SENIOR CENTERS
The Key to Aging Well

Growing | Learning
Connecting | Giving

National Institute of Senior Centers
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Welcome to
National Senior Center Month

Senior Centers: The Key to Aging Well
Growing | Learning | Connecting | Giving

September 2019

National Senior Center Month is celebrated every year in September. It’s a wonderful opportunity to showcase your center and market the valuable programs, activities, and services you offer. It’s also a great time to promote a positive image of aging, show your center’s importance in the community, and create interest among prospective new participants.

Our national celebration theme is Senior Centers: The Key to Aging Well

This year’s theme was chosen to highlight how senior centers have the knowledge, programming, and resources to make a difference in people’s lives—the virtual key to unlocking the components that will give an individual the opportunity to age well.

Aging well means different things to different people. For some, aging well means Growing. They want to understand other cultures, meditate, and develop a more spiritual life or practice gratitude daily through journaling. Others see aging well as having time to devote to Learning, whether it is a new language, tap dancing, or taking up pickleball, a popular recreation sport. Others see their most important work as Connecting to family, old friends, and growing new relationships. And some see Giving back at the senior center and within the community as the thing that fosters purpose and a more meaningful life. But most people want to incorporate a little of all the above while they are on their journey to reach their full potential. Senior centers hold the key to enhancing all these varied experiences that are fundamental to aging well.

Follow these easy steps to celebrate during National Senior Center Month:

1. **Start planning now!** September is just around the corner. Knowing your plans early can make it easier to promote your activities and events.

2. **Use this Program Guide** to find great ideas to create a memorable celebration. You’ll find suggestions to help you, your staff, volunteers, and board members educate the community about the wide range of activities, services, and benefits you offer. Consider planning a different event each week or choose one week out of the month to hold activities.

3. **Use the Publicity Guide** to capture awareness and promote community involvement and support for your celebration. The guide offers a step-by-step media plan with timelines and specific methods.

4. **Use the 2019 Poster** to bring recognition of National Senior Center Month to your center. Two versions are available—one with national photos and one that can be customized for your center.

Happy Senior Center Month Celebration!

— NISC Best Practices Committee
Growing

*Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength.* – Betty Friedan

Highlight programs that inspire older adults to grow stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and in claiming their rights.

**Educate Elected Officials**

Educate your elected officials about how public dollars support services and benefits for older adults, caregivers, family members, and the community at large. Senior center staff and participants are well-positioned to explain how limited public investment, along with growing demand, is having a domino effect on programs and services for seniors. Here are some ideas:

- **Step up for the Older Americans Act (OAA):** The OAA and other services and benefits for older adults are debated annually during the federal budget process. A less regular debate, to reauthorize the OAA, is also due in 2019. Senators and Representatives need to know how seniors and their caregivers would be affected by funding and policy decisions.

- **Tips and Facts:** Use our Advocacy Toolkit and updated issue briefs to educate your elected officials.

- **National Senior Center Month Proclamation:** Ask your mayor or other official to issue a proclamation in honor of National Senior Center Month and build an event around it. A sample proclamation is found in the Publicity Guide.

- **Letter Writing Day:** If your center needs more federal investments, or there are proposed policy decisions that could affect seniors’ services or benefits, organize seniors to write stories about what those federal decisions could mean to them and deliver the stories to an elected official or staffer. This can help you enlist a member of Congress for support and arm them with real stories for national budget debates. Review our 10 Tips to Harness the Power of Stories and email your stories to us at advocacy@ncoa.org, so we can help amplify their voices.

- **Media Outreach:** Invite a local radio station to hold a remote broadcast at your center. Have a live audience of participants and community partners and invite key people to talk on air about your center’s resources and aging issues. See the Publicity Guide for more ideas and a sample media plan.

**EARN (Employment After Retirement Network)**

Follow the example of the Northampton Senior Center, MA and launch an Employment After Retirement Network (EARN). This is an initiative to address the needs of older adults seeking jobs. They formed a leadership team and decided on their mission: To create a win/win situation for seniors seeking additional income and employers who will benefit from hiring skilled and experienced employees.

In collaboration with the Franklin Hampshire Career Center, and with a Community Development Block Grant from the City of Northampton, EARN has started to provide a variety of free crucial services to help local area seniors find jobs. In addition, EARN works to eliminate age discrimination in the workforce and encourages local employers to hire skilled, experienced workers over age 50 for part-time, full-time, or temporary project work. Learn more at https://www.wwlp.com/mass-appeal/earn-job-fair-for-seniors/1528265769.
National Employ Older Workers Week

National Employ Older Workers Week is held annually the last full week of September, and it recognizes the vital role of older workers in the workforce. This year’s recognition is held from Sept. 23-27 and led by the U.S. Department of Labor. Here are some ideas for your center:

- Recognize a Senior Community Service Employment Program worker and other older workers at your center
- Present an award to an older worker in your community for exceptional work ethic and commitment to quality
- Present an award to an exceptional business in your community that employs older workers

Wonders of Women (WOW) Summit

Celebrate your strengths! In March 2018, Center in the Park, a nationally accredited senior center located in in Northwest Philadelphia, PA held its second annual Wonders of Women Summit (WOW). WOW was created to acknowledge phenomenal women and invite them to discuss relevant topics that affect our everyday lives.

