

Nassau County Council on Aging

Senior Life

Celebrating Happy, Healthy Lives

Together, Every Step of the Way

Plus:

*Finding a
Place to Belong*

*A Passion That
Keeps Moving*

*The Beat
Goes On*

*Life in
Full Color*

**Adult
Classes
for ALL
Ages!**

NASSAU COUNTY

Council on Aging

SENIORS LIVING HAPPY, HEALTHY LIVES

October – December 2026

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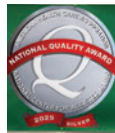
River City Rehab Center is committed to providing quality services and programs that are accessible and responsive to the long and short term nursing care and rehabilitative health care needs of our community.

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Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center

1901 Island Walk Way, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Phone: 904-261-0701 • FAX: 904-261-0704

nassaucountycoa.org

Staff Contacts

Adult Day HealthCare, The Club - **Jennifer Gundling**
Advocate Home Healthcare - **Carla Hadden**
Caregiver Services - **Jennifer Gundling**
Case Management - **Donna Granieri**
CHORE Program - **Chris Fournier**
Development - **Brian LaVacca**
Electric/Water Assistance - **Case Management**
HR, Compliance and Facilities - **Don Harley**
Just Friends/Westie Besties - **G. Thompson/M. Snead**
Marketing and Communications - **Chris Boek**
Lifelong Learning - **Melody Dawkins**
Nutrition and Meal Programs - **Donna Granieri**
Program Operations - **Donna Granieri**
Volunteer Opportunities - **Chris Fournier**

Westside Senior Life Center

37002 Ingham Road, Hilliard, FL 32046-1011

Phone: 904-845-3331 • FAX: 904-845-4491

nassaucountycoa.org

Staff Contacts

Administration/Case Management - **Leanne Striley**
Nutrition/Meal Programs - **Melissa Snead**
Activities - **Melissa Snead**

Follow NCCOA on Social!



@NassauCountyCOA



@NC_COA



@NassauCountyCouncilOnAging



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About Nassau County Council on Aging

SENIOR LIFE CENTERS

Both Senior Life Centers offer those 60 and older assistance, information, and support, in addition to many fun and engaging activities for adults of all ages. Meeting space is available for rent in both Fernandina Beach and Hilliard locations for group functions.

Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 904-261-0701

Westside Senior Life Center, 904-845-3331

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

NCCOA is the lead agency for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs state and federally funded grant programs. Programs & Services include Case Management, Nutrition (Meals on Wheels), Fall Prevention, and CHORE small home repair. NCCOA also partners with local and state-funded programs to assist with home energy crises (EHEAP) and facilitate City of Fernandina Beach Wastewater, Refuse and/or Storm Water Fee Exemption applications and Town of Hilliard Water Bill Assistance for qualified residents. Free legal assistance is offered through Nassau County Legal Aid, and SHINE provides free consultations to Medicare beneficiaries and caregivers.

Donna Granieri, 904-775-5497 | dgranieri@nassaucountycoa.org

THE CLUB/TRAINING & CAREGIVER SERVICES

- The only one of its kind in Northeast Florida, NCCOA's Adult Day HealthCare Program – known as “The Club” – provides respite for caregivers and offers their loved ones a safe and secure environment. The program, licensed by the State of Florida, provides appropriate therapeutic, social, and health-enhancing activities for those with chronic illness, Alzheimer's disease, or other cognitive deficits, and is supervised by a licensed nurse.
- Caregiver resources include workshops, education and training, stress-busting forums, and support groups. NCCOA's Memory Café is an offering for those living with Alzheimer's and related disorders. Learn how to adjust to life changes, combat stigma and isolation, and develop a safe social peer group.

