

NASSAU COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

Senior Life

CELEBRATING HAPPY, HEALTHY LIVES



Dr. Brenda Nicholson:
Diagnosed with Alzheimer's,
Helping Others

The Club:

Fun-with-a-Purpose Activities
for Seniors Needing Assistance

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023



Inside:
Lonely? We can help.
Leadership Circle
Multigenerational Classes



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YOUR VISION



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Cataract, Corneal, LASIK Surgeon



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Glasses, Contacts, Primary Eyecare



Linda Marks, O.D.
Glasses, Contacts, Primary Eyecare



Ashley Stowe, O.D.
Glasses, Contacts, Primary Eyecare



Leah L. Herron, O.D.
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Katelyn Marks, O.D.
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Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center

1901 Island Walk Way, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Phone: 904-261-0701 • FAX: 904-261-0704

Facebook: Nassau County Council on Aging

Website: www.nassaucountycoa.org

Staff Contacts

Adult Day HealthCare - Emily Kunzelmann

Advocate Home Healthcare - Donna Granieri

Caregiver Services - Emily Kunzelmann

Case Management - Donna Granieri

CHORE Program - Frances Bartelt

Development - Scott Brown

Electric Assistance/Water Assistance - Paula Evans

Human Resources, Compliance and Facilities - Don Harley

Just Friends - Frances Nobles

Marketing and Communications - Liz Dunn

Memberships, Presentations and Classes,

Room Rentals and *Senior Life* Magazine - Melody Dawkins

Nutrition and Meal Programs - Frances Nobles

Program Operations - Donna Granieri

Transportation - Julie Cherney

Volunteer Opportunities - Margo Morlock

Westside Senior Life Center

37002 Ingham Road, Hilliard, FL 32046-1011

Phone: 904-845-3331 • FAX: 904-845-4491

Facebook: Nassau County Council on Aging

Website: www.nassaucountycoa.org

Staff Contacts

Administration/Case Management - Linda Rogers

Case Management - Sue VanZant

Nutrition/Meal Programs - Frances Nobles

Activities - Melissa Snead

NassauTRANSIT

Phone: 904-261-0700 • Toll Free: 800-298-9122

FAX: 904-261-3940

Facebook: NassauTRANSIT

Website: www.nassautransit.org

Contacts: Julie Cherney, J.B. Short and Sherry Weidenaar

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On the cover:

Club member Don Weist participates in a painting class and shows off his finished work of art. Painting is just one of the many therapeutic activities offered in NCCOA's day program for seniors needing assistance.

Inset: Brenda Nicholson, MD

Photography by NCCOA staff; graphic design by Jessi Bryan,
Marketing & Communications.

Message from our President & CEO

The Club is alive with the sound of friends, laughter, crafting, exercise and, of course, music. In its 20th year, Nassau County Council on Aging's adult day healthcare program is better than ever and ready to welcome you and your loved one.

The Club is a therapeutic day center enabling seniors age 60+ needing assistance or supervision due to chronic illness, age, dementia or Alzheimer's disease to socialize and enjoy activities. It's more than a program... it's a way of life.

The Club is a godsend for our family as it allows all-day respite for me... Mom just loves going and looks forward to it.

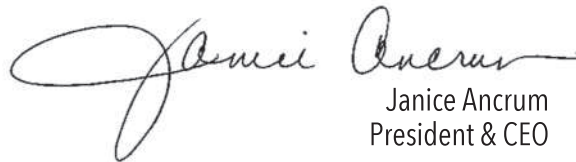
We cannot thank everyone enough for all they do to help Mom. She really comes alive when she's there!

I searched for help and you were there for me. Thank you so much!

These are just a few of the wonderful comments we receive every day. While each day is unique, the love, attention and caring we provide to our Club members and their families is a normal occurrence.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and many other credentialed resources, a holistic approach is most effective when caring for people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Holistic, comprehensive care mirrors what we offer in The Club, including therapeutic, educational, social, cultural and recreational activities for your loved one. All Club members, regardless of functional or cognitive impairments, enjoy activities that promote independence while restoring, maintaining and stimulating their abilities and capacities – in a safe, secure environment. Of course, we also offer a myriad of services for the caregiver, including support groups, workshops and education.

I am so proud of The Club...full spectrum of the latest proven therapies, experienced and professional staff, and one-on-one time spent with your loved one...all in a bright, airy and stimulating space. We look forward to sharing The Club with you.



Janice Ancrum
President & CEO

For more information on how The Club can help your family, contact Emily Kunzelmann, Training & Caregiver Services Director, at 904-775-5472.



Thank You

To Our Funding Partners



1235 South 10th Street
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034
904.261.3696 • Fax 904.261.3698
fbnewsleader.com

Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the lives of older adults through services and compassionate care designed to improve the health, independence and economic security of all Nassau County seniors and their families.

About Nassau County Council on Aging

SENIOR LIFE CENTERS

Both Senior Life Centers offer those 60 and older assistance, information and support, in addition to many fun and engaging activities for adults of all ages...plus opportunities to socialize, such as with the Just Friends morning program. Meeting space is available for rent in both Fernandina Beach and Hilliard locations for group functions.

Contacts: Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 904-261-0701; Westside Senior Life Center, 904-845-3331

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

This department serves seniors by providing vitally important resources such as Case Management, Nutrition (Meals on Wheels and MOW for Pets), Fall Prevention and CHORE small home repair. NCCOA also partners with local and state-funded programs to assist with home energy crises (EHEAP) and facilitate City of Fernandina Beach Wastewater, Refuse and/or Storm Water Fee Exemption applications and Town of Hilliard Water Bill Assistance for qualified residents.

