

Inside Hillcrest

– Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors –



FEBRUARY 2021

HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA

VOLUME 15 • ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY INSIDE HILLCREST

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I just got my second dose of vaccine at Carriage Hills. Again, it was an easy in and out process – very well organized. The first injection 3 weeks ago hurt a little but I didn't even feel this one. The only side effects from the first shot was that I went up one full cup size and my thighs got very firm. But after the second dose, everything went back to normal.

Seriously, though, side effects are a natural part of any vaccination process. As fate would have it, I got the second dose yesterday and was ready to report that I had no side effects. Then last night, I got the chills and a headache. The chills lasted about 30 minutes and were weird; it was like they were coming from the inside. I slept on a heating pad. The headache lasted all night and I still have a dull one this morning. Both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have reputations for riling up the immune system. It has been reported that a third of the recipients ended up with symptoms such as headaches, chills and fatigue. A few will actually run a fever. Dose No. 2, because it builds on the first dose, can pack a bigger punch.

I never could get the flu vaccine because of my allergy to chicken feathers but when my mom and sister got vaccinated, they would experience flu-like symptoms for a few days and I remember having to actually take care of them. People react to medications differently so getting vaccinated is a decision each of us has to make for ourselves. As it is for most things in life, it is a question of weighing the consequences

COVID-19 VACCINE FOR HILLCRESTERS

As you all know, if you are a **HILLCREST RESIDENT 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER**, our **State Representative Marie Woodson**, has been working on bringing the COVID-19 vaccine to Hillcrest. This includes our Parkview at Hillcrest residents who are over 65. Hillcrest supported Representative Woodson when she ran for office last November and she has been a loyal advocate for our community. She has been fighting tirelessly to get us the full number of doses that we need.

Your building board members have been distributing and collecting paper application forms that will later be inputted into the official

database. Those who apply will be notified via email or telephone when their appointment will be. Unfortunately, the appointments will be assigned randomly. I will try and get them assigned by building number so neighbors can go together, especially if you don't drive.

A big THANK YOU to all the buildings who worked hard to get the application forms to their residents in a timely manner so they could give me the totals I needed to report back to Rep. Woodson. A special shout-out to **Sharon Kegeles**, president of Building 1 who informed me that **Gilda Sedacca**, the board VP went door to door the first day I sent out the email with the attached form and had them all filled out and collected THAT DAY! They were the first building to report their total number of vaccines needed. And of course, Inside Hillcrest's own Steve Schneider who helped the residents of two other buildings fill out the form.

Kudos also go to **Michael Einbinder of Command Association Management** who stepped in to take over the project for the two buildings he manages and to **Yana Perez**, Property Manager for Hillcrest Building 24.

We have volunteers who live in the low and midrise buildings who have offered to input the forms for buildings 1 through 18. The high rise buildings will need to assign a couple board members or more to input the forms that they have collected when the time comes.

Some common questions have been "where" will the vaccine distribution take place and "when"? All we know right now is that it will be close by. Once we find out for sure the date the vaccine will be available, **Jaime Hernandez, the City of Hollywood's Emergency Manager** will prepare the facility.

Mayor Josh Levy graciously sent a link to the Hillcrest Leadership Council that I passed on to all of you on our Inside Hillcrest subscriber list, to get the vaccine at Carriage Hills. For those of you who took advantage of that opportunity, you saw how much preparation was needed to make the process as smooth

as it was. Members of the National Guard were there to direct the applicants. There were volunteers directing the traffic in and out of the complex. When applicants walked up, the proper social distancing was monitored. Once inside, tables were set up 6 feet apart with the medical staff giving the shots and another area was set aside for the recipients of the vaccine to sit for 15 to 30 minutes to ensure they did not have an adverse reaction. It is a complicated process that will be made convenient as possible.

Another question I get is "Which vaccine will it be?" We will know that as soon as the doses have been assigned. I am still trying to get final counts from out buildings so we can be sure we are getting the number of doses that we need.

I HAD MY PATIENCE TESTED – TURNS OUT I'M NEGATIVE...

I am not sure if it is the whole quarantine situation and having to drastically the way our team does business as well as hating all the Zoom meetings I have to attend, but I have been overly stressed lately. Also, due to the health crisis, our Help for Hillcresters project has taken a lot of time (and money) over the past year due to the financial impact on some of our Hillcrest neighbors. I even started cooking meals for a few residents, which was great because cooking is my main stress reliever and cooking for 6 rather than 2 is just as easy.

But when this COVID-19 vaccine project popped up, it took up a lot more time than I thought it would. It was going smoothly in the beginning; then two buildings basically told me they were "too busy" to offer the vaccine to their residents, and I took it personally. To fight to get leaders to do the right thing for their owners has made me more than cranky with just about everybody. In fact, I hear that my closest friends have been throwing the term "bitch on wheels" around a lot. When asked, "Why do you put up with her?", Brian, my partner in Real Estate and life answers, "Because no one else will."

So, in honor of our 10th Anniversary of our first date this past Valentine's day, I want to say something about my partner Brian Gaiefsky. Brian is one of the smartest and wittiest men I have ever met. And he can also be downright funny. If you have heard his Dr. Fauci impression, you know what I mean.



Building A Better Community

Continued on Pg. 2

THE LONG PROCESS - *By Vice Mayor Linda Sherwood*



Recently we have had questions about the General Obligation Projects that are in the process of getting built. These processes even being a city project take a very long time to be accomplished. Questions were asked if the City Commission decides who is awarded the project. The first premise everyone needs to understand is that once a project is announced a Cone of Silence begins.

That means that no one who has applied for any portion of the project cannot at any time contact a commissioner. What does any portion mean? It means whether a company applied for the design portion, architectural portion, or construction portion that company cannot lobby us in any form; not by email, not by text, not by phone, not in person.

Once a request for proposal or qualification goes out to the different expert companies in the requested field the replies are evaluated by city staff qualified in that field. For example we do not have city commissioners qualified in the field of construction design but we do have qualified staff who can make that decision. Staff goes over all the proposals, narrows them down to a reasonable number and calls each company for in person demonstrations. From the demonstrations with a point system they choose the top 3. Those 3 companies with all their qualifications are placed on a commission agenda. We commissioners then go over each page of the approved qualifications and vote on which company should be number 1, 2 or 3.

Number 1 will then be put through contract negotiations. So in essence YES the commission chooses the qualified designer.

Next the process begins again for the architect portion, and then again for the construction portion.

