

January 2025

# Vitality

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO AGING WITH  
GRACE, PURPOSE AND WELL-BEING

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older LGBTQ+ adults

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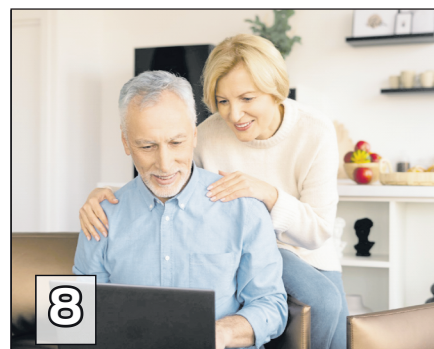
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**On the cover:** MiGen volunteers gather around a number of activities, including gardening.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIGEN

## VITALITY

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## MONEY &amp; SECURITY

# Real estate: Can I sell my home with an old furnace or do I need to replace it beforehand?

**Q**: We're getting our house ready to sell. One concern we have is the furnace. It's about 17 years old, but still working fine. Is its age going to be an issue when selling? We don't want to spend \$8,000 to \$10,000 for a new furnace just to sell our house. What should we do?

**A**: What I recommend to my sellers when I am listing their homes that have older furnaces is to have a licensed heating contractor come in to clean and check the furnace before listing it for sale.

If the furnace passes inspection, you will receive an invoice with inspection results that include showing that the CO2 level (carbon monoxide) was good. I then get a copy of that report.

After an offer has been accepted but before the home inspection is done by the buyer, I provide a copy of the inspection report to the buyer's agent so the furnace does not become an inspection issue.

If your furnace does not pass inspection,

then it should be repaired or replaced prior to listing it for sale.

Like any other home appliance, your furnace could last a week or another 10 years.

Even if you are reading this column and not thinking about selling your home, it's still a good idea to have your furnace checked out for your own safety and health.



**Steve Meyers**  
Columnist

**Q**: Can you tell me how to calculate the acreage of my lot? I cannot remember how to do it.

**A**: This is a question that comes up occasionally. One acre equals 43,560 square feet. To find out the square footage of your lot, multiply width by depth. Let's say your lot is a rectangle and is 70 feet wide by 130 feet deep. Multiply 70 X 130 = 9,100.

Next, divide 9,100 square feet by 43,560 square feet and you get 0.2089072 or approximately 0.21 acres.

**FURNACE » PAGE 5**

## MARKET UPDATE

November's market update for Macomb County and Oakland County's housing market (house and condo sales) is as follows: In Macomb County, the average sales price was up by almost 8% and Oakland County's average sales price was up by more than 7%. Macomb County's on-market inventory was down by 3% and Oakland County's on-market inventory was down by almost 14%. Macomb County's average days on market was 34 days and Oakland County's average days on market was 30 days. Closed sales in Macomb County were down by more than 11% and closed sales in Oakland County were down by almost 1%. The closed sales continue to be down as a direct result of the continued low inventory. Demand remains high. (All comparisons are month to month, year to year.)

By the long-standing historical definition from the National Association of Realtors, which has been in existence since 1908, a buyer's market is when there is a seven-month supply or more of inventory on the market. A balanced market between buyers and sellers is when there is a six-month supply of inventory. A seller's market is when there is a five-month or less supply of inventory. Inventory has continued to stay low. In November, the state of Michigan's inventory was at 2.4 months of supply. Macomb County's inventory was at 2.1 months of supply and Oakland County's inventory was at 2 months of supply. By definition, it's still not close to a buyer's market.



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## MONEY &amp; SECURITY

# SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS IN 2025

## 5 BIG CHANGES RETIREES SHOULD PLAN FOR

By Rachel Christian

Bankrate

If you're retired or planning to retire soon, it's important to have a plan for your retirement income. For most people, Social Security will play a significant role in this plan, so staying up to date on the latest benefits information is crucial.

The Social Security Administration recently announced several key changes to the program for 2025, including its annual cost of living adjustment (COLA). Here are some key changes to Social Security happening next year — and what you need to know:

### Watch for these 5 changes to Social Security in 2024

More than 72.5 million people depend on one of Social Security's benefit programs, so annual changes to the program and its payouts are always highly anticipated.

This year's cost-of-living adjustment is lower than last year's 3.2% increase. Still, any additional income is a welcome boost for beneficiaries who live on fixed incomes. (If you need help developing a plan for your retirement income, you may want to consider hiring a financial adviser.)

#### 1. Cost of living adjustment rises

The SSA has announced that benefit checks will rise 2.5% in 2025. The 2.5% adjustment will amount to an average increase of \$50 in monthly benefits for retired workers on Social Security beginning in January.

Specifically, the average check for retired workers will increase from \$1,927 to \$1,976. For a couple with both partners receiving benefits, the estimated payment will increase from \$3,014 to \$3,089.



DREAMSTIME/TNS

The SSA has linked COLA adjustments to the Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W) since 1975. To determine the COLA, the SSA compares the third-quarter CPI-W of the previous year to the third-quarter CPI-W of the current year. The COLA is then adjusted based on the percentage change in CPI-W from one year to the next.

#### 2. Maximum taxable earnings going up

In 2024, the maximum earnings subject to Social Security taxes was \$168,600. This means workers paying into the system are taxed on wages up to this amount, typically at the 6.2% rate. In 2025, the maximum earnings

will increase to \$176,100, meaning more of a worker's income will be subject to the tax. This adjustment is due to an increase in average wages in the U.S.

#### 3. Maximum Social Security benefit also set to increase

The maximum Social Security benefit for a worker retiring at full retirement age will increase from \$3,822 in 2024 to \$4,018 in 2025. This maximum applies to those retiring at the full retirement age, which is 67 for anyone born after 1960.

The maximum benefit will be lower for those who retire before the full retirement age because benefits are reduced in such cases. On the flip side, those who

retire after the full retirement age can increase their maximum benefit by delaying retirement.

#### 4. Average benefit for spouses and disabled workers is increasing, too

The average benefit will increase across the board in 2025, and that includes benefits for people such as widows, widowers and the disabled. Here's how those figures break out:

- The SSA says the average widowed mother with two children will see an increase from \$3,669 to \$3,761.
- Aged widows and widowers living alone will see their benefits increase from \$1,788 to \$1,832.
- The benefit will increase for a disabled worker with a spouse

and one or more children from \$2,757 to \$2,826.

Of course, those are averages, and individual situations may differ.

#### 5. Social Security adjusts earnings test exempt amounts

If you receive Social Security retirement benefits before reaching full retirement age, the program may reduce your benefits if your earnings exceed certain limits. This is known as the retirement earnings test, and it can claim a serious chunk of your benefits if you are still working. In 2025, the retirement earnings test exempt amounts will be as follows:

If you start collecting Social Security before full retirement age, you can earn up to \$1,950 per month (\$23,400 per year) in 2025 before the SSA will start withholding benefits, at the rate of \$1 in benefits for every \$2 above the limit. In 2024, the maximum exempt earnings were \$1,860 per month (\$22,320 per year).

In the year you reach full retirement age, this rule still applies but only up until the month you hit full retirement age and with much more forgiving terms. In 2025, you can earn up to \$5,180 per month (\$62,160 per year) before benefits are withheld, at the rate of \$1 in benefits for every \$3 earned above the limit (instead of every \$2). In 2024, the threshold was \$4,960 per month (\$59,520 per year).

#### Bottom line

The 2025 Social Security COLA provides retirees and others with an increase in their benefits. However, this isn't the only change to the program. Other levels and thresholds have also been adjusted to reflect ongoing cost increases.



## MONEY &amp; SECURITY

# Ask the Financial Doctor: Know these deduction limits before filing 2024 tax returns

**Q:** When is the due date for filing my 2024 personal tax return?

**A:** The due date is Tuesday, April 15. As long as you have the April 15 postmark, your tax return is considered on time. Taxpayers needing an extension have until Oct. 15 to file their 2024 tax returns. Regardless of the extension, any tax liability must be paid by April 15.

**Q:** What is the standard deduction for 2024?

**A:** For married couples, it is \$29,200 plus \$1,550 for each spouse age 65 or over. For single filers, it is \$14,600 plus \$1,950 if age



**Richard Rysiewski**  
Columnist

65 or over. And for heads of households, it is \$21,900 plus \$1,950 if age 65 or older.

**Q:** What is the 2024 threshold for medical expenses?

**A:** Any medical expense above 7.5% of your AGI (adjusted gross income) is deductible on Schedule A. If Schedule A is less than your standard deduction, then you will use the standard deduction.

*Richard Rysiewski, a certified financial planner, welcomes all questions on tax and financial matters. Send them to Richard Rysiewski, Financial Doctor, 3001 Hartford Lane, Shelby Twp., MI 48316.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

## Furnace

FROM PAGE 3

Your lot is relatively easy to figure out because the front and back and both sides are equal lengths.

If you have an irregularly shaped lot, then the calculation gets a little more difficult.

I hope this helps you and anyone else who was wondering how to calculate acreage.

*Steve Meyers is a real estate agent/Realtor at RE/MAX First with seven offices serving Southeast Michigan and is a member of the RE/MAX Hall of Fame. He can be contacted with questions at 586-997-5480 or Steve@MeyersRealtor.com. You also can visit his website at AnswersToRealEstateQuestions.com.*

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## MONEY &amp; SECURITY



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# TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FINANCIAL PERKS

## A QUARTER OF ALL WORKING WOMEN ARE LEAVING FREE MONEY ON THE TABLE THAT COULD SET BACK THEIR RETIREMENT

**By Alex Gailey**  
*Bankrate*

A larger share of women than men aren't saving for their future selves and could be losing out on hundreds of thousands of dollars over their lifetime as a result.

More than a quarter of women (26%) working full-time, part-time or looking for employment didn't contribute to their retire-

ment savings between August 2023 and 2024, compared to 16% of working men, according to Bankrate's 2024 Retirement Savings Survey.

A similar percentage of Black and Hispanic working women (24%) didn't contribute to their retirement savings during that time, a slight improvement from 2023 (29%).

The reasons why women save

less for retirement aren't clear-cut.

While the gender pay gap is part of the problem, research also suggests women feel misunderstood in the financial world, which may be driving their behavior. Generally, women are more likely to keep more of their savings in cash, feel less confident about their investment knowledge and report higher levels of

financial stress.

Taking action, however, can make the biggest difference in decreasing stress and building financial confidence — and many women said they would make positive financial moves. Fidelity research found that 40% of women planned to contribute to an emergency fund and 38% planned to save more for retirement between March and September. Thirty-

five percent said they would pay down debt and adjust their spending habits during that period, the survey found.

### Key takeaways on women's retirement savings

Nearly 3 in 4 working women (74%) are contributing to their retirement savings, a four percentage-point increase between 2020



and 2024, according to Bankrate's Retirement Savings Surveys.

In 2020, 70% of working women contributed to their retirement savings.

More than a quarter of working women (26%) indicated they didn't contribute to their retirement savings between August 2023 and 2024, compared to 16% of working men.

That's the same percentage as 2023, indicating no improvement year over year.

Nearly 6 in 10 working women (59%) said they felt behind on their retirement savings as of August 2024, up from 57% the prior year.

That percentage is higher than working men: 55% feel behind where they should be with their retirement savings.

### **Women have historically invested less for retirement, but that's changing**

The investment industry is slowly evolving to meet women where they are, but there's still plenty of room for growth.

Because the industry was originally built for more of a "male trader mindset," Kapusta says many retirement providers have been actively trying to make retirement accounts and investing resources more accessible for women in recent years.

More importantly, retirement providers are trying to engage more women with their retirement accounts and investments. Today, you can invest online with as little as a dollar in 401(k) plan, IRA or Roth IRA — and it can cost little to do it online from the comfort of your home.