Contact: Donna Granieri, 904-775-5497
dgranieri@nassaucountycoa.org

"THE CLUB" ADULT DAY HEALTHCARE

The only one of its kind in Northeast Florida, NCCOA's Adult Day HealthCare Program - known as "The Club" - provides respite for caregivers and offers their loved ones a safe and secure environment. The program, licensed by the State of Florida, provides appropriate therapeutic social and health-enhancing activities for those with chronic illness, Alzheimer's disease or other cognitive deficits. The Club is supervised by a licensed nurse.

Contact: Emily Kunzelmann, 904-775-5472
ekunzelmann@nassaucountycoa.org

ADVOCATE HOME HEALTHCARE

Advocate Home Healthcare, a division of Nassau County Council on Aging, provides members with non-medical, in-home services related to daily living activities such as personal care, respite, homemaking and companion services. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Home Health Aides may also accompany members to appointments and activities. Members receive a minimum of two hours of care to full 24-hour shifts, depending on the need. Fees for these services are paid via private pay or approved Medicaid Long-Term Care (MLTC), pre-qualified state and federal programs.

Contact: Advocate Home Healthcare, Donna Granieri, 904-775-5497 • dgranieri@nassaucountycoa.org

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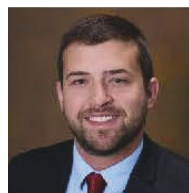
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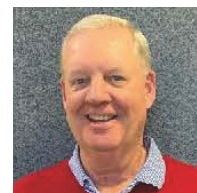
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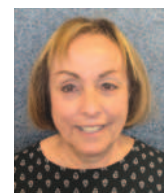
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Keith Meyer



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Dr. Barbara Gingher
Past Chair

NASSAUTRANSIT

NassauTRANSIT has expanded paratransit service, including a more flexible Monday-Friday schedule. Also, Saturday paratransit service is now available on Amelia Island. Registered paratransit is available to all qualifying county residents and provides curbside service for medical appointments, social engagements, recreation, shopping, etc. In addition, NassauTRANSIT offers on-demand Island Hopper public transportation anywhere on Amelia Island, Monday through Saturday (excluding holidays). The State of Florida requires registration for paratransit service through NassauTRANSIT. All NassauTRANSIT vehicle operators and vehicles are credentialed to federal and state requirements, and all vehicles are wheelchair accessible.

Contact: NassauTRANSIT, 904-261-0700/800-298-9122
www.nassautransit.org

Please visit www.nassaucountycoa.com and [Facebook.com/nassaucountycoa/](https://www.facebook.com/nassaucountycoa/) for information and updates on NCCOA's facilities, programs and services.



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JOIN THE CLUB!

Special Program Helps Seniors Enjoy Life

BY EMILY KUNZELMANN, TRAINING & CAREGIVER SERVICES

Do you belong to a club? Many of us do. We join clubs to participate in activities we enjoy, help us be our best, improve or maintain our health and wellness, make new friends and stay connected. What happens when we need assistance to participate in club activities? Do we just stay home and decline? Live in increasing isolation?

No. There's a better way. At Nassau County Council on Aging (NCCOA), there's a place for you: **The Club**, our adult day healthcare program.

Located at NCCOA's Fernandina Beach Senior Life Center, 1901 Island Walk Way, The Club is a day center enabling seniors age 60+ needing assistance or supervision due to chronic illness, age, dementia or Alzheimer's disease to be their best, socializing and benefiting from enjoyable therapeutic activities. The program fosters a holistic approach to maximize each Club member's quality of life in a safe, secure environment. The Club also provides worry-free respite for busy caregivers.

Stay Social

Everyone needs friends! According to the Mayo Clinic, socializing not only prevents loneliness, but also helps sharpen memory and cognitive skills, as well as increases your sense of happiness and well-being. Being unable to drive, moving in with family and being far from lifelong connections, losing old friends to illness and institutionalization means we need help making new friends. Club members look forward to seeing their friends daily and enjoying the day together.



Miss Ruby shows off her freshly painted bird house, ready for visitors!



Groups, duos and solo artists encourage Club members, loved ones, volunteers and staff to burst into song. Music therapy has proven to assist with memory recall.



(Far left) Guided exercises serve to help Club members maintain balance and energize the body. Soft Touch Pet Therapy visits Club members weekly. The simple act of petting a dog can be a calming influence.

Use It or Lose It

Have you heard the old adage 'use it or lose it?' Well it is true when it comes to health and wellness. The Club helps members USE IT to stave off losing it! A typical day at The Club includes therapeutic, "fun with a purpose" activities that help members be their best, both physically and mentally.

• Muscles

Occupational therapy, ribbon gymnastics exercises, total balance class, barre balance, sans-aqua (no water) aerobics, chair yoga and more help maintain and improve muscle strength and flexibility, coordination and stamina. They also aid in fall prevention. Dancing to live bands is great exercise for our gross motor skills. Projects using fine motor skills – painting, crafting, etc. – help maintain ability to complete activities of daily living.

• Mind

Cognitive activities and memory games, led by a University of Florida

educator, retired geriatric therapist and others, provide mental stimulation. Card games involving sequencing and memory add an element of teamwork and competition.

Music Makes the World Go Round

Music is one of the few activities that uses both left and right sides of our brains. Listening and participating in music releases neurochemicals, such as B-endorphin which provides a feeling of well-being. The Club enjoys daily music by accomplished pianists, guitarists, ukulele players, harpists, singers and others. Members sing as well. According to Oxford University Research, music-making exercises both brain and body, and singing is particularly beneficial for improving breathing, posture and muscle tension. Vocalizing and hearing your own voice may be rare for seniors living alone; singing in a group accomplishes both.

