



Encore

AN UPDATE FOR OUR OLDER ADULT RESIDENTS
2025 | VOL. 5

Dear Friends,

The holiday season is upon us and that means it's a good time to take a moment to give thanks for those who enrich our lives and help us remember our shared traditions.

Whether that's a grandparent, parent, sibling or lifelong friend, spending time together helps us remember a simpler time when life seemed easier and kinder. These moments also help us practice patience and grace as we confront the challenges of aging and the fragility of our elders and ourselves.

That's one of the reasons we established the Office of Older Adult Services in Oakland County. We know our population of older adults - and the people who care

for them - is growing rapidly and needs support and resources to help navigate a complicated landscape.

In this edition of *Encore*, you'll find some services we directly offer older adults in Oakland County. And if we don't provide the service or program you're looking for, we know an organization that does. And we want to hear from you, too. What is working well for you? How are you overcoming obstacles that come with getting older? What can we do to help? Through recurring senior expos and town hall meetings coming to your communities soon, you can bend our ear, make suggestions, and catch up with friends or make new ones.

Keep an eye on **OakGov.com/OlderAdults** for upcoming events and resources or give us a call at (248) 858-0593. And have a joyous holiday season.

With gratitude,



Oakland County Executive David Coulter

Encore Empower Hour

Oakland County's Older Adult Services (OAS) is increasing our outreach and communication through a new series of town hall meetings designed to meet older residents in their communities. Encore Empower Hour aims to inform older residents and their caregivers about programs and services targeted specifically for them. It will also be a chance for our team to hear resident concerns and requests for resources.

We also will present information on a variety of topics, ranging from senior isolation to tips for living on a budget. In October, the first Encore Empower Hour was held in Pontiac. Attendees learned about spotting and avoiding online scams, which you can read about in this *Encore* edition. The town halls will resume in February. Go to **OakGov.com/OlderAdults** to stay informed about upcoming locations.

OAS was created in January 2023 by Oakland County Executive David Coulter, with the support of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. Chief Jim Ellison and Communications

and Marketing Assistant Danisha Weathersby lead OAS' outreach efforts and collaborate with the Board's Senior Advisory Council and Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee to support older adults.

Through senior expos, Coffee and Conversation events, Senior Farmers Market, and a host of other outreach services, OAS is committed to educating residents 60+ about age-related services offered by the county. We use several forms of communication, such as this senior newsletter, *Encore*, our Senior Resource Guide, and resources from other departments and agencies in the county to keep our older adults engaged.

Oakland County Older Adult Services is available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at **OlderAdults@OakGov.com** or (248) 858-0593.

Visit **OakGov.com/OlderAdults** for resources, news and events. ■

- Jim Ellison, Chief of Older Adult Services
& Danisha Weathersby, Communications
and Marketing Assistant



Community Engagement Manager Tiffani S. Moncrief Luke speaks with Pontiac resident Norma Alexander at a recent Encore Empower Hour.

Cyber Smarts

with *Grandpa Joe*

Winter Holiday Scams

Joe is 76, a retired teacher and proud grandfather of five. The winter holidays are his favorite time of year. He enjoys shopping for gifts, video chats with his grandkids, and the smell of fresh-baked cookies. But last December, a few clicks nearly cost him his holiday cheer.

The following scenarios show how Grandpa Joe and his friends ran into holiday scammers, and how their lessons can protect you this season.

THE FAKE PACKAGE DELIVERY ALERT

Joe received a message that appeared to be from UPS. It read, "Delivery delayed. Reschedule now." and included a link to click. Since he had a few packages on the way, he was about to click. But then he remembered a warning from his senior center and decided to delete the message instead. That link could have taken him to a fake website designed to steal his personal information.

THE GIFT CARD GRIFT

Joe's friend Martha answered a phone call from someone pretending to be the pastor of her church. The caller said some families were in need and asked if she could help by buying gift cards and reading the numbers over the phone. Wanting to do the right thing, Martha went along with it. Later, she found out it was a scam. The caller had used a cloned version of her pastor's voice, and before she realized it, her money – and funds from several others in her church – were gone.

THE FAKE ONLINE STORE SCAM

Joe's cousin Sam saw a cozy holiday sweater advertised on Facebook. It looked festive and the price was too good to pass up. He placed an order using his credit card. The sweater never arrived, and the store vanished. To make matters worse, his card was charged twice.

