

Nassau County Council on Aging

Senior Life

Celebrating Happy, Healthy Lives

Embracing Your Purpose

Plus:

Preserving
Mental Agility

The Foundations
of Independence

Making Connections

Independent Living

Adult
Classes
for ALL
Ages!

NASSAU COUNTY

Council on Aging

SENIORS LIVING HAPPY, HEALTHY LIVES

July - September 2026

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MISSION STATEMENT

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- Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy, Cardiac, Neurological & Orthopedic Programs
- Open communication between therapy, families and physicians



15480 Max Leggett Parkway, Jacksonville, Florida 32218 • Tel: 904.443.9635 • www.rivercityrehab.healthcare



Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center

1901 Island Walk Way, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

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

nassaucountycoa.org

Staff Contacts

Adult Day HealthCare, The Club - **Jennifer Gundling**

Advocate Home Healthcare - **Carla Hadden**

Caregiver Services - **Jennifer Gundling**

Case Management - **Donna Granieri**

CHORE Program - **Shamrin Lullo**

Development - **Brian LaVacca**

Electric/Water Assistance - **Case Management**

HR, Compliance and Facilities - **Don Harley**

Just Friends/Westie Besties - **Frances Nobles**

Marketing and Communications - **Chris Boek**

Lifelong Learning - **Melody Dawkins**

Nutrition and Meal Programs - **Gina Thompson**

Program Operations - **Donna Granieri**

Volunteer Opportunities - **Chris Fournier**

Westside Senior Life Center

37002 Ingham Road, Hilliard, FL 32046-1011

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

nassaucountycoa.org

Staff Contacts

Administration/Case Management - **Linda Rogers**

Nutrition/Meal Programs - **Frances Nobles**

Activities - **Melissa Snead**

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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. Meeting space is available for rent in both Fernandina Beach and Hilliard locations for group functions.

Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 904-261-0701

Westside Senior Life Center, 904-845-3331

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

NCCOA is the lead agency for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs state and federally funded grant programs. Programs & Services include Case Management, Nutrition (Meals on Wheels), 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. Free legal assistance is offered through Nassau County Legal Aid, and SHINE provides free consultations to Medicare beneficiaries and caregivers.

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

THE CLUB/TRAINING & CAREGIVER SERVICES

- 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, and is supervised by a licensed nurse.
- Caregiver resources include workshops, education and training, stress-busting forums, and support groups. NCCOA's Memory Café is an offering for those living with Alzheimer's and related disorders. Learn how to adjust to life changes, combat stigma and isolation, and develop a safe social peer group.

Jennifer Gundling, 904-775-5488 | jgundling@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,

Board of Directors



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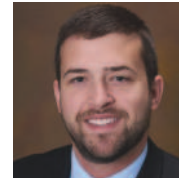
Karen Hackett



Tara Beth Anderson



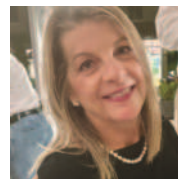
Dr. Tyrone Blue



Urban Fleming



Paul Lynch



Jamie Nelson



Brian Rafferty



McKinley Ravenell



Mark Rowe



David Sharpe



Dr. Pedro L. Tamayo IV

and companion services. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Home Health Aides may also accompany members to appointments and activities. Fees for these services are paid via private pay, and/or pre-qualified state and federal programs.

Carla Hadden, 904-675-9835 | chadden@nassaucountycoa.org

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

If you are interested in helping seniors, there are many opportunities available at both the Janice Ancrum and Westside Senior Life Centers. Seven main volunteer support areas are offered: Administrative, The Club, CHORE, Community Room, Instructors and Presenters, Meals on Wheels Drivers, Friendly Visitors, and other opportunities.

Chris Fournier, 904-775-5490 | cfournier@nassaucountycoa.org

MESSAGE FROM OUR President & CEO



For many of us, home is far more than a place. It is where we feel most comfortable, most independent, and most ourselves. It holds our memories, our routines, and the connections that shape our lives. It is no surprise that when seniors are asked how they want to age, the overwhelming answer is simple: they want to remain at home.

But aging in place is about much more than staying in familiar surroundings.

True independence requires intention. It is built through healthy habits, meaningful relationships, thoughtful planning, and access to the right support systems. It means caring for our bodies through movement and nutrition. It means keeping our minds engaged through lifelong learning and social connection. It means preparing for the future while continuing to find purpose and joy in each day.

Throughout this issue of Senior Life Magazine, we explore the many factors that contribute to successful aging in place. You will find practical guidance on maintaining physical and cognitive health, insights into the importance of social engagement, and resources that can help older adults and their families navigate the future with confidence.

At Nassau County Council on Aging, we see every day how the right support can make all the difference. Whether through case management, caregiver support, home-delivered meals, wellness programs, adult day healthcare, volunteer opportunities, or in-home services through Advocate Home Healthcare, our mission is to help seniors remain safe, independent, and connected to the community they love.

What inspires me most are the seniors themselves. Their resilience, wisdom, and determination remind us that aging is not about limitations. It is about continuing to grow, contribute, and embrace new opportunities. Independence is not achieved alone—it is strengthened by community, support, and a commitment to living well.