"The industry has made it more complex than it needs to be when it comes to investing," she says. "It starts with the fact that the language the investing industry has historically used is full of jargon."

Retirement providers' efforts seem to be paying off: There are more working women saving for retirement than ever before. In the last three years alone, the percentage of women in the workforce contributing to their retirement savings has slowly ticked up.

In 2020, a Bankrate survey found that 70% of working women contributed to their retirement savings. By August 2024, that figure was up to 74%.

Fidelity Investments, the nation's largest provider of 401(k) plans, added 48% more new women customers in 2023 compared to 2019, with younger women leading the way.

"Women work so hard for their money and are also so afraid of losing it that they demand more from the industry to make it (investing) as easy as possible," Kapusta says.

Despite that progress, there are more working women than men who aren't saving for retirement and many don't know much they need to save for retirement. Over a quarter of working women (26%) didn't contribute to their retirement savings between August 2023 and 2024, compared to 16% of working men.

Additionally, 27% say they don't know how much they need to retire comfortably — compared to 19% of men.

### **Women can miss out on hundreds of thousands of dollars when they don't invest**

Another reason women may not be as aggressive as men when it comes to investing is that they like to hang on to their cash, explains Emily Green, head of private wealth management at Ellevest.

The average woman keeps 70 cents of every dollar in cash, according to Green.

"That costs the average woman hundreds of thousands because they are not investing and getting that compound interest," Green says. "Those are real numbers."

Stashing \$100 in a savings account every month instead of investing it over 40 years in the S&P 500 equates to leaving as much as \$500,000 on the table, assuming an annual 10% rate of return.

The stakes increase for women who can put more money away.

If a 25-year-old has the means to invest \$500 every month in the S&P 500 but chooses not to, she could miss out on earning an average of \$2.5 million over a 40-year period, assuming an annual 10% rate of return.

### **Women have struggled more with retirement savings amid high inflation**

Many Americans of all ages struggled to save for retirement in 2022 when inflation peaked at 9.1%, a 40-year high.

But Bankrate data reveals that women struggled more than men to contribute to their retirement savings at that time than men because of elevated inflation.

In Bankrate's 2022 Retirement Savings Survey, 58% of female workers who contributed the same or less to their retirement savings said high inflation made it harder for them to save more for retirement, while only 51% of male workers said the same.

Other data suggests that inflation hurts women's wallets more because they have less earnings, savings and wealth than men.

"Inflation definitely affects women and how they think about their money," says Green. "These days, with inflation where it is, you're losing purchasing power if

you aren't investing."

### **Women feel less confident about retirement planning — why that's a problem**

Research shows women are better investors than men, which begs the question: Why are a quarter of working women leaving free money on the table?

Experts point to the gender confidence gap in investing. Men are far more comfortable investing for their retirement savings than women, according to a May 2023 Federal Reserve survey. Generally, men tend to be overconfident investors, whereas women generally are more risk-aware and tend to hold onto their investments, according to Green.

"They want to understand the risk that they're taking and take a calculated risk — not that they don't want to take any risk," she says.

That makes women better long-term investors, but it can also prevent them from taking action if they don't have all the information in front of them to make financial decisions, says Cady North, founder and CEO of North Financial Advisors, which specializes in helping women meet their financial goals.

"They end up not making any action, which can be really detrimental versus making mistakes along the way," North says.

Bankrate's 2024 Retirement Savings Survey found that most working women didn't feel on track with their retirement savings over the last year.

Nearly 6 in 10 working women (59%) felt behind where they should be with regard to their retirement savings as of August 2024, with 38% feeling significantly behind where they should be.

However, that's an improvement from 2023 when 57% of working women said they felt behind where they should be with their retirement savings.

In comparison, 55% of working men feel behind where they should be with their retirement savings, with 33% feeling significantly behind where they should be.

### **4 ways that women can take action to start building wealth**

Women have different financial needs from men and have to plan differently for their future selves. To help reduce these stressors and make the most of their money, here are four ways women can take action to build long-term wealth:

#### **1. Get familiar with investing basics**

You don't have to be an investing pro

to get started. North says women will often have an 'all-or-nothing' perspective with investing, but she wants women to know they can learn by taking a piecemeal approach.

North suggests setting aside an hour a week for financial education, where you try to learn one new thing with regard to investing. Take advantage of free online resources to learn about different investment account options and investing basics, such as a diversified investment portfolio and your risk tolerance.

Once you've learned the basics, choose a retirement account to start investing.

#### **2. Take advantage of free retirement accounts**

Experts say one of the easiest, most effective ways to start investing is with a 401(k) plan offered through an employer.

Many employer-sponsored plans include a 401(k) match, meaning that if you contribute your pre-tax wages, your employer will match your contributions up to a certain percentage. That's essentially free money on the table for your future self.

"Focus on learning about what your employer offers in the way of investing for retirement," North says. "That should be your No. 1 focus because if you aren't investing yet, you're likely leaving money on the table by not getting that employer match."

If you can't access a 401(k) plan, other free options like IRA accounts are available.

A traditional IRA allows you to contribute pre-tax money earned through income, but a Roth IRA works a little differently.

With a Roth IRA, you can only contribute after-tax dollars and there are income limits. If you like the idea of opening a traditional IRA or Roth IRA, look for a retirement provider with low fees.

#### **3. Start investing early, even if it's just a little bit**

If there's one piece of advice that several investing experts agree on, it's this: Don't try to time the market, and start investing as soon as possible — even if it's just a few dollars a week.

Financial experts recommend putting a portion of your paycheck into a retirement account and increasing your contributions over time as you establish a more regular habit of investing.

If you have access to a 401(k) plan, contribute enough to grab your employer's match and increase your contributions by 1% or 2% each year.



## MONEY &amp; SECURITY

# WHAT'S NEW FOR MEDICARE IN 2025?



GETTY IMAGES

Each year, Medicare comes with a new set of prices, new plan ratings and sometimes new regulations.

## RATINGS ARE DOWN, DRUG COSTS CAPPED, PLAN FEES RISE

**By Kate Ashford**  
*NerdWallet*

Each year, Medicare comes with a new set of prices, new plan ratings and sometimes new regulations. What you'll pay may be different from last year, and your network and prescription drug coverage may change, depending on your plan.

Here's how Medicare looks in 2025:

### Plan ratings have gone down

The average Medicare Advantage star rating in 2025 is 3.92 out of 5, weighted by enrollment, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

This is down from an average star rating of 4.07 in 2025 and represents the third year in a row that ratings have declined. Ratings also dropped for Medicare Part D plans, which have an average rating of 3.06 stars in 2025, weighted by enrollment.

That's down from an average of 3.34 stars in 2024.

Although there are slightly fewer Medicare Advantage plans offered in 2025, there are more plans that have lower star ratings. "Between 2022 and 2025, there was a 150-fold increase in the number of (Medicare Advantage) plans that had a 2 or 2.5 star rat-

ing out of 5," says Diane Omdahl, president and co-founder of 65 Incorporated, which offers guidance on Medicare. "That's huge."

This means, Omdahl says, that Medicare Advantage plans receive less money in star bonuses from the federal government, which cuts into their bottom lines. "They look at ways to increase other things like prior authorizations and premiums," Omdahl says. "It's not good for the consumer."

Some plans also chose to reduce benefits offerings in 2025, cutting back on extras like over-the-counter benefits and meal delivery. With fewer plans on

the market, decreased perks and lower star ratings, it's especially crucial that you compare plans in your area to find one that best fits your health care needs.

### Part D out-of-pocket drug costs are capped

In 2025, Medicare Part D out-of-pocket costs for covered prescription drugs will be limited to \$2,000.

While this feels like a win for the consumer, there may be secondary effects.



# Medicare

FROM PAGE 8

Because drug plans are required to pick up more of the cost of medications, many plans have stopped covering some drugs, Omdahl says.

“We did a survey and found that 50% of drug plans are not covering between five and eight of the most common nine insulins for diabetics,” Omdahl says. “Only one plan out of 14 covers an insulin called Basaglar. If that’s your insulin, and you have to change, that’s a big deal.”

The takeaway: Make sure your prescription drugs are still covered in 2025.

Note, too, that any purchases you make through online prescription drug discount sites — like GoodRx or Cost Plus Drugs — don’t count toward your out-of-pocket limit, says Gretchen Jacobson, vice president of Medicare for The Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation focused on promoting a high-performing health care system. “When we asked people on a survey if they’d ever used those sites, about 1 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries said that they had,” she says.

## Part A costs will go up

Medicare Part A covers inpatient care in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities, plus hospice care and some home health care. For most people, Medicare Part A is free because they’ve worked long enough to qualify for it. If you don’t qualify for premium-free Part A, you’ll pay up to \$518 per month in 2025, compared to \$505 per month in 2024.

The inpatient hospital deductible, which you pay before Medicare starts

to cover costs, will be \$1,676 in 2025 for each benefit period, compared to \$1,632 in 2024. A benefit period ends if you haven’t received inpatient hospital care for 60 days in a row — so it’s possible to have more than one benefit period in a year (and owe more than one deductible).

If you have Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap), many plans cover some or all Part A costs.

## Part B costs will go up

Medicare Part B covers medically necessary services such as doctor’s appointments and diagnostic tests, and preventive services such as vaccines and wellness visits.

Part B comes with a monthly premium of \$185 per month in 2025, up from \$174.70

in 2024. Part B also has a deductible, which you pay for care before Medicare starts covering costs. In 2025 the deductible will be \$257, up from \$240 in 2024.

If you have questions or need help, contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which offers free, unbiased counseling on Medicare. You can find your local SHIP by visiting [shiphelp.org](https://shiphelp.org).



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

# Women

FROM PAGE 7

Taking your first step toward saving and investing, no matter how small it may seem, can lead to more financial “options and opportunities” down the road, according to North.

“You have the option to take a work break for whatever reason,” she says. “Opportunity in that you could retire early; you could start a business or you could do something different that’s not so beholden or traditional in the workforce.”

## 4. Have a long-term mindset and plan for a longer retirement

Women, on average, live six years longer than men and, as a result, their dol-

lars need to stretch further to cover a longer retirement.

Given their longer lifespans, women have additional healthcare costs to consider during retirement, estimated to be \$165,000 on average, according to Fidelity Investments.

That’s why it’s important for women to create an investment strategy that matches their risk tolerance, timeline and long-term goals early on. Experts recommend spreading your investment portfolio across various assets to hedge your bets and boost the odds of higher returns over time.

## Methodology

Bankrate.com commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct the retirement savings survey in 2024.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,445 U.S. adults, of whom 1,257 are work-

ing full-time, part-time or temporarily unemployed. Fieldwork was undertaken between August 19-21, 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all U.S. adults (aged 18+). The survey was carried out online and meets rigorous quality standards.

It employed a non-probability-based sample using both quotas upfront during collection and then a weighting scheme on the back end designed and proven to provide nationally representative results.

Bankrate.com commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct the retirement savings survey in 2023. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

Total sample size was 2,527 U.S. adults, of whom 1,301 are working full-time, part-time or temporarily unemployed. Fieldwork was undertaken between August 23-25, 2023.

Bankrate.com commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct the retirement savings survey in 2022. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,312 U.S. adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between September 21-23, 2022.

Bankrate.com commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct the retirement savings survey in 2021. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

Total sample size was 2,225 U.S. adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between October 20-22, 2021.

Bankrate.com commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct the retirement savings survey in 2020. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,407 U.S. adults, of whom 1,331 were working full-time, part-time or temporarily unemployed. Fieldwork was undertaken between May 13-15, 2020.