Jennifer Gundling, 904-775-5488 | jgundling@nassaucountycoa.org

ADVOCATE HOME HEALTHCARE

Advocate Home Healthcare, a division of Nassau County Council on Aging, provides members with non-medical, in-home services related to daily living activities such as personal care, respite, homemaking,

Board of Directors



Keith Meyer | Chair



Kathy McDonagh | Vice Chair



JD Staton | Secretary



Jerry Mathe | Treasurer



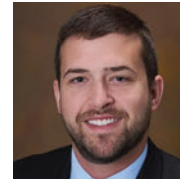
Karen Hackett



Tara Beth Anderson



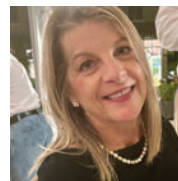
Dr. Tyrone Blue



Urban Fleming



Paul Lynch



Jamie Nelson



Brian Rafferty



McKinley Ravenell



Mark Rowe



David Sharpe



Dr. Pedro L. Tamayo IV

and companion services. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Home Health Aides may also accompany members to appointments and activities. Fees for these services are paid via private pay, and/or pre-qualified state and federal programs.

Carla Hadden, 904-675-9835 | chadden@nassaucountycoa.org

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

If you are interested in helping seniors, there are many opportunities available at both the Janice Ancrum and Westside Senior Life Centers. Seven main volunteer support areas are offered: Administrative, The Club, CHORE, Community Room, Instructors and Presenters, Meals on Wheels Drivers, Friendly Visitors, and other opportunities.

Chris Fournier, 904-775-5490 | cfournier@nassaucountycoa.org

MESSAGE FROM OUR President & CEO

For more than 50 years, Nassau County Council on Aging has been here to serve older adults and their families. At the heart of that mission, however, are the people who make it all possible.

The volunteers who give their time and talents. The instructors who share what they love. The caregivers who navigate challenging seasons with patience and compassion. And the older adults who continue to learn, move, create, connect, and find purpose in every stage of life.

Throughout this issue of Senior Life Magazine, you'll meet some of the remarkable people who make NCCOA such a special place. You'll meet volunteers who found a second family, an instructor who has spent a decade bringing people together through line dancing, and a 96-year-old tap teacher whose passion continues to inspire generations. You'll read about a couple navigating the challenges of caregiving with love and communication, and a woman who discovered that an art class offered something she didn't know she needed: friendship and an end to loneliness.

Their stories remind us that aging well is about more than the services we provide. It is about having opportunities to stay active, build meaningful relationships, learn something new, and continue contributing to the lives of others.

At NCCOA, our mission is to enhance the lives of older adults, and every day, our staff, volunteers, instructors, caregivers, and community partners help turn that mission into something tangible. It looks like a shared meal, a dance class, a painting around a table, a helping hand, or simply someone showing up when they are needed.

What inspires me most is seeing how these connections work both ways. The people who come to NCCOA looking for something often discover that they have something to give, too. A volunteer finds purpose. An instructor builds community. A caregiver finds support. A class becomes a circle of friends. That is the heart of NCCOA. We are not simply providing programs and services. We are creating opportunities for people to remain engaged, valued, and connected—and to discover that there is always another chapter to write.

As you read this issue, I hope you are inspired by the people you meet and reminded of the difference we can make when we show up for one another.

It is an honor to serve this community and the remarkable people who bring our mission to life every day.

With Gratitude,



Janice Ancrum
President & CEO



Thank You

To Our
Funding Partners



Elder  Affairs
FLORIDA

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FLORIDA'S OLDEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
NEWS LEADER

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fbnewsleader.com

Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the lives of older adults through services and compassionate care designed to improve the health, independence and economic security of all Nassau County seniors and their families.

Senior Life

Word Search



N Y E C E L N S S O E I C I S U M T E I R P T O N
 N N R G I E F R I N P N I E A M R Y U T L I S I N
 G R T I E N O I I N V O L U N T E E R I N G N O I
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Retirement
Painting
Caregiving
Movement
Journey
Line Dancing
Friendship
Respite
Music
Socialization
Tap Dancing
Volunteering
Companionship
Curiosity
Art Therapy
Support Group
Memorization
Community

Solution on page 23!



GIVE THE GIFT OF LEGACY

Celebrate the people who've made a difference in your life through the Legacy Pavers Program.

