

# THE DISPATCH

DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING

97 MAIN ST., SUITE 2 • DELHI, NY 13753



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## HEAP 2025-2026

By: Rhonda Barriger,  
HEAP Examiner

Beginning December 1, 2025, regular benefits for HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) will be available for lower income families in Delaware County to help supplement their home heating expenses.

Applications for those persons receiving SNAP benefits and/or public assistance will be processed by the Delaware County Department of Social Services, 607-832-5300.

Applications for applicants age of 60 or older will be processed by the Delaware County Office of the Aging, 607-832-5750.

All other income applications will be processed by Delaware Opportunities Inc., 607-746-1615.

Income guidelines for the 2025-26 HEAP season are as follows:

| Household Size | Maximum Gross Monthly Income |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1              | \$3,473                      |
| 2              | \$4,542                      |
| 3              | \$5,611                      |
| 4              | \$6,680                      |
| 5              | \$7,749                      |
| 6              | \$8,818                      |

See "HEAP 2025-2026" page 3

## Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Begins On January 1<sup>st</sup> And Ends On March 31<sup>st</sup>

Older adults and people with disabilities who are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan have until March 31st to switch to another MA plan or to Original Medicare with or without a stand-alone prescription drug plan (Part D) during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA OEP).

The MA OEP occurs each year from January 1 through March 31, and is only available to people who have a Medicare Advantage plan. One change can be made during this period, which will take effect the first of the month following the month you enroll. For example, if you switch to a new Medicare Advantage Plan in March, your new coverage begins April 1.

Changes that can be made during this period include switching to:

- a different Medicare Advantage plan with drug coverage;
- a different Medicare Advantage plan without drug coverage;
- Original Medicare and a Part D plan; or
- Original Medicare without a Part D plan.

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan and a separate Part D plan,

See "Open Enrollment" page 3

### What You'll Need:

- Social Security or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for each family member
- All tax forms: W-2s, 1099s, 1098s
- Childcare provider name, address, and tax ID, if applicable
- Bank routing and account numbers for checking or savings account
- 2024 federal and state tax returns (if available)

For information, **call:** 607-431-4338 or **email:** [vita@hartwick.edu](mailto:vita@hartwick.edu) for an appointment

Hartwick College IRS VITA Tax Preparation Director: Li Luo, CPA, MSA, MBA

We are the only Vita & TCE site in the region to offer ALL-YEAR no-cost tax service

Hartwick IRS-Certified students served over 7,500 families from 45 NYS counties and those from 19 states nationwide, achieving a 100% acceptance rate with zero errors, bringing over \$5.3 million in economic value to the community, including saved tax filing fees, and claimed tax refunds, tax credits, and Economic Impact Payments (stimulus checks) since 2019.

### When and Where:

**Hartwick College** | Golisano 2nd Floor, Oneonta Feb 2 to Apr 15 (Except March 16 & 17) Mondays & Tuesdays 6 to 8pm  
Call 607-431-4338 or email [vita@hartwick.edu](mailto:vita@hartwick.edu)

**Oneonta Veterans Club** | Oneonta Saturdays, Feb 7 to Apr 11 (Except Feb 21, Mar 14 and 21), 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Call 607-431-4338

**Tabernacle Baptist Church** | Utica Saturday, Feb 21, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Call 315-735-7534

**Laurens Central School** | Laurens Friday, Mar 27, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
Call 607-432-2050 ext. 1120

For more information, contact:

Call: 607-431-4388  
Email: [vita@hartwick.edu](mailto:vita@hartwick.edu) for appointment



## AARP Foundation Tax Aide

By: Suzanne DuMond

**AARP Foundation Tax Aide** will be preparing taxes for the 2025 tax year.

**Location:** Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY

**Dates:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, February 3 - April 9, 2026

You can call for an appointment starting January 20, 2026. The number is 607-376-5542.

## NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR

By: Lyndsay Komosinski

Here we are, at the beginning of a new year. For me, the new year symbolizes several things: new opportunities, new beginnings, uncertainty, growth and development. A new year also allows us to reflect on the previous year, recognizing what works and what could be improved, providing us with a chance to make necessary changes. These changes can be programmatic within the services offered, new faces, and personal changes that each and every one of us can make. I believe that there is always room for improvement.

Let's begin by talking about programmatic changes. As many of you know, in October of 2025, Office for the Aging subcontracted our Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) program to the Rural Health Network of South-Central New York (RHNSCNY). There were several reasons driving the need for this change. The NEMT program easily became one of OFA's most utilized programs over the course of the past couple of years. The need for rides to and from medical appointments became more than what our small department could handle, in terms of staffing, volunteers, and funding. We knew that the importance of this program was so great that we had to figure out how to make it grow so that it could continue to serve our current clients and sustain the growing population of people in need. A contract with the RHNSCNY allowed us to meet all of those needs. Through the GetThere Call Center's Volunteer Transportation Service, our program was able to tap into additional funds, staffing, and volunteers. In the month of October alone, the RHNSCNY was able to provide 191 medical trips for

older adults, for a total of 10,312.63 miles driven.

Another major change that has occurred in 2025 is the increase of the suggested contribution for senior dining meals. In the past, the suggested contribution amount was set at \$3.00 per meal for eligible older adults, and \$5.00 for anyone under the age of 60. In May of 2025, the amount of the suggested contribution increased to \$5.00 for eligible older adults, and a \$10.00 required fee for individuals under the age of 60. The need to increase the amount has been recognized for several years, especially following the pandemic. After the pandemic, food prices skyrocketed. I often hear people joke about the cost for a dozen eggs, or a gallon of milk. While it can be laughable at times, it's a very serious matter. We want people to be able to get a portion of the required daily nutrition but have to be able to sustain the growing need of the program. Currently, the cost of the meal provided is close to \$15.00 per meal. During the year of 2025, our dining centers have served more than 80,000 meals. Due to funding cuts that are beyond our control, the increase was necessary in order to sustain the program. While no qualifying person would ever be turned away from receiving a meal for not making a contribution, the amount that is received helps the program continue to run in a fashion that is unique to Delaware County. This contribution aids in serving the growing population who are in need.