## WORK &amp; PURPOSE



Elsa Florez helps her mother Maria Olguin, 80, who suffers from dementia and spinal stenosis, to her bed.

SARAH REINGEWIRTZ — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## CARING FOR CAREGIVERS: 8 TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS TO CARE FOR THEMSELVES, TOO

Survivors of heart attacks or strokes may have additional health and personal care needs, often relying on a family member or close friend to help. While caregivers take on a valuable role, they also pay unique physical and emotional tolls.

In fact, a growing body of scientific research shows people who serve as unpaid caregivers may not get the care they need to live longer, healthier lives, according to the American Heart Association, which is celebrating 100 years of lifesaving service.

Caregiving typically involves a range of duties from providing health care

services, such as changing bandages and giving medications, to helping with personal needs like bathing, dressing and meal preparation. Administrative tasks like scheduling medical appointments, filing insurance claims and paying household bills may also be necessary.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 1 in 5 U.S. adults provides some form of regular care or assistance to a family member or friend with a health problem or disability; 58% are women and nearly one-third provide care for at least 20 hours per week.

“The typical caregiver

likely has an ever-growing and changing to-do list and most of them probably do not add ‘take care of myself’ to that list,” said American Heart Association volunteer Lisa Kitko, dean of the University of Rochester School of Nursing and vice president of the University of Rochester Medical Center. “While caregiving can be a very rewarding experience, it can also take a huge physical and mental toll on even the strongest person.”

Prioritizing your own physical, mental and emotional health allows you to better help your loved one, Kitko said. Consider her tips for caregivers to care for themselves:

- Knowledge is power. Learn everything you can about your loved one’s condition.

- Set boundaries. Say “no” when it’s appropriate, don’t dwell on what you can’t change and recognize you’re trying your best.

- Maintain a healthy diet, limit caffeine and get adequate rest.

- Stay current with your own medical and dental appointments. Inform your health care provider if you’re experiencing any signs of depression.

- Find a support system. Share your feelings with someone who wants to listen or understands what you’re feeling, like

the American Heart Association’s online Support Network, which includes a section just for caregivers.

- Nurture your spiritual life and focus on things you’re grateful for each day.

- Make time for yourself and friends. Participate in activities you enjoy, including regular physical activity.

- Be prepared for possible medical emergencies. If you’re caring for someone at risk for heart attack or stroke, recognize the warning signs and call 911 if he or she experience any. Learn Hands-Only CPR as research shows most out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen in the home. Be

ready to save a life by calling 911 and pushing hard and fast in the center of the chest.

“Take care of yourself so you can take care of others,’ are definitely words to live by for caregivers. Everyone tells you that and it certainly makes sense, but it’s hard,” Kitko said. “There is a lot of stress associated with knowing someone is depending on you. ... That is why taking care of yourself really should be the first item on your caregiver checklist.”

*Learn more about caregiving and cardiovascular disease at [heart.org](http://heart.org).*

— Family Features



## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

## DATA: FEWER U.S. GRANDPARENTS ARE TAKING CARE OF GRANDCHILDREN

By Mike Schneider  
The Associated Press

Fewer grandparents were living with and taking care of grandchildren, there was a decline in young children going to preschool and more people stayed put in their homes in the first part of the 2020s compared with the last part of the 2010s, according to U.S. Census Bureau data, reflecting some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The latest figures from the most comprehensive survey of American life compare the years 2014-2018 and 2019-2023, timeframes before the COVID-19 pandemic and during the virus' spread.

The American Community Survey data show how lives were changed and family relationships altered by the pandemic and other occurrences like the opioid crisis.

The survey of 3.5 million households covers more than 40 topics, including ancestry, fertility, marital status, commutes, veterans status, disability and housing.

The decrease in grandparents' taking care of their grandchildren is most likely because opioid-related deaths stabilized and then declined

during the more recent timeframe since substance abuse is a leading reason grandparents find themselves raising grandchildren. A reduction in the number of incarcerated women also likely played a role, said Susan Kelley, a professor emerita of nursing at Georgia State University.

"It's very rarely for positive reasons that grandparents find themselves in this situation. Usually, it's a tragic situation in an adult child's life — either a death, incarceration or mental health issues which correlate with substance abuse," Kelley said. "Many grandparents thrive in that role, but there are still socioeconomic and emotional burdens on the grandparents."

A stronger economy in the most recent period also may be a reason the number of grandparents living with their grandchildren declined from 7.2 million to 6.8 million by making it less likely that adult children with their own children were seeking housing help from their parents, she said.

The decline in the number of young children enrolled in preschool stemmed from an unwillingness to send young children to school and the

closure of many schools at the height of the pandemic, according to the Census Bureau.

"These data show how the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on patterns of early childhood education," the bureau said in a separate report. "Future research will show if this was the start of a long-term trend or if enrollment will bounce back to prior levels."

Americans continued to get older, with the median age rising to 38.7 from 37.9 and the nation's share of senior citizens hitting 16.8% from 15.2%.

The share of households with a computer jumped to almost 95% from nearly 89%, as did the share of households with a broadband connection to almost 90% from 80%.

Additionally, fewer people moved and more people stayed put in the most recent time period compared with the earlier one, in many cases because of rising home values and the limited availability of homes to buy.

Home values increased by 21.7% and the percentage of vacant homes dropped from 12.2% to 10.4%.

The median home value jumped from \$249,400 to \$303,400 nationwide.

**"It's very rarely for positive reasons that grandparents find themselves in this situation. Usually, it's a tragic situation in an adult child's life — either a death, incarceration or mental health issues which correlate with substance abuse. Many grandparents thrive in that role, but there are still socioeconomic and emotional burdens on the grandparents."**

— Susan Kelley, professor emerita of nursing at Georgia State University



ALAN WARREN — THE MESSENGER-INQUIRER VIA AP, FILE

Third-grader Dallin Curry, 8, smiles as he talks with his grandmother, Mary Durr, during a Grandparents Day celebration in the lunchroom at Burns Elementary School in Owensboro, Kentucky.

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## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# OLDER MEN'S CONNECTIONS OFTEN WITHER WHEN THEY'RE ON THEIR OWN

THEY CAN INVEST IN THEIR 'SOCIAL FITNESS' IN ADDITION TO THEIR PHYSICAL FITNESS TO ENSURE THEY HAVE SATISFYING SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

**By Judith Graham**  
*KFF Health News*

At age 66, South Carolina physician Paul Rousseau decided to retire after tending for decades to the suffering of people who were seriously ill or dying. It was a difficult and emotionally fraught transition.

"I didn't know what I was going to do, where I was going to go," he told me, describing a period of crisis that began in 2017.

Seeking a change of venue, Rousseau moved to the mountains of North Carolina, the start of an extended period of wandering. Soon, a sense of emptiness enveloped him. He had no friends or hobbies — his work as a doctor had been all-consuming. Former colleagues didn't get in touch, nor did he reach out.

His wife had died after a painful illness a decade earlier. Rousseau was estranged from one adult daughter and in only occasional contact with another. His isolation mounted as his three dogs, his most reliable companions, died.

Rousseau was completely alone — without friends, family, or a professional identity — and overcome by a sense of loss.

"I was a somewhat distinguished physician with a 60-page resume," Rousseau, now 73, wrote in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* in May. "Now, I'm 'no one,' a retired, forgotten old man who dithers away the days."

In some ways, older men living alone are disadvantaged compared with older women in similar circumstances. Research shows that men tend to have fewer friends than women and be less inclined to make new friends. Often, they're reluctant to ask for help.

"Men have a harder time being connected and reaching out," said Robert Waldinger, a psychiatrist who directs the Harvard Study of Adult Development, which has traced the arc of hundreds of men's lives over a span of more than eight decades. The men in the study who fared the worst, Waldinger said, "didn't have friendships and things they were interested in — and couldn't find them." He recommends that men invest in their "social fitness" in addition to their physical fitness to ensure they have satisfying social interactions.

Slightly more than 1 in every 5 men ages 65 to 74 live alone, according to 2022 Census Bureau data. That rises to nearly 1 in 4 for those 75 or older. Nearly 40% of these men are divorced, 31% are widowed, and 21% never married.

That's a significant change from 2000, when only 1 in 6 older men lived

by themselves. Longer life spans for men and rising divorce rates are contributing to the trend. It's difficult to find information about this group — which is dwarfed by the number of women who live alone — because it hasn't been studied in depth. But psychologists and psychiatrists say these older men can be quite vulnerable.

When men are widowed, their health and well-being tend to decline more than women's.

"Older men have a tendency to ruminate, to get into our heads with worries and fears and to feel more lonely and isolated," said Jed Diamond, 80, a therapist and the author of "Surviving Male Menopause" and "The Irritable Male Syndrome."

Add in the decline of civic institutions where men used to congregate — think of the Elks or the Shriners — and older men's reduced ability to participate in athletic activities, and the result is a lack of stimulation and the loss of a sense of belonging.

Depression can ensue, fueling excessive alcohol use, accidents, or, in the most extreme cases, suicide. Of all age groups in the United States, men over age 75 have the highest suicide rate, by far.

For this column, I spoke at length to several older



JUDITH GRAHAM FOR KFF HEALTH NEWS — TNS

The Rev. Johnny Walker, 76, lives on Chicago's West Side. Twice divorced, he has lived on his own for five years. He said he finds solace in religion: "When I wake up in the morning, that's a new blessing. I just thank God that he has brought me this far."



men who live alone. All but two (who'd been divorced) were widowed. Their experiences don't represent all men who live alone. But still, they're revealing.

The first person I called was Art Koff, 88, of Chicago, a longtime marketing executive I'd known for several years. When I reached out in January, I learned that Koff's wife, Norma, had died the year before, leaving him hobbled by grief. Uninterested in eating and beset by unremitting loneliness, Koff lost 45 pounds.

"I've had a long and wonderful life, and I have lots of family and lots of friends who are terrific," Koff told me. But now, he said, "nothing is of interest to me any longer."

"I'm not happy living this life," he said.

Nine days later, I learned that Koff had died. His nephew, Alexander Koff, said he had passed out and was gone within a day. The death certificate cited "end stage protein calorie malnutrition" as the cause.

The transition from being coupled to being single can be profoundly disorienting for older men. Lodovico Balducci, 80, was married to his wife, Claudia, for 52 years before she died in October 2023. Balducci, a renowned physician known as the "patriarch of geriatric oncology," wrote about his emotional reaction in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, likening Claudia's death to an "amputation."

"I find myself talking to her all the time, most of the time in my head," Balducci told me in a phone conversation. When I asked him whom he confides in, he admitted, "Maybe I don't have any close friends."

Disoriented and disorganized since Claudia died, he said his "anxiety has exploded."

We spoke in late February. Two weeks later, Balducci moved from Tampa to New Orleans, to be near his son and daughter-in-law



AMBER BAESLER FOR KFF HEALTH NEWS — TNS

Paul Rousseau pets his neighbor's dog, Obie, at the fish hatchery where he volunteers in Jackson, Wyoming.

and their two teenagers.

"I am planning to help as much as possible with my grandchildren," he said. "Life has to go on."

Verne Ostrander, a carpenter in the small town of Willits, California, about 140 miles north of San Francisco, was reflective when I spoke with him, also in late February. His second wife, Cindy Morninglight, died four years ago after a long battle with cancer.

"Here I am, almost 80 years old — alone," Ostrander said. "Who would have guessed?"

When Ostrander isn't painting watercolors, composing music, or playing guitar, "I fall into this lonely state, and I cry quite a bit," he told me. "I don't ignore those feelings. I let myself feel them. It's like therapy."

Ostrander has lived in Willits for nearly 50 years and belongs to a men's group and a couples' group that's been meeting for 20

years. He's in remarkably good health and in close touch with his three adult children, who live within easy driving distance.

