



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

# Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XXV, ISSUE 2

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

February 2014



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*By John M. Thompson,  
Ph.D., FAAMA*

In this issue of "Spotlight on Aging," we will focus on civic engagement. Civic engagement refers to "individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern."

In our community, some of the concerns germane to our seniors include social isolation, poor quality health, uninhabitable homes needing repairs, and stresses related to caring for a loved one or raising a grandchild. Through civic engagement, caring seniors can play a significant role in helping fellow seniors in meeting their many different needs.

According to research, seniors can improve their overall emotional wellbeing by being engaged in volunteer opportunities to positively contribute in their communities. Other research studies have established that creating and bolstering opportunities for continued civic engagement exhibits a strong positive association with seniors' physical health and functioning, life satisfaction, subjective wellbeing and mortality.

Another benefit of seniors being engaged in their communities is that they do not become susceptible to social isolation, as they are physically connected with their communities.

Thus, it only makes sense for DCOA to continue promoting civic engagement. One ideal approach for getting our seniors and other citizens involved is through DCOA's Ambassador Program.

As you may recall, DCOA launched the Ambassador Program exactly two years ago this month. This was an awesome opportunity to move the agency forward as it sought new ways to link volunteers to seniors who had not received services from the agency. The agency's Ambassador Program creates a safety net in the District to respond to the unmet needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and family caregivers in the community.

Since February 2012, the agency has trained hundreds of volunteers and looks forward to training more individuals who are passionate about helping the District's citizens access long-term services and supports and respite through DCOA.

Civic engagement is a positive movement across the country. We have an opportunity to capitalize on the momentum in the District of Columbia. However, it takes sacrifice, passion and a commitment to want to serve others, especially those who simply need a helping hand.

I view civic engagement as a win-win situation for the giver and the receiver. For the receiver, there is an unmet need that is being addressed. For the giver, it is a sense of accomplishment and a chance to simply do something good for someone.

If you, or someone you know, are interested in becoming a DCOA Ambassador, please contact Darrell Jackson, Jr. at 202-724-5622. I look forward to meeting you at an upcoming Ambassador Program training.

## In the Community



**DCOA Executive Director John M. Thompson, center, spoke to members of the Anacostia/Bellevue/Congress Heights chapter of AARP. Thompson also participated in the installment of the slate of officers.**

## DCOA Program Works with Hospitals to Discharge Patients Successfully

In FY 2013, approximately 86 persons received assistance through the DCOA Hospital Discharge Planning Program.

An initiative to assist hospitals in DC with their discharge planning process, the program offers support to seniors age 60 and older, and persons with disabilities age 18 and older, as they transition from the hospital into the community. Providing assistance is vital so that residents can live independently in the community for as long as possible.

Effective discharge planning:

- Decreases the chances that a patient is re-admitted to the hospital, helps in recovery, ensures medications are prescribed and administered correctly, and ensures adequate prepara-

tion of the patient or caregiver to be able to attend to the patient's needs.

- Elicits patients' input and encourages them to request discharge planning if a referral has not already been made

- Develops a comprehensive assessment, information and education program to support patients and caregivers

- Creates a strong, collaborative discharge team to support the patient's and caregiver's goals and needs during the discharge planning process, and ensures that resources are available to meet the patient's discharge goals.

For more information, or to get assistance with a hospital discharge plan, call 202-724-5626.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

VINCENT C. GRAY, MAYOR





# Election Year 2014: April 1 Primary Election



## What's on the ballot?

The Democratic, Republican, D.C. Statehood Green and Libertarian parties have qualified to hold primaries to select their party's nominee in the general election for the following partisan offices:

- Delegate to the US House of Representatives
- Mayor of the District of Columbia
- Chairman of the Council of the

## District of Columbia

- At-Large Member of the Council of the District of Columbia
- Ward 1, 3, 5 and 6 Members of the Council of the District of Columbia
- Attorney General for the District of Columbia (tentatively included pending outcome of Bill 20-134)
- United States ("Shadow") Representative
- United States ("Shadow") Senator

- District of Columbia Democratic State Committee Offices

## Am I eligible to vote?

In the District of Columbia, primaries are closed, party elections. This means that only voters registered with the Democratic, Republican, D.C. Statehood Green or Libertarian parties may vote in their party's election.

