



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

MAY '21 • ISSUE NO. 190



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

DO YOU EAT BREAKFAST DAILY?

A: ALWAYS; B: SOMETIMES; C: NO

Respond to: survey@nyshainc.org • 845-655-0667



HEALTH STAT

BREAKING DOWN AMERICANS' BREAKFAST

Americans believing breakfast is day's most important meal	92%
Americans who actually eat daily breakfast	44%
Obesity in Americans who skip breakfast	22%

Source: Statistic Brain Research Institute



HEALTH TIP

THE WHATS AND WHENS OF BREAKFAST

With breakfast, it's not just what you eat, but when you eat it, too. Breakfast during morning hours keeps your body's 'fasting/feeding' clock on schedule. As for meal content? Choose whole (not refined) grains; avoid processed foods (and fast food!); keep coffee simple; use fruits/veggies for carbs; and try homemade smoothies.

INSIDE

HEALTH

04 Green-lighting good health, quite literally: Green-light exposure therapy growing around country

14 Cutting edge: Solar-powered steam sterilizer for surgical tools being developed for Third-World usage

TRI-COUNTY CARE

03 Reaching for the flu-vax skies: TCC Care Managers shooting to get everyone protected this season

HAMASPIK

08 Hamaspik Orange Men's Day Hab mastering the Mishnah, again

12 Taking the cake: Hamaspik logo-themed pastry invokes past, future

HOSPITALS

18 More walk-in retail clinics, less visits to local emergency rooms for minor health issues: study

AUTISM / DISABILITY

10 Next stop, accessibility! Verdict forces Amtrak to redo select stations, compensate riders

HAMASPIK NEWS

AT NEW SIPUK MENTAL-HEALTH CLINIC, ROOM TO GROW

HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY'S NEWEST FACILITY GIVES COMMUNITY MEMBERS A LONG-NEEDED RANGE OF SUPPORTS



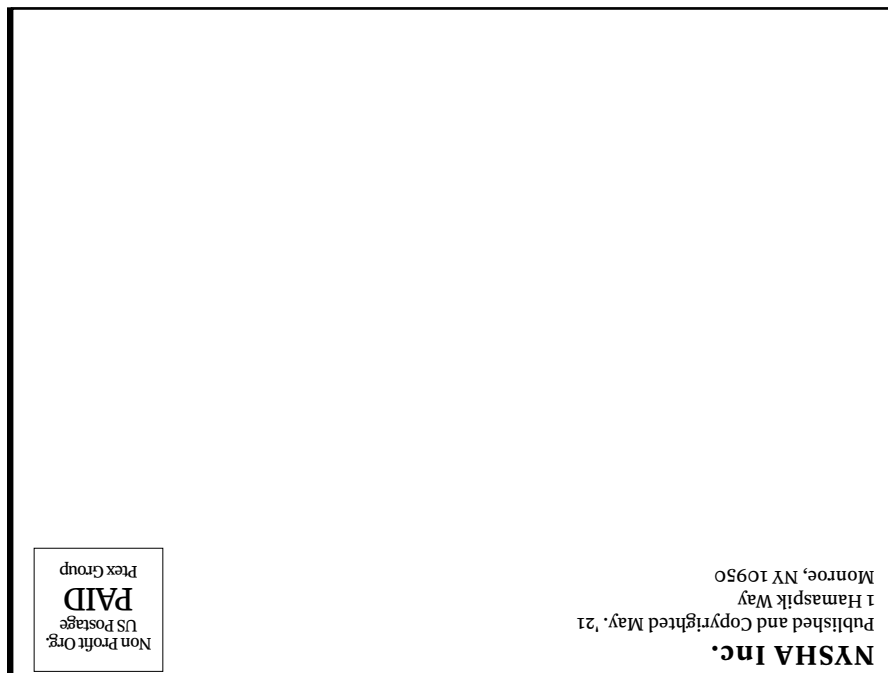
THE STATE-OF-THE-ART CENTER, DISCREETLY LOCATED IN THE HEART OF BOROUGH PARK, PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL CARE TO PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS STRUGGLING WITH MEDICAL AND MENTAL-HEALTH DIAGNOSES

SEE PAGE E9 >>

HAMASPIK HOMECARE NEWS

Home Care/NHTD Program Frees Seniors' Adult Kids to Focus on Emotional Support

SEE PAGE E19 >>



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HAMASPIK NEWS

Learning Responsibility From a Fish Named Ocean A Hamaspik Program Gets a Beloved Pet

SEE PAGE E9 >>

HEALTH NEWS

Scientific Research Center Grows Common Parkinson's Drug Inside Tomatoes

SEE PAGE E3 >>

Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

OPWDD SERVICES

INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

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

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES (ISS)

Paid housing expenses and support for individuals who can live independently.

HOME FAMILY CARE (HFC)

Places individuals with developmental disabilities into private homes to care and support the individual.

DAY HABILITATION (DH)

A day program for adults with disabilities designed to develop skills, greater independence, community inclusion etc.

Site Based: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility.

Without Walls: Day Habilitation Service delivered in a community-based setting.

Stars Day Program: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility for higher-functioning individuals.

COMMUNITY HABILITATION (CH)

Working one-on-one with individuals in their home or in the community to achieve valued outcomes by helping them develop daily living skills and achieve long-term goals.

COMMUNITY PRE VOCATIONAL

Working with individual to prepare them for paid community employment- Teaching individuals job skills and other related social skills to enhance their ability to obtain employment in the future.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

Working with individual to support and provide them with necessary coaching so they can successfully engage in paid competitive employment.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (FSS)

Support for the individual's family by reimbursing them for certain qualifying items or services, otherwise not available to them.

INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES (IBS)

Short-term interventional services for people with behavioral issues and their family members.

RESPIRE:

Home and Community-based respite services to provide a relief for the individual's caregiver and family.

At-Home: Respite services delivered in the home of the individual.

After School: Respite program provided every day after school hours.

Sundays: Respite program provided every Sunday.

Legal Holidays: Respite program provided on all legal holidays when school is not in session.

Summer Break/Camp Neshomah: Full day respite program during the summer break weeks.

Stars Night Program: Respite services delivered in the evening hours to high-functioning individuals by taking them out in the community and doing recreational and stimulating activities with them.

Weekend Getaway: A weekend retreat for individuals receiving respite services.

Hamasmid: After-School program for mainstreamed individuals engaging in recreational activities.

SELF-DIRECTION

The Individual or their advocate takes direct responsibility to manage their services and self-direct their budget.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI): Assists individual or their advocate in implementing their Individual Support Agreement and to manage financial accountability and employer responsibilities.

Brokerage: Assisting individuals or their advocate in creating and managing their budget.

PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

DOH

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Providing a range of services to help young children (ages birth-3) who have a specific delay in their development.

Group Development Model (GDM): Providing Early Intervention services in a group-setting.

Therapy: Providing OT, PT, SLP, Vision, Nutrition, Play, Special Education, Family Training etc. to help the child develop appropriately.

Evaluations: Providing full evaluations to assess child's skills and development.

NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD)

Waiver services to help individuals who need nursing-home level of care safely remain home and avoid nursing home placement.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

Environmental Modifications (EMODS): Provides Internal and external physical adaptations to the individual's home, that are necessary to assure the health, welfare and safety of the individual and avoid institutionalization.

Vehicle Modification (VMODS): Modifications to a vehicle that is used to improve the individual's independence and access to services and supports in the community.

Assistive Technology: Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

Waiver services to help individuals who had a traumatic brain injury.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

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Assistive Technology: Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

SENIOR DINING/SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM (SHNOIS CHAIM)

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

HAMASPIK CHOICE

MLTCP:

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

HMO/INSURANCE

ABA

Behavior modification services for children with autism.

Social Group: ABA service delivered in a group setting.

One on One: ABA service delivered on a one-on-one basis in the child's home or community.

HAMASPIK HOMECARE

LHCSA

Licensed HomeCare Services Agency .

Personal Care Services

Our PCA/HHA assist individuals with personal care needs, activities of daily living, and light housekeeping. They are extensively trained, and screened, and are supervised by RN.

Support Services

Our HCSS Certified Aides assist those enrolled in the NHTD or TBI Medicaid Waiver Programs with oversight and supervision, in addition to personal care services.

Nursing Services

Providing: skilled observation and assessment - care planning - paraprofessional supervision - clinical monitoring and coordination - medication management - physician - ordered nursing interventions and skilled treatments.

Training

Providing: free PCA training and competency testing for those interested in a home care career.

CDPAS/CDPAP

As an alternative to traditional homecare, this program empowers the client to hire, train, and set the schedule of their personal assistants (PA). The PA's may be family members and can even live in the same home.

NYC HCR

ACCESS TO HOME

Providing home modifications for people with physical disability.

NYSED SERVICES

ACCESS VR

Assist individuals to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development.

PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment planning and support services that provide assistance for individuals to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment.

NYSHA

ARTICLE 16 CLINIC

Providing: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · 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

ADULT HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for Adults with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

CHILDREN HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for children with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

ADULT HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible adults over the age of twenty one.

Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment:

Support and treatment to achieve functional improvement and stability, while working to attain the personal goals in a community setting.

Family Support and Training: Family training and support to engage the family in the treatment planning process and provide them with emotional and informational support to enhance their skills to assist in the recovery.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation: Assists with rehabilitating functional deficits and interpersonal or environmental hardships associated with the behavioral health condition.

Empowerment Services-Peer Support: Peer-delivered services designed to promote skills for coping with and managing behavioral health symptoms, while utilizing recovery-oriented principles.

Habilitation: Assist to acquire and improve skills such as: communication, self-care, socialization, mobility, etc. to successfully reside in home and community-based setting.

Intensive Supported Employment: Assists to obtain and keep competitive employment.

Prevocational Services: Prepares for employment, developing strengths and soft skills that contribute to employability.

Transitional Employment: Strengthens the work record and skills toward the goal of achieving assisted or unassisted competitive employment.

Ongoing Supported Employment: Ongoing follow-along support when holding down a job.

CHILDREN HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible children from birth to twenty one.

Prevocational Services: Designed to prepare a youth (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work, volunteer work, or career exploration. Prevocational Services are not job-specific, but rather are geared toward facilitating success in any work environment.

Caregiver Family Support and Services: Teaches skills to caregiver/family's that will enhance their ability to care for the child/youth in the home and/or community.

Community Self-Advocacy Training and Support: Provides family and caregivers with techniques and information not generally available so that they can better respond to the needs of the Individual related to their disabilities.

Community Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social skills, daily living and health related duties by working with the individual on goal-oriented tasks.

Supported Employment: Designed to prepare youth with disabilities (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work.

Planned Respite: Provides short-term relief for the individual's family/caregiver while supporting the individual's mental health, substance use and/or health care goals.

Day Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social and daily living skills in a certified agency setting.

● ► TRI-COUNTY CARE NEWS

With COVID-19, a Jab Above

Tri-County Care Proactively Promoting New Vaccine for People with Disabilities, Front-liners and Family Members; Partnering with State DOH for Ongoing Distribution

The best defense is a good offense, the old saying goes.

It's true at least for Tri-County Care, where staffers at that care coordination organization (CCO), from front-liners to top brass, have never sat around waiting for fires to be put out. At that CCO covering much of the Empire State, productive means proactive—whether it's about an individual on a Care Manager's roster, or a vaccine promising a very real hope of safety and normalcy in the face of an intractable and too-often-deadly new respiratory virus.

So with the advent of a vaccine, and ongoing distribution and administration across New York State, Tri-County Care approached the New York State Dept. of Health (DOH) and Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to advocate for and obtain vaccines

for its priority groups.

Under current state guidelines for New York's phased vaccine rollout, individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD)—Tri-County's target population—are state-eligible for the vaccine. So Tri-County Care rolled up its sleeves.

Here's what that looked like.

Tri-County Care administered in-house training of all its Care Managers on the vital importance of vaccinating the I/DD communities that it supports.

Family forums were held for individuals and their families on all things vaccine-related. Medical Director Hammad Rizvi, M.D. led virtual sessions on the importance of getting the vaccine (anyone in the general public over age 65, as many special-needs parents are, is eligible), separating myth from fact, how and where to schedule the two-dose

vaccinations, and any vaccine side effects.

Tri-County Care's teams of frontline Care Managers then followed that up with additional outreach to individuals and their families—purveying general vaccine education, assistance in scheduling vaccination appointments, and the all-important consents.

With all that prep work behind, Tri-County Care proactively moved on getting its individuals to vaccination sites. Care Managers assisted dozens in signing up for scheduled vaccines on state distribution websites, or coordinated with individuals' primary care physicians in cases where they were affiliated with medical centers with supplies of vaccine. In both cases, transportation with accompaniment to and fro was likewise secured.

Taking it one proactive step

further, Tri-County Care also advocated for all employees eligible for jobs due to their direct contact with said individuals.

Tri-County Care has also been submitting weekly data to the DOH on individuals scheduled for vaccination, successfully vaccinated, and even individuals declining vaccination.

Tri-County Care is now also an official partner with the DOH in eventually providing physical sites within serviced communities at which locals will eventually be able to get their COVID-19 vaccinations.

With their vaccination well underway, Tri-County Care's constituents are joining police officers, firefighters, schoolteachers and bus drivers alike in proactively acquiring a vaccine solution before you've even got a virus problem. ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

Scientific Research Center Grows Common Parkinson's Drug Inside Tomatoes

Innovative Natural Approach Avoids Industrialization, Could Be Scaled Up, Remains Affordable

Norwich, England — Some medications can be found in raw nature in ample abundance—like salicylic acid, the main ingredient in aspirin, which occurs naturally in the bark of willow trees.

Most other medications are man-made through artificial chemical processes and then mass-produced in factories.

And yet other medications can be first manufactured by Man, but then mass-produced in the world's greenest factory: the fruits (and vegetables) of nature itself.

That's exactly what botanical and genetic scientists did at England's independent John Innes Centre (JIC): they grew levodopa, the popular Parkinson's disease drug, in tomatoes.

Researchers at JIC initially selected the tomato as their experiment target because it's a widely-cultivated and hardy crop whose production can be



MODERN MEDICINE'S FRUITS: SCIENTISTS GROW PARKINSON'S DRUG LEVODOPA IN TOMATOES

scaled up to meet mass demand.

They then injected the tomatoes with a gene that produces an amino

acid called tyrosine.

Normally, levodopa is made in factories, where it is produced by

large amounts of tyrosine. But here, scientists got the tomatoes to essentially function as factories by genetically modifying them to make more tyrosine. In turn, the tyrosine inside the tomatoes naturally produced substantial levels of levodopa.

For its part, levodopa works by compensating for the body's lower level of dopamine that occurs with the progression of Parkinson's.

Parkinson's is a growing problem in many countries, where many cannot afford the daily cost of standard man-made levodopa.

The use of tomato plants as a source of levodopa is not only great for the environment, but also obviates the side effects common to man-made levodopa, including nausea and behavioral complications.

Now it seems there may shortly be another reason to eat your fresh veggies—especially tomatoes, and especially for people with Parkinson's. ★

Hamaspik Gazette

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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

WORKPLACE APPRECIATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Orlando, Florida — According to a study, feeling appreciated is not just good for employees, but for employers, too.

The study by University of Central Florida had 79 supervisors record how much they felt appreciated by their staff, twice a day for ten consecutive days. The log also included how that appreciation affected their energy levels, job satisfaction, sense of optimism and life satisfaction.

“On days supervisors felt more appreciated, they had more energy, and this translated into higher levels of optimism, life satisfaction, job satisfaction and helping,” said study co-author Maureen Ambrose, professor of business ethics at University of Central Florida.

“This was interesting because our field hasn’t connected feeling appreciated to higher energy, and we typically look at how supervisors can boost the resources of subordinates—not the other way around,” she said in a university news release.

STUDY ASSOCIATES LIFETIME DRINKING WITH GREATER CANCER RISK

Tokyo, Japan — A review of data on thousands of hospital patients across Japan over several decades has yielded a telling correlation. The researchers found a higher rate of cancer among those patients who reported a lifetime of light drinking of alcohol.

In addition to having their medical history documented, volunteers were asked about their drinking habits, including how much they drank daily and how long they had been drinking altogether. Using this data, the study’s authors compared roughly 63,000 adult patients diagnosed with cancer to the same number of roughly matching patients who did not have cancer.

People who drank a standard drink a day (defined as a two-ounce shot of whiskey, six-ounce glass of wine, or a 17-ounce glass of beer) were five percent likelier to develop cancer, researchers found.

“BROKEN HEART SYNDROME” NOW LINKED TO CANCER

Zurich, Switzerland — Medical research has now established that there really is such a thing as a broken heart.

It may not be news to the wise ancients or modern-day poets, but enough research has been done to give it a medical definition—namely, sudden weakening and shape-changing of the heart muscle in response to intense emotional experiences, most often the death of a loved one, resulting in sudden intense chest pain and shortness of breath that is not a heart attack. It even has a medical name: Takotsubo cardiomyopathy.

While the extreme stress of bereavement or other trauma has been linked to broken heart syndrome, a study by Switzerland’s University Hospital Zurich found that one in six people with

the syndrome also had cancer—and were likelier to not survive five years after diagnosis.

NEW ANTIBIOTIC MAY HELP WORLD FIGHT ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT BUGS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — Scientists at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wistar Institute have developed a potentially new class of antibiotics that works against a wide range of bacteria.

The new class of antibiotics is called *dual-acting immuno-antibiotics* (DAIAs). The new antibiotic worked in lab tests against several bugs that resist many existing antibiotics. It works in two ways at once: One, it stops a key part of each bacterial cell’s “engine”—an enzyme called IspH—from working; and two, it makes the body’s immune system

work harder.

With thousands dying of antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections worldwide each year, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared antimicrobial resistance (AMR) one of the top ten global public health threats against humanity. It is estimated that by 2050, antibiotic-resistant infections could claim millions of lives each year.

LONELY PEOPLE, DIFFERENT BRAIN WIRING

Montreal, Canada — Lonely people not only think differently than social-connected people—they even have different brain wiring than social people, says research at Montreal’s McGill University.

Study participants self-described as “lonely” had denser wiring in the *default network*, a part of the brain involved in inner thoughts like reminiscing and thinking about others. They also had a better-preserved *fornix*—a “bridge” of nerve lines connecting the default network to the hippocampus, the brain part associated mainly with memory.

Loneliness is increasingly recognized as a major health problem; earlier studies have shown that seniors experiencing loneliness run higher risks of cognitive decline and dementia.

The only question now is: If one goes from “lonely” to “connected,” does one’s brain physically change? The answer, based on current brain science, is probably yes.

TAKE VIGOROUS REGULAR WORKOUTS TO HEART

Oxford, England — Too much of anything is no good, the conventional wisdom goes—even if that thing is ordinarily good, like exercise.

But now, a study by the vaunted Oxford University says that high levels of vigorous physical activity are still beneficial despite being excessive. In fact, the researchers now say, people who exercised the most have heart-disease risk the least.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading world’s number one cause of death, with strokes and heart attacks—themselves frequently caused by high blood pressure often due to high salt intake—ending millions of lives globally each year.

For their conclusions, researchers studied data on over 90,000 people over a five-year period. They found that the “slice” of those who exercised the most—some 25 percent, or 22,500 people—also reported an average reduction in risk heart disease of up to 63 percent. ★

GREEN LIGHT EXPOSURE TO TREAT CHRONIC PAIN GROWING AROUND COUNTRY



A HEALTHY GO-AHEAD: GREEN-LIGHT THERAPY SEEMS TO HAVE HEALTH BENEFITS

Tucson, Arizona — “Going green” now has a new meaning.

Normally, the phrase refers to making lifestyle or shopping choices that supposedly best help the environment—like driving a less-polluting car or not buying disposable items.

But now, several researchers and medical professionals around the country are experimenting with relieving chronic pain with... green light.

A number of unrelated

experiments seem to indicate that prolonged daily exposure to light exclusively in the shade of green can drastically cut down migraine headaches (both in number and in intensity), reduce PTSD in war veterans, cut down on post-operative and fibromyalgia pain, trigger positive emotions, and otherwise reduce chronic pain.

The advantage of green-light exposure therapy is that it involves no drugs. How or why it works, however, remains unknown. ★

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BOYS AND GIRLS: AGES 2-6

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A Project by Hamaspik Kings

Hamaspik Twilights™ is a full suite of after school and weekend programs, each distinctly designed for various age groups and life stages within the OPWDD community.



Powered By  Hamaspik

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Parental Input, Personal Passion Drives Strive's Shabbos-Mastery Scrapbook Project

Individuals at Hamaspik Rockland's 'Seminary' Program Use Arts and Crafts to Internalize Mechanics of "Day of Rest"

It's another day at Strive, Hamaspik of Rockland County's classroom-based program that's modeled after traditional post-high-school seminaries.

Bruchy likes drawing letters in Elmer's trademark white glue, then sprinkling them with glitter to form eye-catching art. Leahla enjoys designing her own pages with a variety of scrapbooking materials. And Sarah Leah has the most fun tracing and cutting objects that portray the action being studied.

It's what you might want to call "Project 39," a themed effort by Strive. The project is centered on the Thirty-Nine Melachos (meh-LAW-khose; translates roughly to "Labors") or the actions under Jewish religious law that Jews mustn't do on Shabbos (the Jewish Sabbath).

Constructing, demolishing, reaping, grinding, or baking are among them—and, most visibly, not lighting a fire, which eliminates usage of the combustion engines that drive automobiles.

To bring those actions to life, Strive staff has been facilitating arts-and-crafts sessions at least once a week. Their charges have been making their own scrapbooks. But not just any scrapbooks—Thirty-Nine Melachos scrapbooks, with each page depicting a real-life scenario for each.

Internalizing all 39 specific proscribed actions is the ongoing project's ultimate mission. And judging by how things have been going the past several months, so far, so good.

Parental input

The idea came up in late summer of 2020, when Strive lead staffer Ms. Herzl was approached by the mother of one of her girls with an idea. In tune with parental feedback as Hamaspik is, the program director was all ears. *Why not teach them about the foundations of Shabbos in a fun way?* Ms. Herzl was only too happy to oblige. (Other activities inspired by parental input include swimming outings and social-skills activities, the director shares.)

Immediately after the fall-time Sukkos holiday in October 2020, the Strive group began getting specialized Melachos sessions at least once a week. Operating out of Hamaspik's facility at 221 Rt. 59 in Spring Valley, Strive is a classroom-like effort geared for



KNEAD THIS? WORKING DOUGH'S A NO-NO



"ERASING"... INCLUDES LETTER REMOVAL



PLANTING SEEDS OF SHABBOS AWARENESS



"REMOVAL" REFERS TO CARRYING IN PUBLIC



SHABBOS IN WRITING: NO PEN USAGE



(NOT) PLOWING THROUGH SHABBOS...

high-functioning young women. It's one of Hamaspik of Rockland County's newest programs—and a "classroom," it naturally has a "teacher."

Mrs. Devorah Berger, a veteran community educator, comes in

thrice weekly to instruct her girls in math, social studies and reading comprehension. And during at least one of those classes, the teacher also presents Shabbos-instruction.

Each session lasts roughly an hour.

Firstly, Mrs. Berger patiently and clearly defines the Melachah—*zoreia*, or planting, for example. Installing seeds in the good earth is a no-no, then, from farms laying down wheat rows with grain drills to putting a future petunia in a flowerpot. Earlier, Strive teacher and staff will have brainstormed on the scrapbook art; with lesson now taught, the girls are given raw art materials—and free reign on how to express and capture the lesson best.

"I like it for them to be very hands-on for them to do," Ms. Herzl tells the *Gazette*. "It looks like they made it themselves." Because they did.

When the session is over, each girl has a personally-decorated sheet, replete with three-dimensional art, to add to her growing 39 Melachos scrapbook. Upon completion, they'll have quite the hands-on record of experiential learning—and on a subject that means more to their faith-based community of origin than perhaps anything else.

Substituting specificity with flexibility, the group is not doing them in the Mishnah's traditional order. "We'll put them in order once we're done," says Ms. Herzl. Currently, the group has completed ten of the 39.

Taking work personally

Indelibly baked into Hamaspik's corporate culture is that curious blend of love, experience and exertion known as *passion*. Considering that the agency started with it, employees are still hired for it and live every day by it. Ms. Herzl, a five-year Hamaspik worker and special-needs volunteer since 13, is another example of that.

Proof of that is in the pudding—or in the tea that the Strive girls know they can't make on Shabbos because it constitutes *bishul*, or cooking.

"They're totally getting it!" she proudly divulges, asked if they really understand the rules now.

"They can repeat back to me what the definition is—what you can or can't do."

"They love making the scrapbook," she concludes, "and they're so proud of it!"

And so, one might add, is another member of Hamaspik's corps of extraordinary staff. ★

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Staten Island
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Tri-County Care is a New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) product.

TriCountyCare.org • 844.504.8400 Ext. 2

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



Daily Teaching of Weekly Rules

Hamaspik Orange Day Hab Group to Conquer New Volume of Mishnah

Moshe Hirsh Berkowitz, intrepid Direct Support Professional (DSP) at Hamaspik of Orange County's Day Hab program, is at it again.

Not that he's the only Hamaspik DSP pushing the envelope and going above and beyond the call of duty. But his pet project—teaching the high-functioning gentlemen everything they could possibly learn (and in the process, surprising everyone, including himself)—is taking flight once more.

Last year, his group scored the epic achievement of mastering an entire volume of the Mishnah (the compendium of Jewish law)—even passing a test proving that they'd truly internalized the material. Mr. Berkowitz, not wanting to waste any time, got immediately started on another.

Deferring to the sage advice of his own grandfather, revered community *dayan* (rabbinical authority) Rabbi Getzel Berkowitz, he opted for Tractate Shabbos, the volume of the Mishnah that lays down the laws of, well, Shabbos.

Because Shabbos is the vital weekly mainstay that it is, Rabbi Berkowitz suggested that “the boys” gain familiarity with it. And so, to empower them with a better understanding of the rules by which they live each weekend, they got right to work.

Every day of Day Hab is now marked with a one-hour Mishnah class on Shabbos—with the entire program, even individuals with low function, in attendance. “I want to make them feel like a part of it,” Mr. Berkowitz explains. ★

The Joys of Summer



DAY (HAB) IN, DAY (HAB) OUT: AT HAMASPIK'S MEN'S DAY HABS, ONE GENTLEMAN MARKS HIS BIG DAY (TOP), ANOTHER IS “PUZZLED” (L), AND A THIRD ENJOYS A COOL SMOOTHIE

A Smooth Transition to A New System

Hamaspik Agencies Throughout NYS Do Their Utmost To Ensure That All Adapt Well

Change is never easy. At the various Hamaspik agencies, they seek to make transitions as seamless as possible, bearing in mind how real the challenge is for those adapting.

This past January, individuals, providers, and employees had to adjust to a new reality, when a new system to log hours for HCBS (ComHab and Respite) services was mandated.

Previously, all services provided were logged on paper timesheets. In January, the state introduced a new verification system, Electronic Visit Verification (EVV), requiring some HCBS services to be logged electronically. This posed a challenge for many, who were accustomed to using paper timesheets.

“The coordinators were so devoted,” says Joel Lefkowitz, HCBS Regional Manager (Borough Park). “I was amazed at how they took it so personally to ensure every Respite or ComHab worker gets paid on time!”

“They guided everyone through this transition with remarkable patience and understanding,” adds Shmiel Chaim Tessler, HCBS Regional Manager (Williamsburg). “The Respite and ComHab workers were incredible, too. They were so understanding and flexible.”

Chief Information Officer Shulem Jeremias and the entire software team worked tirelessly to build a new software system to ensure a smooth transition.

“Mr. Jeremias put himself fully into EVV to make sure Hamaspik is fully compliant. There were many hardships and hurdles, but the software team persevered and we were completely ready on January first,” says Hershel Werthiemer, Executive Director at Hamaspik of Kings county.

With the main parts of the transition behind them, employees continue to do what they do best: Helping with heart. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

The Sipuk Clinic: Opening Doors to Mental Health, Support and Hope

The Sipuk Clinic journey has had many bumps along the road. At last, they have reached their destination: The opening of the clinic.

This didn't happen overnight. It took years of work—countless consultations, applications and board meetings with the OMH Advisory Council—to obtain a license. The construction phase wasn't simple either. If every construction site has regulations, a clinic has *many* more, with specific requirements of square footage, number of rooms, and decor.

Built to accommodate clients, the waiting rooms are strategically designed to fully enable confidentiality. Located in the heart of Borough Park to provide easy access, the clinic is camouflaged by other stores, so clients can feel at ease when entering. There's an underground parking lot as well, so clients don't have to worry about parking and can enter comfortably.

Led by Mr. Mutty Solomon, LMHC, a psychotherapist and expert in mental

health, Sipuk has a cadre of top-notch mental health professionals. Hamaspik of Kings County is bringing all resources under one roof: Therapy for children and adults, family therapy, group therapy and more.

"Baruch Hashem, we started seeing clients!" says Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director at Hamaspik of Kings County. "I feel privileged to bring such a clinic to the community."

Fueled by the encouragement of rabbanim and activists in the community, Hamaspik of Kings County is spearheading the mental health revolution. Hamaspik's previous success in destigmatizing and helping the I/DD population, transformed the community's mindset and perspective on individuals with special needs. Who is more capable to enable this breakthrough in mental health? ★

To schedule an appointment or to reach out with questions or comments, call 718-400-9988 or email info@sipuk.org

Learning Responsibility From a Fish Named Ocean

A Hamaspik Program Gets a Beloved Pet

There's other fish in the sea. But there's only one named Ocean. (At least that the *Gazette* knows of.)

That friendly little fish, a fine specimen of the Betta persuasion, a.k.a. the Siamese Fighting Fish, calls his home not the shallow waters of its native Asia but a newly-purchased tank at Strive, one of Hamaspik Rockland's several Day Services programs.

Bettas are known for living alone, although they can be placed with specific species other than their own—with whom they tend to brawl (hence their name of fame).

But while the ocean is a lonely place, Ocean is hardly a lonely fish.

Why a fish tank?

Because most of Strive's regulars love animals, explains Coordinator Ms. Herzl, who correctly figured a fish is easier to maintain—and isn't overwhelming like the rabbits and puppies she'd sporadically brought in for visits.

