



The Tri-Town Friendship Center Is Back

One of the many disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was the planned move of OFA's "Tri-Town" Senior Friendship Center to a new location within the region it serves: LaGrange, Pleasant Valley, and the Town of Poughkeepsie.

We're delighted to announce that Tri-Town now has a new home, at the First Presbyterian Church of Pleasant Valley on Main St. (Route 44), right next to the new town library that's under construction. It's easily accessible from all three towns (thus the name), along with many neighboring communities.

All eight of our Senior Friendship Centers have now returned to full in-person operating capacity. There's a list of friendship centers, operating hours and contact information on Page 2 of this *Spotlight*.

Tri-Town operates Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. If you were a former Tri-Town client, we'd love to have you back. If you live in central Dutchess and are curious about trying out Tri-Town, or if you'd like to try out a Senior Friendship Center near you, please contact us and we'll let you know all about them.

Do we need volunteers at Tri-Town? Absolutely, and we also welcome volunteers anywhere in Dutchess County. Our year-round Home Delivered Meals (HDM) program needs volunteer drivers. Lend a helping hand at any of the OFA's eight Senior Friendship Centers. We also have volunteering opportunities at upcoming OFA outdoor events in 2022. OFA's exercise, tai chi, A Matter of Balance and Bingocize classes always appreciate new volunteer class leaders, and there are many more opportunities. Read about them on Page X of this *Spotlight*.

Todd N. Tancredi
Director

A Message from County Executive Marc Molinaro

Friends,

We hope you've got space on your calendar for all the Office for the Aging events we're planning for 2022.



Winter weather can keep us indoors sometimes, but there'll still be opportunities to take part in virtual OFA exercise classes, including our popular "A Matter of Balance" class. It's been helping Dutchess County seniors make changes that reduce the risk of falling, while increasing activity levels and strength. It's just one of the many virtual classes being offered over the winter. Check for more on the back page of this Spotlight.

Soon as the snow melts in the spring, OFA will kick off a full schedule of outdoor events, beginning with "Pancakes in the Park" in March, in conjunction with Dutchess County Parks. OFA and Parks are also working together to explore ways for more seniors to enjoy Bowdoin and Wilcox Parks, along with the Harlem Valley and Dutchess Rail Trails. OFA also takes part in the annual Caregiver Conference, set for May 25th with vital assistance from the Alzheimer's Association.

Right after Memorial Day, our 30th season of OFA Senior Picnics gets underway. We're hoping to return to a traditional "sit-down" picnic format for 2022, and by spring we should have a better idea about whether that can happen. We have the drive-through picnic option available, just in case. Drive-In Bingo will return as well...and all eight of our Senior Friendship Centers are back in full operation.

Reach out to OFA to find out more about all the great things that are happening!

Have a safe and happy holiday,

Marcus J. Molinaro
County Executive

Free 16th Annual Conference for Caregivers

Caregiving: How To Stay On Track



Save The Date

Thursday, May 25th, 2022

The Grandview

176 Rinaldi Blvd., Poughkeepsie

(Registration opens late April 2022)

Organized by

Alzheimer's Association, Hudson Valley Chapter
Dutchess County Office for the Aging
Hudson Valley Hospice

Parkinson's Disease Support Group of the Mid-Hudson Valley
Wingate Healthcare

--- Clip and save! ---

OFA Senior Friendship Centers

★ Open Mon-Fri ■ Open Mon-Thu

▲ Open Tue-Thu

All centers open 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

unless otherwise noted

Call the center near you for more information

Beacon ★

1 Forrestal Heights

845-838-4871

East Fishkill ★

890 NY 82, Hopewell Junction
(East Fishkill Community Center)

845-226-3605

Millerton

28 Century Blvd. (Library Annex)

518-789-3081

Pawling ▲

154 Charles Colman Blvd.

845-855-9308

Poughkeepsie ★ (open 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.)

114 Delafield St.

845-486-2564

Red Hook ★

59 Fisk St. (Red Hook Community Center)

845-475-1129

South Amenia ■

229 South Amenia Rd., Wassaic
(South Amenia Presbyterian Church)

845-275-2661

Tri-Town ■

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

845-275-8565

Enjoy a nutritious lunch and socialization, plus useful and entertaining activities including exercise, bingo, nutrition counseling, OFA presentations, picnics, shopping trips, dancing, games...

...and plenty more!

