

Celebrating 40 Years

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging

VOLUME XXVI, ISSUE 12

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

December 2015



INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By *Laura Newland*
Interim Director, D.C. Office on Aging

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because it's a dedicated time for gratitude.

This year I was especially grateful and humbled to have become part of the D.C. Office on Aging's family. Mayor Muriel Bowser asked me in early November if I would be the agency's Interim Director. Having worked with DCOA first as a liaison in the Deputy Mayor's office and then as Interim General Counsel, I am intimately familiar with the agency and the community we serve.

Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Brenda Donald — who served as Interim Director for several months this year — returned to her full-time duties as Deputy Mayor. But she remains committed to DCOA's mission and continues to be one of the agency's strongest supporters.

When I was an attorney at AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE), I represented older homeowners who became delinquent on their real property taxes and were at risk of losing their homes through real property tax foreclosure. None of my clients ever lost their homes to tax sale, but that experience pushed me to look for systemic changes.

During my time at LCE, I recruited pro bono partners and community stakeholders to push the District to change the real property tax law so we could better protect our long-time District residents. I am happy to say that sweeping changes were made and imple-

mented last year, and the Deputy Mayor's office works closely with the tax office to ensure that homeowners have every opportunity to protect themselves from losing their homes due to unpaid taxes.

I joined the District government to continue the systems reform work, but from the inside. Over the past year and a half, I have worked with District agencies in making our long-term care services and supports system better, and I continue to be impressed with the dedication and passion of District government employees.

Serving as Interim Director of DCOA is a great opportunity for me to continue implementing the Mayor's vision for DCOA. Mayor Bowser is committed to building an age-friendly city where all residents can thrive. As you may have heard me say at our senior wellness centers, we are committed to listening to you. We want to truly understand your needs, wants, and hopes — now and in the future.

We will continue providing the core services you have come to expect, but we also want to hear from you about how we can better serve you where you live, work and play. We want to make sure that DCOA connects with you — no matter where you live in the District.

My professional roots are in advocacy, and I look forward to continuing my advocacy for older adults and people with disabilities in the District of Columbia as DCOA's Interim Director. The

See **DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**, page 32

Intergenerational Housing Opens

Mayor Muriel Bowser and senior members of her Administration, along with partners at Mi Casa, Inc. and Generations of Hope, celebrated the opening of Genesis — an affordable intergenerational housing community in which service-minded seniors and young families with children transitioning out of foster care live as neighbors.



Mayor Bowser presents Bonnie Duffy-Page with a ceremonial key during the "Welcome Home" activities at Genesis.

Based on an award-winning model, Genesis is a 27-unit affordable building where residents mutually support one another by meeting specific requirements for community participation and service.

The opening of Genesis underscores the Mayor's commitment to combating homelessness among vul-

nerable populations and transforming the District into an Age-Friendly City, where residents of all ages are able to grow up and grow older in diverse, intergenerational, and supportive communities.

"I have a lot of life, a lot of energy still to give," said Bonnie Duffy-Page, one of the new senior residents.



It's been four years since the opening of the Hayes Senior Wellness Center, located at 500 K St. NE. For many seniors, Hayes has become a second home, and the recent anniversary celebration felt more like a birthday party for a dear friend. The event held outside, like a backyard barbeque, featured food on the grill with healthy options, exercise, and music provided by the Sandra Y. Johnson Band. If you haven't already done so, stop by and take a look at what they have to offer.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Learn About Age-Friendly DC Progress

Come to your nearest DC library to learn about the *Age-Friendly DC 2015 Progress Report*, and what you can do to help transform DC into a city where it's easier to grow up and older.

The *Age-Friendly DC 2015 Progress Report* is now available. Ask your librarian for a copy. This report highlights some of the age-friendly work happening in DC, and ways to get involved. You will want to spread the word about Age-Friendly DC to your friends, family and community.

The Age-Friendly DC plan includes 75 strategies that DC agencies are implementing with support from community partners to make life easier for residents of all ages. The strategies are

based on listening to DC residents, particularly those 50+ years old.

