



CANOPY OF NEIGHBORS

SOCIAL ISOLATION, LONELINESS IN OLDER PEOPLE POSE HEALTH RISKS

Human beings are social creatures. Our connection to others enables us to survive and thrive. Yet, as we age, many of us are alone more often than when we were younger, leaving us vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness—and related health problems such as cognitive decline, depression, and heart disease. Fortunately, there are ways to counteract these negative effects.



NIA-supported researchers are studying the differences between social isolation and loneliness, their mechanisms and risk factors, and how to help people affected by these conditions. “NIA is interested in exploring potential interventions to address social isolation and loneliness, which are both risk factors for poor aging outcomes,” said Lisbeth Nielsen, Ph.D., of NIA’s Division of Behavioral and Social Research.

Social isolation and loneliness do not always go together. About 28 percent of older adults in the United States, or 13.8 million people, live alone, according to a report by the Administration for Community Living’s Administration on Aging of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, but many of them are not lonely or socially isolated. At the same time, some people feel lonely despite being surrounded by family and friends.

“A key scientific question is whether social isolation and loneliness are two independent processes affecting health differently, or whether loneliness provides a pathway for social isolation to affect health,” Dr. Nielsen noted.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION, LONELINESS

Research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions: high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer’s disease, and even death.

People who find themselves unexpectedly alone due to the death of a spouse or partner, separation from friends or family, retirement, loss of mobility, and lack of transportation are at particular risk.

Conversely, people who engage in meaningful, productive activities with others

tend to live longer, boost their mood, and have a sense of purpose. These activities seem to help maintain their well-being and may improve their cognitive function, studies show.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIOLOGY OF LONELINESS

Losing a sense of connection and community changes a person’s perception of the world. Someone experiencing chronic loneliness feels threatened and mistrustful of others, which activates a biological defense mechanism, according to Steve Cole,

Ph.D., director of the Social Genomics Core Laboratory at the University of California, Los Angeles. His NIA-funded research focuses on understanding the physiological pathways of loneliness (the different ways that loneliness affects how your mind and body function) and developing social and psychological interventions to combat it.

For example, loneliness may alter the

continued on page 3

Loneliness acts as a fertilizer for other diseases,” Dr. Cole said. “The biology of loneliness can accelerate the buildup of plaque in arteries, help cancer cells grow and spread, and promote inflammation in the brain leading to Alzheimer’s disease. Loneliness promotes several different types of wear and tear on the body.”

AUTUMN 2019

Newsletter of Buffalo’s Canopy of Neighbors



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OUT & ABOUT WITH CANOPY

FALL/WINTER ❖ 2019



COFFEE HOUR

Join us for our monthly Coffee Hour featuring speakers and thought provoking conversation. Coffee Hour is held at 805 Delaware, in the library, at 10am. Please RSVP! **Free Event.**

Thursday 9/26: Mark Janik, Storyteller and Historian shares the life story of Crystal Beach Amusement Park.

The park is now gone except for our memories! For many of us, thinking of warm summer nights, thrilling rides, days on the beach, riding the Canadiana or dancing in the Crystal Ballroom are some of our fondest memories.

We are all Life Story Guardians – “the tellers of the tales in celebration of a life well lived, of the beach and amusement park, as well as of our own unique stories and memories.” Come enjoy the stories and share some of your own.

Thursday 10/17: Susan Mason, educator and author, received her PhD in Psychology from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She currently is at Niagara University where she is a Professor in the Psychology Department, Coordinator of the Gerontology Program, and Director of the Gerontology Center. Dr. Mason has published and presented widely on topics in the study of aging, particularly in the area of cognitive changes, learning, and memory.

Join us as she presents: ***Understanding and Improving Your Memory.*** This is a fun and informative class for anyone who is interested in memory. Learn how the memory system works, how lifestyle choices may affect memory, and how aging does (or does not) affect memory. Learn and practice strategies to improve your memory.

Thursday 11/14: Musical performance to be announced!



IRISH CLASSICAL THEATER: Join us for a full dress rehearsal.