SPOTLIGHT ON SENIORS

Marcus J. Molinaro — County Executive
Todd N. Tancredi — Director, Office for the Aging
Brian Jones — Editor, Spotlight on Seniors

Dutchess County Office for the Aging
114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie NY 12601

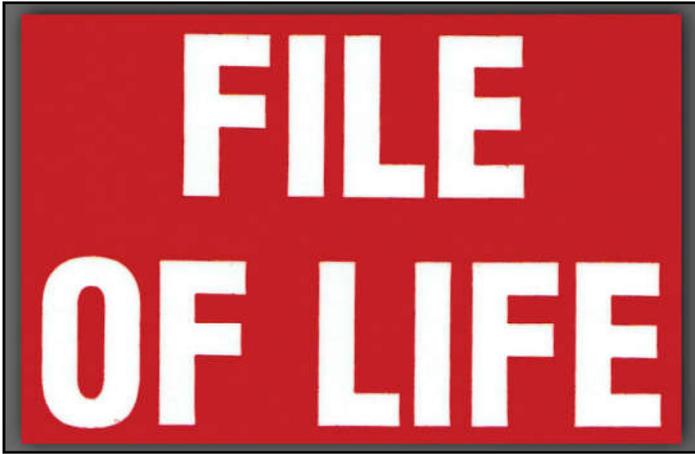
845-486-2555 / toll free 866-486-2555

Email: ofa@dutchessny.gov
Web: www.dutchessny.gov/aging

Available for free at libraries, senior centers and municipal buildings throughout Dutchess County.

Distributed in February, June, September and December, with a Medicare-focused edition in October.

To be added to or removed from our mailing list, call (845) 486-2544 or email bjones@dutchessny.gov.



A File of Life Speaks For You When You Can't

A *File of Life* is designed to help first responders quickly obtain correct medical and contact information during emergencies at your home, in situations where you may be unable to communicate.

The File of Life includes a refrigerator magnet that holds a card on which vital information can be recorded. **Important:** When recording this information, use a pencil so that it's easy to update medical conditions and medications as needed.

Contact OFA if you or a Dutchess County senior you know needs a File of Life. While we cannot mail the File of Life, one can be picked up at OFA offices in Poughkeepsie. We can also arrange for a File of Life to be available for you to pick up at an OFA Senior Friendship Center near you. See Page 2 for Friendship Center contact information.

We also bring Files of Life to OFA outreach group presentations throughout Dutchess County. Presentation topics include successful aging, scam prevention and more. Senior housing property managers and municipal senior center managers anywhere in Dutchess County can arrange for a presentation by contacting OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones at bjones@dutchessny.gov or **845-486-2544**.

Holiday Warning Signs To Watch For

Seniors and their loved ones haven't gotten to see each other as much as they'd like during the pandemic. If the holiday season is bringing a rare opportunity for in-person connection, family members have an opportunity to ensure that senior loved ones are aging with respect and dignity. Here are some things to look out for and discuss with senior loved ones:

- Do they need help with housekeeping, bathing, dressing, shopping, meal preparation, money management, transportation or medications?
- How often do they socialize with others, either in person or remotely?
- If there is a caregiver present, does that person understand the senior's medical conditions?

The National Center on Elder Abuse urges people to watch for signs of a senior self-neglecting, or being neglected or abused by others - keeping in mind that many abusers are related to the older person.

If your senior loved one lives in the community, you can direct your concerns about potential elder abuse to an Office of Adult Protective Services - **845-486-3300** in Dutchess County. If the person lives in a licensed facility, reach out to a representative of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). Their regional office is in Hyde Park, and can be reached at **845-229-4680**. Besides Dutchess, the local LTCOP office also serves Columbia, Greene, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties.

For help with ensuring a senior continues to age successfully and independently, contact the Office for the Aging in your loved one's home county. Every county in New York State has an office devoted to aging services, as does New York City and the City of Yonkers. If your senior loved one lives outside New York, their aging services may be handled on a local, regional or state level.

NYSOFA Honors Dutchess Volunteers



Our senior volunteers bring tremendous value to Dutchess County's seniors and caregivers, with the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) estimating the annual value of all senior volunteers' work throughout the county at well over \$100 million.

NYSOFA recently issued its annual recognition of OFA volunteers making a difference for older New Yorkers, at a virtual celebration held in November. Among the honorees are two Dutchess County volunteers in our Home Delivered Meals program: Sue van Oss (above), and Michael Sawitsky (right).



Sue and Mike both deliver midday meals to homebound seniors in the Towns of LaGrange, Pleasant Valley and Poughkeepsie as part of the HDM program, which provides meals for over 400 homebound seniors throughout Dutchess County.

Sue, Mike, and hundreds of other HDM volunteers provide more than meals - they're trained to note their clients' emotional and physical state, and are thus often the first to notice when something's amiss. This enables seniors' caregivers to be alerted quickly to medical needs that may require intervention.

The more volunteers we have, the more seniors we can help. Besides HDM volunteers, we're also looking for volunteer exercise class leaders, clerical volunteers, volunteer helpers at upcoming outdoor events, and more. Email bjones@dutchessny.gov or call **845-486-2544** for more information.

What "EISEP" Can Do For Seniors

"I had no idea I was eligible for..."

It's a phrase we hear a lot from seniors who contact the Office for the Aging looking for help in living independently. OFA wants to be sure seniors find all the available help for which they're eligible.

One program that comes in handy for seniors goes by the acronym EISEP, short for **Enhanced In-Home Services for the Elderly Program**. Within EISEP are the following services:

Information and Referral on home care options and long-term care information;

Case Management, screening, assessment, care planning, determining eligibility for program subsidies, arranging and authorizing service delivery, services follow-up and monitoring;

In-Home Services, including housekeeping and chores, homemaking, and personal care;

Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) units, which assist people to live active, independent lives by linking them to year-round assistance 24 hours a day. A PERS unit can be used for fire, police, and medical emergencies.

How do I find out about EISEP eligibility?

EISEP is targeted to serve seniors age 60 and older, whose income is low but still above Medicaid level. Eligibility is determined through an assessment of an individual's situation, needs and financial eligibility. The assessment is conducted, in the individual's home, by an EISEP Case Manager. There is no charge for assessment or case management services, but there may be charges for in-home and ancillary services.

Find out more about EISEP by contacting OFA: **845-486-2555** or ofa@dutchessny.gov.

2022 New York Medicaid Look-Back Changes

We've been following developments in New York State's new Medicaid "look-back" law as it applies to community-based home care, ever since the new law was announced in early 2020, near the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The state law applies to the process of applying for a Medicaid-funded home care program for qualifying seniors, whose families may be transferring assets in anticipation of making a new application. Thanks to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, more changes are expected in 2022 - and maybe 2023.

The law was to have originally taken effect in October 2020, but the State Department of Health has repeatedly pushed back the law's effective date, in response to federal law barring states from restricting Medicaid eligibility during the ongoing public health emergency, as declared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The nationwide emergency declaration was extended again by HHS in October 2021. It was the seventh extension thus far, and the emergency declaration now runs through January 13, 2022. Whether extensions continue beyond that date depends on HHS – and therefore, on the path taken by the pandemic.

We expect additional updates to regulations as 2022 begins. Watch for more news during the first quarter, by subscribing to OFA's *Aging News* emails via the "DutchessDelivery" service available at bit.ly/Dutchess-Delivery.

For those without internet access, weekly OFA *Golden Living* columns appear in several area weekly newspapers: the *Northern Dutchess News* and *Southern Dutchess News*; the *Millerton News*; and *The Hudson Valley News*. Homebound seniors in our Home Delivered Meals program receive weekly newsletters in print. Issues of this *Spotlight on Seniors* are available at public libraries countywide, while supplies last, and at dutchessny.gov/aging.

So Where Are We Now?

At some point in 2022 or 2023, after the nationwide emergency is declared to have passed, New York State will phase in a 2½-year (30 month) look-back and transfer penalty for community-based home care.

Whenever the look-back does take effect, it will apply to home healthcare services, private duty nursing services, personal care services, and assisted living program services, with other services possibly included later by the State Department of Health.

The look-back will not affect current home care recipients, who are "grandfathered" in.

OFA can help make it understandable

Please contact OFA with any questions about home care needs and we'll have the most up-to-date answers available for you.

There's plenty you can do in the meantime:

- Make sure financial transactions are documented in detail. For advanced planning, contact an elder law attorney.
- Keep family informed as to the location of important documents.
- Have designated power(s) of attorney and healthcare proxies in place, and review them regularly. OFA hosts regular forums covering senior legal issues, and OFA contracts with private attorney Paul Weinberger to provide legal assistance to seniors who might otherwise be unable to afford it. Contact OFA for more information.



Save the Date!

2nd Annual
PANCAKES IN THE PARK

Bowdoin Park
Sheafe Rd., Wappingers

Thursday, March 24th, 2022

The Conversation: Aging, Dementia and Driving

Deciding when a senior should cut back on driving is already a tricky issue for individuals and their caregivers. We understand that aging brings slower reaction times and growing difficulty with eyesight, even for those without dementia - but giving up the independence that comes with driving is understandably difficult. The National Institute on Aging (nia.nih.gov) offers some helpful advice for seniors and caregivers.

Talk about it early on

A person with early stage dementia may still have adequate skills to drive, but those remaining skills will continue to deteriorate. If you're the caregiver, know that the person with dementia may be unhappy to admit that they have a problem, or may not believe there's any problem at all. Waiting too long to express concerns may make conflict more likely.

