



THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS

January/February 2017

Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging
Hours of Operation: 8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Friday



Monday, January 2

Monday, January 16

Monday, February 20

Free Income Tax Service

Yates County Office for the Aging and the AARP Taxaide Program are pleased to offer free income tax service again for tax year 2016. Beginning Wednesday, February 1, 2017 through Thursday, April 14, free tax service will be available to taxpayers with low to middle income, with special emphasis for those aged 60 and older.

Experienced tax preparers will e-file your Federal and New York State income tax returns. Refunds (if you have one coming) may be received in as little as 2 weeks via Direct Deposit to a bank account. The Earned Income Tax Credit offers extra benefits for taxpayers who are employed, meet income limits, and have qualifying children. A new law requires the IRS to hold refunds until mid-February in 2017 for people claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Additional Child Tax Credit. In addition, new identity theft and refund fraud safeguards put in place by the IRS and the states may mean some tax returns and refunds face additional review.

When coming for a tax appointment, please bring all documents pertaining to your 2016 income such as wages, Social Security benefits, interest, and pensions. If you own a home, please bring copies of your school and property tax bills **paid in 2016**. Also, please bring a **photo ID** and copies of **last year's (2015)** tax returns.

By Jan 31, 2017, health care providers should furnish a copy of **Form 1095A, 1095B or 1095C** to you if you are identified as the responsible individual for health coverage in your family. Watch for this form in the mail, keep it, and bring it to your tax appointment.

The AARP tax preparers have a new software program for 2017, and they do not have access to taxpayer "prior year data" to assist with filling in forms. As a result, your tax return may take a few minutes longer to complete. Please bear with us.

You may start making appointments on January 19, 2017 by calling 2-1-1 or 1-800-346-2211, Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm. Use these numbers to cancel or reschedule appointments, too.

The following locations and times will be available for tax appointments:

- Yates County Office for the Aging, 417 Liberty Street, Penn Yan
Tuesday through Friday, starting at 9am.
- First Presbyterian Church, 31 Main St, Dundee [use public parking at back and enter thru Our Town Rocks, at rear]
Mondays starting at 9am.

LOCAL EVENTS

January 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26 and 31 and February 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, and 23

- ◆ Yates OFA Transportation Program offers transportation for shopping trips on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:30pm to 3:00 pm to local stores, pharmacies, banks, post office and hair salons to Yates County Residents over the age of 60. Please contact Yates Office for Aging Transportation at 315-536-5515 to schedule your ride.

January 10 and February 14

- ◆ "Our Town Rocks" Champions Meeting at the Dundee Presbyterian Church at 10:00am. For more information call Karen Hadley at 607-329-2210, go to www.ourtownrocks.org or email ourtownrocks@ourtownrocks.org. All residents of the Towns of Barrington, Starkey, and the Village of Dundee are welcome to attend.

January 12

- ◆ All family caregivers are welcome to come anytime to visit and share with others who take care of, or are concerned about loved ones with dementia or Alzheimer's at the Alzheimer's Support Group meeting at 2pm in the Yates County Office Building room 1037.

January 16 and February 20

- ◆ "Our Town Rocks" Community Gathering monthly meeting at 6:00pm at the Dundee Presbyterian Church. For more information call Karen Hadley at 607-329-2210, go to www.ourtownrocks.org or email ourtownrocks@ourtownrocks.org. All residents of the Towns of Barrington, Starkey, and the Village of Dundee are welcome to attend.

February 9

- ◆ All family caregivers are welcome to come anytime to visit and share with others who take care of, or are concerned about loved ones with dementia or Alzheimer's at the Alzheimer's Support Group meeting at 2pm in the Yates County Office Building room 1037.

February 21

- ◆ Come learn the basics about Medicare! Welcome to Medicare Presentation by Yates Office for the Aging from 2:30-4:30pm at the Penn Yan Public Library. To register to attend, contact 315-536-5515.

Mark Your Calendars: The HUBBA Tea for 2017 will be on April 6, 2017. More details will be shared in the next newsletter edition.

Transportation, Emergency Response, and Project Lifesaver Programs

We provide **rides** within Yates County and also to Bath, Canandaigua, Clifton Springs, Corning, Elmira, Geneva, Montour Falls, and Rochester.

Would it be helpful to have someone ride along with you? Our Transportation Companions can help you find your way to your medical appointments and will wait for you while you are in the appointment. They will ride with you on our vehicles to keep you company. Let Terri know you are interested in riding our vehicles with a Transportation Companion. For information and scheduling, **call Terri Becker at 315-536-5515.**

The **Personal Emergency Response System** is a push button alert system for seniors and caregivers. It helps you maintain your independence and also gives you and your family peace of mind. If you have a medical emergency you push the button on your pendant or wristband and your call goes into the Yates County Sheriff's Office and help is summoned.