The theme for the 2018 event was: Ageism: #Bridging the Gaps! The program was intergenerational and included students from The Murrell Dobbins Career & Technical Education High School's Female Leader Committee

The 2018 WOW panel included:

- Cherri Gregg, community affairs reporter for KYW News radio 1060, moderator
- Anna Maria Chávez, Executive Vice President and Chief Growth Officer, NCOA
- Kristen Kiefer, Chief of Staff, NCOA
- The Reverend Canon Betsy Ivey, Director of Family and Young Adult Ministries, Offices of the Diocese of Pennsylvania
- Yulan “Mimm” San, certified yoga teacher in both Kundalini Yoga and Vini Yoga
- Cleo Smalls, Program Director, Center in the Park

WOW gave participants the opportunity to recall their own strength and draw strength and inspiration from a new community of women.
Savvy Saving Seniors® Financial Education Toolkits

For many vulnerable and disadvantaged older adults, the path to economic security begins with basic money management. Learning how to budget, avoid scams, apply for benefits, and use prepaid cards wisely can help them stay secure and independent longer.

With support from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, NCOA developed the following toolkits to help professionals educate older adults about good money skills. Use them to hold a Savvy Saving Seniors® financial education workshop in your community!

All materials are available at ncoa.org/SavvySeniors.

**Toolkit 1: Becoming Resource-FULL with the Help of Benefits & Peace of Mind Savings**

This toolkit covers budgeting tips, money management tips and tricks, benefits of banking, budget busters to avoid, and how to find and apply for benefits. Materials include a training guide for facilitators, a PowerPoint presentation, a participants’ handbook, and customizable marketing materials.

**Toolkit 2: Steps to Avoiding Scams**

This toolkit provides an overview of popular scams targeting seniors, tips for avoiding them, and next steps for victims of financial fraud. It was developed in partnership with the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement. Materials include a training guide for facilitators, a PowerPoint presentation, a participants’ handbook, and customizable marketing materials.

**Toolkit 3: It’s in the Cards**

This toolkit covers tips and ideas on how to use, manage, and protect government-issued and prepaid debit cards. It was developed in partnership with Money Management International. Materials include a training guide for facilitators, a PowerPoint presentation, a participants’ handbook, and customizable marketing materials.
Learning

Aging is an extraordinary process where you become the person you always should have been.

— David Bowie

Showcase your educational and informational programs that expand individuals' horizons and present new choices and new adventures.

The Living Well Talk Series

The Lake Oswego Adult Community Center, Oregon created the Living Well Talk Series designed to empower older adults to live life on their own terms. This program takes place one evening each month where different areas of the wellness paradigm are explored. This series strives to present fresh, innovative, and enlightening topics to enrich the lives of today's older adult. Some of the topics include: Understanding Your Personality (with the Enneagram), Finding Love Online (Online Dating Tips for Rookies), “The Talk” for Adults (A Conversation on Sex & Aging), Marijuana as Medicine (Is It Right For Me), Creating Body Trust (Intuitive Eating & Embracing Health at Every Size), The Benefits of Hypnosis, Don’t Just Retire-REFIRE, and Aging with PRIDE (Creating a Community of Understanding and Acceptance of Our LGBT Neighbors).

The Living Well Talk Series is part of an initiative to destigmatize the center and appeal to boomers who are still working and seniors who are retired. This program has increased evening attendance by 100% and has had a 50% increase in male participants!

A Photo Affair/An Artful Affair

Madison Senior Center, WI, has two programs, A Photo Affair and An Artful Affair in which local seniors are invited to submit a limited number of their photos and other artwork (including paintings, multimedia projects, fabric art, and sculpture) to be displayed in the Madison Senior Center. The submissions are judged by a panel of professional artists in the field. The participants have the opportunity to receive constructive feedback from judges in an effort to improve their work for the following year’s submissions.

All submissions are displayed in the Madison Senior Center’s gallery, and the seniors who receive awards win cash prizes. The Senior Center gallery is then included in the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art’s (MMOCA) Gallery Night, a city wide showcase of art galleries. The person awarded Best of Show is invited to display a collection of their work in the senior center later in the year.
5 Ways to Promote Healthy Aging at Your Senior Center

NCOA’s Center for Healthy Aging provides technical assistance and support to community-based organizations on implementing evidence-based health promotion programs and educating older adults about important health topics. For up-to-date news on healthy aging, sign up for the Center for Healthy Aging monthly e-newsletter (ncoa.org/get-involved/sign-up/) or email us at healthyaging@ncoa.org to join our listserv of professionals implementing evidence-based programs.

1. Learn more about evidence-based programs (EBPs).

   EBPs offer proven ways to promote health and prevent disease among older adults. They are based on research and provide documented health benefits, so you can be confident they work.