Along the lines of changing a suggested contribution amount for Meals, OFA has also decided to change the amount of the suggested contribution for our Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)



Lyndsay Komosinski, Director

as well. Previously, the suggested amount was a sliding scale, depending on the recipient's income. The suggested amount ranged from \$18/month to \$32/month, regardless of the service provided. Recipients of PERS can receive a mobile unit, landline, or a smartwatch. Falls detection is an option individuals can add with each unit. Beginning January 1, 2026, the intake will no longer require the recipients to disclose their income information, and the suggested contribution is set at \$20/month. Similar to the meal contribution, no person will be denied the service if they are unable to contribute the full amount, or any at all, but the contribution does greatly assist in sustaining the availability of this program. The goal for changing the contribution amount was to make it more streamlined, and affordable for everyone. Most lifeline companies charge monthly fees ranging from \$50.00 - \$75.00 per month for individuals to have a unit.

The 2025 Open Enrollment period for Medicare presented a major challenge. Prior to my role as Director, there were a couple of positions that were removed from our agency. Unfortunately, by eliminating one of the positions, it also removed a full-time HICAP Counselor, forcing the office to operate during this time with one full-time counselor and one part-time counselor. I filled in as able, but due to learning a new position, and other work deadlines as a new director, my help was limited. I will say that despite being short staffed, OFA's two counselors were able to help 386 individuals from October 15 through December 7. I am very proud of the

amount of time that they dedicated, ensuring they were able to help as many people as possible. Unfortunately, however, there were still many individuals who were not able to get the help that they needed from OFA. This is something that really bothered our staff. Our main goal here at OFA is to provide the greatest amount of assistance possible, to the greatest number of people. That being said, OFA will be adding the two previously eliminated positions back into our roster and training them both as HICAP Counselors. The goal is to have 3-4 full-time counselors, with 1 part time counselor, ultimately allowing our staff to help a larger number of people during the 2026 Open Enrollment period.

A final major programmatic change that will take place in 2026 is the opportunity to lease a new bus, funded by the Senior Council. The OFA Senior Bus is another one of OFA's most utilized programs. We currently have two buses that operate on a fixed route. One was purchased in 2022, has more than 100,000 miles on it, and has needed several repairs, at times forcing runs to be cancelled. The second bus was provided to OFA by Veteran's Services. This bus is older, and does not have a wheelchair lift, limiting those who are unable to get on the bus using the stairs. A new bus will help limit the cost of repairs, allowing greater reliability, and increase the number of riders.

I strongly believe that each and every change that has been, and will be made, will aid in the success of the agency, allowing for the opportunity to increase the number of people that can be served. As always, we here at OFA are open to feedback from those who use the service, know someone that uses, or will possibly need it in the future. You are the ones that matter the most. We can be reached by phone at (607) 832-5750 or by email at ofa@co.delaware.ny.us.

As we move forward into 2026, always remember to be kind and positive, regardless of what struggles may arise. We are the only ones who have the ability to make our day a meaningful one. I often tell my family and friends and will share with all of you, there is always something positive to find in every negative moment, if you are open to seeking what that positive is!

Wishing you all a wonderful year ahead, filled with peace, love and joy.

Delaware County Office for The Aging is  
now accepting  
Credit/Debit Card Payments!



If you would like to make a payment or contribution to Delaware County Office for the Aging by credit/debit card here is how you can do that.

- Visit our website at <https://www.delcony.us/departments/ofa/ofa.htm>, scroll about halfway down and you will see a flier. Click where it says ALL PAID.
- You can also pay over the phone by calling our office at 607-832-5750.
- You can scan the QR code here with your cell phone. →



### THE DISPATCH IS PUBLISHED EVERY OTHER MONTH BY THE DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING

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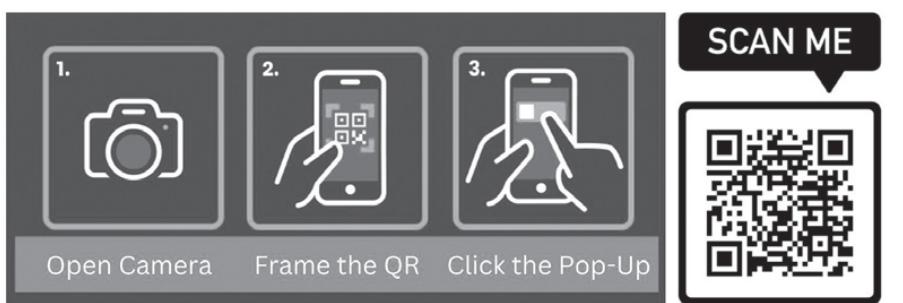
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<https://www.delcony.us/departments/ofa/ofa.htm>



# STAR Exemption

By: Department of Taxation and Finance

The STAR exemption is part of New York State's School Tax Relief (STAR) program, which provides a reduction on school property tax bills for eligible homeowners.

## Key Information

- Purpose: To provide property tax relief on an owner-occupied primary residence.
- Who Gets the Exemption: Only homeowners who have been continuously receiving the STAR exemption since

the 2015-2016 tax year can continue to receive it, provided they remain eligible.

- How it Works (for existing recipients): The exemption amount is subtracted directly from the school property tax bill. The value of the exemption savings is capped and does not increase annually.
- New Applicants: Must register for the STAR credit with the state. The credit amount is generally the same as the exemption but can increase by up to 2% each year, potentially offering a greater long-term benefit.

