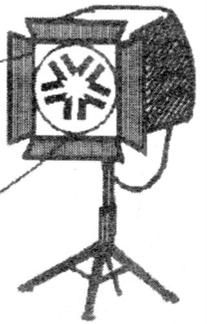


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging



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A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

December 2011



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Dr. John M. Thompson

The holiday season is one of my favorite times of the year. It's a great time to gather together with family and friends. It's a time to express gratitude for living another year. It's a time to be thankful for all of the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us. Yes, it's a great time to receive gifts, but more importantly, it is a better time to give to others.

In this season of giving, I am honored to announce the roll out of the District's Senior Villages for low to moderate income seniors residing in Wards 7 and 8 or East of the River. The cornerstone principle of senior villages is that of giving — people giving their time and compassion to help their neighbors.

The long-term sustainability of senior villages is comprised of a strong base of passionate and dedicated volunteers. Senior villages are membership-based organizations designed to assist seniors and other vulnerable people to remain in their homes so that they do not have to move into nursing homes prematurely.

In a nutshell, a senior village is the resource that can virtually meet every need of a senior in their homes, such as assistance with changing a light bulb, organizing a cluttered home and fixing a leaky roof. It is important to note that services typically offered by senior villages are not offered by the District of Columbia Office on Aging (DCOA).

For example, DCOA provides transportation services to seniors for life-sustaining medical appointments, such as chemotherapy and dialysis through its Washington Elderly Handicapped Transportation Service. This limited scope in offering transportation does not meet some of our seniors' needs, such as transporting them to the grocery store, pharmacist and other places. However, with the advent of two new Senior Villages East of the River, our volunteers will be able to meet this transportation need.

To be successful in this roll out, DCOA is partnering with its lead agencies, East River Family Strengthening Collaborative and Family Matters of Greater Washington, Department of Youth and Rehabilitation Services, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and a host of other District governmental agencies and community-based organizations to connect a vetted group of volunteers with seniors who have an array of unmet needs.

We want to be in the forefront of helping them meet these needs so that they are not in jeopardy of having to go to a nursing home. I envision that this effort will revolutionize the long-term services and supports system in the District of Columbia for low- to moderate-income seniors.

We invite you to be a part of this movement! We are seeking volunteer-based, not-for-profit organizations; home improvement, lawn care, and home organizing companies; restaurants and other local businesses; and residents who have a desire to help our seniors. We also invite high school and college students in search of community service hours and who are interested in gaining valuable work experience.

You can call us at 202-724-5622 to be a part of this positive movement in the District of Columbia. As one of our initial projects, we would like to offer snow removal service for our targeted seniors in Wards 7 and 8.

If you are interested in hosting an interactive, community engagement meeting for me to discuss DCOA's plan for initiating the Senior Villages East of the River, call our office to set up an appointment for me to come to your church, organization, community center or library.

Have a very blessed holiday season! Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah! Happy Kwanzaa!



Seniors joined Mayor Vincent C. Gray and other city officials for the Rally and March for Full Democracy that preceded the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Dedication.



Office on Aging Executive Director John M. Thompson is pictured with E. Veronica Pace, former executive director of the Office on Aging, and Councilmember Harry Thomas, Ward 5 during the ribbon cutting for the D.C. Office on Aging's new offices. Ribbon cutters included Mayor Vincent C. Gray; Councilmember Tommy Wells, Ward 6; Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Beatriz "BB" Otero; Brian J. Hanlon, Interim Director Government Services Administration; Jacqueline C. Arguelles, Chairperson, D.C. Commission on Aging; Ernest Postell, community activist; Wallacestine Curtis, Ward 6 community leader, and Daniel Pernel, former Ward 6 ANC.

Dr. Thompson takes Mayor Gray and Deputy Mayor Otero on a tour of the new office, which is located at 500 K St., N.E. in the former Hayes School. At the Office on Aging headquarters, District residents 60 and older, their family members and caregivers can call or walk in to be linked to direct services and get information on resources available for seniors. In addition, persons 55 and older can get help seeking employment, and disabled persons age 18 and older can receive assistance from a social worker and help with resources. The Hayes Senior Wellness Center will open next year and provide health and wellness activities for older residents. For more information, call 202-724-5626.



D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Community Calendar

December events

7th • 11:30 a.m.

Attend a lunch-and-learn session about diabetes at Ward 5 Senior Nutrition Centers. For a location near you, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

9th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Join in a Ward 4 holiday celebration at Barney Neighborhood House, including a skit titled "A Christmas Reunion." The event will take place at the 19th Street Baptist Church, 4606 16th St., N.W. Call James Thompson at 202-939-9031 for more information.

