

DECEMBER 2017

CLIFTON PARK

AN EXCLUSIVE MONTHLY PUBLICATION
FOR RESIDENTS

Neighbors



Michelle Payette
A Beacon of Light

Michelle Payette with Beacon of Light Board Members (and some of the most important people in her life): Joyce Ann Elsey, Sue Groh, Virginia Augustine & Veronica Huang



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Have feedback? New ideas? We would be happy to hear from you! Please contact Jenna Caputo at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com for information on how to submit ideas, articles, updates, reminders, events, high-resolution photos and more. We will do our best to include as much community information as we can within our space limitations.

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ON THE COVER

Michelle Payette,
 Joyce Ann Elsey,
 Sue Groh,
 Virginia Augustine
 & Veronica Huang



Dear CLIFTON PARK RESIDENTS

In the hustle and bustle of December it's often hard to find time for what really matters, but isn't that what it's all about? Planning ahead so you can get everything done and still have time to really enjoy the holidays is key.

In this issue we cover everything from how to plan a family vacation to planning ahead in order to better utilize your flexible spending accounts to being prepared for winter and the holidays so you can enjoy your time with family and friends.

We can all take lessons from our cover story on Michelle Payette who has devoted her life to helping others, especially those with an incarcerated family member, as well as Nancy McKiernan's story about seniors and their special needs at this time of year, and from Team CAPTAIN who teach us about philanthropy and volunteerism through their many programs that offer a hand up as well as hand outs.

The holidays shouldn't be all about getting or giving presents, but rather about BEING PRESENT. Now is the time of year to really focus on each other and our communities; to be grateful for all we have and to share it with others.

In that spirit I want to thank our team from Best Version Media who produce, print and publish this magazine and to our Editor, Jenna - who works tirelessly to bring you the best content each month and to Mark, who uses his talent and skill to capture the subjects of our cover stories with his beautiful photography. Most of all I want to thank you, our readers, who share your wonderful articles, stories, photos, events and ideas so we can help bring this neighborhood together through these pages.

Here's to hoping that each of you has a wonderful holiday month filled with fun, family and friends!

Barb



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Team CAPTAIN: Here to Save Lives!

By Hannah Kotler

Celebrating their 40th year of serving the Saratoga County area and beyond, CAPTAIN (Community Action for Parents, Teens and Interested Neighbors) is hoping to continue to *lift people up and build brighter futures*. CAPTAIN is a volunteer-driven, human service nonprofit that develops youth and serves youth, individuals and families. Their programs and services include, but are not limited to, an emergency food and hygiene pantry, the only emergency youth runaway and homeless shelter in the county, family assistance programs, a teen leadership program, the Getting Ahead program, the Job Assist program and an outreach



CAPTAIN's Peace Camp kids

center that hosts homework help, afterschool activities and educational support.

CAPTAIN'S goal is to help members of the community who have fallen on difficult times to receive support and guidance to get back on their feet. Speaking at churches, schools, rotaries and other service clubs, CAPTAIN educates others on their programs and services, while connecting and hearing what others feel is important in the community. Currently, they have 17 sites offering free summer meals to children aged 18 and under throughout Saratoga County, an outreach center in Halfmoon Heights mobile home community, an emergency runaway and

youth shelter in Malta, a drop-in street outreach center in Gloversville, an emergency food and hygiene pantry in Clifton Park and more.

Hoping to expand even further beyond that, CAPTAIN is currently working with a developer to create affordable, workforce housing in Saratoga Springs that will include 10 units for teens aging out of the foster care system and other youth who are homeless and in need of transitional housing.

Not one to shy away from tackling even more, newer issues as they arise, this non-stop nonprofit has also included a new focus on human trafficking. The Saratoga Center for the Family and CAPTAIN have been working together for over a year to raise awareness about this issue, providing training to hundreds of individuals and case management services to youth victims of trafficking and those at high risk. Additionally, in 2017, CAPTAIN and the Center for the Family worked closely with the FBI on a sting operation, called Operation Cross Country, to catch traffickers and find youth victims, recovering 82 sexually exploited juveniles and making 239 arrests.

A longstanding mainstay for people in crisis, people trying to get ahead and youth learning about philanthropy and volunteerism, CAPTAIN has embraced every new challenge and problem thrown their way over their 40 years. Their 250-plus active volunteers, numerous donors and local supporters are here to help combat these issues that didn't exist or were not at the forefront when the organization began in 1977, be it human trafficking or cyber bullying.

CAPTAIN offers a hand *up* as much as a hand *out*. They are there when people in crisis need their help immediately, and to offer classes, mentors and resources to help them overcome their obstacles. Whether through a mentor position, volunteerism or community support, you could help this CAPTAIN's team change and save lives.

For more information, please visit captaincares.org. ■



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Know of a great local non-profit? Let us know so we can spotlight them here. Send submissions to jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.

The Rexford Bridge 1915-1964

By John Scherer, Clifton Park Town Historian

These two photographs taken in the 1950s show the bridge at Rexford that was replaced by a new bridge in 1964. The 1964 bridge was replaced just this year by a new four-lane bridge. Notice that the 1915 bridge pictured here makes use of the original Erie Canal aqueduct that carried the canal across the river. The old Erie Canal was closed in 1915 when it was moved to the Mohawk River as the Erie Barge Canal. The river had been dammed and dredged to make it navigable. That year a bridge replaced the center section of the old aqueduct so that boats could pass beneath it. The remains of the aqueduct that the span connected were used as part of the bridge, so that automobiles actually traveled across the river on the towpath of the aqueduct supported by the arches.



