

# Monroe County Seniors' Express Times



Monroe County PA Area Agency on Aging

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**The Monroe County Area Agency on Aging office and all Senior Centers will be closed on Monday, 2/16 in observance of President's Day.**

Visit our website:



[www.monroecountypa.gov/departments/area-agency-on-aging](http://www.monroecountypa.gov/departments/area-agency-on-aging)

Follow us on Facebook:



[www.facebook.com/MCPAAAA](http://www.facebook.com/MCPAAAA)

## Free Tax Assistance

This year, **AARP Foundation Tax-Aide** will operate our area's volunteer income tax assistance program, providing free income tax return preparation for Monroe and Carbon County residents. Certified volunteers will be available to assist middle- and low-income taxpayers, with special attention to those ages 60 or older. To receive help filing 2025 federal, state, and local tax returns, taxpayers must bring last year's tax return; an unexpired photo ID and Social Security card for themselves and any dependents; and all necessary income, expense, deduction, and credit documents pertaining to 2025. Those looking to e-file and receive a faster refund should bring a voided check to ensure the correct account numbers. If money is owed, volunteers can choose the date it is withdrawn from an account. Tax help will be available as follows:

<b>Hughes Main Library</b> 1002 N. 9th Street in Stroudsburg	Tuesdays, starting February 3rd, between 9:30am and 12:45pm
<b>Western Pocono Community Library</b> 131 Pilgrim Way in Brodheadsville	Thursdays, starting February 5th, between 9:30am and 11:45am

Interview sheets must be filled out upon arrival, and they take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

**Appointments can be made by phone only.** Call the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging at **(570) 420-3735**.

AARP Tax-Aide will also be operating three sites in Carbon County: Palmerston Senior Center, Kidder Twp. Municipal Bldg., and Lehighton Rec. Center. Their appointments are handled by the Carbon County Area Agency on Aging: (610) 824-7830, x4511.

**Write to the editor at:**

**Monroe County Area Agency on Aging, Attn: Alexandra**  
**724 Phillips Street, Suite 102**  
**Stroudsburg, PA 18360**  
**OR** **abender@monroecountypa.gov**

## Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

LIHEAP helps income-eligible families pay their heating bills by issuing a grant that does not need to be repaid. The one-time payment is sent directly to the utility company or fuel provider, and it is credited on the bill (though, in some cases, the check may be mailed to the applicant directly). Cash grants range from \$200 to \$1,000 and are based on household size, income, and fuel type. LIHEAP also provides crisis grants for emergency situations—applicants can receive more than one crisis grant, as necessary, each season until the maximum benefit of \$1,000 is reached.

**The 2025-2026 LIHEAP season is open through**

**April 10, 2026.** Applicants can either be renters or homeowners, and they must meet income requirements that include the cumulative yearly earnings of all household members.

To apply, visit [www.compass.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.compass.dhs.pa.gov), or request an application by calling the **LIHEAP hotline: 1-866-857-7095**. You will need the names of everyone in your household, all dates of birth and SSNs, proof of income for all household members, and a recent heating bill. Applications are also available at the Aging Office.

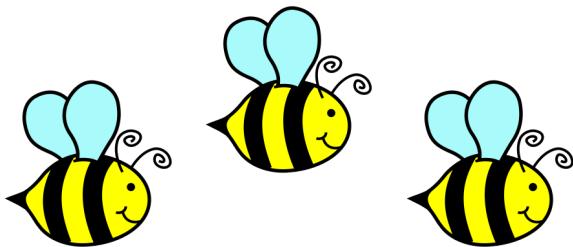
Applicants in need may also be eligible to have their heating system repaired, or replaced if necessary, through LIHEAP. Those who meet the income requirements can call the LIHEAP Crisis number at 1-866-410-2093 and explain there is a problem with their heating system. This is a separate service and does not limit a grant for fuel.

### 2025-2026 LIHEAP Income Requirements:

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$23,475
2	\$31,725
3	\$39,975
4	\$48,225
5	\$56,475
6	\$64,725

## Spelling Bee Update!

We are excited to announce that the Monroe County Senior Spelling Bee will be back this spring after a five-year hiatus! The spelling bee will be open to Monroe County residents ages 55 and older. The location and date are still to be determined, but check out future editions of the Seniors' Express Times for updates!



