

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of January 2nd

Note: The Office for the Aging and OFA Friendship Centers are closed on the following observed January holidays:

Monday, January 2nd – New Year's Day

Monday, January 16th – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Clients of OFA's Home Delivered Meals program will receive meals as needed in advance of each holiday. HDM clients also receive shelf-stable meals in advance of predicted inclement winter weather that could disrupt HDM deliveries. For more information about the HDM program, contact OFA at 845-486-2555 or

ofa@dutchessny.gov.

50 YEARS OF OFA SERVICES

The Dutchess County Office for the Aging celebrates 50 years of operation in 2023. We have lots to celebrate, and just as much work to do. Most notably, we expect continued significant growth in demand for services as the baby boom generation continues to age. Even the youngest "boomers" will turn 60 in 2024.

The Older Americans Act took effect in 1965 but its original version did not address many issues of concern to older adults like nutrition, congregate meal services, legal services, volunteer programs, transportation, and many other programs for older adults. The goal from the beginning was the same then as now: to help older Americans stay as independent and engaged as possible, for as long as possible.

In 1973 states were required to establish area agencies on aging - including the Dutchess County OFA, under the direction of Wanda (Lou) Glasse (1927-2017), who later became director of the New York State Office for the Aging. In 1990, in observance of the 25th anniversary of the Older Americans Act, she wrote:

"As we enter the 21st Century, we foresee the continuing impoverishment of older women, (now 3 out of 4 of the elderly poor), an increasing number of older minorities with unique problems, and the rapid growth of those over the age of 85 whose health needs are often inadequately met. All require new approaches."

Familiar concerns, both then and now. While Dutchess County's poverty rate remains lower than the New York State and national average, the predicted rapid growth of those over 85 has certainly come to pass here in Dutchess. Census figures from the past decade show our 85+ population growing faster here than anywhere else in the state, in the 80% range compared to 2010. It looks like that trend will continue; the Cornell Program on Applied Demographics predicts our 85+ population will continue to rise until at least 2040. We're counting on the county's 85+ population doubling by then, to around 10,000.

The COVID-19 pandemic may not be in the headlines every day, but its effects continue to disrupt older adults' financial security. Compared to families with children, older adults were not as eligible for federal pandemic relief payments.

While the emergency aid did drive down the overall poverty level to its lowest level in 2021, the poverty rate among older people rose during the pandemic.

It's with this knowledge that OFA aims to intensify its efforts to reach isolated and homebound older adults throughout Dutchess County, along with other older adults residing in Dutchess who haven't yet familiarized themselves with OFA services. They're the ones with the most to gain from OFA services while often being unaware of what's available to them.

We did mention there's also plenty to celebrate as we move into our second 50 years of operations. It may be early January, but we're already scheduling a 31st summer of OFA Picnics. Before that, we're planning to join Dutchess County Parks for a Maple Weekend older adults' breakfast in late March; we're joining several county departments for another County Health Fair in the spring.

Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, 114

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HOLIDAYS AND FALL PREVENTION

Falls are more likely to happen during the holidays, with more people shopping (where they can slip on icy surfaces), cooking (where they can slip in the kitchen), and decorating (where they can fall from a ladder or stepstool).

You can learn how to prevent these situations with free “micro-learnings” from the New York Caregiving Portal, provided in partnership with the Association on Aging in New York and Trualta. [Visit this link](#) for more information.

Other news:

Many [new New York State laws taking effect in 2023](#) will affect older adults, caregivers, and the businesses that serve them.

[More evidence](#) connecting obesity at midlife to dementia later, although the association remains unclear.

Is your sleep getting worse as you age? It's not unusual, but [there are ways to deal with it.](#)

Do superagers (those who live to old age AND have the social, physical, and mental state of somebody much younger) have any kind of secret? [Maybe.](#)

This week's birthdays:

1/1: Comedian/writer [Don Novello](#) (80)

1/2: Baseball player/sportscaster [David Cone](#) (60)

1/3: Actor [Dabney Coleman](#) (91)

1/4: Historian/author [Doris Kearns Goodwin](#) (80)

1/5: Actor/director [Robert Duvall](#) (92)

1/6: Golfer/sportscaster [Nancy Lopez](#) (66)

1/7: Singer/songwriter [Kenny Loggins](#) (75)

And here's the first Bad Joke of 2023!

Why do birds fly south on New Year's Eve?

It's way too far to walk.