

Celebrate **LIFE** at Your Senior Center!

SEPTEMBER 2015

LEARNING

Expand your
knowledge



INDEPENDENCE

Live on your terms



..... **FRIENDS**

Enjoy life



..... **ENERGY**

Discover health
and vitality

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251 18th Street South, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22202

571-527-3983

www.ncoa.org/NISC

Welcome to National Senior Center Month

Celebrate LIFE at Your Senior Center!

LIFE = Learning - Expand your knowledge
Independence - Live on your terms
Friends - Enjoy life, laughter, and feeling connected
Energy - Discover health and vitality

September 2015

National Senior Center Month is celebrated every year in September. It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase your center and market the valuable programs, activities, and services you offer. It's also a great time to promote a positive image of aging, show your center's importance in the community, and create interest in prospective new participants.

Our national celebration theme is: *Celebrate LIFE at Your Senior Center!*

This year's theme is a gift from the Wisconsin Aging Network. For years, they have held an *Add LIFE To Your Years* marketing campaign. While some of the components have been tweaked, the basic philosophy remains the same. The theme embraces positive, active aging, incorporates the Seven Dimensions of Wellness (physical, emotional, intellectual, vocational, social, environmental, and spiritual) and takes a holistic approach to senior center wellness. This September, celebrate your programming and services. Celebrate all the good things that happen at your center. Celebrate LIFE at Your Center!

Follow these easy steps to celebrate during National Senior Center Month:

1. **Start planning now!** September is just around the corner. Knowing your plans early can make it easier to promote your activities and events.

Use the Program Guide to find great ideas to create a memorable celebration. You'll find suggestions to help you, your staff, volunteers, and board members educate the community about the wide range of activities, services, and benefits you offer. You'll also find staff educational notes on issues related to advocacy, LGBT outreach, and ageism. Consider planning a different event each week, or choose one week out of the month to hold several activities.
2. **Use the Publicity Guide** to capture awareness and promote community involvement and support for your celebration. The guide offers a step-by-step media plan with timelines and specific methods.
3. **Use the 2015 Poster** to bring recognition of National Senior Center Month to your center. Two versions are available on the NCOA website—one with national photos and one that can be customized for your center. Download the poster and insert your own photos of seniors participating in your activity.

Sincerely, NISC Best Practices Committee

Planning Suggestions for Your Senior Center

Celebrate LIFE at Your Senior Center!

Learning: Expand your knowledge

During Senior Center Month, be inspired to begin an educational, civic-minded, or volunteer led program. Suggested programs were nominated in last year's Programs of Excellence competition. Senior Centers encourage activities that promote lifelong learning, community service, and volunteerism.

Authors Series

For the past year, the Norwalk Senior Center in Norwalk, CT, has presented the Connecticut Authors Program. Each month, they have invited a Connecticut author to visit the senior center and talk about his/her book, the writing process, and answer questions from members. A local skilled nursing facility provides a complimentary and delicious lunch for those attending. There is no cost to the participants or the center. The book club reads a book by the author the month before each speaker. The Connecticut Author series has been a hit with members because they LOVE to learn.

Armchair Adventures

The Armchair Adventure program provides an opportunity for community members to come to White Birch Senior Center, NH, and share their travel adventures with center participants using today's digital technology of thumb drives, laptops, and a big screen TV. Over the past year, members have had the opportunity to enjoy an African Safari, the temples and the Great Wall of China, Giant Sea Turtles of the Galapagos Islands, and two cross-country trips—one on a tandem bicycle and the other a camping trip. Participants enjoyed the presentations because it gave them a chance to imagine places they may like to visit, along with learning about other places and cultures.

Scholarly Scoop

Scholarly Scoop is an interactive, free lecture series aimed at a broad audience (i.e., across age, class, ethnicity, and gender) and composed of five sessions in each series focusing on various topics. Scholars in fields ranging from the humanities and social sciences to natural sciences presented on different subjects, from poets looking back on their lives, wrongful convictions, the laws of war in the 1930s, and nanotechnology. Lectures are held at the Monona Senior Center, WI, and are open to all and free to the public.

This program brings unique topics, thought-provoking discussions, and enjoyable interactions with the participants each month. Leda Nath, professor at UW-Whitewater, coordinates all the speakers from her colleagues at UW-Whitewater. A \$500 grant was obtained to provide a stipend to the professors.

Educate Elected Officials

Educate your elected officials about how public dollars support services and benefits for older adults, caregivers, family members, and the community at large. Senior center staff and participants are well-positioned to explain how limited public investment and recent cuts are having a domino effect on programs and services for seniors. Ideas to get started include:

- **Spotlight the Older Americans Act:** The Older Americans Act celebrates its 50th anniversary in July 2015, and more work can be done to put a face on the various programs this important Act supports. Advocacy in support of the OAA and those it serves is needed more than ever with [reauthorization](#) stalled and [funding](#) under threat.
- **Best Practices:** Use suggestions from [NISC members](#) and [our tips](#) to organize a successful event with public officials.
- **Targets:** The summer recess of both chambers of the U.S. Congress extends through Sept. 7, and Sept. 19-23, the House of Representatives will be in recess again, making these good times to invite your members of Congress and their staff to visit your center or attend a National Senior Center Month event.
- **National Senior Center Month Proclamation:** Ask your mayor or other official to issue a proclamation in honor of National Senior Center Month and build an event around it. A sample proclamation is found in the Publicity Guide.
- **Letter Writing Day:** If your center is suffering from recent budget cuts, or proposed cuts threaten your work, organize seniors to write stories about what the cuts mean to them and invite an elected official or staff to an event where you deliver these important messages. This can work well with enlisting a member of Congress who sympathizes with your struggles and could use your stories for national budget debates. [Share the stories](#) with NCOA, too, so we can help amplify their voices.

