

Taking preventative measures

St. Mary's of the Lake hosts Life Line Screening Radiology to allow participants access to early detection, learn risk factors

By Jason Gabak / Skaneateles Journal

SKANEATELES - Personal health is not a matter to be taken lightly and all too often it is the unseen concerns that lead to some of the major causes of medical problems such as stroke and peripheral arterial disease.

Thursday afternoon, St. Mary's of the Lake hosted Life Line Screening Radiology, a service that tests people for these risk factors.

St. Mary's pastoral associate Mary Gregory said the church has hosted Life Line Screening for the past several years.

“We have the facilities to do this,” Gregory said. “It is a way to help provide these services to the people of the community and we are glad to be able to help.”

For the past several years, Life Line Screenings has visited the Skaneateles area three times each year, using facilities in St. Mary's as well as the community center.

Essentially, Life Line Screening is a traveling radiology department that offers clients the chance to have up to four different tests done in about an hour.

The traveling facilities offer testing by ultrasound technicians, who can screen for stroke/carotid artery, atrial fibrillation, abdominal aortic aneurysm and peripheral arterial disease.

Nancy E. Miller, a health services coordinator with Life Line Screening, said these four areas are among the most important risk factors for people to be aware of.

For example, plaque build up in the carotid artery is the number one cause of stroke and stroke in turn is the third leading cause of death in America and the number one cause of nursing home admission.

Other screenings like atrial fibrillation looks for irregular heartbeat and peripheral arterial disease screenings look for early signs of the disease, which can increase the risk of heart disease by four to five times.

Abdominal aortic aneurysm, like the others, is another risk factor for death and, like the rest, it often has no obviously detectable signs or symptoms.

That is why these screenings become so crucial.

“This is about people being proactive about their health,” Miller said. “People can have undetected health problems like these and not even know it. This helps people get screened, it is a preventative measure. After this we encourage people to follow up with their primary care physician.”

The company is 10 years old and has been well received in the Skaneateles community in recent years,

Miller said.

By offering these screenings and making people more aware of risk factors, Miller said medical concerns such as strokes are highly preventable. People can reduce their chances of having a stroke by becoming aware of the early warning signs.

Many Skaneateles residents came out to St. Mary's Thursday to take advantage of this opportunity.

"I've had it done in Florida," Jean Ryan said. "I just thought it would be a good idea."

Others wanted to stay on top of conditions they already know exist.

"I have peripheral neuropathy," Denis Harrington said. "So I just wanted to get checked out and see how I'm doing, get my blood and my heart checked out."

Whether it is improved health or simply peace of mind, these screenings have a lot to offer.

"The goal is to improve the quality of life for people," Miller said. "We are actually saving lives with this and helping people to live longer, healthier lives."

SCHEDULING SCREENINGS

Miller said that the next Skaneateles area screening would be held in November with the date and place to be decided.

For more information visit www.lifelinescreening.com.