

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

the benefits  
of honey  
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# The sweet benefits of honey

BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM  
AND CLAIRE STABBERT

The cold temperatures of winter leave us retreating for some of the warmer treats in life, whether that be fresh baked goods, a cup of tea or bowl of oatmeal, to name just a few examples.

Honey can be great in any of those. If you go the oatmeal route, try it with some walnuts and fresh blueberries.

Many folks were introduced to the goodness of honey from The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, but little did they know at that youthful age that there is so much more that it can add to our lives.

For one, it can act as a sweetener and there's evidence of it being a better alternative to sugar.

According to an article on CNBC.com, titled "Is honey better than sugar?," they state that honey has a lower glycemic index value than sugar, meaning that it isn't as quick to raise blood sugar levels. The article further cites a 2018 study that says, "honey can contain trace amounts of essential vitamins and minerals, like potassium, calcium, zinc and vitamins C, B1, B2, B3, B5 and B6."

Mayo Clinic adds that studies suggest that honey "might offer antidepressant, anticonvulsant and anti-anxiety benefits."

Furthermore, Healthline.com reports that honey may also help prevent heart disease. They say it



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This homemade granola, with yogurt and fresh fruit, not only tastes great but is packed with ingredients that will nourish you.

may also assist in "lowering blood pressure, improving blood fat levels, regulating your heartbeat, and preventing the death of healthy cells."

## Claire's homemade granola

Moving away from health data, here's a great recipe for homemade granola, incorporating honey, and

directions on how to make it to perfection from **Sullivan County Democrat** Cooking in the Country columnist Claire Stabbert. Her column appears in the paper every Friday ... take it away Claire!

I love homemade granola, and one place it really shines is when added to yogurt for a little extra crunch and variety.

This recipe trades the usual maple syrup for our wonderful featured ingredient: honey. Just be sure to keep an eye on it during the baking process, as honey is a bit more delicate and tends to brown quickly.

As for what type of honey to use, there are no wrong answers; color can generally predict flavor intensity, with light honeys being a bit more mild than darker ones, though this is hardly the rule. Honey that has crystallized can be reliquified by heating gently in a warm water bath.

Just do yourself a favor and get a good local offering - you can't go wrong.

To make homemade granola you will need:

- 4 cups rolled oats
- 1 ½ cups raw slivered almonds, crushed hazelnuts, or pistachios
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ginger
- ½ cup local honey
- ½ cup melted butter
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup dried fruit of your choice

Optional: coconut flakes and pumpkin seeds are a wonderful addition, and can be added midway through the baking process.

I love this recipe because of its simplicity: just combine and bake.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, combine the oats, nuts of your choice, salt, cinnamon and ginger. Stir thoroughly to combine.

Next, stir in your butter, honey, and vanilla until well mixed. Spread the granola onto the sheet pan in an even layer and bake for 25 minutes.

After half of the time has elapsed, briefly remove the pan to stir the granola and ensure it is baking evenly. Add the coconut flakes and pumpkin seeds at this point.

Return to the oven and continue baking for the remainder. The granola should turn a light golden brown, and will crisp up as it cools.

After baking, let it cool to room temperature, then stir in the chopped dried fruit.

This granola will keep in a container at room temperature for up to two weeks.

If you're in the market for a parfait, layer your favorite yogurt with fresh fruit and granola, and anoint with a drizzle of honey. Enjoy!

\*The article was not written by a health or nutrition expert, just a couple members of our staff that enjoy food and cooking.

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# What is Action Toward Independence?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Some of the ATI Holiday Basket assembly team. From left: ATI's Children and Family Services Program Manager Akilah Sutphin, Luis Ocasio from Hudson Valley Community Services and ATI Executive Director Deborah Worden.

BY DEBORAH WORDEN,  
ATI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am often asked “what is Action Toward Independence?” ATI, as many in the community refer to us, is an Independent Living Center. Then, the following inquiry is: “what does that mean?” Which is a fair question because the wording can be confusing. Basically, we are peer-run “Center” of services and information for people with disabilities and their caregivers, who wish to live as independently as possible. Our mission is to promote the independence, participation and personal choices of individuals with disabilities.