## Staying Safe in 2026

### Utility Imposters & Scams

Criminals pretending to be from a familiar electric, gas, or water company frequently target consumers online, in-person, and by phone. If you receive an unexpected or unusual call (or message) from your utility company, do not be afraid to hang up and call the company using the official phone number on your bill to verify its legitimacy. Be vigilant and aware that utility companies will always provide adequate notice if your service is to be disconnected, and they will never call you to demand immediate payment. Report suspicious calls to your utility company and to the Federal Trade Commission at [reportfraud.ftc.gov](http://reportfraud.ftc.gov).

## Community Events

### Patriotic Art Presentation

America250PA—Monroe County

Presented by Pocono Mountains Art Group

**When:** All February, during library hours

**Where:** Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way in Brodheadsville

### Stroudsburg Winterfest

Presented by Downtown Stroudsburg Business Association

**When:** Saturday, 2/14, from 11am to 4pm

**Where:** Downtown Stroudsburg

This year's theme is "Love, the Heart of the Poconos", since the event takes place on Valentine's Day. Visitors can expect 40+ love-themed ice sculptures, local businesses offering specials and discounts, warming stations, the Eastern Monroe Public Library's Bookmobile, and the AmeriHealth Mobile Wellness Unit.

## "Stars and Stitches Forever" Quilt Challenge

America250PA—Monroe County

The Monroe County Historical Association is hosting a quilt challenge in honor of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

"Working within challenge parameters, quilters are invited to interpret their journey (or their family's journey) of migration or immigration to America and/or the area now known as Monroe County. This is a way to reflect on the past, honor the contributions of all people of Monroe County, and look ahead to a shared future."

**Quilts are due by Friday, February 27th.**

Challenge quilts will be exhibited in the Monroe County Historical Association's Hughes Community Room in the new Heritage Center from April 1st through July 31st. For more info, please contact the Historical Association at (570) 421-7703.

## Cryptogram

### *Valentine's Day Edition*

Decode the words to reveal a poem! Each letter stands for another letter. Three letters have been provided to you.

(Solution on Page 13)

B O S S C B G B G J,

H L P N G K M C B G X N S G,

S S I C B L M S M D G G T,

C W J M P C B G V P S !



**TIMING IS EVERYTHING!**

**ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU FOUND OUT WHAT THE PA LINK CAN DO FOR YOU?**

**ARE YOU OVER 60 OR HAVE A DISABILITY OR BOTH?**

**CONTACT THE PA LINK TO GET CONNECTED TO RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY.**

**1-800-753-8827**

**DON'T WASTE ANOTHER MINUTE! CALL TODAY!**



## 2025 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

Homeowners, renters, and some residents of personal care / nursing homes may be eligible for a rebate of up to \$1,000 on their paid taxes or rent. Applicants must be 65 or older, widows/widowers 50 or older, or 18 or older with a disability. The money issued is based on the applicant's annual income, which must have been \$48,110 or less in 2025:

### **\*UPDATED INCOME GUIDELINES\***

Income	Maximum Rebate
\$0 - \$8,550	\$1,000
\$8,551 - \$16,040	\$770
\$16,041 - \$19,240	\$460
\$19,241 - \$48,110	\$380

You can apply online on [pa.gov](http://pa.gov), or you can request an application to be sent to you by calling or emailing the Aging Office:

(570) 420-3735

monroeaging@monroecountypa.gov

## Free Tech Education & Support is Available

Having trouble navigating your devices (cell phones, laptops, printers, etc.)? East Stroudsburg Area School District's **Community Technology Outreach Program** is made up of a dedicated group of tech-savvy students who are willing to work with community members to answer any technology-related questions. Once a month during the school year, students teach participants about common technologies and additionally offer one-on-one sessions for individualized assistance, encouraging attendees to bring their personal devices, moving them toward a better understanding of the tools they own and use.

