

Getting Wiser

A DHAD PUBLICATION VOL. 1 | ISSUE 1



Age Your Way

Well designed,
age-friendly
communities

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Deadly
dangers
of isolation

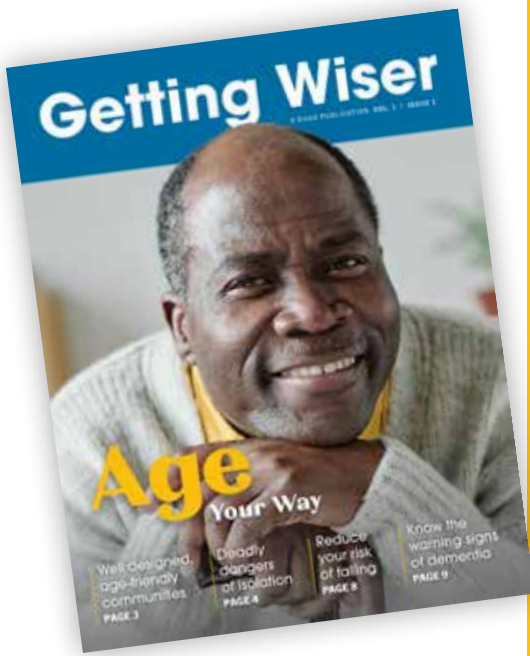
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warning signs
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Welcome

to Getting Wiser Magazine!



This magazine is the first issue created in an effort to provide useful, timely, and entertaining information geared towards allowing residents to learn to age their way, by setting goals, identifying resources, and understanding what assistance is available. The Akron Community

Foundation identified aging support as an important issue for our community and provided us at Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities a grant to further the positive aging efforts in Summit County. Getting Wiser was the result!

Getting Wiser is designed to provide tools for an older adult's tool box for aging.

Most people will not start planning for potential issues that come with aging such as physical limitations until it is too late. We hope to change that by increasing awareness of issues and resources and helping Summit County age well. You'll find more resources at www.gettingwiser.org that will help you in your planning.

We hope you will enjoy this magazine and your journey to getting wiser!

Gary L. Cook

PRESIDENT AND CEO

Direction Home Akron Canton
Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities



Improving the quality of life of our aging residents.

Age-Friendly Network

Many communities are working towards an inclusive future for all residents, but for some, it's a big task. The World Health Organization and AARP have created the "Age-Friendly Network." This network provides guidance and processes to address 8 domains of livability.

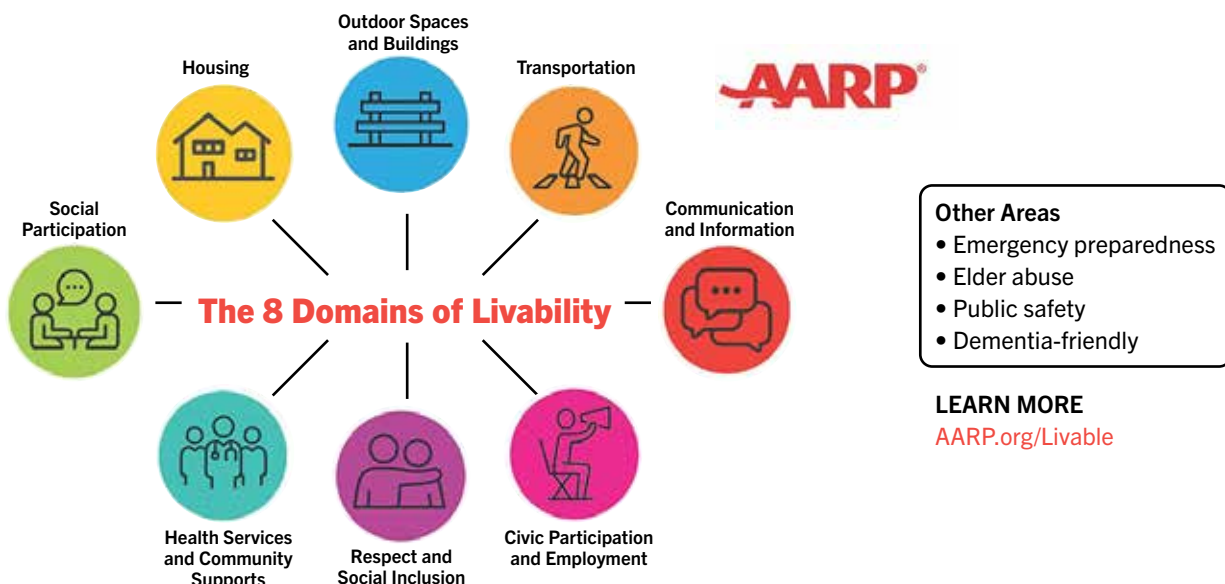
Many leaders in Summit County and the City of Akron have been working together to identify needs and plan for a more livable community by addressing these domains with stakeholders from local government, community-based organizations, and volunteers. This committee has identified four workgroups that are creating one or two projects to complete in the first year of implementation (2022-2023).

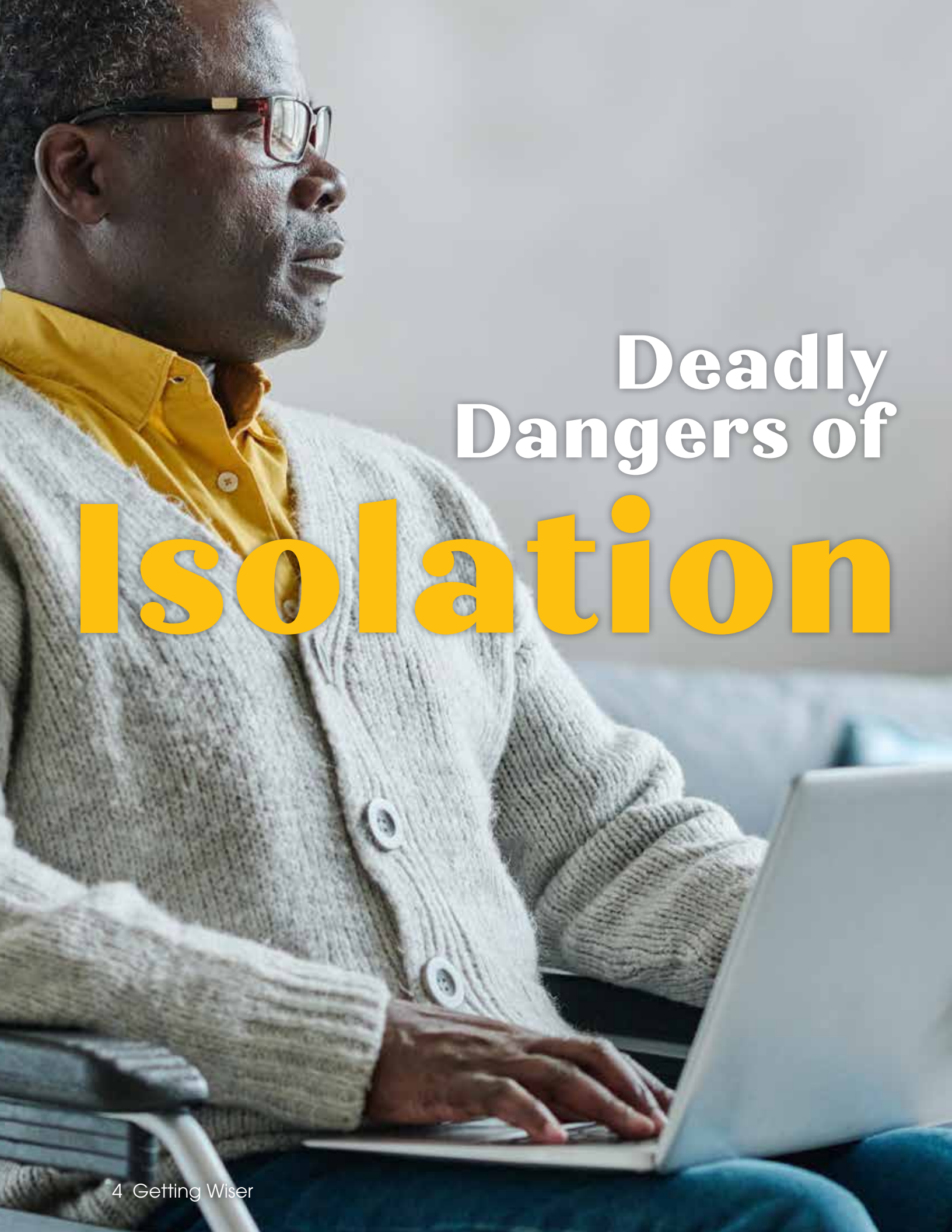
More objectives and all the plans can be found on www.gettingwiser.org or call **Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities** at 877-770-5558.



Projects include:

- A positive aging campaign to empower and educate people who want to age their way
- Create multi-generational programs for education, support, and guidance that is mutually beneficial to the younger and older participants
- Connect partner organizations to improve communication to older adults
- Increase older adult-focused cultural, artistic, and educational offerings
- Increase access to home repair and modifications to enhance the older adults' ability to live in the community
- Create a "Seal of Aging Approval" for businesses and service providers that identify ways to be age-friendly and earn the designation





Deadly
Dangers of

Isolation

Programs Providing Connectivity for Older Adults When They Need It Most



Older adults were impacted more by the pandemic than other age groups. They were more susceptible to COVID-19 and its side-effects: isolation and loneliness borne from the quarantine and social distancing requirements.

While others were turning to Zoom and social media to stay connected to each other, many older adults found themselves cut off from friends, family, and their support community.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published an article “Loneliness and Social Isolation Linked to Serious Health Conditions” on their website ([cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults](https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults)) illustrating just how dangerous isolation is:

- Social isolation significantly increased a person’s risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.
- Social isolation was associated with about a 50% increased risk of dementia.
- Decreased social relationships were associated with a 29% risk increase for heart disease and a 32% risk increase for stroke.
- Loneliness was associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.
- Loneliness among heart failure patients was associated with a nearly 4x increased risk of death, 68% increased risk of hospitalization, and 57% increased risk of emergency department visits.

With these sobering facts in mind, several community resources mobilized during the pandemic to help link elders with online services and programs that would provide needed tethers to their external world. One of these community organizations was Jewish Family Services (JFS).

“By focusing on the unique technology needs of those aged 50+, JFS was successful in paving the way for older adults to connect with each other, friends, and loved ones,” said Buffy Ramos of JFS.





Jewish Family Service (JFS) of Akron has been working hard to promote digital literacy among older adults.

After identifying this need, JFS quickly identified volunteers to provide technology support to their clients. Retired veterans and local college students stepped up to the challenge of coaching older adults to use their smart devices. Some already had a device but didn't know how to use it. Others wanted to purchase a device and begin learning but didn't know where to start in the shopping process. The dedicated JFS volunteer "Computer Coaches" made a positive impact in the lives of the clients through teaching them how to search the internet, how to view concerts on YouTube, how to grocery shop online, and how to connect to their loved ones through platforms such as Zoom.

Direction Home Aging and Disabilities, the Area Agency on Aging for Summit County, was another organization that tackled this need head-on. "We knew as part of our Age Friendly work that older adults would need some help finding their way online," said Matt Reed, Senior Vice President of Community Engagement at Direction Home.

"Thanks to Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro's office, we were able to fund a program that linked computers, internet access, and technical support

to older adults in the community without those resources."

Direction Home coordinated the purchase, delivery, and support of nearly 800 computers and tablets between 2020 and 2022. Direction Home's Peer Support Technician, Holly Flowers, had this to say about her experiences providing support to home-based elders: "It has been a joy to work with our participants and hear the stories of how this program has made them feel seen and supported by the community. The digital divide for older adults is created by issues of affordability, connectivity, and skills training. The ConnectMeDHAD program strives to address each of these issues by providing tools, information, support, and community resources to our participants."

For more information on these programs, please visit www.gettingwiser.org. Many organizations introduced creative ways for people to stay involved, between virtual tours of local and international museums, interactive online group meetings, or even the inspiration to return to favorite past-times. Not nearly as many focused on making these ideas accessible to at-risk populations.



Direction Home's first tech device delivery was through a program called "PCs for People." Shown here is one of the 790+ devices delivered by Direction Home.

If you or a loved one are struggling with technology and/or isolation concerns, check out this list of starting tips:

1. Charge it up.

Laptops, tablets, and smartphones have rechargeable batteries. These devices need to be plugged in and charged regularly. Try designating a specific outlet in your home that you will use for charging and making it a habit to plug it in each night so that the battery has a full charge!



2. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

If you aren't sure how to use your device, ask someone. Many of us have tech-savvy friends, neighbors, and family members that would be happy to help. Local libraries are also a great resource for quick and easy tech support.

3. Think before you click.

While technology is a great tool for connection, users must make smart choices about the information and websites being accessed. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. If a random notification appears urgent, it probably isn't. In both cases, close the program you are working in and start over.

4. Use it.

Try to find one thing you enjoy and can do on the computer regularly. By using the device on a consistent basis for something enjoyable, you will develop skills to use it when it's important. For example, if you enjoy cooking, look up recipes.

5. Don't give up.

Learning how to use a new laptop, tablet, or smartphone can be frustrating. Be patient with yourself and the device. It is okay to start from square one. Just keep in mind that if you give a teenager a rotary phone and a ten-digit phone number to call, they will face a similar challenge!



Remaining Independent

AVOIDING FALLS IS KEY

From the Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Falling is one of the most common reasons older adults find themselves unable to live in their homes any longer as they age. Finding ways to prevent falls is key to maintaining independence and avoiding injuries.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR FALLING?

For people over age 65, having four or more of these risk factors increases your risk of falling:

- A history of falls
- Arthritis
- Depression
- Dizziness
- Chronic disease
- An acute illness
- Taking more than four medications

Other significant risk factors include lower body weakness, vitamin D deficiency, vision or balance issues, and foot pain.

6 Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Falling

1. Ask your doctor if you can safely stop taking any of your medications, especially those with sedatives. Be sure to mention all over-the-counter medicines you are also taking.
2. Get your vision checked annually.
3. Wear non-skid shoes, and avoid walking barefoot or in socks without treads on them.
4. Exercise to increase strength in your legs.
5. Don't be too proud to use a cane or walker.
6. Remove any tripping hazards at home, such as shoes on the floor or area rugs that aren't tacked down. Add grab bars in the bathroom, handrails on stairs, and more light to dimly lit rooms.



If you or a loved one needs help with assessing your fall risks, schedule an appointment to see one of our geriatric specialists: Kathleen Rogers, MD, at Cleveland Clinic Akron General's Health & Wellness Center in Stow, at 330-945-3179.

Fangfei Xiao, DO, at Cleveland Clinic Akron General's Health & Wellness Center in Bath, at 330-344-1255.

10 Warning Signs of Dementia

From the Alzheimer's Association

Over 55 million people worldwide are living with dementia. In collaboration with experts in the field, the Alzheimer's Association created a list of warning signs to help people identify symptoms that may be related to Alzheimer's or another dementia.

- 1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life**
- 2. Challenges in planning or problem solving**
- 3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks**
- 4. Confusion with time or place**
- 5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships**
- 6. New problems with works in speaking or writing**
- 7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps**
- 8. Decreased or poor judgment**
- 9. Withdrawal from work or social activities**
- 10. Changes in mood and personality**

It's natural to feel uncertain or nervous about discussing these changes with others. Voicing worries about your own health might make them seem more "real." Or, you may fear upsetting someone by sharing observations about changes in their abilities or behavior. However, these are significant health concerns that should be evaluated by a doctor. Confide in someone you trust if you notice these signs in yourself, and think about how to best approach the person if you're noticing them in someone else. Have the conversation as soon as possible in a comfortable location. For more information on the 10 warning signs, having the conversation, and the differences between dementia and normal aging, call the Alzheimer's Association Helpline at 800-272-3900.



What's Cooking

Chinese Tomato Egg Stir-fry



This tasty dish is something you'll find among many Chinese home-cooked comfort foods. It's fast, easy, and made with very simple ingredients.

Servings: 4-5 | Prep time: 10 mins | Cooking time: 8 mins

INGREDIENTS

6 large eggs, beaten with 1 Tbsp water

4 medium tomatoes (13-14 oz), cut into 1" pieces

3 stalks of scallions, finely chopped, divide the whites and greens

1 Tbsp cornstarch, dissolved in cold 1.5 Tbsp water

2 Tbsp sugar

2 Tbsp vegetable oil

Pinch of salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Add 1 Tbsp oil to a heated non-stick pan; add white scallion pieces and all tomatoes; Add 1 Tbsp water, salt, and sugar; Cover for 1 min on medium heat; Stir in the cornstarch mixture and mix well; Turn off the heat and set aside all tomatoes.
2. Wipe the pan clean; Add 1 Tbsp oil and heat for 15 secs; Add egg mixture; Do not scramble the egg mixture until halfway cooked; Turn down the heat.
3. Allow 1 min for the eggs to firm, then add the cooked tomatoes; Stir well gently.
4. Cover for 1 min on high heat, and garnish with green scallions. Serve with steamed rice.

ABOUT THE CHEF | Mrs. Yuqun Liu | At Age 70, Mrs. Yuqun Liu retired from a lifelong career at the Food Research Institute (the equivalent of the FDA) in Shanghai. She holds an Applied Chemistry degree and is a board-certified Advanced Engineer specializing in food nutrition analysis and new product development. She enjoys developing all kinds of new recipes and loves cooking for family and friends. Mrs. Yuqun Liu joined ASIA Lucky Seniors in 2017.

Make a Difference Spotlight

Tune into each edition of the Getting Wiser magazine for volunteer stories and opportunities throughout Summit County!

“The New Franklin Volunteer Committee connects New Franklin residents in need of help with skilled volunteer services to improve the lives of our neighbors and demonstrate the giving spirit of our community,” said Katie Smith, City of New Franklin Communications Manager. *“Mayor Paul Adamson started the program in 2020, and since then, more than 30 volunteers have signed up to help throughout the community!”*

New Franklin volunteers can help with light yard work, gardening, light maintenance, grocery delivery, computer/technology help, courtesy calls and check-ins, pet care and dog walking, coordinating home repair services, holiday decorating, and other miscellaneous tasks. Volunteers and those requesting assistance are asked to complete an application.

More information is available at newfranklin.org or by calling New Franklin’s administrative offices at 330-882-4324.



Volunteers Kerry and Diane distributed food boxes to seniors during COVID.



Volunteer Diane helped install a new mailbox for a senior resident and made a new friend in the process.

Getting Wiser Resource Guide

RESOURCES:

Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities

877-770-5558 | dhad.org

Information on long-term services available in the community or in long-term care facility settings. Resource information for home delivered meals, transportation, housing, legal services, utility assistance, etc. Support groups, information, and resources for caregivers.

Community Action Akron Canton

330-376-7730 | ca-akron.org

Rent, mortgage, water, and utility assistance.

Summit County Veterans Service Commission

330-643-2830 | vscsummitoh.us

Financial assistance, transportation to VA medical facilities and applying for VA benefits.

Summit County Crisis Line

330-434-9144

Mental health crisis and alcohol and drug addiction help.

NETS/SCAT

330-646-8200 (for approval), after approval call 330-376-5353

Transportation service providers with scheduled appointments. Must be Medicaid approved and have met "spend down," unable to access METRO bus services.

Crime Victims Assistance

1-800-582-2877

Financial assistance for out-of-pocket expenses may be available for victims of violent crimes.

Summit County Board of Developmental Disabilities

330-634-8000 | summitdd.org

Services available for adults and children with developmental disabilities.

Summit County Public Health

330-375-2772 | scph.org

Immunization, safety, health and wellbeing services.

Asian Services in Action, Inc.

330-535-3263 | asiaohio.org

Health and human services for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

Summit County Department of Job and Family Services

Benefits Assistance:

844-640-6446

Adult Protective Services:

330-643-7217

summitdjfs.org

Eldercare Locator

1-800-677-1116 | eldercare.acl.gov

Connects individuals to services like housing, transportation, meals, etc.

PHONE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER:

911 Emergency Services

211 United Way
Community Services

988 National Suicide and
Crisis Lifeline



gettingwiser.org