Ya Gotta Have Art

According to Harvard University, University of Washington and others, creating art reduces stress, boosts self-esteem, stimulates memory and helps people with depression, pain and anxiety. Art has also been linked to improved reasoning and resilience. Accomplished artists teach classes and workshops at The Club. Members' creations – painting, drawing, collage, arts and crafts – are displayed in the Fernandina Beach Senior Life Center. Many Club members have earned prizes at the local county fair!

That's Entertainment

We have you covered when it comes to performances, pets, outings and parties!

• Performances

It may be challenging to go out at night, but local performers entertain members at The Club. Many of the same performers you see at local restaurants, golf clubs, theaters and

Continued on page 10

churches are right at home with us. Special events spice up life, such as the opera singer who serenaded Club members on his way to Paris!

- **Pets**

Four-legged entertainment – disguised as pet therapy – is 'pawsitively' popular at The Club. Seniors who miss their pets enjoy weekly visits from fur babies, thanks to generous pet parents.

- **Outings**

Club members look forward to regular outings to local restaurants.

- **Parties, Dinners and Holidays**

A variety of events help Club families enjoy life even more. Local organizations also join in the fun, and sponsor holiday parties and even a Valentine Café.

Healthcare Simplified

Health is always a priority at The Club. Supervision by a nurse and a Baptist physician, as well as monthly monitoring of vital signs, is part of the program. Each member benefits from a care plan developed in conjunction with their family, which is updated at least quarterly. Staff monitors each member's intake of food and fluids, as well as bathroom habits which can identify changes and concerns early on. Club staff is trained in CPR, AED and first aid.

Healthcare appointments can be a full-time job. Scheduling and rescheduling visits, and transportation to and from different offices, takes time and effort. The Club consolidates some of those services into a "one-stop shop." Podiatry services and glaucoma and visual acuity screenings are provided on site.

Specialty classes, such as CPR, are regularly available to help caregivers feel confident in the home.



Food for Life

Many seniors who live alone are tempted to skip meals. The Club welcomes arriving members in the morning with coffee, juice or other beverage, and breakfast goodies in a café atmosphere. Beverages are offered throughout the day as seniors become easily dehydrated. A dietitian-approved, nutritionally balanced hot lunch is served daily, and everyone enjoys mid-afternoon refreshments before going home.

Qualified Staff

Club members and families benefit from the expertise of RNs, Baptist Health System physician, Certified Dementia Practitioner, USF-Certified Adult Day Care ADRD (Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders) Training Provider, and Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers Dealing with Dementia Trainer. All staff members are AED, CPR and first aid certified, and complete

4 hours of dementia training each year. Staff receives annual training in HIPAA, Elder Abuse, Adult Protective Services, Food Safety, Nutrition Requirements and LGBT Cultural Competency.

Easy-access Transportation

Members who don't drive, or whose family members work or cannot drive them, can be picked up at their home – at no charge – by a NassauTRANSIT bus and brought right to The Club door. In the afternoon, NassauTRANSIT picks members up at The Club and takes them home. All operators and vehicles are credentialed to federal and state requirements and are wheelchair accessible.

The Club is all about being our best and enjoying the best quality of life we can despite our limitations. Institutional living costs are prohibitive for many while the national staffing crisis in senior living facilities continues. Many seniors don't want to move, but home health care costs continue to escalate and worker availability is an issue. The Club offers an affordable, quality alternative. Subsidies may be available for eligible members. We hope to see you soon.

The Club is open Monday through Friday, 9 am - 4 pm, at the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 1901 Island Walk Way in Fernandina Beach. Contact Emily Kunzelmann at ekunzelmann@nassaucountycoa.org for more information.



Jamie Deonas

Founder and CEO



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Lifelong Learning



All classes are held at the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 1901 Island Walk Way, Fernandina Beach

To enroll, visit www.nassaucountycouncilonaging.org/membership-program/

Questions? Contact NCCOA at 904-261-0701.

Multigenerational Classes for Summer and School Early Release Wednesday

(no experience required)

Dance/Drama – Summer – Ages 4-8

Juliana Baxter, Artistic Director of International Dance & Drama
Every Wed – Jun 28 – Jul 26 • 9:15 - 10:15 am

Dance/Drama – Summer – Ages 9-14

Juliana Baxter, Artistic Director of International Dance & Drama
Every Wed – Jun 28 – Jul 26 • 10:30 - 11:30 am

Dance/Drama – After School – Ages 4-8

Juliana Baxter, Artistic Director of International Dance & Drama
Every Wed – Aug 16 – Dec 13 (except Nov 22)
2 - 3 pm

Dance/Drama – After School – Ages 9-14

Juliana Baxter, Artistic Director of International Dance & Drama
Every Wed – Aug 16 – Dec 13 (except Nov 22)
3:15 - 4:15 pm

Multigenerational Art – Ages 5+

Avery Baker & Audrey Gundling
Every Wed – Jun 7 – Aug 2 • 10 - 11 am

Multigenerational Amelia Strings Learning Orchestra Ages 11+

Dr. Nina Knight, Exec Director
Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival
Every Wed – Aug 9 – Dec 20 (except Nov 22)
3 - 4:45 pm

Note: Dance/Drama classes are offered as a series based on \$5 per class, plus a recital fee of \$20, paid in full at time of registration.