The next sessions will be on these Mondays: February 9th, March 9th, and April 13th.. To register, visit [esasd.net/cto](http://esasd.net/cto), or email [tech2.coaches@esasd.net](mailto:tech2.coaches@esasd.net) for more information. Those interested can also call Diana or Joe, the Community Tech Outreach Co-Advisors, at (570) 424-8500, ext. 10615 or ext. 10616.



Loder Senior Center's New Year's Eve party was an impromptu event that turned into quite the party! There was lots of dancing, good food, and even a singalong. The party ended with a countdown to the new year, complete with a sparkling cider toast!

# Support Groups

## Dementia Caregiver

**When:** Sat., Feb. 28th, 10am-11:30am  
**Where:** Eastern Monroe Public Library  
 (1002 N. 9th St., 2nd Fl., Stroudsburg)

**When:** Sat., Feb. 28th, 1:15pm-2:45pm  
**Where:** B.A.R.C.  
 (1200 Route 390, Room 29, in Cresco)  
**Call Barbara:** (570) 236-3380

## Blindness & Visual Impairment

**When:** 1st Monday of the month, 10am  
**Where:** Burnley Workshop  
 (4219 Manor Drive in Stroudsburg)  
**Call Sights for Hope:** (570) 992-7787

## Bereavement for Adults

**When:** Misc. Tuesdays, 10:30am-12pm  
**Where:** Hughes Library  
 (1002 N. 9th Street in Stroudsburg)  
**Text Ruth:** (570) 242-3536

## Loss Support Group

**When:** 2nd & 4th Monday, 3pm-4pm  
**Where:** Friendly Community Center  
 (1200 Route 390 in Cresco)  
**Call Marilyn:** (570) 420-7164 (landline)

## Grief Share

**When:** Varies; call first  
**Where:** Mount Eaton Church  
 (7277 Mount Eaton Rd. in Saylorsburg)  
**Call the church:** (570) 992-7050

**When:** Varies; call first  
**Where:** The Church of St. Luke  
 (818 Main Street in Stroudsburg)  
**Call the church:** (570) 421-9097

**When:** Thursdays, 5:30pm-6pm  
**Where:** Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church  
 (915 N. 5th Street in Stroudsburg)  
**Call the church:** (570) 421-0750

**Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group**  
**When:** 2nd Monday of month, 5:30pm  
**Where:** Shawnee Ridge Comm. Center  
 (200 Jersey Lane in E. Stroudsburg)  
**Call Jennifer:** (570) 517-9292

## Parkinson's Support Group

**When:** Friday, Feb. 13th, 12pm-1pm  
**Where:** ESU, Monroe Hall, Room 119  
**Email Elliott:** ecolon5@live.esu.edu

Join Us

# Conni's Café

February 19  
 1 to 3 pm



The Memory Café is a place to meet with others living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), Alzheimer's or other related dementias and their Care Partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
 139 Craigs Meadow Road  
 East Stroudsburg, Pa 18301

## Celebration Hall

It's a place to talk with others and to learn,  
 "You are not alone."



RSVP: Barbara Van Nortwick  
 570.236.3380



Community Foundation of Monroe County



Member of the Dementia Friendly PA Community network

Please visit the Monroe County Dementia Coalition's Facebook page for announcements regarding closings of Connis's Café & the Dementia Caregiver Support Group.

## Food Assistance

The Pocono Mountains United Way has updated their list of programs, which has more than 40 resources available in Monroe County. To obtain a copy, visit their website: [www.poconounitedway.org/get-help](http://www.poconounitedway.org/get-help); call their office at (570) 517-3953; or email [info@poconounitedway.org](mailto:info@poconounitedway.org). Copies are also available at the Aging Office.

The Monroe Senior Volunteer Program (MSVP) has volunteers that can grocery shop and deliver food to your residence. If you are interested in receiving this service, call the Aging Office (570) 420-3735.

A meal is available at our senior centers each day for only \$2.50. Please refer to Page 8 for their schedules.