   Learn more about evidence-based programs in these areas:

   - Falls prevention
   - Chronic disease self-management education
   - Physical activity and senior fitness
   - Behavioral health (depression and/or substance abuse management)

2. Host an EBP at your senior center or locate workshops in your area.

   Use the NCOA map and Evidence-Based Leadership Council map to identify and connect with licensed sites and organizations in your state that are implementing evidence-based falls prevention programs or Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME). Don’t see an organization in your state? Email us! (ncoa.org/get-involved/contact-us/email/)

3. Improve your EBPs with tips and resources from state and community-based organizations across the country.

   Don’t reinvent the wheel! The Best Practices Toolkit: Resources from the Field includes over 250 resources focused on leadership and management, strategic partnerships, delivery infrastructure and capacity, centralized and coordinated logistical processes, quality assurance, and business planning and sustainability.


   Malnutrition among older adults is a real problem with serious consequences. Check out the Community Malnutrition Resource Hub, designed to provide practical resources, tools, and ideas to help community-based organizations develop and implement a plan to reduce malnutrition among older adults.

5. Follow and share NCOA’s Healthy Living blog posts.

   Visit our website to see recent blog posts from NCOA staff and partners on hot topics related to aging and healthy living. Find resources and tips for senior center professionals and older adults.
The 12th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD) will be observed on September 23, 2019—the first day of fall. This event raises awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries among older adults. National, state, and local partners collaborate to educate others about the impact of falls, share falls prevention strategies, and advocate for the expansion of evidence-based community falls prevention programs.

Top 4 FPAD activities for senior centers

1. **Offer an evidence-based falls prevention program:** Kick off or provide a demonstration of a program proven to help older adults reduce their risk of falling, such as A Matter of Balance or Tai Chi. A list of programs, training requirements, and videos can be found here. Don’t offer a program in your senior center yet? Contact us to connect with a program leader training in your state!

2. **Host an educational presentation or workshop:** Educate older adults about fall risk factors and prevention strategies. The American Occupational Therapy Association and the Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy developed a falls prevention presentation toolkit that includes a PowerPoint with sample narration notes, a brief presentation guide, and a list of resources and references.

3. **Plan a falls prevention health fair:** Share educational handouts, connect older adults with community resources and services, and/or demonstrate falls prevention workshops or classes.

4. **Provide falls risk screenings:** Collaborate with community health specialists to host falls risk screenings that include vision exams, balance and gait testing, home safety recommendations, and/or medication reviews. Ask your local optometrist, pharmacist, and physical/occupational therapists to volunteer their time. Or work with a local university to coordinate student volunteers, such as professional physical therapy, optometry, or pharmacy students. Customize falls prevention brochures from the CDC that help older adults and caregivers assess their fall risk and take steps to prevent falls. Brochures include “What You Can Do to Prevent Falls” and “Check for Safety: A Home Falls Prevention Checklist for Older Adults.”

Additional resources

Download the following materials and more at ncoa.org/FPAD:

- **Educational handouts:** Share resources to educate older adults, caregivers, and friends about steps they can take to prevent falls.

- **Educational videos:** Share this video to educate older adults about steps they can take to prevent falls and the benefits of evidence-based falls prevention programs.
Aging Mastery Program

JOIN THE ADVENTURE!

Small steps lead to positive changes.

Find out how to bring Aging Mastery to your senior center by going to www.ncoa.org/AMP
Hunger Action Month

In America, 1 in 6 older adults struggles with hunger. Senior centers can make a difference!

NCOA works with senior centers and other community organizations nationwide to enroll eligible older adults in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps).

SNAP helps seniors stretch their food budget. Yet, SNAP is highly underutilized by older adults, who participate at a much lower rate than the general population.

September is Hunger Action Month—here are a few ways your senior center can get involved.

Host a “Pass the Plate” selfie booth

Provide participants with a paper plate and ask them to write down what they can’t do on an empty stomach. Next, have the participant take a selfie and post the photo to your senior center’s Facebook page. You can also invite members of your senior center to post a plate to their own social media channels with the hashtag #HungerActionMonth. Don’t forget to tag @FeedingAmerica for a chance to be featured on their webpage. Try their interactive online plate (secure.feedingamerica.org/site/SPageNavigator/Pass_the_Plate.html).

Raise awareness in your community

- **Adopt your local food pantry.** Ask them what they need and how your senior center participants can help. Provide volunteers, hold food drives, and collect needed items.

- **Invite older adults in your community to get screened** to see if they are eligible for SNAP. Use our free BenefitsCheckUp® tool (BenefitsCheckUp.org/getSNAP) to help seniors find out if they qualify and download their state’s application.

- **Use our SNAP outreach materials** to reach older adults in your community and encourage them to apply for SNAP.
  - Download our free customizable flyers, posters, placemats, and brochure and distribute these materials in places where older adults gather.
  - Spread the word on social media and in your newsletter with our sample messages and images, and place our online badge on your website.
  - Visit the nutrition advocacy toolkit for resources and calls to action for defending SNAP and other programs to combat senior hunger and foster nutrition.

Learn how you can advocate for food assistance

Visit our Nutrition & Hunger Advocacy Toolkit to find out how you can educate Congress about the need for services in your community and help protect benefits like SNAP.

For more information on how to get involved, contact Erin.Kee@ncoa.org.
Exemplify Positive Aging

Research suggests that promoting positive age stereotypes could result in less illness and allow people to live independently longer. During Senior Center Month, consider holding a staff training to understand ageism and develop staff strategies and community outreach. Create a positive, age-friendly environment at your senior center by taking the important steps to understand our own views, train new staff, and educate participants and the community.