Thursday 9/19: 'Tis Pity She's a Whore
Thursday 11/21: A Child's Christmas in Wales
Thursday 3/5: The Onion Game
Thursday 4/23: The Cherry Orchard
Thursday 6/4: Drama at Inish

Curtain up at 7:30 pm. Ride pickups to start at 6:30 pm. RSVP in advance by the Monday before each performance, 716-235-8133. **Free Event.**



**ANNOUNCING AN EXCITING
NEW PARTNERSHIP &
ADDITION TO CANOPY OF
NEIGHBORS PROGRAMMING!**

BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Join us for a musical extravaganza –

More details to come in the upcoming months!

Free Event.



BURCHFIELD PENNEY ART CENTER DOCENT LED TOUR

Join us on Tuesday, 9/24 at 1pm for a Docent led tour of The Burchfield Penney Art Center. Dedicated to the art and vision of American painter Charles E. Burchfield, it

was founded in 1966 as the Charles E. Burchfield Center.

The center features a museum, library, and activity space for the arts. It maintains the world's largest collection of Burchfield's work, as well as many other distinguished artists of Buffalo, Niagara and Western New York.

Please RSVP in advance, 716-235-8133. **Free Event.**



CANOPY OF NEIGHBORS ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Please come! Join us on Friday, 12/13 at 10am-11:30am at Canopy of Neighbors ~ 805 Delaware Avenue.

Spend time with fellow members and volunteers, enjoy wonderful

holiday cookies, music, cider, hot chocolate and conversation. Get in the spirit with holiday music by the Semachords of Buffalo Seminary, an a cappella group making a repeat performance!

RSVP by 12/1 at (716)235-8133 or email respond to wendy@canopyofneighbors.org



to 716-235-8133

Rides are available by volunteers to all activities. Please RSVP to all Events

OUT & ABOUT WITH CANOPY

FALL/WINTER ❖ 2019

ongoing events



CURRENT EVENTS WITH KEITH ELKINS:

Join us for our popular bi-monthly current events discussion.

We meet on the 1st and 3rd WEDNESDAY of each month at 805 Delaware Ave.,

in the library from 11-12 pm.

Please notate scheduled fall and winter Current Event dates which take into account holidays: Wednesdays 9/11, 9/18, 10/2, 10/16, 11/6, 11/20, 12/4, 12/18.

Please RSVP! **Free Event.**



MONTHLY MOVIE:

Join us for a movie! Monthly movie is the FIRST TUESDAY of each month. We take a break for the summer and resume in September. Movies are picked the week

before the outing. Time and theater to be announced.

Monthly Movie dates are: Tuesdays 10/1, 11/5, 12/3.

Please RSVP! Cost to member.



MINDFULNESS WITH MARIA KAHN

Join us for our monthly Mindfulness program.

This exciting program will be held every first Thursday of the month, Maria will help us uncover useful tools to de-stress and return ourselves to a productive state of calm and ease.

It will be held at 805 Delaware in the library at 11am.

Please notate scheduled Mindfulness dates: Thursdays 9/5, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5. Please RSVP! **Free Event.**

Luncheon



LUNCHEON @ HAMLIN HOUSE:

Enjoy our monthly luncheon at Hamlin House. Lunch is held the SECOND TUESDAY of each month.

The scheduled luncheon dates are: Tuesdays 9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 12/10.

Please RSVP! \$12 cost to member and includes lunch, drink, tip & tax.

RSVP to 716-235-8133

*Rides are available by volunteers to all activities. Please RSVP to all Events.
Please cancel all reservations if you know you will not be attending an event.*



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many of you are aware of the kick that life gave me when Jim Eagan, my dear darling husband of 49 years, died suddenly in 2017. So many times I have wanted to wallow behind the closed door of my apartment in ongoing misery. During those times of doubt, my lifesaver has been being able to do something for others – there is nothing

like a commitment on your calendar which makes you realize you cannot let someone else down. I will admit that I took advantage of Canopy to be an outlet for my need to get out of my own way and be available to the needs of others.