So again the commission chooses each final portion of each project. Following all of this the city still has to follow the process just like every other developer by going through the technical advisory committee, resident meetings, planning and development, permitting and then the entire building process.

I hope this answers why these projects take so long to complete and how the city commission becomes a part of the process. Once the building is complete, we like a pregnant mother, are so happy because it is so beautiful we totally forget how painfully long it might have seemed at the time.

Please contact me any time with your questions or concerns by my email. Lsherwood@hollywoodfl.org

Linda Sherwood
City Commissioner, District 6, City of Hollywood
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Continued from Pg. 1

In my opinion (and I have been in Real Estate a long time), he is one of the top two Realtors in Hollywood (the other works for a rival brokerage and no I am not going to tell you his name).

Those who know Brian marvel at how cool, calm, and collected he is all the time. ALL THE TIME. He is logical, thoughtful, and takes nothing personally. And he is always kind. I wish I could be more like him but since I obviously miss that mark by a long shot, I will settle for being in his life until I get there. Until then, I would like to say to anyone I have offended in the past 4 weeks, "please stop pissing me off".

WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE BEHIND HILLCREST 22, 23 AND 24?

According to **Betty Merk**, Hillcrest 15, and member of the Hillcrest Compliance Committee: Construction on the new irrigation lake in the Phase II park towards Trailhead Terrace and behind Hillcrest buildings 22, 23 and 24 has begun. Please exercise caution when using the park area. Sidewalk closures are in effect in this area of the park. Upon completion of the lake, there will be a new path constructed that continues the trail.

ANYONE IN YOUR BUILDING THAT YOU JUST CAN'T STAND?

If it is someone you have never had a conversation with, you need to read this. Abraham Lincoln said, "I don't like that man. I must get to know him." It actually works. If you end up not actually liking them, nine times out of ten you will stop actively disliking them. In one case I scored a new BFF by doing that. It puzzles me to see people in my building who dislike neighbors they have never even spoken to. They shun people based on nothing but what they were told about that person - usually by someone who gossips about everyone. Every building (or workplace, or club, or any place where the same people come together) has "haters". These people go out of their way to recruit; especially newcomers who are socially awkward and just want to fit in somewhere. Or they just have it in their nature to be attracted to negative people who can be counted on to have something nasty to say about others.

"Misery loves company". Trying to disprove malicious gossip is almost always a waste of time. Haters crave the attention and control they have over others. Try reaching out to your neighbors and get to know them - at least enough to have the courtesy to say "hello". Baseless unkindness says more about you than it does about them.

DEAR HELEN

I introduced you to **Helen Vella-Basilone** in a past issue and invited our IH readers to write to her for advice about anything and everything. My intention was to print the questions/answers as kind of an advice column. However, most of the emails she got were of a personal nature so she dealt with them privately. One of Helen's fortes is teaching coping strategies so I will be contacting her (again) as soon as I put this issue of IH to bed.

She did receive one email that resonates with all of us. What to do when you are on an elevator or any other place that others are nearby and they do not have a mask on. Sometimes it is as simple as smiling and saying, "I forget my mask sometimes too" and hoping they graciously take the hint. Other times we are bothered by it but don't want to take the chance of starting an argument with a perfect stranger. What to do? See page 6 for the answer.

YOU ARE NOT SQUARE AND BEIGE, WHY SHOULD YOUR TILE BE?

LuRu Rudawsky, my friend and owner of **Tortuga Tile** in Downtown Hollywood, has helped us get more money for our listings with her distinctive designs on more than one occasion. The problem lately is that colors and designs go in and out of fashion way too quickly. The popular cabinets, flooring, and paint colors of today become "so yesterday" way too quickly.

So, we have Lu Ru come in and do a backsplash or countertop in colors and designs that make a kitchen look gorgeous AND unique. The same with bathrooms.

Continued on Pg. 7



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Rotem Amir, MD completed her education at the prestigious Tel-Aviv University. She then entered the renowned Cleveland Clinic Program and completed her Internal Medicine Specialty with honors. She served on the medical jeopardy team and won several tournaments. Dr. Amir is double board certified in internal medicine and continues to provide the most updated care to her patients. She shares her love for practicing medicine with her patients at her established medical practice in Hollywood, FL., where she is an expert diagnostician and loves to take care of seniors. Additionally, she is an Associate Clinical Professor Nova Southeastern University.

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STATE OF THE COUNTY - County Commissioner Beam Furr - District 6



Greetings Hillcrest Residents,

Residents in Hollywood know all too well the severe flooding risk that we face due to climate change and extreme weather. During Tropical Depression Eta, the city saw some of the most severe flooding in all of Broward County. That flooding was an unfortunate preview of the consequences we face if we do not act soon. Only

a few inches of water stand between preserving South Florida for generations to come – or a total failure of the water management systems that keeps our region above water. Given these stakes, it is imperative that we move heaven and earth – and Congress - to rebuild our water infrastructure and protect us from the threat of sea-level rise and climate change. Unfortunately, we are not being equipped with the full toolbox to find the best solutions. That is why it is so critical that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fully fund the Central and Southern Florida Flood Resiliency Study.

The Central and Southern Florida Project was approved by the United States Congress back in 1948. This Project was designed to manage the water in South Florida, and spoke specifically to “addressing flooding and droughts.” Since that approval, this Project has been foundational in the growth, development, and delivery of flood protection across our region. Today this project includes an extensive network of canals, gates, and water control structures that serve as the backbone of our shared water management system, one that has kept us safe and allowed our region to boom economically. It is not an understatement to say that without the Central and Southern Florida Project we would not have seen any of the growth and innovation that defines our region today.

That is where the Central and Southern Florida Flood Resiliency Study comes in. This Resiliency Study would be a big step forward for Broward County and all southeast Florida, because it would point out exactly how we need to improve our water management infrastructure, where our weaknesses are, and what specifically needs to be done to correct these issues. We need to make investments to stop rising waters contributing to sewer overflows, water coming into homes and businesses, an inability to use our roads, and more. We can prevent that. The Central and Southern Florida Flood Resiliency Study will give us the information we need to prevent disaster and make our region stronger than ever.