Media Outreach

Invite a local radio station to hold a remote broadcast at your center. Have a live audience of participants and community partners and invite key people to talk on the air about your center's resources and aging issues. See the Publicity Guide for more ideas and for a sample media plan.

Advocacy Tips

In Joyce Weil's book, *The New Neighborhood Senior Center*, she suggests that center leaders increase their effectiveness by increasing their scope of advocacy. Weil suggests that directors use NCOA materials in advocacy training efforts.

One of the first steps is to educate your staff to better understand the differences between advocacy and lobbying and learn what nonprofits are allowed to do.

[Are Nonprofits Allowed to Advocate?](#)

The second step is to tell the story of your organization and to highlight stories about the people you serve in your local newspaper or through social media.

[10 Tips to Harness the Power of Stories \(page 13\)](#)

Lastly, directors should work to build larger advocacy teams within their state. The best way to become an effective advocate is to build strong relationships with all individuals who represent you in Washington, DC. You want them to recognize your name and to trust the messages that you deliver.

[How to be an Effective Advocate Outside of Washington, DC](#)

Career Fair for Older Workers

Host a panel of older workers, recruiters, and human resources representatives. Offer tips for resumes and interviews, as well as information about computers and skills training. Invite employers to set up booths at your center. Be sure to include your local [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#) (SCSEP) office. You also can share NCOA's free [EconomicCheckUp](#)[®] website, where older workers can define their skills, access free training, and search online for a job in their community.

National Employ Older Workers Week

National Employ Older Workers Week is held annually the last full week of September, and recognizes the vital role of older workers in the workforce. This year's recognition is held from Sept. 21-25 and led by the U.S. Department of Labor.

- Recognize SCSEP and other workers at your center.
- Present an award for exceptional work ethic and commitment to quality to an older worker in your community.
- Present an award to an exceptional business in your community that employs older workers.

Make a Difference Day

Hold a workshop for older adults to explore their expertise and interests and to learn the right questions to ask that will lead them to a rewarding volunteering opportunity. Get more ideas from [Coming of Age](#). Invite nonprofits and other organizations to give an overview of volunteer opportunities available in your community.

Then schedule a *Make A Difference Day*. Invite older adults and their families to your center for a day of volunteerism, in the center and the community. Develop a list of senior center and community projects. Then break into smaller groups to do a few different projects. [Get more ideas from SeniorCorps](#).

Partner with Your Local Y on Diabetes Education

Partner with your local YMCA to promote a program that helps those at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. Help spread the word to seniors in your community. Visit [YMCA online](#) to learn more.

Food Safety Education

September is also Food Safety Education Month. Did you know that 48 million Americans get sick from foodborne bacteria each year? Food safety is extremely important for older adults. Adults 65 and older are at an increased risk of serious complications from food poisoning, like hospitalization and death, because their weakened immune systems and changes to their bodies as they age. Share food safety information and resources with participants at your senior center. Visit [FoodSafety.gov](#) to learn more.

Independence - Live on your terms

Senior Center Month offers a great opportunity to showcase your creative programs and services that celebrate independence and resilience. Highlight national and community partners and their resources and financial tools that support your participants' freedom to choose their own course in life.

Senior Independent Living Expo

Hold an expo for older homeowners with presentations, vendor exhibits, and other activities all targeted at living more safely and comfortably in your own home. Invite professionals in home safety and modification, in-home services, medical supplies, transportation, grocery delivery, and other related topics. You also can enhance your health offerings with these NCOA resources:

- **Falls Prevention Awareness Day**, Sept. 23: This national event is held on the first day of fall to promote and increase public awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls among older adults. Connect with your [State Falls Coalition](#) to see what's planned for your state. Also see our special section on this event for additional tools and resources (p. 22).
- **Center for Healthy Aging**: Find resources to begin an evidence-based health program at your senior center. See the Additional Resources section for links to evidence-based program overviews, online training modules, and outreach and recruitment materials.

Financial Education Workshops

Use NCOA's [Savvy Saving Seniors® toolkits](#) to plan a financial education workshop for seniors in your community. The workshops are designed to help seniors learn about managing their budget, applying for benefits, avoiding scams, and using prepaid cards. The kits include a facilitator's guide, presentation, handouts, and more.

Senior Hunger Awareness Event

In America, 4.8 million older adults are facing hunger. September is Hunger Action Month, and NCOA is working with senior centers and other community organizations across the country to help older adults get access to healthy foods by enrolling them in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). To find out how to get involved, see our section on Hunger Action Month on p. 20 and visit ncoa.org/SeniorHunger and HungerActionMonth.org for updates.

Research suggests that promoting positive age stereotypes could result in less illness and allow people to live independently longer.

Begin with a Positive Aging Training

As Senior Center Month begins, consider holding a staff training to understand ageism and to develop positive strategies. Understanding our own views on aging may be the first step in creating a more positive environment at your senior center.

- [Ageism in America](#)
- [Gauging Aging: Mapping the Gaps Between Expert and Public Understanding of Aging in America](#)

Hold a Short Film Festival

Since 2011, the Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA), a leading voice in the fight against ageism, has sponsored a film competition, and they encourage your use of the films. The short films (under 9 minutes) are about ageism and each illuminates specific discriminatory practices against seniors, prejudicial attitudes toward the aging process, or institutional practices that perpetuate stereotypes about seniors. The 2015 ALFA Short Film winner was John Jeffcoat for his film, *Transforming the Perception of Age*. Also noted is a film starring Ed Asner, *The Old Ceremony - Til My Voice Is Gone*.

