



SSSF

Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc.

Empowering Seniors to Age at Home



Dear Linda,



THIS IS YOUR LIFE, MARIAN CRAWFORD

This past month I had the privilege of interviewing 95-year-old Full Circle America member, Marian Crawford. With an indomitable spirit and delightful personality, Marian lives alone in her home of 70+ years, a former farmhouse where she and her husband settled as young parents on the outskirts of the village of Wayland.

One of the first things Marian told me was that she grew up during the Great Depression and that it was the best thing that ever happened to her. Perhaps an usual sentiment, but she said that it taught her to appreciate the gift of life. Living through this difficult time taught her the value of family, love, caring, giving, sharing and most of all having each other.

Despite the poverty they lived in, Marian's mother was adamant about her two daughters pursuing a higher education. This was a relatively new idea for women, but college taught Marian how to be independent, and she graduated with a certification in elementary education and library science.

A few years after graduation, Marian met her husband-to-be, a graduate of Cornell Agriculture University. Together they bought the farmhouse she still owns. However, at the time there was no electricity or running water. Marian stated that they used the skills that they had learned in the Depression to live there. As Marian said, they re-lived living with nothing.

To make their home habitable and to achieve their long-range goals including encouraging their three kids to get a college education, Marian decided to go back to work. She took a job at the Dansville School where she worked as a children's librarian. Unfortunately, the unthinkable happened, and her husband was tragically killed out in front of their home by a passing motorist as he was helping another stranded driver.

It seemed as though life was over for Marian. She felt like giving up, but once again she made lemonade out of lemons, and after a few years, she realized it was the beginning of a new life. After 50 years as a school librarian she retired and was hired to be the Gunlocke Memorial Library Director. She stated that this was the experience of a lifetime as she helped children, adults and eventually the whole community. Marian retired at the age of 87, after spending 12 years in the position. When asked why she kept working that long, she stated that it was because she could! She had something to give to others, and it became her life!

Marian stated that she is now in her fourth life—that of retirement—and that it is the

hardest part, having given up her driver's license due to vision problems. It would be easy to quit, but she wants to remain useful and to make this time count—again making lemonade out of lemons. She still serves on the board of the Wayland Historical Museum and edits their newsletter.

SSSF and Full Circle America have now come into her life, and Marian states that this has opened up a whole new world for her. She states that it is a wonderful thing, that it makes life happier to know that she has connections with the world. She also loves to read the page about Full Circle America in Second Season.

For those who are isolated like Marian, reach out and connect with us at Full Circle America. You will be happy you did!

--by Linda M. Teter

Aging in Place Safety Checklist

***Keep fire extinguishers handy.**

***Install higher toilets to assist in sitting and standing.**

***Have your vision checked at least once a year by an eye doctor. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.**



***Use light sensitive night lights in unlit areas such as stairwells and hallways.**

***Use brighter light bulbs—at least 60 watts--to improve the lighting in your home.**

***Avoid thick soled shoes and slippers. Wear sturdy shoes with thin, non-slip soles.**

***Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.**

***Exercise regularly . This will make you stronger and will improve your balance and coordination.**

***Install smoke alarms in every room and test the batteries regularly.**

***Consider using a grit additive to paint applied on steps to prevent slips.**

***Make certain your porch railings and steps are in good repair.**

***Use reflecting tape at the top and bottom of stairs so you can see them better.**

***Put a phone near the floor or carry your cell phone in your pocket in case you fall and can't get up.**

***Leave a light on in your bathroom at night.**

***Consider a personal emergency response system such as LifeStation, available through the Office for the Aging.**

***Consider Full Circle America, a cutting-edge technology system to build a circle of care around you as you age in place, available through SSSF.**

These tips in part were gathered from www.aplaceformom.com and



Keeping Track of Life: How Technology Can Help.

Society and life seem to be picking up the pace, creating more busyness than ever for us to manage.

It seems in my experience that most folks tend to be even busier post-retirement, and

their calendars are jam-packed regularly. Volunteering, doctor appointments, family gatherings, church meetings, social outings with friends. It's a lot to keep track of, let alone the daily things that must be done, like grocery shopping, paying bills, taking medications, and making or returning phone calls. It's enough to make anyone's head spin!

Cognitive overload is real, and as we age, our brains begin to slow in their capacity to manage so many things at once — but that doesn't mean you have to limit your activities or independence.

Calendars are great for keeping track of appointments and birthdays, but they are often too small to write more than one event on a given date, and they only work if we remember to look at them! To-do lists can help, too, but only if they are kept somewhere accessible and don't get lost in the shuffle of other papers.