The **Project Lifesaver System** is designed to rescue individuals with cognitive conditions like Alzheimer's, dementia, autism, and Down Syndrome who tend to wander. It is never too early to enroll your loved one in this program, even if they are not showing signs of wandering yet, it's better to be safe than sorry.

**** For information on Yates OFA Transportation Services, Emergency Response System, or Project Lifesaver, **call Terri Becker at 315-536-5515.**

The Penn Yan Area Council of Churches provides transportation to Sunday Worship Services in Penn Yan. To arrange for a ride or to volunteer to drive, call Jennifer Jensen at 315-536-8281.

Caregiving and Malnutrition

Caregiving Facts:

- Caregivers are a diverse group: they come from every age, gender, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
- 7% of the caregivers are age 75 years or older - typically a 79-year old female, providing care for an adult 34 hours a week without any other unpaid help. She has provided care for 5.6 years.
- She is usually caring for her 77-year old male spouse, with Alzheimer's, "old age" or heart disease.
- 6 in 10 caregivers care for an adult with a long-term chronic condition.

Caregiving and Malnutrition:

Older adults who are malnourished may suffer from unsafe weight loss, feel exceptionally fatigued, suffer from depression, experience memory loss, or have a compromised immune system.

Causes:

- Malnutrition can be caused by social and psychological factors as well as physical. If your loved one has little social contact, he or she may not enjoy cooking or eating meals. If he or she is living on a limited income, he or she may have trouble affording groceries, especially fresh, healthy foods.
- Seniors suffering from dementia may simply forget to eat.
- Diminished appetite is also caused by illness, trouble eating, some medications, and diminished taste and smell. Dietary restrictions that are often put on older adults can also make the food seem tasteless and unappealing. Over-the-counter and prescription drugs can affect appetite, digestion and how nutrients are absorbed.

Signs:

Malnutrition will eventually manifest itself in physical signs: Have you noticed your loved one's clothes fitting more loosely? Is he or she experiencing dental problems? Does he or she bruise easily? Do wounds take longer than normal to heal?

Solutions:

- Buy fresh, whole foods whenever possible.
- Shop for tools that encourage independence in the kitchen.
- Add flavor to foods using herbs, spices, salt-free blends and lemon juice.
- Encourage snacking and have nutritious snacks available around the house.
- Make meals more social.
- Help with grocery savings and meal planning .

Source NANSAP (National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs)News November 18, 2016

Hospital Stays and Dementia

A trip to the hospital can be stressful for people with Alzheimer's or dementia and their caregivers. Here are some ways caregivers can make a hospital visit easier:

- Help hospital staff understand the person's normal functioning and behavior.
- Tell the doctor immediately if the person seems suddenly worse or different.
- Share the load—ask friends and family to make calls, send emails, or use online tools to keep others informed about the person's progress.

Visit <https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication> for more information about hospital stays including emergency room tips, what to pack, and things to do before a planned stay.

Source: Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center

Local Services through the Alzheimer's Association

Care Consultation Office Hours (Reoccurring Monthly):

Our professional staff is dedicated to helping you and your family navigate your journey with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. During a care consultation, we can help assess your needs and discuss care planning, home safety and other concerns.

Yates County Office for Aging
417 Liberty Street, Penn Yan, NY 14527
2nd & 4th Thursday of every month 9:30-1:00

The Living Well
121 East Elm Street, Penn Yan, NY 14527
1st & 3rd Tuesday of every month 9:30-1:00

Social Activity (Reoccurring Monthly)

Yates County Office for Aging (Auditorium)
417 Liberty Street Penn Yan, NY 14527
4th Thursday 2:00-3:00

Care Partner Support Group (Reoccurring Monthly)

Dundee Central School (Community Meeting Room)
55 Water St, Dundee, NY 14837
1st Tuesday 4:00-5:00

Yates County Office for Aging
417 Liberty Street, Penn Yan, NY
2nd Thursday 2:00-3:00

Italy Valley United Methodist Church
915 Italy Valley Rd, Naples, NY 14512
4th Thursday 3:00-4:00

To register or for more information, please call 1-800-272-3900.

These services are supported by a grant from the New York State Department of Health in partnership with Lifespan of Greater Rochester.

Emergency HEAP Benefits Start January 3, 2017

You may qualify for the Emergency HEAP benefit if you have:

Received a shut off notice for electric or natural gas or

Have less than a 10 day supply of wood, coal, propane, or fuel oil.

Applications will be available at YC DSS and Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging or persons may apply on-line at www.mybenefits.ny.gov.

Language Assistance Services Available

Yates Office for the Aging provides language assistance services through the AT&T Language Line program. If you or someone you know speaks or prefers a language other than English, please let us know by using the enclosed Language Access Poster. We will arrange for services to be provided in your preferred language at **no cost** to you.