With the degree of sea-level rise, and with more extreme weather events due to climate change, we face potential devastation. Our lives and our homes are in immediate danger in the next decade if we do not have the tools to rebuild our infrastructure, especially in Hollywood. In addition, the Southeast Florida Business Case for Resilience clearly shows that failure to make these investments will cost our region billions and billions of dollars, due to loss of businesses and rising flood insurance rates. Every lawmaker in South Florida should be asking why this Resiliency Study has not been funded – and using their platform to ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fully fund and support it. Vaccines

The Florida Department of Health is currently vaccinating seniors 65 and over at several locations throughout Broward County. Plans are in the works to add a site in southern Broward as soon as it is feasible. Reservations can now be made using an easy appointment system. Appointments for COVID-19 vaccination sites operated by the Florida Department of Health in Broward can be scheduled using the State appointment system. Seniors age 65+ and frontline healthcare workers can call 866-201-6313 to request an appointment. Those who are eligible for the vaccine (65 and older and frontline healthcare workers) can pre-register and get in line for a vaccine at <https://myvaccine.fl.gov>.

Contact Us

I hope we can be together again soon. I miss visiting my friends in Hillcrest. Until then, you may always contact my office for anything in which you feel I may be of assistance. Our District office is conveniently located in the lobby of the Hollywood Branch of the Broward County Public Library at 2600 Hollywood Blvd, next to Hollywood City Hall. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been temporarily closed. However, my staff is working from our office in Fort Lauderdale, which is open Monday through Friday, from 9 AM to 5 PM, and from other locations within our District. If you would like to schedule an appointment, or you have a great idea, suggestion or an issue that needs my attention, feel free to call me at 954-357-7006/786-559-2306 or send me an email at bfurr@broward.org.

MEET LU RU RUDAWSKY, OWNER OF TORTUGA TILE

Local Hollywood resident, LuRu, makes original, hand-made tiles that create a bold and stylish statement. She develops artwork that fits within the greater design, reflects the client’s personality and that can also deliver a durable and long-lasting surface.



LuRu at the 2014 “Jardin de los Muertos Contentos” exhibition at the Bakehouse in Wynwood, Miami with her Day of The Dead inspired tile mosaic mandalas.

Not only is the art specific to your needs, but the budget is as well. An entire kitchen or back splash can really create an amazing atmosphere but using just a few accent tiles can make an impact on your design as well. Depending on the design, tiles are shipped loose, on mesh, or mounted to cement board.

Tortuga Tile Works has been creating unique designs for ten years and has made tile work for kitchens, pool patios, bars, entrance ways, and gardens. You can see the diversity and range of projects in her portfolio. Visit her website, <http://www.tortugatileworks.com> or call 954-593-9055 to schedule a socially distant appointment at her downtown Hollywood Studio, Zero Empty Space, 2021 Hollywood Blvd.



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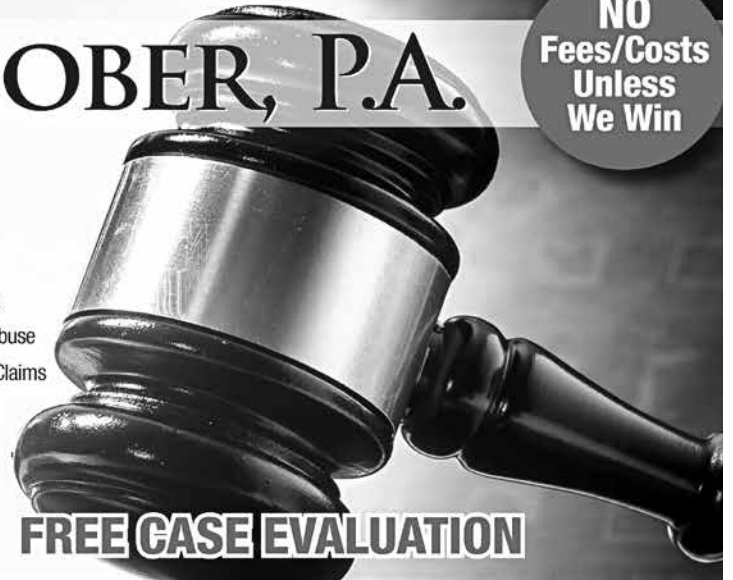
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WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE NOT WEARING A MASK (or wearing it incorrectly)?

by Helen Vella-Basilone, President of Vella Coaching

Mindset is the key to Transformation



Given how politicized wearing masks has become, what happens if you are wearing a mask and find yourself in a supermarket or store, standing next to someone who refuses to do the same?

Do you say something? Do you potentially engage in a public dispute? Do you move to a different location for your own safety?

I think in those situations in public, it is probably not productive to try to change other people's mask-wearing behavior; it is easier to change your own behavior than to change somebody else's behavior. If you have someone in your life who does not wear a mask or thinks it is not important, you can work from your relationship with them to try to impact their behavior.

It is almost always better to try to understand someone's point of view rather than make assumptions about how they value others and define those behaviors as being "ignorant."

If someone you know does not wear a mask, you could simply ask them "I see you don't often wear a mask. I'm curious about that — why?" Having a conversation, rather than a confrontation or an interrogation, could be a better way of reaching a loved one or friend.

Beyond this, emphasizing the "social good" of wearing masks can be a good way to reach out to someone. If they seem to be less concerned about the COVID-19 virus, perhaps they already had an infection months ago or are in an age group where they feel less susceptible to

significant health consequences. It could be helpful to point out in a non-judgmental tone that wearing a mask is a way to protect those who are more vulnerable. You could say, "We never know who we will encounter when we go out. Could be an elderly person, or could be someone with a compromised immune system,"

In public I would suggest you move away from that person and look after yourself rather than being confrontational. Mask wearing is here to stay for some time yet so let's all do our part so we can get back to the "old normal"!



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NEW IN-HOUSE SEAMSTRESS FOR HILLCREST

The Legacy Lives On at www.legacykouture.com



Years ago, we had a Frenchwoman who lived in Hillcrest 22 who had worked with a Fashion House in France before she moved to Hillcrest. When she moved, we were on our own! I am happy to announce that France has given us another lovely lady, **Mireille (Mimi) Fantini** who lives here in Hillcrest and is the owner of **Legacy Kouture**. She is our new go-to Seamstress who can take care of our alterations and so

much more. One of her specialties is converting wedding gowns into Christening dresses for children and/or grandchildren.

She also makes 4-ply masks in three sizes (so they actually fit) with 2 layers of cotton and 2 layers of filter; to be handwashed and air-dried. Way more comfortable than doubling up. She is currently working on St. Patrick's Day masks and of course sold out of her Valentine's masks in days. You can even give her your own cloth for a customized look! Her tote bags are all the rage - the detail is flawless and they are fully lined with pockets inside and out to hold cell phones, glasses, etc.