Technology gets a bad reputation — it distracts people from real life, it is taking place of real social connections, and it can be complicated to use. I would like to dispel at least *some* of that!

The truth is that technology can be extremely helpful, even as we age and seemingly have less use for it.

Here are **3 Ways Technology Can Help Keep Track of Life:**

1. Calendars:

Most phones now have a calendar feature built-in to the phone. You can add events, birthdays, and appointments, and it allows you to add the time and even location of the event. I also like to use this feature to keep track of my bills' due dates. My favorite feature is setting an "alert" — your phone can notify you as that specific event is approaching. Most of us take our phones whenever we leave the house, so using your phone calendar is also a great way to keep your calendar on you at all times!

2. Reminders:

iPhones have a built-in "Reminders" app. (This one is my personal favorite!) This is an awesome way to make a note-to-self to do something at a later time. Type in a reminder, such as "Call doctor about prescription," and if you want, even add a date and time alarm. I often use this app to create to-do lists when I am out in the community and do not have my trusty notepad and pen with me. This is also a great spot to keep your grocery list!

3. Amazon Alexa:

Another great way to get reminders is through home-assistants like Amazon's "Alexa" or Google Home. Simply tell your device "Hey Alexa, remind me to take my pills every day at noon", and she will! This can be especially helpful for those mid-day medications that are tough to remember when you are busy doing other things.

If you are noticing difficulty keeping track of bills or medications, or if you are having a hard time remembering upcoming events, but technology feels overwhelming to learn on your own, you may benefit from speech therapy. Aging doesn't have to mean a loss of

independence!

Brittany Peck, MS CCC/SLP
BPeck Speech and Swallowing
Phone: 607-218-7318
Email: bpeck@speechandswallowing.org
Website: www.bpeckspeechandswallowing.com



- **Some people think that allowing help like Full Circle America in their home might take away their independence. Full Circle America doesn't take your independence, it enhances it!**
-



Transform Your Home into a Safe Haven

Tell me, Sue, ...?

Sue Gruber, Certified Aging in Place Specialist, is here to answer your pressing questions.

Tell me, Sue, what about washers & dryers?

Most people find that putting the washer and dryer onto the level where the bedrooms are is often the best solution. Possibly a closet could house them or a room that backs up to the plumbing in a bathroom. Keep in mind that the vents and plumbing will take up additional room behind the machines.

If your space is limited, sometimes a stackable unit will fit into a smaller closet or can be set off to the side in a spare bedroom. I have even seen them in the corner of the kitchen. If you have trouble reaching upward, this is not the best option.

Did you know that they make all-in-one units? One machine does all of the work and can take up less space. There is no need to transfer the clothes. Because you cannot start the second load until the drying is done from the first load, it takes much longer to do two loads of laundry...a drawback for some.

Front loaders can be easier for some people to use, but others find that bending over is difficult. Some models are now sold with raised platforms. If your machines need to be raised, a good handyman could build a platform to the exact height that you need it!

Tired of doing laundry? Maybe someone else will do it for you?! Now, that might be the best solution!! 😊

Autumn Hints

(worth repeating, again!!)

A handy light leaf blower can make clearing leaves off walkways less strenuous.

Wet leaves can be as dangerous as ice! When avoiding them is impossible, checking the bottom of our shoes before entering the house can prevent us from slipping on our own floor.

Let's stay off ladders and hire someone to clean our gutters or invest in a gutter guard system. In the end it will be less expensive than recovering from a serious injury.



To submit a question to Sue Gruber go to www.forwardthinkinghomesolutions.com and click on the "Contact Us" tab at the top



A huge thank you to the **United Way of the Southern Tier** for their allocations to SSSF for our Full Circle America program through their Senior Supports Fund as well as their annual campaign allocation process and to the **Bethesda Foundation** for their generous award to us for Full Circle America. We are deeply grateful for this outpouring of support!!



BUBBLY & BRUNCH July 28, 2024

The report for Bubbly & Brunch 2024 has been finalized, and thanks to your generosity and that of so many others, it was an unqualified success! Our board of directors is delighted to report that nearly \$19,000 has been raised to support Full Circle America, ramps, and other services in Steuben County that empower our older adults to age successfully at home. Thank you again for your on-going generosity!



AGING IN PLACE NEWS

QKA Aging in Place

Be on the watch for upcoming QKA Aging in Place activities and events on their Facebook page.

Cameron/Jasper/Troupsburg/Woodhull

Aging in Place

Activities in this part of the county were suspended once again due to the devastating flooding in August. The committee hopes to resume programming in November.

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