- After showing an ALFA film, end with a discussion about the theme presented.
- Hold your old “ageism awareness” film competition.

Random Acts of Kindness for Positive Aging

Show the positive power of your participants by holding a Random Acts of Kindness Event. The Bykota Senior Center, MD, staff learned about the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#) and held a week-long event last year. The first day, they initiated a Random Acts of Kindness Club teaching attendees about the Foundation and how to become a RAKtivist—someone who promotes kindness all year long. They displayed kindness quotes and ideas to promote kindness, posted random thank you’s and acknowledgements, and held a rally. This theme could extend to a Random Acts of Positive Aging Event, where you display positive quotes about aging and acknowledge achievements of participants that break stereotypes.

Defining Ageism

Negative comments on aging are part of our culture. These comments may seem innocent, but their end result is that they put others down. At your senior center, have you heard someone say any of these phrases?

- “How are you today, young lady/man?”
- “Oh, you’re so cute!”
- “They are just like children.”

Using words like “young” assumes the older adult would rather be someone else; unless “cute” means “beautiful,” the “cute” comment may mean that they view the older adult as doing something outside of how their stereotype should act; and like many marginalized people, they are seen as childlike. (From [Old Women’s Project](#))

[Ageism](#) is described on Dictionary.com as discrimination against persons of a certain age group. The term was coined in 1971 by Robert Neil Butler to describe discrimination against seniors, and patterned on sexism and racism.

Learn more:

- [Old Women’s Project](#) - Ageism educational site led by three San Diego women who have worked together on progressive issues.
- [ALFA - What is Ageism?](#)
- [APA - Fighting Ageism](#)
- [FightingAgeism.org](#)
- [ICAA - Changing the Way We Age](#)

Friends - Enjoy life, laughter, and feeling connected

Senior Centers provide a space and opportunity to create and develop friendships that give added value to participants' lives. The power of friendship is often seen and heard in the laughter that follows, and the richness is increased with the diversity of participants and experiences. See below for ways to provide an environment that nourishes, cultivates, enhances, and promotes friendships.

Begin a Ukulele Group

Making music together is an easy way to grow friendships. The ukulele is called the “everyman’s guitar” because it is very easy to learn and within an hour you can begin playing music. The Montpelier Senior Activity Center (MSAC), VT, hosts a volunteer-led multi-generational ukulele group that plays for fun and rehearses for public performances. The ukulele group leaders, who are MSAC members, also volunteer at the local Union Elementary School to run an after-school ukulele program. MSAC offers an annual beginner ukulele class at minimal cost, run by a volunteer instructor.

Learn more from other Senior Center Ukulele Groups:

- Anacortes Senior Center, WA - [Senior Ukulele Ensemble](#)
- Tallahassee Senior Center - [Tallahassee Uke Group](#)

Friends and Family Night

Hold a Friends and Family Night! During this evening event held at Edgemere Senior Center, Baltimore, MD, center members were encouraged to invite their friends, family, and members of the community to see all that the center has to offer. It was scheduled during evening hours, so family members could make it to the center after work. It was a great opportunity for the community to see what senior centers are really like and to encourage positive views about getting older.

Tours of the center were offered. Members artwork was exhibited. Students of the classes and instructors were on hand to answer questions about classes and to put on demo sessions for people to try activities like zumba, yoga, and line dancing. That was followed by an open dance time that gave an opportunity for three generations to get up and dance!

Intergenerational Opportunities

Friendships have no age boundaries. As children go back to school, September is a great time to launch an intergenerational program at your senior center.

Or join Generations United as it leads the charge to “Do Something Grand” for Grandparents Day on Sept. 13 (or anytime in September) to honor grandparents’ contributions and encourage intergenerational activism. Visit GrandparentsDay.org for updates and programming ideas.

Friendships Forever

The Friendship Forever Program, held at Winona Friendship Center, MN, is designed to take senior center programs to isolated older adults. In partnership with Senior Learning Network and Winona State University, they use Zoom (web-based teleconferencing). Students take iPads or laptops to homes, and clients sign up for programs of interest at the center. Computers are brought by students, internet access is within computers via hot spots, and students stay with and participate in the program, as well. Programs used are teleconferencing, arthritis exercise, NIA, Tai Chi, knitting, jewelry classes, woodworking, educational speakers, and more. A grant was written and received for this program.

Movie Viewing focused on LGBT Themes

Reach out to your lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. This September, launch a movie viewing night and discussion centered on LGBT themes. SAGE's Technical Resource center has created a guide in consultation with organizations around the U.S. that serve LGBT older adults: [LGBT Programming for Older Adults: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide](#). This program is simple to organize and can be an important step toward a number of goals, including welcoming LGBT older adults to your organization or agency; creating a safe space for the LGBT older adults you already serve to identify themselves and/or more fully integrate into your agency; and fostering an agency-wide culture of openness and acceptance.

Diversity Program



The Gaithersburg Senior Center has members from all over the world. The Diversity Program was created so people can share their culture and experiences with each other and learn about others. The program builds relationships and understanding. The discussion topics vary from harvest time in your country to going to school, to celebrations such as the Indian celebration of Diwali or a Fat Tuesday pancake breakfast to celebrate Mardi Gras.

The discussions last about an hour and are moderated by a staff member. Typically, a small snack related to the discussion topic (such as candy, cookie, or drink) is provided to add to the festive atmosphere of the discussion. For the celebrations, members provide food from their countries or purchase their own breakfast or lunch. Participants enjoy sharing their experiences growing up, discussing how they have continued their traditions with their families, and learning about the similarities they share with others.

