

Senior Living

AN ADVERTISING FEATURE



RSVP volunteers give back to the community

Jewish Family Service of MetroWest New Jersey, through a three year federal grant, now operates the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Center of Essex and Hudson counties. RSVP matches volunteers age 55 and older with local causes.

RSVP is America's largest volunteer network for individuals ages 55 and older. Volunteers choose where to serve, how much time to give, and whether to share their skills or develop new ones. Some of the areas in greatest need of volunteer assistance include food support, domestic violence victim assistance, disaster preparedness, visiting seniors in their homes and helping seniors age in place. RSVP is a program of the Corp. of National and Community Service,

a federal agency engaging more than four million Americans annually.

To manage the RSVP Center, JFS MetroWest has hired two staff members. Stephanie Grove, a licensed social worker is the director. "I look forward to finding engaging volunteer opportunities for older adults in Essex and Hudson counties," Grove said. The new Hudson County program manager, Alexandra Nagy, LSW, is bilingual.

"The grant from the National and Community Services Corp. is a big win for JFS and the community," said Reuben D. Rotman, executive director of JFS MetroWest. "Through the RSVP Center of Essex and Hudson counties, we can create a network of volunteers engaged in gratifying work while sharing valuable skills



Volunteers from the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Center of Essex and Hudson counties and the Jewish Family Service of MetroWest New Jersey, which participates in the Friend Advocate program, meet to discuss the work they are doing for homebound seniors in the community. Pictured from left, back row, are Steve Kroll (Livingston); Stephanie Grove RSVP of Essex and Hudson County program director (Nutley); Robin Mintz (Short Hills); Janet Prevette (Bloomfield); Suzy Berman, JFS volunteer coordinator (Livingston); and from left, front row, are Judy Colton (Short Hills); Barbara Hampton (East Orange) and Madeleine Pasteelnick (Randolph).

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables helps to maintain macular health.



Vision loss and aging

Eighty-three percent of U.S. adults believe their eyesight will worsen as they age, no matter what preventive steps they take, according to a recent DSM Nutritional Products survey. While genetics and lifestyle factors do play a role for some serious eye conditions that cause vision loss, such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), years of proper nutrition may protect vision in the long term.

More than 2 million Americans age 50 and older suffer from AMD and it is especially prevalent among Caucasian women. "You don't want to reach your 40s and realize that you're beginning to have vision problems," said Dr. Kimberly Reed, optometrist and Ocular Nutrition Society board member. "Following a few simple recommendations can help support ones vision — and ones family's vision — now and in the future."

Reed offers the following tips for maintaining eye health and supporting vision in the long term:

See your diet in color. Many brightly colored fruits and vegetables contain lutein and zeaxanthin, two powerful antioxidants that research shows are beneficial in maintaining macular health. Intake of 12 mg per day of lutein and zeaxanthin offers the best protection, but only 10 percent of Americans are getting enough of these essential nutrients, according to the American Optometric Association. For weekly meal planning, choose colorful fruits and vegetables that provide these important antioxidants, such as spinach, kale and other dark leafy greens, as well as corn, peas, broccoli and orange and red peppers.

Omega-3 fatty acids for eye health. A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that people with higher intakes of omega-3 fatty acids may experience a lower incidence of dry eye syndrome (DES). For patients who suffer regularly from dry eyes, omega-3 intake can significantly improve symptoms and increase quality tear production. Adults should get at least 1,500 mg per day of DHA and EPA either by consuming fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel and sardines, or taking high-quality fish oil and algae supplements. Check with a physician to see if you are taking medications that affect blood clotting before increasing the intake of omega-3s to this level.

minerals. An array of vitamins and minerals also play an important role in maintaining eye health. For instance, A and B vitamins perform many complex and critical functions throughout the body, including the eyes. And, according to a study published in Ophthalmology, vitamins C and E, which function as antioxidants, also are essential to eye health and have been shown to impact the progression of certain forms of AMD. Finally, zinc helps deliver vitamin A from the liver to the retina in order to produce melanin, a protective pigment in the eyes. Get your fill of at least five servings

of colorful fruits and vegetables, as well as nuts and legumes, per day to obtain these essential vitamins and minerals.

Even when striving to follow an optimal diet, it's difficult to get the recommended amounts of essential vitamins and nutrients from food alone, so nutritional supplements can play an important role in maintaining eye health. Several products specifically formulated to support eye health and vision are available.

For more nutrition information, visit vitaminsinmotion.com.

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Alyson Kaplan, MSW, LSW
at Jewish Family Service of MetroWest
at 973-765-9050

*NJ Foundation for Aging, % of NJ seniors living below Elder Index
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