A “Peer Run” organization is a very important part of our small 501c3 nonprofit. We are governed by an Executive Order requiring that over 51% of our staff have a disability, AND over 51% of our Board of Directors must have a

significant disability. Our staff and board must have personal experience of living with a disability, and we believe that having such a perspective is the foundation of our agency.

The next assumption is that we only help people with significant disabilities, or developmental disabilities. Actually, we are here to serve anyone with a disability, regardless of the type or number of disabilities a person has. That brings the question: “What is the definition of a person with a disability?”

A person with a disability is someone with “an access or functional need.” Period. While it could be someone who uses equipment such as a wheelchair, hearing aids, cane or walker, it also includes people who have to take medication for a chronic illness such as high blood pressure, respiratory illness or diabetes. It can include people with physical

disabilities, learning disabilities, speech disorders, mental illnesses, substance use disorder, sensory disabilities and intellectual disabilities. This population includes infants, children, adolescents, and adults of all ages.

We get to help people regardless of whether they have a temporary disability that could happen from a sudden accident or illness, or if they need long-term assistance. It doesn't matter if the disability is obvious or if, like most, it is hidden and invisible. We are here to help.

Another great thing is that we also help the caregivers of individuals with disabilities. We recognize that family members, caring neighbors and loved ones play a vital role in helping a person remain living independently, but they too have many challenges.

We understand that 40% of caregivers are in situations with great burdens; family caregivers spend an average of 20 hours a week car-

ing for a person, and the average duration of a caregiver's role is four years. We connect them with a network of agencies that can help and provide assistance.

For example, ATI provides a Caregiver Support Group, focused on Music Therapy, for individuals who are caring for a person with dementia, traumatic brain injury or other brain disorders.

Our funding comes to us from federal, state and local governments in addition to the grant applications we submit and the amazing support from our local community members. This enables us to provide all of ATI's services for free to all of the surrounding areas.

Whether you are a Veteran or Active-Duty Service Member, farmer, student, CEO, factory worker or stay-at-home parent, we can be of help.

For more information, please contact 845.794.4228 or visit [ATItoday.org](http://ATItoday.org).




A painting session is just one of the many activities held at the Parents for Parents Support Group sponsored by ATI.




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# Do You Know “Life’s Essential 8” for Heart Health?

BY DAVID MORCOS, DO, PRIMARY CARE  
GARNET HEALTH DOCTORS

The start of a new year is always a great opportunity to renew your commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Garnet Health wants all Sullivan County residents to step into 2023 with attainable goals for better health. And a great place to start, especially as we approach February and Heart Month, is with the American Heart Association's (AHA) Life's Essential 8. These key measures for improving and maintaining cardiovascular health can help lower your risk for heart disease, stroke and other health problems.

By breaking it down into eight steps, you can see how the choices we make and the actions we take can make a huge difference in not just heart health but overall well-being.

Some of these steps might be obvious, and some might surprise you!

**Step 1: Eat Better.** Eating better and healthier doesn't have to mean being on a "diet." Think of this as a meal plan. The AHA recommends a healthy eating pattern that includes whole foods,

fruits, vegetables, lean protein, nuts and seeds, as well as cooking in non-tropical oils like olive and canola.

**Step 2: Be More Active.** Adults should get 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity, like walking, taking a bike ride, water aerobics and gardening, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous activity, like running, spinning or swimming laps. Or do a combination of both throughout the week! Wherever you start on your fitness journey, the goal is to get up and get moving.

**Step 3: Quit Tobacco.** Sometimes this is easier said than done. Garnet Health's Freedom from Smoking Workshop provides the tips and tools you need to quit! \*

**Step 4: Get Healthy Sleep.** Surprised by this one? Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night. According to the AHA, adequate sleep promotes healing, improves brain function and reduces the risk for chronic diseases.

