

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of January 8th

Note: the Office for the Aging and OFA Friendship Centers are closed on Monday, January 15th, the national Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

2024 OFA CALENDAR ALREADY BUSY

We've heard that midwinter is the "slow" time of year for older adults. We'll only allow that this is what it may look like at a brief glance but take a closer look. Behind the scenes we're laying ground for a 2024 OFA activities calendar that'll be every bit as full as the 2023 calendar, and then some.

First on the 2024 calendar is the annual Senior Park Prints series, co-hosted by OFA and Dutchess County Parks. If you're a Dutchess County older adult (60+) who's looking to develop a new skill, register and join us at one of the following free classes:

- **Thursday, January 18th - 2:30-3:45pm** - Office for the Aging, 114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie
- **Thursday, February 1st - 2:30-3:45pm** - Millerton Northeast Millerton Library Annex, 28 Century Blvd., Millerton
- **Thursday, February 15th - 2:30-3:45pm** - East Fishkill Community Center, 890 Route 82, Hopewell Junction

Space is limited to 12 registered older adults per event. Call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 to register.

All art supplies will be provided, and each artist can take home their new masterpiece after class.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

If we had a magic wand to make one challenge of aging disappear, we'd choose preventing falls every time. Older adult falls just in New York State cost over \$3 billion in medical costs annually, between out-of-pocket costs and those borne by taxpayers via Medicare and Medicaid. The loss in quality of life due to falls is immeasurable, given that both falling itself and the fear of falling can lead to older adults limiting their physical activity and social engagements. When an

older adult pulls back from their fullest possible life in this way, further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness can follow.

It doesn't have to be that way.

OFA's twice-a-year "A Matter of Balance" classes begin their first sessions of 2024 in the late winter or early spring. The classes cover not only fall prevention, but help older adults learn different ways of thinking about their prospects for falling, and that falls are not an inevitable accompaniment to aging.

Call OFA to find about classes near you and check out dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise for more information about "A Matter of Balance" along with all our exercise offerings for older adults.

WHAT IF IT SNOWS?

While this winter so far has been mainly snow-free, Dutchess County has recorded many an unseasonably warm day immediately followed by a nor'easter dumping a foot or more of snow.

When winter weather disrupts OFA activities, find out about it by following Dutchess County Government at facebook.com/DutchessCoGov or

[x.com/DutchessCoGov](https://www.dutchessco.gov). Subscribers to OFA's weekly emails can be advised of cancellations as well; email bjones@dutchessny.gov to get on the list. We also advise area radio stations of cancellations, but many stations have moved their traditional cancellation lists online.

We also reach out individually to clients of our Friendship Center and Home Delivered Meals program. HDM clients receive shelf-stable meals when approaching inclement weather may impede deliveries.

"SENIOR PARK PRINTS" IN POUGHKEEPSIE, MILLERTON, EAST FISHKILL

(Updated date for East Fishkill event)

Dutchess County Parks and the Office for the Aging are collaborating again this winter on the free Senior Park Prints Art Series taking place throughout the county, where older adults can pick up painting skills they may have never known they had.

Dutchess County older adults (60+) can sign up for any one of the following sessions. Registration opens at 9 am Wednesday, January 3rd:

- **Thursday, January 18th - 2:30-3:45pm** - Office for the Aging, 114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie
- **Thursday, February 1st - 2:30-3:45pm** - Millerton Northeast Millerton Library Annex, 28 Century Blvd., Millerton
- **Thursday, February 15th - 2:30-3:45pm** - East Fishkill Community Center, 890 Route 82, Hopewell Junction

All supplies will be provided, but space is limited to 12 participants per event.

Registration is required by calling OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

OFA ENHANCES SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

For every older adult in Dutchess County there is, or will eventually be, at least one caregiver. Everyday tasks that were once simple for an older adult become more challenging, especially without the help of a caregiver. Often, it's an unpaid family member who takes on the role of caregiver, in addition to their roles as parent, spouse, and all-around helper.

An older adult's resistance to accepting help can also be a challenge. That's why OFA continually reminds older adults that independence does *not* mean

going it alone without help. A key part of an older adult's goal of aging gracefully is to accept help gracefully.

It's a reminder that works for caregivers, too.

Many caregivers don't think of themselves as such, especially when caring for a family member. They're simply caring for parents and grandparents who cared for them as children. Regardless of the nature of the relationship between the carer and the person being cared for, the rewards of caregiving can be outweighed by caregiving's physical, emotional, financial, and mental stresses.

Much as a family member might love the person being cared for, an overstressed caregiver can become like a candle whose wick has burned away; there's nothing left with which to give enough light.