## Types of STAR Benefits (Exemption & Credit)

There are two forms of the STAR benefit:

| Feature                | Basic STAR   | Enhanced STAR  |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Eligibility            | All eligible homeowners, regardless of age   | Senior citizens (age 65 or older by December 31 of the year of the exemption)                                      |
| Income Limit           | Combined owner/spouse income \$500,000 or less (for the credit); \$250,000 or less (for existing exemptions) | Combined owner/spouse income \$110,750 or less for the 2026-2027 school year (based on 2024 income)                |
| Benefit                | Reduces the assessed value by a set amount (e.g., \$30,000, adjusted by locality)                            | Provides a larger reduction in assessed value (e.g., \$88,500 for the 2026-2027 school year, adjusted by locality) |
| Residency Requirements | The property must be the primary residence of an owner.  | The property must be the primary residence of at least one age-eligible owner.                                     |

## How to Apply or Manage Your Benefit

New applicants for the STAR program must register for the STAR credit through the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance.

- Online Registration: Use the NYS Tax Department website.
- Phone Registration: Call (518) 457-2036.

## LEGACY CORNER

By: Jonathan J. Moore, Caregiver Coordinator

Hello everyone, I hope the holidays were memorable and healthy. Let's look at the benefits of starting home care service for the new year. January is a month of new beginnings and resolutions, making it an ideal time to focus on improving the quality of life for older adults. For families navigating the challenges of care-giving, starting home care services in January can offer numerous benefits. Whether it's support for family caregivers or ensuring seniors remain in their homes, professional caregiving can bring peace of mind and improved well-being. Let's explore why beginning home care in January is a smart choice for seniors and their loved ones.

**A Fresh Start for the New Year:** The beginning of the year often inspires individuals to make positive changes. For families caring for aging loved ones, this might include seeking professional caregiving services. By

starting home care services in January, families can establish routines that promote healthier lifestyles and reduce stress.

**Post-Holiday Reflections:** After the holiday season, families often notice the increased needs of their aging loved ones. Whether it's difficulty with activities of daily living or managing medications, the signs may become clearer during extended visits. January is an excellent time to address these needs with the help of home care agencies.

**Health Benefits of Home Care Services for Older Adults:** Professional caregiving services offer essential support to seniors, improving their physical and emotional well-being.

**Companionship and Social Interaction:** Isolation can be a significant concern for the aging population, especially during the winter months. Professional caregivers provide emotional support and companionship,



"HEAP 2025-2026"

...continued from page 1

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 7               | \$9,018   |
| 8               | \$9,218   |
| 9               | \$9,419   |
| 10              | \$9,619   |
| 11              | \$9,820   |
| 12              | \$10,020  |
| 13              | \$10,221  |
| Each additional | Add \$687 |

## "HEAP 2025-2026"

...continued from page 1

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 7               | \$9,018   |
| 8               | \$9,218   |
| 9               | \$9,419   |
| 10              | \$9,619   |
| 11              | \$9,820   |
| 12              | \$10,020  |
| 13              | \$10,221  |
| Each additional | Add \$687 |

All households wishing to apply for HEAP, who have not received an application through the early outreach process, may request to have an application mailed to them or can go online at [www.mybenefits.com](http://www.mybenefits.com). For those applicants who are required to complete an interview; interviews can be completed face to face or via telephone. It is recommended that applicants apply prior to their fuel level getting extremely low or out, in an effort to avoid off route charges or emergency deliveries from fuel vendors. If a client has an emergency after hours or on the weekend, they should contact the Delaware County Sheriff's Office at 607-746-2336.

## "Open Enrollment"

...continued from page 1

you can switch to a Medicare Advantage Plan that does not include drug coverage or Original Medicare, but you cannot change Part D plans.

For more information, or to schedule an appointment, contact Delaware County Office for the Aging and NY Connects at (607) 832-5750 and ask to speak with a HIICAP Councilor.

ensuring that seniors stay socially engaged and emotionally healthy.

**Medication Reminders:** Proper medication adherence is crucial, particularly for seniors with chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's disease. Home care aides help with medication reminders, ensuring that doses are taken correctly and on time, which leads to better health outcomes.

**The Benefits for Family Caregivers:** Home care services allow family members to provide care to their loved ones while receiving financial support and professional training, easing the stress of caregiving. Some of the benefits entail:

**Relieving Caregiver Burnout:** Family caregivers often juggle multiple responsibilities, leading to stress and burnout. Starting part-time or full-time home care services in Janu-

ary offers much-needed respite, allowing caregivers to focus on their own well-being.

**Peace of Mind:** Knowing that professional caregivers are available to provide expert care and support bring peace of mind to family members. With the assistance of a trusted home care agency, families can ensure their elderly loved ones are safe and cared for.

On behalf of everyone here at Office for the Aging, we wish you a bright and healthy start to 2026. If you or anyone else you know wants additional information, please contact Delaware County Office for the Aging Caregiver Coordinator, Jonathan Moore, at (607) 832-5750 or by emailing [jonathan.moore@co.delaware.ny.us](mailto:jonathan.moore@co.delaware.ny.us).

Information and research adapted from <https://homincare-aid.com/>

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Do you have a Facebook account? If you do, we would love for you to check out our Facebook page! On it, you will find things like upcoming



program information, agency sponsored events, volunteer opportunities and much more. Search for Delaware County Office for the Aging and click "Like".

## A New Senior Club In The Town Of Middletown

By: Connie Spielman

There is a new senior club, member of the Delaware County Senior Council, in the town of Middletown! The group covers the area of Margaretville, Arkville, Fleischmanns and surrounding areas. We started meeting in the month of June. We are now close to fifty total members and have been averaging about thirty-member attendance.

We call ourselves the SEASONED SOCIAL CLUB. We have a Facebook presence and have an email address of [seasonedsocialclub@gmail.com](mailto:seasonedsocialclub@gmail.com).

We are off to a good start. We had an outdoor outing and lunch at the Rip Van Winkle Putt Putt. Guest speakers have included Diane Galusha from the Town of Middletown Historical Society, Deputy Timothy Tryon from the Delaware County Sheriff's Department, Robin Williams from the HUBB, Deborah Fox teaching us Mexican Train Dominoes and Linda Kelly and Christa Schafer teaching a Holiday Craft.

Future plans would include speakers, local travel, crafts, etc.



We have scheduled our meetings to immediately follow the senior Meals dining hour at the Margaretville Methodist church, encouraging our members to participate in that program.

