

Dutchess County Office for the Aging

**AGING NEWS – Week of February 9<sup>th</sup>**

February Holiday Note: The Office for the Aging and all OFA Friendship

Centers are closed for the following holidays in February:

Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup> – Lincoln’s Birthday (NY State legal holiday)

Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup> – Presidents Day (national legal holiday)

**“A MATTER OF BALANCE” SPRING CLASS OPENINGS**

For older people who have never fallen, the idea of needing to pay attention to balance can seem distant. Falls only happen to *really* old people, they think.

*Old and frail, and that's not me...*

And then, late one night, they get up to use the bathroom...and down they go.

If they're lucky, they're not seriously hurt; but who wants to trust the rest of their lives to luck?

This doesn't have to happen. Falls are NOT inevitable as we age, and that's why the Office for the Aging offers "A Matter of Balance," a series of eight weekly classes that help older adults learn that fall risk is largely within their control.

### **Proprioception - A Meaningful Mouthful**

Muscle mass tends to decline with age, and so does our sense of proprioception: your body's ability to sense its own position and movements without relying on vision. It's crucial to maintaining balance. Proprioception is the reason we can take it for granted that we can walk from the bedroom to the bathroom without having to think about every movement. We aren't born with it. We first learned it when we learned to walk as toddlers - and as we age, we can re-learn it.

### **Use Your Balance, Or Lose Your Balance**

When we lose proprioception, we trip more. We stub our toes more. We bump into the door frame instead of walking through the doorway.

And we fall more. And even if we weren't hurt in the fall, we often reduce our activity out of a misguided fear that it'll protect us from more falls. On the contrary: Reducing physical activity means less use for the muscles we need to keep us steady on our feet, and our risk of falls goes up.

It doesn't have to be that way.

### **Why "A Matter of Balance" Matters**

You don't have to limit your activity because of fear of falling. With OFA's "A Matter of Balance" class, you can:

Make fall risk controllable;

Set easy fall-reduction goals;

Make simple changes around your home to reduce fall risk; and

Practice exercises to improve strength and balance.

### **Sign Me Up!**

"A Matter of Balance" is an eight-week series of classes that meet once a week for two hours each. Sessions typically take place in the spring and fall.

While space is available, we have two sessions available, in the City of Poughkeepsie and Town of Beekman. The classes begin during the week of March 23.

Because "A Matter of Balance" cannot accept walk-in participants, specific information about class times and venues is provided once a participant's registration is confirmed. To start the process of getting into a class, contact the Office for the Aging at **ofa@dutchessny.gov** or

**845-486-2555.**

At the end, you'll feel more confident in your daily routines, maybe even confident enough to be an "A Matter of Balance" volunteer instructor. The more volunteer instructors we have, the more classes we offer.

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### **OFA MOBILE OFFICE HOURS – FEBRUARY / MARCH**

If you have questions about aging services that would be best served by an in-person meeting, but travel to and from Poughkeepsie is a challenge, OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy is hosting by-appointment OFA Mobile Office Hours around Dutchess County.

Appointments are 30 minutes long at each Mobile Office Hours event. Appointments can be made by calling 845-486-2555 during business hours. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email or text. Here's the schedule:

Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 10a-2p – East Fishkill Friendship Center

890 NY 82, Hopewell Junction

Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, noon-3p – Stanford Free Library, 6035 NY 82,  
Stanfordville

Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 10a-2p – Beacon Friendship Center

1 Forrestal Heights, Beacon

Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10a-2p – South Amenia Friendship Center

229 South Amenia Rd., Wassaic

Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 10a-2p – Pawling Friendship Center

154 Charles Colman Blvd., Pawling

Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, noon-3p – Beekman Town Hall

4 Main St., Poughquag

If your Dutchess County civic organization wants to host a Mobile Office Hours event, email [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov) or call 845-486-2555 during business hours. We're also available for presentations to groups on OFA Services, successful aging, scam prevention, home safety, caregiving, and much more.

## **SUBSTITUTE OFA BUS DRIVERS WANTED**

The Dutchess County Office for the Aging is seeking compassionate and responsible substitute Bus Drivers to transport older adults safely to and from OFA Friendship Centers, scheduled outings, and other destinations.

An ideal candidate will prioritize passenger safety, and create a comfortable, friendly atmosphere for our senior community.

### *Key Responsibilities:*

- Safely operate a passenger bus or van, adhering to all traffic laws and safety regulations.
- Assist older adults with boarding and exiting vehicles, including those using walkers or wheelchairs.
- Follow scheduled pick-up and drop-off times.
- Maintain a clean and well-kept vehicle, reporting any maintenance issues as needed.
- Engage with passengers in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Monitor passengers for signs of distress or medical concerns, and respond appropriately.

### *Qualifications & Requirements:*

- Valid New York State driver's license. Both CDL and non-CDL applicants welcomed.
- Clean driving record and background check.
- Previous experience driving older adults and/or individuals with mobility challenges is preferred.
- Ability to assist passengers with mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.).
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Patience, reliability, and a friendly demeanor.

[Click here for a full description of requirements and qualifications.](#)

To begin the application process, call **845-486-2555** during business hours, or email [jnuccilli@dutchessny.gov](mailto:jnuccilli@dutchessny.gov).

**“HEAP” AND “EAP” ...AND WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM?**



Two home energy programs that help thousands of Dutchess County older adults have similar acronyms. To avoid possible confusion, here's a quick explanation of the difference between HEAP and EAP:

**HEAP** = Home Energy Assistance Program, a federally funded and state-administered grant program that helps income-eligible New York residents pay their energy bills. Last winter, HEAP assisted over 12,000 Dutchess County households, according to the state comptroller's office.

