

THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS

January/February 2024

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



Monday, January 1, Monday, January 15, &
Monday, February 19

Free Income Tax Service

Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging and AARP Foundation Tax-Aide will be offering free income tax service for tax year 2023! Experienced tax preparers will e-file your Federal and New York State income tax returns. If you have a refund coming, it can be received in as little as 2-weeks via direct deposit to your bank account.

The tax preparation location will again be St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 135 Hamilton Street, Penn Yan, located just up the street from Morgan's Grocery. Please enter the church through the rear entrance. This season we will do single visit, in-person returns. Your return will be completed, quality reviewed, and e-filed all during your 1-hour appointment.

Tax preparation season will run from February 2, 2024, through April 15. To schedule an appointment call Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321. You can make an appointment, or if you get voice mail, leave a message for a callback. When leaving a voice message, please clearly leave your name and phone number. Appointments can be made beginning **January 16, 2024**. You can call Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Use the same phone number to cancel or reschedule appointments. When scheduling, make sure you will have all your tax documents in time for the appointment date.

When coming for a tax appointment, please bring all current documents that report income and deductions for 2023 [wages – W2 form; Social Security – Form 1099SSA; other retirement/IRA – Form 1099R; home mortgage – Form 1098]. Please make sure you will have all such documents in hand before your tax appointment. If you own a home, bring your school and property tax bills paid in 2023 – you may qualify for a credit. Required documents for all returns are: photo ID for each taxpayer, Social Security cards for each taxpayer **and** dependent on the return and a copy of your 2022 return. If you cannot locate last year's return, you can get a replacement transcript from www.irs.gov. Bring bank account information if you want direct deposit for a refund or direct debit for taxes owed.

You will also need to bring a completed Intake/Interview form just like last year. These can be picked up from the Yates County Office Building on Liberty Street after January 16, or you can request an email form when you make your tax appointment (best option). The electronic form can be printed, and hand completed or filled-in on your computer and then printed.

We need your help to streamline the process. Please open all tax document envelopes prior to your appointment and have all paperwork organized and flat in a folder. If there are items to add up (i.e., medical expenses, car mileage, rental income, etc.) please do it yourself ahead of time and bring totals. Please book your appointments early. We are short staffed and may not be able to serve everyone in the community who wants a tax return done.

SUMMARY

1. Call 315-279-4321 beginning January 16, 2024 for tax appointments.
2. Tax location: St Paul's Lutheran Church, 135 Hamilton Street, Penn Yan.
3. Bring photo ID, SS card(s), 2022 tax return, all tax documents, and Intake form.

LOCAL EVENTS

January 9 and February 13

- ◆ “Our Town Rocks” Champions Meeting will be held at the Our Town Rocks Office, 12 Main Street in Dundee at 10:00 am. For more information call Caryl Sutterby at 607-426-4015, 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 19

- ◆ Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc. has partnered with Foodlink to provide a Drive Thru Pop Up Food Pantry on 1/19/24 from 10am – 11:30am at the Town of Starkey Highway Barn, 656 Dundee-Glenora Road, Dundee, NY 14837. **Pre- registration is required.** This is drive-thru only. Contact Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321 for more information.

January 22 (Penn Yan) & January 23 (Dundee)

- ◆ All Yates County family caregivers are welcome to register 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 Association’s Support Group meeting in-person the 4th Monday each month from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Penn Yan Library, 214 Main Street in Penn Yan and the 4th Tuesday each month from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Dundee Library, 32 Water Street in Dundee. Registration is requested by contacting 1-800-272-3900.

January 23 and February 27

- ◆ “Our Town Rocks” Community Gathering monthly meeting will be held at 7:00 pm at the Our Town Rocks Office, 12 Main Street in Dundee. For more information call Caryl Sutterby at 607-426-4015, 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 16

- ◆ Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc. has partnered with Foodlink to provide a Drive Thru Pop Up Food Pantry on 2/16/24 from 10am – 11:30am at the Town of Starkey Highway Barn, 656 Dundee-Glenora Road, Dundee, NY 14837. **Pre- registration is required.** This is drive-thru only. Contact Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321 for more information.