LGBT Notes

This year, NISC partnered with SAGE's National Resource Center to hold a Healthy LGBT Aging Photo Contest, highlighting the beauty of LGBT aging. Our goal was to exemplify positive images of what it is like to be an aging lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender person. Over 60 wonderful and dynamic photographs were entered from all over the world.

Our Grand Prize winner was **Deborah Craig** with her portrayal of "Two Women in a Forest." The winning photo is found on the NISC National Senior Center Month poster (see cover).

[Read the photographer's story and see the other award winners.](#)

Find practical advice on how to create a welcoming senior center that works to include LGBT older adults by reading [Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies](#)

[Schedule an LGBT Aging staff training.](#) Your staff will learn about the culture, needs, and concerns of LGBT older adults, why they are less likely to access senior centers and other activities, and identified best practices and tools for helping LGBT older adults to feel more included at senior centers.

Energy – Discover health and vitality

Embrace programs that increase physical and mental energy. Senior Center professionals have adopted a holistic approach to aging and have incorporated the Seven Dimensions of Wellness to offer programming that touches the mind, body, and spirit.

Active Aging Week

Active Aging Week will be held Sept. 27- Oct. 3. Active Aging Week is led by the International Council of Active Aging to celebrate aging and to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle on a national scale.

Organizations provide single or multiple activities, for free to older adults, to share the positive messages of Active Aging Week and showcase their age-friendly wellness programs. The campaign's overriding goal is to give as many older adults as possible the means to experience wellness activities and exercise in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere. Look for [Active Aging Week](#) resources to hold your events.

National Senior Health and Fitness Day Celebration

The Lake Oswego Adult Community Center, OR, launched its first-ever 50+ community fitness event last year. Tying it in with the National Senior Health and Fitness Day allowed planners to incorporate every wellness dimension—social, physical, spiritual, vocational, emotional, and intellectual. While that event happens in May, there is a similar Sept. 30 event, [National Women's Senior Health and Fitness Day](#).

Use these great ideas at your event:

- Participants could try one of the many fitness demos for free. Also invite other divisions of your Parks and Recreation Department or community, such as the tennis center, golf course, or natural areas (70+ hikes).
- Connect to a local farm.
- Include private practitioners like an acupuncturist, massage therapist, and reiki professional.
- Invite a local specialty food market to hold a tasting. We had displays on coconut oil and coconut products. Fresh smoothies and snacks with hummus, kale, and homemade pita bread were served.
- We used a Passport to Wellness to encourage attendees to visit as many of the offerings as possible.
- We highlighted evidence-based programs like Tai Chi Moving for Better Balance and Living Well with Chronic Conditions.

Vitality Meets Variety

Johnson City Senior Center, TN, implemented a new approach to group fitness by offering rotations of short-term exercise classes, with each targeting a different areas of fitness. There are classes for cardio, strength training, flexibility, balance, and coordination, as well as simply moving in a fun way. A class series will range from 4-6 weeks. Classes include sports-themed Slimpossible; Love Handles, targeting the core; Age-ility for improved balance; Quick Cardio, a fast-paced 20-minute workout; Ankle Strength; Race Walk Training; and Flexibility Feels Good.

Tai Chi for Better Balance

Since 2013, Reisterstown Senior Center/BCDA, MD, has held a Tai Chi for Better Balance program. This is an evidence-based program that empowers older adults to carry out health behaviors that improve balance, strength, and physical performance; improve postural stability and walking; reduce the risk of falls; improve self-management; and increase quality of life. The program includes 24 Tai Chi forms that emphasize weight shifting, postural alignment, and coordinated movements with synchronized breathing. One-hour classes are held twice per week, with the professionally certified instructor reviewing movements from prior sessions, as well as introducing new movements as the class progresses. Most movements are done in a standing position, but progression for some participants involves starting movements seated then advancing to standing.

Keeping the Mind Sharp

At Cockeysville Senior Center, MD, members are invited to learn different brain stimulating exercises as RN Robin Zahor leads a Brain Fitness class once a month. These interactive, fun, and thought-provoking classes introduce preventative memory loss concerns by measures such as diet, exercise, nutritional supplements, meditation, and stress management. Association, written reminders, visualization, and first letter cues are brain stimulating tricks that Robin covers during her hour-long class. Robin recommends that each student apply the strategies she has taught to keep their minds clear and sharp.

Brain Health As You Age Kit

A Great Brain Health Resource is the Administration for Community Living's educational web page, [Brain Health as You Age: You Can Make a Difference!](#) The webpage includes a PowerPoint presentation, Educator Guide, and two handouts. All materials are downloadable.

7 Dimensions of Wellness

While planning your Senior Center Month activities, check to see if you are including programming that connects to each area of the [Seven Dimensions of Wellness](#).

Wellness is an integration of our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Each of the following dimensions contributes to well-being.

Physical – maintaining a healthy quality of life. E.g. classes in exercise, health education, cooking, [Evidence based programs](#)

Emotional – having the ability to understand ourselves and cope with life's challenges. E.g. groups focused on support, self-help, writing, caregiving

Spiritual – the ability to establish peace and harmony. E.g. meditation, journaling

Social – the ability to connect with other people. E.g. Clubs, dances, luncheons, travel

Vocational/Occupational – getting personal fulfillment from our jobs and maintaining balance in our lives. E.g. computer class, resume writing, volunteer opportunities

Intellectual – the ability to open our minds to new ideas and experiences. E.g. lifelong learning classes, driver safety, book and discussion groups.

Environmental – the ability to recognize our responsibility to our environment. E.g. recycle options, environmental group

10 Tips to Harness the Power of Stories

Putting a face on your center's work by highlighting participants' experiences helps people connect to the personal nature of your senior center. You can give voice to your participants and create a powerful way to gain the attention of potential participants, funders, legislators, and partners.

