape. Recovery from LASIK is usually faster and less uncomfortable than other corneal surgeries.

- Laser-assisted subepithelial keratectomy (LASEK). Here, an eye surgeon creates an ultra-thin flap only in the cornea's outer protective cover (epithelium). A laser is then used to reshape the cornea's outer layers to flatten its curve, and then replace the epithelium.
- Photorefractive keratectomy (PRK). This procedure is similar to LASEK, except it completely removes the epithelium, then uses laser to reshape the cornea. The epithelium will then grow back naturally and conforming to the cornea's new shape

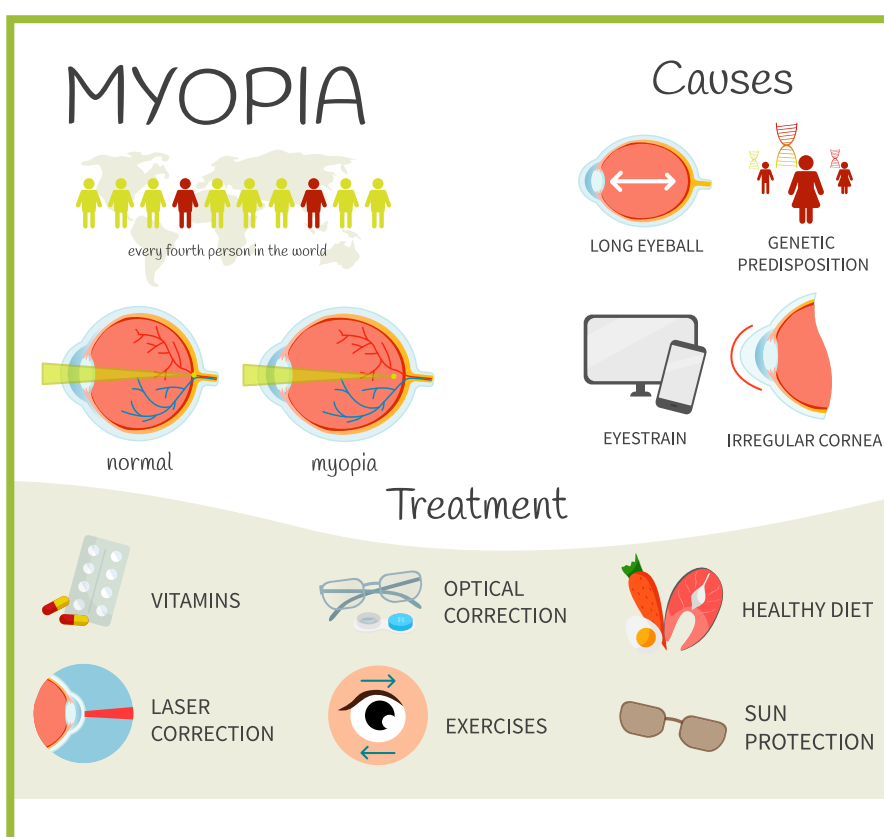
is unknown.

- Increased time outside. Spending time outdoors during adolescence and your early adult years may decrease the lifetime risk of nearsightedness. Researchers think exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays may change the molecular structure of the sclera and cornea and help maintain a normal shape.
- Orthokeratology. In this procedure, you wear rigid, gas permeable contact lenses for several hours a day until the curvature of your eye evens out. Then you wear the lenses less frequently to maintain the new shape. If you discontinue this treatment, your eyes return to their former shape.
- Peripheral defocus modifying contact lenses. This type of contact lens corrects nearsightedness while keeping your eyes evenly focused on the side (periphery) of your retina. Some evidence suggests this type of vision correction may reduce the progression of nearsightedness.

PREVENTION AND PROGNOSIS

Unfortunately, modern medicine cannot currently prevent nearsightedness. Some studies suggest you may be able to slow its progression, though. In the meantime, protect your eyes and your vision with these tips:

- Have your eyes regularly checked—even if you see well
- Control chronic conditions. Without proper treatment, conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure can affect vision
- Protect against sunlight. Wear sunglasses that block ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- Prevent eye injuries. Wear protective eyewear when playing sports, mowing the lawn, painting or using products with toxic fumes
- Eat healthy. Try to eat plenty of leafy greens, vegetables and fruits. Studies also show that eyes benefit from fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, like tuna and salmon
- Don't smoke. It's bad for your eyes, too—not just the rest of your body
- Use the right corrective lenses. Having regular exams will ensure that your prescription is correct and your vision is optimized. Some evidence suggests that eyeglass prescriptions that are too weak can actually increase the development of nearsightedness
- Use good lighting. Turn up or add light for better vision
- Reduce eyestrain with the 20/20/20 method: Look away from the screen or close-up work, including reading, every 20 minutes—for 20 seconds—at something 20 feet away ★



single vision, bifocals, trifocals and progressive multifocals.