Two sizes available!

nassaucountycoa.org





Finding a Place to Belong

How One Volunteer Found a Second Family at NCCOA

Sometimes, you find a place you never knew you were looking for. A place where you feel welcomed the moment you walk through the door, where laughter comes easily, friendships take root, and someone always seems to be there when you need a little support. I found that place right here on Amelia Island—and, surprisingly, it was Nassau County Council on Aging (NCCOA). Now, I'll admit, the name kept me away for a while. "I'm not old enough yet," I told myself. But then I finally walked through those doors. What happened next changed the way I thought about NCCOA—and about what it really means to find a place that feels like home.

I'll start at the beginning...

As the type of person who enjoyed staying active in both my career and personal life, entering retirement struck a nerve I didn't expect. I found that something was missing. During my career, I was what some people might call a workaholic, sometimes spending

ten or more hours a day, six days a week, working. On my day off, I would teach a yoga class to stay active and engaged with my community. After retirement, however, most of my time was spent gardening. It filled the need to stay active and spend time in nature, but I found myself staying home more often than I'd like and not connecting with the broader Amelia Island community. After two years of retirement, no wonder I was a little lost. I missed having a reason to get up, get moving, and be around people who shared my interests.

One of my faithful yoga students had been Frances Bartelt, who happened to be the Volunteer CHORE Coordinator for NCCOA. We talked a little, so I was vaguely familiar with what the organization was all about, but I never seriously thought it was for me. I couldn't have been more wrong.

After talking to a friend about how I felt and what might be next for me, she suggested I try a line

dancing class with her at NCCOA. I tried it for about a month and found I just didn't click with it, but on my way out one day I picked up an activities schedule, and that opened a whole new world. I've always been an exercise junkie, even before I became a workaholic, but retirement put that on hold. With a calendar full of exercise classes in front of me, I started taking a few—yoga, Pilates, aerobics, you name it. I soon became the exercise junkie I used to be, and it felt great. Not only was I getting back in shape, but I made many wonderful friends. Pretty soon, some of those friendships blossomed into lunch dates, beach walks, and biking excursions.

I still had a sense that there might be something more I could do—something to accompany the fun of taking my own classes. There seemed to be so many opportunities at NCCOA that I wasn't sure which direction to take. That's when one of my closest friends, Mary Cillo, an avid NCCOA volunteer, suggested I spend an afternoon helping her during lunch hour in The Club. I was instantly hooked. Everyone I came in contact with and the encouragement I received on that first day made me feel like I belonged there. I signed up that day to become an official volunteer. As all things do, it eventually evolved into something even more; I felt like I had found my volunteer family. Connecting with the Club members, staff, and other volunteers, I made even more friends. I thought to myself, *this place is great*.

After a few weeks of volunteering during lunch at The Club, I attended a volunteer workshop. During that workshop, I learned more about the needs of the members and staff. One thing stood out to me the most. They talked about how chaotic the end of the day could be, with so few staff working to help members board the bus or get picked up by loved ones. That's when I knew I wanted to start extending my time in the Club to help get the members ready for their trip home, help the staff clean up, and help bring a close to their busy day.

It's been more than a year now since I started volunteering with NCCOA. Every day is different, bringing new joys and challenges, which is just what I need and want in this stage of life. And I still feel like everyone is family. I couldn't have made a better choice than I did on that day, when I decided, with a little help from my friends, to take that first step and walk through the doors of the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center at Nassau County Council on Aging.

Cindy Murphy, NCCOA Volunteer

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THE Club



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NASSAU COUNTY

Council on Aging

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The Club is proudly licensed and operated by NCCOA.



A Passion That Keeps Moving

Ten Years of Line Dancing with Kathy Ball

Originally from West Virginia, Mrs. Kathy Ball of Fernandina Beach has been dancing her whole life. Growing up, she was a dancer and the head cheerleader in high school. Even throughout her forty-year business career, she made room for dance.

In 1993, Kathy and her husband, Sid, relocated to Fernandina Beach, where they continued their careers while becoming involved in the local community. A few years in, Joan Bean asked her if she would teach at the Bean School of Dance. Kathy said yes, and that was the beginning of her journey as a dance instructor on Amelia Island.

Over the years, she became renowned for teaching line dancing in the community, offering lessons at places like Sandy Bottoms Restaurant, the YMCA, and many other locations in Jacksonville and Nassau County.