## Weekly Programs Offered by the Jewish Resource Center of the Poconos

The Jewish Resource Center of the Poconos is a community center located at 1210 N. 5th Street in Stroudsburg, and they are currently offering the following programs:

**Mondays:** Nostalgic Recipes, 10am-12pm

**Tuesdays:** 'Let Them' Workshop, 10:30am-12:30pm

**Wednesdays:** Board Games, 10am-11am  
Chair Zumba, 11am-12pm

**Thursdays:** Chair Yoga, 10:45am-11:45am  
The Lunch Club, 12pm-1pm  
Mahjong, 1pm-3pm

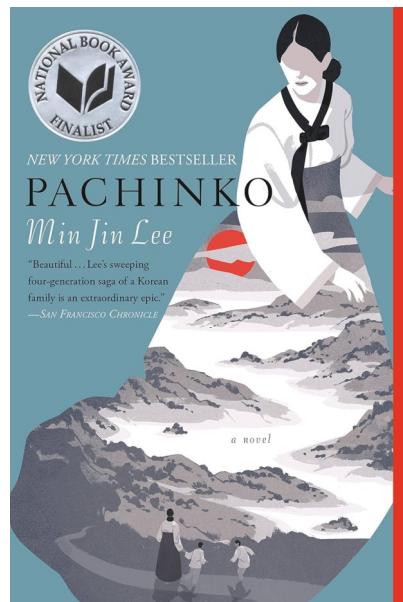
*Please reserve with Maggie by calling (570) 517-0815 or by emailing [maggie@poconojrc.org](mailto:maggie@poconojrc.org).*

## Reading Corner

### Pachinko

by Min Jin Lee

*Pachinko* is a captivating saga that follows one family across four generations while covering major historical events throughout the twentieth century. The story begins in 1910 in Korea with Sunja, a teenager from a poor family, who falls in love with a wealthy man. Realizing he is married only after discovering she's with child, and unwilling to be bought, Sunja marries a minister passing through Korea on his way to Japan. The decisions she makes shape the futures of her descendants for decades to come.



## MCAAA SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

### OPTIONS Program

Help at Home, more commonly referred to as the OPTIONS program, assists PA residents ages 60+ who would like to stay in their home. The program offers:

- **Care Management:** ongoing care plan management to ensure needs are being met
- **Home-Delivered Meals**
- **Personal Care and Home Support:** assistance with daily living activities, basic housekeeping, shopping, and laundry
- **Personal Emergency Response System (PERS):** an electronic device for those at high-risk in case of an emergency

There is currently a waitlist for OPTIONS, but we encourage seniors who need these services to call the Aging Office to register.

# Meet Your Local Area Agency on Aging Team

## Stephanie

Stephanie Shaffer is one of our dedicated Care Managers. She has been a part of the team at the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging for more than seven years!

Stephanie was hired in December 2018 as a Service Coordinator for the Waiver Program. When the Waiver Program was taken over by managed care organizations, Stephanie transitioned to the Care Management Unit, where she remains today. She also serves as a back-up worker for the Protective Services and Assessment Units.

Stephanie loves her job because she gets to meet and work with so many wonderful people, and each day is different. "I am never bored!" Helping people maintain their

independence makes her feel accomplished.

Stephanie is very kind, patient, and a good listener. She often goes the extra mile for her consumers and takes the time to understand each individual's situation. Her coworkers appreciate her willingness to help and step in where needed.

A fun fact about Stephanie is she knows how to play the bagpipes and performs publicly on weekends.

Outside of work, Stephanie enjoys spending time with her two daughters, husband, and cat. Her family often spends time together doing arts and crafts and exploring new places.



## Effie's Pennsylvania Dutch Cake (page 233)

### Ingredients:

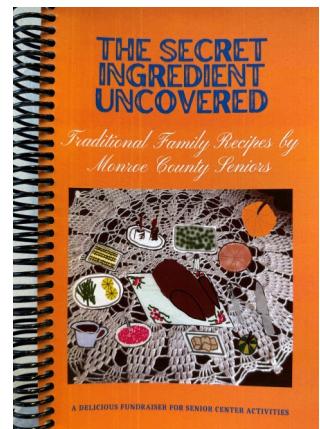
by Effie Howarth of East Stroudsburg

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups flour, sifted
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup softened butter (1 stick)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pint sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup black walnuts

Additionally, 1 tsp cinnamon & 3 tsp sugar.

