THRIVE60+
TENACIOUS · HEALTHY · RESILIENT · INFORMED · VERSATILE · EXPERIENCED
A Publication of the Dutchess County Office for the Aging
Winter 2024-25

A Secret for You

Even the most sharp and active older adult has people who worry about them: children and grandkids, friends, neighbors, and so forth.

They're dreading the prospect of "having the talk" with an older person about aging; but the topic has been on their minds, sometimes for decades.

Let's try making things less awkward for all concerned. This can be simpler than often assumed. We'll boil it down to two key phrases:

Have a plan and *Make your wishes known.*

The earlier you start thinking this over, the better it's likely to go for you and those you care about. The plan doesn't have to be flawless - no plan is - but the act of planning puts you in the right frame of mind to adjust the plan as new realities arise.

You have the most choices right now

Should you be injured in a fall or hospitalized due to a condition that might have been prevented, your choices will be narrowed. That's what family members and caregivers worry about most. OFA can help you and your caregivers study and understand your options *before* life-changing problems arise, when life-altering decisions can easily be made under stress.

Ask yourself: *What do I want from life by this time next year; and in 5, 10, 20 years or more?* Think over the answers, and plan accordingly. OFA can help craft these plans, especially when it comes to housing. If your current home might not meet your needs by 2030 or 2040, what steps can you take now to address the situation?

Reach out to OFA today, and we can help answer your questions, along with questions you might not have thought to ask just yet.

A Message from County Executive Sue Serino

Friends,

You may have heard about the significant and unprecedented growth in our older-adult population, both nationwide and here in Dutchess County. While this demographic shift presents challenges, it also brings countless opportunities to celebrate the vitality, wisdom, and contributions of our older adults.

Rather than focusing solely on the rising costs associated with an aging population, let's recognize the potential for older adults to lead longer, healthier, and more meaningful lives. Here in Dutchess County, the Office for the Aging (OFA) is dedicated to supporting our community's more than 80,000 older adults as they navigate this next stage of life with purpose and preparedness.

Older adults are individuals, not defined solely by their chronological age. They are neighbors, family members, and friends who are planning for vibrant, fulfilling futures. OFA is here to help them — and all of us — make the most of the opportunities that come with aging. By providing guidance, resources, and support, OFA empowers people of all ages to live well and age well. When you talk with your friends, neighbors, and family, be sure to share what an invaluable resource the Office for the Aging can be. Whether you're planning ahead or navigating the challenges of today, OFA is here for everyone, regardless of age.

The growth in our older adult population is like a wave—one we can harness for positive momentum rather than let it overwhelm us. With the right preparation and mindset, we can ensure that everyone in our community thrives as they age. Let's ride the wave together.

Sincerely,

Sue Serino

Sue Serino, County Executive

Amazing Feet Feats

Staying physically active starts from the ground up: with healthy feet. And since you've been using your feet all your life, by now they need some extra TLC to keep you moving the way you'd like to.

If you've already got a foot problem, it's likely to require a doctor's attention. Home remedies are of limited use for serious issues, and a podiatrist can identify problems and help prevent them from getting worse.

For day-to-day foot health, keeping things in good running order isn't as difficult.

Keep your feet clean and dry, and don't forget to clean between your toes, and trim your toenails regularly, straight across. Ask your doctor if you need help, especially if you're diabetic.

Use a mirror to get a look at what you might not feel on the soles of your feet, especially if you see any sores or blisters. This one's important for people with diabetes, in particular.

As for Footwear

Fall prevention is key here. Wear shoes with nonslip soles, like walking shoes. Keep heel heights below one inch. Avoid wearing slippers, backless shoes or flip-flops, even at home. The same goes for socks or stockings. Limit your time walking barefoot at home - you never know when you might step on something painful or slippery. Save barefoot time for your next trip to the beach.

Buying shoes? Make your trip to the store later in the day, when your feet may be larger due to swelling. Your foot size can change over time, so have your feet measured. If one of your feet is larger than the other, choose the larger size of the two.

Keep Things Circulating

When sitting, prop your feet up, and wiggle your toes from time to time. Daily foot stretches and massages are also helpful.

It's never too cold to make a Friendly Call

Social isolation and loneliness can hit hardest during winter months. If you'd like to participate in OFA's fast-growing "Friendly Calls" program, either by making or receiving calls (or both!), contact

Linda Edgar
"Friendly Calls" Outreach Coordinator
845-486-2555
or
ledgar@dutchessny.gov

THRIVE60+

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Available for free at libraries, senior centers and municipal buildings throughout Dutchess County, at dutchessny.gov/THRIVE60

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

Device Charging Safety for Older Adults

Whether you just picked up your first mobile device last week, or you had a “brick style” cellular phone back in the 80s, keeping your devices ready to be useful requires that they be safely charged.