Her other specialty is taking an heirloom dress, military uniform - basically anything clothing item you have saved for the sentimental value - and will make it into a pillow. My mom had made a St. Patrick's Day shirt for my dad back in the 60's. Years later, my mom remade the shirt into a St. Patrick's Day dress for my 3 year old daughter. Now that the dress has been made into a pillow, I have a precious heirloom!

Continued from Pg. 2

She also makes the closing gift we give to our home buyers; a custom made address plate for the front of their new home, maybe with a picture of their dog, or a beach motif or their family crest. Check out her story on page 4 and if you really want to be impressed, go to her website and see a display of her work and how she does it. Mind-blowing...

NEW ADVERTISERS

Anyone out there need to replace your bathtub? Why? If you aren't putting in a shower or a jacuzzi tub why go through the expense? When we have a listing with a bathroom that looks pretty good except for a yellow, pink, or blue toilet, or a worn countertop. **Brando Valenzeula**, owner of **Florida Tub Restoration Inc.** is your guy. He will restore a standard sized tub for only \$260. He also resurfaces sinks and shower stalls. Sellers do not want to spend a ton of money to make their home/condo look new and fresh so Brando has been part of our pre-listing prep for years. His business card is on page 6.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

Meet two Hillcrest neighbors in this issue: **Dino (Constantin) Petropoulos**, owner of **Justingems Jewelers** is not only a jewelry designer extraordinaire; he also buys and sells estate signed pieces as well as diamonds and other gemstones. And yes, he makes house calls. His business card is on this page. Talk about irony, we lost our Hillcrest seamstress when Dino bought his unit in Hillcrest 27! The seller happened to be our go-to for alterations, etc. However, as luck would have it, we once again have our own community seamstress when **Mireille (Mimi) Fantini** moved in! She owns **Legacy Kouture** and is an expert at tailoring and alterations. Her story is also on this page.

THEY ALL COME BACK!

Brandon Levy was THE go-to Condo Insurance guy back in the day for many Hillcrest buildings. When he became president of **Legacy Insurance Associates**, several buildings switched over to Legacy because of Brandon. That is saying something! He attended our HLC meetings and was the resource for keeping us updated on condominium insurance issues. **Sandy Goldstein**, property manager for Hillcrest 19 has this to say about Brandon, "Brandon not only sold us our building insurance be he came by and reviewed all our large contracts to be sure that each vendor had sufficient insurance and workman's comp to cover the job so that Hillcrest 19 is protected. He is absolutely the best!" Brandon will be sharing his vast knowledge and advice regarding condo insurance issues in upcoming IH issues.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD MOVIE (AND A GOOD CRY)

Two very cool videos will be sent out with the email version of Inside Hillcrest this month. One is inspiring and will touch the heart of all Americans, and the other is amazing/terrifying. I am afraid of heights so I will not be going on this new tourist attraction at the edge of a cliff by the Wulong-Baima Mountain in China. No thanks, I get woozy looking down from my balcony...The second video is patriotism at its best; and fair warning - grab a tissue!



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BLATTNER: PERIODICALLY



COMING (BUT NOT SOON) TO A NEIGHBORHOOD SEPTIC TO SEWER NEAR YOU.

A few weeks ago, the City Commission hosted a long-awaited Septic to Sewer Workshop. The subject has been discussed for decades and action has been postponed for just as long.

Background: The Clean Water Act of 1972 recognized the need for clean waterways and established goals, including funding. It was during the period of the 50's through 70's that the City experienced its most rapid growth in Hollywood Hills and Emerald Hills.

Today: 16,000 septic systems (about 35% of all homes) are on septic; meaning, not connected to the municipal water and sewer system. Many of these systems are at risk of failure, jeopardizing our well fields (which may have to be moved west again), as well as streams, canals, and estuaries.

Rising ground levels inhibit the ability of septic systems to function effectively and when that happens (as during the recent very heavy rainfalls), systems overflow their capacity, causing flooding. These flood waters are not just an inconvenience; they also can leave human waste components on streets, lawns, etc. Not only is this real, it's also a health risk.

How to address: Several years ago, staff developed a practical approach to the installation of sewers. They used a grid system that went up one street, down another, and over to the next street. Logical

from an efficiency perspective, but not based on need. So, where were the highest risks?

Now, as unveiled at the workshop, criteria were developed leading to identifying where the first, and subsequent actions should take place. Not a grid pattern; more like a scatter map.

The hold up? Cost, as always. The estimate is more than \$400 million. Miami-Dade is over \$1.5 billion. Everyone will be chasing the same revenue sources: Federal and State grants, loans, bonds, etc. Here is the kicker! State law, going back to the '70's, specifies that only those directly affected by a project can be required to pay for it. So, only the 16,000 out of all Hollywood properties can be assessed. It's an Archaic law that should be changed.

Anticipated cost, per property, is over \$30,000. No one can afford that, including the City, so they must figure out a system of loans and grants to those property owners or conversion will not happen without significant consequences.

The Commission, Staff and consultants are serious about finding a solution to this long-standing and vexing problem. Perhaps this explains why it has taken so long to get started.

Along with sea level rise and climate change, this is the most challenging unresolved issue. We'll all have to stay tuned, because we all have a stake in sustainability.

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WILL I OWE THE IRS TAX ON MY STIMULUS PAYMENT?

(written by John Waggoner, AARP Magazine)

Editor's Note: If you are not reading AARP magazine, you should - AND read the articles on their website. AARP is a great organization and a wealth of information. I find that they cover a lot of issues that I wonder about. This is one of them.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sent out more than 160 million stimulus payments since the CARES Act was signed into law on March 27. Now it is sending out millions more in the second round of stimulus payments. As people start to spend their money, some wonder if their stimulus payment is taxable. The short answer: No. In the somewhat longer words of the IRS: "No, the payment is **not income** and taxpayers will not owe tax on it. The payment will not reduce a taxpayer's refund or increase the amount they owe when they file their 2020 or 2021 tax return next year. A payment also will not affect income for purposes of determining eligibility for federal government assistance or benefit programs."

Not your average tax credit

The stimulus payment — or economic impact payment, as the IRS calls it — is technically a tax credit for 2020. But this is not widely understood. Some people assume that the IRS will add the amount to your income, generating a bigger tax bill, or reduce your future tax refund when you file your tax return next year. Neither is the case, but this bears some explaining.