Don't miss these opportunities to ask questions and get involved:

Age-Friendly DC Library Presentations

12/1 – 10 a.m. – Cleveland Park
3310 Connecticut Ave. NW

12/2 – 4 p.m. – Northeast
330 7th St. NE

12/3 – 2 p.m. – Northwest One
155 L St. NW

12/4 – 10 a.m. – Dorothy I.
Height/Benning
3935 Benning Rd. NE

12/7 – noon – Southeast
403 7th St. SE

12/8 – 1 p.m. – Takoma Park
416 Cedar St. NW

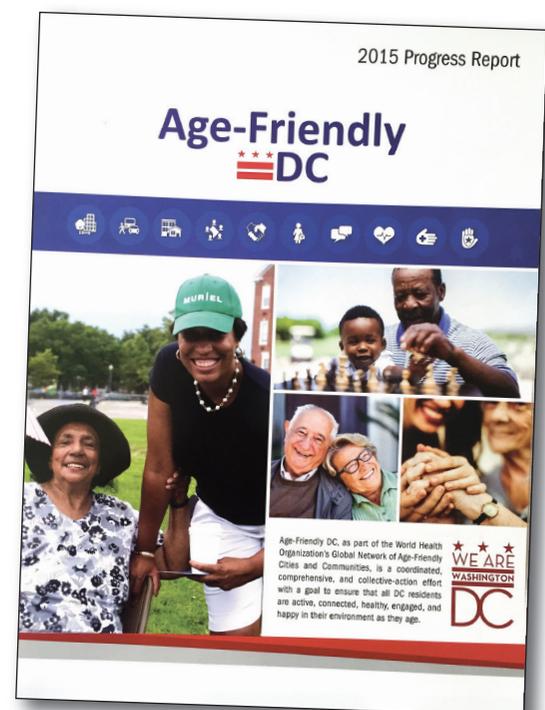
12/9 – 10 a.m. – Mount Pleasant
3160 16 St. NW

12/11 – 10 a.m. – Georgetown
3260 R St. NW

12/14 – 10 a.m. – Southwest
900 Wesley Place SW

12/15 – 1 p.m. – Francis Gregory
3660 Alabama Ave. SE

12/16 – 4 p.m. – Petworth
4200 Kansas Ave. NW



FACT SHEET

- BenefitsCheckUp® is the most comprehensive, Web-based service of its kind in the nation that screens for benefits programs for seniors with limited income and resources.
- BenefitsCheckUp® screens for more than 2,000 public and private benefits programs, from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- More than 4 million people have been successfully screened through individual or agency use of BenefitsCheckUp®.
- BenefitsCheckUp® screens for programs that can help with the cost of prescription drugs, heating bills, housing and rent, food, legal services, medical costs, in-home services, tax relief, Veterans benefits, employment, and volunteer opportunities.
- Screenings are confidential. Users are not required to enter their name, address, phone number, or any other personally identifiable information.
- Reports can be printed that describe each benefit a person has been found potentially eligible for, including information on where to apply locally and documentation required.
- More than 1,400 downloadable application forms are available for benefits programs. Users can also apply online for the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D) Low Income Subsidy (LIS/Extra Help).

About the National Council on Aging

The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Crystal City, Virginia. NCOA is a national voice for millions of older adults—especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged—and the community organizations that serve them. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities.

www.BenefitsCheckUp.org/dcoa

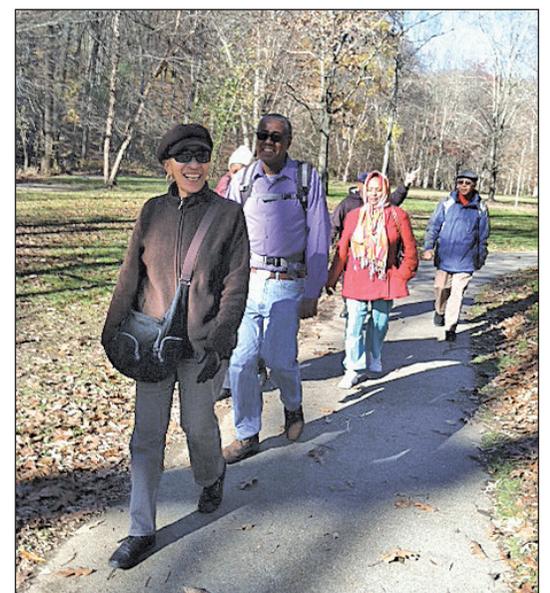
Director's message

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DCOA team is staffed with hard-working, creative and passionate people. Please continue holding us to the highest standard — I know we are up to the challenge.

And stay tuned: We're going to be announcing the beginning of a really fantastic grants program, for up to \$10,000 for accessible modifications to your home or apartment, in January.

As we begin the holiday season, please remember to check in on loved ones and neighbors who may be isolated and want fellowship or need assistance. Have a joyous and safe New Year!