February 26 (Penn Yan) & February 27 (Dundee)

- ◆ All Yates County family caregivers are welcome to register 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 Association’s Support Group meeting in-person the 4th Monday each month from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Penn Yan Library, 214 Main Street in Penn Yan and the 4th Tuesday each month from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Dundee Library, 32 Water Street in Dundee. Registration is requested by contacting 1-800-272-3900.

Stay Tuned: The HUBBA Tea will be held in April 2024. More details to follow.

Stay Tuned: FREE Legal Presentation for Yates County from Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.® topic and date are in process. More details to follow.

Stay Tuned: The schedule for the educational opportunities to learn the basics of Medicare through the Welcome to Medicare presentations by Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is being revised for 2024. The frequency will be changing from every other month to quarterly. Stay tuned for details. Please contact Ashley Beach at 315-279-4321 or tillmana@proactioninc.org if you have questions.

Nominations for Senior Day 2024

Each May as part of national Older Americans Month, NYSOFA celebrates older adults at an Older New Yorkers’ Day event in Albany. Many older New Yorkers, chosen by their local Offices for the Aging, are recognized for their outstanding contributions at this annual event. Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is accepting nominations for the Senior Day 2024 event. It is time to take a moment and share information about the great volunteers you know. Please contact Zack Housworth at (315)279-4321 to nominate someone. Let Zack know how the nominee has made a difference in our community through civic engagement. Nominations are due no later than **Friday, February 2, 2024.**

Six Memory-Boosting Activities for Seniors by Senior Care Authority

As we age, it's normal to experience some decline in memory. However, there are things we can do to help keep our minds sharp and our memories strong. Here are six memory-boosting activities for aging adults to keep their minds active and healthy.

Brain Games - One great way to boost memory is to play brain games. There are many different kinds of brain games available online and as apps for smartphones or tablets. These games are designed to challenge the mind and help improve cognitive function. Not only are they fun, but they can also help keep the mind sharp.

Crossword Puzzles - Research shows that doing crossword puzzles regularly may improve your ability to focus attention on a desired task and enhance your executive function and working memory. All of these skills improve one's ability to successfully navigate the challenges of everyday life and remain independent for as long as possible. They can also be an engaging activity for couples or families as they work as a team to select the correct answer.

Get Regular Exercise - Exercise isn't just good for the body; it's also good for the mind. Studies have shown that regular exercise can help improve memory and cognitive function in seniors. So get out there and take a brisk walk, go for a swim, attend a yoga class, or join a local senior center fitness class.

Stay Connected Socially - Staying socially connected is important for seniors' mental health. Isolation and loneliness can lead to depression, which has been linked to memory problems. Joining a social club, attending religious services, or volunteering are all great ways to stay connected and active socially.

Eat a Healthy Diet - Eating a healthy diet is important for overall health and well-being, but did you know it can also help boost memory? Foods that are rich in antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins B6 and B12 have all been linked with better cognitive function in seniors. So make sure to include plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, and whole grains in your diet.

Get Plenty of Sleep - Getting enough sleep is essential for good health at any age, but it's especially important for seniors. Studies have shown that sleep deprivation can lead to memory problems. So make sure you're getting 7-8 hours of sleep each night to help keep your mind sharp as you age.

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 – In person classes or on Zoom
Penn Yan – Tuesdays: January 2 to March 19 from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Penn Yan – Thursdays: January 4 to March 21 from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Beginner Tai Chi- Relieve Pain and Improve Health and Balance - In person class only
Penn Yan – Mondays: January 8 to March 18 from 10:15 am-11:15 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Walk with Ease— Helps people with arthritis improve balance, reduce pain, and improve overall health.
Penn Yan- Classes will be held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:45 to 9:45 am in the Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging Conference Room. This class runs for 6 weeks. Next class will be April 8 to May 16, 2024

Bingocize-This new program combines bingo with exercise using exercise bands and exercise balls. Classes are held 2 times a week for 10 weeks and 1 hour per class. A new class will be held January 17 to March 20. Location to be determined. Call Pam Swarthout if you have any questions.

* To sign up for these classes, call Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging, Pam Swarthout, at 315-279-4321. Most classes can be joined at any time! Transportation may be available.