3 Ways to Change the Aging Conversation

After attending a workshop at the Frameworks Institute centered on reframing the conversation around aging, Tracy Colagrossi, NISC Executive committee and Hanover Township Executive Director, IL, shared three ways she worked with her center to lay the groundwork for changing the aging conversation.

1. **Train your staff**
   First, I began working with staff around the Reframing Aging research, and I emailed them the Frameworks Academy video series to view. Afterward, we discussed how we can best communicate with each other, as well as with our patrons. If a patron would comment, “I am too old for that,” staff would ask why? Staff would reframe their thought, acknowledging how the older adults have built experiences and gained momentum for the next moment, opportunity, or challenge. It has been a culture change.

2. **Educate your participants**
   Secondly, I conducted a Lunch and Learn entitled Reframed Aging for 50 participants. My presentation included misconceptions about age in the media, as well as from themselves. This led to an engaging conversation with patrons embracing their ages and trying new things. Staff responded by adding an Adventure Series, which includes ziplining, archery, indoor sky diving, etc., in addition to our other program offerings. Our participants continue to build upon their experiences and push outside of their comfort zones.

3. **Evaluate the public perception of your center**
   The third way to change the conversation is to evaluate how your senior center is perceived by the public. The best way to steer that conversation is through social media. Staff reviewed past postings on Facebook and Instagram, as well as on our websites. The challenge for centers is to attract baby boomers, and to do this we need to change our messaging. Baby boomers do not see themselves as “seniors.” Frameworks research states the recommendation to use “older person/people” rather than senior citizen, senior, or elder. We use the term senior citizens to define our funding and our service, and we use people, older adult, or people aged 55+ for the rest of our messaging.

Changing the conversation on aging within your senior centers is not an easy process, but it is completely worthwhile. When staff and patrons work together on a shared vision of building momentum, it creates a culture of “I can” rather than “I can’t.” Senior centers can be places where dreams become realized, people are valued, and experiences are built upon.
Start a Consciousness Raising Group

To address the issue of ageism, hold a discussion group using Ashton Applewhite's book *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism* and use her free booklet *How to Start a Consciousness Raising Group*.

ReFrame Aging

Eight national aging organizations formed an unprecedented partnership to explore better ways to communicate the real story of aging in America. The work includes:

- **Gaining Momentum: A Communications Toolkit (2017).** This collection of research and resources equips advocates in the aging services sector to change the discussion about what it means for America to get older.

- **Frame Brief: Framing Strategies to Advance Aging and Address Ageism as Policy Issues (2017).** This summary of major findings and recommendations offers a brief, lively guide to an evidence-based approach to reframing aging.

- **The Pernicious Problem of Ageism (2015):** A special issue of Generations, the journal of the American Society on Aging, explores the importance of framing in addressing the pressing issue of ageism in America and features articles from FrameWorks researchers.

Share Your Stories Project

Listen. Learn. Share. Share Your Stories Project is a teen and senior interview project inspired by StoryCorps Legacy.

At the Issaquah Senior Center in Washington, a team of trained middle and high school student volunteers, with the help of an adult facilitator, sit with a senior participant to ask them questions about their life. The session is recorded using a simple audio recorder. The student volunteers have an opportunity to observe, run the audio equipment, or lead the interview session as they learn how to listen, ask follow up questions, and guide the storyteller to share their favorite memories. A free audio copy is given to the senior after the experience.

The program's primary goals are 1) combat ageism, 2) form intergenerational community connections, and 3) foster personal growth for all the participants.

The program is held one night a month on a Wednesday evening, where the students meet with two storytellers, each in a quiet room, for an hour of quality time with a sign on the door that reads, "Shhh, Recording in Progress!"

Two Issaquah Senior Center staff coordinate about a dozen students with new students throughout the year. The actual interview team is a minimum of 2 to 5 volunteers for at least one storyteller. The family of the storyteller is always welcome to participate. **Virtually visit the Issaquah Senior Center (issaquahwa.gov/seniors).**
Here’s what I know: …Work at your relationships all the time. Take care of friendships, hold people you love close to you, take advantage of birthdays to celebrate fiercely.

—Patti LaBelle

Provide a welcoming space and opportunities to create and develop friendships that give added value to participants’ lives. Offer community engagement and intergenerational connections.

100 Cups of Coffee: Developing Relationships and Expanding Community Partnerships

The Norwell Council on Aging, MA, developed the 100 Cups of Coffee program to facilitate an inexpensive and personal way to educate older adults, caregivers, and leaders about how the Council on Aging and senior center supports the community, to learn more about older residents who they don’t currently serve, and to explore possible business partnerships opportunities to help meet the needs of our community.

The program was announced at a Selectmen’s meeting and an article appeared in the newspaper. The process for coffee meetings includes taking notes and evaluating trends and ideas. Participants also take selfies and put on coffee cut outs that become a conversation art piece.