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a bundt cake pan.
2. Mix the wet ingredients together.
3. Mix the dry ingredients together (except for additional cinnamon and sugar).
4. Combine the wet and dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Mix well.
5. In a separate side dish, mix together the additional cinnamon and sugar.

*More recipes like this one can be found in our cookbook! Visit the Aging Office or the Loder Senior Center to pick up your copy! (\$5/each)*



6. Sprinkle  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cinnamon mixture into the pan, and then add half of the cake batter.
7. Sprinkle  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cinnamon mixture again, then add the remaining batter.
8. Sprinkle the remaining  $\frac{1}{3}$  cinnamon mixture on top.
9. Bake for one hour.

# Monroe County Senior Centers

Our senior centers serve a midday meal and offer fun activities. There are opportunities to socialize, health-related classes, exercise programs, crafts, trips, and games—including BINGO!

On **February 17th**, all center attendees are invited to attend a Mardi Gras party at the **Mountain Senior Center**. The celebration will begin at 10am.

**To attend center events, participants must be registered members; to sign up, call Mara at (570) 420-3743.**

**All centers will be closed on Monday, February 16th.**

To see a more detailed activities calendar, visit our Facebook page. For meal reservations, call one day in advance by 10am (for JRC only, reserve by Sunday for Thursday). Lunch donation: \$2.50.

<p><b>Loder Senior Center</b> 62 Analomink Street East Stroudsburg, PA 18301 (570) 420-3745 Mon.-Fri. 9am-2pm Manager: Mara Cruz Aide: Michele Auster</p>	<p><b>Mountain Senior Center</b> 354 Memorial Boulevard Tobyhanna, PA 18466 (570) 894-3272 x134 Tues. Thurs. Fri. 9am-2pm Manager: Barbara Schlegel</p>	<p><b>Barrett Senior Center</b> 1200 Route 390, Room 17 Cresco, PA 18326 (570) 420-3735 Mon. Wed. Fri. 9am-2pm Manager: Joan Marie Hess-Tyminski</p>
<p><b>Chestnuthill Senior Center</b> 1919 Route 209 Brodheadsville, PA 18322 (570) 242-6770 Wed. &amp; Fri. 9am-2pm Manager: Donna Riedel</p>	<p><b>The Bookmobile visits the Loder Senior Center every other Thursday at noon! (2/5 &amp; 2/19)</b></p>	<p><b>Jewish Resource Center</b> 1210 North 5th Street Stroudsburg, PA 18360 (570) 517-0815 Thursdays 10am-3pm Manager: Maggie Augugliaro</p>

## **WISH LIST DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT ALL SENIOR CENTERS:**

Acrylic Paints, Adult Coloring Books, Blank Canvases, Glue Guns & Glue Sticks, Holiday Decorations, Paperware & Party Goods

**Please note: these are the ONLY donations we are accepting at this time. Thank you!**



SHARE Housing is an affordable housing choice that brings together home hosts who want to share their home with home seekers who are looking for housing in exchange for assistance with living expenses, help around the house, or a combination of both. Participants must be at least 18 years of age, and one of the individuals in the match must be over 60. Contact Kelly Foley at (570) 832-0538.

**Want to Save on Medicare Costs? PA MEDI can help!**

If you have limited income and resources, you may qualify for **Extra Help and/or Medicare Savings Programs.**

**Call today!**

PA MEDI Helpline 1-800-783-7067  
or your local Area Agency on Aging at (570) 420-3735.

**Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight**

**Link**  
Pennsylvania Department of Aging  
pa.gov/aging  
1-800-753-8827

# Health & Wellness Calendar for February 2026

*All programs are open to the public. For further information on any programs and to make necessary reservations, call (570) 420-3746.*

## Arthritis Foundation Exercise Class

**Instructor:** Debbie Lang, Pocono Family YMCA  
Strengthen your muscles and increase your range of motion and flexibility. An ideal class for the first-time exerciser or those who have arthritis.

**Mountain Senior Center:** Tuesdays, 10am-11am  
**Barrett Senior Center:** Wednesdays, 10am-11am  
**Loder Senior Center:** Thursdays, 10am-11am

## Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight (PA MEDI)

PA MEDI is the State Health Insurance Assistance Program. If you would like an appointment with PA MEDI for your Medicare concerns, please call the Aging Office at (570) 420-3735. Appointments are available at the Loder Senior Center, by telephone, or virtually.