## UPCOMING:

Be sure to mark your calendar for the 98.3 WSUL 45th Heart-a-Thon, to be held on February 17, at Resorts World Catskills Epicenter. Benefits raised go toward heart disease treatment, education and prevention throughout Sullivan County. Every year, we are grateful that Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills is chosen as beneficiary. This year, part of the Heart-a-Thon proceeds will support the funding of a new treadmill, portable heart monitors and vital monitoring machines.





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Dr. David Morcos**

**Step 5: Manage Weight.** There are so many health benefits to managing your weight. Understanding your BMI, journaling your food intake and learning portion control are just a few tips. If you require more specialized help, the bariatric specialists at Garnet Health can partner with you to create a personalized weight loss plan.

Following steps 1 through 5 will help control steps 6 through 8!

**Step 6: Control Cholesterol.** The first crucial step is to know your cholesterol levels, and then work with your doctor to maintain or help lower your levels if needed. High levels of “bad” cholesterol can lead to an increased risk of heart disease.

**Step 7: Manage Blood Sugar.** As with cholesterol, knowing and understanding your blood sugar levels is important to maintaining good health and preventing the risk of diabetes, which can lead to heart disease and stroke. Garnet Health’s diabetes program in Sullivan County can help you evaluate your risk. This comprehensive diabetes prevention program is available to all who qualify.

**Step 8: Manage Blood Pressure.** Keeping your blood pressure at a normal range can keep you

healthier longer!

Scheduling annual visits with your primary care provider can ensure your cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure levels are all regularly checked and monitored. If any levels are found to be higher/lower than they should be, you can immediately begin working toward a treatment plan that’s personalized for you. And if necessary, making an appointment with a Garnet Health Doctors cardiologist can help you address more serious conditions.

Despite our best efforts, some things like our genetics, age and ethnicity increase the risk of heart disease. Should you need to see a specialist about a heart condition, Garnet Health offers Sullivan County residents the very best in heart care—from minimally invasive surgeries to emergency care and cardiac rehabilitation. Throughout our health system, we have comprehensive heart care services covering diagnosis to treatment, and we’re proud to be a cardiovascular health leader in the region.

For more information on Garnet Health’s cardiac services, visit [garnethealth.org/heartcare](http://garnethealth.org/heartcare) or call (845) 333-7575 to make an appointment with a cardiologist. To schedule a visit with a primary care provider, call (845) 333-6500.

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# Phillipy recovers from Quintuple Bypass

BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM

As Heart-A-Thon takes on new meaning

**S**hane Phillipy is volunteering with the WSUL 98.3 Heart-A-Thon for the fifth time. His motivation in the past was to try and do the right thing for his community. However, after suffering a heart attack on November 13 at the age of 49, his perspective changed.

"When you realize it's life or death in those few minutes, it's really a big deal," he said. "It's important we raise money and get this right."

Phillipy was at work when he began to have some chest tightness. When he went home, he still didn't feel great and after waking up later on in the evening, his chest was still tight. Good friend and coworker Randy Resnick drove him to Garnet Health Medical Center in Middletown, at which point Phillipy realized



Phillipy during his recovery.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

what was going on.

Tests confirmed his suspicions. His enzymes were high and he was in fact having a heart attack. A catheterization showed that his main artery was 95 percent blocked. His other arteries were blocked between 50 and 55 percent.

Phillipy, who had no history of drinking, drugs or of heart conditions, was transported to Westchester Medical Center where he underwent a Quintuple Bypass.

"It kind of flew under the radar," said Phillipy. "I'd never have thought to get it checked."

He thanks his wife Regina who "held everything together," Randy, April and the Resnick family, his mother-in-law Ida, sister-in-law Kim, his doctors and all of the Bernie's Holiday Restaurant customers and community at large who have reached out with gifts, support and well wishes.