Here are a few examples of how the organization and community benefited:

- 3 new individuals have become Board members
- 1 new person has become the community liaison to our ASAP Board
- 4 new people have joined the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- 2 new individuals became Meals on Wheels drivers
- We have extended our operating hours to offer two new regular evening programs
- We hosted a weekend housing panel discussion
- We developed collaborations with 3 community organizations for new off-site programs
- We have partnered with a local farm for a weekly produce delivery to the senior center
- We held virtual dementia tour facilitator training for 1 staff and 1 community member
- We received $500 in an unsolicited grant from the Women’s Club
- 94 Jamber coffee mugs were donated to the center
Create an LGBT Welcoming Senior Center

“First impressions go a long way. As a group of people who have been historically marginalized, LGBT older people have a tendency to ‘scan the room’ when they first enter a new facility looking for visible signs that it is welcoming,” according to Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies. Read it and discover practical advice on how to create a welcoming senior center.

Reach out to your lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. This September, launch a movie viewing night and discussion centered on LGBT themes. The SAGE (Services and Advocacy for LGBT Seniors) Technical Resource Center has created a guide in consultation with organizations around the U.S. that serve LGBT older adults: LGBT Programming for Older Adults: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide. This program is simple to organize and can be an important step toward a number of goals, including welcoming LGBT older adults to your organization or agency; creating a safe space for the LGBT older adults you already serve to identify themselves and/or more fully integrate into your agency; and fostering an agency-wide culture of openness and acceptance.

LGBT Senior Social Connection

The LGBT Senior Social Connection is a group of like-minded individuals who want to meet, support, and address the specific needs of LGBT seniors. The group was established in 2013, as a collaborative partnership between Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. and the Merrimac Council on Aging/Senior Center. This group, a first of its kind in this area, seeks to support the unique needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors as they age.

Monthly meetings provide older LGBT adults with a positive, collegial, and safe setting to gather. They share meals and speak openly in an atmosphere of trust to encourage discussions that explore important issues like fear of discrimination when the need for housing, long-term care, or home care services arise. Staff were sensitive to the issues of trust and confidentiality when reaching out to seniors who need a distinctive type of support to reduce isolation and fear, foster social engagement, and create real choice and hope for continued independence. Together our vision of inclusiveness to provide a healthy aging experience that includes meals, education, resources, guest speakers, social activities, and sometimes emotional support to this group has succeeded.

Schedule an LGBT Aging Staff Training

At SAGE’s National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, your staff will learn about the culture, needs, and concerns of LGBT older adults and why they are less likely to access senior centers and other activities. SAGE will identify best practices and tools for helping LGBT older adults feel more included at senior centers. Learn more about SAGE’s in-person and online trainings.
Grandparents Day: Sept. 8, 2019
The official commemorative Grandparents Day is the Sunday after Labor Day. Use these resources from Generations United to Do Something Grand this year.

- Visit the Grandparents Day website for tips and tools (grandparentsonline.org).

Resource ideas:

- **All In Together: Creative Places Where Young and Old Thrive** is a report from Generations United and The Eisner Foundation that includes the findings of two national surveys, profiles of model programs, and recommendations for how we can increase the number of the intergenerational shared sites.

- **I Need You, You Need Me: The Young, The Old, and What We Can Achieve Together** is a report from Generations United and The Eisner Foundation that highlights national examples of pioneers reuniting the generations and making their communities better places to live.

- **Connecting Generations in Senior Housing: A Program Implementation Toolkit** is useful for organizations interested in planning and implementing intergenerational programs and activities. There are many ways to take an intergenerational approach to programming. The materials contained in the toolkit can help you begin developing your program and/or give you tips on deepening or expanding your intergenerational work.

Generation to Generation
Gen2Gen has intergenerational programming resources to share. In their Learning Hub you’ll find ideas, tips, and best practices to unleash the skills and talents of older adults to help kids thrive.

Investigate the Do It Yourself Resources and download:

- 5 Ways for Senior Centers to boost Intergenerational Connections
- To Small to Fail — Community Volunteer Toolkit
- Unique ways to boost literacy by starting a Little Free Library book exchange or setting up a program through Project Night Night for homeless children

Bridging the Gap
This program was a partnership with Learning Gate Community School sixth and eighth graders and the older adults at the Hillsborough County Lutz Senior Center in Florida. The program started with a pen pal program, then a breakfast meeting, followed by a biography assignment. The students then presented a detailed biography. It was a very positive experience for the students who improved their communication skills and developed an appreciation for the older adults and their experiences.

The Grand Plan
To be released late June 2019: The Grand Plan, a user guide for senior centers in leading a short film discussion focused on the important role grandparents play in providing child care for infants and toddlers. Developed in partnership with Zero to Three and NCOA/NISC.
Bridging the Gap Program
Hillsborough County Lutz Senior Center, Florida
Highlight opportunities to give within the senior center and within the community.

**Free Dental Clinic**

The Bain 50+ Center Dental Clinic was held at the Bain 50+ Center, Columbia, MD. This effort was undertaken in partnership with Hope for Tomorrow, a nonprofit organization, which provided pro bono dentists, hygienists, and other professionals.

The Maryland Department of Health provided a permit for a temporary dental clinic for this effort. Special grant funding was used for supplies, food, and personnel costs. The grant sought to target low-income adults age 50 and over and those 18 to 49 years of age who have a disability and are low income. All low-income people who did not otherwise have access to quality and affordable dental care were served.