THE PUPPY SCAM

Joe's neighbor Mary wanted to surprise her grandkids with a puppy for Christmas. She found a Labrador puppy listed online for \$600. The seller asked her to pay in advance for delivery. Once she sent the money, the seller stopped responding. No puppy ever arrived.

To learn more and read articles that explain these four scams in more detail, please visit:

OakGov.com/OlderAdults



Joe's Holiday Wisdom

"Scammers count on us being in a rush during the holidays. Take a moment to double-check, and you will save yourself from trouble."

For more information about online scams visit:

FTC: [Consumer.ftc.gov](https://consumer.ftc.gov) **FBI IC3:** ic3.gov/crimeinfo/elderfraud

Spotlight

Waterford Senior Center Looks Forward to Expanding Services



County Executive David Coulter visits with community members at Waterford Senior Center

The consolidation of Waterford Parks and Recreation and the Waterford Senior Center is proving to be a boon for older residents looking for comfortable and easily accessible spots to stay active and healthy.

“Our mission is to create a warm and welcoming community. A place where seniors could come together and enjoy a variety of fun,” said Candace Tucker, senior coordinator at Waterford Parks and Recreation.

The center offers free programs and activities, as well as fitness and wellness programs. There are art, music, chair yoga and cardio drumming classes, 35 different card games, day trips each month, flight simulator classes twice a week and one of the largest Meals on Wheels programs in Oakland County.

“This place has the friendliest people and good cooks,” said Dora VanFossan from Clarkston, who was enjoying a lunch recently at one of Waterford Parks and Recreation’s community dining at Waterford Leggett Campus.

“This is the best place in the world. The love is so strong. I met my husband right here at the Meals on Wheels community dining program years ago, and he recently passed away. I tell you the love and support here is what keeps me going,” said Terry Kimler from White Lake.

The Waterford program delivers 60,000 meals a year to home-bound seniors ages 60 and up. It also provides 16,000 meals a year to older adults who come to the Recreation Center for a meal with other Waterford seniors. Both programs welcome, but don’t require, a \$3-per-meal donation.

Waterford Township voters approved a bond proposal in 2024 that will be used to build a multi-generational community center on a portion of Oakland Community College’s Highland Lakes campus. The new center will offer expanded recreational programming, an updated amphitheater, pickleball and tennis courts, walking paths, outdoor restrooms, a playground, shuffleboard and bocce ball courts. The project is expected to be completed in January 2028.

“We really love what we do, and we are looking forward to creating a multi-generational center in the year 2028, Tucker said. “We will have a brand-new community center. We want to give our seniors a chance to be active with our kids in the community to bridge the gaps.

To learn more about Waterford Community Center Bond, please visit:

WaterfordMI.gov/1412/Community-Center-Bond ■

Bonus Jumble Clue: A new hour-long program dedicated to informing older Oakland County residents and their caregivers about programs and services targeted specifically for them.

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Word Jumble

Unscramble these five jumbles, one letter to each box to form words found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The boxes in bold can then be unscrambled to form a surprise answer in the above right Bonus Jumble.

1) T M U C N O Y M I

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2) P H I D I N F E R S

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3) F Y T Y E S R B A C E

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4) K N O W E P L A G W R I

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5) N O R S I E M C O Y S L I P

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Board of Commissioners Ensures Approved Budget Supports Older Adults

The need for services supporting older adults like you continues to grow. To meet this need, the Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the county's budget for the next three years, which expands and improves many services for the people of Oakland County.

Aging safely and comfortably sometimes feels out of reach. But help is here:

- Interest-free loans for home repairs, barrier-free access and energy-saving upgrades through the county's Home Improvement Program are available to qualifying older adults. If you are a low-income senior who exceeds the current HUD limits, you may still be eligible thanks to an expansion approved by the Board.
- An increase to the Housing Trust Fund, which will help build at least 120 affordable housing units over the next three years, filling the gap for older residents looking for housing that meets their needs.