What makes a good story and how do you use them? Here are 10 tips to get started:

1. **Decide what you want to accomplish.** What is your goal and who is your audience? Do you want to attract more participants? Get noticed by local politicians? Obtain or protect funding? Answering this question first will help shape the stories you seek.
2. **Develop a set of questions in advance.** Let your interview subjects read the questions in advance, so they can collect their thoughts. This year, try asking questions that reflect the National Senior Center Month theme of **Celebrate LIFE at Your Senior Center**.

Sample questions might include:

- Where did you first hear about (Name) Senior Center?
- Why and how often do you attend (Name) Senior Center?
- What are your favorite activities?
- If funding for (Name) Senior Center went away, what would you do?
- What would you tell a friend who is considering joining (Name) Senior Center?
- How does (Name) Senior Center help you Celebrate LIFE?

3. **Ask a diverse set of people.** Old, young, male, female, black, white, Asian, Hispanic. Show the breadth of the people you serve. The more the merrier.
4. **Take photos.** People see themselves in photos, and they add greatly to the overall narrative. The media loves using photos, as well. Make sure the photo is print/web quality—300 dpi or better.
5. **See if the participant is willing to speak to the media once their story goes live.** Media love stories in first-person format and often want to follow up with their own interview. Have each interviewee sign a release form, so your center is covered legally. NCOA has a sample photo release form you can edit and use. Contact newsletters@ncoa.org for a copy.
6. **Keep your stories short and to the point.** Answer the main questions of: who, what, where, when, and why—then edit as much as you can. The more succinct the point, the more impact the story has.
7. **Be transparent.** Tell readers that the older adult attends your center and how you obtained the information. This adds credence and authenticity to your story.

8. **Plan how to use the stories.** Sometimes it's great to use the whole story at once, or one per month. Sometimes you can chop a story in half and leave people hungry for more!
9. **Capture video of your interviewee.** Thanks to smart phones, video has become an easy and incredibly effective way to tell a story. Let older adults tell their story in their own voice if possible! See our [One Away](#) videos for good examples of video stories and see the Publicity Guide for tips on making videos with a smart phone.
10. **Make the pitch.** Send your story and photo to your local newspapers, online news sites, city officials, and the local offices of your state and federal legislators. A well-packaged story that hits on a hot topic is likely to get noticed.

Remember—don't be shy! The work you do in the community is incredibly valuable. Telling your story shows the public why.

Interviewing Tips

1. Smile, look the person in the eye, and gently shake their hand.
2. Identify a location that would be comfortable to sit for the 10- or 15-minute interview. It is usually better to do it on the interviewee's home turf where they feel most comfortable.
3. Keep your questions simple and short—the interview is about them not you.
4. Prepare questions in advance. This helps organize your thoughts and serves as a safety net in case your mind goes blank for a time—it happens to the most experienced interviewers. But avoid “reading” the questions. Instead, use your natural listening skills and try to have a conversation.
5. Listen to the answers. Adjust your prepared questions from what you have just heard. Don't always fill in with conversation if there are pauses by the interviewee.
6. Ask one question at a time rather than multiple-part questions because the interviewee will likely only answer one question or go on too long.
7. Never ask “yes” or “no” questions because you will only get one-word answers. Instead use open-ended questions such as: “How did you go about determining whether you would have enough retirement income to live on?”
8. A good follow-up question is: “That's interesting, can you tell me more?”
9. Ask for specifics. If an interviewee says they didn't realize how much money could be saved by asking for the generic vs. brand-name prescription drug, follow up and get a concrete example.
10. End the interview by asking: “Is there anything you wanted to add?” or “What am I forgetting to ask you?”

Prepared by Professor Jill Olmsted, Journalism Division Director, School of Communication, American University, Washington, DC

Customizable National Senior Center Month Poster

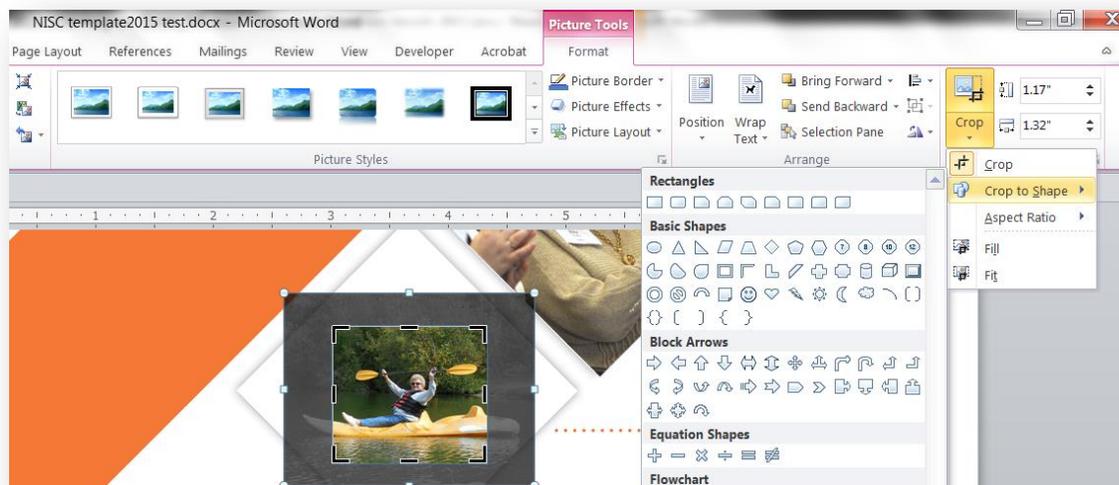
Tailor the National Senior Center Month poster to your center! This is a NISC member-only benefit. Add your own photos and contact information. Here's how:

Directions:

1. We will email you the customizable poster.
2. Save the poster to your computer.
3. Open the poster using Microsoft Word.
4. Click on the photo that you want to replace.
5. Go to Format > Picture Tools.
6. Go to Adjust > Change Picture.
7. Locate the new picture you want to use on your computer and double-click on it.
8. Rotate the photo using the green handle, so that it will be vertical.
9. Crop the photo to a square shape
10. Choose Crop to Shape, choose the diamond shape and adjust



Three photos courtesy of [Baltimore County Senior Centers, MD](#)



If you customize your poster, please save it as a pdf and share it with us! Visit us on [Crossroads](#) to upload your poster and see what other centers have done.