"The hard part of living alone is missing Cindy," he told me. "The good part is the freedom to do whatever I want. My goal is to live another 20 to 30 years and become a better artist and get to know my kids when they get older."

The Rev. Johnny Walker, 76, lives in a low-income apartment building in a financially challenged neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. Twice divorced, he's been on his own for five years. He, too, has close family connections. At least one of his several children and grandchildren checks in on him every day.

Walker says he had a life-changing religious conversion in 1993. Since then, he has depended on his faith and his church for a sense of meaning and community.

"It's not hard being alone," Walker said when I asked whether he was lonely. "I accept Christ in my life, and he said that he would never leave us or forsake us. When I wake up in the morning, that's a new blessing. I just thank God that he has brought me this far."

Waldinger recommended that men "make an effort every day to be in touch with people. Find what you love — golf, gardening, bird-watching, pickleball, working on a political campaign — and pursue it," he said. "Put yourself in a situation where you're going to see the same people over and over again. Because that's the most natural way conversations get struck up and friendships start to develop."

Rousseau, the retired South Carolina doctor, said he doesn't think about the future much. After feeling lost for several years, he

moved across the country to Jackson, Wyoming, in the summer of 2023. He embraced solitude, choosing a remarkably isolated spot to live — a 150-square-foot cabin with no running water and no bathroom, surrounded by 25,000 undeveloped acres of public and privately owned land.

"Yes, I'm still lonely, but the nature and the beauty here totally changed me and focused me on what's really important," he told me, describing a feeling of redemption in his solitude.

Rousseau realizes that the death of his parents and a very close friend in his childhood left him with a sense of loss that he kept at bay for most of his life. Now, he said, rather than denying his vulnerability, he's trying to live with it. "There's only so long you can put off dealing with all the things you're trying to escape from."

It's not the life he envi-

sioned, but it's one that fits him, Rousseau said. He stays busy with volunteer activities — cleaning tanks and running tours at Jackson's fish hatchery, serving as a part-time park ranger, and maintaining trails in nearby national forests. Those activities put him in touch with other people, mostly strangers, only intermittently.

What will happen to him when this way of living is no longer possible?

"I wish I had an answer, but I don't," Rousseau said. "I don't see my daughters taking care of me. As far as someone else, I don't think there's anyone else who's going to help me."

*KFF Health News is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs of KFF — the independent source for health policy research, polling and journalism.*



## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# MiGen provides support

## Group creates bonds for LGBTQ+ adults 45-plus in Michigan

By Susan Thwing

For MediaNews Group

Coming out is often portrayed as a rite of passage for LGBTQ+ individuals, yet for many, the journey unfolds not in youth, but in the later chapters of life. Whether prompted by cultural shifts, personal growth or the weight of long-buried truths, coming out later offers unique challenges and triumphs.

That's where MiGen LGBTQ+ Elder Network comes in.

MiGen, formerly SAGE Metro Detroit, has emerged as a beacon of support and connection for LGBTQ+ adults aged 45 and older in Michigan.

"At MiGen, we believe in vibrant, authentic lives at any age, safe spaces, and connected communities," said Kat Hutton, MiGen's program director.

The organization's transformation from SAGE Metro Detroit to MiGen was pivotal.

"The national organization, SAGE, changed their affiliate structure a couple of years back, shifting to a collaboration-based model. While we're still deeply connected with SAGE, everyone



outside New York and Florida had to change their name," Hutton said.

This transition allowed MiGen to reimagine its identity and

align its services with the evolving needs of Michigan's LGBTQ+ older adult community.

Hutton highlights the timing of this rebranding as ideal for Mi-

Gen's growth.

"We'd already transitioned from a volunteer-based model to an employment-based model, significantly expanding our ser-

vices," Hutton noted.

**Left:** MiGen LGBTQ+ Elder Network has emerged as a beacon of support and connection for LGBTQ+ adults aged 45 and older in Michigan.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIGEN

Today, MiGen offers a range of programs, from case management and basic needs support to social opportunities. Resources, from information on renters' rights and legal issues to caregiver guides, are available. The organization's core values of authenticity, mutual well-being, and belonging are at the heart of its mission, shaping everything from internal operations to community interactions.

Hutton said LGBTQ+ individuals often face challenges that extend beyond those typically encountered by the broader aging population.

"We start at age 45 because, unfortunately, folks in our community tend to need assistance sooner than average senior services can provide," she said.

These challenges include access to affirming health care providers, housing security, food ac-

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cess and social isolation.

"When folks come to MiGen, it's often because they have a basic need that hasn't been met elsewhere," Hutton said. The organization's services address these gaps through community navigation programs, assistance with public benefits, transportation to medical and social events, and more. For example, volunteers may accompany individuals to medical appointments to ensure they feel safe and heard.

"People who come to us may not have an affirming health care provider and they don't know where to turn. Or maybe their landlord is giving them trouble, and they need some help figuring out their rights and how to protect them. Or maybe they're just looking for a friend or someone to listen to them," Hutton said. "And so we have a really robust array of services to assist with that."

Health care access is a particularly significant issue. Many older LGBTQ+ adults carry the trauma of the AIDS crisis and decades of discrimination.

"A lot of folks avoid necessary health care because of fear of discrimination," Hutton said. "MiGen's role in connecting individuals with affirming providers and advocating for their rights is vital."

Social isolation further exacerbates the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ elders. "Our community members are far less likely to have children or long-term partners," Hutton notes. "This often leads to precarious caregiving situations, such as two 80-year-olds trying to care for each other."

MiGen combats this isolation through programs that foster connection, such as friendly caller initiatives that pair older adults with volunteers for regular social interactions.

MiGen's reach extends throughout Michigan, including rural areas into the Upper Peninsula.

"We work with partners



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN F. MARTIN

Members shared their various reasons for getting involved with MiGen and how the organization has positively impacted their lives.

like UPCAP, the Area Agency on Aging in the Upper Peninsula, to ensure support is available statewide," Hutton said. "This deep partnership model ensures that even residents in remote locations can access resources and affirming environments."

"It's really been wonderful to be able to do what we do and help everyone in the state come along with us. So, we have an advisory committee of 12 senior service providers and LGBT centers throughout the state. We convene together once a month to talk about these issues, to talk about what it means to serve LGBTQ+ older adults and to help each other do that better," Hutton said. "We feel it's really important to be a convener of both senior services and LGBTQ-serving organizations to ensure we're all working together towards the same goal."

In addition to direct services, MiGen's training and

education initiatives amplify its impact. The organization has credentialed 11 organizations this year, a process that goes beyond training to evaluate policies and practices to ensure they are affirming and inclusive.

"Credentialing is about ensuring organizations' benefits, nondiscrimination policies and physical spaces are welcoming to LGBTQ+ individuals," Hutton said.

The stories of individuals who have found new hope through MiGen illustrate the organization's profound impact.

"I have one client in particular that always comes to mind when I think about why I do this work. She is a bisexual woman in her 80s living in isolation in northern Oakland County. When she first connected with MiGen, she was socially withdrawn, spending most of her time alone in her home," Hutton said. "But her barriers weren't what peo-

ple might expect. It was as simple as not having a bra, which made her feel uncomfortable going out."

MiGen addressed her needs holistically, helping her with practical support like bra shopping and connecting her with friendly callers and affirming community spaces.

"When she came out of that dressing room, she was glowing," Hutton said. "Over

time, this woman became deeply engaged in her community, attending events, connecting with an affirming church, and even organizing her living space. Her caregiver told me she's unrecognizable from a year ago. She's a completely different person."

MiGen's work relies on the support of volunteers and donors. Opportunities to contribute include facili-

tating social events, participating in the friendly caller program, or helping with behind-the-scenes tasks like research and outreach.

"Volunteering can take many forms," Hutton said. "Whether it's making weekly phone calls or assisting at events, every contribution makes a difference."

The organization also hosts events to celebrate and uplift the LGBTQ+ community, such as its annual senior fashion show in Detroit in the spring.

"Events like these allow our folks to be seen, heard and celebrated in ways they don't always experience," Hutton said.

MiGen's work is driven by the belief that everyone deserves to age with dignity and connection.

"Our goal is to ensure that every organization in Michigan is a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ+ individuals," Hutton said. MiGen continues to transform lives and build a stronger, more inclusive community by addressing immediate needs, fostering partnerships, and advocating for systemic change.

For those interested in supporting MiGen, whether through volunteering, donating or attending events, the organization offers a variety of ways to get involved. More information can be found at [migenconnect.org](http://migenconnect.org).

"All we can do is take care of one another the best we can," Hutton said. "And at MiGen, we're doing just that."

## Next Issue of Vitality

will be on

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2025





## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF CLAWSON

Chair yoga is a popular class at the Clawson Senior Center. It's offered twice weekly. The class is free, but donations are accepted.

## SITTING FOR HEALTH: CHAIR YOGA PROVIDES LOW-STRESS ALTERNATIVE FOR PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY ISSUES, ESPECIALLY SENIORS

**By Mark E Lett**  
For MediaNews Group

For some, the road to enlightenment begins with sitting down.

Taking a seat is a first step for participants of chair yoga, a low-impact, high-benefit variation of the physical, spiritual and mental practice that originated in ancient India. The federal Centers for Disease Control estimates that one out of six adults practices yoga in some form, with about 80% hoping to improve their health and 30% turning to yoga to treat and manage pain.

Part of yoga's appeal is its versatility, with adjustments and adaptations to suit individual needs and situations. For seniors and those with mobility issues, chair yoga can provide a do-able alternative.

"With chair yoga, you don't

have to get up off the floor," said Royal Oak's Jacqueline Polefka, a retired elementary school teacher and a regular at chair yoga sessions offered at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court.

A longtime cyclist, Polefka turned to chair yoga on the recommendation of a friend. Like many enthusiasts, she values chair yoga as an effective way to improve flexibility and balance, manage stress and enhance breathing and sleep.

"I really enjoy it," she said. "I thought it was going to be too easy, but it's not. It's not just sitting and stationary."

Indeed, chair yoga sessions can be tweaked and tailored to safely and comfortably meet the wants and needs of those seeking a rigorous workout as well as those with injuries and limited mobility.

Melissa Weber, owner and creative director of YogiStoned Apparel and instructor for the popular Clawson program, said chair yoga group sessions also provide a setting for individualized performance and growth.

"Sessions are structured to encourage a deeper understanding of one's self," she said.

Chair yoga poses are modified from traditional yoga, she said, to provide additional stability and are performed by sitting in a chair or holding onto a chair for support.

Special yoga chairs generally sell for \$50 to \$100, and Weber said good, study chairs can also be adequate. It's important, experts say, to select a chair with a firm and supportive backrest that does not restrict range of motion. In addition, choose a chair that, when seated, your feet are flat to

the floor and your knees are at a 90-degree angle.

Using a suitable chair makes yoga accessible and safer without sacrificing the mental, physical and emotional benefits of yoga.

"A chair helps you to stabilize," said Weber, referring to physical and emotional sensations. Many traditional yoga poses can be adapted to chair yoga, she said.

Chair yoga poses exist for a variety of purposes. Among those cited by Betterme.world:

- Easing tight hips from sitting all day
- Bloating after lunch
- Upper back and shoulder tension
- Stiff neck and tight shoulders
- Lower back pain
- Anxiety relief
- Lack of focus and mental fatigue
- Difficulty falling asleep



PHOTO COURTESY OF MELISSA WEBER

Melissa Weber, owner and creative director of YogiStoned Apparel and instructor for Clawson's chair yoga program, wears a YogiStoned top. The yoga-inspired apparel company donates a yoga practice to those in need with every purchase.