Sixty percent of Oakland County's veterans are age 65 and older – and their well-being is another of our priorities. Assistance for veterans continues to expand in the county:

- **Oakland County Veterans Benefits Counselor:** Veterans looking for help with disability compensation, non-service-connected pension, medical care and burial benefits can call on an Oakland County Veterans Benefits Counselor. This newly created position supports veterans by cutting through the red tape that can often get in the way.
- **This Ride's On Us:** Qualifying veterans and their caregivers will continue to ride free with This Ride's On Us, a program that provides free door-to-door transportation through the five public transportation services operating in Oakland County – SMART, WOTA (Western Oakland Transportation Authority), NOTA (Northern Oakland Transportation Authority), OPC Activity Center and PEX (People's Express).
- **VA Medical Centers Transportation:** Free transportation is always available to the VA Medical Centers in Detroit and Ann Arbor! Visit [VA.gov/HealthBenefits/vtp](https://va.gov/HealthBenefits/vtp) for more information



The Board is listening to the voices of older adults and veterans in our communities. These services are an important part of aging in place and thriving in the golden years. To learn more about the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, follow along on Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube, or visit OakGov.com/BOC.

2025 - 2028 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: Pictured left-to-right, fourth row: Brendan Johnson, Charlie Cavell, Philip J. Weipert, Robert Smiley. Pictured left-to-right, third row: Penny Luebs, Kristen Nelson, Yolanda Smith Charles, Gwen Markham, Karen Joliat. Pictured left-to-right, second row: William Miller, Linnie Taylor, Ann Erickson Gault, Christine Long, Bob Hoffman. Pictured left-to-right, front row: Majority Caucus Chair Angela Powell, Board Chair David T. Woodward, Board Vice Chair Marcia Gershenson, Minority Caucus Chair Michael Spisz. (Not pictured: Michael J. Gingell)

Oakland County

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To learn more about the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, follow along on Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube, or visit **OakGov.com/BOC**

Services for Older Adults

Property Records Notification

Subscribe to FREE email alerts when new documents of interest are recorded at the Register of Deeds. Users will be notified of any activity happening on their property, including alerts to potential real estate fraud. Sign up at **OCMiDeeds.com**.

Birth Record Discount

Seniors 65 or older requesting a copy of their own birth record in Oakland County pay a discounted rate of \$10. Birth Records prior to 1935 are available in person or by mail only. Visit **OakGov.com/Vitals** or call (248) 858-0571.

Clerk/Register of Deeds

Marriage Record Discount

Seniors 65 or older requesting a copy of their own marriage record in Oakland County pay a discounted rate of \$10. Marriage Records prior to 1942 are available in person or by mail only. Visit **OakGov.com/Vitals** or call (248) 858-0571.

Veterans ID Card

Oakland County Veterans can obtain a free Veterans ID Card. You must appear in person to be photographed and bring your original military discharge papers (DD214) as well as a valid driver's license or state ID with correct Oakland County address. Visit **OakGov.com/Vitals** or call (248) 858-0571.

Senior Olympians Win More Than Gold

It may not have had the pageantry of the summer games in Paris or the drama on the ice rinks in Beijing, but Michigan's Senior Olympics featured fierce competitors, friendly rivalries, and a roster full of older athletes who are more interested in staying active than the bronze, silver, or gold.

"We don't do it to win trophies or to win medals; we do it because of the exercise and for the friendship," said Robert Van Camp, an Oakland Township resident who competed in table tennis.

Held over three months across Oakland and Macomb counties last summer, the Senior Olympics attracted dozens of Oakland County residents to a wide variety of sports ranging from biking, swimming and racewalking to table tennis and volleyball.

Rochester Hills resident and Air Force veteran Michael Cushnier celebrated his 29th consecutive year competing in the Michigan Senior Olympics. Cushnier began competing as a cyclist, but after an accident in 2013, he



**Robert Van Camp
& Donna McMinn**

switched to powerwalking and racewalking.

"A couple weeks ago, I did my 250th race," he said. "And prior to that, I did 114 competitive bike races."

Cushnier keeps in shape through daily stretching, weightlifting and biking in his home gym and he regularly climbs the 180-step staircase at Borden Park in Rochester Hills.

He set a new state record, 36 minutes and 8 seconds, for the 5K powerwalk for his bracket (men 75-79) and placed 13th in the 1500-meter powerwalk at the National Senior Games in 2023.

"I do like the competition, and a lot of times that motivates you, but to be out there, being able to do the racing, especially as you get older, like my age. It's just enjoyable," Cushnier said.

Joining from the cheering section, Cushnier's wife, Ruth, has started taking part in races with him and has competed in more than 10 so far.

Another husband and wife duo, Robert Van Camp and Donna McMinn, began their Olympic journey after retirement in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

**Ruth & Michael
Cushnier**



The Oakland Township residents picked up their new sports at the OPC Social & Activity Center in Rochester to stay active. McMinn is a long-distance swimmer and Van Camp is table tennis player.

