



# The Columbia County Office for the Aging

# ELDER EXPRESS



Winter/Spring 2012

**Columbia County  
Office for the Aging**

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**Accountant**

Ken Schomaker

**Case Manager**

**Supervisor**

Michelle Ublacker

**Nutrition Services**

**Coordinator**

Amy Anderson

**Case Managers**

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**Program Manager**

Patricia Moskaluk

**Community**

**Services Assistants**

Susan Jenrich

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**Bookkeeper**

Donna Race

**Nutrition Program**

**Assistant**

Lisa DiStefano

**Senior Site**

**Manager**

Anna Redding

**Clerks**

Mary Coons

Rebecca Klugo

Gittin Er Done: Meet the Finance and Administration Team

There's a lot of moving parts involved in keeping things running smoothly in a county agency – payroll, purchasing, paying suppliers, ensuring that all the pieces line up properly, making sure funds are properly budgeted and accounted for, expenditures tracked and monitored to identify patterns that may have implications for our ability to serve the public, compiling information for management and reporting, being accountable to the people we serve and being good stewards of the tax dollars we are entrusted with. Staff who perform these important functions are sometimes referred to as “back office staff” or “number crunchers.” At OFA they're called the Finance and Administration Team – Accountant Ken Schomaker and Bookkeeper Donna Race and they are critical to our mission.

A life-long resident of Hudson, OFA Bookkeeper Donna Race brings nearly 40 years of experience “balancing the books.” Her career includes positions with Questar, Pine Haven Nursing Home, and Accounts Payable before coming to OFA about 4 years ago. She quickly demonstrated why she was nicknamed “Donna Do” early on in life – if you want something done in a timely, accurate, precise fashion, Donna is the person for the job. With her uncanny eye for detail, she is responsible for payroll, personnel, paying the bills, and tracking accounts. In addition to her many responsibilities, Donna can also be counted on to pitch in to help with front desk customer service or deliver meals on wheels. She is a big fan of American Idol star Daughtry, attending every concert within driving range – and she has the backstage photos on her wall to show for it. An animal lover, she adopted a wire-haired Jack Russell terrier that competes with Daughtry for attention.

Noted for his engaging, off-beat sense of humor, Ken Schomaker has a remarkable ability to work with numbers in an organizational context. With a degree in accounting from Quinnipiac University and twenty-five years experience in banking, manufacturing, and county government, Ken is a founding member of the OFA Management Team. He has led major initiatives to improve financial management practices and completely redesign the OFA management information system which support our commitment to good management and continuous improvement. His responsibilities include budgeting, ensuring that claims for State and Federal funds are submitted, monitoring expenditures and revenues, and supervising OFA front desk “whiz kids” Becky Klugo and Mary Coons. An avid fan of the Jets, Rangers, and Mets, Ken has an outstanding memory for team and player history and impressive knowledge of sports trivia – for example, how can an NHL hockey team score a goal without putting the puck in the net. He is also a lifelong Olivia Newton-John fan with photos decorating his office wall and an equally extraordinary grasp of ONJ trivia to prove it.

Both Donna and Ken are a lot like Larry the Cable Guy in their “Git ‘er done” approach to work. They are critical members of the OFA team of highly skilled and dedicated staff working to make a difference in the lives of senior citizens.

## **AARP TAX-AIDE PROGRAM**

**Free Tax preparation** will be offered starting February 2nd through April 15<sup>th</sup> at sites in Hudson, Philmont, and Kinderhook. The program is open to all people with lower or moderate income with special attention given to those 60 or older. The program is part the IRS's "Tax Counseling for the Elderly."

Volunteers at these locations are trained to handle tax returns that include itemized deductions, capital gains, W2s, pensions, IRA distributions, and special credits. The only business returns that may be done are the simplified C-EZ form. All returns must be E-filed unless there are some special circumstances that prevent it.

Appointments are recommended, call the telephone number listed under each site. In case of bad weather call the contact number to make sure the site is open.

AARP will also be available to do taxes for 3 days Feb 8, March 14, April 4<sup>th</sup> 10-2 at the Roeliff Jansen Community Library. Sign up at the library for an appointment.

If you have any questions about the program or are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact the local coordinator Noel Fair at 518-325-5448.