On January 5th, a community health educator from AmeriHealth Caritas visited the Barrett Senior Center to teach seniors about asthma.

## Zumba® Gold - Seated

**Instructor:** Lisa D'Arrigo, Pocono Family YMCA

Ideal for individuals with mobility or balance issues, this class features easy-to-follow Zumba® choreography adapted for chair exercise.

**Loder Senior Center:** Mondays at 10:30am

**Mountain Senior Center, Barrett Senior Center & Chestnuthill Senior Center:** every other Friday; see activity calendars on Facebook for time

## Exercise with YouTube!

**Loder Senior Center and Chestnuthill Senior Center** both offer varied classes in which participants watch and follow online exercise videos in a group setting. Examples of classes offered include Zumba and Walking in Place. Call the Loder Senior Center at (570) 420-3745 or the Chestnuthill Senior Center at (570) 242-6770 to find out what days/times/classes will be offered that week!

## Seated Tai Chi for Arthritis

**Instructor:** Michelle Auster, MCAA

Adapted from Dr. Paul Lam's Tai Chi for Arthritis, this class enhances flexibility, muscle tone, and fitness, incorporating the essential Tai Chi principles while emphasizing breathing, posture, and space awareness, with the added benefit of stress reduction.

**Loder Senior Center:** 8 consecutive Wednesdays beginning February 4th, 10am-10:45am

*Registration is required, and space is limited to 12 attendees. Call (570) 420-3746 to register.*

## So, What's Your Routine?

by Laura Pride, PA MEDI Coordinator

By now, some of us, if asked what the date is, might say "December 63rd?!" I mean, it's been cold and snowing since December 2nd, and the shorter, darker, colder days all seem to run together, am I right? For many, winter days mean less time outdoors and breaks in our regular routines due to the holidays and the weather. While this season can feel cozy and calm, it can also quietly disrupt daily rhythms — especially for older adults. That's why maintaining a consistent routine during the winter months is so important for senior health, safety, and overall well-being. A predictable daily routine provides structure, comfort, and a sense of normalcy, even when the weather outside is unpredictable.

### **The Comfort of Predictability**

Routine offers reassurance. Knowing what to expect each day — when to wake up, eat meals, participate in activities, and rest — helps seniors feel grounded and secure. During winter, when daylight is limited and schedules can feel disrupted, this predictability becomes even more valuable.

For many seniors, routine reduces stress and anxiety by creating a steady rhythm that supports both emotional and mental health.

### **Supporting Physical Health and Safety**

Consistent routines help seniors stay on track with essential daily habits such as eating balanced meals, staying hydrated, taking medications as prescribed, and engaging in gentle physical activity.

During winter, when icy conditions and cold weather may limit outdoor movement, having scheduled indoor activities and mealtimes helps prevent

inactivity and reduces the risk of falls, weakness, or isolation.

### **Boosting Mental and Emotional Well-Being**

Winter can sometimes lead to feelings of loneliness or the "winter blues." Routine plays a powerful role in combating these feelings by providing purpose and engagement throughout the day.

Simple daily touchpoints — shared meals, group activities, conversations, and familiar faces — foster connection and remind seniors they are part of a caring community.

### **Encouraging Healthy Sleep Patterns**

Shorter daylight hours can disrupt sleep cycles, making it harder for seniors to fall asleep or stay rested. A consistent daily routine — including set wake-up times, meals, activities, and evening wind-down habits — helps regulate the body's internal clock.

Better sleep supports immune health, mood, memory, and overall energy levels, all of which are especially important during the winter months.

### **Routine and Cognitive Health**

For seniors experiencing memory loss or cognitive decline, routine is especially critical. Familiar patterns help reduce confusion and agitation while increasing confidence and independence.

Winter routines provide stability when environmental cues, like daylight and outdoor activity, may be reduced.