Seniors from the Bernice Fonteneau Senior Wellness Center took advantage of a recent beautiful fall day in Rock Creek Park. The group named itself the BFSWC Rangers, and will make hiking an activity to demonstrate that they are "older and bolder," as they say. The Rangers started at Miller's Cabin in the park and hiked along a trail, chaperoned by the BFSWC fitness instructor Deborah Parker. The Bernice Fonteneau Senior Wellness Center is located at 3531 Georgia Ave. NW. Stop by or call them at 202-727-0338.

The District of Columbia Makes its Mark at the Ms. Senior America Pageant

A deluxe motorcoach full of fans and many others travelled from the District of Columbia to the Ms. Senior America Pageant in Atlantic City, N.J. to support Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Bridges as she competed with 34 women from across the country.

This year, the ladies were also joined by three women from the United Kingdom who competed for the title of Ms. Senior United Kingdom and another new title, Ms. Senior Transatlantic. The pageant was held at the Super Star Theatre at Resorts Hotel on the boardwalk.

Ms. Senior D.C. didn't disappoint. She was articulate and poised as she introduced herself as the representative of the District of Columbia. All of the contestants performed the opening number to Whitney Houston's "I'm Every Woman," all dressed in black. Bridges, a former majorette and avid dancer, was in step with all of her fellow contestants.

During the evening gown competi-

tion, Bridges was dressed in an elegant white satin gown with silk chiffon overlay, one shoulder adorned with embroidered lace and Swarovski crystals. While describing her philosophy of life, Bridges eloquently shared that she was a lifelong learner.

For her talent presentation, dressed in the red fringe of a flapper, Bridges danced to a medley of songs, sharing with the audience that she loved being a girl and she feels good.

Dr. Barbara Mauldin, from Mississippi, was crowned Ms. Senior America. Mauldin is the 35th winner of the contest, which crowns a woman who has reached the "Age of Elegance" — 60 or older. The Mississippi dentist creatively performed a ballroom dance with a jacket during the talent contest, and wore a beautiful sequined mint green mermaid skirt gown during the evening gown segment of the contest. The new Ms. Senior America has volunteered her dental expertise in Peru, Nicaragua and Honduras, as well as at home over the years.

Transatlantic contest

Debbi Miller, a resident of Northern Virginia who was representing her home state of New Mexico during the contest, was crowned Ms. Transatlantic 2016 by a celebrity panel of judges. Miller was also awarded the top Talent Award from among the 13 finalists from the United States and the United Kingdom in a new BBC International contest.

Miller has sung 16 opera roles, including a world premiere, as well as sacred music, barbershop and Broadway.

See **MS. SENIOR AMERICA**, page 33

Ms. Senior D.C. recites her philosophy during the Evening Gown and Philosophy of Life segment of the competition.



Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Bridges performs with other contestants during the opening number of the Ms. Senior America Pageant 2015.



Sandra Bears, Ms. Senior D.C. 2005, after her performance of "At Last" during the Ms. Senior America Pageant Showcase.



Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Bridges takes a moment after the pageant with Ms. Senior America Barbara Mauldin.



The MC Steppers dance to "Living in America."



Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Bridges is shown with Fourth Runner-Up Sherri McGhie, Ms. New Jersey Senior America, Ms. New York Senior America CJ Marie and Ms. Virginia Senior America Janis Thomas at the Cameo Dinner Dance and Ball.

Community Calendar

December

2nd, 7th, 16th • 11 a.m.

Seabury Ward 5 Resources for Aging will host an AIDS Awareness Presentation by Terrific Inc. at three locations: Dec. 2, Gettysburg Apartments, 2855 Bladensburg Rd. NE; Dec. 7, Edgewood Terrace Apartments, 635 Edgewood St. NE; and Dec. 16, Delta Towers, 1400 Florida Ave. NE. For more information, call Norma Hardie at 202-529-8701.

7th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center will hold a Community Health, Wellness and Informational Fair. The center is located at 324 Kennedy St. NW. For more information, call 202-291-6170.

7th • 11 a.m.

Medstar will hold a Medicare seminar at Petersburg (Ft. Lincoln III), 3298 Ft. Lincoln Dr. NE. For more information, call Norma Hardie at 202-529-8701.

8th • 11 a.m.

Learn more about AARP's Legal Counseling for the Elderly services at Vicksburg - Ft. Lincoln 4, 3005 Bladensburg Rd. NE. For more information, call Norma Hardie at 202-529-8701.