So along came a new fish.

Strive and staff visited a pet shop, selected a Betta (because they live long), a tank, and supplies, and debated over a name. Being blue, they dubbed him Ocean.

Some people love the ocean. At Strive, the girls love Ocean.

According to Coordinator Herzl, they take turns carrying out daily feedings, weekly tank-cleanings and water-changings, and regular filter inspections.

In short, being responsible.

So how has having a fish tank changed your individuals for the better? "They're more caring—more looking out for the other," Ms. Herzl observes. "They don't even eat before he does!"

And what might one doted-upon fish have to say?

Bettas reportedly can recognize their human guardians. As for Ocean, says the Coordinator, he would say that he "loves being in the room!"

And for good reason. ★

A Life of Satisfaction



Notes to Our Parents



HIS OWN VOICE: AN INDIVIDUAL SINGS



PULLS THE RIGHT STRINGS: DOVID (L) DOES LEFTY GUITAR; FIDDLING WITH THE VIOLIN (R)



Waves of Responsibility



NOTHING FISHY HERE: IN HIS WATERY HOME, METICULOUSLY MAINTAINED BY THE STRIVE PROGRAM'S REGULARS, OCEAN THE FISH FEELS RIGHT AT HOME, AS YOU CAN SURELY "SEA"

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

MILLIONS AWARDED BY HUD TO EXPAND DISABILITY HOUSING ACCESS

Washington, D.C. — Over the next several years, public housing should be making people with disabilities feel more at home, thanks to two federal programs.

That's because recently the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made over \$86 million in funding available to public housing agencies in more than three dozen states.

The first program, called Mainstream funding vouchers, is meant for non-elderly individuals with disabilities who have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The second program, entailing some \$54.7 million will fund 15 organizations in 12 states to develop more rental housing for people with disabilities and provide rental assistance.

Among the first program's awardees—and, in fact, the only one in the Empire State—is New York's very own Village of Kaser, which was granted

\$261,000 towards Mainstream funding vouchers.

LAB GROWS "MINI-BRAINS" TO TEST TREATMENTS FOR RETT SYNDROME

San Diego, California — Led by autism researcher Alysson Muotri, Ph.D., the University of California San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine recently used brain organoids—also called "mini-brains"—missing the MECP2 gene to better study Rett syndrome.

Rett syndrome is a rare form of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The condition affects nearly every part of a patient's life, including movement, speech and breathing. Unlike general ASD, caused by complex factors, Rett is generally caused by mutation of a specific gene: MECP2.

In their lab, UCSD researchers grew brain organoids, which are tiny clumps of brain cells that resemble jelly beans. While not alive, organoids behave like normal human brains in several ways, allowing drugs to be tested on them.

Researchers found that drugs Nefiracetam and PHA 54361 counteract the deficiencies caused by lack of the

MECP2 gene. Further research is needed.

DISABILITY PARENT-COACHING COMPANY INVENTS COMPUTER MOUSE FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM

Royal Oak, Michigan — Children with autism have long benefited from so-called *fidget toys*—sturdy and generally unbreakable toys, usually colorful and soft—to relax and recalibrate by touching, squeezing and otherwise holding and feeling them.

Combining the classic fidget toy with the otherwise smooth-surfaced, cold and impersonal computer mouse is the Hoglet—a colorful mouse covered with soft "spikes"—made by Michigan-based HedgeHog Health.

The device, which now retails for just under \$40, is available in several colors. The tactile, toy-like mouse is reported to be a breakthrough for numerous children with disabilities, who tend to have difficulty using computer mice. It is designed to increase focus for those with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorders.

Additionally, the Hoglet is wireless and minimizes clicking sounds as to not

irritate those on the autism spectrum.

BOYS AND GIRLS WITH AUTISM SPEAK ABOUT SOCIAL GROUPS DIFFERENTLY

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — Seems that the differences between the genders extend to the world of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), too.

According to research by the University of Pennsylvania, girls with autism use "we," "they" and other words related to social groups differently than do boys with autism.

Scientists first recorded audio and video as each participant took part in an informal five-minute 'get to know you' conversation with an undergraduate student or research assistant.

Computerized transcripts then counted the number of plural personal pronouns like "we," "us," "they" and "them."

The transcripts also counted words with social connotations like "family" and "friends"—then calculating how often a child used these words relative to the total number of words he or she said overall.

Researchers found that the girls used plural personal pronouns almost twice as often as their male counterparts.

AMTRAK SETTLES ADA VIOLATIONS WITH PAYMENTS, STATION ADAPTATIONS



FINALLY ON THE RIGHT TRACK: AFTER ADA-RELATED LEGAL WOES, AMTRAK IS SLATED TO BECOME MORE DISABILITY-ACCESSIBLE

Washington, D.C. — For decades, over 100 train stations run by Amtrak were out of compliance with the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA), which took effect in 1990.

At that time, Amtrak was given 20 years to comply. However, due to failure to satisfy government criteria, Amtrak recently settled with the U.S. Dept. of Justice to upgrade inaccessible stations coast to coast.

Amtrak will also dole out some \$2.25 million to travelers

with disabilities who had sought to board at 78 stations with significant issues.

"Amtrak failed or refused to comply with the congressionally-mandated 2010 deadline, and Amtrak's noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act injured individuals with disabilities," said Eric Dreiband, assistant attorney general at the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "Passengers with disabilities have waited long enough." ★

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS INFLUENCED BY DAILY-LIVING SKILLS

Los Angeles, California — Young adults with autism who are better able to manage and maintain skills in daily living are likelier to pursue post-high school education as well as gain and keep employment.

That's according to a recent study at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The findings stem from a long-term study of over 250 individuals, most with autism, followed since the age of two.

All are now in their mid-20s.

The current study looked at how the participants fared since leaving high school and aging out of previously-used support programs.

While finding that daily living skills improve through age 21, participants were also found to have lost some abilities by age 26 after leaving school.

Researchers say that their findings underscore the need for additional and ongoing support programs in adulthood. ★



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► HAMASPIK NEWS

A Miraculous Past, Baked Into a Hopeful Future

Hamaspik Orange Women's Day Hab Bakes Cake Depicting Agency's Storied Logo

If the world ever needed a symbol for disability inclusion, perhaps it needs look no further than Hamaspik.

Specifically, at the now widely-known symbol of Hamaspik.

Marked by a circle of identical figures ringing a flaming mountain, the symbol has long evoked the unity and connectedness fostered by the corporate culture of Hamaspik—a spiritual ethos that says, and indeed lives by, the genuine belief that deep down inside, we are all truly the same.

But the symbol itself—or more specifically, the watershed moment in history that it captures—far predates Hamaspik.

By just a few millennia.

A Circle of Full Acceptance

In Jewish tradition handed down faithfully over centuries, it was in a very different time and place, in a very different world and in a very different part of the world, that the direct ancestors of today's Jews stood as one before God—prepared to receive His spiritual charge to them as a nation, encapsulated in the physical symbol



GOT IT IN WRITING: A SPECIAL MESSAGE

of what later came to be known as the Torah.

And so, the tradition goes, a prerequisite for the receiving of the Torah was unity—a communizing uniformity of heart and mind that rendered the nascent Jewish nation a single pillar with a single mission.

The Stand at Mt. Sinai thus came to symbolize unity at all levels—and an acceptance that, in the absence of such overt divine intervention, living



MOUNTAINOUS: A MOST EDIBLE MEMENTO

as if we are there is a most momentous aspiration.

And so a mountain, peak aflame at the alighting of God's Torah, as it were, and surrounded by eager, robust and equal witnesses to His Truth, today symbolizes Hamaspik. Indeed, what could better capture everything that is Hamaspik?

A Message That Takes the Cake

Fast-forward a few thousand years to modern-day Monroe, New York, and Mrs. Malky Yabra, energetic Director, Women's Division at Hamaspik of Orange County's Day Hab Program, had a thought: Why not bring the Hamaspik logo once again to life?

What's more, the Director remembered, tradition also has it that all of humanity with disability was healed—not just those of her own direct ancestry. "It's a good time to bring that message to the world," she says. And what could be a better message?

So a new long-term project got underway—and one that, upon completion, would be quite literally fresh out of the oven.

The project? A classic family favorite ever since the invention of Betty Crocker: baking a cake.

But this was not to be just any old torte—this one would really take the cake (pun most definitely intended). Because this would be a cake that would bring the Hamaspik logo to deliciously edible life.

The first signs of life for that oversized pastry came in the form of an informal class of sorts taught by the Director. For short sessions over the course of a week, the Day Hab Director spoken with passion about Mt. Sinai and what it means for hope for the world, then segueing from that

backgrounder into introducing the symbol of Hamaspik.

Next came the purchase and assembly of ingredients by the staff and the individuals. Once everything was on the table, measuring spoons and bowls came out, and the entire Day Hab was shortly measuring, mixing, beating and blending.

A substantial quantity of raw batter was soon poured into a large round mold that had been prepared by the Day Hab individuals—a project in its own right—and slid most ceremoniously into the Day Hab kitchen's oven.

A short time later, a fresh-baked blank cake emerged. Now the real fun began.

Deploying freshly-made icing in pointy-tipped bags, the individuals proceeded to deck the cake in a layer of rich chocolate, then top that with a sugary and remarkably accurate replication of the Hamaspik symbol.

This writer forgot to mention that all along, the individuals also prepared and baked Hamaspik logo-themed cookies.

With finishing touches applied, both central cake and ancillary cookies were now complete.

But the project wasn't.

Coming Full Circle

Director and Crew weren't done quite yet.

Tapping into the ever-surprising potential of her group's highest-functioning individuals, the Director asked those capable of manual penmanship to pen personal notes of appreciation on what Hamaspik is and what the agency means to them. A number of heartfelt letters and notes were soon produced.

Once the entire package was finished, baked goods, letters and all, it was arranged neatly on an oversized platter and delivered in-house (actually, up one flight) to the good offices of one Moses Wertheimer. Mr. Wertheimer has always gone the extra mile for Day Hab (and indeed, all Hamaspik of Orange County programs), notes Mrs. Yabra—making the culinary work of art a token of sincere appreciation as well.