- Contact lenses. These lenses are worn right on the eyes, available in a variety of materials and designs. These include soft, rigid, and gas-permeable—combined with spherical, toric and multifocal designs. Ask your eye doctor about pros and cons, and what might be best for you.

Refractive surgery

Refractive surgery reduces the need for eyeglasses and contact lenses. Your eye surgeon uses a laser beam to reshape the cornea, which results in a decreased nearsighted prescription. Even after surgery, you may need to use eyeglasses.

- Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK). Here, an eye surgeon

Talk with your doctor about the possible side effects, as this procedure is not reversible. Refractive surgery is not recommended until your nearsighted prescription is stable.

Treatments to slow or stop progression of nearsightedness

Researchers and clinical practitioners continue to seek more-effective approaches to stop nearsightedness from getting worse over time.

Therapies that show the most promise to date include:

- The topical medication, atropine. Topical atropine is commonly used to dilate the pupil of the eye, often as part of eye exams or before and after eye surgery. Low-dose (0.01%) atropine may also help slow progression of nearsightedness. The exact mechanism for this effect

Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today

RURAL ER VISITS JUMP OVER 50 PERCENT IN NEAR-DECADE

Albuquerque, New Mexico — Joint research by the University of New Mexico (UNM), Albuquerque and the University of Michigan finds that visits to emergency rooms (ERs) in U.S. rural areas jumped by over 50 percent since 2005 even as the overall population in those areas fell.

The researchers analyzed data from the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey for years 2005 through 2016. They found that ER visits increased from 36.5 to 64.5 of every 100 people in rural areas, compared to an increase from 40.2 to 42.8 of every 100 people in urban areas.

However, the jump may simply be due to a jump in number of rural safety-net ERs—as well as expanded Medicaid programs. When the research began in 2005, 38.3 percent of 2009 total ERs nationwide, or about 769, were rural safety-net ERs. But by 2016, 65 percent of those 2009 ERs, or 1,187, were rural safety-net ERs.

A big factor in that increase was the rise in Medicaid visits—itsself made possible by the Medicaid programs expanded by dozens of states under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

SINCE MID-90S, CHILDREN'S ER VISITS DOUBLE FOR INGESTING SMALL OBJECTS

Columbus, Ohio — According to new research, about 100 kids a day are rushed to U.S. emergency rooms after accidentally swallowing a toy piece, battery, magnet or other foreign object.

The research found that there were about nine cases of accidental ingestion for every 10,000 children in 1995—but that by 2015, that average had rose to almost 18.

Over that same decade, an estimated 800,000 kids age six and under were treated after swallowing foreign objects. Some 62 percent of those cases involved kids ages one



MORE ACCIDENTS? OR MORE ACCESS? UNM RESEARCH FINDS MORE RURAL ER VISITS

through three, researchers found.

But is there an actual rise in incidents? Or is the system just getting better at logging and reporting them? According to lead researcher Dr. Danielle Orsagh-Yentis of Nationwide Children's Hospital of Columbus, Ohio, it's probably both.

Small circular "button" batteries and other small consumer products are increasingly prevalent, according to Dr. Orsagh-Yentis—and the nationwide injury surveillance system is like recording ever-more cases.

Still, it seems that some things haven't changed: over half (53 percent) of incident involved boys—and coins, particularly pennies, were the most commonly swallowed object.

HOSPITAL-COMMON BACTERIA FOUND ON INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Pasadena, California — It shouldn't surprise anyone that where human beings travel, the bacteria—good and bad—that commonly colonize on and in human beings also travel.

Including the International Space Station (ISS), the Earth-orbiting outpost and leading edge of space exploration and research.

Most recently, scientists at NASA's legendary Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) have been cataloging the samples of bacteria and fungi that have been collected at eight locations throughout the ISS).

Most of the microbes found on the



A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE IN SPACE: U.S. SCIENTISTS HAVE FOUND BACTERIA COMMON TO PUBLIC SPACES ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS), TOO

ISS were human-associated—primarily *Staphylococcus* (26 percent), *Pantoea* (23 percent), and *Bacillus* (11 percent).

These microbes are common in hospitals, which suggests that the ISS is similar to other built environments where the population of microbes is shaped by people.

According to the JPL researchers, their work will both help keep astronauts safe in space and improve understanding of infections in hospitals and other close-quarter facilities on Earth.

COURT ORDERS SHUTTERED HOSPITAL TO REOPEN

Melrose Park, Illinois — Usually, it's the other way around: hospitals struggle to stay open, but circumstances—typically financial ones—force them to close.