If you’ve ever opened up an old flashlight and found batteries inside coated with unidentifiable crud, you know to prepare for the unexpected when it comes to electrical equipment. That applies everything from the battery-powered laser pointer you use to entertain the cat, to the latest electric-powered vehicle.

They’re Not Like 20th Century Batteries

Lithium-ion batteries are more lightweight and compact than traditional batteries. The ability to store more energy in less space has allowed for these batteries to be used in everything from mobile phones and laptops to power tools, vacuum cleaners and e-bikes.

Still, there are important safety factors to consider. If a lithium-ion battery is damaged, faulty, or charged incorrectly, it can go into what’s called “thermal runaway.” The chemicals in the battery heat up, and can’t cool down on their own. Sometimes the batteries can catch fire and release toxic gases. Lithium-ion battery fires sometimes reignite when the fire appears to be out.

Preventing Fire Risk

Always use the charger that came with the device when new, and stick to known and reliable brands of replacement charger cables. Even an off-brand charger cable that seems to fit might not be compatible or safe.

Once the battery is fully charged, unplug. There’s no benefit to leaving a charger attached to a fully charged device.

Don’t expose the battery to heat or moisture. Don’t use a battery that’s showing signs of tampering, or damage like swelling, leaking, noises, or unusual smells.

Charge devices at home whenever possible, on hard surfaces.

A long charger cable might appear convenient, but it might also become a tripping hazard.

Thinking About an Electric Vehicle (EV)?

Talk to an electrician before you buy, especially if you have an older home. Older wiring may not be suitable for use with EV supply equipment, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). When your home charging equipment is installed, have a residual current device installed, as well. Its purpose is to turn off power if a fault is detected. Charging an EV is safest when done with certified equipment.

This next one sounds all too basic but...read the manual, and follow manufacturer’s guidelines when charging. Ask your dealer for help if you need it, and check to be sure it’s safe to charge your EV on a rainy or snowy day.

Never use a multiplug adapter or extension cord with an EV charger - and no, you can’t jump-start an electric vehicle.

And on Your Desktop Computer

Even though the cables attached to your computer and monitor aren’t used for charging, it’s important to keep the cables in good working order. And yet, you take a peek behind your computer and...how did all that dust get back there? A few quick shots from a can of compressed air or a hair dryer on zero-heat setting can move the dust away from your cables, where you can then safely use a handheld vacuum or your regular vacuum cleaner’s nozzle to get the dust out of there for good. You can also wipe down cables with a clean rag lightly dampened with common rubbing alcohol.

Use a cable management system to prevent dust buildup and keep things tidy.

What Do We Call People Our Age, Anyway?

For the past few years, OFA has informally surveyed the older adults we encounter. We ask them a simple question:

Do you consider yourselves...old?

We don't get many people who say "yes" to that question. The youngest "yes" thus far came from someone who was 84 at the time.

Her answer is one reason why we're called the Office for the Ag*ing* and not the Office for the Age*d*: because aging is a process, not something that just happens on your 60th birthday. OFA clients range in age from 60 to well over 100; even so, diversity of age is the one form of diversity that people can lose sight of.

The way we communicate about aging can drive how older adults are perceived. That's why we try to use terms like "older adults" rather than "the elderly" or even "seniors." (We plead guilty to sometimes using "seniors" for brevity.)

Maybe it seems picky of us, but at OFA we firmly believe that later life can be a time for improvement in quality of life. A word like "elderly" that was used to describe a 75-year-old in 1950 isn't going to accurately describe a 75-year-old in 2025.

Our goal is threefold: to show respect; to draw people in; and to meet people where they are, rather than where we think they should be. As many people as OFA serves, there are others who either don't yet know what OFA can do for them, or who have misconceptions about us that are obstacles to engagement. The misconceptions often arise from people understandably being defensive about perceived threats to their independence as they age. They may be defensive due to internalizing society's ageism and need help conceiving of a better way forward as they age. Society tells them they're "over the hill." They might not believe that, but might also need help in advocating for themselves to counteract ageism.

And that's where OFA comes in handy!

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Dates to Remember

The 2024-2025 Regular HEAP Benefit opened on November 1st. Regular HEAP offers a one-time benefit to help with heat energy costs. Eligibility and benefits are based on income, household size, the primary heating source, and the presence of a household member who is under age 6, age 60 or older, or permanently disabled.

Applicants do not need a disconnect notice to be eligible for a regular HEAP benefit.

All HEAP benefits are paid directly to the heating vendor or utility company.

The 2024-2025 Emergency HEAP benefit is scheduled to open on January 2, 2025.

Regular HEAP continues until March 17, 2025, or New York State funding for the program is exhausted, whichever comes first.

Depending on demand for HEAP services, New York State may add additional HEAP benefits over the winter.

For the latest information, visit

dutchessny.gov/OFAHEAP
or call
845-486-2555

OFA Friendship Centers - "More Than Bingo"

The Dutchess County Office for the Aging operates 8 Friendship Centers, serving Dutchess County residents age 60 and above. Friendship Center activities promote successful and active aging.

We listen to our Friendship Center clients to find out what they'd like to do, learn, and enjoy, so that the activities we schedule reflect their preferences. While there's still time for the table games commonly associated with centers for older adults, there's also *a lot* more - as shown in these pictures from Friendship Centers around Dutchess County.

At OFA Friendship Centers you'll find large- and small-group, one-on-one, and self-directed activities every day, along with a nutritious midday meal. Each Friendship Center also serves as a regional hub for our Home Delivered Meals program.

Learning traditional Diwali holiday drumming at Beacon Friendship Center

Call the Friendship Center of your choice to arrange a visit at an appropriate time.

Friendship Centers are open weekdays from 10 am to 2 pm, unless otherwise noted below.

"Sandipity" Art at Millerton Friendship Center

Poughkeepsie Friendship Center clients enjoy lunch at Quiet Cove Riverfront Park

OFA Friendship Centers

Beacon - One Forrestal Heights, Beacon
845-838-4871

East Fishkill - 890 Route 82, Hopewell Junction
845-226-3605

Millerton (open Mon-Thu, 9a-2p) - 28 Century Blvd., Millerton
518-789-3081

Pawling (open Tue-Thu) - 154 Charles Colman Blvd., Pawling
845-855-9308

Poughkeepsie (open 9a-2p) - 114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie
845-486-2564

Red Hook - 59 Fisk St., Red Hook
845-475-1129

South Amenia (open Mon-Thu) - 229 S. Amenia Rd., Wassaic
845-373-4305

Tri-Town (open Mon-Thu) - 156 Main St., Pleasant Valley
845-275-8565

Senior Park Prints, with Dutchess County Parks

The “Senior Park Prints” arts program returns in 2025, with essential help from Dutchess County Parks. This FREE series is for Dutchess County older adults, and will be offered at various OFA Friendship Centers throughout Dutchess County.

All supplies are provided, and participants get to take their masterpieces home. Each class is limited to 12 participants with registration required, and will take place from roughly 2:30-4:30 pm.

We are planning four classes over February, March and April, at our Friendship Centers in East Fishkill, Millerton, Poughkeepsie, and Red Hook. When class dates are finalized, watch for them in OFA newsletters, on **dutchessny.gov/calendar**, on **facebook.com/DutchessCountyOFA**, and posted at Friendship Centers.

“A Matter of Balance”

Eight two-hour weekly classes
for Dutchess County older adults
Starting March 2025

Interested? Contact OFA

845-486-2555 or **ofa@dutchessny.gov**

A “Senior Park Prints” session, last winter at the Poughkeepsie Friendship Center

SAVE THE DATE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025

OFFICE FOR THE AGING
MASQUERADE BALL
SENIOR PROM

2025: Social Security Expands Appointment-Based Services

Social Security (ssa.gov, 1-800-772-1213) is implementing appointment-based services nationwide in two phases. The first phase is a transition period that extends through January 5, 2025. The purpose of this transition period is to educate Social Security customers about needing to schedule an appointment for SSA services. As a reminder, many Social Security services can be provided via phone with an appointment, and do not require a customer to walk into an office for service.

Effective January 6, 2025, Social Security will require customers to schedule an appointment for service in field offices, including requests for Social Security cards.

Social Security offers online services at **ssa.gov/onlineservices**, where many transactions can be completed conveniently and securely. For those without online access, automated services are available by phone at **1-800-772-1213**.

Customers who are not able to handle their business online or with the automated options, may call their local Social Security office or **1-800-772-1213** to schedule an appointment. For Dutchess County residents, the local Social Security office's location and contact information are:

332 Main St., Poughkeepsie
877-405-6747

In a statement, Social Security officials say they will not turn people away for service who are unable to make an appointment, or do not want to make an appointment. For example, members of vulnerable populations, military personnel, people with terminal illnesses, and individuals with other situations requiring immediate or specialized attention may still walk in for service at Social Security field offices. Some Social Security offices also have minimal to no wait times; that said, offices are often busiest on Mondays, the morning after a Federal holiday, and the first week of the month.