9th • 3 to 5 p.m.

Seabury Ward 5 Resources for Aging holds its holiday open house at the center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 2900 Newton St. NE. For more information, call Norma Hardie at 202-529-8701.

9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th • 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

"It's OK to be Older — Self Empowerment for Older Adults in the LGBT Community" is a new interactive course at Iona Senior Services in partnership with Whitman Walker to help prepare older LGBT adults to effectively navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of aging. The classes meet for four Wednesdays from Dec. 9 to 30. The course fee is \$85, and scholarships are available. Iona is at 4125

Albemarle St. NW. For more information or to register, contact Emily Lootens at elootens@iona.org or 202-895-9420.

10th

The D.C. Office on Aging will provide an informational table on its resources and services at the Supreme Court 2015 Health and Wellness Fair, 1 First St. NW. For more information, call Alice Thompson at 202-535-1321.

10th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The 2015 Mayor's Annual Senior Holiday Celebration will take place at the D.C. Armory, 2001 E. Capitol St. NE. There will be live entertainment, dancing, health screenings, safety and health information, immunizations, food, giveaways and exhibits. For ticket reservations, call 202-724-5626.

11th • noon to 2 p.m.

The Howard University College of Dentistry will hold its annual senior luncheon at 600 W St. NW. For more information, call Alice Thompson at 202-535-1321.

14th • 7 p.m.

Bring the grandchildren to a play reading at Iona Senior Services. The play, *Princess Georgie*, is about a princess growing up in a restrictive environment, who raises a baby dragon in secret. A \$5 contribution is requested. Iona is located at 4125 Albemarle St. NW. See www.iona.org/education-and-events/special-events.html to register or call 202-895-9448.

15th • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

A Delta Towers Town Hall Meeting will take place at the apartments, 1400 Florida Ave. NE. For more information, call Norma Hardie at 202-529-8701.

19th • 6 to 8 p.m.

Councilmember Brandon Todd hosts a Ward 4 holiday celebration at St. John's College High School, 2607 Military Rd. NW. For more information, call Alice Thompson at 202-535-1321.

Ms. Senior America

From page 33

Her special interests include teaching voice and piano, and participating in Jazzercise, softball, yoga, riding horses, playing bridge, gardening and travel. Miller's volunteer work includes supporting Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs and Feed the Homeless.

Ms. Senior United Kingdom Pat Watts, from Hove, England, was also crowned a winner. She entertained the audience with a comedic monologue on how to be fashionable at the age of 85.

Rita Wood, from Chelmsford, England, was named 1st runner-up, and Lynne Bennett, from Milton Keynes, England, was selected as 2nd runner-up.

Hometown entertainment

For the first time, the District's own MC Steppers danced on the Ms. Senior America Pageant stage during the pageant's showcase. The group, dressed in various forms of the American flag, white pants and sailor hats, performed a lively dance number to the song made popular by James Brown, "Living in America."

Just as they have been in the District, Maryland and Virginia, the group was a hit during the showcase and received a standing ovation from those in attendance.

Sandra Bears, Ms. Senior D.C. 2005, and top 10 finalist during the Ms. Senior America Pageant, returned to sing her talent and crowd favorite, "At Last." After her performance, Showcase MC Helen Halpin McCarney, Ms. Senior America 2005, shared with the audience that during her pageant her family thought that Bears should have been crowned the winner, much to the amusement of the audience.

The District was also represented during the events by Toni Jackson, Ms. Senior D.C. 2014, who was a member of the queens choir. The queens are former contestants, who represent-

ed many states as they sang a medley of Gershwin tunes, including "Someone to Watch Over Me," "The Man I Love," and "I've Got a Crush on You."

Another treat during the pageant activities: Members of the D.C. Seniors Cameo Club performed their version of "Happy" by Pharrell Williams for the Ms. Senior America Pageant Second Preliminary as well as the Pageant Finals. During their performances, the group performed one day all dressed in white, and then all dressed in red accented by American flag scarves during the finals. Each performance was well received by all in attendance.

During the events, a camera crew from the BBC taped the events. It will air as a TV special during the holidays. The District dance groups hope to be featured during the final show. Stay tuned!

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.

**SENIORS AND RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
DO YOU NEED HELP WITH SNOW REMOVAL?**

For assistance, call **311** for

Mayor Bowser's

**DC RESIDENT
SNOW TEAM**



Serve DC
THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON VOLUNTEERISM

WE ARE WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR