Supporting Your Older Neighbors in NYC in this Time of Need

Looking for a way to help while you’re home? Here are some low-tech and easy ways to assist your older neighbors, who are particularly vulnerable during this pandemic.

Let them know you are here to help
Call, email, or knock on your neighbor’s door (and then stand six feet away, of course). Give them your contact information in a readily available format, and let them know that you are available for buying groceries, picking up medications, or just a regular check-in call.

Pick up their mail
If their mail or newspaper delivery is outside or in the lobby, offer to arrange a daily pick-up.

Provide a phone number
PRACTICAL SUPPORT: Tell them that they can call 311 for help in finding medical care and a wide range of resources and services.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: For mental health support 24 hours a day and in multiple languages, call Thrive NYC at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or the Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990.

Connect them to a local volunteer network
Find out what help your older neighbor needs, and try to connect them with a local, volunteer-based organization. For example, Invisible Hands arranges volunteers to deliver groceries and supplies, and can be reached at 732–639–1579 and DOROT’S University Without Walls offers lifelong learning programs on the arts, news, literature and more – all over the telephone. Register by calling 877–819–9147.

Help them access telephonic, virtual and delivery options for essential needs and at-home activities
Many healthcare providers, pharmacies, grocery stores and restaurants are quickly adapting to this public health emergency and conducting business in new ways that limit in-person contact. Your neighbor may not be in the know, especially if they lack an internet connection, so offer to help them access these services.

You can also order books, puzzles, and crosswords online and have them delivered directly to your neighbor.

Help them set up food deliveries
Go to Citymeals on Wheels to find the local case management agency that will set up meal deliveries. You can also call Aging Connect at 212–244–6469 to learn about home-delivered meals and other resources.

Umbrella, a community platform that helps older adults age in place, is offering grocery delivery and medication pick up for people age 60+ nationwide. They are waiving their membership fee and charging just $6 per order to help defray costs. You can submit an online form or call 844–402–2480 to place an order.

Send cards to your local nursing home
KID–FRIENDLY ACTIVITY: Write notes and color pictures to send to your local nursing home residents. Many nursing homes are no longer accepting visitors due to health concerns, and residents would appreciate receiving mail.