The one photo shows an automobile approaching Rexford and the aerial view shows Rexford in the distance. When a new bridge replaced this one in 1964, the stones of the aqueduct were numbered and stored behind the boathouse on the south side of the river. A section of aqueduct was left on either side of the river as a State Historic Site and can be visited and even viewed as one crosses the brand new four-lane bridge. ■

COMMUNITY CORNER

On Thursday, October 19th, new winter coats were gifted from the Corpus Christi Knights of Columbus Round Lake, purchased with the proceeds from their Charitable and Benevolent raffle tickets, to 44 youth at CAPTAIN's Cheryl's Lodge Outreach Center in Halfmoon Heights. Coats, snow pants and boots are now being distributed at CAPTAIN's office in Clifton Park for all who need them for infants through adults. ■



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Michelle Payette

A Beacon of Light

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

Photos by MarkBolles.com

In a world that has become increasingly more cynical, stories of redemption are often viewed as only subjects of holiday Hallmark or Lifetime movies and not something that happens in real life. But Michelle Payette, minister at Beacon of Light, proves that these stories do indeed happen everyday.

Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Michelle was the third of three daughters. Born 10 years later than her middle sister, Michelle was supposed to be the child that would save her parents' marriage. They thought they would be having a boy and instead she was a girl. Michelle felt like a failure from the start. Her family moved to Saratoga Springs when she was five years old. She had a tough childhood and much of her family's past story was kept from her until many years later. She didn't realize that this veiled history was beginning to repeat itself in her own life story.

On the surface, it looked like her life had turned out great. She was a successful businesswoman with a big house on a beautiful piece of property, a nice car and two wonderful kids. It seemed like she had it all. In reality, she felt an immense pressure to "perform" to uphold her status and continue providing for her children. She wanted to give her kids a good life and keep them out of trouble. She wanted to protect them from some of the hardships she went through as a child. She didn't realize at the time that the choices she made to protect them were what would end up hurting them in the end.

CLIFTON PARK *Neighbors*

As a person that always felt like she had to live up to other people's expectations, she had a hard time saying no. Her thoughts became twisted and her boundaries blurred. Things began to spiral. She didn't question the unethical activities that she saw around her. Although she thought twice about it, she made the choice to begin cooking the books at the office for herself, "borrowing" money and then lying to cover it up. "I lost my mind," she remembers. "I was just acting, I wasn't thinking. I was just getting through the minute and there had never been any accountability in my life."

It all started becoming too much for her and she began to feel like she couldn't function anymore. She knew she didn't want to continue doing what she was doing but she couldn't figure out how to stop. One day her son was invited to church and she decided to join him at Grace Chapel of Clifton Park. Something felt right and she continued to go. Eventually, following an audit, Michelle was arrested for stealing. She took a plea bargain and went to prison. It was there that she finally told the full truth. "It was the beginning of a huge change for me. 'The truth will set you free.' It really did. It was a chance for me to realize I could admit what I did and move on from it," she says.

It was in prison when she began to get some clarity on her own life and how she would find her redemption and reconcile with her family to piece their lives back together once she got out. She wanted to own what she had done wrong without pointing fingers, realizing that history repeats itself. "Criminals aren't born bad people. We're all born innocent. It changed my life in prison. People I would have crossed the street from before are now the people I seek out and want to be around because they are good people. It's just generational dysfunction. One learned behavior and one bad choice at a time; one compromise and the next compromise and then before you know it, you're in so deep you don't know when to stop. How do you control your own personal dysfunction? For me, it was Jesus."

After finally being able to tell the truth and knowing that she was doing something to start making her life right again, Michelle felt joyful for the first time in her life. A weight had been lifted off of her and she describes herself as that annoying person that walked around happy all the time. "I had hope for the first time in my life that I could do something right," she says. While in prison she finally received help and counseling for her issues stemming from her childhood. She also always looked for positive ways to keep herself busy.

She was in a unit with 64 other women, all in bunk beds separated by partial walls like bathroom stalls. The lights never went off and there was always trouble. Michelle was scared and just wanted to find a way to keep herself out of trouble. "I've never felt so unsafe but I also wouldn't change it for anything," she explains. "I met the best people I ever met there and I'm better because of it."



Michelle with April Harden

She took courses to become a certified legal research aid. She also volunteered to clean the prison chapel since it was a place that brought her peace. It was during one of those cleaning sessions that she found a closet full of Christian books and videos, including *Strong's Bible Concordance*. Apparently these materials were stored there after the prison's Protestant chaplain had passed away. Michelle asked if she could make a Christian library out of the unused space and created a useable, organized and cataloged Christian space with the help of other inmates and citizen volunteers.

They were drawn to the Concordance and would look up words that related to whatever issues they were feeling that day – anxiety, broken heart, etc. The book led them to the answers to their questions within the Bible and soon they had created their own Bible study group. "It was truly Holy Spirit led," Michelle says, since they were teaching each other and finding their own way as they went along. The group started with about 4-5 people and quickly grew

An advertisement for Creative Photo & Graphic. It features a vintage-style camera on the left. The text on the right reads: "Creative Photo & Graphic", "Commercial & Industrial Photography in the studio or on location", "PhotoAndGraphic.com", and "(518) 490-1757".

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into 50 people within the year. Volunteers brought in Bible studies to help them out. They would start a session with the "Bible Game." It began by asking each other what was bothering them that day. They would look it up, read the related passage, close their eyes and pray about it to see what would come to their minds. Then they talked about it. Michelle calls it a humbling, real experience and it stayed with her ever since.

While in prison she also helped some of the women fill out applications for the Angel Tree program. Angel Tree helps connect parents in prison with their children through the delivery of Christmas gifts. The parent picks out what they would like to give their child and church volunteers purchase and deliver the gifts, letting the children know that it was from their parent. After the first time she was helping the women with their applications, she found them ripped up in the garbage and was incensed. She wrote letters to people she thought could help make sure that this program was followed. The Angel Tree program has been an important part of her life from that day on.