In the tax world, a tax deduction is a good thing. It reduces your income, which reduces the amount of tax you owe. If you had \$50,000 in income and had a \$5,000 tax deduction, your deduction would reduce your taxable income by \$5,000. If you were in the 12 percent tax bracket, it would reduce your taxes owed by \$600 (12 percent of \$5,000).

A tax deduction is good, but a tax credit is very good. A tax credit reduces your tax bill dollar for dollar. If you owe \$1,500 in federal income taxes and you get a \$1,000 tax credit, your tax bill sinks to \$500.

A refundable tax credit is a thing of wonder. A garden-variety tax credit can reduce your tax bill to zero, but it cannot turn a tax bill into a tax refund. Refundable tax credits can. For example, if you owed \$1,000 in taxes but had a refundable tax credit of \$1,200, you'd get a \$200 tax refund check from Uncle Sam.

Because you are getting what amounts to a refundable tax credit now in the form of a stimulus payment, rather than waiting to get the money from the credit in 2021 when you actually file your 2020 tax return, you are in effect getting an advanced refundable tax credit.

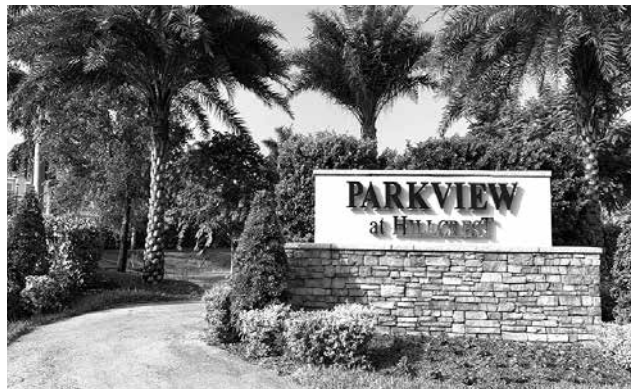


HILLCREST 2021 JANUARY STATE OF THE MARKET

– by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams Realty Professionals A Team Florida



January was a bit of a soft month for Hillcrest condo sales. Currently there are 58 units on the market of which only 18 are one bedroom units. Of the 58, 14 are in the low and mid rise buildings, 26 are in the all-age buildings and 2 are in the buildings that allow rentals.



PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST

Currently in Parkview at Hillcrest, there are only single family homes listed in the MLS. The developer is still selling to prospective buyers directly. Three single family homes and two townhomes went under contract during January and there were three closed sales. Days on Market are not accurate because we don't know at what point they were entered into the MLS so I am going to leave that out. I am also going to include Active rental listings and closed Rentals for the month of January.

Curious as to how much equity you have built up in your Parkview home? Call us at 8-HILLCREST or email INFO@ATeamFlorida.com.

ACTIVE LISTINGS IN THE MLS:

4/2/1 (2802 SF) single family home at 3747 Greenway Drive is listed at \$799,000.

3/2/1 (1703 SF) single family home at 4013 Black Olive Drive is listed at \$479,000.

CLOSED SALES recorded in the MLS for January:

3/2/0 (1742 SF) single family home at 4645 Ficus sold for \$535,000.00.

3/2/1 (1421 SF) townhome at 4023 Black Olive Drive sold for \$405,000.00.

3/2/1 (2795 sf) single family home at 4810 Eucalyptus Drive sold for \$380,000.00.

PENDING SALES

Building	Unit #	B/B	SF	Orig. List	Final List	Sold/DOM
21	908A	1/1/1	896	125,000		5
25	607	1/1/1	844	122,500	119,500	103
1	202	1/1/1	775	105,000	99,000	95
27	309	1/1/1	844	122,500	104,000	383
24	215	2/2	1132	174,900		89
22	515	2/2	1132	165,500	153,999	256
11	111	2/2	992	135,000		5
20	202	2/2	1150	190,000		14
24	902	2/2	1132	160,000		170

CLOSED SALES

Building	Unit #	B/B	SF	Orig. List	Final List	Sold	DOM
25	C-201	2/2	1634	222,000		213,500	28
26	C-501	2/2	1634	165,000	158,900	158,000	61
21	614B	2/2	1132	160,000		157,500	47
25	221	2/2	1132	135,000		130,000	13
26	1109	1/1/1	844	125,000		115,000	229
18	308	1/1/1	755	114,500	109,900	106,500	157
23	610	2/2	1312	149,000	119,000	100,000	130
27	907	1/1/1	884	120,000	95,000	90,000	310



PENDING SALES recorded in the MLS for January.

3/2/1 (1421 SF) single family home at 4414 Ficus Street listed at \$534,055.00.

3/2/1 (1476 SF) townhome at 4102 4812 Greenway listed at \$439,900.00.

3/2/1 (1784 SF) townhome at 5100 Eucalyptus listed at \$3990,000.00

3/2/1 (1421 SF) single family home at 4395 Ficus listed at \$599,000.00.

4/2/1 (1421 SF) single family home at 4378 Ficus listed at \$5757,000.00

ACTIVE PARKVIEW RENTALS recorded in the MLS for January (all are unfurnished Townhomes):

3/2/1 (1768 SF) 4023 Black Olive Ln listed at \$3,200 per month.

3/2/1 (1561 SF) 4005 Poinciana Ln listed at \$2,700 per month.

3/2/1 (1421 SF) 5140 Eucalyptus Dr listed at \$2,500 per month.

PARKVIEW TOWNHOMES RENTED during the month of January (all unfurnished)

3/2/1 (2165 SF) 4984 Greenway Dr rented for \$3,400 month.

3/2/1 (1920 SF) 5012 Greenway Dr rented for \$3,300 month.

“Single-family homes dominated real estate sales in Florida for most of 2020, particularly in the early months of the pandemic. But something seems to have changed late in the year, according to new sales figures reported in The Miami Herald. Suddenly buyers shifted their attention back to condos, as inventory piled up and prices of single-family homes soared.”

February Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham



There was too much going on this month to try too many new recipes so the one I am including in this issue is fast and easy. I also found some delicious, pre-packaged meals from the local grocery stores.

One Hillcrest building reached out to our Inside Hillcrest's Help for Hillcresters initiative to because a couple residents are going through a tough time and sometimes were short of money for the basics, like food. In the beginning, it was easy to just cook bigger portions to have some left over to share. But then I got so busy with everything else that I had to buy a few pre-packaged meals for all of us when the day got away from me and I did not have time to cook.

