



Columbia County Office for the Aging Senior Scoop

(518) 828-4258 | OFA@COLUMBIACOUNTYNY.COM

JANUARY - MARCH 2025

2024: A Year in Review



As I take a moment to reflect on the past twelve months, it becomes evident just how much we have accomplished together. The previous year presented us with a blend of challenges and successes, which continue to shape our ongoing commitment to supporting the older residents of Columbia County, helping them to maintain their independence and stay actively engaged in their communities.

Among the noteworthy moments of the past year were the retirements of cherished OFA veterans **Kevin McDonald** and **Amy Anderson**, our wonderful dietitian **Ellen Levine**, and long-time client favorite **Bill Clark**. Their contributions have left a lasting impact on our organization. We welcomed new members to our team: **Sue Petersen, George Frick, Jonathan Mossman, Valinda Brandow**, and **Joyce Carver**. Their fresh perspectives have brought new energy to our mission. Additionally, **Amanda Piser** has graciously taken on the role of Nutrition Services Coordinator. Our 2024 Senior Day was our largest to date, and we had the privilege of distributing over 500 holiday gifts through our Senior Stars program!

We also bid farewell to our dear friend and Advisory Council member, **Pauline Czajka**, and successfully reopened the Philmont Senior Community Center.

As we move into 2025, we are filled with anticipation and excitement for the significant milestone we are about to celebrate—our 50th anniversary! We are already planning to make this year exceptional and we encourage you to join us in this journey. Stay tuned for exciting changes coming to our congregate meal sites (see more on pg. 4) and watch for new menu items as we welcome **Lynn and Juanita from Bryant Nutrition** to the OFA family.

I extend my sincere gratitude for the dedication demonstrated by our staff, volunteers, Advisory Council members, community partners, and the Board of Supervisors. Your commitment has been key to our success, and I look forward to the adventures that await us in 2025!

Sincerely,

*Nina Benvenuto,
Administrator*

In this edition of the Senior Scoop:

Upcoming Events & Trips

Caregiver's Column

Important Tax Season Information

Emergency HEAP 2025

NEW Senior Center Locations

Hospital Discharge Planning

Keep the HEAT on with HEAP

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federally funded energy program intended to assist low-income households. **Emergency HEAP opened on January 2, 2025 and is a benefit designed to meet a household's immediate energy needs.**

Emergency HEAP benefits and eligibility are based on income, available resources, and the type of emergency. To qualify for this program, the recipient must:

- Have less than a quarter of a tank of fuel oil, kerosene, or propane;
- Have less than a ten day supply of wood, wood pellets, corn, or other deliverable fuels; or
- Electric or natural gas heat has been turned off, or have a utility termination notice. The electric must be necessary for your heating system or thermostat to work.

Please call the Columbia County Office for the Aging at 518-828-4258 for more information, or to request Emergency HEAP, as any delivery made without prior approval will not be eligible for the benefit.



Daylight Savings - Blame Ben!

As we prepare for Daylight Saving Time, remember to change your clocks and check your smoke detectors. **Daylight Saving Time starts on Sunday, March 9, 2025**, at 2 am, when clocks will move forward one hour, which means we lose an hour of sleep. Bummer! On the plus side, the extra daylight in the evening will allow more time for outdoor activities and socializing.

Fun fact: The idea of Daylight Saving Time dates back to Benjamin Franklin's proposal in 1784, where he suggested that people wake up earlier to save on candle use. He humorously recommended ringing church bells or firing cannons to wake people up early!



How You Can Help in the Fight Against Elder Abuse

The community is an important set of eyes and ears. It is critical for family, caregivers, health practitioners, friends, and neighbors to look out for vulnerable older adults.