"I grew up learning how to swim in a farm pond," McMinn said. "But I really started in earnest in 2010."

Five years later, she placed 10th in the 200-yard freestyle in her bracket, women aged 60-64, at the National Senior Games in Minnesota. In 2024, McMinn placed second in the 100-yard freestyle (women 70-74) at the Michigan Senior Olympics.

"It's great exercise, and in the water, nobody sees me sweat. That's why I love swimming," McMinn said.

The couple agrees that their athletic pursuits have helped expand their social circles.

"At the OPC and the Michigan Senior Olympics, you see a lot of the same people you know each time, so you develop a friendship, and that's always a nice aspect," Van Camp said.

Van Camp, a gold medalist at the 2025 Summer games and a Michigan Senior Olympics board member, was inspired by his wife's dedication to her sport and wanted to do the same with table tennis.

"She was having too much fun, so I retired and took up the sport," Van Camp said. "I played in the

basement as a kid, but decided I would take it up seriously and come out of the basement and get lessons."

In his youth, VanCamp played tennis, but the years on the courts took a toll on his knees. He tried pickleball but ultimately settled on table tennis.

"It's great hand-eye coordination. It's one of the fastest sports out there; you have to make split-second decisions," Van Camp said.

Competing is not about the glory and recognition for Van Camp and McMinn.

"We don't do it to win trophies or to win medals; we do it because of the exercise and for the friendship. Those are more important than any medals," Van Camp said.

For older adults who want to dive back into a sport or try something new, Van Camp and McMinn have a few tips. The Senior Olympics is open to anyone 50 or older.

"If you are not sure what sport you want to do, go watch or even volunteer at the Senior Olympics. Hopefully, you can leave that event thinking you can do this," Van Camp said. "Depending on the sport, there are going to be different senior centers that offer opportunities for that sport."

For more information on how to participate in the Michigan Senior Olympics, go to **MichiganSeniorOlympics.org**. ■

Score One for the Pets. License Your Dog, Foster a Cat.

Pets not only delight and comfort, but also encourage better physical health, according to the National Council on Aging.

Oakland County Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center has two program specific for older adults.

LICENSE DISCOUNTS

Seniors 65 and older receive a discount on dog licenses.

Call (248) 452-9890 or visit **OakGov.com/DogLicense**.

C.A.T.S. PROGRAM

The Companion Animals Touching Seniors Program offers older adults the opportunity to foster a cat for up to 60 days. The Animal Shelter will provide all the supplies to care for the cat.

Call (248) 858-1070 or visit **OakGov.com/ASPACPrograms**.



Mickey Redmond
Detroit Red Wings Legend

Yes, You Can Make New Friends As An Adult

Attending school, becoming a parent and similar milestones naturally bring people together through shared experiences, creating a foundation for friendships. As we age and hit different milestones, like retirement or becoming a caregiver, making friends can be more challenging. It is crucial during these times to form new bonds. Even making one friend as an adult can be a rewarding experience.

DO I NEED FRIENDS?

Absolutely! Dr. Maya Angelou explained it best in her poem, "Alone":

*Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.*



As humans, interactions with others are vital to mental and physical well-being.

Researchers examined 38 studies on adult friendships and found that friendships, especially those that provide social support and companionship, can protect against mental health issues such as depression and anxiety¹.

Adults who are not socially isolated are also less likely to die from all causes, including heart disease and chronic diseases such as arthritis².

When life becomes challenging, a supportive friend can help lessen the negative impact while increasing your own resiliency.

¹ Pezirkianidis, Christos, et al. "Adult Friendship and Wellbeing: A Systematic Review with Practical Implications." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9 Jan. 2023. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1059057/full>

² Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB, Layton JB (2010) Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review. *PLOS Medicine* 7(7): e1000316. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316>

³ Hall, J. A. (2019). How many hours does it take to make a friend? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(4), 1278-1296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518761225>

* requires paid ticket

SEASONAL EVENTS



For events in your community, visit our blog at:
oaklandcountyblog.com/things-to-do/holiday-happenings/