13th and 27th • 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Iona Senior Services sponsors a support group for caregivers of spouses/partners with dementia on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. The group meets to share concerns, achievements, frustrations and losses involved in caring for partners who are coping with dementia. The group is free, but donations are accepted. Meetings are held at 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. Pre-registration is required; call 202-895-9448 and select option 4 to register.

14th • 2 to 4 p.m.

Learn more about Seabury Resources for Aging at its open house at 2900 Newton St., S.E. Contact Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701 for more information.

15th • 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Iona Senior Services will hold its early evening support group for adult children caring for their parents with a chronic or acute illness, including dementia. There is a \$10 per meeting fee for this group, which meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. Pre-registration is required; call 202-895-9448 and select option 4 to register.

30th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The East River Family Strengthening Collaborative KEEN Seniors program will host its Annual Day Watch Luncheon. This event is designed to celebrate the incoming New Year with song and prayer. For more information, contact Robin Gantt, outreach coordinator, at 202-534-4880, ext 110.

D.C. Office on Aging Ambassador Program

In early February 2012, DCOA will unveil its Ambassador Program. The purpose of the program is to increase the public's awareness about the programs and services offered by the agency. As part of the program, DCOA will facilitate training that covers all federally and locally funded programs for seniors, persons with disabilities, and family caregivers.

Those individuals who complete the training will be recognized as DCOA Am-

bassadors and will be equipped with the knowledge to tell others about the agency's services. DCOA leadership anticipates that this program will ensure that an increased number of constituents are directed to the agency for the much needed services that will help them to lead quality and productive lives in the community.

If you are interested in becoming a DCOA Ambassador, please call us at 202-724-5622. We look forward to your participation in the February 2012 training!

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business.

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.

Beating Holiday Stress and Depression

Depression is more than going through a tough time or feeling upset or down. It isn't the same as everyday sadness or anger. It's a serious medical illness that leaves you feeling sad or miserable most of the time and having a hard time coping from day to day.

The Department of Health offers the following tips for those who might be feeling depressed or stressed during the holidays.

• Talk to Family and Friends

Talking to family, a friend, doctor or someone else you trust can help to relieve stress. You can call our 24 Hour Access Helpline at 1-888-793-4357 to talk to a mental health professional.

• Keep Active

Doing regular physical exercise helps to relieve mental and muscular tension. It's a good idea to have a plan to make sure you get around to doing the activities that make you feel better, physically and mentally. Along with regular exercise, try to eat a healthy diet.

• Pay Attention to Your Physical Health

Research shows that depression is a risk factor for coronary heart disease and can double the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Conversely, research shows that living with a chronic illness like diabetes may increase the risk of depression.

• Don't Stop Taking Your Medication or Reduce it Without your Doctor's Approval

Studies show that in times of economic crisis, people tend to reduce their mental health care more readily than their general medical care. This is not the time to skip dosages or split pills. If you need

help, contact our Access Helpline at 1-888-793-4357.

• Seek Help

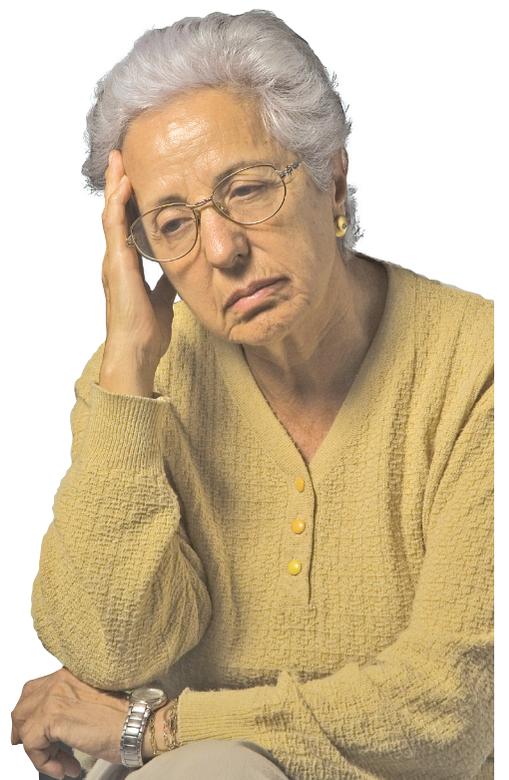
If you think you need more help than talking to family or friends can provide, or if the bad feelings don't go away, call our Access Helpline at 1-888-793-4357 for a referral to emergency help or for ongoing care.

• Other Resources:

Veteran's Mental Health 1-800-273-8255
24-Hour Suicide Prevention Hotline or 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

In addition, the Office on Aging suggests you call 202-724-5626 to connect with a senior program or activity that you enjoy.

Stay engaged this holiday season!



The Mayor's Annual Senior Holiday Celebration for District Seniors

Thursday, Dec. 8
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
DC Armory

Tickets are required.
Call 202-724-5626 for more information.