

Hand in Hand...
Linking Lives



Jan/Feb 2023

GOT — GROWING OLDER TOGETHER

570 630 0509

830 Main St. #574 Honesdale, PA 18431

GOT.clubexpress.com

*If you need
something, just ask!*



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! It's exciting to see Growing Older Together expand. Since I became president in April, we have added thirteen new members and eight new volunteers. Our goal is to continue this trend in 2023.

If the option of volunteering from home appeals to you, you might enjoy being a call manager (CM). CMs communicate with members and volunteers to fill service requests and respond to questions from the public. Prospective call managers receive comprehensive training and ongoing support. If you would like to volunteer to become a CM or have questions, please call 570-630-0509.

I had a hospitalization last month, an experience which made me more aware of what our members need. When someone at the hospital asked me, "Do you live alone?" I answered, "Yes... BUT I can call on volunteers from Growing Older Together when I need them." This reinforced my belief that others can benefit as I have from being a GOT member.

Executive Director Thomas Cambridge and I have been doing "road shows" to spread the word about Growing Older Together and have always received a warm welcome. If you know of any organizations that may be interested in having us speak, please let us know.

Sending you the best for 2023,
Diane Yaddow, President



In October, Growing Older Together and [The River Reporter](#) (TRR) facilitated a community conversation titled "Let's Talk: Seniors." Residents discussed and ranked the concerns that they, as older adults, felt the community should address. Among these concerns were healthcare, transportation, socialization, help with home maintenance, climate change, voting rights, and concerns for LGBTQ+ elders. GOT volunteer Cass Collins participated in the event and wrote her TRR monthly column, "The River Muse," in response. Originally published in the November 3 edition of TRR, it is reprinted here with permission.

GROWING OLDER

The word I like in that phrase "Growing Older" is growing. I really feel like I'm growing as I get older. Not in stature (I've lost an inch and a half in height and grown a size and a half in shoes) but in understanding. I understand a lot more about myself and the road I have traveled getting to my age. I understand more about my parents and their difficult lives. I use that understanding with my family and friends and neighbors. I think it makes me a better person than I once was.

Another thing that happens when we grow older is our hearts keep growing. Not in the physical sense, but in the metaphysical. When I see an animal dead on the road, my heart actually hurts for them. I may shoo the deer eating my holly bushes but I love them in some deep way. I know they care for their young as we care for ours. I admire their fortitude living in the wild, dodging hunger and weather and bullets and cars. I think I felt a little less empathy when I was younger. Some people are born with this empathy. Mine needed time.

A bear ran across my yard recently. I only caught a glimpse of it, on all fours, making small leaps as it made its way along the top of the riverbank. It was a black bear with glorious thick fur. "My body is a bear" I thought, a poem coming to be.

My daughter and a daughter-in-law are both pregnant and due within a month of each other before this year is out. Two more girl babies-to-be. My heart keeps growing. Others have said there is nothing like being a grandparent and it's true. There is something extraordinary about watching your child grow a child. It seems almost magical that we can grow something as complex as a human being in our own bodies. And to know that this child would not be if not for you. It's truly humbling.

Our town is trying to grapple with the needs of those who are growing older among us. I joined a group called Growing Older Together last year, as a volunteer. I mostly like to drive people to their appointments. It's a

way of getting to know my neighbors better and also to see how people manage growing older themselves. I want to continue to live where I live but I know that may not be possible. I see others whose plans went awry with health challenges or money or both. It is heartening to know our community is trying to grow with us as we grow older.

In a gathering at Tusten Town Hall recently, over 100 neighbors came together in small groups to talk about the needs of our older residents. Medical needs topped the list, followed by housing (in my unscientific tally.) But the need to stay connected and informed was on every list in the five groups. In our rural setting, we cherish the open spaces between us but we need connection too. If you're reading this now, you appreciate your local news source, keeping you informed. Volunteering your time and skills can bridge many gaps between neighbors. It's one way to keep growing as you grow older.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