4 WAYS SENIORS AND CAREGIVERS CAN PREVENT AND MANAGE SEASONAL DEPRESSION

Are the winter months especially challenging for your older adult and you? One or both of you could be affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). It's a type of major depression that usually affects people during the winter months. It's more likely to affect people whose time spent outdoors is limited by severe weather, reduced mobility, or illness.

Seasonal affective disorder symptoms

Symptoms of seasonal affective disorder can start out mild and become more severe as winter progresses.

People with SAD often have symptoms that include:

- * Lack of energy, feeling sluggish
- * Irritability and agitation
- * Trouble concentrating
- * Increase in appetite or weight gain
- * Frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- * Loss of interest in once-loved activities
- * Increased need for sleep and/or problems with sleep
- * Becoming anti-social, wanting to be alone
- * Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness

How seasonal depression affects seniors and caregivers

Many caregivers already experience symptoms of depression due to chronic caregiver stress. Seasonal depression can intensify these symptoms and worsen depression. Similarly, many older adults who have serious illnesses or require caregiving help also have symptoms of depression. The CDC estimates that 15-20% of adults over 65 experience depression. When you're aware of and can recognize the warning signs of SAD in yourself and your older adult, you can take action to prevent deeper depression and improve quality of life for both of you.

4 ways to prevent and manage seasonal affective disorder symptoms

1. Know the risk factors

Being aware of the risk of developing SAD helps you be more proactive and notice symptoms sooner. SAD is more common in women than men. And people with a family history or personal experience with depression may also be at increased risk. Living far from the equator where there's naturally less sunlight increases the risk of SAD. For example, it's more common to have SAD during winter in New England than winter in Florida. Low levels of vitamin D have also been found in people with SAD. Scientists suspect that vitamin D plays an important part in regulating serotonin levels.

2. Increase light exposure

One of the first steps in preventing and managing SAD symptoms is to get more exposure to natural light.

- ✦ Opening window coverings to allow more sunlight into the home
- ✦ Spending the majority of time in the brightest rooms of the home
- ✦ Getting outside in the sun every day – a 10 minute walk or just getting out to the porch or backyard

Light therapy is another effective way to increase light exposure without having to go outdoors. This is especially helpful for people with mobility issues or when severe weather forces everyone to stay inside for days or weeks. Before trying light therapy, it's best to check with a doctor because people with certain health conditions need to be careful because the wrong intensity or amount of light may cause problems.

3. Get regular physical activity

Regular exercise and other types of physical activity reduce overall stress and anxiety, which helps to reduce SAD symptoms. Physical activity also helps tire the body, which improves sleep quality and duration for caregivers and older adults.

4. Seek assistance

If you are concerned that you or your older adult may have seasonal depression, don't hesitate to talk to the doctor. They'll be able to properly diagnose the cause of the symptoms and make recommendations that will help you feel better. If symptoms are caused by SAD, they may recommend lifestyle changes to reduce stress, light therapy, appropriate medications, or therapy or counseling.

** Excerpt from DailyDare: full story at <https://dailycaring.com/4-ways-seniors-and-caregivers-can-prevent-and-manage-seasonal-depression/>

Pro Action Yates OFA Transportation, Emergency Response, and Project Lifesaver Programs
Transportation Program

* **The Transportation Program does not operate when the Penn Yan schools are closed or have a delayed opening. Closings are reported to Fox Rochester WHAM.**

* **Please make sure that your driveway is cleared of snow and ice for our vehicles to get in and out of your driveway safely.**

To schedule a transportation trip, please call 315-279-4409 or send an email to beckert@proactioninc.org. If you require a wheelchair van, please mention that at the time of your call. If you would like to request one of our volunteer riding companions, please request a companion when you call. To be courteous to our companions and increase the availability of riding with a companion, it is best to request your ride 2 weeks in advance.

As of this time, we are still operating on a modified schedule. Medical trips are priority, grocery shopping to Tops or Aldi are scheduled on Mondays around the medical appointments for that week if there is availability.



