2018 National Senior Center Month: Program Guide

National Senior Center Month | September 2018

SENIOR CENTERS: BUILDING MOMENTUM
Growing | Learning | Giving | Connecting

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Welcome to National Senior Center Month

Senior Centers: Building Momentum
Growing | Learning | Giving | Connecting

September 2018

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: Building Momentum!
This year’s theme was chosen to highlight how senior centers build momentum for aging well in their communities. This year, senior centers celebrate their 75th anniversary. Just as older adults build on their past experiences and lessons learned to create a rich life, senior center professionals are building on lessons learned from 75 years of experience and wisdom.

We now know the research and importance behind Connecting older adults with others, and that making friends matters. That Learning new languages and skills and exercising helps care for your body. That Giving back at the senior center and within the community fosters purpose and a more meaningful life. And that as long as each of us lives, we want to continue Growing to be the most we can be. Senior centers have built a holistic experience where all of this is possible. This year, celebrate the many ways your senior center build momentum for people’s health, economic security, and independence.

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 several 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 2018 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

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. ~ Viktor E. Frankl

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 and looming cuts are 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 will be under threat in the federal budget process. Senators and Representatives need to know how seniors and their caregivers would be affected by funding cuts.

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

- **Recesses:** Congress will be back home for several recesses, which are good times to connect with them. Given this is another election year, there will be more interest in connecting with older constituents and voters. This year’s recess dates when you can expect Congressional candidates to come calling include July 27-Aug. 3 (House only), Aug. 4-Sept. 3, Sept. 8-11, Sept. 15-24 (House only), Oct. 13-26 (House only), Oct. 27-Nov. 12, and Nov. 17-26. Use our Advocacy Toolkit Recess 2018 to make the most of these opportunities.

- **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 is suffering from recent budget cuts, or proposed cuts threaten your work, organize seniors to write stories about what the cuts 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.
Meet the Candidates Forum

The Duxbury Senior Center & Council on Aging, MA, partnered with Duxbury High School to host a Meet the Candidates forum. Fourteen candidates running for Congress, the State Legislature, and the County Sheriff and Commission participated, and over 200 students, seniors, and community members attended. COA Director Joanne Moore and Dr. Ben Tantillo, Superintendent of Schools, delivered remarks about the importance of intergenerational relationships. The forum was co-moderated by student Sarah Gill and Dr. Jack Hill, retired principal of Duxbury High and an active member of the COA.

AP Government students and seniors from the Duxbury COA posed questions to the candidates that reflected the students’ and seniors’ priorities regarding the quality of life in their community. Questions came in via Twitter using #DuxVoterForum and in person. Prior to the forum, seniors learned Twitter at the COA. Journalism students took over the COA’s Facebook Live and Twitter accounts, creating an online interactive discussion during the forum. Television production students filmed the event, and 95.9 FM WATD cancelled its morning news program to air the forum live on the radio and online. Thousands of people were able to access the forum without physically attending.

After the forum, the students, seniors, community members, and candidates informally met with one another to continue the discussion on issues of importance to them.

InvolvElected Officials

The media often portray aging as a negative experience, but the Baltimore County Department of Aging knows better! This year they challenged the stereotypes of getting older and celebrated reaching later years using a comprehensive marketing campaign. Part of the campaign included asking elected officials to pose with their Reimagine Aging sign to spread awareness.

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. 24-28 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 for exceptional work ethic and commitment to quality to an older worker in your community
- Present an award to an exceptional business in your community that employs older workers
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.

EARN can help senior job seekers to:
- Network with others and find support when seeking employment
- Update job search skills with free workshops and trainings for today’s job market
- Learn how to apply for jobs online and discover local job opportunities

EARN addresses a growing need for senior employment. In Massachusetts as well as across the nation, seniors are looking for employment in ever greater numbers. This new phenomena is called “bridge employment.” The bridge job is a bridge between full-time work and retirement, or a short-term job following a full-time career. Seniors want to find jobs to achieve better economic security and maintain an adequate quality of life. Their peer-based leadership model provides the opportunity for skill building, technical training, community networking, and most importantly, emotional support and encouragement for the older population.

Wonders of Women (WOW) Summit

Celebrate your strengths! Center in the Park, Philadelphia, PA held its first annual Wonders of Women Summit (WOW). WOW was created to acknowledge phenomenal women in their community and invite them to discuss relevant topics that affect our everyday lives.