We try to keep our members informed of events in the area and aware of local trips. We are also encouraging our members to play a wide variety of games after the meeting.

For further information about the club and meeting schedules, please contact Connie Spielman at 845-586-1986.

## Neuromuscular Aging Part 1: Why Balance Matters More Than You Think

From *The Epoch Times* by Cara Michelle Miller

Recent findings show that balance reflects overall health, offering a simple test to gauge neuromuscular aging as we grow.

A simple exercise, such as standing on one leg, can reveal a lot about how we age, according to new research from the Mayo Clinic. Standing on one leg is a good measure of your overall health because balance reflects how the body's systems work together, lead study author Kenton Kaufman, a senior research scientist at the Mayo Clinic, said in a statement.

The study, published on October 23rd in the journal PLOS One, found a "significant decline with the age" in the ability to stand on one leg.

"Balance is crucial to every aspect of life and influences participation and well-being," Anat Lubetzky, an associate professor of physical therapy at New York University, told *The Epoch Times*, "it helps us navigate stairs, carry groceries, and avoid falls or serious injuries."

As we age, our muscle coordination and senses weaken, making it harder to maintain balance. Unintentional falls are the leading cause of injuries

among adults aged 65 and older, and most falls result from a loss of balance. Understanding these changes is essential for maintaining health and independence.

### Declining Balance: A key Indicator of Aging

According to the study, as we age our ability to balance on one leg decreases. Among 40 participants over age 50, all in good health and free from neuromuscular disorders, the time they could maintain a one-legged stance decreased by two seconds per decade. For instance, if someone could balance for 30 sec-

onds in their 50s, they might only manage about 28 seconds in their 60s and around 26 seconds in their 70s. Participants performed several balance exercises, including standing on both legs with eyes open, standing on both legs with eyes closed, and single leg standing on each leg, each lasting 30 seconds.

In addition to balance, researchers compared other factors, such as walking speed, grip strength, and knee strength. They found that balance and knee strength showed significant declines with aging. Dominant grip and knee strength also decreased every decade, with one legged balance deteriorating fastest.

This decline in balance can serve as a reliable and independent measure of neuromuscular aging, the researchers said, often occurring before noticeable changes in other physical abilities, such as muscle strength and walking speed. Kaufman believes proactive steps can improve balance: standing on one leg helps you to train your muscles and vestibular responses to maintain balance.

If you can stand on one leg for 30 seconds you are doing well!

See the next *Dispatch* for Part 2.

The better you feel,  
the brighter your days.

If you or a loved one is coping with a serious illness at home, Helios Care can still help make your days brighter. Our team provides a range of expert, compassionate care to guide and support you and your family at every step – including education and training for family caregivers. Let us brighten your days and keep you home. Contact us for details.

  
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# Think Exercise Is Painful Or Boring?

Edited by: Susan Hammerslag  
Coordinator SNAP-Ed

Delaware County Office for the Aging now offers Bingocize® with health and nutrition information. Bingocize® was created to prove that moving your body and learning about health can be fun, social, and full of prizes! Bingocize® is a one-of-a-kind program that mixes gentle exercise and health education with the classic game of Bingo. It's designed to keep you moving, laughing, and learning while connecting with others.

Join the program and build strength and balance, learn health tips that keep you thriving, enjoy social time with friends, and of course, play Bingo! Workshops are scheduled: two sessions per week for 10 weeks.

Bingocize® is perfect for older adults of all abilities. Exercises can be done seated or standing, so you can join in whether you're a fitness pro or just getting started. No gym membership required! Just wear comfy clothes,

good shoes, and a smile—we'll provide the rest (bingo cards, chips, resistance band, and stress ball).

Benefits you'll feel may include: more energy and activity, better balance and strength, sharper mind and focus, stronger social connections, and reduced fall risk. Bingocize® isn't just exercise, it's a party with a purpose. You'll laugh, learn, and most importantly stay active and connected.

## Bingocize® with health and nutrition information classes currently scheduled for:

Delhi Senior Dining Center  
Wednesdays and Fridays 10:30 – 11:30  
10 weeks beginning January 14.

Walton Presbyterian Church (Red Brick Church) Mondays and Thursdays 2-3pm, 10 weeks beginning January 26.

Call the Office for the Aging at 607 832-5750 to register, or for more information.

## Chicken Chowder for Two

Taken from: [foodhero.org](http://foodhero.org)

Creamy, hearty and comforting soup for two. Ready in under an hour!

### Nutrition Facts

|                          |              |                  |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Chicken Chowder for Two  | Serving size | 1 1/2 cup (434g) |
| Amount per 1 Serving     |              |                  |
| <b>Calories</b>          | <b>260</b>   | % Daily Value*   |
| Total Fat 8g             | 10%          |                  |
| Saturated Fat 1.5g       | 8%           |                  |
| Trans Fat 0g             |              |                  |
| Cholesterol 35mg         | 12%          |                  |
| Sodium 430mg             | 19%          |                  |
| Carbohydrates 29g        | 11%          |                  |
| Dietary Fiber 3g         | 11%          |                  |
| Total Sugars 7g          |              |                  |
| Includes 0g Added Sugars | 0%           |                  |
| <b>Protein 19g</b>       |              |                  |
| Vitamin D 1mcg           | 6%           |                  |
| Calcium 125mg            | 10%          |                  |
| Iron 2mg                 | 10%          |                  |
| Potassium 832mg          | 20%          |                  |
| Vitamin A 306mg          | 34%          |                  |
| Vitamin C 20mg           | 22%          |                  |

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



### Ingredients

2 teaspoons vegetable oil  
½ cup chopped onion  
½ cup diced or grated carrot  
2 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth  
1 cup diced potato (fresh or frozen)  
½ teaspoon thyme  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
½ cup (4 ounces) cooked and diced chicken  
½ cup low-fat or nonfat milk  
1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour  
¼ teaspoon red wine vinegar (optional)  
black pepper to taste (optional)

### Directions

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Rinse or scrub fresh vegetables under running water before preparing.
- In a medium saucepan, sauté onion and carrot on medium heat until softened, about 3 minutes.