To this day she has never stopped wanting to help prisoners. "I realized that we had a lot in common, but I had a tremendous advantage in life," she explains. "I was a smart, upper middle class, white woman with leadership skills. I could read, I could write, and I could reason temperately." It may have started with a closet full of books, but has now grown into a full-blown ministry.

After she was released from prison, she had to find a way to get her life back together. Her family was devastated and ashamed. She had no place to live and couldn't get anyone to hire her for a full-time job. She took a couple of part-time jobs and worked for herself to try to get her through. Luckily, a family in Rexford decided to take a chance on her and rented her an apartment so she could live with her son again (her daughter had graduated college and was employed and living on her own by this time).

She never tried to hide her past. She is a self-described open book because as she says, "You gotta own your responsibility. We put ourselves there. 99% of those in prison did do it. If we don't admit that, our children will follow and it will never get better." She found that every place she went, even getting a haircut or out to dinner, she would hear stories from other people with family members in prison. "So many families in our community are affected by incarceration but no one talks about it. There is so much shame. It's like mold," she says. "It grows in a damp, dark place. If you don't address it, it is just going to grow and fester."

Michelle wanted to help stop the cycle of generational dysfunction and to work with families in her own area to help ease the burden of having a family member in prison. Her "a-ha moment" came when she was delivering a gift



Michelle visiting with the Reynolds family

for Angel Tree to a young girl in Cohoes. "I asked how long it had been since she'd seen her father. When they responded that it had been nearly 10 years, I felt certain I had misheard, but I hadn't! When I asked why, the response was a simple, 'because we don't have a car.' Well, I had a car and before you knew it, I was driving her to see her father." It was the start. Named after her stay at Beacon Correction Facility, Beacon of Light Ministry was born. Their services are different for each family, depending on the family's individual needs. Now a commissioned minister, Michelle oversees Beacon's many programs including a mentoring program, visitation assistance, Christian camps and retreats, job assistance, a pen pal program and the Angel Tree program, with plans for more as this community-based organization continues to grow.

Remembering her experience with the ripped up Angel Tree applications, Michelle has devoted a significant portion of her life to Angel Tree as well. She was so grateful to the Grace Chapel Church for standing by and helping her family while she was incarcerated, she immediately became their Angel Tree Coordinator upon her release. She then became an area coordinator one year later, serving 10 counties in upstate NY. This past fall, she received a full-time job with Angel Tree, now covering Washington DC, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware and Maryland.

She is happy to finally be a fully employed, tax-paying citizen again, but is even more happy to be able to give back with programs that are so important to her. She takes responsibility for what she did and wants to serve her family, community and faith in any way she can. She's been given a new start and is going to make the most of it. She views these last few years as a test of her perseverance and faith and knows that she is only human and will make mistakes, but it is about the choices she makes – the

conscious decisions to do right from this point forward that matters. She now views her life not as being about her, but about God and how she can help other people not make the same mistakes. It's about what she can do to make her community and humanity better.

Michelle has since paid back nearly everyone she monetarily owed and she continues to pay back to the community through her work. "I'm never gonna get over it. It changed who I am," she says. "My character, my fiber from within is 100% different. I'm changed!" She knows you can't keep living in your past and she wants to leave an impact on the world and a good legacy for her children. "I want to make a lasting difference in as many lives as I can by being honest and transparent about our dysfunctions in pain so we can get beyond it and leave a positive legacy for our future children and grandchildren." She feels that her work with youth is the most important in trying to stop the cycle. "You need to catch it in the beginning so you can stop it. Shine the light on it to bring it all out into the open and deal with it. If you don't, it festers."

She wants everyone to remember that there is help out there and that God takes every bad thing and uses it for *His* good. She encourages community members to remember to be good to each other – it's not about the church, it's the people and what we can do for each other. "Life and death are in the tongue," she says. "You can speak words that are

positive or words that cause discouragement and moments of defeat."

She also reminds us to not blame the families of the incarcerated, remembering how her family had no idea what she was doing. "It's not their fault. These families are innocent victims as well. They didn't commit the crime yet they are punished right along with the inmate and ostracized by our community many times. You don't cure dysfunction with hate – you cure it with love. It is truly freeing to not have anything you're hiding and not feel shameful. Have a heart of compassion and understand they are innocent victims."

There are several ways to volunteer here in Clifton Park. Beacon of Light has many volunteer needs, including Christians that are willing to be pen pals to those that are incarcerated (there is a need especially for male pen pals). For more information about the pen pal program or any of the other volunteer opportunities through Beacon of Light, visit www.beaconoflightny.org.

For more information on how you or your church can help with the Angel Tree program this Christmas, visit www.angeltree.org. ■

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Welcome to the Neighborhood

By Pete Bardunias, President/CEO, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County



Collette McComb, proprietor of the **CM School of Fine Arts** (1505 Route 9, Halfmoon, (518) 383-5255, www.performanceschoolofmusicarts.com), cuts the ribbon for her latest initiative, the Little Beans Program, in early October. She was joined by her staff, students and volunteer Ambassadors of the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County (CSSC). Also present were Halfmoon Town Councilwoman Daphne Jordan (representing the Town as well as State Senator Kathy Marchione) and Gina Wierzbowski, representing Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh. The Little Beans Program helps young students (ages 3-7) explore the world through the fine arts.

During the Open House event, one young student won a full scholarship for a free year's worth of lessons!