It all helps, said Weber, emphasizing the importance of yoga to improve physical and mental fitness.

“Move it or lose it,” she said, adding that a chair yoga regimen — incorporating poses, stretching, flexibility and breathing — provides an awesome opportunity to think about things differently, especially yourself.”

Polefkin said she appreciates chair yoga sessions where “you are pushed to do things you think your body can’t do.” Those sessions, she said, can lead to “a feeling of peace.

“We each get out of it our own thing,” she said.

Dr. Nadine Kelly, founder of Yogi MD, told webmed.com that “we tend to think of yoga as an athletic endeavor that has to be done on a mat.

“Yoga practices is about much more than the physical; the practice includes skills like breathing, regulating your emotions and practicing self-care.”

And while each participant can develop and evolve individually, she said, group yoga sessions provide a setting for fellowship and friendship.

“Chair yoga is a great community,” Weber said. “You get to know each other. We are Yogis.”

*The Clawson chair yoga class is free, but donations are welcome. It’s held weekly at 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. For more information, visit recreation.cityofclawson.com or call 248-583-6700.*



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF CLAWSON

Participants prepare for a chair yoga class at the Clawson Senior Center.



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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., talk to the media after the Senate procedural vote to the Women's Health Protection Act on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on May 11, 2022.

YURI GRIPAS — ABACA/PRESS/TNS

# IN DIVIDE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE, THERE'S A CONSENSUS ON MENOPAUSE

**By Nina Heller**  
*CQ-Roll Call*

Despite deep partisan divides on issues like abortion and contraceptive access, lawmakers from both parties appear to have forged a cautious consensus on another women's issue: menopause.

The agreement became evident when a bipartisan group of female senators introduced legislation that would increase federal research on menopause and coordinate the federal government's existing programs related to menopause and midlife women's health for the first time.

At a press conference with actress Halle Berry in May, Sens. Tammy Bald-

win, D-Wis.; Patty Murray, D-Wash.; Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska; Susan Collins, R-Maine; Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.; and Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., touted the bill outside of the Capitol. Later in the year, Murray joined Denise Pines and Tamsen Fadal, national advocates for improving menopause care and executive producers of the documentary "The M Factor: Shredding the Silence on Menopause" to highlight the bill at a panel on Capitol Hill — the first time, according to Murray, that such a discussion about menopause took place in the U.S. Capitol.

"As one of my Republican colleagues said, that if men were experiencing this, it would already be funded (at NIH), but it's

not," she said.

Kathryn Schubert, the CEO of the Society for Women's Health Research, said the issue is one drawing consensus during a time of divisiveness on other women's issues.

"We're seeing this as an issue where people can sort of coalesce around in the women's health space," she said.

Schubert said a key issue hindering research on menopause is the inability to track it to begin with.

Unlike other chronic or debilitating health conditions, menopause lacks Research, Condition and Disease Categorization codes at the National Institutes of Health.

The codes are the system that sort NIH-funded projects into scientific categories for reporting to the public.

The Senate bill would, among other provisions, establish new codes for chronic or debilitating conditions among women related to menopause and midlife women's health.

Another reason advocates say there's been a lack of research on menopause is the fallout from the Women's Health Initiative, a series of clinical trials from the NIH that began in 1991 and focused on strategies for preventing heart disease, breast and colorectal cancer and osteoporosis in



## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# FIGHTING ALONE: MILLIONS OF AGING AMERICANS ARE FACING DEMENTIA BY THEMSELVES

By Judith Graham

KFF Health News

Sociologist Elena Portacolone was taken aback. Many of the older adults she visited for a research project were confused when she came to the door. They'd forgotten the appointment or couldn't remember speaking to her.

It seemed clear they had some type of cognitive impairment. Yet they were living alone.

Portacolone, an associate professor at the University of California-San Francisco, wondered how common this was. Had anyone examined this group? How were they managing?

When she reviewed the research literature more than a decade ago, there was little there. "I realized this is a largely invisible population," she said.

Portacolone got to work and now leads the Living Alone With Cognitive Impairment Project at UCSF. The project estimates that at least 4.3 million people 55 or older who have cognitive impairment or dementia live alone in the United States.

About half have trouble with daily activities such as bathing, eating, cooking, shopping, taking medications and managing money, according to their research. But only 1 in 3 received help with at least one such activity.

Compared with other older adults who live by themselves, people living alone with cognitive impairment are older, more likely to be women, and disproportionately Black or Latino, with lower levels of education, wealth, and homeownership. Yet only 21% qualify for publicly funded programs such as Medicaid that pay for aides to provide services in the home.

In a health care system that assumes older adults have family



GETTY IMAGES

As memory and thinking problems accelerate, seniors with dementia can lose track of bills, have their electricity shut off, or be threatened with eviction.

caregivers to help them, "we realized this population is destined to fall through the cracks," Portacolone said.

Imagine what this means. As memory and thinking problems accelerate, these seniors can lose track of bills, have their electricity shut off, or be threatened with eviction.

They might stop shopping (it's too overwhelming) or cooking (it's too hard to follow recipes). Or they might be unable to communicate clearly or navigate automated phone systems.

A variety of other problems can ensue, including social isolation, malnutrition, self-neglect, and susceptibility to scams. Without someone to watch over them, older adults on their own may experience worsening health without anyone noticing or struggle with dementia without ever being diagnosed.

Should vulnerable seniors live this way?

For years, Portacolone and her collaborators nationwide have followed nearly 100 older adults with cognitive impairment who live alone. She listed some concerns people told researchers they worried most about: "Who do I trust? When is the next time I'm going to forget? If I think I need more help, where do I find it? How do I hide my forgetfulness?"

Jane Lowers, an assistant professor at the Emory University School of Medicine, has been studying "kinless" adults in the early stages of dementia — those without a live-in partner or children nearby. Their top priority, she told me, is "remaining independent for as long as possible."

Seeking to learn more about these seniors' experiences, I contacted the National Council of Dementia Minds. The organization

has a biweekly online group for people living alone with dementia. Its staffers arranged a Zoom conversation with five people, all with early-to-moderate dementia.

One was Kathleen Healy, 60, who has significant memory problems and lives alone in Fresno, California.

"One of the biggest challenges is that people don't really see what's going on with you," she said. "Let's say my house is a mess or I'm sick or I'm losing track of my bills. If I can get myself together, I can walk out the door and nobody knows what's going on."

An administrator with the city of Fresno for 28 years, Healy said she had to retire in 2019 "because my brain stopped working." With her pension, she's able to cover her expenses, but she doesn't have significant savings or assets.

Healy said she can't rely on

family members who have troubles of their own. (Her 83-year-old mother has dementia and lives with Healy's sister.) The person who checks on her most frequently is an ex-boyfriend.

"I don't really have anybody," she said, choking up.

David West, 62, is a divorced former social worker with Lewy body dementia, which can impair thinking and concentration and cause hallucinations. He lives alone in an apartment in downtown Fort Worth, Texas.

"I will not survive this in the end — I know that — but I'm going to meet this with resilience," he said when I spoke with him by phone in June.

Since his diagnosis nearly three years ago, West has filled his life with exercise and joined three dementia support groups.

He spends up to 20 hours a week volunteering, at a restaurant, a food bank, a museum, and Dementia Friendly Fort Worth.

Still, West knows that his illness will progress and that this period of relative independence is limited. What will he do then? Although he has three adult children, he said, he can't expect them to take him in and become dementia caregivers — an extraordinarily stressful, time-intensive, financially draining commitment.

"I don't know how it's going to work out," he said.

Denise Baker, 80, a former CIA analyst, lives in a 100-year-old house in Asheville, North Carolina, with her dog, Yolo. She has cognitive problems related to a stroke 28 years ago, Alzheimer's disease, and serious vision impairment that prevents her from driving.

Her adult daughters live in Massachusetts and Colorado.

"I'm a very independent person, and I find that I want to do every-



# Health

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postmenopausal women.

The findings of a portion of the Women's Health Initiative, which have since been found to be flawed, found that there was an increased risk of developing breast cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke and pulmonary embolisms in those who took hormones.

Since then, further research has demonstrated that hormone replacement therapy does not necessarily lead to an increased risk of breast cancer and that the benefits of hormones can outweigh the risks.

But the findings linking hormone therapy and breast cancer led to a drop-off in treatment for some of the more disruptive side effects of menopause, Schubert said.

"We're pretty behind when it comes to menopause in particular, and I think now we're having a much more open and public dialogue about that time in a person's life and coming to the realization that we really do need to know more, but we also need to know more about the other health risks associated with healthy aging," Schubert said.

Schubert said support for federal research on menopause spans both sides of the aisle, and other women's health issues, like research on conditions such as endo-

metriosis, are emerging in a similar way.

In April, California Sen. Laphonza Butler, a Democrat, and Alabama Sen. Katie Britt, a Republican, introduced a bill that would fund maternal mortality research annually for seven years as well as approve research that would target disparities associated with maternal mortality and reduce preventable causes of deaths, among the bill's other provisions. The House has its own version of the bill.

"I do think when people hear the words 'women's health,' they may think that they are politically charged," Schubert said. "I think we have to shift the thinking on that and make sure that we all understand that we're really thinking about health across the lifespan in a variety of different ways. It's really not a matter of one specific disease, condition or organ, it really is all connected together."

The focus on menopause has united members of Congress who might not typically work together.

Unlike abortion, lawmakers have been able to come together on the issue without controversy and the partisan divides that often plague their work.

"It hasn't had the same divide within the pro-choice and what others would call the pro-life community," said Samara Daly, the co-founder and board chair at Let's Talk Menopause, a na-

tional nonprofit focused on menopause. "It's a different medical issue that sort of crosses literally all political, social, economic lines. It's a natural part of one's life ... as a result, you know, we've really been able to have people from both sides of the aisle join forces."

## Underrepresented

Women have been underrepresented in medical research for decades — with it even being the policy at one point.

In 1977, the Food and Drug Administration created a policy to exclude women who could biologically have children from Phase 1 and Phase 2 clinical trials unless they had a life-threatening medical condition.

After pregnant women who took the drug thalidomide gave birth to babies with limb deformities, researchers adopted a cautious approach to female participation in clinical trials.

Thalidomide was a sedative that was never approved for use in the U.S. but was used widely in Europe and Canada. The resulting FDA policy recommended excluding even women who used contraception, were single or whose husbands had had vasectomies.

The NIH did not establish a policy encouraging researchers to include women in studies until 1986, and it wasn't until 1993 that Congress passed a law that re-

quired women to be included in clinical research.

"There are other health issues that may only affect some women. This is one that's universal. Over the last couple of decades, we've seen more and more stigmas drop around women's health issues of different sorts," said Cindy Hall, president of the Women's Congressional Policy Institute.

A 2022 study by Harvard Medical School found that as recently as 2019, women made up roughly 40% of participants in clinical trials for the three diseases affecting women the most: cancer, cardiovascular disease and psychiatric disorders, despite women being 51% of the U.S. population.

Only roughly 30% of U.S. residency programs offer a formal menopause curriculum, according to a survey from The Menopause Society.

"We're just actually at the very beginning of trying to figure out what we need in terms of what happens during the menopause transition, which hormone therapies work, which don't," said Stephanie Faubion, the medical director of The Menopause Society and the director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Women's Health.

Another bipartisan bill would require the NIH to evaluate the results and status of completed and ongoing research related to menopause, perimenopause or midlife women's health, as well as support that re-

search.

"It's really significant because it would actually mandate the NIH to review existing research, but also invest dedicated funding for additional research around not only treatments and health outcomes but also really correcting the (Women's Health Initiative) study," Daly said.