Mr. Wertheimer invited them all to sit in and enjoy the fruits of their labor in his presence—also noting that in a veritable eye-blink, the cookies were all gone.

And now, things had once again come full circle. ★

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► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

Experimental Device Uses Solar Heat to Sterilize Hospital Medical Tools

Sun-Powered Contraption Could Help Bring Modern Medicine to Undeveloped World Regions

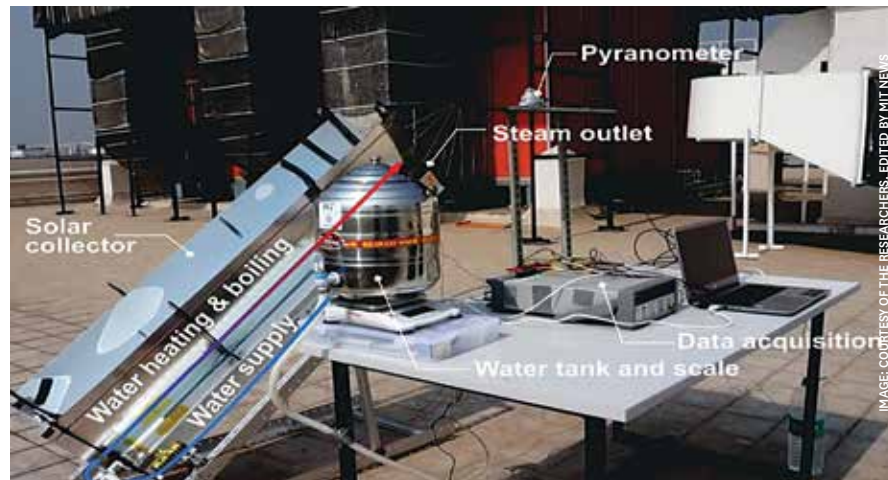
Cambridge, Massachusetts — The ordinary sun, that endless source of light and warmth in the sky that is a simple fact of our complex live as constant as, well, the sun in the sky, is now also the down-to-earth driver of an otherwise high-tech process, too.

And not surprisingly, it's taken the legendary geeks of the legendarily geeky Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to come up with it.

What is "it"? Why, sterilizing hospital tools using sunlight, of course.

Scalpels, lancets and many other hospital tools are regularly rendered bug-free by putting them in an autoclave—a machine that uses pressurized hot steam (around 257° F) to kill viruses, bacteria and other such bugs.

But because modern autoclaves need a steady supply of pressurized steam, which in turn needs modern



RESEARCHERS AT MIT AND THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY HAVE COME UP WITH A WAY TO GENERATE THE STEAM REQUIRED BY AUTOCLAVES, USING JUST THE POWER OF SUNLIGHT, TO HELP MAINTAIN SAFE, STERILE EQUIPMENT AT LOW COST IN REMOTE LOCATIONS.

power, many rural areas—especially in the developing world—don't have them. The result is unsterilized or poorly-sterilized medical tools, itself

resulting in high risk for patient infection.

To help solve this problem not-uncommonly faced by Western-trained

doctors working in Third World regions likely to not have autoclaves, a joint team of MIT and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay researchers have figured out how to generate steam using sunlight—with no need for fuel or electricity.

Their prototype device is essentially a sunlight-heated copper plate whose heat turns water in pipes below it into hot steam. The plate is about 2.75 square feet. It's lined on two sides with mirrors that reflect even more heat onto its surface. It's also coated on top with an experimental insulation material called aerogel; the aerogel lets sunlight in but not its heat out.

In experiments conducted in India, the device was able to produce constant hot steam for 30 consecutive minutes—the minimum required to achieve proper sterilization. ★

HEALTHY EATING



BUTTERNUT SQUASH

EASY | YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 0:10 | READY IN: 1:45



Butternut Squash Dish

THIS IS ONE OF MY SIGNATURE DISHES. KIDS AND ADULTS LOVE IT!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 butternut squash
- Salt to taste
- Dash of pepper
- Cooking spray oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons honey

DIRECTIONS:

- Cube butternut squash and place in 9x13 baking pan
- Spray some cooking spray oil
- Season with salt, black pepper, garlic powder
- Pour honey on top
- Cover well
- Bake at 420 for 1 hour
- Uncover and bake for another ½ hour

CHEF'S TIP:

For easy peeling and cutting microwave for 5 minutes or bake at 420° for 15 minutes.

BENEFITS:

Butternut squash delivers an ample dose of dietary fiber and is low in fat, making it exceptionally heart-friendly. It provides significant amounts of potassium, important for bone health, and vitamin B6, essential for the proper functioning of the nervous and immune systems.

INTERMEDIATE | YIELDS: 15-20 BLINIS
READY IN: 0:20



Butternut Squash Blini

AWESOME GLUTEN-FREE SUBSTITUTE FOR PANCAKES!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup mashed butternut squash, cooked
- 4 eggs
- ¾ cup almond flour
- 2 tbsps honey
- 1 scoop vanilla sugar
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- Dash of pepper
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg

DIRECTIONS:

- Blend all ingredients together
- Heat skillet and spray cooking oil
- Add 2 heaping tablespoons of batter; flip each over after a minute or two (as you would usually do with pancakes)

EASY | YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 0:10 | READY IN: 1:00



Butternut Squash Soup

QUICK AND EASY SOUP FOR ANY OCCASION!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 onion, diced
- 3 tablespoons oil for sautéing
- 3 cloves fresh garlic
- 1 butternut squash, cubed or 2 bags frozen 3 sweet potatoes, cubed
- Salt to taste
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- Parsley flakes
- Water

DIRECTIONS:

- Sauté onion and garlic
- Add cubed butternut squash and sweet potatoes; sauté for a few minutes, stirring every few seconds
- Fill pot with water, just to cover the butternut squash
- Season with salt, cinnamon, nutmeg
- Cook for about 45 min. or until everything is soft
- Blend in immersion blender till smooth
- Garnish with parsley flakes

Public Health and Policy News

vard cardiac electrophysiologist Jag Singh says that Year 2021 has four things to learn public health-wise from the once-in-a-century medical crisis that was Year 2020.

“An inability to learn and improve from these events will be a huge disservice to all of the people who we have lost this past year,” he writes.

According to Dr. Singh, these lessons are:

1. Sensor-aided virtual care: “Sensors will help us proactively capture information and allow us to predict and prevent disease,” he writes.

2. Addressing social disparities: Black people are twice likely as white people to be hospitalized, and also face a death rate two times higher than whites.

3. Tackling structural/systemic racism: Existing in many contexts with medicine, racism often triggers distrust and discomfort among patients and even caregivers of color

4. Global connectedness: “What happens at one end of the globe will ultimately impact the other,” he writes.

FIRST-EVER INTENTIONAL GENOMIC ALTERATION (IGA) IN LIVESTOCK APPROVED BY FDA

Silver Spring, Maryland — Intentional genomic alteration (IGA), which translates in plain English to changing an animal’s genes to make it healthier, has been ethically debated for some time.

But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is now allowing a first-of-its-kind IGA, so long as the livestock in question is being used for food or human therapeutics.

The biotechnology, known as GalSafe, involves genetically removing a natural sugar called alpha-gal from the surfaces of the animals’ cells. For some people, the presence of alpha-gal sugar in red meat such as beef or lamb triggers allergic reactions, sometimes dangerously so.

According to the FDA, animals undergoing the GalSafe process may potentially provide a source of genetic materials that are naturally free of detectable alpha-gal sugar in the future.

FOUR MEDICINE 2021 LESSONS FROM YEAR 2020

Boston, Massachusetts — Har-

STATES GIVEN NEW “ROADMAP” ON SOCIAL HEALTH DETERMINANTS

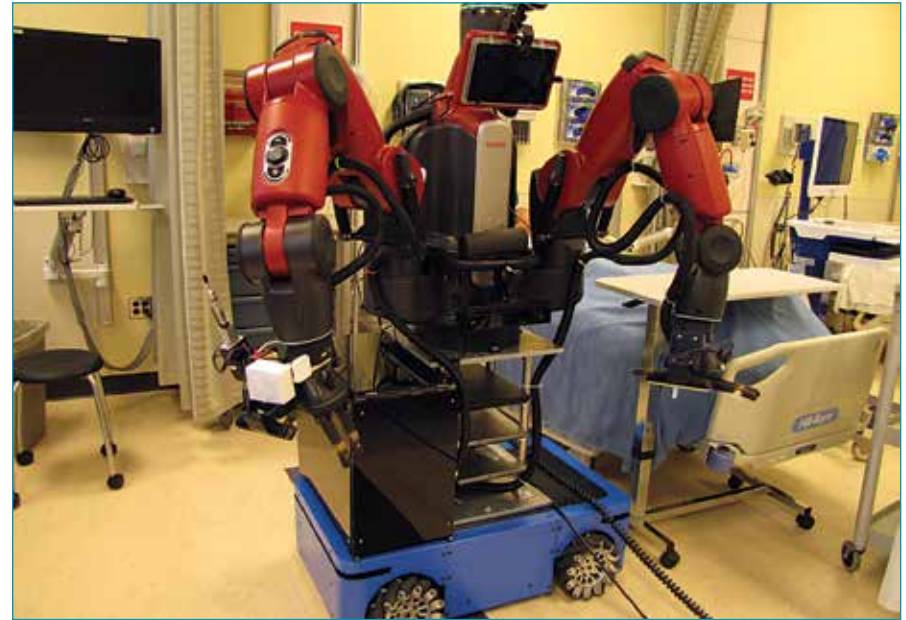
Bethesda, Maryland — Many Americans rely on the Medicare and Medicaid programs for their healthcare.

The two programs, long provided by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), bring quality care to millions via their state’s Medicare or Medicaid programs.

But now, CMS has issued guidance to state health officials designed to drive the adoption of strategies that address the social determinants of health (SDOH) in Medicaid, so that states can further improve beneficiary health outcomes, reduce health disparities, and lower overall costs.

Social determinants of health refers to the range of social, environmental, and economic factors that can influence health status.

The new guidance describes how states can leverage existing flexibilities under federal law to tackle adverse health outcomes that can be impacted by SDOH.