Clifton Park resident and business owner Stacy Clifford receives an Assembly citation from Samantha Torrey, Chief of Staff to Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh, during the dedication of **Holistic Wealth Advisors'** big new office in downtown Clifton Park. The firm is now located at 5 Southside Drive, Ste 204, and assists its customers by building a foundation of information about new clients, understanding their needs and mapping a plan of success, which is then implemented and monitored for effectiveness and appropriateness as financial needs change. Ms. Clifford has served Tech Valley families and business owners for 15 years, and works with her team to ensure the best possible customer service and satisfaction. For details, contact Holistic Wealth Advisors at (518) 357-3858, or visit www.holisticwealthny.com



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Planning a Trip to Disney

By Colleen Parisi, *A Walk in the Park*

Great we're going to Disney!!

OMG what do I do next?? What do I do first??

Your trip to Disney is emotional in many different ways and it affects us all. I am going to help you through the planning process, let's call it Disney 101.

Step 1 - Who is going?

This is the time to decide who will be in your travel party. It's important to know your travel parties' traveling abilities. This includes naps, walking, food, etc. It is important to discuss and know PRIOR to the trip to avoid issues once you are there.

Step 2 - When to go?

What is important to you? It could be wanting to be there when cold here, it could be based around your children's school schedule or your work schedule. Remember also that the time of year you go changes the price of the trip and levels of the crowds.

Step 3 - How to get there?

Most people from up in New York will fly to Orlando. Some people I know won't fly so they drive. Flying saves you LOTS of time and helps you to arrive not tired. I find for me that driving there makes me feel tired when I get there, even with stopping and staying at a hotel overnight. You need to do what is best for your party.

Disney provides transportation from their resorts into all the parks (including water parks) and to Disney Springs. Most transportation is by bus, but there are 3 deluxe resorts that are on the monorail for transportation as well. These deluxe resorts as well as Fort Wilderness Resort have boat transportation to Magic Kingdom and the Transportation Center.

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For guests staying at a Disney resort you can ride the Magic Express from Orlando Airport to your resort at no additional cost! Imagine being able to check in you and your luggage here at Albany Airport, boarding the plane and flying to Orlando Airport (MCO), where you get on the Magic Express and a few hours later your luggage is delivered to your room – amazing!! When you leave, you bring your luggage to the resort airline check-in where you leave the luggage and get your boarding pass. Then, if you have an early flight you board the Magic Express to go back to the airport. OR, if you have a late flight, you check in luggage and get your boarding pass, then go into a park for a few hours before coming back to the resort to board the Magic Express back to the airport.

Step 4 - Where to stay?

Options include Disney Resorts, Timeshares, other hotels, renting a house or condo, family and friends. Each one has its pluses and minuses. For myself, I usually stay at my timeshare, but 1 in 3 times I stay on site. I love to stay on site to be immersed in the Disney magic! You can have groceries delivered to your resort for a fee by delivery company and by Disney, to help you save some money.

Step 5 - How many days for in which parks?

I will usually buy park tickets for people traveling with me (I am an annual passholder) to have for each day we are there. Once you get past 5 days, the amount to add a day is

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reasonably small and I like the flexibility of being able to go into a park any day. This means I can spend a day hanging by the pool and go in for dinner and fireworks just for the evening.

Step 6 - Plan your days in the parks, do NOT schedule.

Your days in the parks should be set up as a guideline, not a schedule. By scheduling a day you give up spontaneity and a chance for something wonderful to happen. Also, things can and do go wrong; you must be *flexible* with your schedule. It also gives you less stress. Study your park maps *before* going into the parks.

Remember to plan a down day especially if you are going to be there for 5 or more days. A down day can be hanging at your resort, maybe by the pool, or by participating in resort activities.

BIG TIP – Start walking BEFORE you go. I recommend to my clients to start walking 30 minutes a day in preparation for your walking at Disney. I can tell you from personal experience that on a “short day” in the park I will have over 12,000 steps and on a “long” day over 25,000. Be prepared!

Step 7 - Dining plans.

Regardless of whether you stay on site or off site, you can make table service dining reservations or you can do counter service. You need to determine what is best for your travel party. Personally, I enjoy a table service for lunch and for dinner (except for Epcot Food and Wine Festival) because I can sit down, relax, rehydrate (VERY IMPORTANT) and enjoy the AC.

Dining reservations NEED to be done 180 days in advance, yes *6 months in advance*, in order to get your top choices and best times.

Step 8 - Ride reservations are important.

Disney has a great benefit called Fastpass. It allows you to pick fastpasses (or as I call them, go to the head

of the line tickets) for 3 rides *prior* to getting to the park. This helps to plan the day out for how to tour the park. Remember, we want to maximize our time in the parks with minimizing stress. This is a FREE benefit that you get with your park ticket! Yes, free!!

Step 9 - Packing for the vacation and packing for the parks.

Remember everything costs more if you need to buy on vacation, plus you might not get the brand you prefer. I always make sure to pack ponchos, Tylenol, Advil, Tums, Motion Sickness pills, Benadryl (I have allergies), Anti-diarrhea medicine, sunscreen, hand cream, chap-stick, hand sanitizer, pens and markers for characters to sign my vest.

These are your must-haves for the travel: airline tickets, resort confirmation (yes, I am old school and still prefer paper for back up), Magic Bands, wallet, credit card, drivers-



license (for ID), park tickets (if separate from resort/hotel reservation - like for special events) and cell phone.

It is always a good idea to create a packing list. It's a good way not to forget anything. Also a good way to make sure you bring everything home with you.

Step 10 - RELAX AND ENJOY!!

Remember this is your vacation – it is supposed to be fun and relaxing. By planning ahead you cut out the worries while in the parks, therefore cutting out the stress.