## White House involvement

In addition to bipartisan bills in Congress, the departing Biden administration has backed increased research funding for menopause as part of President Joe Biden's investment in women's health. It's unclear, however, whether the incoming Trump administration will follow up on that work.

In November 2023, Biden announced the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research, led by first lady Jill Biden and the White House Gender Policy Council.

On Oct. 23, the Biden administration announced \$110 million in awards from the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) to accelerate research and development for women's health across 23 research teams.

Two of those awards focused on menopause: one aiming to construct a novel ovarian therapy to prevent disease in menopause and another aiming to develop a drug that would eliminate

the adverse effects of menopause.

One award, which received \$3.5 million, would fund a study to test the development of a drug to extend ovarian function and lifespan.

The other, which received \$10 million, would fund research on a cell therapy implant that would replace deficient ovarian function, restore normal hormonal processes, manage menopause-associated symptoms and minimize the adverse health outcomes related to menopause.

Jill Biden launched ARPA-H's Sprint for Women's Health in February, making it the first major deliverable of the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research.

The nature of the awards means the projects have the potential to be commercialized and widely used sooner, rather than decades down the road, according to the White House.

Advocates say they hope the shared understanding among female lawmakers of what it's like to go through menopause will continue movement on the issue.

"It's a universal experience. Obviously, each woman has a different individual experience of menopause, but the symptoms and the experience of embarrassing hot flashes and different symptoms that make it a tough thing to go through is kind of a uniter," Hall said.

# Alone

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thing I possibly can for myself," Baker told me, months before Asheville was ravaged by severe flooding. "It makes me feel better about myself."

She was lucky in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene: Baker lives on a hill in West Asheville that was un-

touched by floodwaters. In the week immediately after the storm, she filled water jugs every day at an old well near her house and brought them back in a wheelbarrow.

Though her power was out, she had plenty of food and neighbors looked in on her.

"I'm absolutely fine," she told me on the phone in early October after a member of Dementia Friendly

Western North Carolina drove to Baker's house to check in on her, upon my request. Baker is on the steering committee of that organization.

Baker once found it hard to ask for assistance, but these days she relies routinely on friends and hired help. A few examples: Elaine takes her grocery shopping every Monday. Roberta comes once a month to help with her mail and finances.

Jack mows her lawn. Helen offers care management advice. Tom, a cab driver she connected with through Buncombe County's transportation program for seniors, is her go-to guy for errands.

Her daughter Karen in Boston has the authority to make legal and health care decisions when Baker can no longer do so. When that day comes — and Baker knows it will — she expects

her long-term care insurance policy to pay for home aides or memory care. Until then, "I plan to do as much as I can in the state I'm in," she said.

Much can be done to better assist older adults with dementia who are on their own, said Elizabeth Gould, co-director of the National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center at RTI International, a nonprofit research institute. "If health

care providers would just ask 'Who do you live with?'" she said, "that could open the door to identifying who might need more help."

*We're eager to hear from readers about questions you'd like answered, problems you've been having with your care, and advice you need in dealing with the health care system. Visit [kffhealthnews.org/columnists](http://kffhealthnews.org/columnists) to submit your requests or tips.*



## Calendar of trips, activities and events

To have an event included in the Vitality calendar, email the name of the event, the time, date, address, cost (if applicable) and contact information to [jgray@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:jgray@medianewsgroup.com).

### JANUARY

**Jan. 9:** Booked for the Evening: "The Secret Life of Sunflowers" at the Roseville Public Library, 29777 Gratiot Ave, Roseville, Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 6:30 p.m. Join us every month for a lively conversation. You are welcome to join us even if you have not read the book. This month's title: The Secret Life of Sunflowers by Marta Molnar. Please note, this program will be held in the City Hall Lobby. Please continue to enter the building from the Kelly Road entrance. For more information, call 586-445-5407 or email [rsvlibraryservice@roseville-mi.gov](mailto:rsvlibraryservice@roseville-mi.gov)

**Jan. 10:** Financial Friday:

Getting Started on the Right Financial Track in 2025 at the Older Persons' Commission at 10:30 a.m. \$2. Naviage budgeting, saving, and managing money in retirement. Learn practical strategies to maximize resources, avoid pitfalls and plan for a secure financial future in 2025 and beyond. Presented by Xenia Woltmann, AWMA. Open to the public. Please pre-register by calling (248) 659-1029. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit [opc-center.org](http://opc-center.org).

**Jan. 11:** AARP OATS Tech at Blair Library. Online Basics Starts Jan. 11, Saturdays, 9—10:15 AM. 5-session course on online skills. Clawson Senior Center, call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at [recreation.cityofclawson.com](http://recreation.cityofclawson.com).

**Jan. 13:** Movie at the Library Monday, Jan. 13 at

1 p.m. Join us for a showing of Selma (128 minutes), a powerful film about the 1965 march for voting rights led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Clawson Senior Center, call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at [recreation.cityofclawson.com](http://recreation.cityofclawson.com).

**Jan. 13:** Lunch Bunch on Monday, Jan. 13 at Salvatore Scallopini in Madison Heights. Sponsored by the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. The bus departs at 11:30 a.m. Transportation: \$4 (lunch not included). Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at [recreation.cityofclawson.com](http://recreation.cityofclawson.com).

**Jan. 13:** Spice of the Month Club: Caraway at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Monday, Jan. 13, while supplies last. Join the Spice of the Month Club to try new spices! Members will receive a sample packet of

each month's spice, two recipes with the featured spice, and a little bit of history. Supplies are limited so, grab your free sample before they're gone! Don't need the spice but want the information? Join the Spice of the Month Club email list. You'll automatically get everything each month except the free spice sample. The fun comes straight to your email inbox. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, [htlibrary.org/events](http://htlibrary.org/events).

**Jan. 14:** Terrific Tuesday: Secret Service at the Older Persons' Commission, 4:30 p.m., dinner; 5 p.m.; presentation. \$15. Retired Secret Service agent Rad Jones, who served under President John F. Kennedy, will discuss his firsthand accounts of life on the front lines of presidential protection during one of the most tumultuous times in American History. Experience safeguard the nation's

most iconic leader. Don't miss this opportunity to experience history through the eyes of someone who lived it. This event is sponsored by Waltonwood Main. This event will begin promptly at 3:30 with Holiday Music by the Golden Belles. Register by calling (248) 659-1029. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit [opc-center.org](http://opc-center.org)

**Jan. 14, 21, 28:** Knitting and Crochet Circle, at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, from 10 a.m. — noon. Welcome knitters and crocheters of all levels. Hang out and share your love of creating with others. Please bring your own project and supplies. This group is currently accepting donations of yarn, fleece, or craft store gift cards. The group creates and donates to charitable organizations like Beaumont Little Angels,

Project Linus, Compassion Pregnancy, and more to give comfort items during times of need. You're welcome to create for charity or work on your own projects. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, [htlibrary.org/events](http://htlibrary.org/events).

**Jan. 14:** Craft Hour with Jess Tuesday, Jan. 14, 11 a.m. at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. Join a free, themed craft session sponsored by The Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at [recreation.cityofclawson.com](http://recreation.cityofclawson.com).

**Jan. 15:** Savvy Seniors: New Year, New You: Simple Organizing Tips at the Older Persons' Commission at 9:30 a.m. \$5. Professional organizer Jo Golda will provide simple, effective tips for organizing and downsizing

CALENDAR » PAGE 22

# AGING GROWS EXPERIENCE, NOT MEMORY LOSS.

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# Calendar

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simple, effective tips for organizing and downsizing to start the new year with a fresh, clutter-free mindset. This event is sponsored by Comfort Keepers. Register by calling (248) 659-1029. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit OPC-center.org

**Jan. 15:** Coffee and Conversation: Genealogy with Brit-tany Fields at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 10 a.m. Come sip, chat, and get the scoop on the genealogy. Enjoy a cup of coffee while engaging in meaningful conversations about genealogy research and preserving your history. Don't miss this chance to ask questions, share your thoughts, and engage with others! Coffee and donuts will be served. Registration is required. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, htlibrary.org/events.

**Jan. 15:** DIA Museum Tour. Sponsored by the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. Wednesday, Jan. 15. Bus departs at noon for a guided tour of the DIA. Explore world-class art and exhibits. Cost: \$5. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Jan 15:** Kombucha 101 at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 6:30 p.m. Join Renee Pokoj to learn how to brew your own Kombucha, Ginger Soda, and Water Kefir. You'll discover how to influence the flavor of kombucha through your choice of tea, timing, and environmental conditions. Learn to use lacto-fermentation to preserve and elevate your garden harvest, boosting both your health and your culinary creativity. Registration required. Call, sign up online, or visit us at the

library to register. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, htlibrary.org/events.

**Jan. 16:** Trivia Night at Total Sports sponsored by the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6:30 p.m. Come test out your knowledge at HTPL Trivia Night @at Total Sports. Tickets include trivia, pizza, salad, and soft drinks. Tickets can be purchased at the library for \$7 in advance or purchased at the door on Trivia night for \$8. Arrive with a team, or we'll team you up. Teams limited to 6 players. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, htlibrary.org/events.

**Jan. 16:** Wheel of Fortune Game at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson, Thursday, Jan. 16, at 1 p.m. Test your luck and enjoy the fun with friends. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Jan. 16:** Mystery Book Club: "The Big Sleep" at the Roseville Public Library, 29777 Gratiot Ave, Roseville, Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6:30 p.m. Get together with other sleuths every month as we discuss crime novels. This month's title: The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler. Please note, this program will be held in the City Hall Lobby. Please continue to enter the building from the Kelly Road entrance. For more information, call 586-445-5407 or email rsvlibraryservice@roseville-mi.gov

**Jan. 16:** Flamingo BINGO Games: Celebrity Style at the Older Persons' Commission, 5 p.m. \$10. Join us for Bingo in the Dining Room. Ticket price includes 8 games with up to 4 BINGO cards per player and pizza! Sponsored by the Village at Orchard Grove. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, call (248) 659-1029 or visit OPCcenter.org.

**Jan. 17:** Grief Support

Group at the Older Persons' Commission, from 10-11:30 a.m. The death of a loved one affects your head, heart and spirit. A Grief Support Group is an opportunity to gain an understanding about grief and receive support and healing with other caring individuals who have experienced a loss. Many people report a feeling of relief in knowing they are not alone as they share their experience with others. Walk-ins are Welcome Questions: (248) 608-0249. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit OPCcenter.org.

**Jan 18:** Book Bingo! at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Saturday, Jan. 18 from 1-3 p.m. Looking for your new favorite book? Hoping to read more in the new year? Come play bingo with us, but with a twist: if you get a bingo, you can choose a book as your prize! This is an adults-only event. Registration is required. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, htlibrary.org/events.

**Jan. 18:** Saturday, Jan. 18. Join us to see a parody of Miami's sassiest seniors at the Fisher Theatre to enjoy the production of "Golden Girls." The Laughs Continue allows audiences to relive the heartfelt hilarity of the four ladies who never stopped being best friends. Bus departs from Walmart, 45400 Marketplace, Clinton Twp at 11:15 a.m., Cost \$105 which includes lunch prior to the show at The Nautical Deli. SMALL purses are allowed and may be searched upon entry to the theatre. Register online at www.lcps.ce.eleyo.com or by calling L'Anse Creuse Community Education at 586-783-6330.

**Jan 21:** Check Mates: Roseville Library Chess Club at the Roseville Public Library, 29777 Gratiot Ave, Roseville, Tuesday, January 21 at 6 p.m. Ages 12 to Adult. Whether you're a

Grandmaster or just learning the game, there's a place for you at our Chess Club. Bring your own set or use one of ours. Please note, this program will be held in the City Hall Lobby. Please continue to enter the building from the Kelly Road entrance. For more information, call 586-445-5407 or email rsvlibraryservice@roseville-mi.gov

**Jan. 21:** Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregivers Group at the Older Persons' Commission, from 1:30-3 p.m. Support group for those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or Dementia. Respite care is available. OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. Call (248) 659-1036 or visit OPCcenter.org for additional information.