The panel was intentionally diverse, with women being chosen for their breadth of experience and their standing in the community. The panel included a recently retired Democratic Ward Leader in Philadelphia’s City Council; a long-term care ombudsman who is a known activist in the LGBT community; a former Director of Volunteer Administration for the Southeastern PA Chapter of the American Red Cross who is also a certified Love and Attraction Coach; an executive, bilingual, and external relations professional with public policy and advocacy experience; and a former State Department of Aging Secretary.

The topics discussed ranged from politics/advocacy/civil rights, relationships and self-image, women and economic security, and women and gay rights activism. The panel concluded with a motivational keynote speech from a beloved Center in the Park participant and family therapist and former radio personality Dr. Lucille Ijoy. 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

“You are never too old and it is never too late.” ~ Margaret Muth, artist from Ashton Applewhite’s book, *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*

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

**Falls Prevention Awareness Day**

**September 22, 2018**

The 11th annual *Falls Prevention Awareness Day* (FPAD) will be observed on Sept. 22, 2018—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 fall prevention strategies, and advocate for the expansion of evidence-based community falls prevention programs.

**Top 4 FPAD activities for senior centers**

1. **Evidence-based falls prevention programs:** 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. **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. **Host 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.

**Additional resources**

Download the following materials and more at [ncoa.org/FPAD](http://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 these videos to educate older adults about steps they can take to prevent falls and the benefits of evidence-based falls prevention programs.
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 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.

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/SNAP](http://BenefitsCheckUp.org/SNAP)) 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](https://www.ncoa.org/nutrition-and-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](mailto:Erin.Kee@ncoa.org).
Aging Mastery Program®

NCOA’s proven Aging Mastery Program® (AMP) offers an innovative approach to guide individuals through their later years and help them achieve autonomy, mastery, and meaning. Senior centers have always been central to AMP, and now you have an opportunity to be part of the new self-directed version of the program: The Aging Mastery Starter Kit.

Like the community-based AMP, the Aging Mastery Starter Kit is a fun, engaging approach to aging well that combines education with engaging activities to inspire and motivate. It is appropriate as a stand-alone entry or as continued inspiration for those who have completed the community-based classes.

Central to the kit is the Aging Mastery Playbook©, a guide to the philosophy of Aging Mastery with practical tips for aging well across six dimensions: Gratitude and Mindfulness, Health and Well-Being, Finances and Future Planning, Connections and Community, Learning and Creativity, and Legacy and Purpose. Each dimension has specific guideposts, or actions, that people are encouraged to incorporate into their daily lives.

The kit includes activity cards that support mindful actions, foundational exercise DVDs, a notepad for personal reflection and goal-setting, and postcards to express gratitude. All of the components of the kit can be completed individually at home. Senior centers have successfully used the kit as part of their home-delivered meal program to engage isolated older adults in new ways.

Just like the community-based program, the Starter Kit is a fun and innovative experience that empowers older adults to embrace their gift of longevity by spending more time each day doing things that are good for themselves and others.

To learn how to bring AMP or the Starter Kit to your center, visit ncoa.org/AMP or email us at AMP@ncoa.org.

### Aging Mastery® Starter Kit Components

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<td>Aging Mastery® Playbook</td>
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<td>Activity Cards &amp; Dice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise DVDs</td>
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<td>Notepad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratitude Postcards</td>
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<td>Magnet and Sticker</td>
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![Diagram of Starter Kit Components]
4 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 on important health topics. For up-to-date news on healthy aging, sign up for the Center for Healthy Aging monthly enews or email us to join an online community to connect with peers.

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!

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 200 resources focused on leadership and management, strategic partnerships, delivery infrastructure and capacity, centralized and coordinated logistical processes, quality assurance, and business planning and sustainability.

4. **Explore the Community Malnutrition Resource Hub**
   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.
Market 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. Understanding our own views, training new staff, and educating participants and the community are important steps in creating a positive, age-friendly environment at your senior center.

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.

Reimagine Aging

The Baltimore County Department of Aging, MD, held a comprehensive marketing campaign to challenge the stereotypes of getting older and to celebrate our later years.

They encouraged individuals of all ages to discuss the perceived limitations placed on older adults and their ability to live to their fullest potential through programs and intergenerational events. They highlighted individuals in their community who are making a difference as they age on their website and in their Senior Digest newspaper, and they offered resources to grow older successfully at their senior centers, professional conferences, and EXPO.