If you are a voter who is already reg-

istered, you must complete any changes to your party affiliation on or before March 3, 2014 in order to participate in the primary election.

- To avoid delays at the polling place, advance registration is encouraged.

- To confirm your registration, including party affiliation, visit the website at [www.boee.org](http://www.boee.org).

- To access a registration application online, visit [www.boee.org](http://www.boee.org). Registration applications sent by mail must be postmarked by **March 3, 2014**.

## Where and when can I vote?

You have the choice to vote early, by mail, or at your polling place on Election Day.

## Early voting

Early voting will be offered during the April 1, 2014 Primary Election. Information about dates, times and locations will be available soon.

## Vote by mail

Request your absentee ballot online. All requests must be received by March 25, 2014.

Your voted absentee ballot must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2014 and received by April 11, 2014.

## At the Polls on Election Day

On Election Day, vote at the polling place assigned to serve your residence. Look up your polling place online. Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

For more information contact:  
DC Board of Elections  
441 4th St. NW, Suite 250 North  
Washington, DC 20001  
Tel: 202-727-2525 | TTY: 202-639-8916 |  
Toll free: 1-866-DC-VOTES



## District of Columbia Department of Health

### What You Need to Know About Sodium/Salt Reduction

#### What is Sodium/Salt?

#### Why is Sodium Reduction Important?

- Sodium in moderation helps your body balance the level of fluid inside and outside your cells.
- An increased amount of sodium in your body will cause your body to hold excess fluid. Your heart has to overwork to pump this added fluid.
- Another name for sodium is **Salt, Sodium Chloride, Sodium Benzoate, or MSG**.
- Sodium can be found in most processed foods and accounts for most of the salt consumed.
- Blood Pressure can be lowered by reducing the intake of sodium/salt.

#### What Can I do to Reduce Sodium Intake?

- Always check food labels to see how much sodium you are having in a meal. It is recommended to consume **less than 2,400 milligrams** of sodium a day.
- Avoid canned items or processed meat such as tuna, canned beans or canned chicken. If you do have them, rinse canned food to remove some of the sodium. Instead, use fresh poultry, fish and lean meat.
- Choose canned items that are **plain** or "**with no salt added**."
- Avoid instant or flavored rice, pasta and cereals. Use minimal amount of salt when cooking these items.
- Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, and packaged foods. These items tend to have more sodium.
- Stock up on **low, reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added** versions of food.
- Use salt-free seasoning blends and herbs in place of regular salt to reduce sodium.

#### Facts on Sodium/Salt

- It is recommended to have **less than 2,400 milligrams** of sodium a day. 2,400 milligrams equals 6 grams or 1 teaspoon.
- 75% of sodium in the diet comes from sodium added to processed foods and beverages.
- Sodium may be in some of the foods you least expect it to be in, such as candy, frozen pizza, soups, frozen dinners, and beverages. Be mindful and **CHECK LABELS FIRST!**
- There are many different kinds of salt, such as Kosher Salt, Sea Salt, Grey Salt- watch the intake of these as well.
- Sodium reduction in your diet can lower your blood pressure.
- Try to limit your intake of fast foods as these foods contain high levels of sodium.

#### What Are Some Important Questions to Ask My Doctor?

- What is my blood pressure reading?
- What blood pressure range should I be aiming for and when do I need to contact a health care professional?
- How can I improve my diet?
- What is a recommended healthy eating plan I can use to reduce my sodium intake?
- What types of foods should I avoid when watching my sodium intake?