If you suspect someone is a victim of elder abuse, call the **Columbia County Department of Social Services** at **518-828-9411, press 4** for Adult Services (8 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday). **For emergencies that require immediate attention, call 911.**



Who is at Risk?	Signs of Elder Abuse:	Types of Elder Abuse:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abuse can happen to any older person — at home, at a relative's home, or in an eldercare facility.• Elder abuse is found in all communities.• Individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other neuro-cognitive impairments are at a greater risk.• Informal caregivers and family/friends are most often the perpetrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruises, burns, scars, poor hygiene.• Changes in banking/spending.• Depression, confusion, acting withdrawn.• Isolation from friends and family.• Seeming underfed, dehydrated, overmedicated or undermedicated.• Lack of needed medical care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical abuse• Emotional abuse• Sexual abuse• Financial exploitation• Neglect (including self-neglect) <p><i>Learn more at:</i> aging.ny.gov/programs/elder-abuse</p>

OFA Senior Community Centers

We have seven locations across the county (listed below) offering nutritious meals and social activities to older adults. We may provide transportation for those who need help getting to one of the meal locations. To schedule a ride call 518-828-4258, and press 1. **Please call 24-hours ahead to the appropriate center for a lunch reservation.**

Albert L. Tripp Center

93 Main Street
Philmont, NY 12565

9:30am - 1:30pm

Mondays

Wednesdays

Fridays

518-672-7134

Canaan Town Hall

1647 County Route 5
Canaan, NY 12029

10:00am - 1pm

Wednesdays

518-781-0028

Copake Recreation Center

305 Mountain View Road
Copake, NY 12516

9:30am - 1:30pm

Tuesdays

Thursdays

Fridays

518-567-7881

Hudson Senior Center

51 North 5th Street
Second Floor
Hudson, NY 12534

9:30am - 1:30pm

Monday - Friday

518-610-0698

Elizaville Fire Department

1575 Cty Route 19
Elizaville, NY 12523

10:30am - 1:30pm

Tuesdays

Fridays

518-828-7538

St. Joseph Parish Hall

1820 Route 9
Stuyvesant, NY 12173

9:30am - 1:30pm

Tuesdays

Thursdays

518-751-0267

NEW!

Saint Luke's Lutheran Church

UNTIL JANUARY 31ST

1010 Saint Luke's Drive
Valatie, NY 12184

9:30am - 1:30pm

Mondays

Wednesdays

518-567-7881



Valatie Senior Center

OPENING FEBRUARY 3RD

3302 Williams Street
Valatie, NY 12184

9:30am - 1:30pm

Mondays

Wednesdays

518-567-7881



We are thrilled to share some exciting news about our Senior Community Centers in 2025! **Our Hudson location has returned to the Hudson Senior Center on North 5th Street.** When asked for his thoughts on the return of OFA, Hudson Mayor Kamal Johnson stated, "I am thrilled to announce the return of our partnership between county and city senior services. This collaboration reflects our unwavering commitment to providing our seniors with the resources, programs, and community support they deserve. Together, we are building a stronger network that ensures our older residents can thrive, stay connected, and enjoy the quality of life they've earned."

On February 3rd, our Valatie location will move back to the Valatie Senior Center on Williams Street. We're looking forward to seeing all of the familiar faces again! As always, we will continue to offer delicious, healthy meals, fun social activities, and various other programs at all of our locations. Plus, we're collaborating within our new settings to bring some fresh opportunities to the table.

We want to thank the **Hudson Fire Department** and **St. Luke's Lutheran Church** for all their support and partnership over the past few years. We've created many lovely memories together, and we're hopeful these changes will lead to even more growth and great times ahead!

Property Tax Exemption Deadline: March 1, 2025

If you are renewing or applying for new property tax exemptions, you must do so by March 1. Here's what you need to know:

Types of Exemptions:

1. Basic STAR

- For owner-occupied primary residences to reduce school property taxes.
- New applicants must apply through the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance. Call 518 457-2036 or visit www.tax.ny.gov.

2. Enhanced STAR

- Available for those 65 and older with qualifying income.
- No renewal is needed if NYS Taxation and Finance can verify your eligibility.
- If you have Basic STAR and turn 65, check your eligibility for Enhanced STAR with the assessor's office in your town.

3. Low Income Senior Exemption

- Use form RP-467 (new applicants) or RP-467-Rnw (renewals).
- Provides 5% to 50% exemption based on income (limits: \$34,000 for 50% and \$42,399 for 5%).
- Must include a copy of your 2022 Federal Tax Return or an Income Worksheet.
- Must be 65+ and own your home. Must renew annually.

4. Low Income Disability Exemption

- Use form RP-459-c (new applicants) RP-459-c-Rnw (renewals).
- Same income limits and requirements as Low Income Senior, but you don't have to be 65.
- Must have proof of a qualifying disability.