- Add broth, potato, thyme, garlic powder and salt. Bring to a gentle boil and simmer until the potatoes are soft, 15 to 20 minutes.
- While potatoes are cooking, stir flour and milk together in a small dish.
- Add chicken to the saucepan and stir 1 to 2 minutes until heated through.
- Slowly add milk mixture and stir as the soup thickens. Boil gently for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Before serving, add vinegar and pepper, if desired.
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

### Notes

- Substitute the diced carrot with any combination of carrot, celery, pepper or leek.
- Substitute other vegetables such as corn or broccoli for half of the potatoes.

## Annual Sale...



Delhi Senior Community located at 7 Main Street held their annual sale on November 8th.

### ATTENTION – ATENCIÓN – 注意 – AUFMERKSAMKEIT – UWAGA

Delaware County Office for the Aging offers interpretation services for more than 200 languages. To inquire about our agencies services for the aging at no cost to you, please call (607) 832-5750.

(Spanish) Oficina del Condado de Delaware para el envejecimiento ofrece servicios de interpretación para más de 200 idiomas preguntar acerca de nuestros servicios de agencias para el envejecimiento, sin costo para usted. Por favor llame al (607) 832-5750.

(Chinese) 特拉华县办事处老化超过200种语言提供口译服务。在没有你的成本询问我们的机构老龄化的服务, 请致电 (607) 832-5750.

(German) Delaware County Amt für Aging bietet Dolmetscherdienste für mehr als 200 Sprachen. Um mehr über unsere Agenturen Dienste für das Altern ohne Kosten für Sie, rufen Sie bitte (607) 832-5750.

(Polish) Delaware County Urząd the Aging oferuje usługi w zakresie tłumaczeń ustnych na ponad 200 języków. Aby dowiedzieć się o naszych usługach agencji do starzenia bez kosztów dla Ciebie, zadzwoń (607) 832-5750.

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Leslie & Virginia Sanford, Joseph Spinella, Barbara Thompson, Douglas Whittaker & Ellen Ohara**

# Helping People, Changing Lives: 3 Health Benefits Of Volunteering

Article adapted from: 3 health benefits of volunteering - Mayo Clinic Health System

Volunteers make an immeasurable difference in people's lives and often serve to help others. Did you know that volunteering can benefit your health as well?

The good news is that you don't need to be a philanthropist or senator to enhance or create change in your community. Volunteering makes an immeasurable difference in people's lives. Your actions, big or small, can help others and benefit your health.

Research has shown that volunteering offers significant health benefits, especially for older adults, including:

### 1. Improves physical and mental health.

Volunteer activities keep people moving and thinking at the same time.

Research has found that volunteering among adults, age 60 and over, provided benefits to physical and mental health. Volunteers report better physical health than non-volunteers. Research also has shown that volunteering leads to lower rates of depression and anxiety, especially for people 65 and older.

Volunteering reduces stress and increases positive, relaxed feelings by releasing dopamine. By spending time in service to others, volunteers report feeling a sense of meaning and appreciation, both given and received, which can have a stress-reducing effect.

Reduced stress further decreases the risk of some physical and mental health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety, and general illness. In addition, people who volunteer have lower mortality rates than those who do not.

### 2. Provides a sense of purpose and teaches valuable skills.

The work that volunteers provide is essential to everyday activities, giving volunteers a sense of purpose, especially when giving their time and talent in the areas they find meaningful. Older volunteers experience greater increases in life satisfaction and self-esteem.

### 3. Nurture new and existing relationships.

Volunteering increases social interaction and helps build a support system based on common interests. One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to participate in a shared activity.

In many cases, volunteers have diverse backgrounds, which helps expand their social network and allows them to practice social skills

with others.

People volunteer for different reasons, such as exploring careers, sharpening skills, staying active during retirement, meeting new people and serving their communities. Yet all volunteers share a common desire to improve the health and welfare of people in their communities.

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer? There is a wide variety of volunteer opportunities in every community, whether you're interested in youth, environmental, health, religious or community causes.

At Delaware County Office for the Aging, volunteers play a vital role in daily operations, both in the office and within the programs. If you are interested in volunteering contact Delaware County Office for the Aging at (607) 832-5750 or email us at ofa@delaware.ny.us

## SENIOR DINING PROGRAM MENU

*MILK IS SERVED WITH EVERY MEAL. NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO CONSULTANT DIETITIAN. MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE.*