Helpful Shortcuts at the OFA Website dutchessny.gov/aging

"Aging News" Weekly Newsletters
dutchessny.gov/agingnews

"Friendly Calls" Program
dutchessny.gov/friendlycalls

Information for Caregivers
dutchessny.gov/ofacaregiver

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
dutchessny.gov/ofaheap

Nutrition and Friendship Centers
dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition

Summer Picnic Program
dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics

Transportation
dutchessny.gov/ofatransportation

Volunteering (printable form)
dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer
(For OFA's online volunteering option, email **bjones@dutchessny.gov**)

Scam Prevention Resources
dutchessny.gov/scamprevention

Senior Exercise Program
dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise

Senior Citizen Owner-Occupied Property Rehabilitiation Program
(Dutchess County Planning)
dutchessny.gov/srproprehab

OFA THRIVE60+ Newsletters
dutchessny.gov/thrive60

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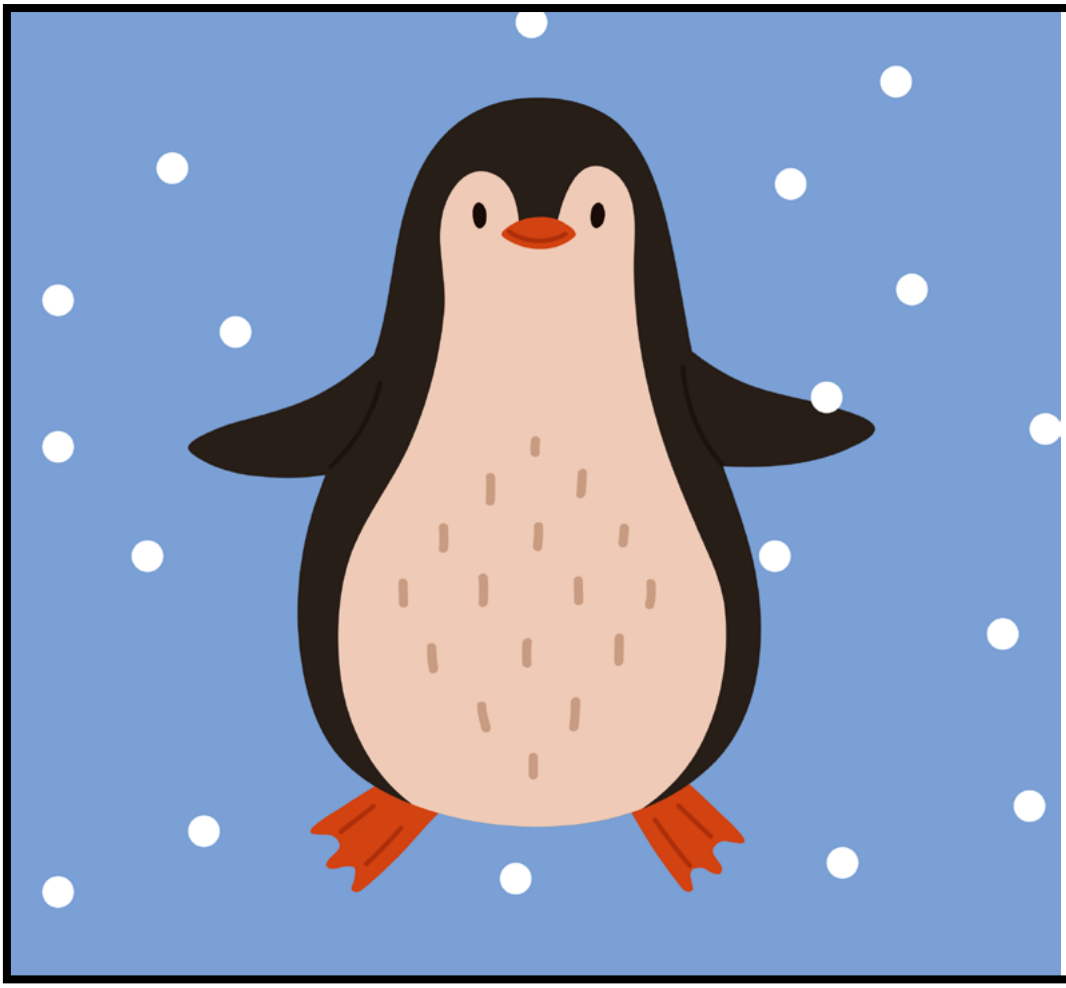

Walk like a penguin to stay safe this winter!

Concentrate on balance

Hands at your sides... not in your pockets

Take short steps

Walk flat footed

Travel in groups

Stay on ice-free paths

dutchessny.gov/penguin