Benefits of Maintaining Mobility

Retaining the ability to get up and about easily — to walk across a parking lot, climb a set of stairs, rise from a chair and maintain balance — is an under-appreciated component of good health in later life.

When mobility is compromised, older adults are more likely to lose their independence, become isolated, feel depressed, live in nursing homes and die earlier than people who don't have difficulty moving around.

Problems with mobility are distressingly common: About 17 percent of seniors age 65 or older can't walk even one-quarter of a mile, and another 28 percent have difficulty doing so.

If you start getting physical activity on a regular basis, you'll be more likely to recover strength and flexibility and less likely to develop long-term disability, new research published in the Annals of Internal Medicine shows. The group that focused on walking and strength and balance exercises was 25 percent less likely to experience significant problems with mobility than the group that focused on education over a period of almost three years. Specifically, they recovered faster from episodes of being unable to walk and were less likely to have problems getting around after that recovery period.

Experts' practical advice:

- It's never too late.
- Focus on activity, not exercise.
- Start slow.
- Even small amounts make a difference.
- Make a plan.

Source: 10/13/16 article titled "Exercise, Even in Small Doses, Offers Tremendous Benefits for Senior Citizens" Kaiser Health News by Judith Graham.

Exercise Programs Offered through the Office for the Aging

Do you want to feel great when you wake up in the morning?

What if you fall, do you want to learn how to get up?

Would you like to feel stronger and have more stamina?

Do you want to have fun and be active at the same time?

Bone Builders – Osteoporosis Prevention and Bone Strengthening

Penn Yan area class – Tuesdays: January 3 to March 14 – 10:00-11:00am

Penn Yan area class – Thursdays: January 5 to March 16 – 10:00-11:00am

Tai Chi – Relieve Pain and Improve Health and Balance

Penn Yan class — Tuesdays: **Advanced class** –January 3 to March 14 – 8:30-9:30am

Penn Yan class — Thursdays: **Beginner class**- January 5 to March 16– 8:30-9:30am

Penn Yan class – Wednesdays: **Beginner class** – January 4 to March 15 – 1:30-2:30 pm

Matter of Balance – Practical strategies to manage falls, increase activity level

Save the date – We will have a class March 28 to May 16. Time and location to be announced

Heathy Living –Learn how to manage your chronic health conditions

Penn Yan area class — January 10 to February 14 – Time and location to be announced.

To sign up for these classes call Pam Strong at 315-536-5515. Most classes can be joined at any time! Transportation may be available.

Your Medicare Number Will Be Changing

For many of you, your Medicare number contains your Social Security Number. Congress passed a law this past April that will change that. This law requires Medicare to replace current Medicare Claim numbers with randomly generated "Medicare Beneficiary Numbers" that will **not** include your SSN or any other identifying information. This is hoped to decrease incidents of fraud and identity theft. The process will start in 2018.

Assistance with Your Pets Is Available

The goal of **Pet Partner Connections** is to help those in need to feed and care for their companion animals. If you own a pet and need assistance, please contact them at 315-694-6449 or petpartnerconnections@gmail.com. The **Home Assistance Program** will provide pet food and support to those Seniors who are homebound or disabled. PLEASE CALL if you or anyone you know needs help with their pets at home or to arrange for home delivery of pet food. You can visit their website at www.ppcny.com or their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/petpartnerconnections.

STAR/Enhanced STAR and Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemptions

Reminder: STAR and Enhanced STAR Tax Exemption deadlines are approaching for new applicants. The applications must be postmarked by Taxable Status Date, which is usually March 1st. You do not need to register for STAR if you are receiving a STAR exemption and purchased your current home prior to May 1, 2014. You do not need to register separately to receive the Enhanced benefit if you've already registered to receive the Basic benefit. The STAR benefit applies only to school district taxes.

Basic STAR eligibility includes: You must own your home and it must be your primary residence. No age restriction. Income is \$500,000 or less. The income limit applies to the combined incomes of only the owners and owners' spouses who reside at the property.

Enhanced STAR eligibility includes: You must own your home and it must be your primary residence. Age 65 or older. For jointly owned property, only one spouse or sibling must be at least 65 by December 31 of the year when the exemption will begin. Income of \$86,000 or less for 2017. The income limit applies to all owners, and any owner's spouse who resides at the property.

See the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance website for full details at <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/default.htm>

The Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption was created as a property tax relief program by the New York State Legislature. Each taxing jurisdiction sets their own exemption levels within the guidelines established by the legislature. In Yates County, each town, school district, village and the County establishes their own senior citizen property tax exemption levels.

The purpose of the Senior Citizen Exemption is to provide relief to seniors with low, fixed incomes to help them remain in their homes in Yates County. The Senior Citizen Exemption is in addition to any other exemptions, including STAR, Enhanced STAR and Veterans exemptions. Seniors with **incomes up to \$22,399** may be eligible for a senior citizen property tax discount. To find out if you are eligible for these exemptions, call your town or village assessor. There is a deadline to apply each year.