MONSTROUSLY FRIENDLY: TRINA, A REMOTE-NURSING ROBOT DEVELOPED BY WPI, MAY TREAT UNAPPROACHABLY INFECTIOUS PATIENTS ONE DAY WITHOUT RISKING VIRAL SPREAD

GOVERNMENT FUNDING POWERING FUTURE NURSING ROBOTS

Worcester, Massachusetts — In the future, a patient hospitalized with a diagnosis too dangerous for nurses to approach—say, a virus with no current treatment—might be put in an isolation room... and treated by an infection-proof robot controlled by a nurse in an adjoining room.

That’s the concept of TRINA, or the Tele-Robotic Intelligent Nursing Assistant.

But the looming mechanical monster, a project of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), is as benevolent as its appearance isn’t.

Resembling a two-legged giant spider with a rolling cart for feet, TRINA’s two articulated arms and human head-like camera and screen allow a human nurse to see and talk to a patient while gently gripping and moving objects or even administering medication.

Most recently, WPI’s TRINA project was the recipient of a CDC grant to reduce exposure to workplace hazard through robotic technology.

EMERGENCY-MEDICINE DOC DEFENDS FAITH AMID PANDEMIC

Greenville, South Carolina — “Even during a pandemic, it’s important to realize why worship is essential.”

So began Edwin Leap, M.D., a veteran emergency-room physician and blogger from South Carolina, in a recent editorial on why doctors should support the religious beliefs and needs of their patients—especially amid a crushing global medical crisis like the coronavirus pandemic.

“Physicians in general are a pretty intelligent group of professionals. However, we sometimes make the mistake of thinking that because we know a lot about one particular thing,

we must also know a lot about almost everything,” he writes. “However... that idea is hubristic. But it isn’t just science and technology where we fall short.”

According to Dr. Leap, group services are vital to public health because—among other reasons—they lend patients “meaning and purpose in a vast world which everyone struggles to comprehend.”

FORMER U.S. SURGEON GENERAL WARNS ON COVID VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

Tucson, Arizona — It’s been long known that a consistently-maintained and relatively high level of Vitamin D in the body is essential in the prevention and reduction of a growing number of conditions and diseases.

But now, no less an authority than a former U.S. Surgeon General is calling the nation’s general lack of healthy vitamin D intake a crisis that’s even more acute with the advent of Covid-19.

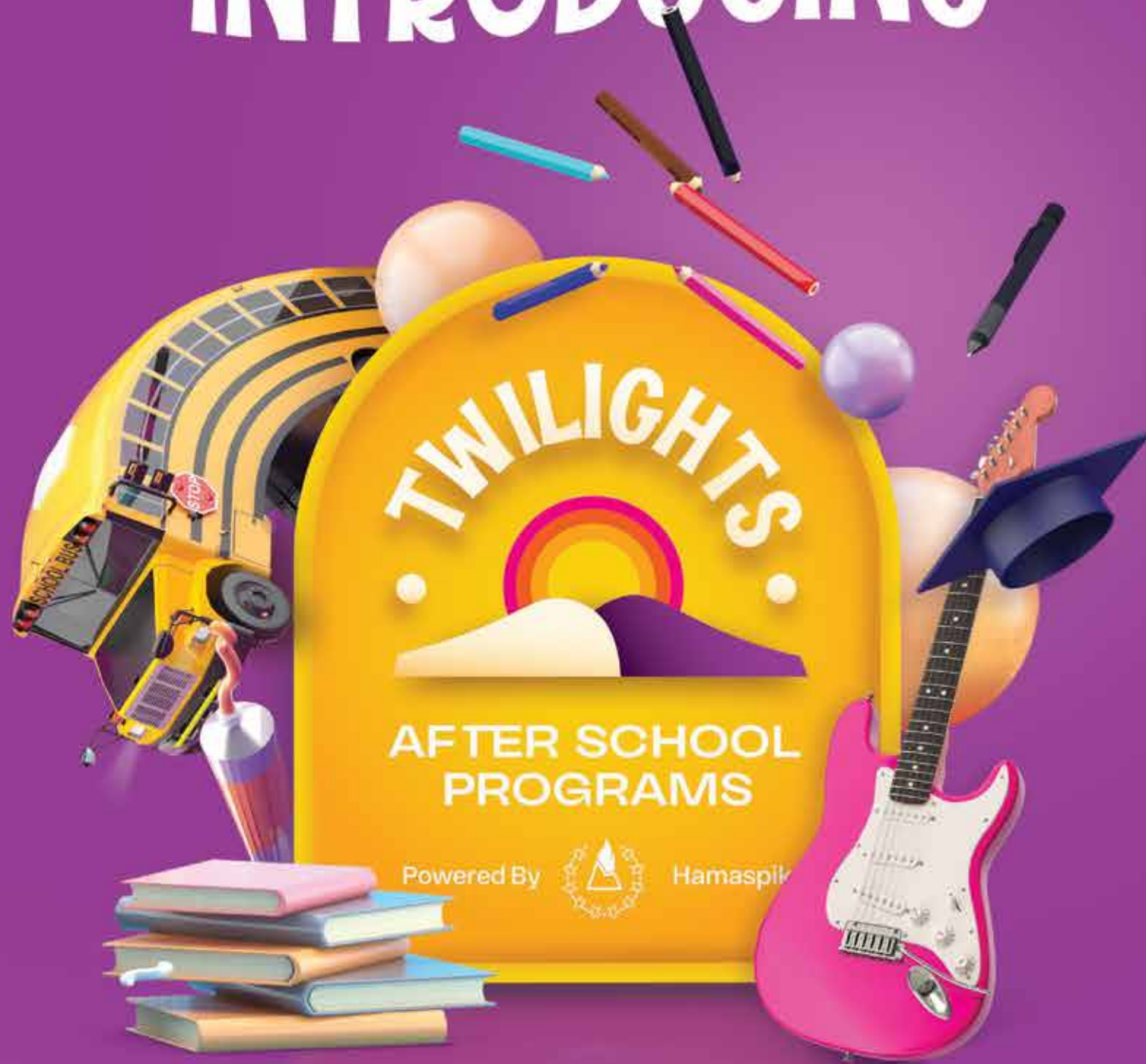
Citing several studies, Richard H. Carmona, MD, MPH—who served as the country’s 17th top health cop—recently noted that patients with low Vitamin D have alarmingly higher ICU and mortality rates.

“It is our responsibility as physicians not to wait for perfect evidence when making life-and-death decisions. Given the safety profile of vitamin D, the 40-percent prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in the U.S., we need to act now.”



“D”-FINITIVE: VITAMIN A MUST, SAYS DOC

INTRODUCING



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In the Know

ALL ABOUT... POISON IVY, OAK AND SUMAC

Sources: American Skin Association, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, WebMD

“If the leaves be three, leave it be!”

So goes the old American saying, popular among camping groups and outdoorsy folks in particular. That’s because each leaf of poison ivy, a plant that grows as a shrub or a vine, consists of exactly three leaflets—a telltale natural warning sign that all but shouts, “Hands off! Don’t touch!”

Poison oak and poison sumac, the other two of the three plants most known in the U.S. for imparting an itchy skin rash, are a little harder to identify. Poison oak closely resembles poison ivy but is usually more shrub-like, while poison sumac can be distinguished by its drooping clusters of green berries (harmless sumac has upright clusters of red berries).

But what they all have in common is *urushiol* (yoo-ROO-shee-ohl)—an oily, irritating natural sap or resin that is found throughout their leaves, stems, bark and roots. Urushiol will trigger a skin rash upon contact. Medically speaking, this skin rash is known as *atopic dermatitis*. If not treated, an urushiol rash can sometimes lead to complications, too.

However, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” as another saying goes—and one that is especially applicable here. So, here’s everything you need to know about this notorious trio to stay... in the know.

DEFINITION

Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac can be found in most areas of the U.S., except Alaska, Hawaii, and the deserts of the Southwest.

In some areas of the country (East, Midwest, and South), poison ivy grows as a vine. In the northern and western U.S., and around the Great Lakes, it grows as a shrub. Each poison ivy leaf has three leaflets.

All three “poison” plants are defined by their natural secretion of urushiol. Urushiol is very sticky and can thus transfer easily to human skin—as well as to animals, clothing, tools, equipment and other objects.

Urushiol is found in all parts of these plants, including the leaves, stems, and roots, and is even present after the plant has died. Urushiol is absorbed quickly into the skin. It can also be inhaled if the poison plants are burned. The smoke may expose not only the skin to the chemical but also the nasal passages, throat, and lungs. Inhaled urushiol can cause a very serious allergic reaction.

Often the rash looks like a straight line because of the way the plant brushes against the skin. But if you come into contact with a piece of clothing or pet fur that has urushiol on



it, the rash may be more spread out. You can also transfer the oil to other parts of your body with your fingers. The reaction usually develops 12 to 48 hours after exposure and lasts two to three weeks.

The severity of the rash depends on the amount of urushiol that gets on your skin. A section of skin with more urushiol on it may develop a rash sooner.

A poison ivy rash itself isn’t contagious—blister fluid doesn’t contain urushiol and won’t spread the rash. And you can’t get poison ivy from another person unless you’ve touched urushiol that’s still on that person or his or her clothing.

Your skin must come in direct contact with the plant’s oil to be affected. Blister fluid doesn’t spread the rash.

But to summarize: Poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac means a non-contagious and very itchy rash caused by a natural skin irritant in those specific plants that takes about two weeks to go away and which usually does not need much major medical treatment.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of a poison plant reaction are similar, because they all contain the same chemical, urushiol.

Symptoms generally occur in the following phases:

- The skin becomes red and itchy
- A rash erupts on the skin, often in a pattern of streaks or patches from where the plant has come into contact with the skin
- The rash develops into red bumps, called papules, or large, oozing blisters

Signs and symptoms of an urushiol rash include:

- Redness
 - Itching
 - Swelling
 - Blisters
 - Difficulty breathing, if you’ve inhaled the smoke from burning poison ivy
- See a doctor if:
- The reaction is severe or widespread
 - You inhaled the smoke from burning poison ivy and are having difficulty breathing
 - Your skin continues to swell
 - The rash affects your eyes, mouth or genitals
 - Blisters are oozing pus
 - You develop a fever greater than 100°F (37.8 C)
 - The rash doesn’t get better within a few weeks

CAUSES

Poison ivy/oak/sumac rash is a type of allergic contact dermatitis caused by an oily resin called urushiol. It’s found in the leaves, stems and roots of poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac. This resin is very sticky, so it easily attaches to your skin, clothing, tools, equipment and pet’s fur.