The department encouraged county residents to share their thoughts, pictures, or tips on how they were embracing aging and breaking ageist stereotypes by using #reimagineaging2017 on their social media posts. They asked them to join in the conversation by following their Instagram account @BaltCoAging, Facebook page @BaltimoreCountyAging, and Flickr account BaltimoreCountyAging.

Well-known ageism speaker, Ashton Applewhite, was the keynote at their Senior Solutions Conference. To make the effort intergenerational, the department showed THE AGE OF LOVE, which follows the humorous and poignant adventures of 30 seniors in Rochester, NY who sign up for a first-of-a-kind speed dating event exclusively for 70-90 year-olds. From anxious anticipation through the dates that followed, it was an unexpected tale of intrepid seniors who laid their hearts on the line and discovered how dreams and desires change—or don’t change—from first love to the far reaches of life.

The campaign asked elected officials to pose with their Reimagine Aging sign to spread awareness at EXPO. They also asked people to put a dot on the age when they would consider themselves “old” to spark additional discussion with college students about aging and ageism. Finally, the department hosted “Are you Smarter than a Senior?” game shows with middle school children and seniors and held a Sophomores vs. Seniors basketball game.
Link to Resources:

- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBoG17GzDGy](www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBoG17GzDGy) - Reimagine Aging song
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCY0X9Kb9OQ](www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCY0X9Kb9OQ) - kick off video
- [www.baltimorecountymd.gov/reimagineaging](www.baltimorecountymd.gov/reimagineaging) - website
- [www.facebook.com/BaltimoreCountyAging/](www.facebook.com/BaltimoreCountyAging/) - Facebook page
- [www.flickr.com/photos/baltimorecountyaging/albums](www.flickr.com/photos/baltimorecountyaging/albums) - Flickr albums
- [www.instagram.com/baltcoaging/](www.instagram.com/baltcoaging/) - Instagram Account
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvAN-1G8YNU](www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvAN-1G8YNU) - video about Power of Age EXPO

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.
Connecting

“Cherish your human connections – your relationships with friends and family.” ~ Barbara Bush

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

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. SAGE’s 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.

Gay & Grey Expo

The Gay & Grey Expo is a biennial event for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults and allies in the Portland metropolitan area that occurs at Friendly House, home of Friendly House Senior Center and SAGE Metro Portland, a program for LGBT older adults. The day-long event includes a resource fair, breakout sessions, and panel discussions, all geared toward building community, providing educational opportunities, and providing a venue for older adults to interact with LGBT-friendly service providers from nonprofit, government, and corporate entities, as well as celebrating and socializing with one another. The Gay & Grey Expo provides an opportunity to showcase LGBT-friendly aging resources while building relationships within the LGBT elder community, effectively providing the social glue that encourages strong bonds, both among themselves and with the rest of the community.
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. 9, 2018

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.
- Watch a video tutorial on how to access and use the site’s resources.
- Check out the Take Action Guide and Grand Things to Do for ideas on how to participate.
- Raise awareness using the Social Media Toolkit and follow the event on Facebook and Twitter.

Activity ideas:

- Grandparents and Older Adults: Commit to share your wisdom, perspectives, and key civic values with young people and advocate on their behalf.
- Children, Youth, and Younger Adults: Connect with and serve your grandparents or older adults in your community.
- Grandfamilies: Get resources to provide a safe and loving home to your grandchildren or other relatives in your care.
- Intergenerational Programs: Plan and coordinate grand intergenerational activism projects.

Generation to Generation

Gen2Gen has intergenerational programming resources to share. Find ideas like connecting through movies that inspire mentoring, boosting childhood literary, and more.

"Who Matters" Multigenerational Photo & Story Project

"Who Matters," a Multigenerational Photo & Story Project, was initially conceptualized at the Madison Senior Center, WI, with the Madison Public Library. In August and September 2017, on two days of scheduled appointments, allowing walk-ins as well, a professional photographer captured multigenerational relationships. There was only one rule: At least one person in the photo had to be 55 years of age or older and the other person had to be of a different generation. No other limitations were placed on ages, number of people, silly or serious, or anything else. As their pictures were captured, their stories and conversations were recorded by a local author during an on-the-spot interview. She simply asked, "What brought you here together today?" The resulting photo and story narrative was exhibited at both the senior center and the public library.
Grand Friends - An Intergenerational Program

The West Chester Area Senior Center, PA, has an intergenerational program called Grand Friends done in partnership with Chester County Family Academy, a neighboring charter school serving 110 low-income children in kindergarten to second grade. This program takes place throughout the school year with seniors and students meeting twice weekly to participate in educational, social, and creative activities that focus on reading and literacy, art, history, music, nutrition, science, and math. A sampling of activities were: “Jump into Art” exploring the five senses through art, African drumming, music appreciation, singing performances, and nutrition and cooking together while exploring recipes that included cultural and traditional meals.