Arts, Crafts & Hobbies

Art from the Heart

Leeanne Saylors, H&R Block, FB
Wed – Jun 21 • 10 am - 12 pm
Mon – Jul 24 • 2 - 4 pm
Mon – Aug 21 • 2 - 4 pm
Wed – Sep 20 • 10 am - 12 pm

Painting & Crafts with Madisyn

Madisyn Boyd
Mon – Jul 17, 31, Aug 14, 28,
Sep 11, 25 • 2 - 4 pm

Crocheting Circle: All Levels
Every Tue • 10 - 11:30 am

Crafts with a Purpose

Linda Seng-Mills, Robyn Padgett
Tue – Jul 18, Aug 15, Sep 19
10 - 11 am

Casual Knitting – Free

Beginners Welcome
Marcia Foshee Duffy
Every Thu • 1 - 3 pm



Cards & Games

Rummikub

Janet Chatfield & Dootsie Krenach
Every Mon • 3 - 4 pm

Wheel of Fortune – Free

Michelle Shock
Fernandina Beach Rehab & Nursing
1st Tue • 9 - 10 am

Monopoly Auction – Free

Sabrena Bua
Medicare Insurance Agent
4th Tue • 10 - 11 am

Pass the Parcel – Free

Chad Skomrock, NY Life
4th Thu • 9 - 10 am

Canasta: Open Play & Instruction

Debbie Price
Every Fri • 9:30 - 12 pm

Mahjong: All Levels with a Current Mahjong Card

Theresa Macwithey
Every Fri • 12:30 - 3:30 pm

Bridge: For Beginners and Those Seeking Review

Every Fri • 12:30 - 2:30 pm

Bridge: Open Play

Every Fri • 3 - 5 pm

Lifelong Learning



Computers & Technology

Samsung/Android Q&A

T-Mobile – Wildlight Team
Wed – Jul 26, Aug 23, Sep 27
9:30 - 11:0 am



Fitness & Dance

Pelvic Floor & Core

Janice Clarkson
Every Mon • 8:30 - 9:30 am

Enerchi

Mary Bleck
Every Mon • 10 - 11 am

Standing Yoga

Mary Bleck
Every Mon • 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Tap Dancing - Beginners

(Series of 7)
Maggie Comey
Every Mon – Aug 7 – Sep 25 • 1 - 2 pm

Tap Dancing - Advanced

(Series of 7)
Maggie Comey
Every Mon – Aug 7 – Sep 25 • 2 - 3 pm

Resistance Training

Debi Senger
Every Tue • 8:30 - 9:30 am

Tai Chi - Free

Charles Macabasco, Conviva
2nd Tue • 10 - 11 am

Stability Exercises

Mary Bleck
Every Tue • 10 - 11 am

Belly Dancing

Laura Giordano
Every Tue • 11:15 am - 12:15 pm

Tai Chi

Tom Gagne
Every Tue • 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Zumba Gold

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Tue • 1 - 2 pm

Advanced Stretch & Balance

Janice Clarkson
Every Wed • 8:30 - 9:30 am

Weight Training & Toning

Janice Clarkson
Every Wed • 10 - 11 am

Enerchi

Mary Bleck
Every Wed • 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Meet Me at the Barre