Honestly, not many were that good but there are a couple I would buy again. Aldi's is known for carrying quality product and I love the Tyson roast complete with carrots, potatoes and onion with seasoning included that you can just pop in the oven. For \$9.99 you can feed 3-4 people. I have made similar roasts and really did not notice a difference in taste. Just follow the directions.

On the very last aisle of Aldi's toward the back, are some prepared meals that are we liked. I bought a few of them for them for the residents who needed them. We liked the Pork roast with Apples and the Pulled Chicken. There also had several others like Hawaiian Chicken and Stuffed Chicken Breasts with various ingredients.



case across from the cheese wall. The Hormel and Publix brand Beef Tips, Meatloaf, and more chicken entrees are good; but I only buy them if they are on sale or BOGO.

And best of all, if you watch the sales, THE PORTIONS FOR ALL THE MEALS MENTIONED ABOVE AVERAGE **\$3.00 EACH!** Can't beat that for good food with little prep work.

Some tips to make life easier:

I need to have a recipe in front of me at eye level. Many times, I need to put the recipe in the copy machine and blow it up so I can see better. Then I just tape it to a kitchen cabinet next to the stove and above the counter where I am doing the prep work.

If you use minced anything a lot, like capers or olives, mince a bunch ahead of time and return them to the jar. For minced garlic, I use an old capers jar and fill it up. But be sure to pour some extra virgin olive oil in the jar to keep them moist.

If you don't keep fresh lemons or limes around and you need the juice for recipes, squeeze a bunch, put the juice in an ice cube tray, freeze and bag. Usually, each cube is about 1 TBS. You can also freeze the zest to use later.

To roll pie or puff pastry dough without the mess, sprinkle the flour into a 2-gallon zip lock bag. Add the chilled dough and roll away. Cut the sides of the bag to transfer the dough to a pie place.



I always keep puff pastry in the freezer. It thaws fast at room temperature and I love baked Brie in puff pastry! It makes an elegant hors d'oeuvre or a great snack with wine. Again, Aldi's has super cheap brie wheels. I get the puff pastry at Publix when it is on sale.

BAKED BRIE

Preheat oven to 350 and spray a pie pan or a baking sheet with non-stick spray. Remove one sheet of puff pastry and let thaw at room temperature. Using the method above with the flour and a zip bag, roll it until it is thin but still sturdy. Put the puff pastry on a large cutting board and use a round pan or plate to cut it into a circle (or freeform it if you have a good eye and a steady hand). Place the brie wheel in the center and top it with whatever you like. I like dried berries and walnuts. Pour a little honey, jelly or agave over it and wrap - bringing the dough up and over the brie to seal in the topping. Bake 20-25 minutes until it is golden brown. Some people cut the brie in half horizontally and stuff the fruit/nuts in the middle before wrapping and baking.

CHICKEN PICCATA

This one of my fast and easy go-tos when I need to get dinner ready in a hurry. If you eat cereal, save the empty bags inside the box. They are great for pounding boneless skinless chicken breasts. Use a small pan instead of a mallet, it is faster and make for more even breasts. This one takes about 20 minutes to prepare. Remember it goes a lot faster when you assemble the ingredients first. Serve with broccolini or pasta or both.



- Ingredients:
- 2 or 3 chicken breasts pounded thin or chicken cutlets
- Salt and pepper
- 2 TBS olive oil
- 1 medium minced
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 2 TBS all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup chicken broth

Continued from Pg. 12

- ½ cup dry white wine (or double up on the broth)
- 2 TBS lemon juice
- 1 TBS butter
- 1 TBS rinsed capers
- 1 TBS dried parsley (or 2 TBS fresh)

Sprinkle pounded chicken breasts with salt and pepper. Heat oil over medium high. Add the chicken and flipping once until cooked through and well-browned on both sides. Remove chicken from pan and set aside. Reduce heat to medium and add a little more oil to the pan with the minced shallot. Cook until softened, 1–2 minutes. Add garlic and cook for about a minutes. Sprinkle with the flour and cook, stirring constantly for 1 minutes.

Stir in broth and wine, scraping up the brown bits and simmer until the liquid is reduced by half. Lower the heat to low and stir in lemon juice, butter, capers, and parsley. Return chicken to pan, turn off heat and cover. After about 5 minutes, flip the chicken over and serve.



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LET'S TALK ABOUT DRUGS



When is the last time you looked in your medicine cabinet? Some of us just hang on to old drugs just in case... Do you even know what they are for? Some of us hold on to them because we know **not to dispose of unused medication in the trash or down the toilet because it can be dangerous.** If you don't read anything else, read this line:

CVS on 46th and Sheridan will dispose of your expired medications. I recently cleaned out one of my listings and brought a 5-pound bag of various medications (including a LOT of fentanyl, a very dangerous opioid, to the Sheridan CVS. You can also find an authorized drug collection site near you by calling the DEA Diversion Control Division Registration Call Center at 1-800-882-9539 for more information about these collection sites.

Flushing medicines down the toilet is not safe. Pharmaceuticals can pollute our water and unintentionally expose us to the chemicals in these medications. Recent studies have found that medicines flushed down the drain can contaminate our lakes and streams, which can hurt fish and other aquatic wildlife, and end up in our drinking water. Some medications, such as hormones and antidepressants, include endocrine disrupting compounds (EDCs), which interfere with the reproduction and normal growth of many aquatic species, such as frogs and fish.

Throwing medicines in the garbage is not safe – especially for controlled substances like OxyContin, narcotics and other highly addictive and dangerous drugs – because the drugs can be found and used by others, even if they are mixed with undesirable materials like coffee grounds or kitty litter.

IF YOUR MEDICATION HAS EXPIRED, DO NOT USE IT!

It is important to know and stick to the expiration date on your medicine. Using expired medical products is risky and possibly harmful to your health. Outdated medications are more likely to lose potency and efficacy than cause toxicity. However, certain outdated medications such as liquid antibiotics, eye drops, and nitroglycerin have the potential to harm patients. Expired medical products can be less effective or risky due to a change in chemical composition or a decrease in strength. Certain expired medications are at risk of bacterial growth and sub-potent antibiotics can fail to treat infections, leading to more serious illnesses and antibiotic resistance. Proper disposal of unneeded medicines is essential!

INSULIN

Taking out-of-date drugs carries certain risks. Especially insulin. If the **insulin** has **expired**, don't **use** it. Once you have begun using insulin (pen or vial with injection, pump), the insulin can remain at room temperature (up to 86F or 30 C) for the number of days you will be using it. ... When picking up prescribed **insulin**, don't accept expired or nearly **expired insulin**.