Important Reminders:

- OFA is not a medical transport. **ALL RIDERS MUST BE ABLE TO GET TO AND FROM THE VAN ON THEIR OWN. Drivers are not able to lift, pull or tug.** Our drivers can lend an arm and each vehicle has a step stool to help with getting in/out of the vehicle. This is for your safety and theirs.
- Drivers are not permitted to load/unload your grocery bags from the vehicle. If you are using our transportation program to grocery shop, then you must be able to carry your own bags.
- You are always welcome to have a family member or friend ride along with you. Please make sure to mention this at the time of your request.
- Reminders calls are made the morning prior to your ride. If you do not receive a call by 2pm the day prior, please call our office after 2pm.
- If you need to cancel a ride, please call the main number at 315-279-4321, and speak to the receptionist so that the driver can be notified and does not drive to your home.

**Messages left after 3pm Thursday will not be received until the following Monday.

****A minimum of 2 days' notice is required for in town and a week's notice is required for out-of-town transportation requests.

Personal Emergency Response Services (PERS)

QUESTION: Have you ever thought about what you would do if you were alone in your home and needed medical help?

ANSWER: A Personal Emergency Response System.

The fee for the service is \$30 per month or \$45 for a unit with a Cell Modem for households that do not have a landline phone. This covers 24-hour monitoring, annual maintenance, and service calls.

Other services available are:

- FALLS DETECTION PENDANT can be added for an additional \$10 per month.
- CELL MODEMS can be linked to the unit for an additional \$15 per month and a 1 time \$10 hook up charge (for homes without a landline phone)
- SMOKE DETECTORS can be added to your service for an additional \$5 per month.
- SECOND PENDANT for someone in the same household can be added for an additional \$5 per month.



The Project Lifesaver System offers help in rescuing loved ones who may wander. If your loved one has Alzheimer's, dementia, autism, or Down Syndrome this is a great program that is offered to anyone in Yates County regardless of age.

If you would like more information or to sign up for either program, please call Terri Becker at 315-279-4321.

***Attention current PERS and Project Lifesaver Clients:** If you have activated your PERS pendant and are admitted to the hospital please make sure the PERS pendant or Project Lifesaver Pendant stay with your belongings. There is a \$47 fee to replace a lost PERS pendant. Project Lifesaver pendants are very costly to replace.

GET INVOLVED!
Strengthening yourself by Strengthening your Community

- ◆ **Pro Action 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 315-279-4321 for more information.
- ◆ **Phone Friends-** Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is seeking volunteers to make brief, friendly phone calls to homebound seniors to provide emotional support and to enhance social contact. Call Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-279-4321 for more information.
- ◆ **Milly's Pantry** - we are looking for some friendly folks to volunteer at the Pinwheel Market. For more information, please stop in (19 Main Street, Penn Yan), call 315-595-2500, or email volunteer@millyspantry.org.
- ◆ **Keuka Comfort Care Home**—Throughout the year we look for people to help with our fundraisers; we need pie makers in September, and various other tasks. We also have openings for volunteer caregivers for our residents. For more information call 315 536-1690 or email director@keukacomfortcarehome.org.
- ◆ **HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program) Volunteer-**Are you someone who has some free time to spare and the drive to help others? Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is looking for individuals interested in volunteering to assist Medicare Beneficiaries comparing health plans and screening for financial assistance programs. Training and learning materials will be provided. If you are interested, contact Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-279-4321.
- ◆ **Front Desk help-** Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is seeking volunteers to answer and transfer phone calls, help customers who come into our office, and general clerical duties. Volunteers decide how often they assist. We will train you! Contact Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-279-4321 for more information.

2023-2024 Emergency HEAP benefit will open January 2nd

Emergency HEAP is a benefit designed to meet a households immediate energy needs. If you are eligible, the Emergency HEAP Benefit can help you heat your home if you are in a heat or heat related emergency. Emergency HEAP benefits and eligibility are based on: 1) income; 2) available resources, and; 3) the type of emergency.

You may be eligible for an emergency HEAP benefit if:

- Your electricity is necessary for your heating system or thermostat to work and is either shut-off or scheduled to be shut off or
- Your electric or natural gas heat is off or scheduled to be shut-off or
- You are out of fuel, or you have less than one quarter tank of fuel oil, kerosene or propane or have less than a ten (10) day supply of wood, wood pellets, corn, or other deliverable heat source.

and

- Your income is at or below the current income guidelines or you receive Family Assistance, Safety Net Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) or Code A Supplemental Security Income.

