



Otsego County OFFICE *for the* AGING



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term
Services and Supports

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Otsego County Office for the Aging Pen Pal Project Guidelines

The Otsego County Office for the Aging is developing an intergenerational pen pal project to connect older adults and local youth to help reduce isolation and loneliness. This project matches students from local schools, including homeschoolers, with older adults in the community. Participants will exchange hand-written letters during the upcoming months.

How does the program work?

- Office for the Aging will obtain consent and share contact information for the adult with the student facilitator.
- The student will initiate the first letter, mailing the letter to the address provided. Then the older adult will follow suit, mailing the letter back to the school address of the student. (Remember to include a return address when mailing your letter.)
- It is recommended that letters be responded to within 3 weeks of receipt to keep both parties engaged.
- The students and seniors are asked to exchange at least 3 letters each, with the option of continuing letter exchanges as long and as frequently as they wish.
- To keep the conversation going and ensure your pal writes back to you, it's important to be curious. Ask some questions about their life and share information about yourself. Here are some topic ideas and ideas to get you started:
 - Introduce Yourself: age/gender, family members, favorite things
 - Pets: did/do you have pets, what are their names, what kind of animals do you like
 - Sports: what sports do you enjoy to play or watch, did/do you play sports in school
 - Weather: what do you think about the current weather, what season do you favor
 - School: discuss what you have been doing in class, are you in person or remote and how you adapted to this different school year so far, what's your favorite subject
 - Travel: do you travel or like to travel, where have you been, what's your favorite place, is there any place you'd like to visit?
 - Community: what activities are you involved with or have been involved in the community
 - TV/Movies: do you have a favorite show or movie(s)
 - Share photos, drawings or other artwork

If any participant is in need of stamps, cards, paper or envelopes, please contact Office for the Aging to be obtain materials.