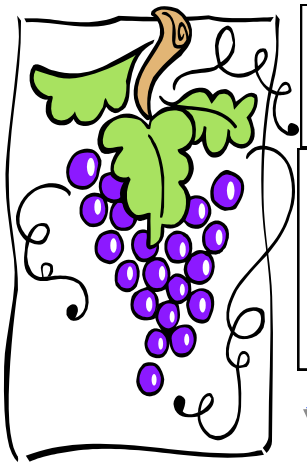


THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS

November/December 2026
Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging
Hours of Operation: 8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Friday



Wednesday, November 11, Thursday & Friday, November 26 & 27, Friday & Monday, December 25 & 28

Don't forget! Medicare Open Enrollment period ends December 7th 2026

You can evaluate and change plans between October 15th and December 7th each year during the Annual Open Enrollment Period.

The changes made during this time will go into effect January 1, 2027.
The Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging Staff can help you decide what plans fit your needs best. There are still presentations being held at the following locations to go over Federal Medicare updates and Medicare Advantage plan changes:

Dundee Library: Wednesday, November 4 from 10-11am
Yates County Highway Building (Benton): Tuesday, November 10 from 10-11am
Penn Yan Yates County Office Building Auditorium: Friday, November 20 from 2-3pm; Monday, November 30 from 2-3pm

Do you wish to not attend a presentation? We are offering 2027 Yates County Medicare Reference Guide packets. Each packet will include all 2027 plan information, federal updates, and a comparison worksheet with tips and advice. These packets can be mailed to you or you can stop in to pick one up.

Call **315-279-4321** to reserve your spot at a session or request a packet. Attendance at the group sessions is strongly encouraged as there will be limited availability for individual meetings. You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227) directly for assistance that is available 24/7 during the Open Enrollment Period.

"I missed the Medicare Open Enrollment Period – What do I do?!"

Every year, the annual Medicare Open Enrollment period runs from October 15th- December 7th, and changes made during this time take effect January 1st. Understandably life sometimes gets busy and the deadline gets missed. Here are some Special Enrollment Periods (SEP's) that you can use if you missed the Open Enrollment Period:
If you are a member of EPIC and have not used your once annual special enrollment period in 2026, you can use it to change your plan before December 31st and the change will take effect January 1st. This is an annual SEP that all members of EPIC can use, regardless of plan or deductible status.
If your current plan notified you that the plan is terminating and will not be offering Medicare coverage in 2027, you have until December 31st to enroll in a new plan for January 1st. Additionally, you have until the end of February to enroll in a new plan and coverage will take effect the first of the month following your enrollment.
The Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period is an additional Open Enrollment period every year from January 1st to March 31st where Medicare beneficiaries can disenroll from their Medicare Advantage plan and enroll in a different Medicare Advantage plan or switch to Original Medicare and a stand-alone Part D plan. Coverage will take effect the first of the month following your enrollment.

If you find yourself in a position where you may need to use one of these enrollment periods, please reach out to Ashley Beach at 315-279-4321 or tillmana@proactioninc.org for assistance.

LOCAL EVENTS

November & December

- "Our Town Rocks" Champions Meeting typically are held monthly 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.

November & December

- "Our Town Rocks" Community Gathering monthly meeting are typically held monthly at 6:00 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.

November 13

- Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc. has partnered with Foodlink to provide a Drive Thru Pop Up Food Pantry on 11/13/26 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.

November 16 (Penn Yan) & November 17 (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 typically 4th Monday each month (3rd Monday in November due to holiday week) from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Penn Yan Library, 214 Main Street in Penn Yan and the 4th Tuesday each month (3rd Tuesday in November due to holiday week) from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Dundee Library, 32 Water Street in Dundee. Registration is requested by contacting 1-800-272-3900.

November 18

- Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging will hold a **Thanksgiving luncheon** on Wednesday, November 18th at the First Baptist Church in Penn Yan. The menu is turkey w/gravy, stuffing, winter squash, cranberry sauce, rolls/butter, pumpkin crisp w/topping and water or coffee. The 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 11/9/26 by calling 315-279-4321.

November 30

- Last day to utilize your Farmers Market Coupons. Reminder– not all markets will be open through 11/30/26 so be sure to check for closing dates.

December 16

- Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging will hold a **Christmas luncheon** on Wednesday, December 16th at the First Baptist Church in Penn Yan. The menu is ham w/fruit sauce, baked potato w/ sour cream, green beans, rolls w/ butter, cherry crisp w/topping and water or coffee. The meal will be served at 11:30 am. 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 12/7/26 by calling 315-279-4321.

December 18

- Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc. has partnered with Foodlink to provide a Drive Thru Pop Up Food Pantry on 12/18/26 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.

December 22 (Dundee) & December 28 (Penn Yan)

- 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 typically 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.

REMINDER: Contact Pro Action Yates OFA at 315-279-4321 if your address has changed so we can ensure you continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you.

