



THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS

March/April 2026

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



NO CLOSINGS SCHEDULED

Tax Appointments Are Still Available!

Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging and AARP Foundation Tax-Aide are still offering free income tax service through Wednesday, 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 a voicemail box, leave a message for a callback. When leaving a voice message, please clearly leave your name and phone number. You can call Monday thru Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Use the same phone number to cancel or reschedule appointments.

All tax appointments will be held at the St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 135 Hamilton Avenue, Penn Yan (not Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging). Appointments are held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

Where do you find help and information on services and supports in your Community?

Call **NY Connects of Yates County** at 315-279-4321 or visit the NY Connects Resource Directory at <https://www.nyconnects.ny.gov/>

What is NY Connects? NY Connects is a trusted single point of access where you can get information and assistance you need to make informed decisions about long term services and supports. Long term services and supports can be provided in your home, in your community, in assisted living facilities, or in nursing homes. It is for people of all ages. You could be paying for services yourself, through insurance, or be eligible for a government program. NY Connects is a free service and there are no eligibility requirements to access the information and consultation services.

Who does NY Connects serve? Anyone who needs information on long term services and supports:

- A child or adult with a disability
- An older adult
- Family members and caregivers
- Friends or neighbors
- Helping professionals

What kind of help can I get from NY Connects? Comprehensive and unbiased information about long-term services and supports including:

- In Home Services
- Caregiver Supports
- Care Coordination
- Respite Care
- Transportation
- Home Delivered Meals
- Health Insurance Information
- Nursing Homes And More!



No March Meeting and April 27

- ♦ “Our Town Rocks” Community Gathering monthly meetings are typically held at 6:00 pm on the 4th Monday of the month at the Our Town Rocks Office, 12 Main Street in Dundee. For specific 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.

March 10 and April 14

- ♦ “Our Town Rocks” Champions Meeting meetings are typically held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Our Town Rocks Office, 12 Main Street in Dundee at 10:00 am. For specific 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.

March 19

- ♦ Come learn the basics of Medicare! Topics discussed include Parts A and B, Medicare Advantage, Medigap, Part D, and more! Great for those new to Medicare or those looking for a refresher. The presentation will be March 19 at 2pm in the Yates County Office Building, Room 1037. Registration required by 3/17/26, please call 315-279-4321.

March 20

- ♦ Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc. has partnered with Foodlink to provide a Drive Thru Pop Up Food Pantry on 3/20/26 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.

March 23 & April 27 (Penn Yan) & March 24 & April 28 (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.

April 8

- ♦ Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging will hold a Spring Fling meal on Wednesday, April 8th at 11:30am at the First Baptist Church in Penn Yan. Menu is Chicken Parm, rice pilaf, vegetable blend, dinner rolls with butter, and strawberry shortcake with whipped topping. Meal will be served at 11:30. Dine in only. No take out meals available. Limited to 100 participants. Suggested donation of \$8 per meal for people over 60. Mandatory \$13.75 for people under 60. RSVP Due by 3/30/26 by calling 315-279-4321.

April 16

- ♦ Learn how to prepare for the fall open enrollment period and what tools are available to compare plans, and support education and decision making. The presentation will include a brief Medicare basics refresher, plan comparison tips and examples, and a demonstration of the online Medicare Plan Finder Tool. Specific plan information will not be discussed. Attending a Welcome to Medicare presentation first is highly encouraged. Presentation will be April 16 at 2pm in the Yates County Office Building, Room 1037. Registration required by 4/14/26, please call 315-279-4321.

April 16

- ♦ **Free** to all Yates County Seniors: Annual HUBBA “Afternoon Tea”, Penn Yan Academy Gymnasium, from 4:00—5:30 p.m on Thursday, 4/16/26. This is a gift to the community by the Youth of Penn Yan. No cost to attend! To place a reservation, please call Pro Action Yates OFA at 315-279-4321 by Friday, 4/3/26. Transportation is available by calling 315-279-4409.

April 17

- ♦ Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc. has partnered with Foodlink to provide a Drive Thru Pop Up Food Pantry on 4/17/26 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.

Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging (OFA) Staff Spotlight

Meet **Ashely Beach, Aging Services Coordinator**, at Pro Action Yates OFA! Ashley has been with the Yates OFA since May 2015. She is the main contact for New York Connects, Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) and Legal Assistance. If you or someone you know is in need of long-term services and supports, she is the person to contact. Ashley also has a vast knowledge about Medicare information, plans and money-saving options. She is able to answer almost any question. If you are able to stump her, she knows the right people to contact for answers. Ashley can link people to resources to assist with specified legal concerns. If you think Ashley could assist you in any way, contact her at 315-279-4321.



Activities at the Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging's Older Adult Center

****Discover Live** is a virtual and interactive travel experience with exceptional tour guides from around the world. Discover Live whisks you away on premier, AI-empowered, virtual tours to incredible locales across the globe. Tours are 1 hour in length. Upcoming scheduled tours for March and April include:

- ♦ March 6: Prague, Czech Republic 12:00pm
- ♦ March 10: Winnipeg, Canada 2:30pm
- ♦ March 16: Women's History in Washington DC 1:30pm
- ♦ March 24: Venice, Italy (St. Mark's Square) 1:30pm
- ♦ April 16: Falun, Sweden 10am
- ♦ April 20: Amsterdam, Netherlands 1:30pm
- ♦ April 23: Athens, Greece 11am
- ♦ April 28: Buenos Aires, Argentina 1:30pm

To attend a tour, you need to pre-register by calling Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321. Limited space available with tour attendance limited to 10 older adults. No limit on the number of tours you can attend. Tours are broadcasted at Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging, 417 Liberty Street in Penn Yan.

* We invite individuals who have previously traveled to any of the destinations to come share their experience with our participants.

April 28, 2026, from 1:30pm to 3:30pm Container Gardening Workshop: Join us for a hands-on container gardening workshop focused on growing ornamentals and herbs. The Yates Older Adult Center will provide this activity in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Location: Yates Auditorium at Yates County Office Building, 417 Liberty St. Penn Yan NY, 14527. Call Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321 to register. RSVP by 04/14/26 at 4:00pm. Free and Open to Older Adults 60+.

****Contact the Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321 for additional activities that will be happening in the Older Adult Center in March and April ****

**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- 12 weeks In person and via Microsoft Teams
Penn Yan – Tuesdays: April 7 to June 23 from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Penn Yan – Thursdays: April 9 to June 25 from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Beginner Tai Chi- Relieve Pain and Improve Health and Balance - 16 weeks
Penn Yan – Wednesdays: February 18 to June 3 from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm 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 Fridays from 8:45 to 9:45 am from March 23 to May 1 in the Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging Conference Room. This class runs for 6 weeks.

Bingocize- This program combines bingo with exercise using exercise bands and exercise balls. Classes are held twice a week for 10 weeks and 1 hour per class. Class is on Mondays and Fridays, June 1 to August 10 from 12:00pm –1:00pm at St. Mark's Terrace in Penn Yan.

* To sign up for these classes, call Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging, Priscila Ames, at 315-279-4321.
Transportation may be available.

Communicating With Someone Who Has Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease can make communication difficult for both caregivers and the person with Alzheimer's. This page covers how Alzheimer's can change how a person communicates and provides tips for how to manage these changes.

How does Alzheimer's change communication?

People with Alzheimer's may struggle with:

- Finding the right word when speaking
- Understanding what words mean
- Paying attention during long conversations
- Organizing words logically
- Keeping their train of thought when talking
- Blocking out background noises from the radio, TV, phone calls, or conversations in the room

Alzheimer's causes some people to get confused about language. For example, the person might forget or no longer understand English if it was learned as a second language. Instead, they might understand and use only their first language, such as Spanish.

Tips to cope with communication challenges:

Keep the following suggestions in mind to make communication easier:

- Make eye contact and call the person by name.
- Be aware of your tone, volume, facial expressions, and body language. Try to avoid appearing angry or tense. Show a warm, loving, and matter-of-fact manner.
- Encourage a two-way conversation if the person is able.
- Be open to the person's concerns, even if they are hard to understand or address.
- Be patient with angry outbursts. Try a distraction, such as offering a favorite snack or a walk outside. If you become frustrated, take some time to calm down.
- Allow more time for the person to respond. Be patient and try not to interrupt.
- Don't talk about the person as if they are not there.
- Don't talk to the person using "baby talk" or a "baby voice."
- Use methods other than speaking to help the person, such as gentle touching to guide them. Hold the person's hand while you talk.

