



January 6, 2025

If you see an asterisk (*) by an article heading, there is additional information in the *Timely Resources for Readers* section of the newsletter.

Happy New Year!

Wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy 2025! Thank you for your support over the years. If we can be of assistance with information on supportive services or resources related to aging or caregiving, let us know.

Smell Retraining Therapy

[Smell retraining therapy](#) (SRT) was developed in 2009 by Dr. Thomas Hummel as a treatment for the loss of smell due to minor head trauma or viral infections. (We have heard a great deal about loss of smell and taste from Covid infections.) Interestingly, some people can detect sweet, salty, and sour tastes but can't distinguish what the specific 'flavor' is. [Smell and taste are closely interwoven](#) so if we can't detect aromas, our sense of taste is adversely affected. The process of SRT involves the repeated presentation of different smells to stimulate the olfactory system. Consult your primary health care provider or ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist for treatment information if you are having issues with your sense of smell and taste.

Dementia and Home Safety*

What can we do to keep our loved ones with dementia as safe as possible? As the cognitive decline progresses, your loved one can face more challenges in their environment. General safety can include lowering the temperature on the hot water heater to avoid burns, remove fall hazards such as throw rugs, store medications and cleaning products in a safe place that is out of reach, and install drain traps to catch any items that may fall in the sink. The National Institute on Aging offers [more tips on home safety](#) for your loved one with dementia.

Dementia and Firearms

When we talk about dementia and home safety, we need to call attention to firearms. According to [Alzheimer's Today](#), "close to 40% of households in the United States with older adults have at least one firearm on the premises". When someone develops dementia, there needs to be special consideration. Changes occur with dementia that impact judgment, speed of reaction, mood, and, of course, memory. [FireArm Life Plan](#) offers information on making a plan about firearms, warning signs and assessment tools, and conversation starters for families.

Help! I've Fallen...

Statistics on falls are unsettling. According to Brain and Life's article "[Healthy Living: Ways to Reduce the Risk of Falling](#)", falls are the main cause of injury among people 65 and older. [Falls may result in](#) bone fractures, traumatic brain injuries, and are often fatal. Factors that increase fall risk include lower-body weakness, cognitive impairment, balance problems, vision and/or hearing impairment, certain medications, and neuropathy – to name but a few. If you've fallen, talk to your doctor. Ask if physical therapy would be beneficial. Things that help include exercising, fall-proofing your home, using assistive devices, reviewing your meds, and having your hearing and vision checked. Read more tips in the [Brain and Life article](#).



Clinical Trials*

Do you think a clinical trial may be helpful to you or your loved one? There are benefits to participating such as access to new drugs, and focused attention and monitoring from medical experts. Support groups and other resources can help participants, too. There are more trials listed on clinicaltrials.gov and additional options may be advertised in professional journals, newspapers, or television. There are considerations for prospective applicants. Clinical trials are experimental. Length of time commitment may vary. Being accepted into a study is not guaranteed. You may receive a drug or treatment or you may receive a placebo. Read more about clinical trial participation in the Brain and Life article "[What Are the Benefits of Joining a Clinical Trial?](#)"

Downsizing and Sorting

How many of us have a room – or a house - full of ‘stuff’ that we don’t use, don’t need, and often don’t remember owning? Some people have lived in the same house for years and their stuff is representative of those years. Some possessions may be from our kids, from our flea market shopping days, or we may have inherited items. What do we cling to because of [the emotional attachments?](#) How do we let go? How do we determine what to keep, toss, or donate? Where can we donate? Read this month’s Deeper Dive (emailed mid-month) where Jeanette focuses on Downsizing.

Scam Updates

Scammers never rest! Scamming consumers is a huge business that bilks billions of dollars from consumers. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) reported that consumers lost over \$10 Billion in 2023. Resolve NOT to get scammed in 2025! *Don’t open suspicious or unknown emails. *Don’t click on unfamiliar links. *Don’t reply to texts that appear to be phishing. *Don’t answer calls from unknown numbers. *Does the email address look a little off? Delete it. *Watch what you post on social media. *Be cautious and don’t give scammers access to your life!

Adding a Pet to Your Life

[Research has shown](#) that there are benefits to having pets that include companionship, helping to lower blood pressure, and reducing levels of stress-producing hormones. Service animals help people with tasks and help with independence. Therapy animals are beneficial in many settings. However, if you’re considering gifting a pet to an older adult, give it some serious thought. Is your loved one’s health a consideration? Are they able to provide the proper care? Can they walk the pet? Is veterinary care accessible? Is there transportation to the vet? Can they afford the expense of a pet? Can they handle the responsibility of a pet? Do they WANT a pet? Before offering the gift, have the discussion. Be fair to your loved one and the animal!!