The clinic served 275 people, with 264 dental examinations performed; 112 prophylaxis and debridement treatments; 93 restoratives; and 70 extractions. The total value of the dental services provided was $92,000. There is a relationship between poor dental health in the elderly and their quality of life. Oral health is a prerequisite for a good chewing function, which impacts nutritional well-being.

**Expand Your Reach with Mobile Senior Centers**

In 2016, Catholic Charities, through its Lakeland Activity Center for Seniors, developed and began operating four “mobile senior center” sites using volunteers and borrowed space. Each mobile senior center offers one four-hour session, one day a week, offering exercise, education, socialization, a nutritious lunch, and other activities meeting the needs and interests of our participants.

The sites are in small towns located in rural parts of Polk County, FL, where because of health or economic issues many elderly residents are unable to travel to metropolitan areas like Lakeland to take advantage of a senior center.

The center then recruits and trains appropriate volunteers to maintain the on-site operation with center staff providing oversight and support and scheduling the speakers and program content. This arrangement allows the center to minimize the cost of staffing for each individual site, while still assuring consistency and providing a valuable experience for older adults.

Collaboration with community partners saves the cost of a “bricks and mortar” meeting space and assists in providing participants with speakers on a variety of topics related to aging well, with physical exercise programs developed with age and ability in mind, and with recreational activities that stimulate the mind and promote socialization.
10 TIPS TO HARNESS THE POWER OF STORIES

Putting a face on your center’s work by highlighting participants’ experiences helps people connect to the personal nature of your senior center. You can give voice to your participants and create a powerful way to gain the attention of potential participants, funders, legislators, and partners.

What makes a good story and how do you use them? Here are 10 tips to get started:

1. **Decide what you want to accomplish.** What is your goal and who is your audience? Do you want to attract more participants? Get noticed by local politicians? Obtain or protect funding? Answering this question first will help shape the stories you seek.

2. **Develop a set of questions in advance.** Let your interview subjects read the questions in advance, so they can collect their thoughts. This year try asking questions that reflect the National Senior Center Month theme of **Senior Centers: The Key to Aging Well**.

   Sample questions might include:
   - Where did you first hear about (Name) Senior Center?
   - Why and how often do you attend (Name) Senior Center?
   - What are your favorite activities?
   - If funding for (Name) Senior Center went away, what would you do?
   - What would you tell a friend who is considering joining (Name) Senior Center?
   - How does (Name) Senior Center help you age well?

3. **Ask a diverse set of people.** Old, young, male, female, black, white, Asian, Hispanic. Show the breadth of the people you serve.

4. **Take photos.** People see themselves in photos, and they add greatly to the overall narrative. The media loves using photos, as well. Make sure the photo is print/web quality—300 dpi or better.

5. **See if the participant is willing to speak to the media once their story goes live.** Media love stories in first-person format and often want to follow up with their own interview. Have each interviewee sign a release form, so your center is covered legally. NCOA has a sample photo release form you can edit and use.

6. **Keep your stories short and to the point.** Answer the main questions of: who, what, where, when, and why—then edit as much as you can. The more succinct the point, the more impact the story has.

7. **Be transparent.** Tell readers that the older adult attends your center and how you obtained the information. This adds credence and authenticity to your story.
8. **Plan how to use the stories.** Sometimes it’s great to use the whole story at once, or one per month. Sometimes you can chop a story in half and leave people hungry for more!

9. **Capture video of your interviewee.** Thanks to smart phones, video has become an easy and incredibly effective way to tell a story. Let older adults tell their story in their own voice if possible! See the Publicity Guide for tips on making videos with a smart phone.

10. **Make the pitch.** Send your story and photo to your local newspapers, online news sites, city officials, and the local offices of your state and federal legislators. A well-packaged story that hits on a hot topic is likely to get noticed.

Remember—don’t be shy! The work you do in the community is incredibly valuable. Telling your story shows the public why.

### INTERVIEWING TIPS

Smile, look the person in the eye, and gently shake their hand.

1. **Identify a location that would be comfortable** to sit for the 10-15 minute interview. It is usually better to do it on the interviewee’s home turf where they feel most comfortable.

2. **Keep your questions simple and short**—the interview is about them not you.

3. **Prepare questions in advance.** This helps organize your thoughts and serves as a safety net in case your mind goes blank for a time—it happens to the most experienced interviewers. But avoid “reading” the questions. Instead, use your natural listening skills and try to have a conversation.

4. **Listen to the answers.** Adjust your prepared questions from what you have just heard. Don’t always fill in with conversation if there are pauses by the interviewee.

5. **Ask one question at a time** rather than multiple-part questions because the interviewee will likely only answer one question or go on too long.

6. **Never ask “yes” or “no” questions** because you will only get one-word answers. Instead use open-ended questions such as: “How did you go about determining whether you would have enough retirement income to live on?”

7. **A good follow-up question is:** “That’s interesting, can you tell me more?”

8. **Ask for specifics.** If an interviewee says they didn’t realize how much money could be saved by asking for the generic vs. brand-name prescription drug, follow up and get a concrete example.

9. **End the interview by asking:** “Is there anything you wanted to add?” or “What am I forgetting to ask you?”