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JOSEPH ABRAHAM | DEMOCRAT  
Shane Phillipy (at right)  
with Marie Smith (left)  
and Joanna Gass at last  
year's Heart-A-Thon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Below right: Shane Phil-  
lippy (at center) with his  
Bernie's Holiday Restau-  
rant family.

Heart-A-Thon is to get much-needed equipment to Garnet Health Medical Center-Catskills," he said. "Within 15 minutes I had an EKG. They saved my life, they really did. If I didn't have help right away, it could have been minutes, hours ... I would have died."

#### About the Heart-A-Thon

The 98.3 WSUL Heart-A-Thon will celebrate its 45th year on Friday, February 17 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Resorts World Catskills' Epicenter and will broadcast live on 98.3 WSUL. This is the second year that Resorts World Catskills is

hosting this community event.

"For 44 years, the Heart-A-Thon has worked to save the lives of many, and we are honored to once again join them in their efforts to ensure patients have access to the best medical technology and care," said Megan Taylor, VP Government Affairs & Public Relations, Resorts World New York. "We can't think of a better way to help promote health and wellness in and around our community. Plus, we're excited this year's event has expanded to include more of our community partners throughout Sullivan County."

This year the event focuses on three areas; Prevention, Education, and Treatment of Heart Disease in Sullivan County.

"In the past the 98.3 WSUL Heart-A-Thon has benefited from equipment for treatment of heart disease, we feel we now have an opportunity to expand our support locally by the additional focus on Prevention and Education. We will be continuing our work with Garnet Health Medical Center - Catskills, but we are bringing in additional partners like Suny Sullivan, A Single Bite, and Sullivan 180," said Dawn Ci-orciari, Bold Gold Media GM NY

Region.

Proceeds will benefit Treadmills for the Cardiac Rehab, portable Cardiac Monitors, and a Vital Machine for the Garnet Medical Center - Catskills; The Warrior Teens Program and an Outdoor Fitness Pad in Monticello with Sullivan 180, A Single Bite's Real Food School Education Program, and Building Sullivan's Healthcare Workforce Academic Scholarships with SUNY Sullivan.

For more information or to make a pledge, visit [wsul.com](http://wsul.com). Many area businesses will also have hearts for sale to benefit the Heart-A-Thon.



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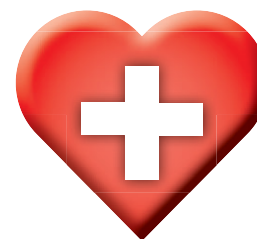
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# The Year of the Senior

BY MEIR HOROWITZ

The Chinese New Year 2023 starts January 22nd, 2023, and is known as the "Year of the Rabbit."

Based on early indications, residents of Sullivan County may be celebrating the "Year of the Senior." Despite the nasty bite that inflation has been taking from people's pockets, there are a number of very significant changes in health care and related programs that should provide some very real relief:

## Medicaid Guidelines Relaxed

Both the income and asset requirements for Medicaid eligibility have changed dramatically.

- **Increased Income Limits:** Medicaid recipients can now receive more income. Starting January 1, 2023, the income limit will increase from \$924 to \$1,563 for an individual, and from \$1,367 to \$2,106 for a couple. These levels are expected to get a little higher again in March 2023.

- **Increased Resource Limits:**

Medicaid recipients can have more resources. Starting January 1, 2023, the resource limit will increase from \$16,800 to \$28,133 for an individual, and \$24,600 to \$37,902 for a couple.

## Medicare Savings Plan (MSP)

For those who may not be Medicaid eligible, the Medicare Savings Plan offers a significant benefit. NY State- through the local Department of Social Services will pay the entire Part B premium for eligible individuals.

Beginning in Jan, 2023 the qualifying income has been increased as follows:

2023 New York gross monthly income limits for the QI program is \$2,107 for individuals, \$2,839 for couples, while the limits for the QMB program are \$1,563 for individuals, \$2,106 for couples.

Kelly Soller, Program Director for Sullivan County's Office of the Aging had this to say: "I am anticipating a HUGE jump in numbers of individuals applying

for Medicaid and the Medicare Savings Program.