### **Locations and Hours**

<b>Philmont:</b>	Tripp Nutrition Center - 93 Main St. Monday 9-12:30 Call 518-325-5448
<b>Hudson:</b>	Office for the Aging - 325 Columbia St. Thursday 10:00am-2:00pm Call 518-828-6434
<b>Kinderhook:</b>	McNary Center St Paul's Episcopal Church - 6 Sylvester St. Tuesday 9-12, Thursday 1-4 Call 518-758-9529

## **Caregiver / Respite Services**

The Columbia County Office for the Aging offers respite services for caregivers of any age who are caring for a person over 60 years of age in their home. The service provides a home health aide to care for that person allowing you to leave the house and enjoy a break from your care giving responsibilities. You can use this time in any way you would like – to go out to lunch with a friend, to go shopping, to spend time with a child or grandchild, for whatever you need to do. The number of hours available is dependent on the number of people utilizing the service. If you are interested in this program or any other program we offer at the Office for the Aging, give us a call at 828-4258.

## Protect Yourself and Your Family by Getting Vaccinated!

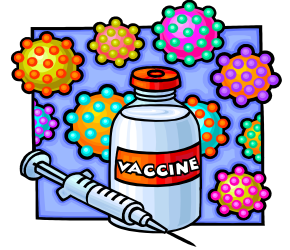
The flu is a contagious respiratory illness. Getting a **flu shot** each year is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and others from the flu.

Pneumonia is a dangerous complication of the flu. The **pneumonia shot** can greatly reduce your chance of getting pneumonia and also reduce the severity of the illness if you get it.

Shingles is a viral disease that causes a painful rash. **Zosta-vax is the Shingles vaccine**. It can prevent or reduce the severity of the Shingles.

One shot of the **Tdap vaccine** reduces the risk of potentially serious infections such as tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). It is recommended as a one-time dose for all adults in place of their 10-year booster shot for tetanus (Td).

The Columbia County Department of Health has a limited supply of free vaccines. For more information, or if you have questions, call the Columbia County Department of Health at **(518) 828 -3358, ext. 1300**.



## Important Dates and Information

- Are you interested in being a part of the AARP Driver Safety Program but have not been able to attend the seminars? With access to the internet, you can be a part of this program at your own convenience. You can take this course online at [AARPdriversafety.org](http://AARPdriversafety.org).
- Do you need SMALL home repairs done? Call 828-4258 and ask to speak with Patricia Moskaluk.

## Emergency HEAP

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Emergency HEAP program opened. To apply for emergency assistance, the following criteria must be met:

- You have applied for and received regular HEAP
- Have less than ¼ tank of fuel or less than a ten day supply
- Have a shut-off notice
- Must be resource eligible

If you are HEAP eligible, you may also qualify for assistance in furnace repair or replacement. To apply you must:

- Own your own home
- Have owned the home for at least 12 months prior to the application for HEAP
- Must be resource eligible
- All work, whether repair or replacement, must be authorized by DSS prior to commencement of work.

You may contact the Columbia County Department Social Services at 518-828-9411 for Emergency HEAP and/or furnace repair and replacement. If you are over 60 or receive Social Security/Disability (SSD) and would like to apply for **regular** HEAP, you can call Office for the Aging, 828-4258. Individuals under 60 should apply at Columbia Opportunities. Their phone number is 828-4611.

## **60 + Food and Friendship Centers**

**Albert L. Tripp Center**  
93 Main Street  
Philmont  
672-7134—open Mon-Fri

**Canaan**  
Canaan Town Hall  
1647 County Route 5  
Canaan, NY 12029  
392-4146-open Wednesdays

**Hudson/Greenport**  
Sons and Daughters of Italy  
27 Bridge Street  
Hudson, NY 12534  
610-0710-open Mon-Fri

**Livingston**  
Linlithgo Reformed Church  
447 Church Road  
Livingston, NY 12541  
828-7538-open Tues/Fridays

**Roe Jan**  
Our Lady of Hope  
8074 Route 22  
Copake Falls, NY 12517  
329-1626-open Mon-Fri

**Spencertown**  
St. Peter's Presbyterian Church  
5219 Route 203  
Spencertown, NY 12165  
392-5364  
Open 4th Tuesday of the month

**Stuyvesant**  
St. Joseph Parish Hall  
1820 Route 9  
Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12171  
751-0267-open Tues and Thurs

**Valatie**  
Valatie Senior Center  
3302 Williams Street  
Valatie, NY 12184  
751-0267-open Mon/Wed

*Please call a day ahead to the  
appropriate site to make a  
reservation for lunch.*



## **What's Cooking?**

Happy New Year everyone!! The New Year is sometimes accompanied with resolutions of weight loss, or maybe not weight loss, but the promises of eating healthier and maintaining a healthier lifestyle.

An excellent way to begin making small changes for a healthier lifestyle is by making sure that healthy snacks are incorporated into your daily food plan. Although some folks think that snacking will spoil your appetite, the simple truth is that a small healthy snack of no more than 150 calories and consumed 2-3 hours before a meal can be quite beneficial to eating a healthy diet. A snack can help to supplement vitamins and fiber that provide essential fuel for energy. Long lapses between meals can lead to reduced levels of blood sugar called hypoglycemia. Some noticeable symptoms of hypoglycemia can include loss of energy, tiredness, difficulty in concentrating, changes in mood, blurred vision, tremors, sweating, and in severe cases fainting.

The key to incorporating healthy snacks into your diet is the planning process that begins at the grocery store. Fruits and vegetables are always wonderful choices for a quick easy snack and with just a little creativity they can become fun and exciting. A simple way to tune up a stalk of celery or a slice of apple is with a staple from everyone's pantry, good ole' peanut butter. A two ingredient recipe that is sure to tickle everyone's tongue combines one cup of low-fat vanilla yogurt with one half cup of peanut butter. Just mix the two together and dip with your favorite fruit or vegetable.

Preplan your snacks; be mindful of fat, sodium, sugar, and calories hiding in the snack. A nutrient rich snack that is balanced with a lean protein and a fiber rich carbohydrate such as yogurt and fruit or a handful of nuts with some dried fruit cannot only help to curb your appetite, but it can also give you the sustained energy boost that your body needs to get through the day and keep you physically active.

Amy Anderson  
Nutrition Service Coordinator

## Winter Safety Tips for Seniors

With the cold weather upon us it is important to be prepared for what lies ahead during the winter months. Changes in weather conditions can happen rapidly so it is important to have food and supplies such as batteries, candles and blankets on hand. You should also make sure you have adequate home heating fuel and gas in your vehicle. Remember that you can ALWAYS get help with just a phone call! In case of emergency call 911 or your local police or fire department. If you have a general question and need some direction, you can call the Office for the Aging at 828-4258 and we will help you or point you in the right direction. Below are some important weather related terms to be familiar with and phone numbers in case you need help.

Winter Weather Terms:

- **Winter Advisory:** means weather is expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous.
- **Frost & Freeze Warning:** means to expect below freezing temperatures that may damage pipes. Be sure to wear warm clothing when exposed to the outdoor elements.
- **Winter Storm Watch:** means heavy ice and snow are expected in one or two days.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** means severe weather is about to begin and you should stay indoors.
- **Blizzard Warning:** means that outdoor conditions could well be life threatening. Winds above 40 mph are dangerous and could occur. **STAY INDOORS!**

Take extra care and allow extra time to get around when the ground is frozen and ice and snow may be hazardous. When possible, stay indoors. If you must go out, make sure to dress in layers and cover exposed skin. Stay active when possible to keep your body temperature up, however remember not to overdue it. If there is a heavy snowfall, ask for help with shoveling whenever possible.

If there is a severe storm and you lose power or heat and feel that you need help, do not hesitate to call and ask for help. Many times we feel that asking for help may be a burden on someone, however there are many people ready to help if you need it. Again, remember that help is just a phone call away.

## Meals On Wheels Cancellations

Tune into WRGB – Channel 6 (CBS) on your television to watch for closings. As a general rule, if the schools in your area are closed, we will not be delivering meals. You may also tune into WCTW 98.5 FM, WHUC 1230 AM and WZCR 93.5 on your radio for the same information.



Do you need help for a loved one? **NY CONNECTS, COLUMBIA COUNTY** is a program that assists with helping the elderly stay in their homes longer with support services. Please call 828-CARE or 1-877-260-9244 for more information. Or visit the NY CONNECTS website at [www.columbiahealthnet.org](http://www.columbiahealthnet.org).

## **Dog Animal Rescue and Senior Program** **By Wendy Guntert/Everlasting Hope Animal Rescue**

Everlasting Hope Animal Rescue and Advocacy was founded in August of 2011 by Wendy Guntert of Hillsdale. In five months 56 puppies and dogs have been adopted to their forever homes. Most dogs that we take into our rescue come from high-kill shelters in New York City and others are local surrenders. All dogs are spayed/neutered if they are old enough, and a spay/neuter contract is required if they are too young. They are all current on vaccines including Rabies and are heart-worm negative. Adoption applications are required including a vet reference and three other references. The adoption fee is usually \$250, but may be less. Fees go toward veterinary care, medication, flea and tick preventative, heartworm preventative, food, treats, bedding, etc.