### **A Steady Rhythm Through the Winter Season**

Routine isn't about rigidity — it's about creating a sense of balance, purpose, and comfort. During winter, a consistent daily

*Continued on Page 11*

**'So, What's Your Routine?'**  
*continued from Page 10*

routine helps seniors stay healthy, connected, and emotionally supported, no matter what the weather brings.

For seniors and their families alike, routine offers something invaluable during winter: stability, reassurance, and peace of mind.

If you are looking for a new routine, consider joining one of our Monroe County Senior Centers for active adults! The names and locations of the centers are listed on **Page 8**. We offer great conversation, games, a hot lunch, exercise, education, and the occasional trip! Join us!

Look for another Health and Wellness article from me in April! Until then, I leave you with these quotes about routine. Be well!

*"Your routine is your best friend. It keeps you grounded." — Unknown*

*"Every day, do something that will inch you closer to a better tomorrow." — Doug Firebaugh*



The 2024 Helen G. Brown Award recipients, **Lourdes Salvador** (second from the left) and **Heidi Fareri** (second from the right), pictured alongside Erin DeRosa from Rep. Probst's office (left), Sherrif Todd Martin (middle), and Mariclare Miller from Sen. Brown's office (right)

## Senior Independence Month

February is National Senior Independence Month, a time to recognize, honor, and support the independence of older adults.

Maintaining independence is critical to our wellbeing and dignity. It helps us have a sense of control over our daily lives, continue to contribute to our communities, and preserve our sense of purpose and self-worth.

As we age, we may encounter various challenges that can impact our independence. The Monroe County Area Agency on Aging is committed to addressing these challenges by offering services and resources that help older adults age at home. The **OPTIONS Program** (see page 6), **Caregiver Support Program**, and our **Health and Wellness programs** (see page 9) are just some of the ways MCAAA can assist. Our programs are designed to improve the physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of older adults.

Prioritizing health is key to aging at home. Scheduling regular medical check-ups, eating a balanced, nutritious diet, and managing medications effectively can make all the difference in our wellness.

Another aspect of maintaining independence is keeping socially active and engaged. Some nearby opportunities include participation at our **Senior Centers** (see page 8) and in our volunteer program, **MSVP**. (To become a volunteer, call (570) 420-3747.) Continuing lifelong learning to keep an active mind is important as well; the **Older Adult Learning Center (TOALC)** offers classes on a wide variety of topics. (For more information on TOALC, call (570) 422-7810.)

Today's world often requires some measure of technological literacy, which can be tricky for some. ESASD's **Community Technology Outreach Program** (see page 4) is a great way to learn more and have your

*Continued on Page 12*

**'Senior Independence Month'  
continued from Page 11**

questions answered.

When driving is no longer an option, the **Monroe County Transit Authority** has alternatives. Seniors ride the Fixed Route for free, and other affordable options are available too. For more information, call (570) 839-6282 or visit [www.gomcta.com](http://www.gomcta.com).

Another thing to keep in mind is ensuring accessibility in the home by making sure there is adequate lighting, removing tripping hazards, and installing grab bars. Emergency alert buttons are imperative in case of an emergency at home.

Managing our finances wisely and staying aware of scams targeting seniors (see page 2) are more important ways to stay safe and independent.

This February, and year-round, the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging would like to empower older adults to embrace their independence. If you or a loved one is in need of assistance, please do not hesitate to call our office at (570) 420-3735.

**Programs Offered by the  
Friendly Community Center**

The Friendly Community Center, located at 1200 Route 390 in Cresco (same building as the Barrett Senior Center), is currently offering the following programs:

**Bus Trip to the 2026 Philadelphia Flower Show on Tuesday, March 3rd**

Tickets are \$155/person (includes bus transportation and admission to the show) Pick-up/drop-off will be available in both Cresco and Tannersville

Last day to purchase tickets: **February 13th**

**Dance & Movement for people with  
Parkinson's and arthritis**

Tuesdays at 2pm

**Mah Joong**

Thursdays, 1pm-4pm

**In Stitches (knitting, crochet, needlework)**

Thursdays, 1:30pm-3pm

For more information, please contact the Friendly Community Center by calling them at **(570) 481-4330** or emailing [info@thefriendlycommunitycenter.org](mailto:info@thefriendlycommunitycenter.org).