Colleen Parisi is a professional at creating a magical experience at Disney. For more information, visit her at www.awalkintheparkwithcolleen.com. ■

The S. SAXON Co.
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Blessings

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518-630-5243 | www.ssaxonfinejewels.com

An advertisement for The S. Saxon Co. Fine Jewels. It features a large blue zircon ring, a gold cross necklace, and a gold coin. The text includes 'The S. SAXON Co. Fine Jewels', 'Holiday Sale', 'FREE Alex & Ani with purchase of \$200', 'Local Family-Owned Business', 'Blue Zircon & Spiritual Blessings', and contact information: '1524 Rt 9', 'OVER 30 YEARS in the Diamond Industry Clifton Park, NY', '518-630-5243 | www.ssaxonfinejewels.com'.

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An advertisement for Crowther Construction. It features a cartoon character of a man in a yellow hard hat and orange shirt, giving a thumbs up. The background shows a modern kitchen with white cabinets and a black countertop. The text includes 'CROWTHER CONSTRUCTION', 'Kitchens, Baths, Custom Closets, & Remodeling', and contact information: '518 435-5733' and 'crowtherconstruction.net'.

Don't Wait Until December 31 to Spend Your Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Funds on Eye Care (Use it or Lose it!)

Contributed by Ophthalmic Consultants of the Capital Region

Now is the time to take advantage of using your FSA for your eye care needs. Schedule an eye exam today to ensure you stay on top of your eye health.

Q: So what eye care needs can you use your FSA funds on?

A: Every FSA plan is a bit different, so it's very important for you to review your plan prior to using those funds. Usually, a FSA will cover vision expenses like:

- Insurance co-payments and deductibles
- Refraction fee (the fee for vision testing to determine your new glasses prescription)
- Annual eye exams
- Prescription eye glasses (frames and lenses)
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Prescription sunglasses (frames and lenses)
- Intraocular lens (IOLs for cataract surgery)

- Surgery center costs that insurance does not cover
- LASIK



First Step: Call your eye doctor to schedule an eye exam.

Schedule an eye exam and we'll let you know if you have any vision issues that need to be addressed with new glasses or contact lenses. Before your eye exam visit, be sure to note any concerns to discuss with your eye doctor such as vision changes, blurry vision, trouble seeing at night and dryness. It's also very important to let your eye doctor know if you have any health issues such as diabetes or high blood pressure.

Second Step: Purchase your eyeglasses or contacts.

If you need new glasses or contact lenses, we make it easy. All 5 Ophthalmic Consultants of the Capital Region office locations have convenient optical services (Riverfront Optical) to select your eyeglass frames and lenses within steps of your eye doctor's door.

Our Riverfront Optical shops offer a wide variety of designer and standard frames and sunglasses to choose from. Our opticians are qualified to help you select the perfect frames, lens options, and correct single vision, bifocal, trifocal or progressive lenses for your needs.

LASIK

If you've been wearing eyeglasses or contact lenses, now is a good time to discuss your interest in LASIK. FSA usually covers the cost of LASIK.

Cataract Surgery

The staff at Ophthalmic Consultants of the Capital Region will help you navigate the insurance process with cataract surgery. Every insurance plan is different and your cataract surgery cost will vary depending on your medical needs and IOL choices. For example, you may choose premium IOLs to reduce your reliance on reading glasses. Standard IOLs are usually covered by insurance but premium IOLs are considered an elective upgrade and are not covered. However, you can usually use your FSA to cover the cost of premium IOLs.

Give us a call to schedule your eye exam. Don't wait – December 31 is just around the corner. Ophthalmic Consultants of the Capital Region offers comprehensive eye care services. We have locations in Albany, Clifton Park, Schenectady, Schodack and Troy. To make an appointment, call 518-777-2777 or visit myoccr.com. ■



BAPTIST HEALTH SYSTEM presents
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Positive Approach

Caregiving for Individuals with Dementia

A seminar for family and professional caregivers

Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2018, 8 am - 4 pm
Proctor's GE Theater, Schenectady

Are you caring for someone who has dementia?

Don't miss this opportunity to join dementia and Alzheimer's expert Teepa Snow in a life-changing, interactive seminar with her Positive Approach® to Care. Professional and family caregivers are invited to attend. 4.5 CE's available for nurses and social workers.* Lunch is included.

Admission: \$40 • Admission with CE Certificate: \$60

*Visit www.bapthealth/new/teepa/ for registration and CE information. Contact Nancy McKiernan, 518-370-4700 x193 for more information.

SPONSORS:



Making the Holidays Special for Elder Relatives

Contributed by Baptist Health System

Just before Mother's Day a few years back, a couple of nursing home residents were overheard discussing their plans for the weekend. One lady in her late eighties said she would be going to visit her children and grandchildren, but confided that once there she would "find a quiet corner and hide." The statement seemed amusing at the time, but it also says something about how older people may experience holiday gatherings.

Being part of a family holiday is something that older relatives truly look forward to, but the experience can also be overwhelming. There are things we can do to help make the day more enjoyable for them and show them how grateful we are to them.

Make them feel welcome and seat them at the table in a place where they will be able to take part in the conversation. Be sure to include favorite family recipes that show your appreciation for the traditions they've established. Be aware of any special dietary needs they have, so that they can partake and enjoy the meal. Put the cellphones away during dinner and focus on the moment.

Tell your older relatives how much you appreciate sharing the holidays with them, and let them know how grateful you are for all they have done for you. Express your gratitude by sharing your family stories and experiences with other family members and friends.

