

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

## **AGING NEWS**

For the week of July 17<sup>th</sup>

### **DEATHS IN FALLS INCREASE – BUT YOU CAN HELP**

The advice the Office for the Aging provides for older adults and their caregivers isn't necessarily carved in stone. When new evidence emerges to challenge the original advice, we adjust our advice accordingly – as is the case with the past few years' findings on injuries and deaths caused by falls among older adults.

Fatal falls among older adults have doubled since 2000, rising across all ethnic groups, according to data released this year by Pennsylvania State University. The increase in deaths and injuries is happening even though seniors are typically advised to exercise more, have their vision checked, cut back on sleep medications when possible, and install grab bars in bathrooms and other areas of potential risk.

So what's going wrong?

One thing we've learned is that the advice mentioned above needs to be

tailored to individuals so that they're more likely to act on the advice and take whatever additional fall prevention steps are necessary. U.S. Centers for Disease Control health scientists note that older adults are living longer with conditions that used to be fatal, and that more older adults are taking medications that can affect brain function and balance, such as opioids. Both these factors can contribute to falls.

One truth remains: that falls are *not* inevitable as you age.

One excellent preventive step you can take is to sign up for an OFA "A Matter of Balance" classes, now registering seniors for eight-week sessions, with classes held once a week at locations throughout Dutchess County. The evidence based "A Matter of Balance" program is ideal for you, if you are a resident of Dutchess County, age 60 or more and ambulatory, and you'd like to maximize the likelihood that you'll be able to live independently in your own home for as long as possible.

You can sign up for "A Matter of Balance" by calling the Office for the Aging at 845-486-2555. Outside the 845 area code, our toll-free number is 866-486-2555. Classes fill up quickly. If it turns out that your preferred "A Matter of Balance" is fully booked, visit [www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise](http://www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise) to look at OFA's other fitness options.

Other steps you can take include asking your medical providers about how to receive a comprehensive fall risk assessment, recommended by both the federal Centers for Disease Control and the American Geriatrics Society. Such an assessment becomes increasingly necessary in the case of those at the highest risk for falls – that is, older adults who have already fallen more than once or sought medical attention for falls.

A fall risk assessment should cover all the issues that can contribute to falls: gait, lower-body strength, balance, medication, vision, home environment, and blood pressure measure when getting up from a seated position.

What else can you do in the meantime to prevent falls? That'll be the topic of next week's column.

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

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***[ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov) website: [www.dutchessny.gov/aging](http://www.dutchessny.gov/aging)***

## **VOLUNTEER HELPERS WANTED AT OFA CENTRAL KITCHEN IN POUGHKEEPSIE**

OFA's Home Delivered Meals (HDM) program serves nutritious weekday meals to about 500 homebound older adults throughout Dutchess County. That's

thousands of meals every week, all year. It's OFA volunteers who keep the HDM program humming – drivers, as well as helpers at the OFA central kitchen in Poughkeepsie.

If you are free to help in our kitchen any weekday mornings – but especially Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and/or Friday - please email [bjones@dutchessny.gov](mailto:bjones@dutchessny.gov) or call 845-486-2555 during business hours. We're also interested in hearing from prospective volunteer drivers anywhere in the county. Mileage reimbursement is available for volunteers who use their own vehicles for deliveries.

### **PICNIC VOLUNTEERS ALSO WANTED (THIS WEEK IN PINE PLAINS)**

We have volunteering opportunities available at all Summer Picnics. There are picnics on the calendar every Wednesday through August 30th. For volunteers under age 18, a signed parental waiver is required.

This week's picnic is taking place on Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, at Stissing Mountain Jr/Sr High School on Route 199 in Pine Plains.

We'll need help on picnic days getting tables and chairs set up, guiding drivers to parking spaces, bringing food and drinks to senior guests, and more.

Besides the Pine Plains picnic, our remaining picnics take place in Wappinger (7/26), Pleasant Valley (8/2), Fishkill (8/9), the City of Poughkeepsie (8/16), East Fishkill (8/23) and LaGrange (8/30).

For a picnic schedule, see [www.dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics](http://www.dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics).