Opened vials, whether or not refrigerated, must be used within 28 days. They must be discarded if not used within 28 days. If refrigeration

is not possible, the open vial in use can be kept unrefrigerated for up to 28 days in a place away from direct heat and light, as long as the temperature is not >86°F (30°C).

How to Dispose of Expired / Unused Insulin Vials

Expired insulin may still be biologically active and a vial containing even a small amount of unused insulin could cause serious injury if it is accidentally ingested. To properly dispose of expired or unused vials of insulin, place them in a container for biohazardous and regulated medical waste.


Sharps Disposal (Needles & Syringes)

The best way to dispose of used insulin syringes is to place them in an approved sharps container immediately after use. These can typically be purchased from a pharmacy, or obtained for free from a doctor, hospital, or health care institution.

Sharp containers are specially designed to be puncture proof. Therefore, it is essential that no attempt be made to place the plastic shield back on the tip of the needle as this can result in serious injury. The used, unshielded needle should be placed directly into the container. Containers are considered full upon reaching three quarters and should not be overfilled. It is not recommended to dispose of sharps containers in the regular trash. A municipal waste disposal agency should be contacted to inquire about proper arrangements for the disposal of used sharps containers.

Insulin Pen Disposal

Insulin pens often contain autoinjector devices, which have the potential to cause serious injury if they are improperly handled after use. Once used, insulin pens should be placed in an approved sharps container that will be sealed and disposed of appropriately.



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IN OUR BACKYARD – by Meredith Shuster, Hillcrest 26

Do you sometimes wonder why at times birds seem to quiet down? Morning after morning we are awakened to a cacophony of birdsongs; and then, very little. During migration seasons some birds are just passing through. Few birds end their migration in our area. They are heading toward the Everglades and beyond. The true “snowbirds” pass through and feed as they head onward. Many songbirds fall into this category. As they move on, we have a quiet spell.

There are some birds that are with us year-round. One that has truly changed its habitat is the White Ibis. They graze through our yards eating ringworms, snails and various insects. Not long ago, Ibis were only found in the Everglades. They have adapted to human habitats. I enjoy hearing their chattering sound as the flock eats in the backyard. It is thought that the Ibis will continue to thrive throughout Florida. Other birds we will be seeing all year are Blue Jays, Cardinals, Northern Mockingbirds and Muscovy Ducks. We also have some Egyptian Geese that have claimed Hillcrest as its territory. The Muscovy Ducks and Egyptian Geese are thriving in human areas mostly due to people feeding them. There are areas in South Florida that have become inundated with either or both of these birds. All of these birds do us a favor by eating pounds upon pounds of insects, ringworms, snails, lizards and crop our grass. (Some parts of the world use geese as lawn mowers.) Nature provides a banquet for the ducks and geese and will limit their number naturally when there is just enough food for the birds that are here. We noticed the dominant pair of Egyptian Geese chase off about eight other geese behind Buildings 26 and 27 in the past couple of months. Essentially, the “kids” were told to move out of the house.

We often see blackbirds that get lumped together as crows. Actually, there are several species of black birds. Notice some will have iridescent brown, blue or purple heads, yellow beaks or red eyes, long tail feathers or stubby ones. In our backyard I have seen Blackbirds, Grackles, Cowbirds, and American Crows. Rock Pigeons, Eurasian Ring Neck Doves and Mourning Doves are the most common “coosers” we hear. The Eurasian Ring Neck Doves were not very common just a few years ago. For reasons not yet known, their habitat has spread throughout North America. Just two years ago, they were even seen in Alaska. What isn’t known is the effect their increase is having on other birds and habitats. The doves and pigeons have also been acclimated to human habitats predominantly due to people feeding them. Human feeding has created “pests” as their numbers increase. We all know the problems with guano left on balconies and patios. Bird “doo doo” smells and erodes our cement.

Doves, pigeons, Ibis, geese and ducks are natural foragers. We don’t want them to “forget” how to forage nature for food by “taming” them to always come to one place for a food source. Hence, one of the reasons

most condo documents and city ordinances prohibit the feeding of wild animals. As much as we may love wildlife, we also don’t want more in our backyard than Mother Nature can feed.

Now, in spite of the ordinances and condo documents prohibiting the feeding of wildlife, people enjoy feeding them. I have mixed thoughts. People have built over natural habitats to such a degree that migrating birds are starving and not able to complete their journey. The National Audubon Society recently mentioned on its website that the world has seen a decrease in all migratory birds by about a third. Specific birdseed suitable for songbirds put in a suitable container is being recommended by many naturalists to augment the feeding areas humans have built over. However, for each person that intelligently augments nature, there are so many others that do not take the time to “learn” before “doing”.

Now there are those of you who in spite of all warnings will “break the law” and feed the birds and squirrels. If you are going to become a “lawbreaker,” at least be a smart lawbreaker. It is definitely not good to feed “people food” to birds. Bread, crackers and the like have too much sugar and salt. Bird kidneys range from the size of your small fingernail to perhaps the size of your thumb nail. People food can kill the birds, cause disease that can spread to other animals (dogs and cats) and create problems with the eggs and juveniles. Instead of helping the birds, you could actually be harming them. Every pet store has appropriate wild bird seed. Squirrels also enjoy birdseed.

Never feed the animals from your patio or balcony. (You feed them and they poop on your neighbors place – not nice.) **Move off the property. Only put a handful of seeds on the ground** when there are **no birds** around. Seeds spread on the grass will provide extra food. Trust me, the birds and squirrels will come across it as they follow their grazing patterns. They will get the seeds but will be foraging for them as nature intended, not waiting for a human to give it to them. In the process they will get the bugs and other natural food. **Never** leave any food/seeds in a pile or to such an excess that the birds passing by can’t eat it all in one passing (remember 1, no more than 2, handfuls spread over the ground). Birds and squirrels eat during the day. Rats, possum and raccoons mainly forage at night. Leftover food will attract them and cause them to “hang around.” The last thing we want are those creatures in our backyard.

Finally, we need to remember that our backyard is full of wild animals. Do not think of them as pets. It is enjoyable to simply watch them. Make note of which birds and other animals you see. Read about them or search out YouTube videos to learn more about them. Instead of feeding the animals – feed your intelligence by getting to know our backyard neighbors. Happy nature watching!