Take time to listen to them. So often we get caught up in the stress and preparations for the holidays that we lose sight of the purpose of getting together. Find a way to pull aside that aging aunt and start a conversation. She will appreciate the attention and you'll probably hear a great story or learn something that you never knew about your family. You'll also both have a lasting memory of that time spent together.

Take pictures! Document this moment in your family history and send photos to your loved ones so they can share their holiday memories with their friends.

Most importantly, cherish the time that is spent with the people you love.

For more information visit www.bapthealth.com or call 518-370-4700. ■



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Friday-Thursday, Dec 1-7 SARATOGA COUNTY WINTER RESTAURANT WEEK

@Participating Saratoga County
Restaurants

Enjoy the 13th Annual Winter
Restaurant week with a 3-course dinner
for just \$10, \$20 or \$30. Some restaurants
are also offering lunch specials for \$5 or
\$10. Reservations suggested.

Friday-Sunday, Dec 1-3 ITALIAN CHRISTMAS MARKET

@American Italian Heritage
Museum, Albany

Share and celebrate in the old
Italian tradition of the "Christmas
Market." Enjoy a room-sized
Nativity featuring live mosses and
life-like figurines. The museum's
exhibit rooms serve as mini market
places filled with something for
almost everyone on your Christmas
list. Find things like greeting cards,
made-in-Italy items, wooden
Ceppo, Befana figurines, ornaments,
plaques, novelties, homemade
baked goods, hand-crafted items,
food and more!

Time: 10am-5pm | Cost: FREE

Admission

Friday, Dec 1

BALLSTON SPA HOLIDAY PARADE & TREE LIGHTING

@Milton Ave, Ballston Spa

This hometown-style holiday tradition
parade will proceed down Milton
Ave with fire trucks, floats, animals,
kids and of course, Santa and end in
Wiswall Park on Front Street with
Santa lighting the Christmas tree.
After the lighting, Santa will head to
Ballston Spa National Bank to visit
with kids of all ages.

Time: 6:30pm | Cost: FREE

Dec 1-Dec 27

TRAIN TO CHRISTMAS TOWN

@Stony Creek Ranch Resort,
Stony Creek

Based on the beloved storybook, this
holiday ride recreates the tale with
all the elves and woodland creatures,
sweet treats to eat and drink, activities
and games, and special gifts for the
passengers. Book tickets at
www.sncrr.com/train-to-christmas-
town/.

Time: 5:30pm

Dec 1-3

BIG LOVE

@Janet Kinghorn Bernhard Theater,
Skidmore College, Saratoga

Written by two-time Obie Award-
winning playwright Charles L.
Mee, *Big Love* fuses the ancient and
the modern by bringing the plot
of Greek tragedian Aeschylus's
The Suppliants into the modern era,
raising issues of gender politics, love
& domestic violence to a modern
audience in this violent, musical
& comic production. Get tickets
through the box office at theater.
skidmore.edu or 518-580-5439.

Time: 8pm

Cost: \$12 General, \$8 Students/Seniors

Saturday, Dec 2

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

@Saratoga City Center, Saratoga

Enjoy a continental breakfast with
Santa, Mrs. Claus and other holiday
friends as part of the Saratoga Festival
of Trees! Adults must accompany
children. Reservations and tickets
required for both adults and children.

Call for reservations: 518-587-5000

Time: Seatings at 8am, 9:30am, 11am

Cost: \$8 per person

Saturday, Dec 2

SANTA'S WORKSHOP

@Saratoga City Center, Saratoga

Enjoy children's Christmas crafts
and goodies, costumed characters,
storytelling and photos with Santa at
the Saratoga Festival of Trees!

Time: 8am-2pm | Cost: \$1 per activity

Saturday, Dec 2

JINGLE BELL RUN/WALK

@Halfmoon Town Park, Halfmoon

Be part of the largest holiday-
themed 5K race series anywhere
and join the movement to conquer
arthritis! Put on your favorite
holiday costume, tie jingle bells to
your shoelaces, and be jolly for a
reason! 100% of registration fees and
fundraising efforts go to this great
cause. Call 518-831-4202.

Time: 10am-12pm

Cost: Varies on Registration Date

Saturday, Dec 2

SARATOGA FAIR TRADE MARKET

@Saratoga City Center, Saratoga

Find hand-crafted earrings, necklaces,
bracelets, scarves, toys, home goods,
pocketbooks, totes, hats, slippers,
ornaments, brigadeiros, coffee, ice
cream, and more.

Time: 10am-4pm | Cost: FREE

Saturday, Dec 2

SUNDAES WITH SANTA

@Saratoga City Center, Saratoga

Make your own ice cream sundae
and meet Santa, Mrs. Claus and
other holiday friends at the Saratoga
Festival of Trees. Adults must
accompany children. Reservations
required – 518-587-5000.

Time: 12:30pm

Cost: \$8 per person

Saturday, Dec 2

FAMILY SATURDAY: SPOOL SCULPTURES

@Tang Teaching Museum, Skidmore
College

We will look at Dario Robleto's *You
Make My World A Better Place To Find*
and make sculptures from wooden
spools and colorful buttons, gathering
inspiration from his technique of
taking something old and turning it
into something new.

