



Dear Friend of SSSF,

### **THE LASTING IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION**

Rheubena Knapp and her husband moved to Canisteo in 1946 after WWII ended, and she has been there ever since. Mrs. Knapp illustrated her love for Canisteo and its residents with a story about Grandma Gillis, a neighbor and owner of the local hotel who helped Mrs. Knapp a lot when her second son was small and very ill. For her, Mrs. Gillis represents the goodness of the people of Canisteo and how they watch out for each other.

Mrs. Knapp and her husband celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2005, shortly before his death. Prior to that, Mrs. Knapp had taken care of her husband in the family home for nine years. From their long marriage there were four children, twelve grandchildren, and 21 great grandchildren, several of whom still reside in the Canisteo/Hornell area. A year after her husband's death, Mrs. Knapp moved into senior housing in Canisteo where she has resided ever since, except for a few short stays in area nursing homes for rehab.

Mrs. Knapp, now 95 years old, receives in-home services through the Office for the Aging, paid for by your generous donations to SSSF. The caregivers from Home and Health Care come in once a week to give her a shower and to wash her hair, which allows her to continue living at home. Mrs. Knapp also receives home delivered meals through the Office for the Aging and ProAction. Mrs. Knapp stated that she has a bad heart valve as well as congestive heart failure both of which make it difficult to move around a lot, so without the care through SSSF, she would no longer be able to stay at home.

Mrs. Knapp commented that it's "invigorating to be at home—there's freedom—you can eat when you want to, go to bed and get up when you want to, and get dressed if and when you want to!" She believes that she is "happier at home" and "enjoys life more."

Mrs. Knapp states that people are thinking more about remaining in their own homes—aging in place—now. She has helped older neighbors to stay at home and now people help her—"what goes around comes around," she stated.

Mrs. Knapp's advice to younger people is "don't think about your age—think about what you are thankful for. You can always find something to be thankful for." She also advises that people take things day by day, slow down and pace themselves.

Thanks to SSSF and being able to stay at home, Mrs. Knapp has a "wonderful life". From Mrs. Knapp to you our donors, "thank you so much"!



## UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc. recently cosponsored two workshops on Universal Design (UD). These workshops were intended to promote UD concepts in building and product design that are accessible to people without disabilities as well as people with disabilities. As described in a recent NPR “All Things Considered” broadcast, universal design means that “houses are designed so owners can stay put as they grow old even if they develop physical limitations.”

The design concepts include entrances without stairs (zero step entrances), doorways and passageways wide enough for wheelchair access, a bathroom or half bath on the ground floor, and a room on the ground floor that can be easily converted into a bedroom for future use. Also included are reinforcements in bathrooms around the tub/shower and toilet areas so that grab bars can be installed if needed, lever handles for opening doors rather than twisting knobs, bright, and appropriate lighting (particularly task lighting), etc.

These concepts promote successful aging in place while making our homes and communities more livable for people of all ages. For example, passageways that are wide enough for wheelchairs can also accommodate strollers more easily, and towel racks designed and installed properly can double as grab bars as balance grows unsteady. These concepts should be included in homes so that they are barrier free without looking purposely modified.

Professionals in the field of aging, senior citizens, home builders, contractors, code enforcement officers, planning, zoning and town/city/village board members from all across Steuben and adjoining counties attended one of two workshops featuring Esther Greenhouse and Mike McGowan, both Certified Aging in Place specialists who spoke on UD.

Our thanks to the other workshop cosponsors including AARP, the Finger Lakes Home Builders and Remodelers Association, NY Connects of Steuben County, and the Steuben County Office for the Aging for their assistance in promoting these workshops.

For more information see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design) , or <http://www.npr.org/series/129085934/aging-at-home-helping-seniors-stay-put>.