"The number of people that we have had to turn away over the years due to being over income by a hundred dollars or so, especially the Medicare Savings Program... (is disturbing)," she continued. "This program has so many terrific advantages (Automatically eligible for Extra Help) that will finally be available to a large number of individuals that otherwise had to be turned away. This is real money savings for people."

## Dual Eligible

### Medicare Advantage Plans

And for those that will now be eligible for either of these enhanced plans, a Dual Needs Special Plan (DSNP) from a Medicare Advantage carrier will offer a number of exciting extra benefits:

- **OTC (Over the Counter) allowance:** this is a special debit card that can be used to buy a wide variety of non-prescription



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Meir Horowitz

items that normally would have to be paid for in cash. Many carriers offer allowances of \$100 per month or more

- **Dental benefits:** up to \$2000 of dental work from network dentists

- **Healthy Food allowance-** a special debit card that can be used to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables each month

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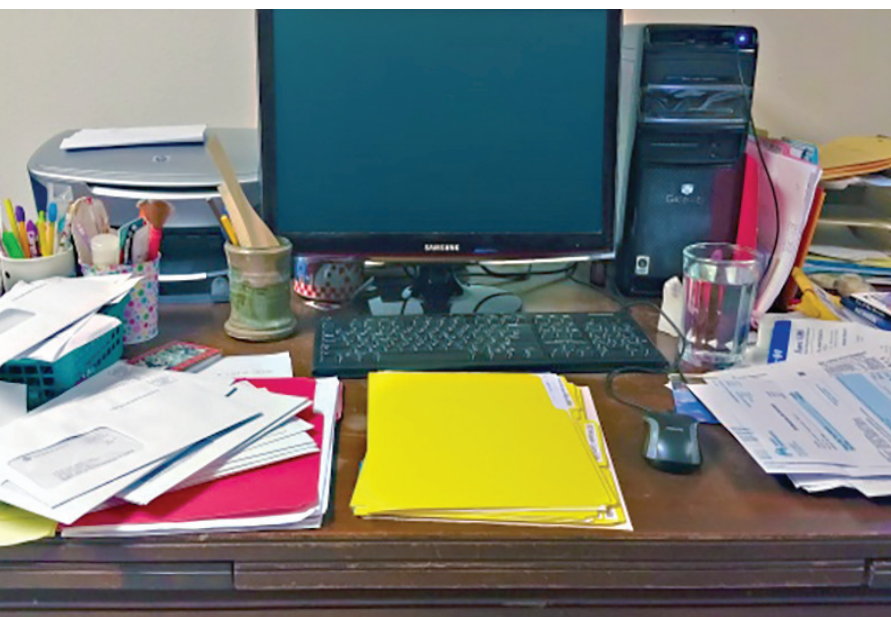
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# Is your desk getting you sick?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

We don't often think of our work stations as being places to pick up infectious germs...think again.

**W**inter is a time of year when colds and the flu tend to spread more easily. People know that door handles and commonly shared items like remote controls and even mobile phones can be hot spots for various bac-

teria and viruses, but what about your desk? According to WebMD, more than 10 million bacteria are on a typical office desk, which is 400 times more bacteria than is found on the average toilet seat. NBC News investigative correspondent Vicky Nguyen tested her own desk, computer and mouse with a specialized swab in 2021. Her desk scored 7,506, a numerical score given to calculate how soiled the area is. That figure was 75 times higher than what high-touch hospital surfaces are expected to be for cleanliness. Other coworkers scored much higher. Routinely wiping down desks and computer equipment with recommended disinfecting wipes can help to corral germs. In addition, do not eat at your desk and keep pets away from workspaces to tame bacteria.