As you read this issue, I hope you find encouragement, valuable resources, and a renewed appreciation for the choices that help preserve independence at every stage of life.

It is an honor to serve this community and to support the seniors who make Nassau County such a special place to call home.

With Gratitude,

Janice Ancrum
President & CEO

Thank You

To Our
Funding Partners



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HEALTH

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FLORIDA'S OLDEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
NEWS LEADER

1235 South 10th Street
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034
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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.

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Embracing Your Purpose

A Call to Live Fully in Your Golden Years

As the gentle waves of the Atlantic kiss the shores of Amelia Island, they remind us of life's enduring rhythm—one that continues season after season. If you are reading this, you have already walked many beautiful miles. You have raised families, built businesses, volunteered in our community, and weathered storms that would have sunk lesser ships. Yet here you are, still carrying wisdom, strength, and experiences that only you can offer.

According to Ageing Research Reviews and the Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, community involvement is associated with reduced cognitive decline, improved self-esteem, better heart health, a more efficient immune system, greater calories burned, less body fat, and a 37% increase in lifespan. Your presence matters deeply. Your life is not a footnote. There is still meaningful work to do right here in Fernandina Beach—in the smile you share at the Senior Center, the wisdom you offer a struggling

neighbor, or the story you tell a grandchild that plants seeds of resilience and hope.

Never give up. Your presence, your voice, and your kindness still make this world a better place. And to continue living with joy and strength, we must care for our bodies and minds.

Nourish Your Body

Healthy eating is not about perfection or fad diets. Fill your plate with vibrant foods: leafy greens, colorful vegetables, berries, nuts, seeds, lean proteins, and healthy fats. In our coastal community, fresh seafood from local waters and produce from nearby farms are treasures we can celebrate. Reduce your intake of processed foods and excess sugar, which steal energy and cloud the mind.

Drink plenty of clean water—your body is over 60% water, and even mild dehydration can affect mood, memory, and energy. Aim for half your body weight in

ounces each day. A simple glass of water first thing in the morning can be a small act of gratitude for another day of life and opportunity.

Restorative Sleep: Necessary Daily Renewal

Sleep is not laziness; it is essential. Decades of research prove that deep, restful sleep allows the human body to heal. Sleep allows your body to repair tissues, balance hormones, consolidate memories, and restore emotional well-being. Create a peaceful bedtime routine: dim the lights, read an uplifting book, and perhaps enjoy a warm cup of herbal tea. Protect a cool, dark, and quiet sleep environment. Avoid screens before bed. When you wake up rested, you are better equipped to think clearly and engage fully with life.

Exercise also helps sleep. Even a simple daily walk can improve mood, mobility, and overall health.

The Cost of Isolation and the Power of Community

One of the greatest threats to seniors today is not physical disease but loneliness. Isolation can be as damaging as smoking—it raises risks for heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline. Human beings are meant for connection. Research dating back centuries has demonstrated that prolonged isolation can shorten one's lifespan.

Here in Fernandina Beach, we are blessed with a strong sense of community—through Nassau County Council on Aging programs, social groups, beach walks with friends, pickleball clubs, volunteer opportunities, and neighborhood gatherings.

Stay connected. Call a friend daily. Attend senior luncheons or music events. Share meals. Offer encouragement. Your story, your listening ear, and your smile can be the very thing another person needs. Relationships are not optional; they are essential to a meaningful life. When you invest in others, you discover that you are needed—and that realization brings renewed purpose.

Dwell On What Is Good and Hopeful

Your mind is powerful, and what you focus on shapes your reality. Henry Ford said it best: "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you are right."

It is easy in later years to focus on losses—aching joints, departed loved ones, changing times. Yet choosing gratitude can reshape your outlook and strengthen resilience. Keep a daily thankfulness journal. Speak positive words about yourself and others. Surround yourself with uplifting music, books, and people who encourage and inspire you.

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THE Club



Peace of Mind Starts Here

Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy
Individualized Care

Monday – Friday, 9AM – 4PM

Now Accepting New Members

jgundling@nassaucountycoa.org
904.775.5488



NASSAU COUNTY

Council on Aging

SENIORS LIVING HAPPY, HEALTHY LIVES

The Club is proudly licensed and operated by NCCOA.



Laughter: The Best Medicine

Never underestimate the healing power of laughter. Research continues to show that laughter reduces stress hormones, boosts immunity, eases pain, and strengthens the heart. Watch a comedy. Share funny family stories. Spend time with grandchildren—they are experts at finding joy in simple things. When you laugh, you remind yourself that joy is still possible, even during difficult seasons.

Targeted Support: Supplements with Wisdom

While food is foundational, modern soil and lifestyles sometimes leave nutritional gaps. Work with a qualified healthcare professional who understands the needs of mature bodies. Targeted supplements can make a meaningful difference:

- **Vitamin D3 + K2:** Crucial for bone health, immune function, and mood.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Support heart, brain, and joint health while reducing inflammation.
- **The 9 essential amino acids:** Help maintain muscle mass, energy, and repair.
- **Magnesium:** Promotes calm, better sleep, and muscle relaxation.
- **High-quality multivitamin/mineral:** Helps fill nutritional gaps.