## **AGING IN PLACE**

SSSF's mission is to build a resource for aging in place for the seniors of Steuben County. The premiere issue of our newsletter examined the concept of Aging in Place which is defined as the increasing desire for people to remain in their homes as they age, without having to move to access needed services. Former US Senator Bob Dole says "Few experiences can be more devastating for an older person than the realization that, due to physical limitations, he must move from his home. This is especially true here in America where home ownership is a cornerstone of the American dream. "

In order to avoid the pitfalls that may occur as we age, planning ahead is essential in the area of home modifications, in understanding helpful technology, as well as how to access the services that may be needed. With regards to home modifications, a particularly useful publication, "The Do\*Able, Renewable Home", is available.

This 43-page booklet, published by AARP, can now be accessed on line at [www.universaldesign.com/resources/media/Do-Able%20Renewable.pdf](http://www.universaldesign.com/resources/media/Do-Able%20Renewable.pdf). It contains ideas for making your home more livable and safer if you develop limitations in movement, strength, dexterity, eyesight or hearing. If you are unable to access this publication on line, please write to us at SSSF for a copy.

## **TO HELP YOU STAY AT HOME**

Could you use extra money each month? If you have Medicare and your gross income is \$1239 or less per month, we want to hear from you! Many people in our county are eligible for the Medicare Savings Program and don't even know it! You owe it to yourself to find out if this benefit is right for you. Call the trained professionals at the Steuben County Office for the Aging/NY Connects at 1-866-221-7324 for a simple and confidential review of your individual situation.



## **AGING IN PLACE IN PULTENEY—EXPANSION POSSIBLE**

Due to the success of our current Aging in Place Project in Pulteney, we are actively pursuing grant possibilities for an expansion into the neighboring town of Urbana. If we are successful in securing the funding, we anticipate forming an advisory group to lead the project in Urbana as we did in Pulteney. We also plan to build on the recent countywide Aging in Place survey and pursue development or accessibility to services identified by Urbana residents as being key to their ability to age in place including: transportation (general), transportation to medical services, home health care/personal care

aides, shopping, Lifeline (medical alert services), entertainment trips, general handyman, home delivered meals, medical equipment such as wheelchairs, beds and walkers, and special services such as plumbing and electrical. Stay tuned for more information!

## **MEDIA FOCUSES ON AGING IN PLACE**

A phenomenon is taking place in our country, the likes of which has never been seen before. The Baby Boomers, people born between 1946 and 1964 are beginning to turn 65. Because of the sheer size of this group of people, it is being referred to as a tidal wave or a tsunami, bringing incredible change to the culture of our nation. The historical impact of this generation may be one of the most significant our country has ever seen.

In addition to the Baby Boomers, the number of very old, those in the 85+ age bracket, are increasing exponentially. In Steuben County alone, those age 85 and older are expected to increase by 54% from 2010 to 2015.

As our population ages so dramatically, national media has been turning more and more attention to the needs and desires of these generations, as well as to the available programs and services to address the concerns of aging.

One of our SSSF Board members recently spotted an excellent series beginning in a quarterly regional magazine, "Life in the Finger Lakes". The first in the four-part series, "Now is the Time to Think About Looking After Aging Relatives" was published in the Spring edition of the magazine. Future articles will include a look at the warning signs of aging, residential options, and regional and national resources. For information on county resources for aging in place, contact OFA/NYConnects at 1-866-221-7324.

## **HOW TO GIVE**

To make a contribution to the vital work we are doing at SSSF of helping your aging neighbors to remain in their own homes, you may go on line to our website at [www.steubenseniorservicesfund.org](http://www.steubenseniorservicesfund.org) and hit the Donate Now button. This will take you to a secure website managed by Network for Good where you will be able to donate one-time or on a recurring basis. You will also be able to give in memory or honor of someone who has been special to you and sign up to receive our newsletter on line, if you don't already. If you prefer, you can mail your gift to SSSF, Inc., 3 East Pulteney Square, Bath, NY. 14810 Your gift will bring hope and will change the lives of our older friends and neighbors here in Steuben County.

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