



The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

January 2025

RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

Every New Year's Eve in New York, a glittery ball drops at midnight, delighting the revelers in Times Square and up to 1 billion people watching live broadcasts worldwide. But how did this all start?

According to the Times Square website, New York's annual New Year's bashes began in 1904 and originally featured fireworks set off from the base of the *New York Times* tower. When the city banned fireworks in 1907, the *Times* arranged for an illuminated ball to drop along the tower's flagpole to signal the calendar flip to 1908. The ball drop has played out every year since, except during World War II "dimouts" in 1942 and 1943.

New Year's celebrations date back at least 4,000 years to the Akitu festival in Babylon, which marked the planting of crops and rebirth of nature. (Their year began in the spring.) The Babylonians made promises for the New Year to win the favor of their gods.

Today, we call them New Year's resolutions. Other time-honored traditions...

Foods of Good Fortune: In Italy, eating lentils just after midnight portends prosperity in the coming year. A legend from Spain says it is good luck to eat 12 grapes at midnight. In India and Pakistan, rice brings good luck; in Germany, the tradition is sauerkraut.

Out with the Old: People in Denmark throw plates at neighbors' and friends' doors to let go of ill will and celebrate a new beginning. In Naples and other parts of Italy, people throw old furniture and other unwanted items out of windows or off balconies; South Africa has a similar tradition. In Cuba people toss out a bucket of water to wash away past troubles.

Medicaid Fraud Alleged at South Jersey Nursing Home

Acting State Comptroller Kevin Walsh dropped a bombshell report in December showing how the owners of South Jersey Extended Care siphoned off millions in profits by misusing Medicaid funds and leaving residents at risk in an understaffed and under-resourced facility.

Walsh announced the principals, along with South Jersey Extended Care and sister facility Sterling Manor, will be suspended from the Medicaid program.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/f9zxr5sr> for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Laurie Facciarossa Brewer's reaction to the report.

Residents of South Jersey or Sterling Manor: Call 1-877-582-6995 if you have questions or concerns.



FEEDBACK: If you have comments, questions, or ideas for future stories, please email them to outreach@ltco.nj.gov.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

UNSCRAMBLE THESE CLUES TO FIND WORDS OR PHRASES RELATED TO NEW YEAR'S EVE.

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NOW, USE THE CIRCLED LETTERS ABOVE TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION: WHAT IS A PROMISE FOR THE NEW YEAR?

New York, Midnight, Square, Ball Drop
Resolution

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, LTC Ombudsman

www.NJ.GOV/LTCO

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