

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of October 14th

Note: The OFA and all OFA Friendship Centers will be closed for the national Columbus Day holiday, on Monday, October 14th.

You may have noticed that the world is often an unfriendly place for older adults. Whether it's due to simple mistakes or outright ageism is sometimes hard to determine, but that doesn't mean any of us have to take it lying down.

What we at OFA are looking for is a change in attitudes, no matter the age, from "aging is something to avoid" to "aging is something to embrace." This isn't our emotional reaction; it's based on sound science. Not only are the negative stereotypes of aging incorrect, they're often completely backwards.

One example: While it's true that studies show that cognitive abilities and reaction times often worsen with age, those same studies note that other brain functions like conscientiousness, regulating emotions, and ignoring distractions remain strong as we age - and can even improve.

Among the Office for the Aging's clientele are people of all physical abilities, from quadriplegics to marathon runners. Our mission is to serve them all, and their caregivers. Ageism would have all our older adults lumped in with the least healthy, the least capable, and the least alert among us. It becomes a barrier to access to OFA services for the older adults who could be helped most by OFA.

"I don't want to talk to them. They'll put me in a home!"

It's a common objection from older adults with real concerns about their future independence but who aren't familiar with what OFA can do to improve their chances of remaining independent.

Through no fault of their own, they may have internalized society's ageism. As readers who already know what OFA can do through your experience in OFA's Home Delivered Meals and/or Friendship Center programs, you can help spread OFA's message, counteract ageism, and help older adults get to know us before they need us.

Let's Try an Exercise (This One's for Younger People, Too)

Think of any older person you know and come up with five words or phrases to describe them. Don't overthink; just use the first ones that come to mind.

Take a look at those words and phrases. Are they positive or negative?

What tends to happen is that some positive words and phrases like "wise" and "kind" will come up, but after negatives like "frail" and "stubborn." That's been the experience of Yale University aging science expert Dr. Becca Levy, who found that negative age beliefs can adversely affect our health, while positive beliefs can add as many as 7.5 healthy years to our lives. Dr. Levy

exposed her lab subjects to positive messages, and the result was an improvement in balance, memory, and even the will to live.

But maybe you're not a natural positive thinker. Are you doomed? Probably not; after all, you've read this far, and given the space limitations of this newsletter we must be getting to the good part by now.

The Good Part

Building a habit of positive thinking is as easy as breakfast, lunch and dinner. Every time you sit down for a meal, think of something that went well for you, an achievement by yourself or a loved one, a bit of good news, a happy memory...it can be just about anything, long as it's positive. Do this for a few weeks and you'll be well on your way.

Put together a "portfolio" of positive older role models. Some can be family members or neighbors; others can be well-known people from anywhere in

the world. Think about their qualities, and how you could incorporate them into your own life.

The positive beliefs can lead to positive actions: better nutrition, more exercise, greater wellbeing, less stress. From here, you might experience what's called a "preference cascade." It's that moment where a thought like this comes to you: Holy cow, I'm not the only one who thinks this way. I'm not alone!

And that's how change for the better is achieved: from the bottom up. Eventually, the journalists writing fretful articles about the "silver tsunami" of older adults take a second look at the landscape and realize what they missed the first time around: While the growing number of older people enjoying healthy independence as they age into their 80s, 90s and beyond can be a challenge for our financial and human assets, it's also an achievement that has never happened before in human history. More of us have more of what no business or government project can create: time, and the good health to use it well.

***Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging,
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2024 OFA “SENIOR PROM” IS SOLD OUT

We said seats would go fast...and they did, faster than ever before.

Any payments that arrived at OFA after Friday, September 27th will be returned.

OFA “NAVIGATING MEDICARE” CLASSES FOR THE FALL (SO FAR)

Medicare’s annual Open Enrollment period begins on October 15th every year. The Office for the Aging has added additional “Navigating Medicare” classes to the year-round schedule of classes at the Poughkeepsie Galleria Community Room (2001 South Rd., Poughkeepsie), Adriaance Library

in Poughkeepsie (93 Market St.) and Starr Library in Rhinebeck (68 W. Market St.), plus extra classes we've added for Open Enrollment season.

Here's what's on the fall schedule so far, along with how to call and register for a class:

10/16/24, 10AM	Poughkeepsie Galleria (Community Room)	Call OFA
10/17/24, 11am	Amenia Free Library 3309 NY 343, Amenia	845-373-8273
10/21/24, 5:30pm	Adriance Library	845-485-3445 x3380
10/25/24, 1 pm	Fishkill Recreation Center 793 NY 52, Fishkill	845-831-3371
10/28/24, 4pm	Starr Library, Rhinebeck	Call OFA
10/30/24, 2pm	Howland Library 313 Main St., Beacon	845-831-1134 or use the calendar at beaconlibrary.org
11/7/24, 9:30am	Boardman Road Branch Library 141 Boardman Road, Poughkeepsie	845-485-3445 x3380
11/20/24, 10am	Poughkeepsie Galleria (Community Room)	Call OFA
11/25/24, 4pm	Starr Library	Call OFA

Social Security [has announced a 2.5% cost-of-living increase for 2025](#).

Is this season's flu shot effective? [Not as much as experts had hoped, but still worth getting](#).

Is an older adult's falling connected in any way with incidence of dementia later? [Maybe](#), according to recent research.

More [older workers with disabilities](#) have been able to find remote work opportunities.

This week's birthdays:

10/11: Singer/songwriter [Daryl Hall](#) (78)

10/12: Yankees shortstop/sportscaster [Tony Kubek](#) (89)

10/13: Disc jockey ["Cousin Brucie" Morrow](#) (89)

10/14: Fashion designer [Ralph Lauren](#) (85)

10/15: [Sarah, Duchess of York](#) (Sarah Ferguson) (65)

10/16: Actor/director/screenwriter [Tim Robbins](#) (66)

10/17: Physician/astronaut [Mae Jemison](#) (68)

The Bad Joke!

Where do penguins go to vote?

The South Poll.