| <b>DATES</b>                       | <b>MONDAY</b>  | <b>TUESDAY</b>  | <b>WEDNESDAY</b>  | <b>THURSDAY</b>  | <b>FRIDAY</b>  |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>2-2</b><br>Thru<br><b>2-6</b>   | Baked Tavern Ham<br>Baked Potato<br>Butternut Squash<br>Rosey Apple Relish<br>Jello w/ Topping   | Country Fried Steak<br>Mashed Potatoes<br>Vegetable Medley<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Apple Crisp        | Spicy Cranberry Pork<br>Baked Sweet Potatoes<br>Steamed Peas<br>Creamy Cucumber Salad<br>Chocolate Pudding                  | BBQ Chicken<br>Baked Beans<br>Zucchini/Squash<br>Cole Slaw<br>Sherbet                                | Turkey Penne Bake<br>Garden Fresh Carrots<br>Snow on the Mountain<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Yellow Cake  |
| <b>2-9</b><br>Thru<br><b>2-13</b>  | Swedish Meatballs<br>Egg Noodles<br>Broccoli Florets<br>Fruit Cocktail<br>Banana Pudding         | Chicken Stir Fry<br>Steamed Brown Rice<br>Diced Carrots<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Mandarin Oranges      | Stuffed Shells<br>Winter Blend Veggies<br>Italian Bread<br>Diced Pears  | Homestyle Meatloaf<br>Mashed Potatoes<br>Green Beans<br>Diced Peaches<br>Sugar Cookies               | Turkey Pot Pie<br>Brussels Sprouts<br>Cranberry Sauce<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Upside Down Cake         |
| <b>2-16</b><br>Thru<br><b>2-20</b> | CLOSED<br>PRESIDENTS'<br>DAY   | Chicken Parmesan<br>Spaghetti w/ Sauce<br>String Beans<br>Orange Juice<br>Vanilla Ice Cream           | Macaroni & Cheese<br>Stewed Tomatoes<br>Tossed Salad<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Chocolate Brownie                              | Pot Roast w/ Gravy<br>Mashed Potatoes<br>Red Cabbage<br>Dinner Roll<br>Butterscotch Pudding          | Tuna Noodle Casserole<br>Peas & Carrots<br>Apple Juice<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Cranberry Crisp         |
| <b>2-23</b><br>Thru<br><b>2-27</b> | Beef Pepper Steak<br>Parmesan Rice<br>Broccoli/Cauliflower<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Diced Pears   | California Chicken<br>Roasted Potatoes<br>Sliced Carrots<br>Cranberry Sauce<br>Sherbet                | Turkey Ala King<br>Buttermilk Biscuit<br>Zucchini & Squash<br>Snow on the Mountain<br>Spiced Peaches                        | Spaghetti/Meatballs<br>Green Beans<br>Tossed Salad<br>Italian Bread<br>Vanilla Pudding               | Potato Crusted Pollock<br>Sweet Potato Fries<br>Steamed Peas<br>Cole Slaw<br>Lemon Squares             |
| <b>3-2</b><br>Thru<br><b>3-6</b>   | Chili Con Carne<br>Steamed Brown Rice<br>Winter Blend Veggies<br>Fruit Salad<br>Ice Cream Sundae | Chicken Florentine<br>Capri Blend Veggies<br>Cabbage Salad Bowl<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Lemon Pudding | Spinach Quiche<br>Green Beans/Mushrooms<br>Orange Juice<br>Cinnamon Applesauce  | Roast Turkey w/ Gravy<br>Whipped Potatoes<br>Peas and Carrots<br>Cranberry Sauce<br>Iced Yellow Cake | Crab Topped Tilapia<br>Parmesan Pasta<br>Steamed Broccoli<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Peachy Cream Pudding |
| <b>3-9</b><br>Thru<br><b>3-13</b>  | Swiss Steak<br>Oven Roasted Potatoes<br>Seasoned Spinach<br>Three Bean Salad<br>Brownie          | Orange Pork<br>Steamed Brown Rice<br>Steamed Peas<br>Pineapple Juice<br>Sugar Cookies                 | Sunrise Chicken<br>Buttered Noodles<br>Steamed Broccoli<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Chocolate Pudding                           | Beef Stew<br>Cauliflower<br>Tossed Salad<br>Italian Bread<br>Sliced Peaches                          | Macaroni & Cheese<br>Stewed Tomatoes<br>Brussels Sprouts<br>Cucumber Salad<br>Cinnamon Apples          |
| <b>3-16</b><br>Thru<br><b>3-20</b> | Sloppy Joe on a Bun<br>Greek Oven Fries<br>Mixed Veggies<br>Apple Juice<br>Vanilla Ice Cream     | <b>ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER</b>   | Cranberry Chicken<br>Rice Pilaf<br>Capri Blend Veggies<br>Sliced Carrots, Boiled<br>Potatoes, Dinner Roll<br>Pistachio Cake | BBQ Pork<br>Sweet Potatoes<br>Cauliflower<br>Snow on the Mountain<br>Pineapple Tidbits               | Breaded Fish on a Bun<br>Roasted Potatoes<br>Mixed Veggies<br>Fruited Jello                            |
| <b>3-23</b><br>Thru<br><b>3-27</b> | Swedish Meatballs<br>Steamed Brown Rice<br>Red Cabbage<br>Apple Juice<br>Oatmeal Raisin Cookies  |   | Roast Pork w/ Gravy<br>Whipped Potatoes<br>Succotash<br>Applesauce<br>Mandarin Oranges                                      | Meatloaf w/Gravy<br>Mashed Potatoes<br>Peas & Carrots<br>Diced Pears<br>Sherbet                      | Vegetarian Lasagna<br>Sautéed String Beans<br>Tossed Salad<br>Italian Bread<br>Jello w/ Topping        |
| <b>3-30</b><br>Thru<br><b>4-3</b>  | Tangy Baked Chicken<br>Baked Potato<br>Butternut Squash<br>Rosey Apple Relish<br>Lemon Pudding   | Braised Beef<br>Egg Noodles<br>Sautéed Zucchini<br>Mandarin Oranges<br>Peanut Butter Cookies          | Taco Pie<br>Seasoned Spinach<br>3 Bean Salad<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Vanilla Ice Cream                                      | Roast Turkey w/ Gravy<br>Mashed Potatoes<br>Sliced Carrots<br>Cranberry Sauce<br>Diced Pears         | BroccoliCheddarQuiche<br>Baby Carrots<br>Cucumber Salad<br>Whole Wheat Bread<br>Sherbet                |

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## HELP US HELP OTHERS!

Our needs are always greater than the resources that are available. The Delaware County Office for the Aging, the Delaware County Senior Council, and the Delaware Opportunities Senior Meals Program encourage and appreciate your financial donation to our programs and services that help seniors.

Please print

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address

Street/PO Box \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I/We designate my/our donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for:

 In honor/memory (please circle one) of: \_\_\_\_\_*If you have designated someone special to honor/remember, then you (and your designee) will be acknowledged in "The Dispatch" for your donation.**If you wish to remain anonymous then please check here.* 

And/Or, indicate below which program(s) you wish to support:

|   |  |                                       |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use where most needed      | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance Counseling            | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Meals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver/Respite Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Aide     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Del. County Senior Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Emergency Medical Transport |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EISEP                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Bus                      |                                       |

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

**DELAWARE COUNTY SENIOR COUNCIL**

Clip and return this coupon with your donation to:  
Delaware County Office for the Aging, 97 Main Street, Suite #2; Delhi, NY 13753

THANK YOU! All donations are greatly appreciated!

All donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law.

A receipt will be sent for all donations over the IRS stated requirement of \$250.

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION FOR "THE DISPATCH" OR  
FOR A CHANGE OF ADDRESSTAPE THE CURRENT DISPATCH  
LABEL HERE

**CONTRIBUTION** – Wish to make a contribution to "The Dispatch" but can't remember when you last made one? Here's a suggestion – contribute on your birthday, the first of the year or any holiday you choose. Planning tasks and yearly appointments on or around a specific day during the year that you already know and can easily remember, makes it much easier to plan for those things which only occur once a year.

**SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION: \$7 PER YEAR**

Most services provided have no fee, but you are welcome to contribute toward their cost. No one is ever denied service due to inability or unwillingness to contribute. Those with a self-declared income at or above 185% of the Federal Poverty line are encouraged to contribute at levels based on the actual cost. All contributions are used to expand services to all who need them in Delaware County. We are grateful for your support.

## SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION,

(Cash OR, If You Prefer, A Check Made Payable To Office For The Aging),

TO: OFFICE FOR THE AGING, 97 MAIN STREET, SUITE #2; DELHI, NY 13753

**Address Change** – Are you going away or moving from the area? Do you live in Delaware County seasonally, heading to warmer climates during the winter months? Please let us know of your new address so that we can update our mailing list. We incur an expense with every paper that can't be delivered and is returned to us when you go away. Keeping our mailing list accurate helps keep mailing costs down.

FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS:  PERMANENT  TEMPORARY

FROM (DATE): \_\_\_\_\_ ; IF TEMPORARY, TO (DATE): \_\_\_\_\_

NEW ADDRESS:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

 Our household receives more than one copy. (Please send labels from ALL copies you received for this issue, indicating which one is correct.) Please remove name from mailing list.

## SENIOR ACTIVITIES FOR FEBRUARY 2025 AND MARCH 2026

**HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:** Monday 2/16/26 for President's Day.  
St. Patrick's Day Dinner will be served at all  
dining centers on Tuesday 3/17/26.

**Delhi Senior Dining Center (97 Main Street, Delhi, NY 13753 – side entrance) (607) 746-2250.** CENTER MANAGER: CHRISTINE WINNER.

**Grand Gorge Senior Dining Center (Old School, Civic Center, Rte. 30 (607) 588-6166.** CENTER MANAGER: JOY JOHNSON.

**Hancock Senior Dining Center (Baptist Church, Messenger Hall, Wheeler Street) (607) 637-2219.** CENTER MANAGER: ANDREA MIKULA.

**Margaretville Senior Dining Center (Margaretville Methodist Church, Church St.) (845) 586-4764.** CENTER MANAGER: STEFANIE BLANCHARD.  
Center's 52nd Anniversary celebration will be Tuesday 3/17/26.

**Sidney Senior Dining Center (Civic Center, Liberty Street) (607) 563-2212.** CENTER MANAGER: JENNIFER ANDERSON.

Center's 52nd Anniversary celebration will be Wednesday 2/4/26.

**Walton Senior Dining Center (St. John's Catholic Church, Benton Ave.) (607) 865-6739.** CENTER MANAGER: JAMES JACKSON.  
Center's 52nd Anniversary celebration will be Thursday 3/26/26

**NOTE:** Suggested contribution for regular meals is \$5.00 seniors and \$10.00 non-seniors. Suggested contribution for St. Patrick's Day Dinner is \$6.00 seniors and \$11.00 for non-seniors. Those with incomes above the 185% of poverty are asked to contribute the full cost of the meal (\$13.52). The Delaware County Senior Dining Program is operated by Delaware Opportunities Inc. under contract with the Delaware County Office for the Aging with funding from the Delaware County Board of Supervisors, New York State Office for the Aging and the Department of Health, federal and other state funds and contributions provided by program participants.

**DINING CENTER PRESENTATION SCHEDULE**

The following presentations will be held at the dining centers during the regular lunchtime meal on the dates listed below.

**OFA Outreach Dining Center Presentations Schedule**

January 2026 topic will be  
"Tax Season Information  
& STAR property tax exemptions"  
• Delhi Dining Center on 1/13/26  
• Deposit Dining Center 1/15/26  
• Grand Gorge Dining Center  
on 1/14/26  
• Hancock Dining Center on 1/13/26  
• Margaretville Dining Center  
on 1/21/26  
• Sidney Dining Center on 1/8/26  
• Walton Dining Center on 1/20/26

February 2026 topic will be  
"Laughter Is Good For You!"  
• Delhi Dining Center on 2/10/26  
• Deposit Dining Center 2/19/26  
• Grand Gorge Dining Center  
on 2/18/26  
• Hancock Dining Center on 2/10/26  
• Margaretville Dining Center  
on 2/18/26  
• Sidney Dining Center on 2/12/26  
• Walton Dining Center on 2/17/26

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# Beat The Post-Holiday Blues With Feel Good Foods.

Revised by Andrea Martell RDN, CDN. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/depression/features/foods-feel-better>

Meal-to-meal and day-to-day, keeping your blood sugars steady and your gastrointestinal (GI) tract running smoothly will help you feel good and energetic. So be sure to limit or avoid processed sugar (including refined flours) and get enough fiber and water.

Week-to-week and month-to-month, keeping your body healthy and disease-free makes good moods more likely. Key nutrients you get in certain foods can influence the levels of feel-good hormones such as serotonin. Other nutrients can help pre-

vent inflammation so blood circulates well to all your organs.

## Foods that help you feel good

1. *Seek out foods rich in Vitamin B12 and Folic acid (Folate).* These two vitamins appear to help prevent disorders of the central nervous system, mood disorders, and dementias. Several studies have found a link between higher food intakes of folate and a lower prevalence of depressive symptoms. Folic acid is usually found in beans and greens. Vitamin B12 is found in meats, fish, poultry, and dairy. Try a burrito or enchilada made with black beans plus lean beef, chicken, or pork; a spinach or romaine salad topped with crab or salmon; or an egg

white or egg substitute omelet filled with sauteed spinach, broccoli, and reduced-fat cheese.