**EAP** = Energy Affordability Program, for New York households with annual income levels at or below 60% of the State Median Income. The program aims to provide financial relief for low-income consumers by making their electric and/or natural gas utility bills more affordable through monthly bill discounts.

If you're eligible for any of the following programs, you're also eligible to enroll in EAP:

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Lifeline Telephone Service Program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)

- Medicaid
- Veterans Disability or Survivors Pension
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Utility Guarantee / Direct Vendor programs
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Safety Net Assistance

To enroll in EAP or verify your EAP enrollment, contact your utility company:

**Central Hudson: 845-452-2700**

**NYSEG: 800-572-1111**

Beginning in 2026, EAP benefits are available to utility customers below median income who do not qualify for assistance under the existing EAPs.

## **AN EARLY SIGN OF SPRING...IT'S TAX SEASON**

FREE tax preparation assistance for qualifying tax filers is available from AARP Foundation Tax-Aide's IRS trained and certified volunteers and the Hudson Valley CA\$H Coalition.

Assistance is available to low to moderate income residents through April 10, 2026, by appointment only. There are over 30 tax sites in the Hudson Valley region, including many in Dutchess County and nearby. Appointments are available six days a week, days and evenings.

To schedule an appointment, call [United Way's Hudson Valley Region Helpline](#), 2-1-1 (1-800-899-1479). The 2-1-1 Helpline is open Monday-Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

In Dutchess County, tax prep venues are located in Beacon, East Fishkill, Fishkill, Hopewell Junction, Hyde Park, Millerton, Pleasant Valley, Poughkeepsie (City and Town), Tivoli, Wappingers Falls, and Wingdale.

Filers do not have to be AARP members or older adults to receive service. 211 call specialists will review each caller's eligibility and, if within the scope of the program, schedule an appointment.

## **OFA CENTRAL KITCHEN VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

OFA's Nutrition Services division is looking for weekday volunteer assistance in our central kitchen, at OFA headquarters in Poughkeepsie (114 Delafield St.).

Every weekday morning, Nutrition Services volunteers help prepare and package hundreds of daily hot meals for OFA Friendship Center clients and homebound older adults throughout Dutchess County.

If you are available any or all weekday mornings (roughly 9am-noon), and can stand while doing kitchen work, find out more about this volunteer opportunity by emailing [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov).

### **“SENIOR PARK PALETTE” RETURNS IN FEBRUARY**

OFA and Dutchess County Parks are presenting the 2026 series of “Senior Park Palette” classes for Dutchess County older adults (age 60+). Dutchess County residents over 60 can sign up for one of the following free classes:

~~Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:30-3:45 pm – Poughkeepsie Friendship Center, 114 Delafield St. (AT CAPACITY)~~

Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2:30-3:45 pm – Millerton Friendship Center, 28 Century Blvd. (Library Annex)

Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-3:15 pm – Red Hook Friendship Center, 59  
Fisk St. (Red Hook Community Center)

Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2:30-3:45 pm – East Fishkill Friendship Center,  
890 NY 82, Hopewell Junction (East Fishkill Community Center)

All supplies are provided. Each class size is limited to 12.

### **SIGN UP FOR ALZHEIMER'S MINI CONFERENCE (Wed 3/18)**

Join the Alzheimer's Association, the Office for the Aging, Sun River  
Health and community partners for a mini-conference and listening session  
on Alzheimer's disease, dementia and memory loss:

**Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11:30am**

**Millerton-NorthEast Library Annex (OFA Friendship Center)**

**28 Century Blvd., Millerton**

It's essential learning for older adults and caregivers of all ages. Sign up  
by calling OFA at 845-486-2555 or emailing [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov).

The event is supported in part by grants from the New York State  
Department of Health.

## **Other news:**

[Small changes in lifestyle](#) can bring larger-than-expected rewards.

The last time you read the words [endoplasmic reticulum](#) might have been in high school biology, but it turns out this cell component is worth re-learning about.

How do a few people manage to live [past 110](#)? By our count, we've had at least three Dutchess residents who reached this milestone.

[The shingles vaccine may be linked to slower biological aging.](#)

A [bipartisan federal online scam advertising prevention bill](#) has been introduced in the US Senate. In the meantime, if you see something like “game-worn Super Bowl jerseys” being advertised for too-good-to-be-true low prices on social media...those would be scams.

Home modifications can help people age in place more easily, [but what about the price tag?](#) There's also a price tag involved in doing nothing, though. If you're a homeowner who's concerned about being able to keep your home safe and "up to code" as you age, contact OFA to find out more about home-repair programs for which older adults might qualify. [Here's one, supervised by the county Department of Planning and Development.](#)

A history lesson! [Amenia's small but key role in the early civil rights movement.](#)

Let's hear it for [average old people!](#)

### **This week's birthdays:**

2/6: Singer/songwriter [Rick Astley](#) (60)

2/7: Actor/comedian [Chris Rock](#) (61)

2/8: Lawyer/author [John Grisham](#) (71)

2/9: Singer/songwriter [Carole King](#) (84)

2/10: 7-time Olympic gold medalist [Mark Spitz](#) (76)

2/11: Actress/singer [Tina Louise](#) (92)

2/12: Guitarist/songwriter [Steve Hackett](#) (76)

### **Bad Joke time!**

*What do you call 53 guys watching the Super Bowl?*

The Dallas Cowboys.

(We're not about to pick on all you Jets, Giants and Bills fans.)