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



December 15, 2026 at 2pm: Zentangle Art Class: The Zentangle is an easy-to-learn, relaxing, and fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns called tangles. If you can form the letters S, O, C and I you can create beautiful Zentangle-inspired art. You will be provided with all the materials you need for the class. Class offered in partnership with the Arts Center of Yates Couty. Location: Yates Older Adult Center at Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging, 417 Liberty St., Suite 1116, Penn Yan NY, 14527. Please call Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321 to register. RSVP by 12/7/26 at 4:00pm. Free and Open to Older Adults 60+.

****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 November and December include:

- November 6: Siracusa, Sicily, Italy 12pm
- November 10: Capitol Hill, Washington DC 2:30pm
- November 16: Cardiff, Wales, UK 12:30pm
- November 24: Plymouth, England 1:30pm
- December 9: Holiday in Mexico City, Mexico 1:30pm
- December 17: Heidelberg Germany Holiday Virtual Tour 10am
- December 21: Holiday in Prague, Czech Republic 1:30pm
- December 22: Krakow Poland Holiday Virtual Tour 10:30am

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.

****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 November and December****

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- 12 weeks in person and via Microsoft Teams
Penn Yan – Tuesdays: Ongoing until December 22, 2026, from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Penn Yan –Thursdays: Ongoing until December 17, 2026, from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Beginner Tai Chi- Relieve Pain and Improve Health and Balance - 16 weeks
Classes are held on Wednesdays from 11am to 12pm at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Penn Yan. Contact our office for dates of the next class.

Walk with Ease— Helps people with arthritis improve balance, reduce pain, and improve overall health.
Penn Yan- Classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:45 to 9:45 am in the Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging Conference Room. This class runs for 6 weeks. Contact our office for dates of the next class.

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. Contact our office for dates of the next class.

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

CAREGIVER'S CORNER

Legal Planning: Peace of Mind for the Road Ahead-Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA)

Early planning is crucial when it involves the care of a person with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses. The most important reason to plan early is simple: a person must have legal capacity to sign any official document. This enables them to have input on important decisions regarding their life. When legal documents are completed later in the progression of dementia, their validity may be questioned or even challenged in court - a process that can be expensive, emotionally draining and create painful divisions within families.

Dementia progresses differently for every individual, making it difficult to predict how quickly abilities will change or what types of care will eventually be needed. What is certain, however, is that care needs increase over time and often rise beyond what families can realistically manage at home. Early planning helps ensure that the person's wishes are honored and gives caregivers the time and clarity needed to prepare for long-term care options before decisions become urgent.

The Legal Documents That Safeguard Decision-Making

Everyone, especially when cognitive health may be a concern, should have a basic set of essential legal documents in place. Two of the most important are a **power of attorney (POA)** and a **health care proxy** (also called a **medical power of attorney**).

These documents are often more important than a **will** in the early stages because they apply while you are still living. Known as **advance directives**, they allow you to designate a trusted person to make financial or medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so yourself. Having these safeguards in place protects your autonomy, reduces stress for loved ones and ensures your wishes are honored when it matters most. The **will** states how a person's property and assets should be distributed after death.

The Durable Power of Attorney (POA): This is the most critical document for planning for incapacity. It is where we appoint a trusted person (friend, family member or lawyer) to handle our financial affairs on our behalf. Only a **durable POA** stays in effect after the principal has become mentally incapacitated. A **nondurable POA** is used in specific, short-term tasks, such as appointing an agent to close on a house for you in another state, but it ends on the completion of the task or if you become mentally or physically incapacitated. The POA does not cover medical decisions.

Health Care Proxy: Medical decisions are covered in a **health care proxy**. This document appoints a trusted person to make medical decisions for you when you can no longer make them for yourself. This could be about surgery, medications, life-sustaining treatments or anything health-related.

Living Will: A **living will** is a document detailing specific preferences for end-of-life medical care and treatments (e.g., life support such as feeding tubes, ventilators or resuscitation; organ and brain donation). Due to the progressive nature of dementia, early planning is crucial. This will reduce the burden on family members who might otherwise struggle to make these decisions in line with your wishes.

A Will: A **will** spells out what you want to do with your money, property and other assets after death, and appoints an executor to manage your estate. You can give assets outright or put them in a trust for a particular person.

Guardianship & Conservatorship: Guardianships (or conservatorships) are court-appointed arrangements for people who can no longer manage their own finances or medical decisions due to incapacity, such as Alzheimer's. They're necessary when someone hasn't completed planning documents — like a durable power of attorney or health care proxy — that would otherwise authorize someone they trust to act for them.

A guardianship can be initiated by a family member, friend, hospital or nursing home. After a hearing, a judge decides whether the person is incapacitated and then appoints a guardian, who may or may not be someone the person knows, to make decisions on their behalf. Guardianships aren't inherently negative. They are critical safety nets when no planning has been done. But they often lack the most important perspective: the wishes of the person whose life will be affected.

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 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.