Guntert said “We recently placed dogs with two women in their 80’s, and the joy they received from their new companions is indescribable, not to mention the love and devotion they give to these dogs discarded by others.” Which gave us the idea of placing senior dogs slated for euthanasia, solely due to age, with senior citizens who can offer them lots of love and a warm lap to spend their days and nights.

“At first, we were hesitant to accept senior dogs, those over five or six, as we didn’t think they would be easy to adopt which would leave them in foster care long term. Until one day when I received a call about a eight year old Pomeranian, named McNugget, needing rescue and urgent medical care. Shortly following his extensive dental surgery, costing almost \$400.00, as well as being neutered we posted him for adoption. When we received several applications on Nugget, most from senior citizens, we realized that there are many loving homes available for senior dogs in good health,” states Guntert. The most common problem with most older dogs is dental issues that must be addressed. This is not a serious, life threatening issue, if diagnosed and treated, but one that has to be taken care of for the comfort of the dog. Sometimes only cleaning is necessary, but occasionally extractions are required.

We would love to offer a “Saving Seniors” program where we can adopt older dogs in good health to senior citizens at a minimal charge. We would accept donations from sponsors to offset expenses related to these senior dogs so that they can be adopted into loving homes by seniors on fixed incomes.

For more information, contact Wendy at Everlasting Hope Animal Rescue 518-821-9422 or [adoptapup@hotmail.com](mailto:adoptapup@hotmail.com). Check out our available animals at [www.petfinder.com/shelters/NY1061.html](http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/NY1061.html).



## **Demography is Destiny: What Does the 2010 Census Mean for Columbia County?**

The first census after the American Revolution was conducted in 1790, under then Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. As required by the Constitution it has been repeated every 10 years with the results determining the number of congressional representatives, electoral votes, and the distribution of federal funds.

The 2010 Census shows 63,096 people in Columbia County – only two more than there were 10 years ago. That might tell us something about the rate of population growth. There is also a wealth of data about income, housing, education, race and ethnicity, and what people do for a living. But what does it all mean and how do we use the data to think about our communities and plan for the future?

Let's start with a national example – Baby Boomers (those of us born between 1946 and 1964) started turning 65 a year ago at the rate of 10,000 every day and will continue at that rate for next 17 years! This is pretty much what makes health care a huge public policy issue – how will we cover health care costs for 78 million new Medicare recipients?

So what might county data tells us about important things to think about? If we look at the age distribution of those 63,096 we'd find that:

26% (16,219) are over 60

8.3% (5264) are over 75

2.5% (1581) are over 85

In terms of percent of population over 85, Columbia County is the “oldest” county in the state. While most of us over 60 are independent and in pretty good shape and we all know lots of pretty spry people in their late 70s, 80s, and beyond - from a planning perspective there is a relationship between advancing age and needing some help. The older the population, the greater the need for services like transportation for doctors appointments and shopping, help with the activities of daily living, recreation and socialization opportunities, etc. That means we have to work at making the right services available. Another example relates to the 1000 County residents who will turn 65 each year over the next 4-5 years. Those of us over 65 know that making the right choices about Medicare can be quite a challenge. OFA provides counseling to help people make informed choices and work through problems when applying for Medicare benefits so we're planning *Welcome to Medicare* sessions around the county to help people make those important decisions.

Bette Davis noted, “Getting old ain't for sissies.” We all know that. That's why the Office for the Aging is your place to come or call knowing that you will always be treated with dignity and respect by knowledgeable, patient staff.



Columbia County Office for the Aging  
325 Columbia Street  
Hudson, NY 12534  
518-828-4258  
[www.columbiacountyny.com/depts/ofa](http://www.columbiacountyny.com/depts/ofa)

## “Caring for those who cared for us”

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



Columbia County Office for the Aging  
325 Columbia St.  
Hudson, NY 12534

### **Would you like to be included on our mailing list?**

Please fill out your mailing information below so we may include you on our list

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Office for the Aging, 325 Columbia Street, Hudson, NY 12534

**Email to:** [ofa@govt.co.columbia.ny.us](mailto:ofa@govt.co.columbia.ny.us)

