

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of December 8th

The “Oh, I Don’t Need Anything” Question

Maybe you like to give gifts far more than you prefer to receive them. You're not all about chasing this year's popular gift - and maybe you already have everything you need as it is.

You can see how conflict could arise between two people who prefer giving to receiving, but let's stop and think. Aren't there plenty of ways to give gifts that don't involve physical objects? Of course there are. And you don't have to figure out how to wrap anything, or where you put the ribbon and the tape last December.

Your Time Is Your Most Valuable Gift

Imagine this scenario: Your older neighbor needs to pick up some groceries but the weather's a bit iffy for them. They need the porch shoveled but there aren't any teenagers in the neighborhood who'd like to make a few bucks.

Grab the shovel. You're giving your neighbor a gift of service, assuming you're in good enough shoveling condition yourself. And you needed to go on a grocery run anyway.

We didn't want to mention it right away, but a gift-giver could consider volunteering for the Office for the Aging, in the name of someone who is unable to volunteer. Email ofa@dutchessny.gov or call **845-486-2555** to learn more.

Gifts, If You Feel Absolutely Compelled

It's common to accumulate "stuff" over the decades. By the time we've reached our 60s and beyond, there can be too much of everything and nowhere left to put it. Our first goal, then, will be not to add to the clutter, no matter how good our intentions may be. With that in mind, here are a few suitable starter ideas:

If they have a "bucket list," help them complete an item on it.

Are there gardeners in your life? A packet of seeds fits inside a card.

Car wash certificates and subscriptions are especially helpful in the winter.

Tickets to a special event or destination.

A "date" with their favorite people.

A week of freezer meals.

Instead of another mug, cup or water bottle, try specialty beverages, coffees or teas. Make sure it's a consumable they'll like. Keep it simple: A big fancy hamper full of food is likely to be too much of a good thing.

A prepaid subscription renewal to a service they already use and like.

A replacement for something they already use but have worn out.

Still at a loss? Gift cards and certificates are a solid fallback - but be sure they're for a destination the recipient will visit.

Everyone loves fruitcake, right?

Cash is among the simplest options. If you want to dress it up a bit, the internet is full of tutorials on making origami with U.S. currency.

We were kidding about the fruitcake.

A MESSAGE FROM OFA DIRECTOR TODD TANCREDI

Dutchess County winters can be hard on drivers of any age, but even more so for older drivers. That's why we keep our advice simple:

When in doubt, don't go out. The day before an expected winter weather event tends to draw heavier-than-usual traffic, especially around grocery stores. Get that shopping run done two or more days earlier, and avoid the last-minute crush.

Curb the milk-and-eggs enthusiasm. You got to the store ahead of the crowds, and brought your list? Well done. Every winter storm comes with the possibility of power outages, so there's no need to pick up more perishables than are necessary. Instead, make sure you've got plenty of shelf-stable food on hand in case of an extended outage. OFA Home Delivered Meals clients

receive shelf-stable meals in anticipation of weather affecting delivery schedules.

Drive like a "townie." Know your community's alternate routes, for when main roads are clogged. Remember that there are still some cellular "dead zones" in Dutchess County, so your mobile device's navigation features might not be available.

Even sunny days can be tricky. Have your sunglasses handy. Not only are sunrise and sunset driving challenging, there's also the matter of glare from sunlight reflected off snow to consider. Take care!

“HEAP” FUNDS RELEASED FOR WINTER ’25-26

The Regular Benefit component of the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is open for the 2025-26 season as of Monday, December 1st.

HEAP offers financial assistance to eligible households, helping them to heat their homes safely. One regular HEAP benefit is available per year. The Regular HEAP benefit is scheduled to operate through April 7, 2026, or until funding is exhausted, whichever occurs first.

Regular HEAP benefits for households who pay directly for heat based on actual usage are paid directly to the vendor that supplies the household's primary source of heat.

An emergency HEAP benefit is scheduled to become available on January 2nd, 2026.

If You've Already Applied for HEAP and Been Approved

You don't need to do anything else. Your HEAP allotment will soon be paid to your heating vendor.

If You've Never Heard of HEAP

Contact OFA at 845-486-2555 if you're a Dutchess County resident over 60 who's not already benefitting from HEAP, especially if you're already qualified for other benefit programs like SNAP.

Eligibility and benefits are based on income, household size, the primary heating source, and whether or not the household has a member who is under age 6, over age 60, or permanently disabled.

There's Also EAP – Similar Acronym, Different Program

New York State's Energy Affordability Program (EAP) provides up to \$500 in annual discounts on energy bills. State officials estimate that 1.5 million households are eligible for the discount but have yet to apply. Contact OFA for details or visit www.ny.gov/EAP.

"SUPPORT OUR SENIORS" HOLIDAY GIVING PROGRAM

End-of-year holidays can be less than joyful for Dutchess County's homebound, low-income older residents, who find it difficult to join friends and family at holiday gatherings. Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino and Office for the Aging want to be sure these older adults are remembered this season, through our new "Support Our Seniors" giving program.

We're looking for donations of new, unwrapped gifts:

- non-slip socks
- blankets and throws
- gloves and mittens
- Sudoku, word-search and crossword books
- Puzzles
- Slippers

- Scarves

Gifts can be dropped off until Monday, December 15th, at the OFA main office at 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie, weekdays from 9:00am-4:30pm. Gifts can also be dropped off until December 15th at any OFA Friendship Center. Operating dates and hours are listed below:

Beacon

1 Forrestal Heights

Mon-Fri, 10a-2p

East Fishkill

East Fishkill Community Center, 890 NY 82, Hopewell Junction

Mon-Fri, 10a-2p

Millerton

North East-Millerton Library Annex

28 Century Blvd., Millerton

Mon-Thu, 10a-2p

Pawling

Town Hall Annex, 154 Charles Colman Blvd. (lower level)

Tue-Thu, 10a-2p

Red Hook

59 Fisk St. (Red Hook Community Center)

Mon-Fri, 10a-2p

South Amenia

First Presbyterian Church, 229 South Amenia Rd., Wassaic

Mon-Thu, 10a-2p

Tri-Town

First Presbyterian Church, 1576 Main St., (US 44), Pleasant Valley

Mon-Thu, 10a-2p

For additional information, contact OFA Outreach Coordinator Linda Edgar at

ledgar@dutchessny.gov or 845-486-2548.

Other news:

Do snacks and successful aging mix? [Depends on the snack.](#)

A solution (maybe) to [shortages of home care workers.](#)

How are [100-year-olds](#) able to thrive? One interesting finding: 40 percent of them play video games.

This week's birthdays:

12/5: Rapper/producer [Dr. Dre](#) (60)

12/6: Actor/comedian [Steven Wright](#) (70)

12/7: Baseball Hall-of-Famer [Johnny Bench](#) (78)

12/8: Irish flute player Sir [James Galway](#) (86)

12/9: Actress Dame [Judi Dench](#) (91)

12/10: Actress [Susan Dey](#) (73)

12/11: Actress/singer/dancer [Rita Moreno](#) (94)

And a Bad Joke!

I got a new pen that can write under water. It can write other words too.