Time: 2-3:30pm | Cost: FREE

Saturday, Dec 2
THE NUTCRACKER

@Proctors Theatre, Schenectady
Making its annual return to the Main Stage is everyone's favorite holiday ballet. Enter a world of Christmas dreams to the joyous music of Tchaikovsky in this annual year-end favorite. Join the Sugar Plum Fairy, the heroic Nutcracker Prince and the evil Rat King in this whimsical celebration of the season.
Time: 7pm

Saturday, Dec 2

SKIDMORE COMMUNITY CHORUS & VOCAL CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

@Zankel Music Center,
Skidmore College, Saratoga
December Program - Winter Has Come
BACH, Magnificat; BRITTEN, Ceremony of Carols; ELGAR, Snow; THOMPSON, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
Time: 8pm
Cost: \$8 Adults, \$5 Seniors/Skidmore Community, FREE Students & Children

Sunday, Dec 3

GREAT TRAIN EXTRAVAGENZA

@NY State Convention Center, Albany
Highlights of this annual event include operating layouts most scales including Legos for the kids, 200+ tables of model trains, sets, parts, accessories, scenery items, books, videos, DVDs, prints, railroad memorabilia, educational displays, seminars including free make-n-take. Call 518-668-9892 or trains@gtealbany.com for more info.
Time: 10am-4pm
Cost: \$7 adults, FREE for children under 12

Dec 3-Dec 23

11TH ANNUAL SCHENECTADY FESTIVAL OF TREES

@Schenectady County Historical

Society & YWCA, Schenectady
View beautifully decorated trees and decorate a tree too!

Time: Weekdays 12-5pm, Weekends 10am-4pm

Cost: \$5 Adults, \$2 Children, FREE Children Under 5

Sunday, Dec 3

TASTE NY HOLIDAY MARKET

@New York State Museum, Albany
Stroll through the halls of the museum while shopping and sampling "made in NY" food & beverages from dozens of vendors including hand-crafted beer, wine, spirits, cheese, chocolate, apple & maple products, and other edible goodies.

Time: 11am-4:30pm | Cost: FREE

Sunday, Dec 3

TROY VICTORIAN STROLL

@Downtown Troy
Celebrate the holidays at the 35th annual Victorian Stroll with more than 100 live performances throughout the day, special deals at local stores and restaurants, ice sculptures, refreshments, window decorating & poster contests and hundreds of Christmas lights!

Time: 11am-5pm | Cost: FREE

Sunday, Dec 3

EMPIRE STATE PLAZA HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING & FIREWORKS FESTIVAL

@Empire State Plaza, Albany
A family-fun event with Santa, holiday arts & crafts, caroling, skating demonstrations, live music, tree lighting, fireworks & more!

Time: 1-8pm; Tree Lighting at 5:15pm
Cost: FREE

Sunday, Dec 3

YOGA & SELF CARE PRACTICES: AYURVEDA WITH DIVINE SLEEP NIDRA & DOSHA TEST

@The Yoga Lily, Clifton Park

Improve your health, develop your inner energy & find balance in your life by discovering your individual dosas in this 2-hour workshop that is concluded with a 30-minute Divine Sleep Yoga Nidra session.

Time: 2:30-5:30pm

Cost: \$20 Pre-registration, \$25 at the Door

Tuesday, Dec 5

LA CUCINA ITALIANA COOKING CLASS

@Chianti il Ristorante, Saratoga
Enjoy an evening of food & wine as Chef Fabrizio prepares your 3-course meal with 3 wine pairings in front of your eyes and guides you through the process of replicating it in your own kitchen. Limited seating - Register in advance.

Time: 6:30-10pm | Cost: \$55 per person

Wednesday, Dec 6

PLAY DATES: MAGNET MANIA

@Colonie Center, Albany
Stop by to play and explore with an educator from the Children's Museum of Science and Technology. Geared for ages 2-5.

Time: 10-11am | Cost: FREE

Wednesday, Dec 6

CLARKSON UNIVERSITY CAPITAL REGION OPEN HOUSE

@Clarkson Capital Region Campus, Schenectady
Stop by Clarkson's Capital Region Campus to learn more about our master's, professional, online and executive programs in: Business, Education, Engineering and Healthcare!

Time: 5:30-7:30pm | Cost: FREE

Friday, Dec 8

SANTA'S PLAYLAND OPEN HOUSE

@Quick Response Restoration, Round Lake
Santa will once again be joining Quick Response for their Annual Santa's Playland Open House. Enjoy visits from

Santa and friends, horse and wagon rides along with rides on the Quick Express trains and free refreshments.
Time: 5:30-9pm | Cost: FREE

Friday-Sunday, Dec 8-17

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

@HMT at The Spa Little Theater, Saratoga

Join us and Tiny Tim for this holiday season classic!

Time: 12/8 & 15 - 7:30pm; 12/9, 10, 17- 1pm; 12/16 - 1 & 4:30pm

Cost: \$18 Adults, \$12 Kids 12 & under

Sunday, Dec 10

BRUNCH W/ SANTA

@The Century House, Latham

Treat your family to a special holiday tradition brunch with professional photos with Santa, children's activities, music & more! Reservations required – www.thecenturyhouse.com.
Time: Seatings at 9:30am, 10am, 12pm, 12:30pm

Cost: \$32 Adults, \$17 Kids 5-10, FREE kids under 5

Sunday, Dec 10

THE PUZZLE QUESTS:

SHIMMER'S EGGS BOOK PARTY

@Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library

Join us for a sneak peek into Janine's favorite parts of the book and have her sign your very own copy of *The Puzzle Quests: Shimmer's Eggs!* Egg tattoos, refreshments and fun for the whole family!

Time: 1-2:30pm | Cost: FREE

Sunday, Dec 10

MEDIUMSHIP, MESSAGES & MEDITATION

@Hilton Garden Inn, Clifton Park
 Spiritual Medium, Drew Cali, presents this "Gallery Style" mixed event. Open your hearts and minds and receive messages of love, hope & healing. For adults 18 or older. Limited seating. Register at info@drewcali.com or 917-697-6164.

Time: 4-7pm | Cost: \$50

Saturday, Dec 16

FAMILY SATURDAY: CONSTRUCT A TRAIN!

@Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga

We will talk about Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler's piece *Constitution on Tour* and construct train cars out of cardboard.