2015 NISC Programs of Excellence Awards Application

Every day, senior centers across the country offer an exciting array of programs for older adults. The annual NISC Programs of Excellence Awards honor and promote these outstanding efforts.

All senior centers are invited to submit a senior center program in one of six categories. Recognition will be given for the top entries in each category. NISC also will recognize the winners on ncoa.org, and entries will be posted in the NISC Members Resource section.

How to Apply

Programs must have been conducted in a senior center between July 1, 2014 and Sept. 30, 2015. Judges will look for programs that are innovative, creative, and easily replicated. Award categories are:

- Fundraising
- Special Events
- Nutrition, Fitness, and Health Promotion
- Education
- Leadership, Civic Engagement, and Community Development
- Expressive and Creative Arts

Click the link below for complete rules and the nomination form. Due to the potential volume of submissions, **each senior center may submit only ONE entry.**

[Rules and Application](#)

Deadline

Completed nomination forms must be received no later than **Friday, Oct. 23, 2015**. Please direct questions to NISC Program Manager Maureen O'Leary at Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org.

Many thanks to Jill Hall for organizing the NISC Programs of Excellence Awards

2014 NISC Programs of Excellence Award Ideas

The [2014 NISC Programs of Excellence Awards](#) honor outstanding programs at senior centers nationwide. Get inspired by the top six innovative, creative, and replicable program ideas from 2014!

Diversity Program

The Diversity Program highlighted the cultures and experiences of Gaithersburg Senior Center, MD, participants. The program discussion topics vary from harvest time in your country, to going to school, to celebrations such as the Indian celebration of Diwali or Mardi Gras. See page 10 for more details.

Peer-to-Peer Computer Training

The Madison Senior Center, WI, offers formal and informal computer training for older adults and hosts a weekly open computer lab that is staffed by volunteers. A computer instructor was hired to update the skills of the volunteers, including writing a manual and teaching a four-week class.

Create Art Through Patience and Trust

Indian Head Senior Center, Indian Head, MD, held an art program where the instructor acted as the eyes of the blindfolded creator by guiding him or her through the art process. Through verbal instructions, the artist selected paint colors and placement on the canvas and created a work of trust.

Wall of Love

66 six-inch square paintings at the Ateaze Senior Center, in Baltimore, MD, form the Wall of Love project. The wall was constructed from three painting sessions by members. The only stipulation was to paint something that represents the center to that person. Painting represented both feelings and activities.

Duxbury Senior Center 1/2 Marathon Run

The purpose of the community 1/2 Marathon Run was to raise money to expand Duxbury Senior Center's social day program for clients with Alzheimer's disease while educating the public on the disease. 250 runners supported this cause while showcasing the work of the center.

Urban Farming Partnership with Greensgrow Farm

St. Anne's Senior Community Center, Philadelphia, PA, has a "non-traditional" community partner in Greensgrow Farm, a nationally recognized leader in urban farming, located across the street from the center. St. Anne's distributes produce vouchers through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, providing a service to food insecure seniors and includes educational classes throughout the year.

The full 2014 Programs of Excellence Guide with 68 programming submissions is available to NISC members.

“Getting older is better because...”

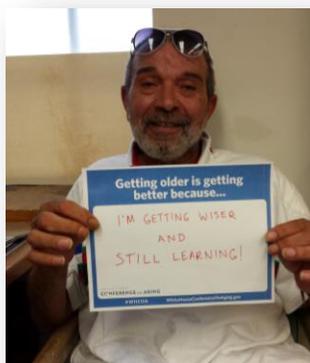
This idea is part of the White House Conference on Aging, which will occur on July 13, but it is never too late to begin an empowerment event at your senior center or in your community. This is a simple and moving way to engage people of all ages in a conversation about the value and contributions of older adults.

Tell Us Why Getting Older is Better!

1. [Download the sign.](#)



2. Have participants and others in the community fill in the blank.
3. Snap a photo of them holding their answer.



Examples courtesy of Center in the Park, Philadelphia, PA

4. Display and share the photos at your senior center, on your website, in a presentation or slideshow, or through video.
5. [See examples of photos](#) from NCOA's “I Believe” campaign, which was similar.

Hunger Action Month

In America, 1 in 6 older adults struggles with hunger. Senior centers can make a difference!

NCOA works with senior centers and other community organizations nationwide to enroll eligible older adults in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps).

SNAP helps seniors stretch their food budget. Yet, SNAP is highly underutilized by older adults, who apply at a much lower rate than the general population.

September is Hunger Action Month—here are two ways your center can get involved.



1. Hold a SNAP screening event

Invite older adults in your community to get screened to see if they are eligible for SNAP. Use our BenefitsCheckUp® tool ([BenefitsCheckUp.org/getSNAP](https://www.benefitscheckup.org/getSNAP)) to help seniors find out if they qualify and download their state's application.