One day, Kathy and her husband were having lunch at the Loop restaurant in Fernandina Beach and ran into Janice Ancrum, President and CEO of Nassau County

Council on Aging. Knowing Kathy's not-so-secret talent, Janice asked her to teach a line dancing class at NCCOA as a volunteer instructor. Kathy happily agreed, and she started her journey with NCCOA, teaching the first lesson in 2016 at the old Life Center building across from Baptist Health.

Kathy is now almost 78 and loves every minute of her teaching sessions. But line dancing, she admits, is no easy thing to teach. "You have to memorize 32 beats for every song," she said. Anyone who teaches knows the time and attention it takes to master something first if you're going to teach it well, and Kathy is no exception.

"It takes a lot of time, practice, and memory work for her to be able to do this," her husband Sid, said, "and at the same time it comes so naturally. She knows exactly how to communicate so that it will land. This is her happy place."

Kathy has taught well over five hundred different songs to her students at NCCOA. "I teach a new song every

four weeks. We work on it for a while and then they vote whether to keep it.” They cover two songs per class. Challenging dances can take up to six weeks to learn, and easier ones take two weeks on average.

When asked why she decided to teach line dancing, Kathy said, “I’ve taught couples dancing before. I’d see women sitting and not being able to dance because nobody asked them. It was sad. But line dancing is one of those things where you don’t need a partner. That’s why I love line dancing. Everyone can dance.”

After ten years of teaching at NCCOA, Kathy now has around 100 active students. Her favorite thing to see, she explains, is that “they make great friendships with each other. Sometimes it’s hard to get started with the lesson because everyone is talking. I love that.”

While dancing is a fun and beneficial activity for all ages, it can be especially fitting for those in retirement. “When people enter retirement,” Kathy said, “they want to find a purpose, a way to give back and help others. For many on Amelia Island, line dancing has become an outlet for fitness, socialization, and fun.”

People of all backgrounds benefit from Kathy’s dance lessons. “I teach people from all walks of life—those who have danced professionally, those who are beginners, and many who are physically limited. What they all have in common is that they’re memorizing patterns and participating in mind/body connection exercise every week.”

Kathy is a pillar of the NCCOA community. She is a listening ear for those who are discouraged and a voice of hope for those who attend her classes. She encourages everyone to try line dancing. It’s not for everyone, she says, but “line dancing has helped many on our little island to stay active, help others, and have a purpose in the community.”

When asked what makes for a strong and happy retirement, Kathy simply replied, “Faith, family, and fitness.”

Kathy and her husband Sid have been married for 45 years and have lived on Amelia Island for 33 years. Kathy is a certified instructor and a member of the National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) and has taught line dancing and couples dancing for 17 years. Kathy’s son, Jonathan Ball, and his wife Jamie live on Amelia Island and are teachers at Fernandina Beach High School and Emma Love Hardy Elementary School. Kathy is dearly loved by her NCCOA community.

Elisabeth Gluntz, Marketing & Communications

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Amelia Plantation Chapel
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Lifelong Learning



All classes are held at the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center, 1901 Island Walk Way, Fernandina Beach, unless noted otherwise
Questions? Contact NCCOA at 904-261-0701.



Special Events

Coffee & Connection – Vet to Vet

Dawn Townsend, Community
Hospice & Palliative Care
Every 2nd Wed • 10 – 11 am

Book Club – Reading Between the Lines – Free

Kathy DeAngelis, Lucy Martin

The Water is Wide by Pat Conroy
Wed – Oct 7 • 5:30 – 7:00 pm

*A Manual for Cleaning Women:
Selected Stories*
by Lucia Berlin
Wed – Nov 4 • 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Kin by Tayari Jones
Wed – Dec 2 • 5:30 – 7:00 pm



Cards & Games

Samba

Sue King
Every Mon • 1 – 4 pm

Rummikub – Open Play & Instruction

Janet Chatfield
Every Mon • 3:00 – 4:45 pm

Rummikub – Free

Nancy Chandler
Every Tue • 9 – 10 am

Trivia with Nelson Insurance – Free

Savanna Varney
Every 3rd Tue • 9 – 10 am

Mah Jongg – No Instruction – Must Have Current Playing Card

Sherri O'Hara
2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Tue • 1 – 4 pm