You can get a reaction from:

- Direct touch. If you touch the leaves, stem, roots or berries of the plant, you may have a reaction
- Touching contaminated objects. If you walk through some poison ivy and then later touch your shoes, you may get some urushiol on your hands, which you may then transfer to your face or body by touching or rubbing. If the contaminated object isn’t cleaned, the urushiol on it can still cause a skin reaction later
- Inhaling smoke from the burning plants. Even the smoke from

burning poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac contains urushiol and can irritate or harm your nasal passages or lungs

Risk factors

Outdoor activities such as the following can put you at higher risk for exposure to poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac:

- Farming
- Forestry
- Landscaping
- Gardening
- Firefighting
- Construction
- Camping
- Fishing from the shoreline or hunting
- Cable or telephone line installation

Complications

If you scratch a poison ivy rash, bacteria under your fingernails may cause the skin to become infected. See your doctor if pus starts oozing from the blisters. Treatment generally includes antibiotics.

DIAGNOSIS

You generally won't need to see your doctor for an urushiol rash. If you do visit your doctor, he or she will be able to diagnose your rash by looking at it. No further testing will be needed.

TREATMENT

An allergic reaction to urushiol cannot be cured, but the symptoms can be treated. You may take cool showers and apply an over-the-counter lotion—like calamine lotion—to help relieve the itch. If your reaction is more severe or involves mucus membranes, you may need a prescription drug, such as prednisone, to help control the reaction.

Wash your skin right away if you come into contact with this oil, unless you know you're not sensitive to it. Washing off the oil may reduce your chances of getting a poison ivy rash—especially if done within ten or 15 minutes of first contact. Before the urushiol has been absorbed by the skin, it can be removed with soap and water. It is important to do this quickly, as 50 percent of the urushiol can be absorbed within ten minutes. If you develop a rash, it can be very itchy and last for weeks.

You can treat mild cases of poison ivy rash at home with soothing lotions and cool baths. You may need prescription medication for a rash that's severe or widespread—

especially if it's on your face or other specific sensitive areas.

Urushiol treatments are usually limited to self-care methods. The rash typically goes away on its own in two to three weeks.

If the rash is widespread or results in a large number of blisters, your doctor may prescribe an oral corticosteroid, such as prednisone. If a bacterial infection has developed at the rash site, your doctor may give you a prescription for an oral antibiotic.

For some urushiol rashes, a doctor may prescribe Burrow's Solution, a topical over-the-counter (OTC) drug that comes in several brand names, including Borofair and Domeboro. It is commonly prescribed for poison sumac in particular, though the drug

ing an oatmeal-based bath product (Aveeno)

- Place cool, wet compresses on the affected area for 15 to 30 minutes several times a day

PREVENTION

About 85 percent of the population is allergic to poison ivy, poison sumac or poison oak, and about 10 to 15 percent are extremely allergic. Together, these are the most common allergic reactions in the U.S., affecting as many as 50 million Americans each year—so don't be a statistic! Take care when outdoors to make sure that that plant, vine, or shrub that doesn't rub you the right way, doesn't rub you

roots, while wearing heavy gloves. Afterward remove the gloves and thoroughly wash them and your hands. Don't burn poison ivy or related plants because the urushiol can be carried by the smoke

- Wash your skin. Within 30 minutes after exposure, use soap and water to gently wash off the harmful resin from your skin. Scrub under your fingernails too. This helps prevent a rash. Even washing after an hour or so can help reduce the severity of the rash
- If you think your pet may be contaminated with urushiol, put on some long rubber gloves and give your pet a bath
- Clean contaminated objects. If you think you've come into contact with poison ivy, wash your clothing promptly with detergent—ideally in a washing machine. Handle contaminated clothes carefully so that you don't transfer the urushiol to yourself, furniture, rugs or appliances
- Also, wash any other contaminated items—such as outdoor gear, garden tools, jewelry, shoes and even shoelaces—as soon as possible.
- Apply a barrier cream. Try over-the-counter skin products that are intended to act as a barrier between your skin and the oily resin that causes poison ivy rash

AN AMERICAN PROBLEM, ALL THE WAY FROM JAPAN: MORE ABOUT URUSHIOL

Where does the word urushiol come from? You'd think it's the scientific name of some kind of natural chemical. But actually, urushiol comes to American shores across the Pacific Ocean—all the way from Japan, where the lacquer tree is known as *urushi*.

In Japan (as well as China and Korea), the otherwise-irritating sap of the lacquer tree is very carefully collected and prepared to be used as a lacquer for wooden items—hence the name of the tree. As such, urushi also refers to the ancient—and dangerous—art of collecting, producing and applying that lacquer onto a range of bowls, utensils and even chopsticks whose designs are associated with the Far East.

Scientifically speaking, the lacquer tree is known as *Toxicodendron vernicifluum*, a name whose first part speaks for itself.

But like so much of life, things which seem bad—like the natural irritant of three common American plants and their related Asian counterparts—can not only simply be avoided, but even turned into something good. ★



is also sometimes used for treating outer ear infections.

Lifestyle and home remedies

An urushiol rash will eventually go away on its own. But the itching can be hard to deal with and make it difficult to sleep. If you scratch your blisters, they may become infected. Here are some steps you can take to help control the itching:

- Apply an over-the-counter corticosteroid cream for the first few days
- Apply calamine lotion
- Take oral antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl, others), which may also help you sleep better
- Soak in a cool-water bath contain-

the wrong way.

To prevent urushiol rash, follow these tips:

- Avoid the plants. Learn how to identify poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac in all seasons. When hiking or engaging in other activities that might expose you to these plants, try to stay on cleared pathways. If camping, make sure you pitch your tent in an area free of these plants
- Wear protective clothing. If needed, protect your skin by wearing socks, boots, pants, long sleeves and vinyl gloves
- Remove or kill the plants. In your yard, you can get rid of poison ivy by applying an herbicide or pulling it out of the ground, including the



Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today

UNIVERSAL FEEDING TUBE STANDARDS CREATING MORE PROBLEMS THAN SOLUTIONS

Columbus, Ohio — With the hospital industry and community being as complex as it is, you're guaranteed several running debates among professionals and patients on various parts of the vast machine.

One such current debate is the growing adoption of the ENFit® feeding tube standard.

Feeding tubes, known medically as enteral tubes, are small plastic lines of varying widths that allow people of all ages who cannot eat and swallow normally to get pureed or liquefied food injected directly into the stomach.

On one side of the debate is an industry group called the Global Enteral Device Supplier Association (GEDSA), which has largely imposed a universal size upon all newly manufactured enteral tubes. The goal was to eliminate coupling problems in the wake of several avoidable tragic mistakes.

On the other side are “tubies,” slang for tube-feeding adults, and families of tube-fed children and other individuals, who say that a new ENFit standard is too narrow to facilitate feeding.

STUDY: FEWER ER VISITS WITH MORE WALK-IN CLINICS

Chicago, Illinois — People who live near newly-opened walk-in medical clinics are less likely to visit emergency rooms for minor health issues like the flu, research now suggests.

Walk-in health clinics like those located in stores such as Walgreens, CVS and Walmart began offering basic primary care services like flu shots and diabetes monitoring in the early 2000s.

In a study, economists measured ER visits among people who lived within two miles of a retail clinic open at some point between 2006 and 2014 in New Jersey.

Their findings indicate the retail



URBAN HOSPITALS MATTER: ILLINOIS' LEGISLATURE MOVES TO BLOCK CLOSURES

clinic's effect depended on the health issue. The rate of ER visits fell by 13 percent for the flu, for example, while they declined 12 percent for sore throats and 10 percent for eye infections. Rates of emergency room visits for urinary tract infections, upper respiratory infections, ear infections, sprains and strains all declined by about six percent, while visits for diabetes fell by three percent, the researchers found.

YOUTH MENTAL-HEALTH ER VISITS RISES IN PAST TEN YEARS

Columbus, Ohio — In the decade leading up to Year 2016, some 60 percent more U.S. children and teens visited ERs due to mental-health emergencies, many self-harmful.

Joint researchers at the Columbus, Ohio-based Nationwide Children's Hos-

pital, and the government's Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) measured mental health-related ER visits from 2007 to 2016 among kids ages five through 17.

They found that while the number of pediatric visits for any cause remained relatively level over the decade, visit rates surged dramatically in the categories of impulse-control disorders, anxiety and self-harm.

The findings add to a growing body of research suggesting children's mental health is a major challenge in the U.S. About 4.5 million children have a diagnosed behavior problem, and previous research shows that up to 1 in 6 U.S. children have mental health issues including depression, anxiety or ADHD.

ILLINOIS LAWMAKERS MOVE TO SAVE URBAN HOSPITALS

Chicago, Illinois — Seems that Chicago's public, or at least the elected officials serving that public, have had enough with hospitals in high-density areas closing down.

Healthcare injustices disproportionately affect populations in high-density urban areas, which typically consist of a heavy minority presence—so when hospitals in such areas go out of business, minorities are hurt most.

That's why the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus has introduced legislation

that would stop any state hospital closures until December 2023.

The move is primarily aimed at blocking the immediate closure of Chicago's historic Mercy Hospital, which is currently struggling to stay afloat and operating.

The proposed legislation would also allocate \$50 million to safety-net hospitals to preserve obstetric services and require implicit bias training for nurses when they renew their licenses.

IN DEAL, WHOLE FOODS WORKERS GET CO-PAY-FREE CARE AT NORTHWELL

New Hyde Park, New York — You feed us, we heal you. Or at least do so for less.

That's the crux of the agreement between the New York's Northwell Health hospital system and the employee body of Whole Foods, the organic-leaning global supermarket chain.

Workers at Whole Foods in the New York region will now be able to get care at seven different Northwell facilities across metro New York, including Westchester, Queen and Long Island—without having to shell out those pesky (and costly) co-pays and deductibles.

The business deal revolves around preventive care. Under the agreement, Northwell doctors providing primary care for Whole Foods employees will also integrate health coaching, stress management, fitness, healthy eating and other wellness services into each appointment.