But Westlake Hospital, located in the Chicago suburb of Melrose Park, recently suspended services due to what it said were staffing issues—and was shortly ordered by Cook County Circuit Judge Moshe Jacobius to reopen or face a fine of \$200,000 a day.

In a hearing, Jacobius found the hospital operator violated a temporary restraining order to maintain services at the 225-bed hospital. Jacobius made it clear the state Health Facilities and Services Review Board will determine if the hospital will stay open permanently.

Attorneys for Pipeline Health, the company that owns the hospital, declined to comment after Jacobius' ruling.

PEDIATRICS AMONG LEAST-PAID MEDICAL SPECIALTIES: DOCTOR SURVEY

San Francisco, California — Few would argue that the most vital indicator of a community's vitality is the health and wellbeing of its children—which would by extension make pediatricians, or doctors specializing in children's health, any community's most vital doctors.

By that logic, pediatric specialists should arguably be among the highest-paid physicians.

However, according to the 2019 *Physician Compensation Report*, the third annual such compilation by Calif.-based medical network Doximity, among the lowest-paying U.S. physician specialties for 2018 are pediatrics.

Specifically, pediatric infectious disease specialists reported an average annual compensation of just under \$186,000. Pediatric endocrinologists clocked in at just over \$201,000, while standard pediatricians took the third-lowest annual U.S. average of \$222,942.

On the flip side, neurosurgery topped the list at an annual U.S. average of just below \$617,000, followed respectively by thoracic (\$584,000) and orthopedic (\$526,000) surgery. ★



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

New Hamaspik HomeCare Regional Office Opens in Bronx

Range of Jobs, Culturally-diverse Staff Coming to Community

There's nothing like a career that has you serving the very community you're from—working in the same place you call home. And conversely, there's nothing like as “local” as caregivers who come from the same place as you.

Those facts make Hamaspik HomeCare, the home-care wing of the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA), all the more best equipped to service the predominantly Latino community of the Bronx.

Working out of 1749 Grand Concourse in the heart of the West Bronx, the Hamaspik HomeCare regional office employs a growing number of native Spanish speakers—

including Crystal Rivera.

Coming to the new office from Hamaspik HomeCare's downstate hub in Brooklyn (and there from the administrative offices of Touro College), Ms. Rivera brings a wealth of human-resources experience—not to mention fluency in the borough's dominant language and culture—that makes her, and the office's clients, feel right at home.

Qualified local staff, including home health aides (HHAs), personal care aides (PCAs), registered nurses (RNs) and Scheduling Coordinators, have also been newly recruited—with more in the pipeline, according to

Hamaspik HomeCare Chief Operating Officer Mordechai Wolhendler.

Coming from a niche culture itself, Hamaspik knows a thing or two about catering to niche cultural sensitivities.

And that's all the more reason Hamaspik HomeCare's Bronx office is a vital community resource rightfully exuding that “been here forever” vibe.

“We're here to provide services for their needs,” says Mr. Wolhendler, “and jobs for the community.” ★

For more information and/or to obtain Hamaspik HomeCare's wide range of supports and services, please call 1-855-HAMASPIK (1-855-426-2774).

Treating Parkinson's disease by cooling 'brains on fire'

Brisbane, Australia — An experimental treatment on laboratory animals was found to stop the development of Parkinson's disease in those animals. The University of Queensland researchers conducting the experiment hope to launch a human trial of the treatment in 2020.

The treatment involves using a drug called MCC950 to stop inflammation in the animals' brains. Inflammation in the brain is one of the hallmark symptoms of Parkinson's.

Specifically, the MCC950 drug made a part of the immune system called the NLRP3 inflammasome stop working. By preventing NLRP3 from working, the researchers found that they made the immune system stop attacking the brain.

Given orally once a day to the laboratory animals, MCC950 blocked NLRP3 activation in the brain and prevented the loss of brain cells, resulting in markedly improved motor function.

The MCC950 drug essentially “cooled the brains on fire,” turning down inflammatory activity, and allowing the animals' brain neurons to function normally, according to University of Queensland lead researcher Dr. Trent Woodruff. ★

Computer Game Designed to Detect Alzheimer's Seems to Work

London, England — A game created by British company Glitchers is designed to identify people with

early and mild symptoms of dementia that medical tests can't yet detect.

In the game, dubbed Sea Hero

Quest, players have to navigate a virtual boat across a realistic-looking seascape.

Each player is first shown a map and checkpoints, which shortly disappear. Players must then rely on memory to navigate to the checkpoints without the map.

Since its release a few years ago, Sea Hero Quest has been played by over three million players—allowing researchers to collect some 1,700 years' worth of data.

Researchers specifically looked at data from players with the APOE4 gene associated with higher risk of developing dementia. Comparing those players' results to those without that gene, they found that APOE4 carriers performed worse on spatial navigation tasks, taking less efficient routes to checkpoints.

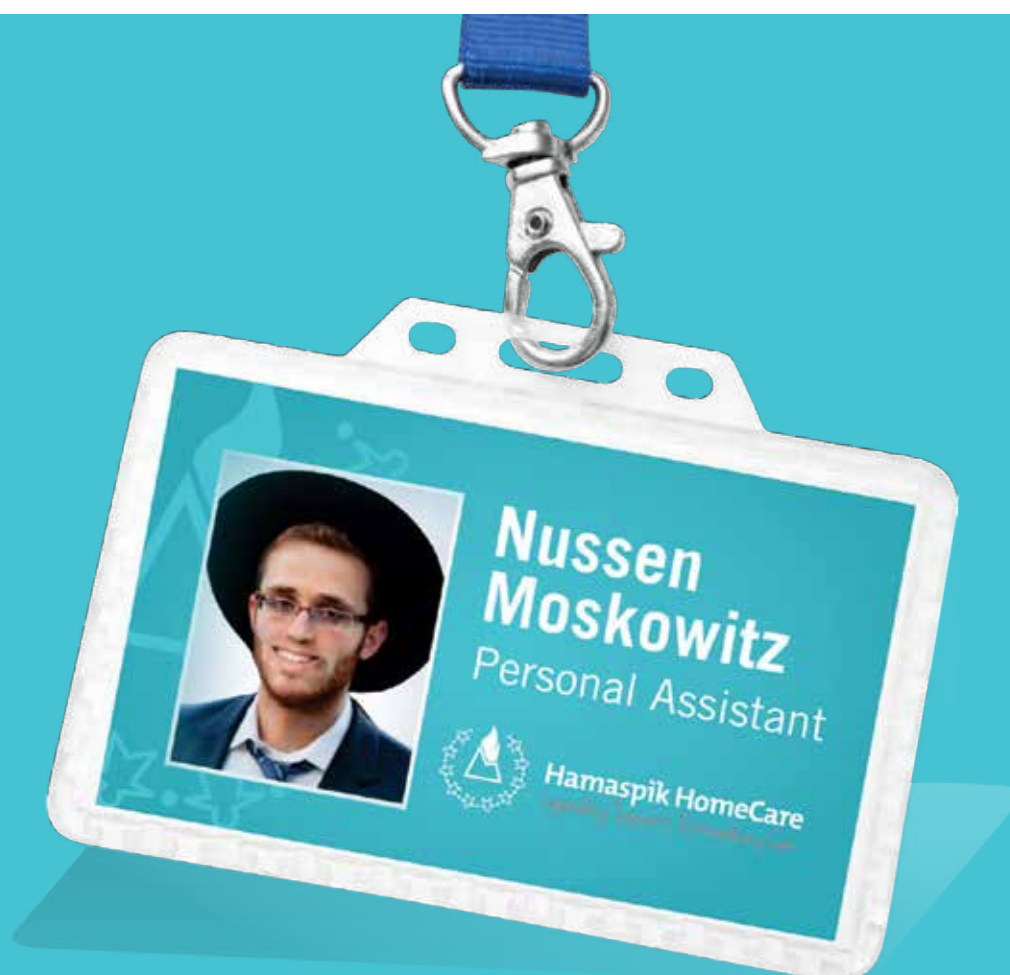
Alzheimer's is generally seen as

an illness that progressively destroys memory. But memory problems, while very common and severe in Alzheimer's, are actually late-stage symptoms.

The thinking behind the new game is to catch Alzheimer's as early as possible—with the hope of giving future treatments the best chance at working before any serious memory loss kicks in. ★



COMPUTING POWER: “SEA HERO QUEST” APPARENTLY DETECTS EARLY DEMENTIA



I GET PAID TO CARE FOR ZEIDY

Our Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program allows friends and family to serve as homecare aides.

Bringing homecare home.

1.855.HAMASPIK
info@hamaspikcare.org
www.hamaspikcare.org

BORO PARK / 4102 14TH AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NY
WILLIAMSBURG / 293 DIVISION AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NY
MONSEY / 5 PERLMAN DRIVE, SPRING VALLEY, NY 10977
MONROE / 1 HAMASPIK WAY, MONROE, NY
NEWBURGH / 53 ROUTE 17K, NEWBURGH, NY



Hamaspiik HomeCare
Legendary Support, Extraordinary Care



CDPAS | NHTD/TBI | Home Health Aides | Personal Care Aides | Therapy Services | Social Workers