Advanced Bridge

Rhona Walsh
Every Tue • 1 – 4 pm

Party Bridge

Glenda Young
Every Wed • 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Cribbage – Open Play & Instruction

Shirley Green
Every Wed • 12:30 – 3:30 pm

Canasta Hand Knee & Foot – Advanced

Sue King
Every Wed • 1 – 4 pm

Canasta – Hand, Knee, Foot & Toe Open Play and Instruction

Debbie Price
Every Fri • 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Mah Jongg – No Instruction – Must Have Current Playing Card

Arlyse McDowell & Debbie Price
Every Fri • 12:30 – 3:30 pm

Bridge Open Play – All Levels

Every Fri • 12:30 – 4 pm

Advanced Bridge

Carolyn James-Rudd
Every Fri • 1 – 4 pm



Computers & Technology

iPhone/iPad – Series of 3

Marc Williams
Mon, Tue, Wed – Oct 5, 6, 7
9:30 – 11:30 am

Apple Mac- Including OS-26 – Series of 3

Marc Williams
Mon, Tue, Wed – Nov 2, 3, 4
9:30 – 11:30 am

iPhone/iPad – Series of 3

Marc Williams
Mon, Tue, Wed – Dec 7, 8, 9
9:30 – 11:30 am

AI Unlocked: The Words That Get Better Results

Jeff Cheeney

The Prompt is in the Power

Tue – Oct 20 • 11 am – 12 pm

From Idea to Story

Tue – Nov 10 • 11 am – 12 pm

Set It and Forget It

Tue – Dec 1 • 11 am – 12 pm

Stepping Into AI – Series of 2 (Beginners Welcome)

Ebony Porter, Author





Lifelong Learning

ChatGPT Made Simple: A Hands on for Beginners

Fri – Oct 30 • 1 – 2 pm

Making Everyday Life Easier with ChatGPT

Fri – Nov 6 • 1 – 2 pm



Fitness & Dance

Pelvic Floor & Core – Mat Required

Janice Clarkson

Every Mon • 8:30 – 9:30 am

Chair Yoga

Tina LaVacca

Every Mon • 9:00 – 9:45 am

Exercise with Tissa – Free

Tissa Harold Lewis

2nd & 4th Mon • 9:00 – 9:45 am

Enerchi

Mary Bleck

Every Mon • 10 – 11 am

Beginning Ballet

Laura Giordano

Every Mon • 10:30 – 11:15 am

Standing Yoga

Mary Bleck

Every Mon • 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Tap Dancing

Laura Giordano

Every Mon • 12:45 – 1:45 pm

Tap FUNDamentals!

Gwen White

Every Mon • 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Tai Chi Form

Tom Gagne

Every Mon • 3:15 – 4:00 pm

Tai Chi Practical

Tom Gagne

Every Mon • 4:00 – 4:45 pm

Standing Core

Catherine Paradise

Every Tue • 8:15 – 9:15 am

Floor Yoga Stretch – Mat Required

Catherine Paradise

Every Tue • 9:30 – 10:30 am

Stability Exercises

Mary Bleck

Every Tue • 10 – 11 am

Standing & Sitting Pilates – Mat Required

Merle Sauer

Every Tue • 10:45 – 11:45 am

Belly Dancing

Laura Giordano

Every Tue • 11:15 am – 12:15 pm

Chair Aerobics

Merle Sauer

Every Tue • 12 – 1 pm

Hula Hooping: All Levels Welcome

Heidi Freilich & Laura Giordano

Every Tue • 12:15 – 12:45 pm

Zumba Gold

Stacey “Sparkle” Vinson

Every Tue • 1 – 2 pm

Line Dancing – Basic

Kathy Ball

Every Tue • 1:00 – 1:45 pm

Line Dancing – Intermediate

Kathy Ball

Every Tue • 2 – 3 pm

Energy Burst Stations

Tina LaVacca

Every Wed • 8:00 – 8:45 am

Stretch & Balance – Advanced

Janice Clarkson

Every Wed • 8:30 – 9:30 am

Tighten and Tone – Mat Required

Merle Sauer

Every Wed • 9 – 10 am

Weight Training and Toning

Janice Clarkson

Every Wed • 9:45 – 10:45 am

Aerobic Exercise

Merle Sauer

Every Wed • 10 – 11 am

Pilates – Mat Required

Merle Sauer

Every Wed • 11 am – 12 pm

Enerchi

Mary Bleck

Every Wed • 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Line Dancing – Basic

Kathy Ball

Every Wed • 1:00 – 1:45 pm

Line Dancing – Intermediate

Kathy Ball

Every Wed • 2 – 3 pm

Tai Chi Form

Tom Gagne

Every Wed • 3 – 4 pm

Tai Chi Practical

Tom Gagne

Every Wed • 4:00 – 4:45 pm

Fitness cont. on the following page



Lifelong Learning

Sit & Be Fit!

Catherine Paradise
Every Thu • 8:15 – 9:15 am

Chair Yoga

Tina LaVacca
Every Thu • 8:30 – 9:15 am

Floor Yoga Stretch – Mat Required

Catherine Paradise
Every Thu • 9:20 – 10:20 am

Yoga for Parkinson's and Movement Disorders

Tina LaVacca
Every 1st, 2nd & 4th Thu
9:30 – 10:15 am

Just Dance

Laura Giordano & Heidi Freilich
Every Thu • 10:30 – 11:30 am

Stability Exercises

Mary Bleck
Every Thu • 10:30 – 11:30 am

Standing Yoga

Mary Bleck
Every Thu • 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Dancing Queens

Lorraine Gaito
Every Thu • 12:00 – 12:45 pm

Qigong

Tom Gagne
Every Thu • 12:45 – 1:45 pm

Zumba Gold

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Thu • 1:30 – 2:30 pm

Zumba Gold: Weight Training & Toning

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Fri • 8:30 – 9:30 am

Chair Yoga

Tina LaVacca
Every Fri • 9:00 – 9:45 am

Zumba Step Up

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Fri • 9:45 – 10:45 am

Aerobic Exercise

Merle Sauer
Every Fri • 10 – 11 am

Strength in Motion

Merle Sauer
Every Fri • 11 am – 12 pm

Total Body Workout

Stacey "Sparkle" Vinson
Every Fri • 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Yoga Full Body Stretch – Mat Req

Merle Sauer
Every Fri • 12 – 1 pm



History, Culture & Travel

Armchair Travel – Free

Nancy Cerra, Realtor,
Keller Williams Realty
1st Tue • 9 – 10 am

Photo Destinations

Alwynne Lamp
3rd Thu • 9 – 10 am



Hobbies - Arts, Crafts & Gardening

A Presentation of Nebulae – Free

Jayne Fraser, Astronomer
Mon, Oct 12 • 10 – 11 am

"Eyes to the Skies"

Gail Pfoh, Published Photographer
& Writer
Mon, Oct 12, Nov 9, Dec 14
1 – 2 pm

Crocheting Circle – All Levels – Free

Brenda Brubeck
Every Tue • 10:00 – 11:30 am

Drawing from Observation (5-week series – Commitment Requested)

Ann Freeman, Artist
Every Wed - Oct 7 thru Nov 4
1 – 3 pm

Casual Knitting & Conversation – No Instruction – Free

Every Thu • 1 – 3 pm

Crocheting Circle – All Levels – Free

Brenda Brubeck
Every Fri • 11 am – 1 pm

Art Therapy

Leeanne Saylors,
Saylors Accounting & Tax
Every Fri • 2:00 – 4:30 pm

Creating Beaded Jewelry

Francis Peters, Front Porch Beads
Sat – Oct 3 • 1:00 – 3:30 pm



Language/Literature

Spanish Level 3: Intermediate Conversation

Maria Hernandez
Every Mon • 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Intermediate Sign Language