2. Spread awareness through your network

Use our SNAP outreach materials ([ncoa.org/SNAPOutreach](https://www.ncoa.org/SNAPOutreach)) to reach older adults in your community and encourage them to apply for SNAP.

- **In-person:** Download our free customizable flyers, posters, placemats, and brochure and distribute these materials in places where older adults gather.
- **Online:** Spread the word on social media and in your newsletter with our sample messages and images, and place our online badge on your website to help seniors find their state's application.
- **Help us advocate:** Visit the nutrition advocacy toolkit for resources and calls to action for defending SNAP and other programs to combat senior hunger and foster nutrition.

For more information on how to get involved, contact Erin.Kee@ncoa.org.

Grandparents Day, Sept. 13

Join Generations United as it leads the charge to “Do Something Grand” for Grandparents Day on Sept. 13 to honor grandparents’ contributions and encourage intergenerational activism. Visit GrandparentsDay.org for ideas and updates. Celebrate all month or all year.

Partner with Generations United in 2015

Grandparents Day 2014 was a success! Through our partnerships with AARP Experience Corp, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, LeadingAge, Legacy Project, Mentor Up, N4A, NCOA, National Human Services Agency, National Youth Leadership Council, Our Time, Youth Service America and ZERO TO THREE, we raised awareness with nearly 50,000 Facebook followers and over 680,000 Twitter followers.

The Obama Administration issued a White House Proclamation, honoring what President Obama called “the anchors of our families.”

Sign on to be a partner!

We are inviting your organization to sign on as a partner with Generations United and use your social media and communication channels to encourage your members, audiences, and programs to **Do Something Grand** for Grandparents Day 2015.

Leading up to Grandparents Day 2015, we will share resources, ideas, and information on ways that you and your organization can get involved, including regular social media posts and feeds. We will update the Grandparents Day website www.GrandparentsDay.org with information and upcoming activities that we will be gathering from you and other partners around the country.

As a partner, your organization will receive:

Visibility - Your organization will be listed as a partner on all Grandparents Day materials and the official Grandparents Day website: www.GrandparentsDay.org.

Publicity - Your organization will be listed as a partner in all press releases and communications.

Raise Awareness - You may have the opportunity to blog or co-author op-eds with Generations United or other partner organizations that support the connection and social compact between generations.

Gain a wider audience for your organization - When you share your plans and activities with us, Generations United will help get them out to other partners and the public through our communications network and social media.

We hope you'll join us. Why? Because we are stronger together!

Falls Prevention Awareness Day, Sept. 23

Sept. 23, 2015, the first day of fall, is the 8th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD). The 2015 theme is *Take a Stand to Prevent Falls* and the official social media hashtag for this year's event is **#FPAD15**.



The NCOA-led **Falls Free® Initiative** offers tools and resources to help you connect with events in your state and plan your own. Last year, 47 states participated in this event. This year, we hope to expand our reach even further.

Download the following materials and more at ncoa.org/FPAD:

- **Media Toolkit:** Sample media tip sheets, press releases, media alerts, proclamations, and fact sheets
- **Promotional Materials:** Handouts, flyers, tips, and more
- **State Coalitions Map:** Interactive map to find your state falls prevention coalition

Flu + You

Flu + You seeks to educate and empower older adults and their caregivers about the dangers of flu, the importance of annual vaccination, and available vaccination options. Download our free toolkit and facts to learn more about influenza in older adults and help spread the news to others. All materials are available at ncoa.org/Flu.



Toolkit for Professionals

- **How-to Guide:** Get step-by-step tips for educating older adults about the flu.
- **Presentation:** Use this slide presentation to educate older adults in your community.
- **Posters:** Download, print, and share these posters to promote the campaign or your flu education event/flu immunization clinic.
- **Handouts:** Download, print, and share these with older adults in your community.
- **Customizable Communication Materials:** Use these template materials to spread the word about flu and this campaign among the older adults you serve.

Savvy Saving Seniors®

Financial Education Toolkits

For many vulnerable and disadvantaged older adults, the path to economic security begins with basic money management. Learning how to budget, avoid scams, apply for benefits, and use prepaid cards wisely can help them stay secure and independent longer.

With support from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, NCOA developed the following toolkits to help professionals educate older adults about good money skills. Use them to hold a Savvy Saving Seniors® financial education workshop in your community!

All materials are available at ncoa.org/SavvySeniors.

Toolkit 1: Becoming Resource-FULL with the Help of Benefits & Peace of Mind Savings

This toolkit covers budgeting tips, money management tips and tricks, benefits of banking, budget busters to avoid, and how to find and apply for benefits. Materials include a training guide for facilitators, a PowerPoint presentation, a participants' handbook, and customizable marketing materials.



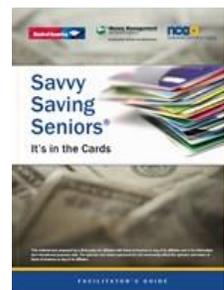
Toolkit 2: Steps to Avoiding Scams

This toolkit provides an overview of popular scams targeting seniors, tips for avoiding them, and next steps for victims of financial fraud. It was developed in partnership with the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement. Materials include a training guide for facilitators, a PowerPoint presentation, a participants' handbook, and customizable marketing materials.



Toolkit 3: It's in the Cards

This toolkit covers tips and ideas on how to use, manage, and protect government-issued and prepaid debit cards. It was developed in partnership with Money Management International. Materials include a training guide for facilitators, a PowerPoint presentation, a participants' handbook, and customizable marketing materials.



September Holidays and Observances

Visit the following websites for more information around which to build programs and activities.