Linda Giordano
Every Wed • 1 - 1:45 pm

Line Dancing: Basic

Kathy Ball
Every Wed • 1 - 1:45 pm

Line Dancing: Intermediate

Kathy Ball
Every Wed • 2 - 3 pm

Mat & Core Class – All Levels

Debi Senger
Every Thu • 8:30 - 9:30 am

Chair Yoga

Phyllis Rowley
Every Thu in Sep • 8:30 - 9:30 am

Happy Hoopers

Laura Giordano and Judy Desroches
Every Thu • 9:45 - 10:15 am

Just Dance

Laura Giordano
Every Thu • 10 - 11 am

Dancing Queens

Lorraine Gaito
Every Thu • 12 - 12:45 pm

Pilates

Carol Rossmeissl
Thu - Jul 6, 20, 27, Aug 10, 17, 24, 31
12 - 1 pm

Zumba Gold

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Thu • 1:30 - 2:30 pm

Zumba Gold

Weight Training & Toning

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Fri • 8:30 - 9:30 am

Zumba Step Up

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Fri • 9:45 - 10:45 am

Enerchi

Mary Bleck
Every Fri • 10 - 11 am

Full Body Workout

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Fri • 11:30 am - 12:30 pm



History, Culture & Travel

Yunnan China Photography

Presentation

Alwynne Lamp
Wed – Jul 26 • 1:30 - 3 pm



Literature

Author Spotlight - Free

Chip Kirkpatrick, Author of
ROSCOE: My Cardinal Sin
Wed – Jul 12, 26 • 9 - 10 am

Writer's Workshop

Steve Gibbs, Author
Thu – Jul 27 • 2 - 3 pm



Legal & Finance

Fraud – Think Before You Click

Jeff Fatora, Secure Amelia LLC
Thu – Jul 6 or Wed – Aug 30
2:30 - 3:30 pm

Fraud - Protecting Your Mobile Device and Computer

Jeff Fatora, Secure Amelia LLC
Mon – Jul 17 or Thu – Sep 14
2:30 - 3:30 pm

Fraud - Everything About Passwords

Jeff Fatora, Secure Amelia LLC
Tue – Aug 1 or Thu – Sep 28
2:30 - 3:30 pm

Fraud - Multi-Factor Authentication: Keeping Critical Accounts Safe

Jeff Fatora, Secure Amelia LLC
Mon – Aug 14 • 2:30 - 3:30 pm



Music

Elvis Music with Lane - Free

Lane Mashburn, Amelia Auto Mart
1st & 3rd Mon • 9 - 10 am

Ukulele – Open Play

Julie & Jim Black
Every Mon • 10 - 11 am

Sing Along with Bruce - Free

Bruce Beville
1st & 3rd Wed • 9 - 10 am

Music with Terry Murphy - Free

Terry Murphy
1st Thu • 9 - 10 am

Tunes with 2J's - Free

Julie & Jim Black
2nd & 4th Thu • 10 - 11 am

Classic Broadway Tunes - Free

Courtney Russell and
Sophia Rose Loveday
Fri – Jul 14 • 9 - 10 am



Lifelong Learning



Other Opportunities

The Shocking Truth Behind Electricity

Tom Polito
Wed – Aug 9 • 1:30 - 3:30 pm

Sign Language

Lynn Freeman
Every Thu in Jun • 10 - 11 am



Photography

iPhone Photo Workshop

(Series of 3)
Bill McKenna & Thomas Morris
Tue – Jul 11, 18, 25 • 2:30 - 3:30 pm



Policy & Government

Ask the Mayor - Free

Mayor Bradley Bean
2nd Fri – Jul 14, Sep 8
9:30 - 10:30 am



Wellness

Know Your Body to Enhance Your Health

Andrea Miranda, PT

Liver

Mon – Jul 10 • 3:30-4:30 pm

Kidneys

Mon – Jul 17 • 3:30-4:30 pm

Gut Health

Mon – Jul 24 • 3:30-4:30 pm

Stomach

Mon – Jul 31 • 3:30-4:30 pm

Bladder

Mon – Aug 7 • 3:30-4:30 pm

Caregiver Stressbusters Forum - Free

Emily Kunzelmann
Wed – Jun 14, 28, Jul 12, 26,
Aug 9, 23 • 1:30 - 3:30 pm

Tapping Meditation - Tapping Café - Free

Dr. Jean Kerry
Every Thu – 1 - 2 pm

Balance Techniques - Free

Andrea Miranda, PT
Fri – Jul 21, Aug 18, Sep 15
9 - 10 am

Cooking with April - Free

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Patriotic Pudding

Fri – Jul 7 • 9 - 10 am

Mini Mushroom Sliders

Fri – Aug 4 • 9 - 10 am

Ice Cream Social

Fri – Sep 1 • 9 - 10 am

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Susan Pendergrass & LaShea Stokes
FL Dept of Health - Nassau
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Mon – Aug 28 • 10 - 11 am

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Physician Uses Alzheimer's Diagnosis to Help Others



Brenda Nicholson, MD, board-certified internist and oncologist, candidly discusses her diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease with Club volunteers. NCCOA President & CEO Janice Ancrum said, "We are unbelievably fortunate to welcome Dr. Brenda Nicholson to our newly formed Club Advisory Panel. She is already using her personal and professional expertise to help The Club fulfill its mission with excellence and care."

CONTRIBUTING WRITER – BRENDA NICHOLSON, MD

Brenda Nicholson, MD, is a board-certified internist and oncologist and has worked with the NIA IMPACT Collaboratory and served as a stakeholder in the 2017 NIH National Research Summit on Care, Services and Support for Persons with Dementia and Their Caregivers. She also is very involved with Alzheimer's Tennessee, and is a member of the study advisory committee of UCLA's Clinical Trial D-Care Study of Dementia Care Interventions.

Dr. Nicholson, a resident of Fernandina Beach, has a special interest in Alzheimer's. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with the disease.

Her life-changing diagnosis has motivated her to share personal insights and experiences with research and advocacy groups, academic and governmental agencies, caregivers and their loved ones. Through education and conversation, her goal is to

shed a more realistic light on living with Alzheimer's disease.

The stigma is real

"When we think of a person with dementia, we often think of an older person experiencing the late stages of disease who is living in an assisted living facility. I am not the person who comes to mind," said Dr. Nicholson. "I often confound people when they learn I have been living with Alzheimer's disease for 8 years." Spending time with people helps them understand life with the disease.

She shares that some common myths associated with Alzheimer's include:

- People with dementia can't understand what is going on around them.
- Nice people change and become aggressive, and people who were hard to live with before become nice.

- Everyone with dementia experiences the same symptoms.
- Losing your memory and getting confused is just normal aging.
- Dementia can be prevented.
- There is a cure for dementia.

"It is important to know these myths in order to understand the stigma associated with dementia," Dr. Nicholson says. "Stigma causes negative attitudes, and even discriminatory behavior, just on the basis of disease. This stigma is very real, and she provided a personal example.

As she relates, patients with dementia are often not worked up for cancer or referred to an oncologist for treatment. "So I saw only a small number of patients with dementia during my career as an oncologist," Dr. Nicholson said. "I know I had a pre-formed concept of people with dementia because my only experience as a doctor with

this disease was in my geriatric rotations in a nursing home during my residency. I didn't give them the benefit of the doubt and assumed they couldn't comprehend well, so I would speak to their caregiver instead of to them directly. I questioned their competence to make decisions for themselves."

She continued, "When I became sick, I realized how faulty my concept of this disease was compared to the lived experience. Also, I was suddenly on the receiving end of being stigmatized, which most everyone with a diagnosis has had to learn to deal with. It is a hurtful experience which can lead people to hide their diagnosis and become isolated."

Dr. Nicholson emphasizes how important it is to understand the stigma of dementia in order to better care for loved ones affected by the disease. "How we feel toward a person is often communicated non-verbally...tone of voice, facial expressions and body language speak louder than words," she said. "People with Alzheimer's pick up on 'knowing looks' to our caregivers...if we feel stigmatized, it negatively affects how we respond."

Fear is a natural reaction when life feels out of control, such as when you've been diagnosed with dementia. When we stigmatize someone, it is not consciously done. Stigma is rooted in our fears, personal biases and misunderstandings about the disease. To overcome stigma, education is critical to tackle the root causes.