When speaking to a person with Alzheimer's, try to ask questions with a yes or no answer, and if the person does not understand what you say the first time, try rephrasing what you said with different words.

Here are some examples of how to change what you say to the person with Alzheimer's to make communication easier:

Avoid Saying

1. What do you want for dinner?
2. That's not how you do it?
3. How do you feel?
4. Are you hungry?

Say This Instead

1. Do you want fish or chicken for dinner?
2. Let's try it this way.
3. Are you feeling sad?
4. Dinner will be ready in 5 minutes.

Be aware of nonverbal communication. As people lose the ability to talk clearly, they may rely on other ways to communicate their thoughts and feelings. For example, their facial expressions may show sadness, anger, or frustration.

Source: National Institute on Aging

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

Transportation Program



*We regularly travel throughout Yates County as well as have routes to out of the county locations, including but not limited to Canandaigua, Geneva, and Rochester. To schedule a transportation trip, please call the Yates OFA Transportation Line at 315-279-4409. If you require a wheelchair accessible van, please mention that at the time of your call. If you would like to request a volunteer riding companion, please request this 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.

*We are operating with a low number of drivers. Medical trips are the priority. Grocery shopping trips are scheduled around the medical appointments for the week if there is availability. If you have a non-medical trip need, call and ask if it can fit into the schedule. Tuesday and Thursday are the preferred days.

Important Reminders:

- OFA cannot provide rides to medical appointments for individuals with Medicaid. They need to utilize Medicaid Transport Services.
 - 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.* For everyone's safety, our drivers can only lend an arm and each vehicle has a step stool to help with getting in/out of the vehicle.
 - 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.
 - Reminder 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 to confirm your ride.
 - If you need to cancel a ride, please call the main Yates OFA phone number at 315-279-4321 as soon as you can, and speak to the receptionist so that the driver can be notified and does not drive to your home.
- ****A minimum of 3 business 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 without a landline phone. It covers 24-hour monitoring, annual maintenance, and service calls.

Additional services available include:

- Falls Detection Pendants 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. It is offered to anyone in Yates County, regardless of age. The monthly cost is just \$25.

**If you would like more information or to sign up for either program, please call Sarah Thillman at the Yates OFA at 315-279-4321.

*Attention current PERS and Project Lifesaver Clients: If you are admitted to the hospital please make sure your PERS pendant or Project Lifesaver pendant stays with your belongings. There is a \$46 fee to replace a lost PERS pendant. Project Lifesaver pendants are \$300 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 older adults need and may be the only contact that older adult 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 older adults 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.
- ♦ **Food Box Delivery-** Pro Action's Hope Center Keuka Food Pantry is seeking volunteer drivers for the once-a-month food delivery to eligible individuals. Approximately 1 to 2 hours per month required. Call Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-279-4321 for more information.
- ♦ **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.
- ♦ **Pop Up Food Pantry-** Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is seeking volunteers for the once-a-month food pantry to assist with sorting, packing and distributing food to drive thru participants. Approximately 3 hours once a month. Call Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-279-4321 for more information.
- ♦ **Transportation Companion-** Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging is seeking volunteers to accompany older adults being transported by Office for the Aging, to their medical appointments. As a volunteer you would ride along with the older adult in 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. Call Becky Bennett-Tears at 315-279-4321 for more information.

Top Ten SSA Webpages for 2025

Social Security Administration's SSA.gov website often allows you to do business with them without visiting a local office or calling. The top 10 webpages recommended by SSA are:

1. *my* Social Security — You can open a personal *my* Social Security account to verify your earnings, view your *Social Security Statement*, get benefit estimates, and more. <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>
2. Social Security blog — The hub for Social Security news and updates is the blog at ssa.gov. You can use social media to easily share these informative articles with others. <https://blog.ssa.gov/>
3. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) — Do you need answers to Social Security-related questions? The FAQ webpage is another valuable source of information. www.ssa.gov/faq
4. Retirement Application — You can complete and submit your online application for retirement benefits in as few as 15 minutes. www.ssa.gov/retirement
5. Disability Application — You can conveniently apply online for disability benefits. www.ssa.gov/benefits/Disability
6. Publications — Visit the online publication library for information on key subjects (includes audio versions of publications). <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs>
7. Medicare — Sign up for Medicare. <https://www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up>
8. Online Services — You can take care of most business with SSA by visiting the online services page. <https://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices>
9. People Helping Others — Use these resources to help your family and others in your community at www.ssa.gov/thirdparty
10. Fraud and Scam Prevention and Reporting — Learn how to recognize Social Security fraud and scams, and how to report them. <https://www.ssa.gov/fraud>

Focus in On Eye Health

Did you know that your brain can detect 10 million different colors? Or that the six muscles in each of your eyes move faster than any other muscles in your body? Your eyes are completely unique to you as no two people share the exact same hue. This month, take some time to learn how to keep your eyes safe and your vision healthy.