Food Insecurity

There are many people who don’t have enough to eat. It may be financial, it may be accessibility to food products or stores, or there may be other circumstances that lead to food insecurity. [The Ohio County Family Resource Network](#) and [the Marshall County Family Resource Network](#) offer information on food resources (hot meals, food pantries, blessing boxes). [The Mid-Ohio Food Bank](#) offers resources in Ohio. When donating, consider items not covered by SNAP benefits such as personal care items, hygiene items, laundry and dish soaps, pet food, and other non-food items. Consider donating what would constitute a meal such as tuna and mac and cheese (for a quick and easy tuna noodle casserole). Canned meat, tuna, and peanut butter offer protein and are shelf stable.



Timely Resources

Upcoming Workshops

The workshop committee has been busy planning the 2025 workshops. We will be offering a free workshop in March on older adult issues and a workshop in October on veteran issues. Details are incomplete but applications have been submitted to the WV Board of Social Work for approval. If you would like to be added to the email list to be notified once details are finalized, you're your contact information to akoegler1995@gmail.com.

Vaccinations, Boosters, Flu Shots

Vaccinations are covered by Medicare for those who have prescription coverage.

- The CDC offers [information on vaccinations](#) which are appropriate to age and health conditions.
- Covid vaccinations, boosters, annual flu shots, RSV vaccinations, shingles vaccines, TDAP (tetanus) vaccinations, and others are available at most pharmacies, and most vaccinations including the shingles vaccine are now covered by Medicare *for those with prescription coverage*. Check with your primary health care provider for any contraindications.

Local Adult Services Coalitions

Adult Services Coalitions offer networking and educational opportunities for professionals who serve older adults. Meeting dates, times, and contacts are listed below.

OHIO

Belmont County: 1st Thursday at 11am at Senior Services of Belmont County, akoegler1995@gmail.com

Guernsey County: 3rd Wednesday at 3pm Stacey.clark-frame@altercareonline.net

Jefferson County: 3rd Thursday at 3pm at Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, starr.decariarx@gmail.com

Harrison County: 4th Wednesday at 3pm at Cadiz Senior Center Starr.decariarx@gmail.com

WEST VIRGINIA:

Brooke County: 2nd Monday at 2pm at the Brooke County Senior Center Chris Orris at corris@valleyhospice.org

Ohio County Adult Services Coalition: 3rd Tuesday at 2:00pm at the Ohio County Public Library, 52-16th Street, Wheeling sdunlevy@icare.com

Marshall County Senior Coalition: 2nd Weds at 2:30pm at Marshall County Senior Center corris@valleyhospice.org

Timely Resources for Readers

A Dementia & Home Safety

- The Alzheimer's Foundation offers "[The Apartment: A Guide to Creating a Dementia Friendly Home](#)". This guide takes readers on a tour of a home that is designed for those with memory loss incorporating safety and modification of the living space.

A Clinical Trials

- Find clinical trials for Alzheimer's disease at alzheimers.gov
- Find clinical trials for cancer at the [National Cancer Institute](#)
- Find clinical trials for neurological disorders at the [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#)

All information presented is for educational purposes only.

**WITH OUR BEST WISHES FOR
A HAPPY AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!**



Altenheim Retirement Community

Founded 1891

Our cottages are situated adjacent to our Main House at 1387 National Road, Wheeling

Conveniently located close to medical care, churches, shopping, restaurants, recreation

Offering 8 independent cottages for those who are 65 and older

Two bedroom, two bath, living room, kitchen room, dining room

Stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, washer and dryer are included

Lawn care, snow removal, general maintenance, general repairs included in monthly rent

Utilities are not included

Pets considered ~ call for our pet policy

We are accepting applications!

Contact George A. Dakovic, Executive Director at gam.dakovic@gmail.com or 304 281-8797



Altenheim Resource Services

Altenheim Resource Services, a division of Altenheim Retirement Community for over 25 years

Empowering older adults, caregivers, & advocates with information on aging, services and resources

Free & confidential information and no geographic limitations

Let us be YOUR GATEWAY TO CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS!

Ann Koegler, M.A., L.S.W., Resource Services Coordinator Akoegler1995@gmail.com

<https://www.altenheimcommunity.com>

Information on Altenheim, Resource Services, calendar of events, blog, and a photo gallery

Contact us at 304 280-8701 with questions about resources and issues concerning older adults and caregiving.