"Dementia, at its heart, is a total loss of control over one's self and one's life. Against our will, our personalities change, we lose our self-control, we lose our independence, and our choices are taken away," Dr. Nicholson said. "So it is entirely expected and natural that we should fear this disease. The problem is that we avoid what we fear, and it is difficult to think objectively when we experience fear."

Understanding the disease

Knowledge helps us cope with and overcome our fears. The more we know the more comfortable we feel around people who are living with dementia and the better we are able to support them.

Understanding is also important in combating stigma. When we do not fully understand something, it leads us to draw inaccurate conclusions and misinterpret what we see unfolding. It can also lead to miscommunications. To be able to effectively care for and communicate with another person requires both understanding and compassion. The more we can empathize with the other person the better our interactive experiences are with them.

Not everyone with dementia has Alzheimer's disease. There are many forms of dementia, including Vascular Dementia, Lewy-Body Dementia and others. The symptoms of each disease that causes dementia are different. For example, in Lewy-Body Dementia, people often have hallucinations; in frontotemporal disorders (FTD), sometimes called Frontotemporal Dementia, people have a lot of



Dr. Nicholson and her husband, Don.

behavioral symptoms; a person with Vascular Dementia might not have either of these, but could have aphasia (a disorder that results from damage to portions of the brain that are responsible for language) or not be able to use their arm.

"To make things even more complicated, many of the diseases cause dementia overlap, and so a person can have more than one cause for their dementia," she said.

Living with dementia

So what is it like to live with dementia? People want to know, but are afraid to ask. The experience is unique for each person. Some reasons for this is because people have different life experiences that shape their perspective. "Our baseline intellectual acuity and educational level affect a person's understanding and their capacity to compensate for their cognitive impairment. Our personalities and coping skills affect how we deal with challenges and adversity. The specific disease pathology and the anatomic location of the brain lesions determine symptoms," Dr. Nicholson said. "And finally, many patients do not have insight. Due to the disease affecting a specific location in the brain, they are not aware that they have any cognitive impairments."

Continued on page 18

Dr. Nicholson shares a little about living with Alzheimer's...

My memory is like a file room

"I think of my memory like a file room with many filing drawers. Some drawers are locked and I don't have the key. Some drawers are full of clutter and it is hard to find what I am looking for. Or I will pull out a file and it is distorted and hard to read. Other drawers are organized and easy to find what I want," Dr. Nicholson explained.

"People say that they can't tell I have any problems with my memory, but they didn't know me before [my diagnosis]," she said. "I used to have a remarkable memory and could remember the details of my patients' cancer and their treatments without their chart. If you never knew me before, you would think my memory is fine," she added.

My mind can play tricks on me

I can sometimes look at something and think it is something else. When I had neuropsych testing when I was first diagnosed, I remember looking at a picture of a funnel and thinking it was a martini glass. As soon as I found out what it was, I could see it correctly. Also, things hide from me in plain sight. I was looking for a suitcase for a trip and looked in the closet, but couldn't find it. So I searched the other likely places without success. Finally, I asked Don [my husband] to help me; he immediately found it in the first place I had looked.

My 'executive function' skills are not consistent

Executive function skills include adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, working memory, time management and organization. I especially have difficulty with collating, sorting and multi-tasking. The best way to 'break my brain' is to ask me to sort and collate papers. In addition, my judgment and decision-making skills are not good as I can't assess risk or see all the possible consequences of my decisions. So I have to defer to my husband to help counsel and guide me on a daily basis.

What you can do

Communication is about interpreting the emotions and behaviors we see in others. People with dementia gradually lose self-control over unwanted behaviors or verbal responses. They become impulsive and begin to lose their filter, so they say whatever comes to mind. It's important for you to know their negative reactions generally are in response to something they find stressful, frustrating or confusing.

When confronted with a person who is demonstrating negative behaviors or emotions, it's good to consider first that if it is bad for you to observe the problem, it's probably worse for the person who is emotionally distraught. Ask the person to help you understand what is wrong and help remove them from the stressful situation. If the person is non-verbal, look in the environment for an immediate cause and take steps to minimize the effects it is having, or take the person to a quieter place. Lastly, try to create a calm and comfortable environment for the person to prevent problems from reoccurring.

In closing...

When in the company of people with dementia, communicate your acceptance by being comfortable in our presence; you may also use humor to smooth over rough spots. Connect with us through laughter and love...a smile, gentle touch on the arm or kind word.

Even though challenges abound, keep in mind that our dignity lies not in what we do or have done, but in our personhood...who we are. Each human being has dignity, and should be valued and treated with respect.

For more information on how The Club can help you and your loved ones, contact NCCOA at 904-775-5472.



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Contact Scott Brown, Development Director, at 904-775-5481 or sbrown@nassaucountycoa.org. You may also visit our website at www.nassaucountycouncilonaging.org/leadership-circle/.

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Which Age is Most Lonely?

How to combat feelings of isolation at any age

SOURCE: KATIE MCPHERSON, BAPTIST HEALTH JUICE

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, recently published a study with some interesting findings for three particular age groups. The team discovered that loneliness peaks at three ages for most people: the late 20s, mid-50s and late 80s. More than 300 San Diego County residents between the ages of 27 and 101 participated in the study.

When it comes to why these three age groups are most at risk, however, the scientists still have work to do. For those in their 20s, they speculate that because this age involves making many life decisions, it may increase loneliness as old relationships end and people experience guilt over their choices. For people in their 50s, the working theory is that this is the time when health begins to decline, and friends begin passing away. And in the 80s age group, deaths of family, friends and spouses may leave a person without as many deep connections.

Nicole Winter, PsyD, a clinical psychologist at Baptist Behavioral Health and the AgeWell Center for Health, says it's important to know that loneliness doesn't just strike those who are physically alone.

"I believe that loneliness is more about feeling alone rather than actually being alone. I prefer to differentiate loneliness from solitariness in that solitary means preferring to be alone and lonely means suffering from being alone or feeling isolated," Dr. Winter says. "I am a strong believer that even those with several friends or social contacts can still feel lonely and that loneliness isn't always

negative."

With that understanding, Dr. Winter explains why she thinks loneliness hits at each of these age milestones. For those in their twenties, a little bit of loneliness may just be part of growing up and spreading your wings.

"Our late 20s is a time often accompanied by problems with money as college ends, career confusion or difficulty and romantic challenges. It is during this timeframe when we generally become more independent by branching off from parents and college friends and expect to have a career, committed relationship, and fabulous social life. If by this time we do not, people in this age group can feel as if they have already failed," Dr. Winter continues. "Add in the unrealistic expectations highlighted on social media and that can be a recipe for feeling lost, alone and, ultimately, lonely."

People in their 50s, however, may experience heightened loneliness as they struggle to determine their wants and needs, while their peers may seem to have it all together.



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"Middle age can be an especially lonely phase of life as a result of feeling confused as to who we are and who we will be, in addition to disappointments and anxieties of unfulfilling work, unhappy family life and our own or others' poor health," says Dr. Winter.

She agrees with the study's researchers that the 80s may bring on loneliness simply because, by that age, many people have lost a number of their deep relationships.

"Loneliness is a common source of distress, suffering, and impaired quality of life in older persons. With age often comes a multitude of life changes such as the death of loved ones, retirement, stressful life events, or dealing with various medical issues, all of which can increase the risk for and susceptibility to loneliness," she says.

It's important for doctors to address loneliness with patients of these ages because it can have negative effects on health besides just making a person feel down.

"Persistent loneliness is not only emotionally and mentally painful but can be damaging to physical health. The most common negative effects I see in those who identify as feeling lonely include experiences of depression and anxiety, poor or disturbed sleep in both quantity and quality, reduced immune and cardiovascular functioning, functional impairment, and signs of early cognitive decline," Dr. Winter says.

In order to avoid these health consequences, no matter the age or cause of loneliness, Dr. Winter says changing your thought process can help you have positive, productive relationships with others.

"Persistent loneliness often makes individuals increasingly sensitive to rejection. They often have a tendency to convey negativity and remember and pay more attention to the negative, which ultimately leads to increased negative expectations or pushing others away because of perceived rejection," she explains. "Changing maladaptive thinking is the process of identifying, testing and challenging negative thoughts when they occur. During this process, an individual learns to consider other possibilities and practice trying to see things from the perspective of others. Then they're able to interpret their actions more benignly. Once the negative thoughts are challenged and eventually eliminated, a person who identifies as feeling lonely can begin approaching new relationships with a positive, optimistic outlook."

If you feel alone or isolated more often than not, call 904.376.3800 to find a Baptist Behavioral Health provider who can help you find a solution and/or contact Nassau County Council on Aging at 904-261-0701 to explore the best options for you to get involved.

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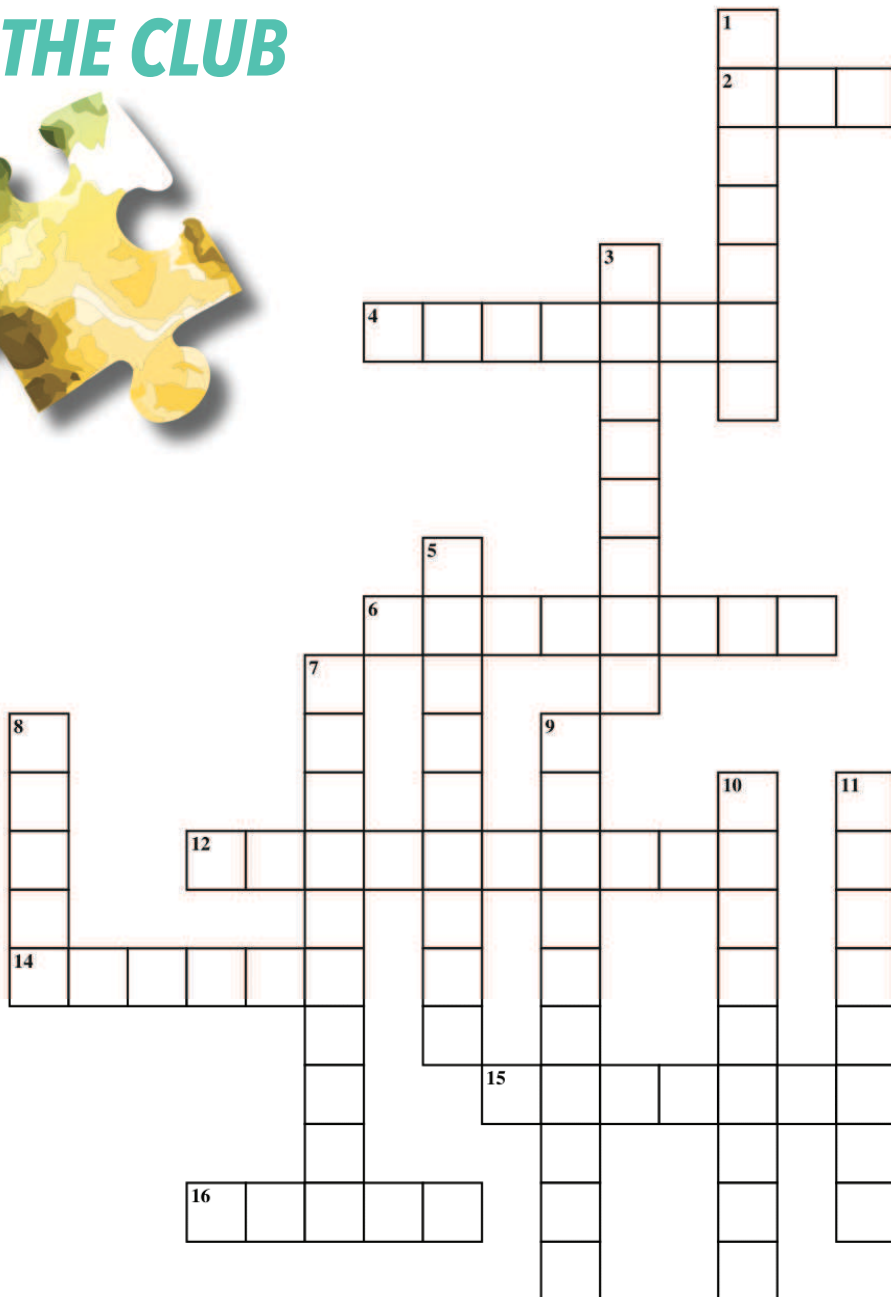