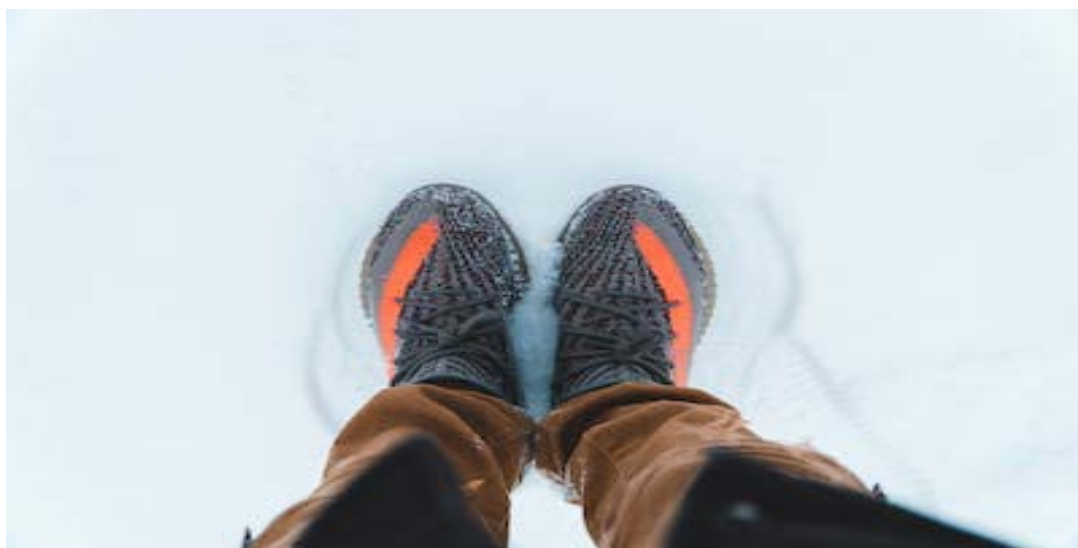
Much of what we hear about growing older focuses primarily on the losses and hardships of the last stages of life: cognitive decline, physical limitations, ageism, and social isolation. But research indicates that older adults actually experience the highest levels of life satisfaction and well-being compared to previous times in their lives.

From where you stand, what does it mean to age in a healthy, positive, and meaningful way?

To share your perspective on this engaging question in our next newsletter:

- send an email to marcianehemiah@gmail.com (no later than January 30 please) with a short, written response (up to three sentences) to the question: What attitudes, outlooks, and/or activities have helped you to age in a healthy, positive, and meaningful way, despite the challenges that come with growing older?
- send your phone number and the best time to call to marcianehemiah@gmail.com (no later than January 30 please). Someone will get back to you.

Responses may be edited for space considerations. First names and ages will be included.



Pexels photo by Erik McLean

GET A GRIP!

By Mary Greene

The winter months, hosting frequent snowstorms and freezing temperatures, can be hard on older adults. The [National Institute for Aging](#) stresses the dangers of hypothermia and gives tips on how to stay warm, indoors and out. In winter, senior safety includes staying up to date with vaccines, staying in touch with family and neighbors, and staying off the roads in slippery weather.

The advice to stay indoors during bad weather seems like a no-brainer. But there are some of us who need to get out from time to time, whether to walk the dog, take out the trash, get groceries, or just escape cabin fever. When you must go out, consider equipping your boots or shoes with ice grips. These contraptions literally grip into ice and prevent falls. There are many versions of ice grips, and some are vastly better in quality than others.

Box stores sell inexpensive versions of detachable ice grips for around \$9 a pair. They are better than nothing, for sure, but they tend to fall off easily and frequently, and you may not even realize you have lost one, or both, in a snowdrift or along a path.

A step up might be to invest in a better-quality detachable ice grip. In general, you want a pair of ice grips that will reliably grip on icy drives and sidewalks and snowy patches and will not fall off during your outings.

LLBean, for example, offers a pair for \$35 that features straps across the toe of the boot to hold them in place. Other companies that sell ice grips for affordable prices include Limm, YakTrax, and Due North. Taking a close look and reading reviews might reward you with a decent pair.