Magic of Lights*

Pine Knob Music Theatre, Clarkston

Now – Jan. 3

magicoflights.com/locations/detroit-mi
help@funguysevents.com

The Big, Bright Light Show

Downtown Rochester

Now – Jan. 18

downtownrochestermi.com/holiday-happenings
(248) 656-0060

Holiday Stroll*

Canterbury Village, Orion Township

Nov. 28 – Dec. 23

canterburyvillage.com/event/holiday-stroll
(248) 391-1900

Annual Potters Market*

The Southfield Pavilion

Dec. 4-7

thepottersmarket.com
(248) 398-6846
\$10 admission on Dec. 4 only

Birmingham Winter Markt

Downtown Birmingham

Dec. 5-7

downtownbirmingham.com/events/winter-markt
(248) 530-1200

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AS AN ADULT

While stepping out of your comfort zone can feel overwhelming, it is well worth the effort when you are forming friendships. Here are ways to form friendships:

RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS

Send a private message to former coworkers, classmates, and others on Facebook (or your preferred social media platform) or find your old address book and invite them to grab lunch and catch up. If you're looking for someone in particular, leverage your existing social groups, former employers, or your high school and /or college alumni associations.

JOIN A CLUB OR ADULT REC LEAGUE

Like to read? Talk to your local librarian about where to find a book club. Pickleball player? Reach out to your city's parks and recreation department for information about courts and schedules. Visit your local senior center or community center for social events. You may also want to search online for local or virtual groups. You can search: *(your hobby) club near me* or *(your hobby) club in (your city)*. Websites like **Stitch.com** and **Meetup.com** offer opportunities to connect with others based on age and interest.

VOLUNTEER

Join local charities and organizations with missions that are meaningful to you, such as animal shelters, food pantries, libraries, or foster care closets. While you work, chat with your fellow volunteers – you'll already have something in common to talk about. Here is a short list of volunteer opportunities for older adults:

[Oakland County Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center](#)
Email petvolunteer@oakgov.com

[Oakland County Parks](#)
Visit oakgov.com/community/oakland-county-parks/get-involved/volunteer

[Meals on Wheels America](#)
Visit mealsonwheelsamerica.org/volunteer

[AmeriCorps Seniors](#)
Visit americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors

[VolunteerMatch](#)
Visit volunteermatch.org/search

BUILDING ADULT FRIENDSHIPS TAKES TIME

It does not come as a surprise that people become friends over time, through repeated interactions.

Researchers from the University of Kansas approximated how many hours it took for different levels of adult friendship to appear: It takes 94 hours to turn acquaintances into casual friends,

164 hours to transition from casual friends to good friends and 219 hours for good friends to become best friends³.

Take your time to enjoy the present and relish your interactions with others without stressing about the next phase of friendship. ■

SEASONAL EVENTS (continued)

* requires paid ticket

Michigan Makers Holiday Craft Market

Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi

Dec. 13

suburbancollectionshowplace.com/upcoming-events

(248) 348-5600

Wild Lights*

The Detroit Zoo, Royal Oak

Nov. 28–30, Dec. 5–7, 11–23 & 26–31, Jan. 2–4

detroitzoo.org/events/wild-lights
(248) 541-5717

Holly Dickens Festival

Downtown Holly

Nov. 29–30, Dec. 6–7 & 13–14

hollydickensfestival.org
(313) 663-9313

Lighting Up The Grand

56730 Grand River Ave., New Hudson

Dec. 13

funonthegrand.com/events
(248) 437-2240

Troy Senior Expo

San Marino Club

March 10

seniorexpousa.com/attend/michigan

West Bloomfield Spring Senior Expo

Jewish Community Center

March 19

seniorexpousa.com/attend/michigan

Important NUMBERS

Nurse on Call:

(800) 848-5533

Oakland County

Older Adult Services:

(248) 858-0593

Neighborhood &

Housing Development:

(248) 858-0493

AgeWays Nonprofit

Senior Services (formerly Area
Agency on Aging 1-B):

(800) 852-7795



Sign up for the service that provides text, phone and email alerts in the event of critical incidents, including weather emergencies, shelter-in-place orders, significant road closures, major health events and more.

Visit **OakGov.com/OakAlert** to sign up.

About *ENCORE*: This newsletter magazine, proudly funded by Oakland County, is dedicated to serving and empowering the older adult community across the county. Published twice a year, it provides valuable resources, community news and health tips designed to enrich the lives of our older adult residents. Through this initiative, Oakland County is committed to fostering a strong, connected, and informed community for our older adults, ensuring they stay engaged and well-supported. *ENCORE* is distributed to households with older adult residents. If you have questions, please contact Danisha Weathersby at WeathersbyD@OakGov.com or (248) 858-0593.

All ways, MOVING FORWARD