2. *Enjoy Fruits and Vegetables in a big way.* Fruits and vegetables are packed with key nutrients and antioxidant phytochemicals, which directly contribute to your health and health-related quality of life. In one study, eating two or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day was associated with significantly higher likelihood of good functional health. In addition, people who ate the highest amount of fruits and vegetables felt better about their overall health.

3. *Eat Selenium-rich foods every day.* Selenium is a mineral that acts like an antioxidant in the body. Research suggests that the presence of oxidative stress in the brain is associated with some cases of mild to moderate depression in the elderly population. One study evaluated the effect of selenium supplementation on depression scores in elderly people. The group taking selenium had significant decreases in their depression symptoms. Whole grains such as oatmeal, whole grain bread, and brown rice are an excellent source of selenium. Other foods

rich in selenium include beans and legumes; meat (lean pork or beef, skinless chicken or turkey); low-fat dairy foods; nuts and seeds; and seafood (oysters, clams, crab, sardines, and fish).

4. *Eat Fish several times a week.* Several recent studies have suggested that men and women who consume fish at least 2x a week have a lower risk of symptoms of depression, particularly fatty fish like salmon which is high in omega-3 fatty acids. Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include herring, rainbow trout, salmon, sardines, and tuna.

5. *Get a daily dose of Vitamin D.* Recent studies have shown an association between low serum levels of vitamin D and higher incidences of mood disorders such as seasonal affective disorder, non-specified mood disorder, and major depressive disorder. We can get vitamin D from a variety of sources: short periods of sun exposure, vitamin D supplements, and foods. Vitamin D can be found in fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel; beef liver; cheese; and egg yolks. But our primary source of dietary vitamin D is fortified foods such as breakfast cereals, breads, juices, and milk.

## Dispatch Publishing Dates For 2026

The Office for the Aging publishes its newsletter, "The Dispatch," every two months. Organizations are invited to submit articles concerning programs and services that would be of interest or benefit to senior citizens. "The Dispatch" also sells advertising space (contact the Office for the Aging for details and rates).

Below is the 2026 annual schedule for "The Dispatch." The article due date is the date all articles need to be received at the Office for the Aging to be put in the corresponding issue of

"The Dispatch." The mailing date is the date "The Dispatch" gets mailed to over 10,000 recipients through a bulk mailing process. Anyone wishing to submit articles for publication should send articles to our address to: Lyndsay Komosinski, Delaware County Office for the Aging, 97 Main Street, Suite #2, Delhi, NY 13753, or [Lyndsay.komosinski@co.delaware.ny.us](mailto:Lyndsay.komosinski@co.delaware.ny.us), by the article due date listed for the corresponding issue of "The Dispatch." All questions should be directed to Lyndsay Komosinski at 607-832-5750.

### 2026 DISPATCH DATES

| ISSUE     | ARTICLES DUE               | MAILED                    |
|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| March     | Thursday, February 5, 2026 | Friday, February 27, 2026 |
| May       | Thursday, April 9, 2026    | Friday, May 1, 2026       |
| July      | Thursday, June 11, 2026    | Friday, July 3, 2026      |
| September | Thursday, August 6, 2026   | Friday, August 28, 2026   |
| November  | Thursday, October 8, 2026  | Friday, October 30, 2026  |

# Breathe Better with Us

## Having Trouble Breathing?

### Do you often experience?

- ✓ Abnormal breathing
- ✓ Chest pain or tightness
- ✓ Coughing
- ✓ Wheezing
- ✓ Disrupted sleep

### Does any of this apply to you?

- ✓ Asthma
- ✓ Bronchitis
- ✓ COPD
- ✓ Emphysema
- ✓ Pulmonary Hypertension
- ✓ Farmers Lung
- ✓ Work-related lung injury
- ✓ Exposure to Asbestos, Chemicals, or Mold
- ✓ Diesel fumes exposure
- ✓ Dusty classroom exposure
- ✓ Past smoker with symptoms

### If you said "yes" to any of the above, you may qualify for our FREE Breathe Better With Us program.

These exposures and diagnoses fall under the umbrella of Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases (CLRD) — and the good news is that CLRD is treatable. With proper management, most people can reduce symptoms, improve quality of life, and lower their risk of other conditions.

Our program offers free individual sessions with a Respiratory Therapist for those living in rural Ulster, Greene, and Delaware Counties.

We also offer convenient drop-in classes held virtually. From physical therapy to nutrition and CLRD basics, each class focuses on a different theme designed to help you breathe better.

For more information, call 845.517.6316 or email [breathebetter@wmchealth.org](mailto:breathebetter@wmchealth.org).



**WMC Health** | **Margaretville Hospital**  
Westchester Medical Center Health Network

A FREE Clinical and Educational Respiratory Health Program

10,500 readers. This is 2,000 fewer readers than in 2020. Currently, the readers can receive the Dispatch electronically. There are close to 50 readers receiving the Dispatch electronically. This number continues to grow as more and more older adults are feeling comfortable using a computer.

DCOFA will continue to publish articles pertinent to the senior population such as articles on health insurance, financial assistance programs, legal needs, caregiver services, veteran services, and retirement planning.

There is a request for contributions published two times each year. The targeted amount for contributions between August 2023-July 2024 was \$6,000. The agency met its goal. The actual amount received was close to \$9,600. The targeted amount for 2024-2025 has been increased to \$8,000. The readers always have positive comments regarding the senior newspaper: "I enjoy reading this paper." "I look forward to receiving and reading each Dispatch issue." "I read every issue of the Dispatch from cover to cover. I save helpful articles for me and my husband as future references. I also give the articles to my daughter as she begins to assume some degree of caregiving for me and my husband. Delaware County Office for the Aging helped my parents in the 1990's and now it's our turn." "Thank-you for keeping us informed."

Readers who still feel that "The Dispatch" is a useful publication are encouraged to share their comments with the Office for the Aging. Reminder, a contribution coupon is located in each issue.