Hilda Maroney & Becky Clark
Every Tue • 11 am – 12 pm

French – Basic/ Beginner

Niama Hashem
Every Tue • 1:00 – 1:45 pm

French – Intermediate

Niama Hashem
Every Tue • 1:45 – 2:30 pm

Beginner Sign Language

Lynn Freeman
Every Thu • 10 – 11 am



Lifelong Learning

Spanish Level 1: Basic Spanish

Maria Hernandez
Every Thu • 10 – 11 am

Spanish Level 2: Beginning Conversation

Maria Hernandez
Every Thu • 11 am – 12 pm



Music

Elvis Music with Lane – Free

Lane Mashburn, Amelia Auto Mart
1st Mon • 9 – 10 am

Ukulele – Open Play

Julie and Jim Black
Every Mon • 10 – 11 am

Guitar Slow Jam w/ Bass All Levels

Joyce Whorton, Musician
Every Mon • 2:30 – 3:30 pm

Guitar Adventures with Joyce Free

Joyce Whorton, Musician
2nd & 4th Tue • 10 – 11 am

String Ensemble – All Levels

Judith Ward
Every Tue • 3:00 – 4:45 pm

Sing-Along with Bruce – Free

Bruce Beville
1st, 3rd & 5th Wed • 9 – 10 am

Guitar Tunes – Free

Doug Tober
2nd Wed • 9 – 10 am

Tunes with the 2J's – Free

Julie & Jim Black
2nd & 4th Thu • 10 – 11 am



Other Opportunities

Coffee & Conversation – Free

Walker Davis, Jim Ramage
Every Tue • 9 – 10 am

Safe Digital Payment Practices for Seniors

Ron Behanic, Lea Scott & Sydney
Goezt • First Port City Bank
Thu – Sep 24 • 1:00 – 2:30 pm



Wellness

Global Longevity Foods

April Blue-Moseley, Gut Health
Nutrition Specialist
Every Mon • 10:30 – 11:30 am

Holistic Health

April Blue-Moseley, Gut Health
Nutrition Specialist
Every Mon • 11:45 am – 12:45 pm

Medicare Fraud Prevention

Kathy DeAngelis – Medicare Rep
Wed, Oct 7 • 11 am – 12 pm
Thu, Nov 5 • 11 am – 12 pm

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions (6-week series – Commitment Required)

Presented by AHEC
Every Thu – Oct 8 thru Nov 12
11 am – 12 pm

Brain Boosters

Memory, Forgetfulness, and Aging

Dr. Widdifield, Case Chiropractic
Neurology Center
Fri – Oct 9 • 10 – 11 am

Rethinking Pain: Brain to Body

Dr. Widdifield, Case Chiropractic
Neurology Center
Fri – Nov 13 • 10 – 11 am



Critical Issues

Every Tue – Sep 15 thru Dec 15
(no discussion on Nov 24)
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

The South China Sea: In Crisis

Robert Weintraub

AI and the Disruption of American Power Structures

Paul Pierson

Our Perceptions of Global Progress

Brian Dieffenbach

Rare Elements & Critical Minerals

Greg Doyle

Advanced Nuclear Electric Generating Plants

Tom Polito

The Data Center Debate

Paul Pierson

From Drought to Dinner Tables

Peter Adams

The Future of Cryptocurrency

Jack Corgel

When Diplomacy Failed the Public

Nicholas Kuchova

EU and Ukraine: The Impact of the War on Iran

Tom Smith

Public Health Preparedness

Jackie Dorst

Examining American Postsecondary Education

Ruth Watkins

Coping with Climate Change Impacts

Richard Scribner



The Beat Goes On

Meet the 96-Year-Old Who Still Teaches Tap Dancing

In a small town in New Jersey, a twelve-year-old girl walks to her dance studio, clicking along, heel, toe, heel, toe. Once there, she is suddenly surrounded by little toddlers and young girls, some looking up with excitement in their eyes, others hesitant or indifferent. She takes her place next to the head tap instructor, and they begin to demonstrate a step sequence. Her own eyes hold a sea of excitement, as her memory and skill harmonize into the dance.