When we, as volunteers, offer to transport a member, sometimes with the added benefit of being able to enjoy an activity, or to spend an afternoon with someone who cannot leave home or to share a meal or make a friendly check-in phone call, we lessen the social isolation that may be occurring in our own lives. Maybe we are not even aware of its existence.

Likewise, when we, as members, accept the help of others and leave the confines of our home to go out to lunch or to Irish Classical Theatre or to a Canopy coffee or to a medical appointment or to the beauty parlor or barbershop, or to a movie or concert, we reduce the risk of social isolation. Again, maybe if we are not even aware of its existence.

Relationships here at Canopy unfold whether you are ready for them or not – people give and receive in so many ways that alleviate loneliness, help build critical relationships that help in times of need and touch you when you least expect it.

Recently, one of our earliest members, Ruth McGhee, died just 3 months shy of her 90th birthday. Ruth's zeal for life, her positivity and her gratitude for all of life's blessings touched all of us who were friends and volunteers. She never missed a Canopy event until her health forced her absence. As we all sat in the First Centennial Missionary Baptist Church celebrating her life, we heard from her Pastor and friends share stories of what Ruth did for others in the community as recently as a couple of weeks before her death. It was clear that Ruth not only chose to stave off the social isolation to which she could have succumbed given her physical limitations but that she spent a lifetime celebrating the joys of new experiences.

If I have learned anything in these past two years, it is to be open to friendly encounters and to find ways to give of myself. We must all be aware that the existence of social isolation is prevalent and can be remedied. Canopy will continue to explore ways to reduce social isolation amongst our members and volunteers thanks to the generosity of the Catholic Health System and other donors, so that we may experience some of the joy that Ruth McGhee bequeathed to all of us.

Social Isolation...continued from page 1

tendency of cells in the immune system to promote inflammation, which is necessary to help our bodies heal from injury, Dr. Cole said. But inflammation that lasts too long increases the risk of chronic diseases.

People who feel lonely may also have weakened immune cells that have trouble fighting off viruses, which makes them more vulnerable to some infectious diseases, he added.

NIA-supported research by Dr. Cole and others shows

that having a sense of mission and purpose in life is linked to healthier immune cells. Helping others through caregiving or volunteering also helps people feel less lonely.

"Working for a social cause or purpose with others who share your values and are trusted partners puts you in contact with others and helps develop a greater sense of community," he noted.

National Institute on Aging

Featured research, April 23, 2019

"Changing the Face of Aging" at Burchfield Penney

On May 9th Canopy held an exhibit at the Burchfield Penney titled "Changing the Face of Aging" in an attempt to elevate the conversation around aging. Companion books are for sale through the office!



Albright Knox



*Albright Knox hosted us
for an informative
and enjoyable tour
of the museum.*

*As always, volunteers
provide rides to and from
all of our events!*



Aboard the Miss Buffalo



Members and volunteers enjoyed relief from the summer heat on a beautiful day aboard the Miss Buffalo!

Parkside Candies



Parkside Candies hosted us for two wonderful ice cream socials!

Speaker Series • Drew Kahn

Drew Kahn, head of the Anne Frank Project, came for a moving Speaker Series coffee hour and told us of his group's travels to Rwanda and their use of storytelling to resolve conflict.



Speaker Series • Marla Bujnicki



Perennially favorite, Historian Marla Bujnicki, guested at our Speaker Series and wove fascinating tales about famous historic figures from Buffalo and their impact on the world.



Thank You

Our sincere thanks and gratitude to the individuals, corporations and foundations who have supported Canopy of Neighbors and its mission through their financial support in 2018.

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FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR



As we continue to grow, our need for new volunteers is at the forefront of expansion success. The need for services provided by our dedicated Canopy of Neighbors volunteers grows daily as word spreads through members and volunteers alike who are enjoying mutual fulfillment.

When surveyed, our volunteers indicate that they enjoy the large variety of social interactions with members, the satisfying feeling they get when helping members and the flexible nature of volunteering with Canopy as the top reasons they are so dedicated to volunteering with us. We hope that those of you reading this will consider venturing into new territory and enjoy new experiences centered around the convenience of your schedule with no minimum requirement.