Want to venture a guess where Northwell will recommend patients get their healthy foods?

SURVEY: UNDER 40 PERCENT OF U.S. RESIDENTS CAN WEATHER \$1,000 MEDICAL BILL

New York, New York — So, let's say you get hit with that unexpected medical bill—you know, the one filled with unintelligible numbers and threatening verbiage. *You want me to pay what?!*

Fortunately, a number of public servants have also heard about it, leading to several U.S. states, including New York, passing various anti-“Surprise Bill” bills with various levels of effectiveness against such underhanded collection attempts.

Bankrate's personal-finance survey, conducted on just over 1,000 Americans nationwide, found that 39 percent did not have \$1,000 in savings handy for such crises. Some 18 percent said such bills would be put on interest-heavy credit cards; 12 percent said they'd borrow from friends or family; and another 18 percent would simply carve it out of their budgets by trimming spending elsewhere. ★



WORK HERE, GET TREATED THERE—FOR LESS: IN A DEAL WITH THE NORTHWELL HEALTH HOSPITAL SYSTEM, WHOLE FOODS EMPLOYEES WON'T HAVE TO PAY THOSE PESKY CO-PAYS



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

Leaving Supervision to the Professionals

Combo Home Care/NHTD Program Frees Seniors' Adult Kids to Focus on Emotional Support

It's virtually all middle-agers' problem today: Caring for their own family while caring for the parents who raised them. But the innovative combination of Hamaspik HomeCare and Hamaspik of Rockland County's Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) programs is an effective solution. Here's one example.

Mrs. L.'s mother was in the hospital and rehab post-corona with a history of falls and confusion—but her insurance granted only 13 daily direct-care hours max, and only six days a week. It forced Mr. L to spend every Shabbos with his mother-in-law, away from family. He called Hamaspik HomeCare.

Hamaspik HomeCare set up his mother-in-law, Mrs. S., with 24/7 care the day she was discharged. Hamaspik of Rockland County also provided Mrs. S. with NHTD. That program gave her

quality personal care in all activities of daily living, household help and, most importantly, fall-preventing constant supervision. (Mrs. L.'s kids are too young to care for Bubby, but adult grandchildren can become Hamaspik HomeCare aides.) The NHTD Service Coordinator assists with NHTD's several services, including medical transportation, durable medical equipment, and even accessible bathrooms as needed and approved.

Today, Mr. and Mrs. L. helper mother with shopping, bill-paying and visiting grandkids—while 24/7 supervision is capably handled by Hamaspik.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: What is the NHTD program?

A: Medicaid's Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waiver (NHTD) program

transitions people back home or diverts them from nursing home in the first place. Its Individual Service Plan (ISP) provides community integration, activities of daily living (ADL), household help and constant health and safety supervision.

Q: Who is eligible?

A: For NHTD, a person must 1: have Medicaid; 2: be at least 18 (and physical disability proof if under 65); and 3: be eligible for nursing facility level of care due to physical and/or cognitive disability, or cannot be safely left alone.

Q: My Grandmother is currently receiving homecare services, What would change?

A: The NHTD program would take over the existing program and increase

her aide services to 24/7 through something called HCSS. Client will also be eligible for additional services.

Q: What other services can my loved one get?

A: Besides 24/7 HCSS aides, clients get a Service Coordinator that will help obtain additional services like medical equipment, transportation, and accessibility remodeling.

Q: Do aides sleep over or live in?

A: No; aides do rotating shifts (often eight or 12 hours).

Q: Can the Clients Children be the aides?

A: Hamaspik HomeCare can train certain family members as HCSS aides—but not spouses, children, or children-in-law.

Q: Who do I call about NHTD eligibility?

A: Call Intake at (888) 503-8777 and a specialist will quickly guide you through the process. ★

The Last Word on GERD

Keeping Up with Keeping Stomach Acid Down

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, the common digestive condition otherwise known as GERD, is caused by hernias (small tears or holes) in the diaphragm. However, interestingly enough, such hernias in seniors do not always cause GERD. In fact, many such hernias cause nothing at all—despite the fact that GERD most commonly hits people aged 60 to 70.

So for now, let's talk what GERD is and how to best treat and prevent it.

Definition

Basically, GERD is a case of heartburn that doesn't eventually go away like normal heartburn.

Heartburn (a.k.a. acid reflux, or stomach acid backing up the esophagus as far as the mouth), is caused by any of the following: eating too much, weighing too much, eating spicy or otherwise "wrong" foods, wearing too-tight clothes, or lying down too soon after eating.

Named for the "burning" felt in the chest (really, the lining of the esophagus), heartburn comes and goes. But when

symptoms hit at least twice weekly, see a doctor about GERD. Common symptoms separating GERD from heartburn include chest pain, sour taste in the mouth, difficulty swallowing, dry cough, hoarseness or sore throat, or lump in the throat.

Treatment

If a doctor's just diagnosed you with GERD, the next step depends on how severe the case.

Step 1: Lifestyle changes. Many cases are treatable with lifestyle and/or diet changes. Symptoms can often be improved if not eliminated by avoiding alcohol and spicy, fatty or acidic foods; eating smaller meals; not eating close to bedtime; wearing looser-fitting clothes; raising the head end of your mattress; and losing weight and quitting smoking.

Step 2: Medications. Many over-the-counter (OTC) drugs neutralize stomach acid and can make a major difference. These include Gaviscon, Gelusil, Maalox and Tums. Other medications include Axid AR, Pepcid AC, or Zantac. These last longer by decreasing acid

production.

The strongest over-the-counter (OTC) medications are called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). These temporarily block stomach acid production altogether, giving damaged esophagus tissue time to heal.

Step 3: Surgery. Most cases won't come to this. But where lifestyle/diet changes and medications don't do the

trick, several surgical procedures may.

Prognosis

Stress and anxiety have a lot to do with GERD, it turns out—which is also why mental health care, including relaxation, meditation, and professional counseling, are powerful tools.

Regardless of what's causing GERD, it's important for seniors to know about it—especially since studies confirm that GERD is increasing and treatment is readily available to ease the uncomfortable symptoms of GERD. ★

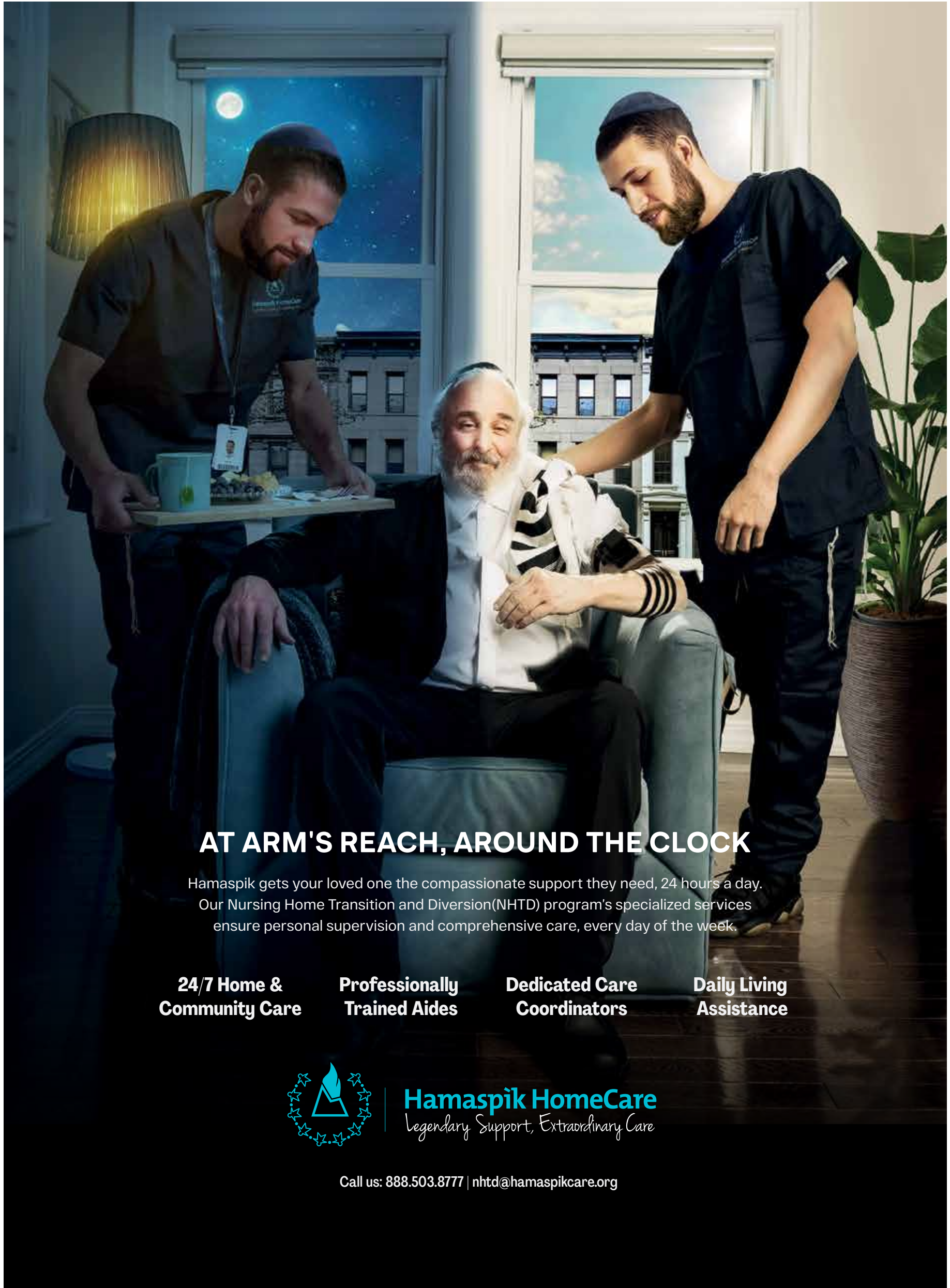
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WITH CARING FOR YOUR
ELDERLY LOVED ONES?**

Call today to see if they qualify
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845-503-0700





AT ARM'S REACH, AROUND THE CLOCK

Hamaspik gets your loved one the compassionate support they need, 24 hours a day. Our Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) program's specialized services ensure personal supervision and comprehensive care, every day of the week.

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