For more information, contact the  
DC Department of Health at:  
**202-442-5925**





## Pepco Warns Customers of Fake Invoices

Pepco is warning its customers that scammers posing as third-party energy suppliers are sending fake utility bills via email to some utility customers around the country. The email asks that customers click on a link contained within the email. It is suspected that, by clicking the link, the customer's computer could become infected with a virus or malware.

Pepco asks customers to only pay their utility bill by visiting [pepco.com](http://pepco.com) or by sending the hard copy of the remittance portion of the invoice through the mail. Customers should not open any email asking that payment be made on their utility bill unless sent by Pepco or by the customers' respective third party energy supplier.

Many companies, including Pepco, contact customers in person or via phone for various reasons. If someone claims to represent a company, whether the company is Pepco or another entity, it is important that customers take precautions to verify that the person is affiliated with the company, especially if that person is requesting an immediate monetary

payment. When addressing past due accounts, Pepco never endorses a specific form of payment. Instead, multiple payment options are always given to the customer.

Pepco advises customers to ask for official photo identification from any person who shows up at their door. Employees from reputable companies, such as Pepco, will carry official company identification cards. If proper identification cannot be produced, customers should notify police and the company with whom the individual claims to be associated.

Similarly, if someone calls saying they represent a certain company, customers should ask them to verify their identity and affiliation. If customers have any doubt about the validity of a person's claim to represent Pepco, they should call the company immediately at 202-833-7500.

For more information and updates, visit [www.pepco.com](http://www.pepco.com), follow Pepco on Facebook and Twitter at PepcoConnect, and download the mobile app at [www.pepco.com/mobileapp](http://www.pepco.com/mobileapp).

## 'It Takes a Village' Raises Awareness About Emergency Planning

Serve DC coordinated the Mayor's signature Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service project, "It Takes a Village," which deployed volunteer teams to 13 senior residence complexes across the District to raise awareness about emergency planning and assist those residents in completing emergency-preparedness plans.

"This year, we were particularly pleased to emphasize how volunteerism can help create safer communities through the 'It Takes a Village' project," said Jeffrey Richardson, MSW, chief service officer for the District of Columbia and executive director of Serve DC. "It is important to do

emergency-preparedness education and outreach for our aging population. No matter your age or where you live in the city, we all want to be safe."

Presented in collaboration with the D.C. Department of Health's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration (HEPRA), the D.C. Office on Aging and the D.C. Housing Authority, "It Takes a Village" was a complement to Serve DC's ongoing emergency-preparedness-volunteer programs and the recent launch of the Mayor's "Age-Friendly DC" Initiative, which aims to help influence the health and quality of life of older people in Washington.

## Fort Lincoln Gets New Meal Center

Mayor Gray, DCOA Executive Director John M. Thompson and other community leaders attended the grand opening for a new nutrition site at the Vicksburg Building hosted by Seabury Resources for Aging, the agency leading services for DCOA in Ward 5. The new meal program is located at 3005 Bladensburg Rd. NE in the Fort Lincoln community.

Opening additional sites like this one helps meet the agency's goal to provide all seniors in the District with nutritious meals, physical and recreational activities, and to help them be prepared financially for retirement and their long-term care needs. During the

week, the site will provide nutritious mid-day meals, supportive social services, and recreational programs for persons age 60 and older.

Residents interested in registering for the program should contact 202-529-8701 or visit [www.seaburyresources.org](http://www.seaburyresources.org) for more information.



Mayor Gray poses with Bernard Gibson (center), who conducts a fitness class with seniors at the Vicksburg Building several days a week, and a class participant. "Seniors Exercise" is a great way for these Fort Lincoln residents to keep moving!



Ms. Senior DC 2013  
Nancy A. Berry



We're looking for Ms. Senior DC 2014.  
Maybe you know her...