Do you have both  
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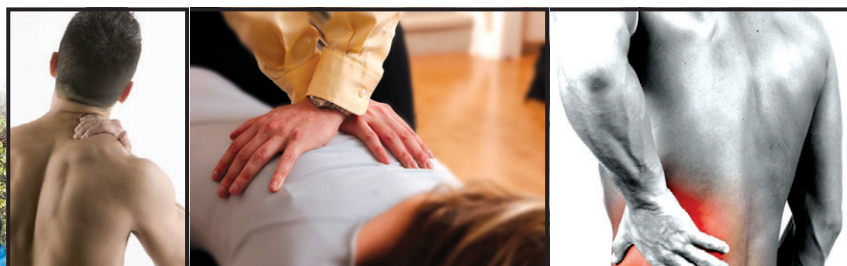
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# Virtual program offered to parents by CCE Orange & Sullivan

Parenting is not easy and it always helps to learn new tools and strategies. Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange and Sullivan Counties are offering our popular program called Discipline is NOT a Dirty Word, fully online in six - 90 minute sessions beginning Wednesday, February 1st and running until March 15th from 8-9:30pm each evening. We will skip February 22nd as many schools will be on break.

This FREE, FUN, INTERACTIVE series is filled with resources about child development, parental coaching, and powerful parenting tools that support caregivers on

their parenting journey. There will be ample time for questions and group discussions that support parental confidence and well-being. Topics include: What is discipline?, Why do kids misbehave?, understanding your parenting style, ways to co-regulate with your child, parental self-care, child and brain development 101, understanding the value of empathy and self-esteem, temperament, Protective Factors framework, communication strategies, how to build connection with your children, and 5 important techniques for your parenting tool box.



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES PHOTO

Effective parenting isn't always easy but help is available.

Suzan Sussmann, Parenting Educator representing both Orange and Sullivan CCE, says, "This program always proves to provoke respectful dialogue and a supportive environment." Sussmann states that she continually is updating

the program to provide rich, research informed information that meets the current needs of today's parents.

The virtual format gives participants the opportunity to log-in from anywhere, without having to worry about childcare, driving, or time constraints. We have changed our programming time to begin at 8:00pm to allow time for parents to get their children settled for bed, so they can focus on the program.

For more information or to register, please visit [www.cceorangecounty.org/events](http://www.cceorangecounty.org/events). Once registered, you will receive the Zoom links to participate. Please contact Suzan Sussmann at 845-344-1234, x271 or by emailing her at [sls536@cornell.edu](mailto:sls536@cornell.edu) with any questions.

Cornell Cooperative Extension and its partnerships provide programs for Orange and Sullivan County residents on youth and family development; nutrition, health, and food safety; community and economic vitality; and agricultural sustainability through Cornell based research. Committed to both Orange and Sullivan Counties, we design programs to meet local needs to enable people to improve their lives and communities. For more information call Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County at 845-344-1234 or visit our website at [www.cceorangecounty.org](http://www.cceorangecounty.org).



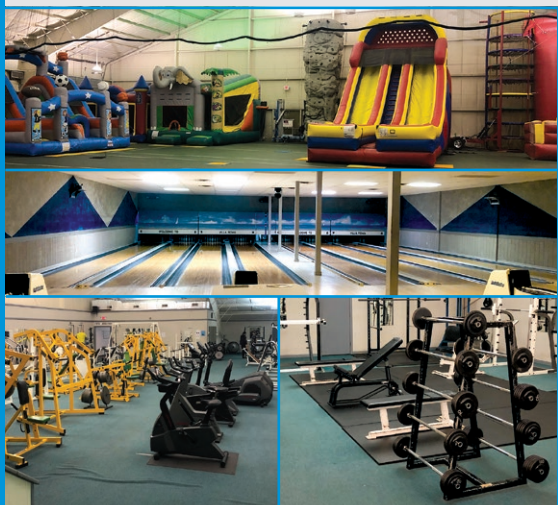
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# Consider donating blood

BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM

January is National Blood Donor Month, and 2023 marks its 53rd anniversary.

According to 2021 statistics from the American Red Cross, "about 328 million people currently live in the U.S. Each year, approximately 6.8 million people in the U.S. donate blood."