## **February is Also Low Vision Awareness Month**

Many people experience a decline or loss in their eyesight as they age. This can cause feelings of isolation and helplessness. Luckily, our community has resources to help.

**Sights for Hope** is a United Way agency in Stroudsburg serving Monroe County's visually impaired and blind individuals by providing free social services, such as escorted transportation for essential needs and assistance with chores like writing checks, reading correspondence, and labeling and organizing household items. The agency also offers support group sessions and life skills classes that provide discussions on issues related to vision loss, adaptive ways of handling household tasks, and navigating inside and outside the home. Their low-vision outlet store is open to the public and sells helpful products such as talking watches and clocks, large-numbered phones, and magnifiers at a reduced price. Limited free vision screenings are available. Their phone number is **(570) 992-7787**.

Our **local libraries** offer large print books and audiobooks, and the Hughes Library in Stroudsburg has a book machine. The Hughes Library's phone number is **(570) 421-0800**.

The **Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP)** ships books in accessible formats like braille, audio, and large print directly to patrons across PA, all for free. Their phone number is **(215) 683-3213**.

## Question of the Month

### How do I get into senior housing in Monroe County?

*Raymond Brown, Mount Pocono*

Finding affordable senior housing can be difficult. In Monroe County, all of the public senior housing options are currently full, and applicants are placed on a waitlist. The **Monroe County Housing Authority** can be reached at **(570) 421-7770**, and their website is [www.housingauthoritymonroecounty.org](http://www.housingauthoritymonroecounty.org). Another option to consider is the **SHARE Program** (see page 8 for more information). For a full list of Monroe County senior housing opportunities, a list of out-of-county housing authorities, applications, or questions about the process, please call the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging.

**Do you have a question? Send it to:**

**abender@monroecountypa.gov, or**

**MCAAA, Attn: Alexandra, 724 Phillips Street, Suite 102, Stroudsburg, PA 18360**

Retired seniors whose annual income does not exceed \$30,778 qualify for a reduced vehicle registration fee of \$12. Refer to the letter sent to you by PennDOT for your registration's due date. For an application, contact the Snydersville DMV at (717) 412-5300 or the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging at (570) 420-3735.



### Cryptogram Solution:

**ROSES ARE RED / VIOLETS ARE BLUE / SUGAR IS SWEET / AND SO ARE YOU!**

## We Need Your Help!

The mission of Support Services for Seniors is to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional wellbeing of older adults by providing services that empower them to attain or maintain independence and self care.

Your tax-deductible gift provides life-changing help for those among us who are most in need. The names of all contributors are acknowledged in the Seniors' Express Times unless anonymity is requested.

*Thank you  
for your  
generous  
donations!*

### Donation Coupon

Make your donation payable to: **Support Services for Seniors**

Mail to: Monroe County Area Agency on Aging  
724 Phillips Street, Suite 102, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

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**THE MONROE COUNTY SENIORS' EXPRESS TIMES** is published monthly by Support Services for Seniors and the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging. **Support Services for Seniors** is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors whose vision is a community where every older adult has an opportunity to pursue a life of independence, safety, and good health. Their mission is to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional wellbeing of older adults by providing services that empower older adults to attain or maintain independence and self-care. The organization works closely with the **Monroe County Area Agency on Aging** to: investigate and identify the long-range needs of older adults in the Pocono area; develop outreach activities which will inform the Pocono area older adults of available services, benefits, and opportunities; publish and fund the distribution of the Seniors' Express Times, a monthly newsletter with an emphasis on Aging issues; and to raise funds to support the objectives of the organization.

All editorial comments, requests, questions, or articles for submission should be addressed to: **Monroe County Area Agency on Aging, Attn: Alexandra Bender, 724 Phillips Street, Suite 102, Stroudsburg, PA 18360**, or emailed to: [abender@monroecountypa.gov](mailto:abender@monroecountypa.gov).

If you are receiving this publication in error, changing your address, or if you would like to receive this publication electronically via email, please call the **Monroe County Area Agency on Aging** at **(570) 420-3735** or email [abender@monroecountypa.gov](mailto:abender@monroecountypa.gov).