For those who can afford it, some companies offer a boot with the cleat built right into it. Such companies include Icebug, Pajar, and Anfibio, and their boots have been tested and found tried and true in harsh Canadian conditions. The boots act like regular winter boots (in various attractive or work-worthy fashions), but with small ice-gripping spikes, or cleats, covering the bottom. Prices range from \$200 to \$300. These boots promise that you will be safe in almost all conditions, and could certainly, for example, walk your dog or shovel your steps without fear of falling.

Whatever kind of ice-grip you choose, you will be less likely to fall (thus giving your confidence a boost!) in outdoor winter weather.

[Growing Older Together member and volunteer Mary Greene is a call manager and a frequent contributor to the newsletter.]



Pexels photo by David McBee

ALTERNATIVES IN SENIOR HOUSING

By Colette Ballew

Seniors today are more active, living longer, and continuing to contribute to their communities long after traditional retirement age. So it is not surprising that the model of life in the confined space of a nursing home is not appealing to the current generation of seniors. When thinking about living arrangements to remain independent, what are seniors considering?

The Village-to-Village model allows seniors to age-in-place with volunteer helpers. Growing Older Together is a member of the [Village-to-Village Network](#), a nationwide consortium of similar organizations, though all “villages” are not organized in the same way. The most common benefits of being a member of a village are transportation, social gatherings, outings, and social visits.

Another option is house-sharing, where a senior who owns a large house with several bedrooms offers the rooms to rent. There are different online services, such as [New York Foundation for Seniors Home Sharing](#) and [SHARE](#) of Pennsylvania, that match house owners with potential renters that have been screened and vetted before they meet. The program allows the owner to age-in-place without the isolation and loneliness. This option is seeing a resurgence in popularity especially as housing costs continue to rise.

Cohousing is another option that functions slightly differently. A like-minded group (friends, book clubs, knitting circles) forms a community to search for a living situation that they can develop together, either through building tiny houses or converting larger spaces into individual apartments. Most have common shared areas like gardens, kitchens, or dining rooms and landscaped areas and walkways that encourage socializing. Cohousing is most often multigenerational and has an initial buy-in cost, much like condominiums, and maintenance fees. [Cohousing Association of US](#) has listings of various cohousing communities.

Some seniors have chosen to become residents on cruise ships. Meals, housekeeping services, and lectures are provided. There are lovely rooms to sleep in and the opportunity to visit exotic ports of call. All cruise ships have 24-hour medical staff on call, though limited in medical skill. This option may be cheaper than living in an assisted-living facility. One couple became minor celebrities for living on a cruise ship for close to ten years. When her husband died, the widow continued to live on the ship for a few more years. Of course, if you are the adventurous type, there are many overseas retirement communities that are full of expats living a more comfortable life in warmer climates. Mexico, the peninsula of Baja, and


Costa Rica have many such communities along the coast lines on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

If you become infirm, the more conventional models of nursing facilities may be what is needed. Newer facilities now may include restaurants, spa-like gyms, and community centers with classes and pools.

As the population of seniors continues to increase, the options for new and different kinds of living situations for seniors will continue to evolve as well.

[Colette Ballew is a retired teacher of French and Spanish who loves to travel and explore new cultures. She now serves as a volunteer, board member, and call manager for Growing Older Together.]

JUST FOR LAUGHS...



My super power is holding onto junk for years and throwing it away a week before I need it.

Your **tax-deductible donation** will go a long way in sustaining GOT as we continue to fulfill our mission: to give residents aged 60 and older who live in Wayne County, PA, western Sullivan County, NY, and surrounding areas both the practical means and the social connections to live

independently in their homes. GOT is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

All donations in any amount are welcome. Visit the Growing Older Together homepage, www.growingoldertogether.com and click on the "Donate" button on the right, or mail your check to GOT, 830 Main Street #574, Honesdale, PA 18431. Thank you in advance for your support.

Please **help spread the word** about the benefits of becoming a member and/or volunteer for GOT. If you know a friend or neighbor who might want to offer a helping hand or might benefit from one, share our phone number, 570-630-0509, and/or our website, www.growingoldertogether.com.

Thank you!

Growing Older Together is supported in part by grants from Wayne Memorial Health Foundation and Wayne County Community Foundation, and by donations from the Upper Delaware Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.