The Red Cross notes that around 13.6 million units are collected in the United States. Furthermore, the Red Cross provides about 40 percent of the country's blood and blood cell components.

There are also other non-profit organizations like the New York Blood Center (NYBC), who also partner with local organizations and groups to put on blood drives, which are critically important so that there is a diverse supply of blood available to meet the needs of those who require it.

Last January amid the Omicron COVID variant surge, a national

blood shortage was declared, which means giving blood is more important in the present than it ever has been.

According to the NYBC, our area faces a high demand for blood.

"Close to 2,000 donations are needed each day in the New York/New Jersey community for patients who require a lifesaving blood and/or platelet transfusion," they say.

NYBC adds that those in need include: cancer patients, accident, burn, or trauma victims, newborn babies and mothers delivering babies, transplant recipients, surgery patients, chronically transfused patients suffering from sickle cell disease or thalassemia, and many more.

NYBC points out that donated blood is perishable just like milk.

"Red cells last for 42 days, platelets last for 5 days, and plasma can be frozen for up to a year," says NYBC.

There are no substitutes for do-



nated blood as all transfusions in the U.S. are thanks to blood donors.

The demand for transfusions may increase as the population ages, the NYBC notes, as more sophisticated medical care and surgeries requiring transfusion support become more commonplace.

Interested but curious how often you can donate?

According to the NYBC, you can safely donate your whole blood every eight weeks, automated red cells every 16 weeks, platelets every three days up to 24 times

METRO CREATIVE SERVICES PHOTO

Our region has a high demand for blood, and that may increase in the future.

each year, and plasma every 28 days.

Once blood is donated, it is tested for blood type, hepatitis, HIV, syphilis, and other transmissible diseases.

Before going to donate blood, the NBC recommends potential donors eat at their regular meal times and drink plenty of fluids before donating. Donors who only give platelets may not take aspirin, or products containing aspirin, for 48 hours prior to donating.

There are also other transfusion restrictions. You can find out more on the NYBC's website, [www.nybc.org](http://www.nybc.org).

Their website also has a number of answers to frequently asked questions.

Keep an eye out in your local newspaper for advertised and/or mentioned upcoming opportunities to donate blood.

As stated earlier, the need for blood is there, so please consider answering the call!

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# Celebrate Life Half Marathon turns 20

BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM



Cancer.org previously estimated that 2022 would bring 1.9 million new cancer cases diagnosed and 609,360 cancer deaths in the United States.

Each year, runners travel from all over to participate in the Celebrate Life Half Marathon (CLHM) which raises funds to fight against that terrible disease which has affected so many people and their loved ones.

As Race Director Myriam Loor has stated on occasion, CLHM is not just a race, but rather an experience you don't want to miss.

The beautifully scenic half marathon, held in Rock Hill, has been voted one of the best half marathons in New York State by the 100 Half Marathons Club. It was also featured in the March 2009 issue of Runners World for

having the "Best SWAG."

In addition to offering a chance for runners to test their mettle, the annual event bonds survivors and families in triumph. Celebrate Life honors, remembers and celebrates those who have fought against cancer.

One hundred percent of the proceeds are donated to patients in treatment. CLHM is volunteer driven, meaning no salaries. What they raise is what they donate, which was \$78,000 in 2021.

This year's race is scheduled for March 12, 2023, with the walk slated to start at 8:45 a.m., an early run start time of 9:30 a.m. and the regular run start time of 10 a.m.

Race registration is \$70.

To register or for more info, visit <https://celebratelifehalfmarathon.com/registration>.



PHOTOS BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

At top left: Runners during last year's half marathon.

Above: This runner crossed the finish line with a smile.

At top right: Evan Waterton won last year's race. In the picture to the left is Evan and second place finisher Caleb Monroe.

At right: Sullivan West alum Bryce Maopolski competed in the race.

At left: Race Director Myriam Loor gives Waterton his first place medal.







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