- ♦ She is a woman 60 years of age or older who lives in the District of Columbia
- ♦ She inspires others with her enthusiasm
- ♦ She is poised, charming and articulate
- ♦ Her positive philosophy of life reflects her inner beauty
- ♦ She is an active, vital member of her community
- ♦ Blessed with a special talent, she defies the myths of aging

If you know her, make sure she is entered as a contestant in the 2014 Ms. Senior D.C. Pageant. She may compete for the opportunity to represent our city in the Ms. Senior America Pageant. Contact the Ms. Senior DC Planning Committee Chairperson, Gwen Coleman at 202-289-1510 x1170/1171 to make sure she receives an application. You may also go to [www.dcoa.dc.gov](http://www.dcoa.dc.gov), call 202-724-5626 or email [darlene.nowlin@dc.gov](mailto:darlene.nowlin@dc.gov) for more information.



Government of the District of Columbia  
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor





# Community Calendar

## February events

### 4th • 7 to 8:45 p.m.

Office on Aging Executive Director John M. Thompson, Ph.D., will be the speaker at the Glover Park Citizens Association meeting. The meeting will be held at Stoddert Elementary School, 4001 Calvert St. NW in the student cafeteria. For more information, call Alice Thompson at 202-535-1321.

### 6th • noon to 2 p.m.

A community health and information fair will be held at the Holy Temple Church of Christ, 429 12th St. NE. For more information, call Alice Thompson at 202-535-1321.

### 10th • 11 a.m.

Seabury Resources for Aging presents Ward 5's Healthy Heart Day at nutrition sites. For locations and more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

### 11th • 11:30 a.m.

Enjoy a black history program sponsored by the Choraleers of the Washington Seniors Wellness Center. The program features lecturer Ben Wright on remembering Emmett Till, along with songs, drama and dance. The Washington Seniors Wellness Center is located at 3001 Alabama Ave. SE. For more information, call 202-581-9355.

### 12th and 26th • 6:30 to 8 p.m.

A new discussion group for adult children of parents with memory loss

meets on Wednesdays, Feb. 12 and 26 and continues on March 12 and 26 at Iona Senior Services, 4125 Albemarle St. NW. The group is designed for participants interested in learning ways to cope with challenging behaviors, situations and emotions presented by a parent with declining memory. The series is free, but space is limited. To register, call 202-895-9448.

### 13th • 10 a.m.

A black history program will be presented at the Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired, 2900 Newton St. NE. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

### 13th

The East River Family Strengthening Collaborative KEEN Seniors Program will host its annual Valentine's Day/black history luncheon. The event is free. For the time and location, contact Robin Gantt, recreational activities outreach coordinator at 202-534-4880.

### 21st • 11 a.m.

Learn all about the D.C. libraries at Seabury Resources for Aging's Ward 5 Library Day. For locations and more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

### 26th

A community health and information fair will be held in the lobby of the Frank D. Reeves Municipal Center, 2000 14th St. NW. Call Alice Thompson at 202-535-1321 for the time and more information.

## DCOA to Celebrate Centenarians

DCOA is seeking persons age 100 or older to honor at an upcoming event to celebrate the District's oldest residents. If you know of someone who should be honored, please make sure

they are registered with the D.C. Office on Aging. To register a D.C. resident, call 202-724-5622 or send an email to darlene.nowlin@dc.gov.



Mayor Vincent C. Gray, DCOA Executive Director John M. Thompson and Ms. Senior D.C. Nancy A. Berry pose with centenarian Laura Griffin at the Vicksburg Building nutrition program opening.

## SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging is published by the Information Office of the D.C. Office on Aging for D.C. senior residents. Advertising contained in the *Beacon* is not endorsed by the D.C. Office on Aging or by the publisher.

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Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subjected to disciplinary action.

**The Office on Aging is  
in partnership with the  
District of Columbia  
Recycling Program.**

## Upcoming DCOA Performance Oversight Hearing

Chairperson Yvette Alexander will convene the Committee on Health FY '14 Performance Oversight Hearing for the D.C. Office on Aging on Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 10 a.m., 1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Council Chambers, Room 500.

Persons wishing to testify may contact Ravna Smith, [rsmith@dccouncil.us](mailto:rsmith@dccouncil.us), or call 202-741-2111.