5. Alternative Veterans Exemption

- For veterans who served in defined periods of war based on property ownership.

All other exemptions (like agricultural or forest exemptions) must also be applied before March 1st. **Visit tax.ny.gov to learn more.**



Get Free Help Filing Your Taxes

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide provides tax assistance to anyone, free of charge, with a focus on taxpayers who are over 50 and have low to moderate income. You don't need to be an AARP member to use the service.

This year, the service is located at the Valatie Town Hall (3211 Church St.) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Call 518-325-4337 for more information. Slots are limited!



Connections: Animal Edition



We are going to test your knowledge on what a bunch (or group) of the same animals are called. For example, a large bunch of birds together, they are called a “flock”. Fish when they gather in a group they are called a “school”. Let’s see how many of the following you can match up! Flip this page for answers at the bottom.



- 1. **Fish**
 - 2. **Ants**
 - 3. **Bees**
 - 4. **Clams**
 - 5. **Giraffes**
 - 6. **Leopards**
 - 7. **Lions**
 - 8. **Penguins**
 - 9. **Porcupines**
 - 10. **Birds**
 - 11. **Racoons**
 - 12. **Skunks**
- A. **Army**
 - B. **Bed**
 - C. **Colony**
 - D. **Gaze**
 - E. **Leap**
 - F. **School**
 - G. **Pickle**
 - H. **Pride**
 - I. **Stench**
 - J. **Swarm**
 - K. **Tower**
 - L. **Flock**

ANSWER KEY ON PAGE 10

Blooming Health



Senior Community Centers and home-delivered meals may be closed due to inclement weather or other reasons from time to time. **Any closures will be communicated via the Blooming Health automated messaging system, WRGB-Channel 6 (CBS), and other local news outlets with school closings.** Please call OFA at 518-828-4258 to sign up for automated notifications.

Sign Up for e-Newsletter

Get the latest news from the Columbia County Office for the Aging delivered right to your inbox! Email us at OFA@columbiacountyny.com to receive our quarterly e-newsletter, or check out the digital version on our website to help us reduce paper waste.



Winter Day Trips to Kick the Winter Blues

This year we will visit the 2025 Capital Region Flower and Garden Expo on March 28th to help us “kiss off winter”! Transportation is free; participants are responsible for the cost of their lunch.

Seating is limited, and reservations are required. Reserve your seat by calling **518-828-4258, Press 1**. Please leave a message on the non-medical transportation voicemail, and a driver will get back to you. Pick-up times and locations will be determined by the driver before the trip date. The driver will determine departure time upon arrival (typically between 1:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.).

February

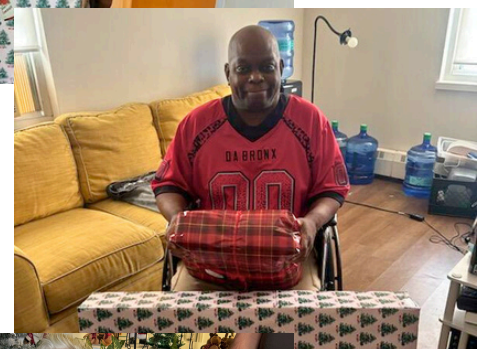
- Wednesday, February 12th
 - Shopping, lunch trip to **Mid-Hudson Buffet**-Kingston
- Thursday, February 27th
 - Shopping trip to **Walmart** and **Target** in East Greenbush and lunch



March

- Tuesday, March 11th
 - Shopping trip to **Colonie Center Mall** and **Hobby Lobby** and lunch
- Friday, March 28th
 - **2025 Capital Region Flower and Garden Expo** at Hudson Valley Community College. Farmers market, food trucks, NYS wine tastings and many vendors. **Admission is \$17.00 at the door.**

Senior Stars Holiday 2024



Important: Holiday Closures

The Office for the Aging will be closed on the following dates, there will be **no meal deliveries and Senior Centers will be closed:**

January

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Monday, January 20th



February

Presidents' Day Monday, February 17th





Call for Nominations: 2025 Volunteer of the Year

Each May, NYSOFA honors older adults for their volunteer work. This event celebrates healthy aging and community involvement while challenging stereotypes about aging.