These are tools, not magic. Always consult your healthcare provider before starting new supplements. When your body feels stronger, your spirit often feels stronger too.

Your Unique Purpose Still Shines

Colonel Harland Sanders, the founder of KFC, did not find success until age 65. Winston Churchill became Prime Minister at 66 and helped lead England through one of history's darkest times. Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote *Little House on the Prairie* when she was 65.

Their most meaningful chapters came later in life.

You may never fully know whose life you have touched through a kind word, a shared meal, a mentoring conversation, or simply by showing up faithfully at a community event. Your purpose may be quiet or visible; simple or extraordinary. It may involve writing your life story for your family, supporting a neighbor, or planting flowers that brighten someone's day.

Friends, this season of life still holds meaning and possibility. Do not give up. Eat well, rest deeply, drink water, stay connected, choose positivity, laugh often, and support your body wisely. Go for long walks on the beach with friends, or be the strong shoulder for someone who is struggling.

Your best days can still be ahead—not despite your age, but because of the wisdom, grace, and experience you now carry. The world needs your light. Your family needs your love. Our community needs your presence.

Rise up. Your life still matters. The shores of Amelia Island continue to welcome new tides—let your life do the same.

Dr. Patrick Kennedy, Dr. of Chiropractic

Senior Life

Word Search



I F A A U E A I F T N L L R G E H I L P E T P M P
 L A N G U A G E L E A R N I N G L P E N D T P E R
 R D O O F A E S H S E R F A T U L H O A T T N N A
 C E A V S I E C N E D N E P E D R E T N I R D T S
 A U T G I S O D N P C E D I T P I E A A G O C A A
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 P E P R S L N E C S I A G A D N L O G D A R D I N
 A R O P P I I O D T S T D U A S T L M E L E P T P
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 E U A A I A U M R S P N P A E O A N D A A H L S A

- Aging in Place**
- Deep Sleep**
- Healing**
- Interdependence**
- Dignity**
- Language Learning**
- Fresh Seafood**
- Laughter**
- Advanced Planning**
- Friendship**
- Mental Acuity**
- Leafy Greens**
- Supplements**
- Caregiver Support**
- Volunteerism**
- Community**
- Socialization**
- Advocate**

Solution on page 23!



GIVE THE GIFT OF LEGACY

Celebrate the people who've made a difference in your life through the Legacy Pavers Program.

Two sizes available!

nassaucountycoa.org



Lifelong Learning



All classes are held at the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 1901 Island Walk Way, Fernandina Beach, unless noted otherwise
Questions? Contact NCCOA at 904-261-0701.



Special Events

Environment Nassau, Today & Tomorrow

Amelia Island, Life Along the Edge

Robert Prager & Munsell McPhillips
Introduction by Nick Kuchova
Tue – July 7 • 3:00 – 4:30 pm

The North Florida Land Trust

Ramesh Buch
Introduction by Jim Halle
Tue – July 14 • 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Keeping Amelia Island Safe & Dry

Andre Desilet, Victoria Guadagno,
and Katie Peay
Introduction by Richard Scribner
Tue – July 21 • 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Coffee & Connection – Vet to Vet

Dawn Townsend, Community
Hospice & Palliative Care
Every 2nd Wed • 10 – 11 am

Book Club - Reading Between the Lines – Free

Kathy DeAngelis, Lucy Martin, and
Traci Canada

Theo of Golden by Allen Levi
Wed – Jul 1 • 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Things We Never Say
by Elizabeth Stout
Wed – Aug 5 • 5:30 – 7:00 pm

The Unmaking of June Farrow
by Adrienne Young
Wed – Sep 2 • 5:30 – 7:00 pm



Cards & Games

Pennies – Advanced

Sue King
Every Mon • 1 – 4 pm

Rummikub – Open Play & Instruction

Janet Chatfield
Every Mon • 3:00 – 4:45 pm

Rummikub – Free

Nancy Chandler
Every Tue • 9 – 10 am

Trivia with Nelson Insurance – Free

Savanna Varney
Every 3rd Tue • 9 – 10 am

Mah Jongg – No Instruction – Must Have Current Playing Card

Sherri O'Hara
2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Tue • 1 – 4 pm

Bridge – Tuesdays

Rhona Walsh
Every Tue • 1 – 4 pm

Party Bridge

Glenda Young
Every Wed • 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Canasta Hand Knee & Foot

Sue King
Every Wed • 1 – 4 pm

Canasta – Hand, Knee, Foot & Toe Open Play and Instruction

Debbie Price
Every Fri • 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Mah Jongg – No Instruction – Must Have Current Playing Card

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

Cribbage – Open Play & Instruction

Shirley Green
Every Wed • 12:30 – 3:30 pm

Bridge Open Play – All Levels

Every Fri • 12:30 – 4 pm

Advanced Bridge – Friday

Carolyn James-Rudd
Every Fri • 1 – 4 pm



Computers & Technology

AI Scam Busters: Voice Clones, Deepfakes & the New Wave of Fraud

Shirley Singleton. CISSP, CSSLP,
CRISC, Secure Data Consortium
Mon – Aug 17 • 1:00 – 2:30 pm