2023-2024 Maximum Gross Monthly Income guidelines:

1 Person Household --\$3035 2 Person Household--\$3970 3 Person Household--\$4904

- The heating and/or electric bill is in your name **and**
 - Your household's available resources are:
 - less than \$2,500; or
 - less than \$3,750 if any member of your household is age 60 or older, or under age 6.

If you have an emergency, contact the Yates County Department of Social Services at (315)536-5184 for assistance.

Adults need vaccines too!

Adults need to keep their vaccinations up to date because immunity from childhood vaccines can wear off over time. As an adult, you are at risk for different diseases. Getting vaccinated is one of the safest preventative care measures available.

As we get older, our immune systems tend to weaken over time, putting us at higher risk for certain diseases. All adults age 65 and older should make sure they are up to date on these vaccines:

- COVID-19 vaccine
- Flu vaccine (Influenza)
- Pneumococcal vaccine
- Shingles vaccine (zoster)
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough) or Td (tetanus and diphtheria)

You may need other vaccines based on your age or other factors. Talk with your doctor to learn which vaccines are recommended for you. This may include:

- RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) – adults aged 60 years and older should talk to their healthcare provider about getting a single dose of RSV vaccine

Where to find COVID-19 vaccine:

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Check with your doctor or pharmacy to see if they have COVID-19 vaccine. If you are uninsured or your insurance does not cover the COVID-19 vaccine, you may be eligible to get vaccinated at Yates County Public Health.

Talk to your doctor today to find out what vaccines you may need! For more questions on adult vaccinations, call Yates County Public Health at (315) 536-5160.



5 Ways To Improve Your Bladder Health

Do pelvic floor exercises.

Daily exercises can help strengthen your muscles and may help avoid infections.

Drink enough fluids, especially water.

How much water you need may vary but try to drink enough fluids so that you need to urinate every few hours.

Wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothing.

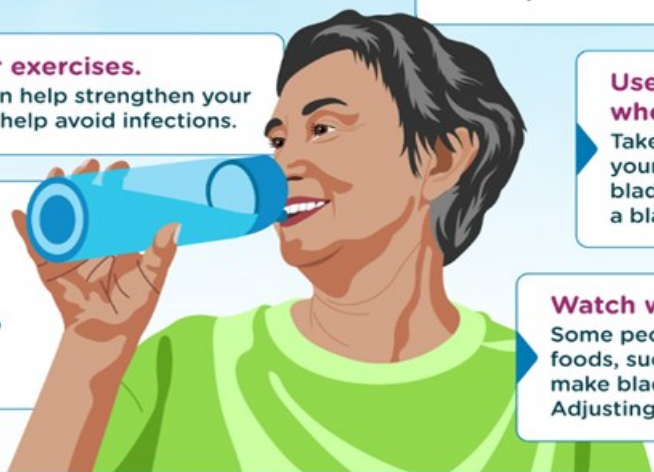
Tight-fitting pants and nylon underwear can trap moisture and help bacteria grow.

Use the bathroom when needed.

Take the time to fully empty your bladder. If urine stays in the bladder for too long, it can make a bladder infection more likely.

Watch what you eat.

Some people find that certain foods, such as spicy foods, make bladder problems worse. Adjusting your diet may help.



To learn more about bladder health, visit www.nia.nih.gov/bladder-health.



Yates County Office for the Aging
417 Liberty Street, Suite 1116
Penn Yan, NY 14527
Phone: 315-279-4321
Fax: 315-536-5514
Email: ycofa@proactioninc.org
www.proactioninc.org

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THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

REMINDER:

Keep 2024 Social Security award letters in a safe place!

They will be needed for HEAP, SNAP and any other applications that require income documentation.

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!

Language Assistance Services Available

Pro Action 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.

2024 NY Connects Yates Office for the Aging Service Directory

The 2024 Service Directory is enclosed. Please keep this as a helpful reference tool all year long.

Stay Informed

- Follow Yates NY Connects/Office for the Aging on Facebook.
- Go to our website for previous issues of The Grapevine Express at <http://proactioninc.org/thriving-seniors/>



Yates NY Connects/Office for the Aging

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