Our current volunteers say it best:

Ginx Graves – volunteer since 3/2016:

“Volunteer relationships have blossomed into new friendships. I can volunteer on my own schedule and I like helping people.”

Sue Adams – volunteer since 7/2015:

“I love being a volunteer at Canopy of Neighbors because I like helping Sasha and Wendy in any way I can. I enjoy working in the office. Every week I call members to see how they are and tell them about upcoming events. Canopy is a wonderful organization. I am glad to be a part of it.”

Jeff Fleischmann – volunteer since 5/2016, with over 500 rides given:

“By giving to others, I receive at least as much as I give them. It’s always satisfying to do something for someone that they can’t do for themselves, or without assistance. And the Canopy seniors I help are so grateful and show it with anything from just a smile, to a warm ‘Thank you,’ to tears of gratitude. It’s always fun chatting with them, swapping stories, ‘comparing notes’ about aging, or just bemoaning the ever-changing Buffalo weather.”

As you can see, you will be in the good company of other neighbors who have found that they enjoy attending our events and devoting a few hours of their schedule to help others. Call or email me for more information – Wendy Fredricks at 716-235-8133 or Wendy@CanopyofNeighbors.org.

Wendy Fredricks
Volunteer Director



VOLUNTEER WITH CANOPY OF NEIGHBORS!

- As a Canopy volunteer you directly impact the daily life of someone in your community.
- Volunteer opportunities are flexible and meet your schedule.
- Our volunteers are invited to participate fully in all Canopy programming including: Mindfulness Meditation, Irish Classical Theatre, Current Events, Buffalo Philharmonic events, outings, speakers, and more!
- Volunteering with Canopy is a doorway to new friendships, expands your horizons and helps keep your mind fresh. It's rewarding, too!

What can I do to help?

- Give a ride to a vital medical or social appointment or to Canopy events.
- Lend a hand with simple technology tasks like computers, TV remotes, printers and smartphones.
- Provide simple help in the garden or assistance with shopping.

How do I hear about volunteer opportunities?

- Our office sends out emails listing the needs of our members and you choose the opportunity that fits your schedule. If you don't have email, the office will call you to let you know of opportunities!

I am retired and like to travel or winter/summer out of town. Can I get involved?

- Absolutely! Volunteering with Canopy is flexible and meets your schedule 100% of the time. There is no minimum volunteer time commitment required. Canopy lets volunteers know our needs by email or phone. You pick what you want to do and when.

I'm a student. Can I get involved?

- Yes - Canopy of Neighbors welcomes student volunteers! Consider filling your community service hour requirements, internship requirements or just volunteer with us at your convenience.

How do I start?

- Let us help you find a rewarding, flexible volunteer opportunity that fits your needs. Please call or email Canopy of Neighbors office. We will meet you, fill out minimal paperwork and get you volunteering!

(716) 235-8133

wendy@canopyofneighbors.org

www.canopyofneighbors.org

Please let us know...

...if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, or if you know of someone who might enjoy our newsletter, please let us know!

**Call or email the Canopy office 716-235-8133
or info@canopyofneighbors.org**

Welcome

New members

Anthony Peter Gorny
Margaret Hudson
Florence Johnson
Miriam Langan
Shirley Schintzius
Richard Scibilia

New volunteers

Gretchen Brand
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Sarah Goodyear
Denise Scheig
Joe Scrivani



CANOPY OF NEIGHBORS

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A Few Words Say So Much

By naming Canopy of Neighbors in your estate plan, you can continue your support well past your lifetime and positively impact your neighbors for years to come.

When making a charitable estate gift to Canopy of Neighbors, it is vital that the legal name of the charity, city and other identifying details be used. Below is the bequest language to share with your attorney:

I give to Canopy of Neighbors, a New York not for profit 501(c)(3) corporation (tax ID#:27-1007766) the following described property: (description of the dollar amount, portion of estate or property) to be used to support Canopy of Neighbors.



For additional information, please contact your attorney or call Canopy of Neighbors at 716-235-8133.

Our Mission

Canopy of Neighbors creates new pathways to aging well and aging independently in community.

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