AI Scam Busters: Pig Butchering & Romance Scams — How to Recognize Them & What to Do

Shirley Singleton. CISSP, CSSLP,
CRISC, Secure Data Consortium
Mon – Sep 21 • 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Android Classes

Kristian Allen, T-Mobile
Every Fri in Aug • 12 – 1 pm



Lifelong Learning



Fitness & Dance

Pelvic Floor & Core – Mat Required

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

Chair Yoga

Tina LaVacca
Every Mon • 9:00 – 9:45 am

Exercise with Tissa – Free

Tissa Harold Lewis
2nd & 4th Mon • 9 – 10 am

Enerchi

Mary Bleck
Every Mon • 10 – 11 am

Beginning Ballet

Laura Giordano
Every Mon • 10:30 – 11:15 am

Standing Yoga

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

Tap Dancing

Laura Giordano
Every Mon • 12:45 – 1:45 pm

Tap FUNDamentals!

Gwen White
Every Mon in Sep • 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Tai Chi: 13 Elements

Tom Gagne
Every Mon & Wed • 3 – 4 pm

Tai Chi: 24 Postures

Tom Gagne
Every Mon & Wed • 4:00 – 4:45 pm

Standing Core

Catherine Paradise
Every Tue • 8:15 – 9:15 am

Floor Yoga Stretch – Mat Required

Catherine Paradise
Every Tue • 9:30 – 10:30 am

Stability Exercises

Mary Bleck
Every Tue • 10 – 11 am

Standing & Sitting Pilates – Mat Required

Merle Sauer
Every Tue • 10:45 – 11:45 am

Belly Dancing

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

Hula Hooping: All Levels Welcome

Heidi Freilich & Laura Giordano
Every Tue • 12:15 – 12:45 pm

Chair Aerobics

Merle Sauer
Every Tue • 12 – 1 pm

Zumba Gold

Stacey “Sparkle” Vinson
Every Tue • 1 – 2 pm

Line Dancing – Basic

Kathy Ball
Every Tue • 1:00 – 1:45 pm

Line Dancing – Intermediate

Kathy Ball
Every Tue • 2 – 3 pm

Energy Burst Stations

Tina LaVacca
Every Wed • 8:00 – 8:45 am

Stretch & Balance – Advanced

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

Tighten and Tone – Mat Required

Merle Sauer
Every Wed • 9 – 10 am

Weight Training and Toning

Janice Clarkson
Every Wed • 9:45 – 10:45 am

Aerobic Exercise

Merle Sauer
Every Wed • 10 – 11 am

Pilates – Mat Required

Merle Sauer
Every Wed • 11 am – 12 pm

Enerchi

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

Line Dancing – Basic

Kathy Ball
Every Wed • 1:00 – 1:45 pm

Line Dancing – Intermediate

Kathy Ball
Every Wed • 2 – 3 pm

Sit & Be Fit!

Catherine Paradise
Every Thu • 8:15 – 9:15 am

Resistance Training – Advanced

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

Mat & Core – Advanced – Mat Required

Debi Senger
Every Thu • 9:30 – 10:30 am

Fitness cont. on the following page



Lifelong Learning

Just Dance

Laura Giordano & Heidi Freilich
Every Thu • 10:30 – 11:30 am

Dancing Queens

Lorraine Gaito
Every Thu • 12:00 – 12:45 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

Chair Yoga

Tina LaVacca
Every Fri • 9:00 – 9:45 am

Zumba Step Up

Stacey “Sparkle” Vinson
Every Fri • 9:45 – 10:45 am

Aerobic Exercise

Merle Sauer
Every Fri • 10 – 11 am

Aerobic Body Pump – Advanced – Mat Required

Merle Sauer
Every Fri • 10 – 11 am

Total Body Workout

Stacey “Sparkle” Vinson
Every Fri • 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Yoga Full Body Stretch

Merle Sauer
Every Fri • 12 – 1 pm



History, Culture & Travel

Armchair Travel – Free

Nancy Cerra, Realtor,
Keller Williams Realty
1st Tue • 9 – 10 am

Photo Destinations

Alwynne Lamp
3rd Thu • 9 – 10 am



Hobbies - Arts, Crafts & Gardening

Crocheting Circle – All Levels – Free

Brenda Brubeck
Every Tue • 10:00 – 11:30 am

Casual Knitting & Conversation – No Instruction – Free

Every Thu • 1 – 3 pm

Vision Board Workshop

Barbaree King
Thu – Aug 13 • 2:15 – 4:15 pm

Crocheting Circle – All Levels – Free

Brenda Brubeck
Every Fri • 11 am – 1 pm

Art Therapy

Leeanne Saylor,
Saylor Accounting & Tax
Every Fri • 2:00 – 4:30 pm

Creating Beaded Jewelry

Francis Peters, Front Porch Beads
Sat – Sep 5 • 1:00 – 2:30 pm



Language/Literature

Spanish Level 3: Intermediate Conversational Spanish

Maria Hernandez
Every Mon • 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Intermediate Sign Language