Health & Fitness

National 5-A-Day Month

<http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/index.html>

National Food Safety Month

www.foodsafety.gov/

National Cholesterol Awareness Month

http://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/cholesterol_education_month.htm

Hunger Action Month

<http://www.HungerActionMonth.org>

Falls Prevention Awareness Day: Sept. 23

<http://www.ncoa.org/FPAD>

Active Aging Week: Sept. 27-Oct. 3

Sponsored by the International Council on Active Aging

<http://www.activeagingweek.com/>

National Women's Health & Fitness Day: Sept. 30

www.fitnessday.com/women/index.htm

Enrichment

International Women's Friendship Month

<http://confidencecoalition.org/internationalwomensfriendshipmonth>

International Literacy Day: Sept. 8

<http://internationalliteracyday.org/>

Other

National Employ Older Workers Week: Sept. 21–25

http://www.doleta.gov/seniors/html_docs/natemploldwkr.cfm

National Voter Registration Day: Sept. 22

<http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/about>

Fun Activities for all Ages

Grandparents Day: Sept. 13

<http://grandparentsday.org/>

Checkers Day and Dogs in Politics Day – check out the historic connection: Sept. 23

www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/September/checkersday.htm

National Video Games Day: Sept. 12

www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/July/videogamesday.htm

Plan a Wii Tournament

http://www.ehow.com/how_4735744_plan-wii-tournament.html

Recognized Holidays

Labor Day: Sept. 1

www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/labor-day

VJ Day: Sept. 2

www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/September/vjday.htm

Patriot Day: Sept. 11

www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/patriot-day

Citizenship Day: Sept. 17

www.patriotism.org/citizenship/

POW/MIA Recognition Day: Sept. 18

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/pow-mia-recognition-day>

International Day of Peace–Make a Difference Day – Sept. 21

<http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/>

Start of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year): Sept. 13-15

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday2.htm>

Native American Day: Sept. 25

www.holidayinsights.com/other/native

National Good Neighbor Day – Sept. 28

<http://www.holidayinsights.com/other/goodneighbor.htm>

Additional Resources

[Center for Healthy Aging](#)

While the aging network has been moving toward evidence-based health programs for the past several years, Older Americans Act Title IIIID funding now must be used only for programs and activities that have been demonstrated to be evidence-based. Learn more about evidence-based programs and get tools to offer them at your center:

- **[About Evidence-Based Programs](#):** Get program overviews, descriptions of program goals, training requirements, references, and locations where programs are active.
- **[Offering Evidence-Based Programs](#):** Download a variety of outreach and recruitment materials to support your evidence-based programs.

[Public Policy & Advocacy](#)

Get the latest news and action alerts and review our Advocacy Toolkit for advocacy basics and issue-specific resources.

[BenefitsCheckUp[®]](#)

If you have members with limited income, use this free online tool to screen them for more than 2,000 benefits programs to help them pay for prescription drugs, health care, rent, utilities, and other daily needs.

[EconomicCheckUp[®]](#)

Use this comprehensive, free online service to help your members improve their economic security. The website has tools to help older adults find work, cut spending, reduce debt, and use their home equity wisely.

[My Medicare Matters[®]](#)

Help your members get ready for Medicare open enrollment by pointing them to this free website that provides step-by-step help to make Medicare work for them.

[National Resource Center on LGBT Aging](#)

Explore this valuable website that pinpoints the specific concerns, needs, and resources available to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults.

[Taking Your Medicines Safely](#)

Get this free train-the-trainer program to educate older adults about medication safety and the Poison Helpline.

United States of Aging

See the results of a survey of 4,000 older Americans to better understand seniors' perspectives on aging, and how the country can better prepare for a booming senior population.

Gauging Aging: Mapping the Gaps Between Expert and Public Understandings of Aging in America

This project identifies the patterns of thinking that Americans use to reason about issues related to aging, and compares those patterns with the knowledge of experts in the aging field.

2015 NISC Contacts

NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) is pleased to provide you with this Program Guide and strongly encourages your support to advance the visibility and viability of senior centers across the country. For additional information about NISC, please contact Maureen O'Leary, NISC Program Manager, at Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org. Comments also can be directed to the NISC Chair.

Thank you,
Susan R. Getman, Chair NISC 2014-2016

Susan R. Getman, Executive Director

Wilmington Senior Center
1901 N. Market Street
Wilmington, DE 19802
(302) 651-3460
Email: srgetman@wilmingtonseniorcenter.org

National Senior Center Month Poster Credits

Learning: [Center in the Park](#) (CIP) promotes positive aging and fosters community connections for older adults (55+), whose voices are critical instruments in shaping its activities and direction. CIP's Guitar Instructor, Monette Sudler Honesty, a jazz musician, poet, and composer, has performed and recorded for over 30 years. In addition to her instructional classes at the Center, she arranges "Intergenerational Guitar and Poetry Jams," which meet in the evening and welcomes all instruments and voices.

Independence: Grand Prize Winner of the [SAGE/NISC LGBT Photo Contest](#) was Deborah Craig with her portrayal of "Two Women in a Forest."

Friends: [North Shore Senior Center](#) has worked with older adults to redefine the process of aging. We imagined a social community for seniors—one defined by friendships, volunteerism, clubs, and new experiences. We didn't know what it would look like, but we knew that creativity, enthusiasm, and knowledge would be its foundation.

Energy: Maggie Shackelford, photographer. [Tallahassee Senior Center](#) was the site of the [USA Dance](#) Tallahassee Chapter Semi-formal. This center had an exciting [Facebook page](#).

Would you like to be on our next National Senior Center Month Poster? Share your great senior center photos with NISC, and you may find your center highlighted next year. Email your photos to Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org.