

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of December 18th

Note: the Office for the Aging and OFA Friendship Centers will be closed on Monday, December 25th and Monday, January 1st (2024) for the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays respectively. Clients of OFA's Friendship Centers will receive meals in advance of the holiday.

Golden Living . . . News for Seniors, Their Families and Caregivers

Todd N. Tancredi, Director

Dutchess County Office for the Aging

GOALS FOR 2024 (Part 2 of 2)

The Office for the Aging is planning for 2024 with an eye toward meeting emerging unmet needs, as Dutchess County's older adult population is expected to continue growing for at least the next 20 years even as overall population levels stay roughly level.

Measured in percentages, Dutchess County's older adult population is considerably higher than New York State's, which in turn is higher than the nation's. According to the 2022 Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 27% of Dutchess County's population is over age 60. We're at a new all-time high for older residents: over 80,000.

The county's median age of 42.8 reflects this reality; again, higher than both the state and federal median ages. Several rural Dutchess towns show even higher median ages: Clinton, Milan and Washington at 50, North East and Pine Plains at 51; Stanford at 52; and Rhinebeck at almost 55.

On one hand, the statistics are encouraging in that they show how many older adults in Dutchess County have been able to live longer, healthier lives, even while accounting for the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, the sheer number of older adults is certainly cause for a new kind of concern. What we at OFA call "successful aging" isn't just a personal achievement for an older adult trying their best to maximize their years of independence. It's quickly becoming a necessity.

WHY THE CAREGIVER SUPPORT RATIO MATTERS

In 2010, AARP measured the ratio of potential family caregivers to people in the high-risk years of 80+ in the US at 7:1. It's called the "caregiver support ratio" and it's been declining sharply over the past 15 years, especially in counties like Dutchess with larger populations of older adults whose children no longer live nearby. Declines in caregiver support ratios are a worldwide concern; ratios have been declining throughout Europe and other nations with older populations, often to an even greater extent.

OFA'S GOALS...AND YOURS

The key to OFA's plans for 2024 is to successfully combine policy, funding, and delivery of services in the face of daunting caregiver support ratios and staffing challenges. Through our NY Connects and Case Management units, we're working to engage caregivers more than ever before, to connect them to services and supports. We know that once caregivers identify themselves as such, the more likely they'll be to consider accepting supports.

Another challenge for older adults in Dutchess involves transportation, especially where medical procedures are concerned. We're aware that some

older adults require improved safe transportation home from hospitals, dialysis centers and outpatient treatment. To help ease the often challenging process of getting re-settled at home after discharge from a hospital, dialysis center or outpatient procedure, OFA plans to offer older adults without caregivers a safe transportation option for the return home, beginning in 2024. It's in the planning stages now, and we'll let you know when the service becomes available.

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

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OFA VOLUNTEERING OVER THE HOLIDAYS AND THROUGH THE WINTER

Interest in volunteering often grows during end-of-year holidays. The Office for the Aging is ready with options, whether it's for yourself, a family member, or a college student home for winter break.

Demand for volunteer drivers throughout Dutchess County in our Home Delivered Meals program is a year-round need, and clerical assistance is always helpful.

Looking ahead to 2024, our various OFA Exercise programs are looking for volunteer instructors, especially as winter moves toward spring: exercise, tai chi, A Matter of Balance and more. We provide training for instructors.

You can read about all of OFA's volunteering options and fill out a printable volunteering form at www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer, and if you have follow-up questions you can email bjones@dutchessny.gov.

IS YOUR GROUP LOOKING FOR A SPEAKER FROM OFA?

The Office for the Aging can send a representative to speak with your seniors' group, faith community, caregivers' group or civic organization on issues of interest to older adults and caregivers. We cover all kinds of topics:

Successful Aging;

Caregiving Resources;

Scam Prevention;

Senior housing issues;

Office for the Aging Services;

Topics related to nutrition;

Preventing falls and safety at home...and more!

We're available anywhere in Dutchess County for presentations during weekday business hours, and on a case-by-case basis for evening and weekend events.

For more information about speakers from the Office for the Aging, email Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones at bjones@dutchessny.gov.

YOGA FOR OLDER ADULTS AT SOUTH AMENIA FRIENDSHIP CENTER

Eastern Dutchess older adults looking for an exercise option in the Harlem Valley can add the yoga class at the Office for the Aging Friendship Center in South Amenia (229 South Amenia Rd., Wassaic). Classes meet for an hour, every Tuesday at 10:45 am. For more information and to get signed up, contact OFA at 845-486-2555, and visit www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise for a closer look at all OFA exercise options.

Other news:

The National Institute on Aging's [top five healthy aging articles for 2023](#).

There's a strong association [between being sedentary and developing dementia](#).

Missed the December 7th Medicare open enrollment deadline? [Here are some what-to-do resources](#).

In addition to his many achievements in mathematics and engineering, this 101-year-old WWII veteran from upstate New York [also invented the modern bowling ball](#).

The one gripe we've heard about pickleball? [Noisy paddles. But check this out](#).

Got trouble with "porch pirates" making off with holiday deliveries? [Here's what can be done about that](#).

[This 1881 cooking essay](#) translates from Italian as “Wine, Meatballs and Steaks: A Doctor in the Kitchen.” Tell us more, please?

This week’s birthdays:

12/16: Singer/songwriter Benny Andersson ([Abba](#)) (77)

12/17: [Pope Francis](#) (87)

12/18: Chef/author [Jacques Pépin](#) (88)

12/19: Model/actress [Jennifer Beals](#) (60)

12/20: Musician/producer [Alan Parsons](#) (75)

12/21: Actor/screenwriter/producer [Ray Romano](#) (66)

12/22: Mets pitcher [Jerry Koosman](#) (81)

And the Bad Joke!

Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love, and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.