Hilda Maroney & Becky Clark
Every Tue • 11 am – 12 pm

Beginner Sign Language

Lynn Freeman
Every Thu • 10 – 11 am

Spanish Level 1: Basic Spanish

Maria Hernandez
Every Thu • 10 – 11 am

Spanish Level 2: Beginning Conversation

Maria Hernandez
Every Thu • 11 am – 12 pm



Music

Elvis Music with Lane – Free

Lane Mashburn, Amelia Auto Mart
1st Mon • 9 – 10 am

Ukulele – Open Play

Julie and Jim Black
Every Mon • 10 – 11 am

Guitar Slow Jam w/Bass All Levels

Joyce Whorton, Musician
Every Mon • 2:30 – 3:30 pm



Lifelong Learning

Guitar Adventures with Joyce **Free**

Joyce Whorton, Musician
2nd & 4th Tue • 10 – 11 am

String Ensemble – All Levels

Judith Ward
Every Tue • 3:00 – 4:45 pm

Sing-Along with Bruce – **Free**

Bruce Beville
1st, 3rd & 5th Wed • 9 – 10 am

Guitar Tunes – **Free**

Doug Tober
2nd Wed • 9 – 10 am

Special by Wellcare – **Free**

Jennifer Sanders, Wellcare
4th Wed • 9 – 10 am

Tunes with the 2J's – **Free**

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

Songs with Terry – **Free**

Terry Murphy
Every 2nd Fri • 9 – 10 am



Other Opportunities

Coffee & Conversation – **Free**

Walker Davis, Jim Ramage
Every Tue • 9 – 10 am

Honoring Choices

Cindy Newman, Health Care Advocate for Hospice
Tue – July 14 • 9:30 – 11:30 am
Tue – July 21 • 9:30 – 11:30 am

Heimlich Maneuver Demonstration Training

Cindy Newman, Health Care Advocate for Hospice
Tue – July 14 • 11:30 am – 12:00 pm
Tue – July 21 • 11:30 am – 12:00 pm



Wellness

Global Longevity Foods

April Blue-Moseley, Gut Health Nutrition Specialist
Every Mon • 10:30 – 11:30 am

Holistic Health

April Blue-Moseley, Gut Health Nutrition Specialist
Every Mon • 11:45 am – 12:45 pm

Getting the Most From Your Doctor's Appointment

Kim Lippmann, Patient Advocates of Nassau
Wed – July 29 • 2 – 3 pm

Brain Boosters

Brain Health & Nutrition: Fueling the Aging Mind

Dr. Marc Case, Case Chiropractic Neurology Center
Fri – July 24 • 10 – 11 am

Exercise & the Aging Brain: How Movement Protects Brain Health

Dr. Caelum Widdifield, Case Chiropractic Neurology Center
Fri – August 14 • 10 – 11 am

Memory Matters: How to Keep Your Brain Engaged

Dr. Caelum Widdifield, Case Chiropractic Neurology Center
Fri – September 18 • 10 – 11 am

*Classes marked **Free** are usually held during our “Just Friends” program (free for seniors, 60 or older residing in Nassau County). Guests are welcome.*

Lifelong learning classes can be reserved at MyActiveCenter.com.

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For seniors in Nassau County, aging in place isn't just a wish—it's the foundation of a life well lived.



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Forever Sharp

The Senior Guide to Preserving Mental Agility

We often associate aging with a natural slowing down time, trading the fast-paced hustle for a quieter, more relaxed rhythm. But while your schedule might slow, your mind doesn't have to. Intellectual vitality, mental acuity, and cognitive sharpness are not exclusive to youth. In fact, keeping your brain firing on all cylinders as you age is one of the most powerful ways to maintain independence, confidence, and a high quality of life.

The human brain possesses a remarkable, lifelong characteristic known as neuroplasticity—the ability to reorganize itself, form new neural pathways, and adapt to fresh challenges. Your brain is a muscle; with the right habits and tools, you can keep it remarkably sharp.

The Ultimate Cognitive Anchor: The Power of Sleep

When discussing brain health, we often jump straight to puzzles and brain games. However, the true foundation of cognitive preservation happens when your eyes are closed. Sleep is not merely a period of downtime; it is an active, essential maintenance state for your mind.

As we age, sleep architecture naturally changes. Deep sleep stages often become shorter, and waking up during the night becomes more frequent. Yet, the biological necessity for quality sleep remains unchanged. During the deepest stages of sleep, your brain initiates a vital "cleanup" process. The glymphatic system, the brain's unique waste clearance mechanism, becomes highly active, flushing out metabolic waste and toxins, including beta-amyloid plaques associated with cognitive decline.

Furthermore, sleep is the precise window when memory consolidation occurs. The brain reviews the day's experiences, transforming short-term memories into long-term retention. Without adequate, restful sleep, seniors may experience: fragmented focus and shorter attention spans; slower processing speeds and delayed reflexes; increased difficulty retrieving words or names; and/or heightened vulnerability to mood swings and anxiety.