Clarify whether it's dementia

The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) notes that the following can share some of the same signs as dementia:

- D** — Drugs - the effects and side effects of single drugs or combinations of drugs
- E** — Emotional distress and depression
- M** — Metabolic diseases and diseases of the endocrine system
- E** — Eye or ear problems or environmental problems like allergies
- N** — Nutritional or neurological conditions (for example a mini-stroke)
- T** — Tumors or trauma (for example a fall where the head is injured)
- I** — Infections - some infections can cause confusion
- A** — Alcoholism, anemia, or atherosclerosis

These conditions can put an older driver at risk, as well as anybody on the road with them.

Concerning signs

- New dents and scratches on the car
- Simple errands taking much longer than they used to - and not being able to explain why
- Two or more traffic tickets for a person with a previously clean driving record
- Comments from friends and neighbors
- Sudden lane changes or changes in speed
- Confusing the gas pedal with the brake
- A doctor's recommendation
- Deterioration in vision, hearing or mobility

What does the law say?

New York has no age-specific rules for drivers, other than that licenses must be renewed every eight years. Proof of adequate vision is required at every renewal.

Police, physicians or concerned individuals can complete a New York "Request for Driver Review" form and mail it to DMV, who will review the request.

I'm worried about my own driving skills

Consider a driver rehabilitation program. According to DMV, occupational therapists are normally the specialists who conduct driver rehab evaluations, because driving is an activity that's important to independence and quality of life.

The evaluation can include a look at your driving history, medicines, and physical and communication abilities. Check with your health insurer healthcare provider to find out more about coverage.

Disabled person placards and plates

You and your healthcare provider can fill out the DMV application for a parking permit. The completed form goes not to DMV, but to the issuing agency in your locality - usually your city, town, or village clerk. Dutchess County residents do not need to have a driver license or non-driver ID to get a permit. Specialized plates are only issued by DMV to those with a permanent disability, with a vehicle registered in their name.

Get help

with your long term services
and supports needs.



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term
Services and Supports

The Dutchess County NY Connects program is here to help.

NY Connects is your trusted place to go for free, unbiased information about long term services and supports in New

York State for people of all ages, or with any type of disability. The program links individuals of all ages to long-term services and supports regardless of payment source; whether it be private pay, public, or a combination of both.

Reach out to NY Connects by calling
845-475-3511
or visit NYConnects.ny.gov.

Did You Know?

Too Much Screen Time Warps Your Eyeballs

Remember mom or dad telling you not to sit too close to the screen of your old TV? You may have scoffed when you were young, but they may have been onto something after all. Many of us have spent a lot more time with screens of all sizes since the pandemic began. Adapting to new technology may have been necessary, but the American Academy of Ophthalmology says too much screen time can lead to nearsightedness by causing our eyeballs to elongate from eyestrain. Your eyes could be, quite literally, bent out of shape. Myopia affects twice as many Americans as it did 50 years ago, and if you already had issues with your eyes, too much screen time surely isn't helping. Still, a better balance of activities can be a big help. Follow the "20-20-20" rule: every 20 minutes, look at a distance 20 feet away, for 20 seconds. Better yet, spend some time outside whenever conditions permit it.

Winter Bird Feeding Tips

- *Place your feeders in sheltered locations*, away from the worst winds and heaviest snowfall.
- *Keep any feeders near your house close to it*, less than three feet away. Birds taking off from a feeder near your house are unlikely to be at top speed if they do fly into anything.
- *Keep feeders in safe locations* where cats and squirrels can't reach them, with an escape route to wooded shelter if a bird of prey shows up.
- *Be patient* if you're setting up new feeders. Birds need time to discover the new food source.
- *Plenty of space between feeders* helps attract a variety of birds.
- *Regular feeder cleaning* helps prevent harmful bacteria and fungi.
- *Wash your hands* after handling bird supplies.
- *Skip the bread*. It's empty calories for wild birds, who thrive on seeds, bugs, fruit, suet, and nuts.
- *Store extra birdseed indoors* at all times.
- *End feeding by April 1st* if you live in bear country in rural Dutchess.

**Dutchess County Office for the Aging
114 Delafield Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601**

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEWBURGH, NY
PERMIT NO. 17

CURRENT RESIDENT OR

TO:

Participants and Volunteer Leaders Wanted!

OFA Senior Exercise Classes

Tai Chi • Bingocize • A Matter of Balance

Training Provided for Leaders

Remote classes available this winter

Phone: 845-486-2555 (866-486-2555 outside the 845 area code)

Email: ofa@dutchessny.gov

Web: www.dutchessny.gov/aging