Prepared by Professor Jill Olmsted, Journalism Division Director, School of Communication, American University, Washington, DC.
2019 NISC PROGRAMS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Every day, senior centers across the country offer an exciting array of programs for older adults. The annual NISC Programs of Excellence Awards honor and promote these outstanding efforts. All senior centers are invited to submit a senior center program in one of 7 categories. Recognition will be given for the top entries in each category. There is an additional highlighted area called “the Arts” that each center can apply for in addition to the general categories. NISC will recognize the winners on ncoa.org, and entries will be posted in the NISC Members Resource section.

How to Apply

Programs must have been conducted in a senior center between July 1, 2018 and Sept. 30, 2019. Judges will look for programs that are innovative, creative, and easily replicated. Award categories are:

General Categories:

- **Community Development, Leadership, and Intergenerational** — Programs that increase community involvement in senior centers, enhance diversity appreciation and understanding, and develop strong leaders and volunteers
- **Cultural Programs** — Programs that showcase performing and visual arts, music, and literature
- **Fundraising** — Programs designed to generate revenue or in-kind sponsorship for the senior center
- **Health and Wellness** — Programs designed to improve the health of seniors through screenings and education
- **Nutrition** — Programs geared to improving nutritional health or combating malnutrition
- **Special Events** — Programs designed as one-time events or projects; may be intergenerational, thematic, seasonal, or patriotic
- **Technology** — Programs that teach the use of technology or use technology in program delivery

Highlighted Program Area: The Arts:

This year, the NISC Programs of Excellence highlighted category will be the Arts. To be considered for an award, the program must engage older adults in a multidimensional art project or series of arts programs over the course of the year, with the project/series culminating with a public program component such as an art show, open house, exhibit, etc. that is open to the community. The program should involve community partners, local artists and older adults in the planning and delivery of the project/series.

There are two applications below. You may apply for an award in the General Category AND the Arts Programming. The rules are included in each form. Due to the potential volume of submissions, each senior center may submit only ONE entry in the General Category and ONE entry in the Arts Programming Award.

- Apply for General Category
- Apply for Arts Programming Award

Deadline: Completed nomination forms must be received no later than Friday, Nov. 22, 2019.

Please direct questions and materials to NISC Program Manager Maureen O’Leary at Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org, with “NISC Excellence Awards” in the subject line. Many thanks to Jill Hall and her team for organizing the NISC Programs of Excellence Awards!
CUSTOMIZABLE SENIOR CENTER MONTH POSTER

Tailor the National Senior Center Month poster to your center! This is a NISC member-only benefit. Add your own photos and contact information. Here’s how:

**Directions:**

1. We will email members the customizable poster.
2. Save the poster to your computer.
3. Open the poster using Microsoft Word.
4. Select any of the four circles in the poster.
5. Under Drawing Tools — Format, select Shape Fill — Picture — From a File.
6. Select a photo from your computer to use. This will work best if the photo is high resolution and square shaped.
7. Click Insert.
8. If the photo does not fit the circle, select the circle and click Picture Tools — Format — Crop — Fill.

If you customize your poster, please save it as a PDF and share it with us at membership@ncoa.org.
SEPTEMBER HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

Visit the following websites for more information around which to build programs and activities.

HEALTH & FITNESS

 National Food Safety Month
 foodsafety.gov

 National Cholesterol Awareness Month
 cdc.gov/cholesterol/cholesterol_education_month.htm

 Hunger Action Month
 HungerActionMonth.org

 Malnutrition Awareness Week: Sept. 23-27
 nutritioncare.org/maw

 Falls Prevention Awareness Day: Sept. 23
 ncoa.org/FPAD

 National Women’s Health & Fitness Day: Sept. 25
 fitnessday.com/women/index.htm

ENRICHMENT

 International Women's Friendship Month
 kappadelta.org/international-womens-friendship-month

 International Literacy Day: Sept. 8
 internationalliteracyday.org/

 American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign: Sound the Alarm. Save a Life: Sept. & May
 redcross.org/sound-the-alarm.html

 National Employ Older Workers Week: Sept. 23-27
 doleta.gov/Seniors/html_docs/NatEmpOldWkr.cfm

 National Voter Registration Day: Sept. 24
 nationalvoterregistrationday.org/about

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

 Grandparents Day: Sept. 8
 grandparentsday.org/

 Checkers Day and Dogs in Politics Day: Sept. 23
 holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/September/checkersday.htm

RECOGNIZED HOLIDAYS

 Labor Day: Sept. 2
 timeanddate.com/holidays/us/labor-day

 VJ Day: Sept. 2
 holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/September/vjday.htm

 Patriot Day: Sept. 11
 timeanddate.com/holidays/us/patriot-day

 POW/MIA Recognition Day: Sept. 20
 timeanddate.com/holidays/us/pow-mia-recognition-day
Citizenship Day: Sept. 17
timeanddate.com/holidays/us/constitution-citizenship-day

Start of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year): Sept. 29-Oct. 1
jewfaq.org/holiday2.htm

International Day of Peace — Make a Difference Day: Sept. 21
internationaldayofpeace.org

Native American Day: Sept. 27
holidayinsights.com/other/native.htm

National Good Neighbor Day: Sept. 28
holidayinsights.com/other/goodneighbor.htm

YEAR-LONG OBSERVANCES

FEBRUARY
  American Heart Month
  Feb. 4: World Cancer Day
  uicc.org/world-cancer-day-2018