Prioritizing seven to eight hours of quality sleep is the single most effective baseline tool for protecting your cognitive edge.

The Digital and Practical Toolbox for Sharpness

Beyond sleep, keeping your mind agile requires deliberate, daily engagement. Fortunately, the modern world offers an excellent mix of traditional practices and innovative technology to help seniors stay sharp.

1. Embracing Targeted Cognitive Exercises: Traditional pastimes like crossword puzzles and Sudoku are wonderful for routine maintenance, but neuroplasticity thrives on novelty and difficulty. To truly challenge the brain, look to dedicated cognitive training platforms like Lumosity, Elevate, or CogniFit. These tools offer targeted exercises designed by neuroscientists to improve fluid intelligence, spatial awareness, and working memory. The key is to choose activities that feel slightly difficult; if an exercise is easy, your brain is cruising on autopilot.

2. Lifelong Learning and Novelty: One of the most potent shields against mental decline is building a robust "cognitive reserve"—a buffer of resilient neural networks built through lifetime learning. Taking up a brand-new skill forces the brain to construct entirely new pathways. Consider learning a new language via apps like Duolingo, picking up a musical instrument, or diving into an unfamiliar subject through online lectures.

3. Staying Connected: Social isolation is a quiet but significant contributor to cognitive decline. Engaging in meaningful conversation, reading social cues, and expressing complex thoughts requires immense computational power from your brain. Joining book clubs, volunteering at community organizations, or participating in group fitness classes provides a double benefit: emotional fulfillment and an intense workout for your frontal lobe.

A Holistic Blueprint for the Future

Preserving your mental sharpness is not about tracking down a single magic cure; it is about cultivating an intentional, balanced lifestyle. By pairing a rigorous sleep routine with continuous learning, technological brain-trainers, and active social lives, seniors can effectively steer their own cognitive destiny.

Your mind is an incredible archive of wisdom, experience, and capability. By investing a little time into its care every day, you ensure that your sharpest days are still ahead of you, filled with growth, learning, and meaningful connection.

Dr. Marc Case of Case Chiropractic Neurology Center



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More Than Staying Home

The Physical and Mental Foundations of Independence

For many older adults, aging in place represents freedom, dignity, and independence. It means remaining in familiar surroundings, maintaining routines, and continuing to live life on one's own terms. Yet aging in place is about far more than staying at home. It is about preserving the physical and mental abilities necessary to live safely, confidently, and meaningfully within that environment.

Successful aging in place begins long before support is ever needed.

One of the most overlooked realities of aging is how quickly the body can change when movement decreases. A temporary illness, injury, hospitalization, or even a short period of inactivity can create lasting effects on strength, balance, endurance, and mobility. That is why consistent movement is one of the most important investments in long-term independence.

Exercise is not simply about fitness or appearance, it is a form of empowerment.

Consistent movement helps preserve the strength needed to stand safely, walk confidently, climb stairs, carry groceries, and complete everyday tasks that support independence. Aerobic and strength training exercises can help improve circulation, support heart health, protect joint function, and reduce the risk of falls.

Equally important, however, is the link between regular movement and emotional and cognitive health. Ongoing physical activity has been linked to improved mood, reduced anxiety, sharper thinking, and better overall quality of life. Simple, everyday activities like walking, stretching, swimming, light strength training, dancing, or chair-based exercises can help sustain confidence and happiness for an older adult.

The key is consistency, not intensity.

Unfortunately, many people wait until mobility declines before recognizing how essential movement truly is. By then, regaining lost strength becomes far more difficult. Daily walks, gardening, participating in wellness classes, or simple resistance exercises performed consistently over time can strengthen both the body and mind.

Unfortunately, many people wait until mobility declines before recognizing how essential movement truly is. By then, regaining lost strength becomes far more difficult.

Take advantage of opportunities to stay engaged and active at NCCOA.

Community-based wellness programs can provide the structure and encouragement needed to make physical activity a regular part of daily life. At Nassau County Council on Aging, Membership classes offer a variety of opportunities for older adults to stay active while supporting strength, balance, flexibility, and overall well-being. From yoga classes to Pilates, Zumba, and aerobics, these offerings are designed to help participants remain engaged physically, mentally, and socially.

The benefits often extend beyond the activity itself. Regular participation can help establish routines, build confidence, and encourage continued movement, all of which contribute to aging in place successfully. Shared experiences with others can also create a sense of community that makes healthy habits easier to maintain.

Programs that combine movement, learning, and connection can help older adults stay active, engaged, and better prepared to maintain their independence for years to come..

Nutrition presents a challenge to aging in place — and families often underestimate it.

Healthy eating sounds simple in theory, but aging can complicate nutrition in unexpected ways. Changes in appetite, medication side effects, chronic illness, or social isolation may all interfere with maintaining proper nutrition. Basic tasks like grocery shopping, preparing meals, or remembering to eat regularly can slowly become difficult for an older adult living alone.