Nominations are open for Columbia County residents aged 60 and older. Your volunteer efforts in our community, no matter the size, are important, and we want to recognize them! You can find the nomination form in this newsletter or call the Office for the Aging at 518-828-4258 to request a form to nominate yourself or someone else. The form requires basic information about the nominee and their volunteer work, and a brief statement about why they deserve recognition. The deadline for nominations is February 28, 2025.

Thank you for helping us celebrate those who make our community a great place to live and age well!



*Pat & Eileen Maloy
Older New Yorkers' Day 2024*

Previous Honorees

2009

Dottie Brown

2010

Patricia Racenet

2011

Arlene Sweeny
Nancy Bryant
James Dunham

2012

Noel Fair
Donna Diehl

2013

Joyce McDonald
Arlene Brown

2014

Raeph Sanderson
Louise McCord

2015

Sally Charron
Connie Mondel

2016

Marilyn Burch
Ida Leiser

2017

Eleanor "Bootie"
Fenoff
Judy Harp

2018

Robert Donahue
Robert Preusser

2019

Marcia Race
Richard Moran

2020

Terence Farrell

2021

Shirley McThenia
Pat Collins

2022

Charlie Proper
Nancy Smith

2023

Mary Young
Marge Laurie

2024

Pat & Eileen
Maloy

Hospital Discharge Planning (Simplified)

Planning for your discharge when you are feeling well can help ensure a smooth recovery. Here are some key points to remember:

Before You Leave the Hospital

1. Organize Your Information

- Start a file to keep all discharge papers in one place. Let a friend or family member know about it for support.

2. Meet Your Discharge Planner

- Find out who your discharge planner is and meet with them in advance to discuss your discharge.

3. Understand Your Discharge Plan

- Get a written copy of your discharge plan. Review it with a family member to understand medications, restrictions, and health tasks.

4. Arrange Medical Equipment

- Find out how to obtain any needed medical equipment and whether you need a personal emergency response system.

5. Check Insurance Coverage

- Clarify what services your health insurance covers, such as home health aides or therapy. Ask about your admission status, as it affects coverage.

6. Order In-Home Services

- Ensure your doctor has ordered any required home services before you leave the hospital.

7. Assess Safety at Home

- Determine if you will need help at home with daily activities like showering or meal preparation.

8. Follow-Up Appointments

- Find out when you will need to see your doctor again. Speak up if you have concerns about your discharge plan.

After You Arrive Home

The Columbia County Office for the Aging can provide **home-delivered meals**, even if only temporarily while you recuperate. The OFA **non-medical transportation** program can provide rides to the store for grocery shopping and to pick up medications.

Call the Office for the Aging at 518-828-4258 and ask to speak to intake. A case manager will come to your home and conduct an assessment to determine what other services may be beneficial.

Call the Health Care Consortium at 518-822-8020 for **transportation to/from medical appointments**. Seating is limited, so please call as soon as your appointment is scheduled.





Beware of Scams, Protect Yourself Post-Holidays

The holidays may be over, but the scammers are still at work!

Make sure to review your credit card bills thoroughly as there may be a hidden charge on the statement that you did not make. Contact your credit card immediately if this happens and they can research the details. Perhaps it was something you bought and forgot about. If not, work with the credit card company to reverse the charges and replace your card to prevent future charges. Also, have a free credit report generated by going to Annualcreditreport.com, where you can pick from one of the three major credit reporting agencies. To do this, simply follow the instructions on the website. Review the report in detail to detect if any unauthorized accounts were opened in your name.

Be careful with after holiday sales. Scammers may email you about a significant sale going on. Any links in the email may direct you into the scammer hands. Make sure that the site is legitimate and one you have used before and trust. Scammers are not limited to just emails. They may try to capture you through social media sites. Keep your eyes open and avoid sharing personal information (such as bank, social security and credit card numbers)

Scammers may send an email related to a purchase of an item such as “You’re TV set has been shipped”. But you have not ordered such item and the scammer is trying to trick you into clicking on an attachment within the email. This will reel you to their site where the scammer hopes you will want to cancel this order and get refunded. The scammer may ask you for your credit card number or your bank account number to return your money...and you will never receive it as they deplete your bank funds or use your credit cards.

NYSOFA Scam Series on YouTube

Join NYSOFA and Lifespan of Greater Rochester for a video series on some of the most common scams targeting older adults. Learn tips to prevent scams from happening, and what to do if you become a victim.