*We operate with just two drivers. Medical trips are given 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.
- All animals being transported must be fully restrained within a carrier during the entire trip. They cannot be held in a lap, sit in a car seat, or ride on the floor. Drivers cannot assist with the carrier or the animal inside.
- 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.
- Please ensure your driveway is accessible and free of snow or ice. If the driveway is not accessible the ride will need to be rescheduled.
- If Penn Yan Schools are closed due to winter weather, there will be no transportation services that day.

****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 stay 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 Michelle Hare at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101 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 Michelle Hare at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101 for more information.
- **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 Michelle Hare at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101 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! Call Michelle Hare at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101 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 Michelle Hare at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101 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 Michelle Hare at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101 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.

Note: Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc has a new Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Hare. You can contact her about all Pro Action volunteer opportunities that are available. She can be reached at 607-776-2125 ext. 1101.

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



Meet **Colin Weichenthal, Case Manager**, at Pro Action Yates OFA! Colin has been with the Yates OFA since March 2026. He has been a great addition to the Yates OFA Team, He is responsible for case management services for the Home Delivered Meal (HDM) program participants in Yates County. This involves many home visits and assessments. He also handles the in-home support called Telephone Reassurance (TR). This involves registering older adults to receive the telephone calls and coordinating the volunteers who make the calls.

If you or someone you know would benefit from the TR service or HDMs, reach out to Colin at 315-279-4321. He will be able to offer assistance and answer any questions about these services. He looks forward to hearing from you!

Tax-Aide Income Tax Service

Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging and the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program are pleased to provide completely free tax preparation and filing assistance to low-to-moderate-income taxpayers, with a special focus on individuals aged 50 and older, for tax year 2026.

Returns are prepared by IRS-Certified community volunteers who complete annual training and certification on changing federal and state tax codes. Counselors are trained to handle complex senior tax situations, including pensions, Social Security, investment income, and specific age-related deductions.

Experienced tax preparers will e-file your Federal and New York State income tax returns in a single 1-hour appointment ensuring you receive all the credits and deductions you're entitled to. If you have a refund coming it can be received in as little as 2 weeks via direct deposit to your bank account.

Tax-Aide is the nation's largest free tax assistance and preparation program.

There have been some minor changes to the tax code for tax year 2026. Standard deductions have been increased across the board. The Earned Income credit has also indexed upward. Non-itemizers can now deduct charitable cash donations up to $1,000 (or $2,000 for married filing jointly).

The tax preparation site is St. Paul's Lutheran Church; 135 Hamilton Street; Penn Yan, NY. Appointment days and times are not yet determined. Look for much more information in the next newsletter including specific details on how to schedule appointments and what documents you need to bring.

Please come prepared for your 2026 tax return. It will make the experience better for all of us!

Tax-Aide is always looking for new volunteers as tax preparers but also for other positions that require no specific income tax training or knowledge. If you feel you can give some of your time to help our community please contact Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging at 315-279-4321.

HEAP Announcement—Changes for 2026-2027

People should reference the following website http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/ for full details and information about the HEAP Program.

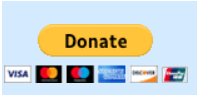
- 26-27 Clean and Tune applications accepted starting October 1, 2026.
- 26-27 Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement applications accepted starting October 1, 2026.
- 26-27 Regular HEAP benefit anticipated opening November 2, 2026.
- 26-27 Emergency benefit anticipated opening January 4, 2027.
- 26-27 Cooling Assistance benefit will open April 15, 2027.

** *HEAP Applications are accepted at the local Yates County Department of Social Services, 417 Liberty Street, Suite 2122, in Penn Yan, 315-536-5184***

NOTE: No 2nd Emergency HEAP benefit is in the 2026-2027 HEAP budget at the time of this newsletter printing.

Donations Welcome at the Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging

If you or someone you know is interested in making a donation to Pro Action Yates Office for the Aging to support our work to improve individual's lives, there is a Donate section on the Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc website located at: https://proactioninc.org/support-us/ You can make a donation in whatever amount you can share. You can donate by PayPal. If you prefer not to submit a donation electronically, you can send checks, payable to Yates Office for the Aging to: Yates Office for the Aging, 417 Liberty Street, Suite 1116, Penn Yan, NY 14527. Please indicate "donation" in the memo field of your check and you can specify a specific program if you choose.



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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ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

THE GRAPEVINE EXPRESS
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

Emergency/Weather Related Closings

Pro Action Yates OFA Transportation, Exercise/Wellness Classes, 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 WROC Channel 8 or WHAM Channel 13 or check the Yates NY Connects/Office for the Aging Facebook Page.

Procedures for Hope Center Keuka Food Pantry Holiday Distributions

- Individuals need to call in advance to set up an appointment. Contact Number is 315-924-3502.
- If this is the person's first visit, the appropriate paperwork needs to be filled out.
- In addition to the person's pantry shopping choices, additional traditional holiday food and fresh vegetables will be provided, as available.
- Holiday meats would either be turkey, ham, or chicken, depending upon availability.

*Regular Hope Center Hours: Tuesday 11am-4pm, Wednesday 9am-2pm, and Thursday 10am-2pm.

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/**

LIKE US ON facebook

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