IN OUR BACKYARD ADDENDUM – by Meredith Shuster, Hillcrest 26



February 10, at 7:30 a.m. I came across 2 raccoons. It was a fairly cloudy morning. These two critters hadn’t quite decided to go to bed. They are left over from the golf course. We can’t blame them for being here, but these are neighbors we don’t want to see.

Raccoons eat eggs, seeds, rodents, small lizards, fish and plants. In our area, they help control mice, rats and lizards. They do not need our bread or crackers!

humans as a source of food, they may alter their pattern and be seen more during the day. Raccoons could carry rabies or at least leave a very infectious bite. Do not allow your dog to fight or attack and be careful if you have a cat that goes outside. Cats, dogs and raccoons are natural enemies. If you see a raccoon avoid them entirely. It is rare for a raccoon to attack a human but keep a wide berth.



I am not in favor of extermination if the population is within the numbers our area can naturally feed. As stated, they serve a beneficial purpose eating surplus rodents etc. The golf courses could naturally support a larger population than our current habitat. The population will adjust (if it hasn’t already) to what Mother Nature provides. Do not help her out. Keep garbage in closed containers. Do not leave dog or cat food outside. The best way to “Love these Neighbors” is to leave them alone.

Raccoons are not CUTE. They are not like cats and dogs. NEVER approach with food or leave food for them. Teach your children to leave these critters alone. If raccoons lose their fear of humans or see

THE UNCHANGING CENTER OF MYSELF

- WRITTEN BY BK CHIRYA RISELY, SUBMITTED BY ETTA STEVENS

2021 promises to be a wonderful year ahead. How do I know? Because I decided it will be that way! You can decide how 2021 will be for you too. Each and every day is a new day. I happily look forward to seeing new opportunities present themselves in life. You might like to repeat these affirmations to yourself each day. I have found the affirmations helpful in keeping me steady and aligned as the New Year unfolds. As I focus on all that I have, I practice gratitude and appreciate those small treasures and blessings in my life.

What is certain is the world will continue to change. Accepting and not resisting this is the first and most important inner skill in this frantically changing, modern world. The effects of science and technology are everywhere. Man is becoming more desperate and frustrated as he tries to cope with the negativity in society, crime, disease and corruption. In the midst of this, can you say, "Yes, the situation may get worse, but I am preparing for it; I am learning how to change my old inner patterns of thinking." Life tests us every day to see how well we have developed this ability!

Vision is one of the secrets for transforming old 'body conscious' inner patterns of thinking. To change, always start with creating a vision, not an action. What is your vision of yourself today - relaxed or tense, positive or negative, tired or full of energy, a peaceful soul living in the costume of a body or.....? See it and you will be it. Be it and you will do it.

By visualizing that you are a spiritual being of light, a soul, with a natural nature of goodness, you can go within to your center, to your 'still point'. This deepest point of constant sweet silence is forever within each of us.

The ability to be in this inner silent space, where our original peace is found, when all around would prefer chaos and crisis, is the deepest spiritual skill for change. It is the eye of the storm; it is the oasis in the desert; it is the place where peace is power and peace is constant - where positive change occurs.

Many, not recognizing the power of inner silence, do not value silence. When you check very carefully you will find that we all use the power of silence even without knowing it. When we need to remember something we look within, silence most thoughts, and use this power. When we find our thoughts moving in many directions we say to our mind, "Slow down; become stable, concentrate". After a few minutes, we feel our mind relaxing and we are able to see things more clearly. Next time you have the opportunity of a moment's silence, don't waste that precious moment. Use it to store the strength within that is so necessary for dealing with the world without. Take a 'Time Out' - close your eyes; take 10 slow breaths in and out.

Use the 'Power of the Pause', slow down your thoughts, visualize your 'still point', connect and remain resting there, feeling your original natural peace, always there.

Keep these exercises in your spiritual tool kit and apply them to stay stable and unaffected by adverse circumstances. You'll be surprised how much it can influence and change everything and everyone around you! See how easily the day would pass if you were able to move freely without being affected by the negative attitude of others; remain constantly in a calm and peaceful state rather than fluctuating up one minute then down the next like a see-saw. Every time you lose the happiness and go down, just see how much energy is needed to take yourself up again. When we learn to remain constant, not only is the energy saved but you will find that our mental strength increases. With mental strength and stability come the development and maturity of character. Strength of character depends upon my ability to remain stable and unaffected by obstacles and negativity. Strength of character creates my destiny. Prepare for the future by visualizing positive inner changes and practicing being the change now for when I change the world changes.

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NEWEST FAD – Choline Supplements

The richest dietary sources of choline are meat, fish, dairy, and eggs. Many fruits, vegetables, and whole grains contain choline as well, so there are plenty of options for people on vegetarian or plant-based diets.



There are companies out there right now claiming that their product can prevent dementia because they contain acetylcholine. I did a little research and found out that I probably do not need them and probably neither do you.

According to WEB.MD, "Choline is a nutrient essential to many bodily functions. Our bodies produce this vitamin-like compound in our liver, but not at sufficient levels. We need to get the rest of our body's requirements from food. The richest dietary sources of choline are meat, fish, dairy, and eggs. Many fruits, vegetables, and whole grains contain choline as well, so there are plenty of options for people on vegetarian or plant-based diets.

Choline is also available as a supplement, either on its own or in combination with B-complex vitamins and multivitamins. There are no studies to confirm its effectiveness from supplements over dietary sources, however. Research shows that getting enough choline in your

diet is essential to brain health and nervous system function, and plays a role in memory and learning processes.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF CHOLINE

The Food and Nutrition Board recommends that men and women get 500 milligrams and 425 milligrams of choline per day, respectively. Women who are pregnant should increase their intake by about 25 milligrams and breastfeeding women by 175 milligrams. Our bodies make a small amount of choline, but we need to get most of our daily total from dietary sources. While most people don't get enough in their diet, deficiencies are rare. At low levels, a lack of choline can lead to muscle or liver damage.

Research shows choline helps maintain the health of several bodily functions. Our bodies need choline to produce acetylcholine. Research shows this compound is a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in functions like memory, muscle movement, maintaining your heartbeat, and even your mood.

While research is ongoing, choline is being studied for its potential to boost long-term cognitive health, including reducing the risk of conditions like Alzheimer's disease. Choline is a vital nutrient for normal metabolic processes, like breaking down fats that maintain good cell membrane structure and carrying nutrients around your body. Choline is also required to clear cholesterol from your liver. Deficiencies cause fat and cholesterol accumulation in your liver, which puts you at risk for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.



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