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THE CLUB



Across

- (2) The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination
- (4) Short term relief
- (6) Medicine devoted to the foot
- (12) A relationship between friends
- (14) A short excursion
- (15) The activity of tending and cultivating a garden
- (16) Vocal or instrumental sounds
- (17) People who have served our country through the Armed Forces
- (18) A sequence of actions regularly followed

Down

- (1) Social gatherings of invited guests
- (3) Anniversary of the day a person was born
- (5) A group of people having common interests
- (7) An activity that stimulates your thinking
- (8) A game in which players mark off numbers on cards
- (9) Another word for support
- (10) The profession of an eye doctor
- (11) Body activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness
- (13) Person who provides care to a family member of a friend

SOLUTION ON PAGE 23

Support Groups

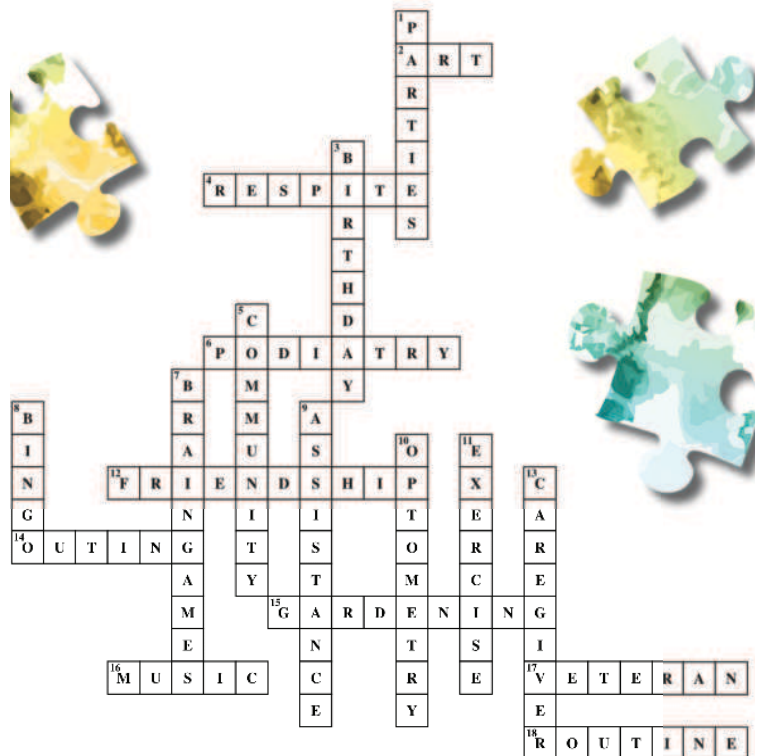
- Grieving with Hope Support Group**
 2nd and 4th Monday of each month
 5:30-7:00 p.m.
 Contact: Emily Kunzelmann, 904-775-5472 or ekunzelmann@nassaucountycoa.org
 Helps those who have experienced the loss of a family member or close friend as you connect with others in similar situations. Experienced facilitators and presenters often featured.
- Caregiver Support Group**
 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month
 3:30-5:00 p.m.
 Contact: Emily Kunzelmann, 904-775-5472 or ekunzelmann@nassaucountycoa.org
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- Hearing Loss Support Group**
 1st Tuesday of each month
 12:00-1:30 p.m.
 Contact: Frances Bartelt, 904-775-5484 or fbartelt@nassaucountycoa.org
 Group discussions focus on hearing loss, how hearing loss impacts everyday living, your brain and your ability to keep socially engaged and live a fulfilling life.
- Low Vision Support Group**
 4th Wednesday of each month
 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 Contact: Frances Bartelt, 904-775-5484 or fbartelt@nassaucountycoa.org
 Provides information on adaptive devices and encourages members with vision challenges to share experiences through group discussions and guest speaker presentations.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support Group**
 Every Friday
 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 Contact: NAMI Nassau, 904-277-1886
 Support group for individuals, family members and friends impacted by mental illness.

All support groups are sponsored by Nassau County Council on Aging, and held at the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 1901 Island Walk Way. As always, there is no charge to attend support group meetings.

Assistance Programs

- Assistance Through Government-Subsidized Programs**
 NCCOA is the lead agency for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs' state and federally funded grant programs. Potential clients are screened and prioritized according to their needs.
- Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (EHEAP)**
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- Fall Prevention**
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- Free Legal Assistance**
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