<u>Annual Income</u>	<u>Percentage Assessed Valuation Exempt From Taxation</u>
\$0 to \$14,000.00	50%
\$14,000.01 to \$14,999.99	45%
\$15,000.00 to \$15,999.99	40%
\$16,000.00 to \$16,999.99	35%
\$17,000.00 to \$17,899.99	30%
\$17,900.00 to \$18,799.99	25%
\$18,800.00 to \$19,699.99	20%
\$19,700.00 to \$20,599.99	15%
\$20,600.00 to \$21,499.99	10%
\$21,500.00 to \$22,399.99	5%

GET INVOLVED!

Strengthening yourself by Strengthening your Community

- ◆ **Transportation Companion**-We are seeking volunteers to accompany a senior, being transported by Office for the Aging, to their medical appointments. As a volunteer you would ride along with a senior on our vehicle, help make sure they get to their designated appointment spot, wait while they are in the appointment and then accompany them back to our vehicle and ride back home with them. Background checks are required. Call Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-536-5515 for more information.
- ◆ **Home Delivered Meals Drivers**- We cannot serve our customers without the help of volunteers who deliver the meals. Volunteers are the heart and soul of our program, providing so much more than a meal. Volunteers provide the warm, human contact our seniors need and may be the only contact that senior has that day. Whether you have only a few hours one day per week, can volunteer every day, or can only work a few hours a month, your assistance is needed. Background and driver's license checks are required. Mileage is paid. Call Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-536-5515 for more information.
- ◆ **Front Office help**- Office for the Aging is seeking volunteers to answer and transfer phone calls, help customers who come into our office, and general clerical duties. We will train you! For more information, please contact Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-536-5515.
- ◆ **Dundee Meals on Wheels**- Would you like to deliver meals to homebound seniors in the Dundee area? Please contact Charlene Stanton at 607-243-8371 or Pat Woodard at 607-243-8229 for more information.
- ◆ **Keuka Food Pantry and Penn Yan Mobile Food Pantry**—Volunteers are needed to help at the Keuka Food Pantry and the Penn Yan Mobile Food Pantry. If you can help, please call Cheryl at 315-521-5949 to learn more.
- ◆ **Ombudsman for Yates County region**- *Advocate, Educate, Empower* Older Adults Living in Long Term Care. New York State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at Lifespan is in need of volunteers to join a team of advocates for older adults residing in nursing homes, adult care and assisted living communities in the Yates County region. With just a few volunteer hours each week, you can help ensure quality of care and quality of life for individuals living in long-term care settings. As you build trusting relationships, you will have the opportunity to preserve resident's rights and safeguard their dignity. Make a difference for older adults in your community by volunteering as an Ombudsman. The next NYS mandated training will be in April 2017. For more information about the application process, dates, times and location of training, contact Deb Frink at the Ombudsman Program at (585)287.6378 or email dfrink@lifespan-roch.org.

Nominations for Senior Day 2017

Yates Office for the Aging is accepting nominations for the Senior Day 2017 event. It is time to take a moment and share information about the great volunteers you know. Please contact Becky Bonsignore at (315)536-5515 to nominate someone. Let Becky know how the nominee has made a difference in our community through civic engagement. Nominations are due no later than Friday, February 3, 2017.

Staff Changes at Yates Office for the Aging

Farewell to Katie Smeenk-Director

Welcome to Rebecca Bonsignore- Director

Welcome to Substitute Drivers- Guy Crofoot, Charles Ellis, David Hostutler

2017 NY Connects Yates Office for the Aging Service Directory

There have been some staffing changes. The 2017 Service Directory is enclosed. Please keep this as a helpful reference tool all year long.



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THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017



[Yates NY Connects/Office for the Aging](#)

Weather Related Closings

Our Transportation and Nutrition Services are closed whenever the Penn Yan Schools are closed for weather-related reasons. Although meals are not served that day, we send out emergency non-perishable meals in advance in case of weather closings so no one goes hungry. If a special event is cancelled, the event will be postponed for one week.

**To find out if we are closed due to weather, listen to WYLF 850 AM or WFLR 96.9 FM or watch WETM Channel 18, WSTM Channel 3, WROC Channel 8, WUHF Channel 31, WHEC Channel 10, or WHAM Channel 13.

NEWSLETTER ACCESSIBILITY: LARGE PRINT issues of “The Grapevine Express” are available upon request. You may also receive this newsletter electronically via email. Let us know your preference. We offer help for those who don’t speak/read English or cannot read. We have special equipment if you are hard of hearing. All of these services are FREE. Just ask!

This newsletter is funded in part through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B of the Federal Older American’s Act