MARCH
  National Nutrition Month
  National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
  4th Tuesday of March, March 26, 2019: American Diabetes Alert Day
  niddk.nih.gov/health-information/communication-programs/ndep/partner-community-organization-information/diabetes-alert-day

APRIL
  Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month
  Financial Literacy Month
  National Public Health Week
  nphw.org/events/nphw-forum
  World Health Day
  who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2018/en
  World Immunization Week
  who.int/campaigns/immunization-week/2018/en

MAY
  Older Americans Month
  Arthritis Awareness Month
  National Osteoporosis Month
  National Stroke Awareness Month
  Mental Health Month
JUNE
Alzheimer’s & Brain Awareness Month
National Safety Month
June 22: Olmstead anniversary (1999)
June 15: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)
eldermistreatment.usc.edu/weaad-home

JULY
July 14: Older Americans Act anniversary (1965)
July 30: Medicare and Medicaid anniversary (1965)

AUGUST
National Immunization Awareness Month

SEPTEMBER
National Senior Center Month
Hunger Action Month
National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month
World Alzheimer’s Month
Sept. 8: Grandparents Day
Sept. 23-27: Malnutrition Awareness Week
Sept. 23: National Falls Prevention Awareness Day (first day of fall)
Sept. 23-27: National Employ Older Workers Week (last full week of Sept.)
Sept. 29: World Heart Day

OCTOBER
National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
National Physical Therapy Month
National Down Syndrome Awareness Month
Oct. 6-12: Mental Illness Awareness Week
Oct. 12-20: Bone and Joint Health Action Week

NOVEMBER
National Family Caregivers Month
National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month
American Diabetes Month

DECEMBER
Dec. 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities
National Influenza Vaccination Week
Additional Resources

**NCOA Center for Healthy Aging**  
[ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging](ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging)  
While the aging network has been moving toward evidence-based health programs for the past several years, Older Americans Act Title IIID funding now must be used only for programs and activities that have been demonstrated to be evidence-based. Learn more about evidence-based programs and get tools to offer them at your center:

- **About Evidence-Based Programs:** Get program overviews, descriptions of program goals, training requirements, references, and locations where programs are active.
- **Offering Evidence-Based Programs:** Download a variety of outreach and recruitment materials to support your evidence-based programs.

**NCOA Public Policy & Advocacy**  
[ncoa.org/public-policy-action](ncoa.org/public-policy-action)  
Get the latest news and action alerts and review our Advocacy Toolkit for advocacy basics and issue-specific resources.

**NCOA’s BenefitsCheckUp®**  
[benefitscheckup.org](benefitscheckup.org)  
If you have members with limited income, use this free online tool to screen them for more than 2,000 benefits programs to help them pay for prescription drugs, health care, rent, utilities, and other daily needs.

**Elder Index™**  
[ncoa.org/economic-security/money-management/elder-index](ncoa.org/economic-security/money-management/elder-index)  
What does it take for a senior in your community to be economically secure? The Elder Index can give you the answer. NCOA’s new guide will show you how to use the Index to educate others about the true cost of aging in your area.

**NCOA’s My Medicare Matters®**  
[mymedicarematters.org](mymedicarematters.org)  
Help your members get ready for Medicare open enrollment by pointing them to this free website that provides step-by-step help to make Medicare work for them.

**National Resource Center on LGBT Aging**  
[lgbtagingcenter.org](lgbtagingcenter.org)  
Explore this valuable website that pinpoints the specific concerns, needs, and resources available to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults.

**Taking Your Medicines Safely**  
[poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/resources/safemedicine/index.html](poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/resources/safemedicine/index.html)  
Get this free train-the-trainer program to educate older adults about medication safety and the Poison Helpline.

**Gaining Momentum: A Communications Toolkit**  
[frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/aging](frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/aging)  
Use this collection of research and resources to change the way you talk about aging in America.
2019 NISC Contacts

NCOA’s National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) is pleased to provide you with this Publicity Guide and strongly encourages your support to advance the visibility and viability of senior centers across the country. For additional information about NISC, please contact Maureen O’Leary, NISC Program Manager, at Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org. Comments can also be directed to Scott Harlow, NISC Membership Coordinator, at Scott.Harlow@ncoa.org, or to the NISC Chair.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Biggers Bernat, MHA

NISC Chair 2019-2020
Director of Senior Services
Roper St. Francis Healthcare

Executive Director
Lowcountry Senior Center
865 Riverland Drive
Charleston, SC 29412
Elizabeth.Bernat@RoperSaintFrancis.com

Many of the programs are from 2018 Programs of Excellence Awards. All program nominations can be seen in the NISC member only section. See the Award Winners to learn more programming ideas. Or go to www.ncoa.org/nisc to find the booklet.

National Senior Center Month Poster Credits: Photos are from the Tallahassee Senior Center, Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida. The photos highlight the Capital Games, the cities involvement with the National Senior Games. Go to www.nsga.com to connect the games to your center’s programming.

Would you like to be on our next National Senior Center Month poster?

Share your great senior center photos with NISC, and you may find your center highlighted next year. Email your photos to Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org.