Time: 2-3:30pm | Cost: FREE

Sunday, Dec 17

A SARATOGA CHRISTMAS W/ THE MCKRELLS

@HMT at Spa Little Theater, Saratoga

Home Made Theater continues their tradition of hosting Christmas shows with Kevin McKrell and his merry musicians. Join HMT for an evening of Christmas favorites, Kevin's trademark sound, and their popular rendition of "A Visit From St. Nick" (*Twas the Night Before Christmas*).

Time: 7pm | Cost: \$15 per person

Sunday, Dec 17

THE SONG HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD: A CANTATA FOR CHRISTMAS

@Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Clifton Park

Come celebrate the Christmas season with music that expresses the paradox of diversity and unity. At a time in our history where diversity often leads to division, this cantata, written by Joseph M. Martin and presented by Prince of Peace's 35 voice choir, is filled with music from around the world to speak for peace and unity while sharing the story of Jesus' birth.

Time: 8:00am and 10:30am

Cost: FREE

Wednesday-Tuesday, Dec 20-26

CAPITAL HOLIDAY LIGHTS IN THE PARK

@Washington Park, Albany

This 21st annual celebration features holiday scenes of yesteryear and many new and exciting lighting displays. At

the end of your drive, the Washington Park Lake House comes alive with the holiday season as everyone enjoys crafts and refreshments. Santa will join us until 12/23. All proceeds benefit the youth programming of Albany PAL.

Time: Sun-Thurs, 6-9pm; Fri-Sat, 6-10pm
Cost: \$20 per car; \$25 per 10-18 passenger vehicle; \$50 for 19-28 passengers; \$100 for school buses; \$125 for commercial coaches

Sunday, Dec 31

FIRST NIGHT RUN

@Skidmore College Athletic Complex, Saratoga

Begin the First Night celebration right by joining the run before the huge New Year's event! Limited to 1500 runners – pre-registration required.

Time: 5:30pm

Sunday, Dec 31

FIRST NIGHT SARATOGA

@Downtown Saratoga Springs

As one of the oldest and largest First Night celebrations in the country, First Night is the most affordable, accessible, family-friendly, safe & exciting way to spend New Year's Eve in the Capital Region. Check out our regional and touring performing groups full of live music, dance, comedy & magic in over 30 venues throughout downtown Saratoga Springs, ending with fireworks at midnight.

Time: 5:30pm-12am

Cost: \$20 Adult; Kids in free with purchase of adult button

Sunday, Dec 31

NEW YEAR'S EVE 2017

@Hilton Albany, Albany

Party hardy with this awesome '80s celebration featuring live music by the Refrigerators, dinner, dancing, 4-hour open bar, photo portraits, room package, Bloody Mary breakfast, prizes.

Time: 8pm-12am

Cost: Room packages \$150 single, \$499 per couple

Saratoga Arts Events

Contributed by Emma Huneck, Saratoga Arts

First Night

Photo courtesy of
Saratoga Arts



Saratoga Arts invites to you the area's largest New Year's Eve celebration: First Night Saratoga - Light Up the Night! Featuring dozens of musical and magical acts, First Night Saratoga is for the whole family! Saratoga Arts ensures that kids aged 12 and under will be able to attend all First Night Saratoga events for free with the purchase of one adult button (one child per adult). Buttons may be purchased as of December 1st at a number of locations listed on online. For more information, including a list of acts and performers, visit Saratoga Arts' website at www.saratoga-arts.org/firstnight.

At the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library...

NOVEMBER 28, 2017 - JANUARY 2, 2018

Works by the Southern Saratoga Artists Society

Founded in 1996, the Southern Saratoga Artist's Society is an informal, friendly group of people who have joined together to foster and promote the visual arts in southern Saratoga County and environs for the benefit and enjoyment of its members and the general public.

In The Arts Center Gallery - The Annual Members' Show


NOVEMBER 11 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

Exhibiting over 200 pieces of artwork by Saratoga Arts member artists!

Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm & Saturdays 11am-5pm

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3200+ sq ft. 4 BR upstairs w/ media/theatre room & 2nd flr laundry, guest BR w/bath on 1st flr. 4 full baths. Inviting wrap-around porch. Can't build for this price w/all these upgrades! Temporary Rental Available.



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CLIFTON PARK Neighbors

0153

IMPORTANT TOWN PHONE NUMBERS

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 Town Board Members.....371-6651
 Animal Control Officer371-6756
 Town Attorney *Tom McCarthy*371-6651
 Assessor *Walter Smead*.....371-6460
 Building & Development Director
Steve Myers371-6702
 Building & Grounds Director
Mike Handerhan371-6651

Town Clerk *Pat O'Donnell*.....371-6681
 Town Court, 5 Municipal Plaza371-6668
 Storm Water Management Technician
Scott Reese.....371-6054
 Director of Communications & Tech
Dahn Bull.....371-6651
 Highway Superintendent *Rick Kukuk*...371-7310
 Parks and Recreation Director
Myla Kramer.....371-6667

Planning Director *John Scavo*371-6054
 Receiver of Taxes *Lorraine Varley*371-5720
 Director of Safety and Security
Lou Pasquarel.....348-7311
 Town Security Officers369-6651
 Sewer Director *Mike O'Brien*348-7313
 Transfer Station Supervisor
Jeff Vedder.....371-6669

If the person you wish to reach is not on the list above, please call 371-6651 to speak to a receptionist who will direct your call to the appropriate individual or department. The Town's office buildings are open from Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, excluding holidays. The Town Clerk's Office is open until 7pm every Thursday. The Building and Parks and Recreation Departments are open at 8am Monday through Friday.



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