Holi - Hindu Celebration of Spring

Staff at the Flower Mound Senior Center, TX, noticed a growing population within the membership from Hindu countries. However, they struggled to find a place within the senior center community. Many had recently moved to the United States and spoke little or no English. They were hesitant to participate in activities and programs and began to isolate themselves. Staff reached out to these individuals to find ways to include them. The members spoke about an upcoming holiday called Holi, a Hindu celebration of spring. Each year during Holi, people flood the streets and throw brightly colored powder at each other, shoot water guns filled with color, and throw balloons filled with colored water. They dance and celebrate the new season of happiness and in the hopes of leaving behind all regrets and forgiving each other.

Staff scheduled a Holi Party for March 8. During the event, volunteers prepared and served a traditional lunch, and others brought their favorite foods to share. After lunch, staff showed a video about the Holi Festival and played traditional music. Members were asked to share stories about Holi in their home countries. Then, members were invited outside for the throwing of the colors. Staff purchased colored powder in a variety of colors for the event. Members greeted each other with “Happy Holi!” as they lovingly marked friends with colors and threw handfuls of colored chalk. Participants laughed and played with the colored powder for almost an hour. Following the event, staff saw members forming new friendships and embracing each other.

The Selfie Project

The Old Bridge Senior Center, NJ, introduced a technology program entitled The Selfie Project. To eliminate resistance to learning something new, they encouraged seniors to get out their smart phones and take photos and “selfies” that they could then text and share with their family and friends.

During this month-long project, seniors were asked to take selfies doing a variety of activities from exercise to dancing, to riding on the bus, shopping, and at special events. The selfies were then sent to staff via email or text, which were then imported into an old-fashioned Polaroid photo. Opening this door to visual communication provided seniors with the ability to go from a basic cell phone skill to advanced uses such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snap Chat to continue to be engaged with ever-changing technology.
Giving

“One of the greatest gifts you can give is your time.” ~ Unknown

Highlight opportunities to give within the senior center and within the community.

Act of Kindness

Cockeysville Senior Center, MD members and Council opened their hearts and wallets this past holiday season. The center partnered with two local nursing homes to share a little kindness. The center asked each facility to give a list of names and a wish list from individuals. Senior center members purchased over 85 gifts. They bought blankets, pajamas, slippers, sweaters, Ravens clothing (NFL football team), gloves, socks, robes, sweatpants, sweatshirts, shoes, toilet articles, craft items, paints, and lots of snacks and goodies. Once all the gifts were collected, volunteers from the center wrapped, tagged, and checked that each gift went to the appropriate residents. A representative from each facility picked up the gifts from the center. This is one example of an Act of Kindness your center can implement.

Caring & Sharing

On April 30, 2017, a record-breaking flood occurred in the town and community of Van Buren, MO. Approximately 180 homes and businesses were affected by a devastating flood. Everyone came together and did what they had to do, and so did the Carter County Senior Center. The administrator of center decided that what they could do for the community was to feed people. Staff and volunteers provided breakfast and lunch to a community that lost three of the five town restaurants. They served over 1,500 extra meals to the community, clients, and volunteers. The community and the volunteers were very thankful that they had the senior center to go to, relax, and have a good hot meal and great fellowship. Proof that a senior center can implement important community relief during a disaster.

Buzz Coffee Shop

At the DPC Community Center, Cottage Grove, MN, they have created and opened the BUZZ Coffee Shop. It is a nonprofit coffee shop using professional grade coffee, syrups, and machines. They have an all-volunteer staff, which includes seniors from the community and students in our Next Step program. The Next Step program enrolls students in the district who have special needs and range in age from 18-21. Their goal is to learn life skills including social skills, taking orders, coffee preparation as a barista, cashier, cleaning on a commercial level, and other duties at the center.

Through volunteering, these students learn the value of giving with the reward of building marketable life skills. The students’ participation at the center enhances the lives of the older population, creating an intergenerational venue where people enjoy each other’s company. When ordering, the older adults are kind and patient, which inspires the students to succeed. The BUZZ Coffee Shop provides a safe, learning environment with job coaches who lead and instruct the students as they gain skills to use in a future paid position.
Tools & Resources to Help You Celebrate

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: Building Momentum**. 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 build momentum for a healthy life?