Vision Changes as You Age

Some common changes that people notice as they age include having trouble seeing objects up close, not being able to tell certain colors, like blue and black, apart, and needing to take more time to adjust to changes in levels of light. These problems tend to be minor annoyances that can be easily resolved. You may need to turn on more lights in your home or get non-prescription reading glasses to help focus on objects that are close by. Low vision is another common problem that comes with age and cannot be permanently fixed, but can be managed with glasses, contact lenses, or certain therapies. Those with low vision have trouble recognizing the faces of family and friends. They also may have trouble doing everyday tasks like reading, cooking, or reading street signs. In addition to low vision, there are other diseases and conditions that you could develop with age.

Look Out for These Eye Diseases and Conditions

These diseases and conditions can lead to vision loss and blindness and may have few or no symptoms:

- ◆ Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) can make objects appear less clear.
- ◆ Diabetic retinopathy may occur when a diabetic's blood sugar isn't well controlled.
- ◆ Cataracts can show up as cloudy spots in your vision that cause blurry and hazy sight.
- ◆ Glaucoma is typically caused by fluid buildup in the eye and could lead to vision loss and blindness. Those with glaucoma usually have no early symptoms or pain.
- ◆ Dry eye could feel like stinging or burning in the eye and is a result of tear glands not working well.

If you suddenly cannot see, or experience blurry vision, double vision, eye pain, redness or swelling in your eye/ eyelid, or are seeing many new floaters (specks that float along your vision), you may be experiencing an eye emergency. Talk to your eye doctor as soon as possible.

Treat Your Eyes to Better Health

Since many eye diseases and conditions begin with few noticeable symptoms, regular dilated eye exams are recommended to prevent complications and vision loss. The National Eye Institute recommends that everyone over the age of 50 should have a dilated eye exam once each year. There are additional ways that you can prevent eye diseases from occurring or worsening:

- ◆ For AMD, dietary supplements can prevent the condition from getting worse.
- ◆ Diabetic retinopathy can be slowed by controlling your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.
- ◆ Cataract surgery is a common treatment that can restore vision.
- ◆ Prescription eye drops, lasers, or surgery can help treat glaucoma.

Prevention is the Key

Taking steps to keep your eyes healthy starts with a few simple lifestyle changes. Tend to your overall health by eating foods that are good for your eyes, including dark, leafy greens (spinach, kale, and collard greens) and fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, tuna, and halibut). Improve your health and lower your risk of worsening health and eye conditions by increasing physical activity. This will help lower your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Quit smoking to lessen the likelihood of developing diseases like macular degeneration and cataracts. Lastly, protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses when you're outdoors and using protective eyewear when doing potentially dangerous activities (home repairs, yard work, etc.).

Source: IPRO Healthy Insights September 2025

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 136
PENN YAN, NY 14527



THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS

MARCH/APRIL 2026

REMINDER: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS at 2:00 AM
Change your clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 8th, 2026.



Interested In Taking College Courses?

New York State Law permits residents 60 years or older to audit credit-bearing classes at state-affiliated campuses, without tuition, examination, grading or credit upon a space-available basis. Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) permits persons sixty years of age or over to audit courses without tuition, examination, grading or credit on a space-available basis. This auditing privilege is restricted to courses that are offered for college credit. Any materials or supplies that are needed for class and that are not covered by normal tuition will be the responsibility of the person auditing the class.

- ♦ To view classes, go to: <https://my.flcc.edu/Student/Courses> Search for Classes from this page.
- ♦ For the Senior Citizen Audit registration procedures, contact Finger Lakes Community College's One Stop Center, 3325 Marvin Sands Drive in Canandaigua at (585)785-1000 or e-mail: onestop@flcc.edu

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

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