Malnutrition among older adults is more common than many realize and often develops gradually, making it easy to overlook until significant decline has already occurred. A reliable food preparation

routine can help combat these challenges. Having a small list of favorite recipes and a designated grocery shopping day keeps meal preparation easy and predictable.

Ultimately, aging in place is not about avoiding aging itself. It is about preparing for it wisely.

Today’s choices directly influence tomorrow’s independence. Whether staying active, maintaining strength, prioritizing nutrition, or planning for future support, aging well does not happen accidentally. It is built through consistent habits that protect both the body and mind over time.

Aging in place begins with understanding that independence is not preserved by standing still. It is preserved through movement, preparation, and the willingness to continue caring for ourselves through every stage of life.

Kim Kelly-Speranza, NCCOA Caregiver Support Navigator



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Independent Living

Resources and Advanced Planning for Older Adults

As Nassau County's population grows and ages, the concept of independent living becomes increasingly important. Independent living refers to the ability of seniors to live safely, comfortably, and autonomously in their own homes or communities, rather than in institutional settings. This approach not only supports dignity and personal choice but also contributes to improved health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

The Value of Independent Living

Maintaining independence allows older adults to continue engaging in meaningful activities, remain socially connected, and make decisions about their lives. Studies consistently show that older adults who live independently experience greater satisfaction and better mental health outcomes. However, achieving and sustaining independence can sometimes be challenging due to health issues, mobility limitations, and the risk of isolation.

The Importance of Advanced Planning

Advanced planning is critical to successful independent living. This includes preparing for potential health changes, considering housing options, and making legal and financial arrangements. Advance directives, powers of attorney, and healthcare proxies ensure that an individual's wishes will be respected if they are unable to make decisions in the future. Financial planning helps secure resources for home modifications, transportation, or in-home assistance, preventing crises and reducing stress for both seniors and their families.

Community Resources in Nassau County

Nassau County Council on Aging is fortunate to have a robust network of services dedicated to supporting older adults as they live healthy, independent lives and remain active members of the community. Two key resources that stand out within the Council on Aging are:

Advocate Home Healthcare: Advocate Home Healthcare offers a range of in-home services designed to keep seniors safe and comfortable in their own homes. These services include personal care assistance, homemaking, respite care, companionship, and personal concierge-style VIP assistance services. The Advocate team works closely with clients and families to develop personalized care plans, making it possible for older adults to remain independent for as long as possible.

Case Management & Caregiver Support: NCCOA also provides comprehensive case management services to older adults and their families. Experienced case managers help navigate available benefits, connect clients to community resources, and provide guidance on health and wellness. Caregiver support is offered through respite care, caregiver group networks, caregiver navigator services, as well as our in-house Adult Day Health Center “The Club”. NCCOA also offers congregate and home-delivered meals, as well as an abundance of empowering wellness and restorative programs that address the diverse needs of the senior community.

How Case Management Supports Independence

Case management services, such as those offered by NCCOA, can be a cornerstone of independent living. Case managers assess each individual’s needs, coordinate care, and advocate for necessary services. This holistic approach ensures that seniors receive the right support at the right time, helping them overcome challenges and empowering them to maintain or regain their independence.

Conclusion

Independent living is a desirable and realistic goal for older adults in Nassau County. By practicing advanced planning, and by taking advantage of local resources like Advocate Home Healthcare, case management, adult day healthcare, and caregiver support programs, seniors can take steps toward maintaining their autonomy, dignity, and quality of life. Families and caregivers are encouraged to start planning early and to reach out to NCCOA for information, support, and guidance along the way. The path to independence is best traveled with preparation, and with the right plan and resources in place.

Brian LaVacca, NCCOA Chief Administrative Officer

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NASSAU COUNTY
Council on Aging



Making Connections

Why Staying Social is the Secret to Aging in Place

Aging in place is about far more than just staying in the comfort of your own home; it is about remaining deeply rooted in the community that surrounds it. As we navigate our golden years, independence is a wonderful goal, but it should never mean isolation. In fact, research consistently shows that social connections are just as vital to our health as a balanced diet or regular exercise.

Staying socially active is the ultimate fuel for the mind, body, and spirit, helping us remain engaged and connected. When we have a laugh with an old friend or meet someone new, our brains light up, our stress levels drop, and our overall sense of purpose skyrockets. For seniors who choose to live independently at home, fostering these connections is the secret to thriving and maintaining a fulfilling, meaningful lifestyle.

The Power of Shared Experiences

Human beings are wired for connection, and that need only grows as the chapters of our lives change. Retirement or shifting family dynamics can sometimes shrink our daily social circles, making it easy to fall into quiet routines. However, stepping out to engage with the world is a powerful act of self-care.

Whether attending local events, participating in a weekly card game, or joining a book club, staying active with friends keeps us grounded. Shared moments remind us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. With friends by our side, we can celebrate life's joys together and find reliable, loving support during challenging times.

A Gateway to Connection

This is exactly why Nassau County Council on Aging

(NCCOA) exists. We aren't just a building; we are a vibrant hub designed specifically for your enrichment, laughter, and growth. Think of the center as your community living room, a place where you are always welcome and where there is always something happening.