Go to:
www.youtube.com/@NewYorkStateOfficefortheAging to watch!

ANSWER KEY:

Ants-Army
Bees-Swarm
Clams-Bed

Giraffes-Tower
Leopards-Leap
Lions-Pride

Penguins-Colony
Porcupines-Pickle

Racoons-Gaze
Skunks-Stench



Caregiver's Column



Why Join a Support Group?

Support groups help people who care for others. Members meet regularly to talk about caregiving issues. These groups offer social connections, education, and support, creating a sense of community. Trained facilitators lead the groups and create a welcoming environment. They encourage members to support each other in their caregiving journeys.

Benefits of joining a caregiver support group include:

- A source of additional resources and useful information
- Emotional support
- Improved quality of life for you *and* your loved one
- Time to recharge and/or relax
- An opportunity to gain new perspective



Parkinson's Support Group

Capital District Parkinson's Support Group

2nd Thursday of most months at 7:00 pm

In-person & Zoom

Glen Eddy Senior Living Community

One Glen Eddy Drive, Niskayuna, 12309

Email cdparkinsons@gmail.com or call Jud at

518-281-3466 for more information or to register.

Alzheimer's & Dementia Caregivers Support Groups

Call the Alzheimer's Association at 518-675-7214 to register and confirm group.

Columbia County Chamber of Commerce

1 N Front St., Hudson
2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm

In-person

Hearthstone Care Adult Day Program

1187 NY-23A, Catskill
4th Thursday of the month at 10:00 am

In-person

Sky High Adventure Center (SHAC)

27 Lake Ave., Averill Park
4th Thursday of the month at 11:00 am

In-person

**A Memory Café for those living with the disease is available, so caregivers can attend the support group.*

Hawthorne Ridge

32 Community Way, East Greenbush
1st Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm

In-person

Men's Caregiver Support Group

1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am

Virtual

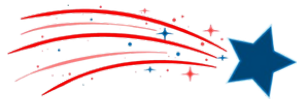
**Registration is REQUIRED. Contact Eddy Alzheimer's Services for details at 518-238-4164*

Adult Children Caregiver Support Group

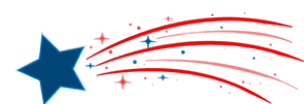
2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm

Virtual

**Registration is REQUIRED - call 518-675-7214*



Senior Stars



(Please print form and mail to the address below)

Name _____

Address _____

I'd like to make my contributions in memory of _____

If you would like to remain anonymous, please check here

Please make checks payable to:

COLUMBIA COUNTY SENIOR STARS and mail to 325 Columbia Street, Hudson, NY 12534.

Senior Stars provides emergency aid as a last resort to older adults on a once-in-a-lifetime basis. It also delivers necessary items such as clothing, bedding, and more to many older adults in our community during the holiday season. Funding for Senior Stars is primarily provided by donations and fundraising efforts like our Senior Day raffles. We also accept contributions made in memory of a loved one.

The Office for the Aging would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for their financial support of our Senior Stars Program:

- Sidney & Anne Richter
- Joan Miller
- Anonymous
- Robert & Linda Fix
- Paul & Gail Koch
- Warm Up America!
- The Knit Club of the Hudson Valley
- Deborah Corneau
- Copake Lake Realty Co.
- Joyce & James Lapenn

- Morabito Lawn Care, LLC
- Maximum Home & Garden Inc.
- Karp, Ackerman, Small & Hogan, PC
- Alvarez Homes, A division of Fritz Craft, LLC
- Chinatown QI Resteraunt
- The Community at Bell's Pond
- PGS Millwork, Inc.
- Harrington's

Special thanks to those who contributed in memory of Pauline Czajka.

- John Stevens
- Alison Paalz
- Robert & Dorothy Otty
- Gail & Carl Hulle
- John & Dana Cacchione
- Carolyn & Richard Leaf
- Michael & Lynette Tucker
- Livingston Area Sr. Community Center Participants



Columbia County Office for the Aging
325 Columbia Street, Suite 231
Hudson, NY 12534



"Caring for those who cared for us..."

Funding provided by the Older Americans Act and the State of New York through grants administered by the New York State Office for the Aging and the Columbia County Board of Supervisors.