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*
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 you 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.
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.
2018 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 “Social Isolation Prevention Campaign” 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, 2017 and Sept. 30, 2018. 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: Social Isolation Prevention Campaign** – Please share a committed effort to address social isolation of underserved or marginalized populations, such as LGBT, tribal, immigrants, etc. Describe four related social isolation prevention outreach programs that occurred within the year and were offered to an underserved or marginalized population in your community.

There are two applications below. You may apply for an award in the General Category AND the Social Isolation Prevention Campaign. 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 Social Isolation Prevention Campaign.

[Apply for General Category](#)
[Apply for Social Isolation Prevention Campaign](#)

**Deadline:** Completed nomination forms must be received no later than Friday, Nov. 16, 2018.

Please direct questions and materials to NISC Program Manager Maureen O'Leary at Maureen.Oleary@ncoa.org Please use “NISC Excellence Awards” in the subject line.

*Many thanks to Jill Hall and her team for organizing the NISC Programs of Excellence Awards*
September Holidays and Observances

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

Health & Fitness

National Food Safety Month
www.foodsafety.gov/

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

Hunger Action Month
www.HungerActionMonth.org

Malnutrition Awareness Week: Sept. 24-28
www.nutritioncare.org/maw

Falls Prevention Awareness Day: Sept. 22
www.ncoa.org/FPAD

Active Aging Week: Sept. 23-29
Sponsored by the International Council on Active Aging
www.activeagingweek.com/

National Women’s Health & Fitness Day: Sept. 26
www.fitnessday.com/women/index.htm

Enrichment

International Women’s Friendship Month
www.confidencecoalition.org/internationalwomensfriendshipmonth

International Literacy Day: Sept. 8
www.internationalliteracyday.org/

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

National Employ Older Workers Week: Sept. 24-28
www.doleta.gov/Seniors/html_docs/NatEmpIOldWkr.cfm

National Voter Registration Day: Sept. 25
www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/about

Fun Activities for All Ages

Grandparents Day: Sept. 9
www.grandparentsday.org/
Checkers Day and Dogs in Politics Day: Sept. 23
www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/September/checkersday.htm

Recognized Holidays

Labor Day: Sept. 3
www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/labor-day

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

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

POW/MIA Recognition Day: Sept. 21
www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/pow-mia-recognition-day

Citizenship Day: Sept. 17
www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/constitution-citizenship-day

Start of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year): Sept. 9-11
www.jewfaq.org/holiday2.htm

International Day of Peace – Make a Difference Day: Sept. 21
www.internationaldayofpeace.org/

Native American Day: Sept. 28
www.holidayinsights.com/other/native

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

Year-Long Observances

February
American Heart Month
Feb. 4: World Cancer Day

March
National Nutrition Month
National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
4th Tuesday of March, March 25, 2019: American Diabetes Alert Day

April
Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month
Financial Literacy Month
National Public Health Week
April 7: World Health Day
World Immunization Week
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)

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. 9: Grandparents Day
Sept. 24-28: Malnutrition Awareness Week
Sept. 22: National Falls Prevention Awareness Day (first day of fall)
Sept. 24-28: 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. 7-13: 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

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

Get the latest news and action alerts and review our Advocacy Toolkit for advocacy basics and issue-specific resources.

NCOA’s BenefitsCheckUp®

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.

NCOA’s EconomicCheckUp®

Use this comprehensive, free online service to help your members improve their economic security. The website has tools to help older adults find work, cut spending, reduce debt, and use their home equity wisely.

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®

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

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

Get this free train-the-trainer program to educate older adults about medication safety and the Poison Helpline.

Gaining Momentum: A Communications Toolkit

Use this collection of research and resources to change the way you talk about aging in America.
2018 NISC Contacts

NCOA’s National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) is pleased to provide you with this Program 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,

Lynn Fields Harris & Elizabeth Bernat

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National Senior Center Month Poster Credits

Holi - Hindu Celebration of Spring, Flower Mound Senior Center, Flower Mound, TX
Bains’ Got Talent, Bain 50+ Center, Columbia, MD
Eagles Pep Rally, Center in the Park, Philadelphia, PA
“Who Matters” A Multigenerational Photo & Story Project, Madison Senior Center, Madison, WI

Many of the programs are from 2018 Programs of Excellence Awards. See the Award Winners to learn more programming ideas.

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.