From educational workshops and creative arts to fitness classes tailored just for you, our calendar is packed with opportunities to move, learn, and connect. Coming to the center takes the guesswork out of socializing. It provides a safe, warm, and lively environment where you can try new things and, most importantly, expand your circle. While keeping up with lifelong friends is beautiful, remaining open to meeting new friends keeps life exciting. Every stranger at NCCOA is just a conversation away from becoming a cherished companion.

Purpose Through Community

Beyond our doors, there are countless ways to weave a tight-knit web of support. For many, local churches and places of worship offer a profound sense of belonging and spiritual community.

Volunteering is another incredible avenue for staying social while making a difference. Giving your time to a cause you care about—whether it's helping at the center, teaching a class, or supporting our seniors—ignites a powerful sense of purpose. It gets you out of the house, keeps your mind sharp, and surrounds you with positive, mission-driven people.

These connections do more than fill a calendar; they help create a sense of belonging that is essential for healthy aging. Knowing there are people who care, check in, and share experiences with you provides comfort, confidence, and encouragement to remain active and engaged in everyday life.

NCCOA is Here Waiting on You

Aging in place successfully means recognizing that you don't have to do it alone. True independence is backed by interdependence. By staying active, showing up to events, leaning into faith communities, and volunteering, you build a vibrant life filled with joy and support.

We encourage you to look at our upcoming schedule this week. Come on by, join an event, bring an old friend, or come ready to make a new one. Your community is right here, and we can't wait to welcome you.

Cami Lawson, NCCOA Membership & Community Engagement



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SOLUTION FROM PUZZLE ON PAGE 15

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NCCOA Event Rentals

At both Fernandina Beach and Westside (Hilliard) Senior Life Centers, an assortment of rooms with maximum occupancy of 200 persons can be rented for galas and parties, weddings and receptions, fundraisers, business meetings, church services, and more!

For reservations, please contact Don Harley at 904-775-5485 or donharley@nassaucountycoa.org



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Caregiver Support Groups

**Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center
1901 Island Walk Way
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034**

All support groups are hosted by Nassau County Council on Aging, and are open to the community. Meetings include guest speakers and group discussion. There is no charge to attend our support groups.



Grieving with Hope Support Group

2nd and 4th Monday of each month, 5:30 pm—7:00 pm

Share stories and find support from those who have also lost a family member or close friend.



Successful Caregiver

3rd Monday of each month, 3:30 pm—5:30 pm

Do you want to become a more educated caregiver? This support group is facilitated by a registered nurse and public health professional. Come ask questions relating to transportation, nutrition, medical equipment, “awkward” topics and more.



Caregiver Stressbuster Forum

2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 1:30 pm—3:00 pm

Practice stress-reduction techniques, find support from other caregivers, reduce anxiety and improve quality of life. A respite activity for loved ones is available by reservation for a nominal fee for Club members during the meeting.



Caregiver Support Group

2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 3:30 pm—5:00 pm

Reduce stress and improve quality of life through conversation with fellow caregivers. A free respite activity for loved ones is available by reservation during the meeting.



Memory Café

2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 2:00 pm—3:00 pm

Find support, connection, health & well-being for those experiencing clinical memory loss in a welcoming and safe environment.

For more information, please contact

Jennifer Gundling, 904-775-5488, jgundling@nassaucountycoa.org





Support Groups

Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center
1901 Island Walk Way
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

All support groups are hosted by Nassau County Council on Aging, and are open to the community. Meetings include guest speakers and group discussion.
There is no charge to attend our support groups.

Yoga for the Grieving Heart

2nd and 4th Monday of each month, 4:15 pm—5:15 pm

Instructor: Tina LaVacca. Grief Yoga® is accompanied by Restorative Yoga to aide in the release of physical pain and emotional struggle experienced through grief and loss.
Sponsored by Rev. Jim Tippins, Changing Tides Bereavement Resources.
Contact: Melody Dawkins, 904-775-5477, mdawkins@nassaucounty.org



Hearing Loss Support Group

1st Tuesday of each month, 12 noon—1:30 pm

Discuss latest technologies and member experiences to assist with hearing loss in daily living.
Contact: Chris Fournier, 904-775-5490, cfournier@nassaucountycoa.org



Low Vision Support Group

4th Wednesday of each month, 11:00 am—12:30 pm

Discuss latest adaptive devices and member experiences to assist with vision loss in daily living.
Contact: Chris Fournier, 904-775-5490, cfournier@nassaucountycoa.org



Parkinson's Support Group: You Are Not Alone

3rd Thursday of each month, 10:00 am—11:00 am (beginning Sept. 18)

Open to individuals with Parkinson's and their care partners to share experiences, learn coping strategies and find encouragement. Facilitated by Tina LaVacca.
Contact: Melody Dawkins, 904-775-5477, mdawkins@nassaucountycoa.org



National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Every Friday, 11:00 am—12:30 pm

Share experiences with individuals, family members and friends impacted by mental illness.
Contact: NAMI Nassau, 904-277-1886



For more information, contact us at 904-261-0701 or visit
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