**Jan. 22:** Savor the Experience: A Four-Part Series: Cooking with Edible WOW — Meals on Wheels Takeover Meal at the Older Persons' Commission, at noon, 60 and Over: \$3 Under 60 \$4 Open to the Public. Chef Matt Schellig wowed attendees at the Edible Wow competition last month featuring three lunch entrees competing for the title of crowd favorite. After voting, the winning dish was chosen and will be featured at this unique luncheon experience prepared by the OPC culinary team. Sponsored by Optalis Health and Rehabilitation and Rose Senior Living. Register by calling (248) 659-1029. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit OPC-center.org

**Jan. 22:** Human Trafficking 101 with Turning Point at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Wednesday, Jan. 22 at 6 p.m. Join us as a representative from Turning Point discusses their empowerment approach to serving survivors of human trafficking. Participants will leave with an understanding of human trafficking, knowledge about Turning Point's programming, and clarity

about what they can do to make a difference. Register by calling 586-329-1261 or visit htlibrary.org.

**Jan. 22:** Oakland County Health Presents discover tips for healthy eating, physical activity, and goal setting in this interactive session at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. Topics include eating on a budget, MyPlate guidelines, the benefits of colorful fruits and veggies, and reading nutrition labels. Duration: 1 hour. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Jan. 23:** Women's Luncheon: Inspirational Women at the Older Persons' Commission at 1 p.m. \$15. The luncheon will feature winning contestants of the Ms. Senior Michigan pageant. These accomplished women will share their personal journeys and showcase their unique talents. This program is sponsored by Wellbridge of Rochester Hills. Register by calling (248) 659-1029. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit OPC-center.org

**Jan. 23:** Tech Time at HTPL at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Thursday, Jan. 23 at 6:30 p.m. It's the start of a new year, and we're introducing Tech Time at HTPL! Join the adult librarians as they discuss a different technology-related topic each month. Got a new tablet for Christmas? Stuck with smartphone troubles or just overall frustrated with your everyday devices? Let us help! Stop by with your new (or old!) device, and ask us your questions. Please be sure to bring any necessary passwords, device chargers, or other accessories along with you. Space is limited. Registration required. Register online, call 586-329-1261, or stop by the library to secure your spot.

**Jan. 23-24:** Casino Trips, MotorCity. Sponsored by the Clawson Senior Center, 509

Fisher Court, Clawson, on Thursday, Jan., 23 and Friday, Jan. 24. Sponsored by the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. Depart at 10 a.m. Cost \$12 each trip. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Jan. 24:** Memory Café at the Older Persons' Commission, from 1-2:30 p.m. A welcoming social gathering for individuals affected by memory challenges and their care partners. Some activities include art, music and games with light refreshments provided. Sponsored by Waltonwood Main. RSVP to Theresa Gill (248) 659-1036 or tgill@OPCcenter.org. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, call (248) 659-1029 or visit OPCcenter.org.

**Jan. 24:** Visually Impaired Group at the Older Persons' Commission, from 10-11:30 a.m. Support group providing information, socialization, support and speakers to those with low vision. Register by calling (248) 608-0246. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit OPCcenter.org.

**Jan 28:** Tuesday Night Book Group at the Harrison Township Public Library, 38255 L'Anse Creuse, Ste. A, Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. Join the Tuesday Night Book Group as we discuss The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters. Get your copy and join us today. About the Book: A four-year-old Mi'kmaq girl goes missing from the blueberry fields of Maine, sparking a tragic mystery that haunts the survivors, unravels a community, and remains unsolved for nearly fifty years. Registration appreciated, but not required. For more information, call 586-329-1261 or visit, htlibrary.org/events.

**Jan. 29:** BINGO Games at the Older Persons' Commission, 12:30 p.m. \$10. Join



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# Seniors

## FROM PAGE 22

us for Bingo in the Dining Room. Ticket price includes 8-10 games with up to 4 BINGO cards per player and pizza! Sponsored by the Village at Orchard Grove. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, call (248) 659-1029 or visit OPCcenter.org.

**Jan. 29:** Parkinson's Care Partner Group at the Older Persons' Commission, from 1-3 p.m. This group provides an opportunity for those who are caring for their loved one to come together for support, sharing and time to talk with others who are also living with Parkinson's. Call facilitator Kathy Walton 248-568-3549. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, visit OPCcenter.org.

**Jan. 30:** Chinese New Year Celebration & Bingo at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson Thursday, Jan. 30 at noon. Celebrate the Year of the Snake with an Asian-themed lunch at noon followed by Bingo at 1 p.m. Join us for this festive tradition filled with fun and delicious food. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

## February

**Feb. 3:** Learn While Lunching with Cardiologist Dr. Sindhu Koshy at the Older Persons' Commission at 1 p.m. \$12. In honor of Heart Health Month, Dr. Sindhu Koshy will share expert tips on preventing heart disease, managing conditions, and staying heart-healthy. Attendees will gain practical advice and insights into the latest treatments and lifestyle changes for better cardiovascular health. For more information, call (248) 659-1029 or visit OPCcenter.org. The OPC is

located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester.

**Feb. 3:** Identity Theft & Fraud Training at the Clawson Senior Center: Protect yourself from scams and safeguard your personal information. Join Officer A. Beydoun for an insightful session on recognizing and avoiding identity theft and fraud. Learn practical tips to stay secure in today's digital age. This essential workshop is perfect for anyone looking to enhance their financial and personal safety. Monday, Feb. 3, 11 a.m. Register early to secure your spot. Clawson Senior Center, call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 5:** AARP OATS Tech Talks: Food Delivery Apps at the Clawson Senior Center: Make life more convenient with food delivery apps. In this hands-on session, our tech group facilitator will guide you through using popular apps like DoorDash, Grubhub, and more. Discover how these tools can simplify meal planning and bring your favorite restaurants to your doorstep. Ideal for beginners or anyone looking to master these apps. Wednesday, Feb. 5, 1 p.m.. Don't forget to register in advance. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 6:** Estate Planning with Attorney Eric Glick at the Clawson Senior Center: Take charge of your future with comprehensive estate planning strategies. Attorney Eric Glick will cover the essentials you need to know to secure your assets and ensure your wishes are honored. This empowering session is a must-attend for anyone planning for long-term peace of mind. Thursday, Feb. 6, 1 p.m. Register early. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 10:** Movie at the Library: Lee Daniels' The Butler at the Clawson Senior

Center: Enjoy a captivating afternoon at the library with a screening of Lee Daniels' The Butler. This critically acclaimed drama explores pivotal moments in history through the eyes of a White House butler. A thought-provoking and entertaining experience for all movie enthusiasts. Monday, Feb. 10, 1 p.m.. Be sure to register in advance. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 10:** February Lunch Bunch at the Clawson Senior Center: Join us for a delightful outing at Grand Tavern in Troy. Enjoy great food, wonderful company, and lively conversation. The bus departs promptly at 11:45 a.m.. Monday, Feb. 10. \$4 for the trip (lunch not included). Advance registration is required. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb 11:** AARP OATS Tech Talks: Smartphone Camera Tips at the Clawson Senior Center: Unlock the creative potential of your smartphone camera. Learn unique tips and tricks to use your camera for more than just photos. This fun and interactive workshop will inspire you to explore new possibilities. Tuesday, Feb. 11, 4 p.m. at the Blair Memorial Library. Reserve your spot today. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 12:** Birthday Lunch at the Clawson Senior Center: Celebrate Feb. birthdays with a delicious free lunch in your honor. Whether it's your special day or you're here to join the festivities, we'd love to celebrate with you. Wednesday, Feb. 12, noon. Advance registration is required. Feb. birthdays receive a complimentary lunch. You must register before 9 a.m. no later than the day lunch is served. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 13:** Valentine's Lunch & Bingo at the Clawson Senior Center: Enjoy a festive Valentine's-themed lunch followed by a lively bingo session with exciting prizes. Perfect for a fun and social afternoon. Lunch begins at 12:00 p.m., and bingo kicks off at 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13. \$6 per person. Don't forget to register in advance. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 18:** Royal Oak Musicale at the Clawson Senior Center: Experience the joy of live music with the talented Royal Oak Musicale. Relax and enjoy an afternoon of melodies sure to uplift your spirits. Bus departs at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18. \$3 per person. Register early to save your seat. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 19:** Lunch & Learn at the Clawson Senior Center: Boost your health knowledge while enjoying a complimentary lunch. This engaging session will provide valuable tips for staying healthy, active, and informed about their services. Wednesday, Feb. 19, 11:30 a.m. Reserve your spot now. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 20:** Wheel of Fortune at the Clawson Senior Center: Spin the wheel for a chance to win fantastic prizes in this exciting game show-style event. Don't miss out on the fun. Thursday, Feb. 20, 1 p.m. Register early to join in. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 21:** OATS Tech Talks: Estate Planning Resources & Tools at the Clawson Senior Center: Discover helpful tools and resources to simplify estate planning and secure your future. This informative session will provide actionable insights for anyone looking to protect their assets. Friday, Feb. 21, 1 p.m. Advance registration

is required. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 26:** Health Screenings at the Clawson Senior Center: Stay proactive about your health with free screenings and personalized tips. Take the first step toward better well-being. Wednesday, Feb. 26, 11 a.m. Register today. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 27:** Hollywood Casino Trips at the Clawson Senior Center: Try your luck at the Hollywood Casino. The bus departs at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 27, and Friday, Feb. 28. \$12 per trip. Register today. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

**Feb. 27:** Melodies at the DIA at the Clawson Senior Center: Enjoy the soulful sounds of the Sean Dobbins Organ Trio at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Immerse yourself in an unforgettable musical experience. Bus departs at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 27. This event is FREE, but advance registration is required. Call to register at 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

## Monthly events

■ **Chair Drumming:** Second Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Cost is \$5 per drop-in class. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or online at recreation.cityofclawson.com.

■ **The Birmingham Metropolitan Women's Club:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Iroquois Club, 43248 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Twp. at 10 a.m. for lunch & informative speakers. We are a friendly group of 50+ women who gather for friendship, informative programs & philanthropic activities in our community. Visit before

becoming a member. The cost for the luncheon & program is \$32. To make a reservation, call Chris at 248-303-7339. To learn more, visit tbmwc.com

■ **Learn Spanish at 11:30 a.m.** on Wednesdays at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. Donations welcomed. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit cityofclawson.com

■ **Somerset Mall Walking and Shopping:** 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the month. Depart at 9:45 a.m. from the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court to enjoy a scenic and safe way to support your physical & mental well-being and shop while you are there! Cost \$3. Contact dispatch at 248-583-6700 to sign up.

■ **Yoga for Seniors:** At the Fraser Senior Activities Center, 34935 Hidden Pine Dr., Fraser. Friday mornings 10:30am-11:30 a.m. (6-week sessions). Wednesday mornings 11:30-12:30 p.m. (6-week sessions). \$26 for members per session, \$32 for non-members per session. To register, call 586-296-8483.

■ **Pickleball Drop:** in with friends of all ages for a friendly game of pickleball at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. on Mondays, from 1-3 p.m. Cost is \$2. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit cityofclawson.com

■ **Quilting Group:** meets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Clawson Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court, Clawson. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit cityofclawson.com

■ **Water Fitness Classes:** Mondays & Wednesday, from 11:10 a.m. — noon (times subject to change based on staffing) at L'Anse Creuse North high school located at 23700 Twenty One Mile Rd, Macomb. Cost \$5 drop in or punch cards available for \$50 — payment



accepted poolside or online and bring your receipt. Register online at [Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com](http://Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com) or by calling L'Anse Creuse Community Education at 586-783-6330.