For information on other OFA volunteering opportunities, visit [www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer](http://www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer) or email [bjones@dutchessny.gov](mailto:bjones@dutchessny.gov).

## **SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM NOW UNDERWAY**

Qualifying older adults have an opportunity to improve their nutrition while supporting local farms this summer, thanks to New York's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).

Qualifying for SFMNP is straightforward: be a Dutchess County resident at least 60 years of age and receiving benefits through Social Security, public assistance, SNAP, HEAP, or Section 8 housing. Alternately, an older adult may qualify if household income is below 185% of US poverty guidelines. Older adults living outside Dutchess County should contact their home county's Office for the Aging.

To find out more about qualifications, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 or email [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov). Residents of low-income housing complexes may be able to find out more about SFMNP from their residence manager.

We will distribute a limited number of SFMNP booklets across the county from our main office in Poughkeepsie, and to qualifying participants of our OFA Friendship Center and Home Delivered Meals programs throughout the County.

**SFMNP booklets are distributed from the OFA main office *only on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 4 p.m.*** Distribution hours at OFA Friendship Centers are available on request. OFA Friendship Centers are in Beacon, East Fishkill, Millerton, Pawling, Pleasant Valley (Tri-Town), Poughkeepsie, Red Hook, and South Amenia.

Each booklet contains five checks valued at \$5 each. Treat the checks like cash to avoid loss or theft.

Customers redeeming SFMNP checks will not receive cash change, so use the whole check whenever possible. SFMNP checks cannot be exchanged for cash.

Distribution will continue throughout the 2023 growing season for as long as supplies last. SFMNP checks can be used until November 30th or a participating

market closes for the season, whichever comes first. Leftover checks from 2022 or earlier years are no longer valid.

The most recent available list of participating markets in Dutchess County is available at [www.dutchessny.gov/OFANutrition](http://www.dutchessny.gov/OFANutrition). For a statewide list, go to [www.agriculture.ny.gov/farmersmarkets](http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/farmersmarkets). New markets often enter the program in the summer and fall, so check back regularly.

Eligible recipients must personally sign the Statement of Eligibility Form to receive SFMNP checks. Checks cannot be mailed to eligible older adults. A valid Power of Attorney (POA) may sign for checks and pick up books for an eligible older adult.

A variety of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey may be purchased with SFMNP benefits. “Locally grown” produce can be grown within State borders but may also include areas in neighboring States.

## **NEXT OFA FRIENDLY CALLS VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS AND INFO SESSIONS**

The OFA Friendly Calls program is a great opportunity to help our older adults avoid loneliness and social isolation, with the convenience of volunteering

from home if you so choose. The volunteering program is open to ages 18 and above; maybe it's an option for those who have recently graduated from high school or are home from college for the summer.

Each orientation session lasts 40-50 minutes. Our next orientation sessions will be held at OFA's City of Poughkeepsie headquarters:

**Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup> – 3:30 pm**

**Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup> – 3:30 pm**

To register for orientation at OFA, or to request a group orientation at your place of business or meeting venue, call 845-486-2555 or email [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov). We'll schedule additional orientations all summer, throughout the county. Contact OFA to schedule your orientation.

**Other news:**

How the shortage in home care workers affects [older adults in the UK](#).

The Alzheimer's drug Leqembi [recently received FDA approval](#).



[A genetic variant specific to those of African ancestry](#) is associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's.

[6 things doctors wish their patients knew about better nutrition.](#)

Here's the story of a pioneering woman aeronaut from the Hudson Valley. Spoiler alert: [She didn't use a plane, though.](#)

[Older adults are taking to the social media site TikTok.](#)

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

7/15: Singer/songwriter [Linda Ronstadt](#) (77)

7/16: Football coach/commentator [Jimmy Johnson](#) (80)

7/17: Actor/producer [Donald Sutherland](#) (88)

7/18: Yankees/Mets manager [Joe Torre](#) (83)

7/19: Songwriter/guitarist/astrophysicist [Brian May](#) (Queen) (76)

7/20: Guitarist/songwriter [Carlos Santana](#) (76)

7/21: Cartoonist [Garry Trudeau](#) (75)

### **And a Bad Joke!**

Q: What does a clock do when it's hungry?

A: It goes back four seconds.