To address the potential for caregiver burnout, we need to first define what a caregiver is: a person who provides physical or psychological care to someone else. For the Office for the Aging's purposes, these are the most common caregiving scenarios:

Are you over the age of 18 and caring for an older adult (age 60+)?

Are you over the age of 18 caring for an individual (any age) with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder (e.g., dementia, traumatic brain injury, mild cognitive impairment, chronic traumatic encephalopathy)?

Are you over the age of 55 and living with and caring for a child (not biological) under the age of 18?

Are you over the age of 55 and living with and caring for an adult (can be a biological child) aged 18-59 with a disability?

If you answered “yes” to one or more of the above questions, you’re a caregiver. It’s also possible to be more than one kind of caregiver at the same time. The classic example is the “sandwich generation” caregiver, who’s raising their own children - and sometimes grandchildren - while also caring for an older adult.

OFA can help Dutchess County caregivers take the next step, to measure the risk for caregiver stress and burnout. This is why we’ve created dutchessny.gov/ofacaregiver, to help a caregiver get a better understanding of their unique role and find out more about supports available to them through OFA.

For caregivers who aren't online, call OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours to find out more.

“FRIENDLY CALLS” ORIENTATIONS THIS MONTH

Interested in becoming a volunteer for OFA's Friendly Calls program? We have orientations scheduled throughout January at OFA headquarters (114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie). Pick one:

Wednesday, January 10th – 1:30 pm

Tuesday, January 16th – 10:00 am

Monday, January 22nd – 3:00 pm

To schedule your orientation and learn more about Friendly Calls, call OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours or email bjones@dutchessny.gov.

More orientations will be scheduled, so check for updates at www.dutchessny.gov/calendar.

DUTCHESS COUNTY GOVERNMENT 2024 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Making plans to contact or visit OFA or a Dutchess County Government office this year? Here's the 2024 schedule of holidays. On the following holidays, OFA offices and Friendship Centers are closed, with Home Delivered Meals clients receiving shelf-stable meals in advance of each holiday:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 15

Lincoln's Birthday – Monday, February 12 (New York State holiday)

Presidents Day/Washington's Birthday – Monday, February 19

Memorial Day – Monday, May 27

Juneteenth Day – Wednesday, June 19

Independence Day – Thursday, July 4

Labor Day – Monday, September 2

Columbus Day – Monday, October 14

Election Day – Tuesday, November 5

Veterans Day – Monday, November 11

Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 28

Christmas Day – Wednesday, December 25

New Year's Day – Wednesday, January 1, 2025

AND WHAT ABOUT THE SUMMER PICNIC SCHEDULE?

We've been working on it since the end of last summer's OFA Picnic schedule. We can tell you at this point that the picnic schedule will be similar to the 2023 schedule, with 12 picnics taking place between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The complete picnic schedule will be released in the spring, and Dutchess County households with at least one resident age 60+ can expect their picnic reminder cards to arrive in the mail 6-8 weeks before the picnic serving their community.

Many thanks to 2024 picnic season supporter The Pines at Poughkeepsie.

Other news:

What older adults should know about [the "RSV" virus](#). If vaccination for flu and/or COVID is on your calendar, talk to your health care provider about [the RSV vaccine](#).

[As of December, no effective treatment](#) for RSV was available, meaning that prevention is key.

[A lot of drivers have these bad habits](#). You don't, of course. Readers of this newsletter are excellent drivers...but...if you're interested in brushing up on your skills, give OFA a call during business hours at 845-486-2555 or email ofa@dutchessny.gov. We're finding out how many people would be interested in taking an older driver safety course like we offered with AARP last year. The class(es) would be offered in the spring, summer and/or fall.

[Older adults' participation in online gaming is up 33 percent](#) in recent years. One 81-year-old great grandmother draws tens of thousands of viewers when she plays World of Warcraft.

[Poughkeepsie used to be the rowing capital of the world](#). Meanwhile, if we get a good sustained cold snap, [maybe the ice yachts can come out](#).

A weather report from a postmistress in Ireland was key to the success of the D-Day invasion in 1944; [that postmistress, Maureen Flavin Sweeney, passed away recently at age 100.](#)

This week's birthdays:

1/6: Former NY Jets/college football coach [Lou Holtz](#) (87)

1/7: Singer/songwriter [Kenny Loggins](#) (76)

1/8: Singer [Shirley Bassey](#) (87)

1/9: Oldest living Olympic medalist [Agnes Keleti](#) (103)

1/10: Singer/songwriter [Rod Stewart](#) (79)

1/11: Golfer/architect [Ben Crenshaw](#) (72)

1/12: Magician [The Amazing Kreskin](#) (89)

Nothing to do on a cold winter's day? Share a Bad Joke with someone.

What do you call a lazy kangaroo? A pouch potato.