▪ **Quilting Group:** Meets every Tuesday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Room 5/6. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Let's meet up to discuss the latest topics and ask questions in a friendly environment. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Pick Your Play:** Thursdays at 12:45 p.m. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Play Kings in the Corner, Hand & Foot, Farkle, whatever you like. Bring a friend and have some fun. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Did you want to learn to play piano, guitar or ukulele? What about voice lessons? We offer beginner classes for youth and adults:** Visit our website to see all of the music lessons we offer. Lessons take place at Kawai studios and rental instruments are available for rent. Kawai studio is located at 12745 23 Mile Rd, Shelby Twp, MI 48315. Register online at [Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com](http://Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com) or by calling L'Anse Creuse Community Education at 586-783-6330

▪ **Current Events Club:** meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Let's meet up to discuss the latest topics and ask questions in a friendly environment. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Fitness 20/20/20:** Monday and Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Fitness 20/20/20 held at Frederick V Pankow Center — Room 505, 24076 F V Pankow Blvd, Clinton Twp. Cost is \$96 Register online at [Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com](http://Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com) or calling L'Anse Creuse Community Education at 586-783-6330.

▪ **Chair Exercise:** On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Level I at 10:30 a.m.: Seated warm-up, light weights, bands and balance work. Level II at 11:15 a.m.: Low-impact moves. No fee, donations welcome. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Socrates Club:** Meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Meetup to discuss current events in a relaxed, informal setting. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Zumba Gold at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court at 1:30 p.m.** on Mondays with Ivy. Cost is \$5 per drop-in class. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Solo-Seniors Group:** meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court Meet and mingle with other seniors in this fun social group. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Indoor Walking on Mondays and Wednesdays at 9:15 a.m.** at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Cost is \$1. Price includes prize money for the top three scores. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Mondays and Wednesdays:** 9:15-10 a.m. (tentatively starting this Fall/Winter), Water Walking or Lap Swim held at L'Anse Creuse High School North, 23700 21 Mile Rd, Macomb. Walk in \$5 a visit or purchase a punch card. Punch cards can be purchased at the pool, online at [Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com](http://Lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com) or calling L'Anse Creuse Community Education at 586-783-6330.

▪ **Older Persons' Commis-**



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To have an event included in the Vitality calendar, email the name of the event, the time, date, address, cost (if applicable) and contact information to [jgray@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:jgray@medianewsgroup.com).

▪ **Membership:** Mondays — Thursdays, from 8:30 a.m. — 7:30 p.m.; Friday, from 8:30 a.m. — 3:30 p.m.; and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. OPC membership is available at no charge to all residents 50+ of Rochester, Rochester Hills and Oakland Township. Registration forms are available at OPC or online at [opcseniorcenter.org](http://opcseniorcenter.org). You must register in person and proof of residency is required. The OPC is located at 650 Letica Drive, Rochester. For more information, call 248-656-1403.

▪ **Pinochle:** on Mondays and Wednesdays at 12:45 p.m. at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Cost is \$1. Price includes prize money for the top three scores. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Chair Yoga:** at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays & Thursdays with Melissa or Stephanie at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Come get a great stretch in this class! No fee, but donations are welcome. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Tai Chi:** Wednesdays at 10 a.m. with Cheryl at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. Cost is \$5 per drop-in class. For more information,

call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Euchre:** on Tuesdays at 12:45 p.m. Cost is \$1, which includes prize money, at the Clawson Recreation and Senior Center, 509 Fisher Court. For more information, call 248-589-0334 or visit [cityofclawson.com](http://cityofclawson.com)

▪ **Confident Communicators Club:** Meets monthly for people who seek improving public speaking skills and leadership confidence. This supportive Toastmasters group meets online the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 8-9:30 a.m. Many of our members have gain skills needed to become a better salesperson, grow their business, get promoted, and engage students. Register for any of our meetings to get the Zoom Link -<https://confident-communicators-club-meeting.eventbrite.com>. Contact our VP Membership to get more information [vpm-1196053@toastmastersclubs.org](mailto:vpm-1196053@toastmastersclubs.org)

▪ **Breakfast Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries:** Breakfast (3rd Tuesday of each) at 10:30 a.m., Pancake Factory, 13693 23 Mile Rd, NE corner of 23 Mile & Schoenherr, Shelby Twp. Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries. Contact Ellen 586-781-5781.

▪ **Bowling held at Collier Bowl:** 879 S Lapeer

Rd. (M24), Oxford every Tuesday. Arrive at noon for lane assignments. Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries. Cost is \$7.50 for three games, (shoes extra at \$2.50). Lunch afterwards optional. Call Joe at 248-693-2454 or Nadine at 248-475-9036.

▪ **New Baltimore Civic Club:** Euchre every Thursday at 36551 Main St. (corner of Blackwell) in New Baltimore. Sign in at 6:30 p.m., play at 7 p.m. \$10 plus a quarter for each euchre.

▪ **Breakfast every Wednesday:** Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries. Join us at 10 a.m. at Cavis Pioneer Restaurant, 5606 Lapeer Rd., Kimball. Call Rita, 810-334-6287 for more information.

▪ **Senior Card Playing:** Come and join a fun group of card players who play a wide range of card games. Everyone brings a snack to share while playing. Free. Mondays from 1-4 p.m. at 35248 Cricklewood Blvd. (Cricklewood Recreation Building). Call 586-725-0291.

▪ **Dancing every Tuesday:** at Polish Century Club, 33204 Maple Lane, Sterling Heights. Doors open at 6 p.m. Music from 7-10:30 p.m. Cost is \$8 per person with a cash bar. A table is reserved for Widowed Friends. Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries Contact Kate at 586-344-3886.

▪ **New Baltimore Senior Club:** Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This welcoming group of seniors has all sorts of fun. We play bingo, hold luncheons, go on trips, and play cards. Monthly dues, \$2. Location 35248 Cricklewood Blvd. (Cricklewood Recreation Building). Call 586-725-0291.

▪ **Zumba Gold:** from 10:30-11:30 a.m. every Monday and Wednesday at the Washington Center, 57880 Van Dyke, Washington Twp. Cost depends on how many punches are purchased. 4 punches \$23 resident, \$29 NR; 11 punches \$60

resident, \$66 NR. For more information, call 586-752-6543.

▪ **Cards/Games/Friendship:** Ss. John and Paul, (1st Thursday or every month), 1:30-4 p.m. at, 7777 28 Mile Rd. Bring a snack to share and your own beverage. Ss. John and Paul supports the Agape Center, a resource center for the most vulnerable members of society and would appreciate it if you could bring a canned good (vegetable, meat, fruit) when you come to play. (Dinner afterward at Romeo Family Restaurant, 66020 Van Dyke Rd., between 30 & 31 Mile is optional.) Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries. Call Ellen, 586-781-5781.

▪ **Men Only Breakfast:** Lukich Family Restaurant (1st & 3rd Thursday), 3900 Rochester Rd., Troy, at 9 a.m. The Widowed Men's Group invites you to meet with other widowed men for breakfast at either of the Men's Fellowship locations whichever is more convenient for you. Many topics & ideas help you become involved in the activities of Widowed Friends. Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries Contact Ray at 248-585-5402.

▪ **Eastside Movies:** (1st Tuesday of each month) at Chesterfield Crossing Digital Cinema 16 (known for free soda & popcorn refills also offers discount matinee pricing) 50675 Gratiot Ave., Chesterfield Twp. Early dinner afterwards TBD. Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries. For more information, contact Marion at 586-703-1427

▪ **Metamora — Dinner Club:** (3rd Wednesday of the month) at 5 p.m. Join us at The White Horse Inn, 1E High St., Metamora. Reserved seating. Sponsored by Widowed Friends Ministries. Please RSVP to Sharry 248-840-0063. No walk-ins. Please call if you must cancel your reserved seating.



# POETRY PAGE 1

## JANUARY: "BRING IT ON!"

January comes with wintery rain and snow  
 And snowbirds that fly far away.  
 Die-hards remain to enjoy "The White Plains",  
 As they drift and go lightly bye....  
 It's a great time to write;  
 Take flight on the pages,  
 As time drifts on mounting snow.  
 And those who stay, remember and know,  
 And wish it would soon melt away.  
 Blankets and comforters  
 And short winter naps,  
 Bring visions of Michigan  
 Near and past.

Survivors, we are; recording former times,  
 Of sports and hot chocolate  
 And nights full of stars.  
 So, in recovery from holidays,  
 Be thankful who you are.  
 For those who stopped by  
 Or sent you a card and remember  
 The reason for the season:  
 New Year Brings It On!

**Submitted by: Margherita J. Wiszowaty of  
 St. Clair Shores, Michigan**

## FLORIDA BOUND

Let's go to Florida says he  
 Eagerly we pack our RV  
 Blankets, pillowcases and sheets  
 Healthy foods and food for treats  
 Laundry, kitchen goods and paper stuff  
 How will we know when we have enough  
 Towels, maps, stamps and addresses  
 Clothing, books and reading glasses  
 The list is long and goes on and on  
 Carrying these things feels like a ton  
 Cancel papers hold the mail  
 Don't forget the garbage pail  
 Turn down heat pack travel circulars

Take Off remote and binoculars  
 We thought we might have extra room  
 Then we added dustpan and broom  
 We know we've packed more than we need  
 If it's not in now it's not needed we agreed  
 We're really packed to the gills  
 Except for cash to pay our bills  
 As we near Toledo we realized something funny  
 Someone should have packed our vacation money!

**Submitted by: Jean Waid of Rochester Hills, Michigan**

FIRST & LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF POEM: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: Poetry, Pets &  
 Be Kind Spotlight  
 Dawn Emke  
 53239 Settimo Crt  
 Chesterfield, MI 48047

If you chose to submit your Poetry, Pet Tribute or Be Kind Spotlight through email, please include your first and last name along with your phone number and the city, state you reside in. You will not be solicited and all information will be kept confidential.

Email Poetry, Pet Tributes & Be Kind Spotlights to: [demke@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:demke@medianewsgroup.com)

**Look for other ads in this issue of Vitality for more information  
 on Be Kind Spotlight and Pet Tribute.**

**NEXT ISSUE WILL BE FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

Thank you for your interest in sharing your creativity. We look forward to reading your poems and letters of appreciation.





# PET TRIBUTE PAGE

## Tula

This will be Tula’s first Christmas with Mary G of Clinton Township, MI. Tula was surrendered by her previous owner and then rescued in October from the Macomb Humane Society. She is very happy to be in her furever home. Tula is 7 years old.

FIRST & LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF POEM: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: Poetry, Pets &  
Be Kind Spotlight  
Dawn Emke  
53239 Settimo Crt  
Chesterfield, MI 48047

If you chose to submit your Poetry, Pet Tribute or Be Kind Spotlight through email, please include your first and last name along with your phone number and the city, state you reside in. You will not be solicited and all information will be kept confidential.

Email Poetry, Pet Tributes & Be Kind Spotlights to: [demke@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:demke@medianewsgroup.com)

**Look for other ads in this Vitality with more information  
on Pet Tribute and Be Kind Spotlight.**

**NEXT ISSUE WILL BE FEBRAURY 13, 2025**

Thank you for your interest in sharing your creativity. We look forward to reading your poems and letters of appreciation.



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**LAKESIDE**  
in Clinton Twp.  
(586) 263-0081

**LLOYD'S BAYOU**  
in Spring Lake  
(616) 844-9001

**OAKLAND**  
in Auburn Hills/Pontiac  
(248) 335-7020