Before moving to Amelia Island, Ms. Maggie Comey spent nearly 60 years teaching and operating her own tap dance studio in New Jersey. Growing up, Maggie had attended only one dance studio, and it wasn't until she graduated high school that she ventured out from her hometown to spend a summer in New York City. Once there, she joined the Roxettes dance group, the precursor to Radio City Rockettes.

After her experience with the big city, Maggie returned to New Jersey, where she started her own tap studio in



Maggie Comey celebrates her 96th birthday at NCCOA with President & CEO, Janice Ancrum

the basement of a row house. From there, she rented space in the local Recreation Center before eventually obtaining her own studio, naming it Turning Point.

In 1991, the Comey family moved to Amelia Island, causing Maggie to give up her dance studio. "It was heartbreaking to leave, of course, but I was able to transfer ownership to a young woman who had been my student from the wee age of four years old," Maggie reflected. "That was a special moment."

For Maggie, however, tapping didn't stop with retirement. While supporting her husband's health, Maggie got active in the Fernandina community and continued to teach tap anywhere she could. "Tap is really not as popular as Zumba and other dance classes," she said, "but as I visited different places, it seemed that everyone knew how wonderful tap can be for people of older age, because instead of becoming or staying stiff, you're moving."

One day, when Nassau County Council on Aging was at its previous location, NCCOA Membership and Community Engagement Director Melody Dawkins asked a number of NCCOA members if anyone knew of a tap dance instructor. She announced that the membership program was growing and that they'd like to add a new tap dancing class. It just so happened that Maggie was present, and she immediately volunteered her services.

"We were one of the first classes when NCCOA moved buildings in 2018," Maggie said. "I used to have 12 or more students, and I was busy every day," she said.

Maggie no longer lives on Amelia Island but still visits NCCOA once a month. Although Maggie stepped down as main tap instructor last year and passed the class to volunteer instructor Laura Giordano, Maggie remains a cherished member of the NCCOA family. Once a month, she returns to the area, teaching a tap class and spending time with her "Forever Friends" social group. This year, her friends and tap students gathered to celebrate her 96th birthday.

"I visit once a month," Maggie said, "I try to teach some new skills to the tappers, and they do very well. The attitude of everyone here is something you have to be grateful for. I miss it dearly."

Maggie's own legacy is alive in many of her students, including a former student who became a Rockette, the one who was entrusted with taking over her studio, and many seniors in Nassau County, whom she has inspired to keep moving and doing things they love.

"Maggie has inspired generations with her vitality," said President & CEO Janice Ancrum. "At 96 she continues to be a leader and a friend by staying connected, sharing her gifts, and investing in friendships. We are grateful to celebrate her and the way she has touched our community with her grace, talent, and wisdom."

Elisabeth Gluntz, Marketing & Communications



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Finding Strength, Support, and Love in Caregiving

Caregiving is a gift. As caregivers, we provide our loved ones with the support they need to maintain their dignity and strength during challenging times. At the same time, each caregiving experience is unique depending on proximity, level of care, assigned roles, and disease progression. Caregivers wear several hats. We become housekeepers, nurses, pharmacists, aides, companions, and confidants. Our original roles in the family begin to change as the focus becomes our loved one's needs.

My husband and I care for his mother, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease several years ago. The original signs of "forgetfulness" and "disorganization" proved to be more than we expected. Over time, she began struggling to complete activities of daily living. When driving was no longer an option, we became her taxi. When schedules, dates, and times got lost, we became her calendar. When shopping, cooking, and correspondence was just too much, we helped her along the way. At the end of the day, it is the least we can do for a woman who never forgot a thank-you card, a birthday, or a special event, and who has always found joy in the simple things.

Still, becoming a caregiver is not an easy task. In most cases, as caregivers, we are thrown into a role that we don't have experience or knowledge to fall back on. We spend time educating ourselves on our loved ones' condition, building a care team, meeting with lawyers to organize paperwork and final wishes, establishing Plan B, and taking care of finances—all in conjunction with holding down a job, caring for our own children, and running a household.

How does everything get done? What do you do when the role is just too much? These are questions that my husband and I have been conscious of when caring for his mother. We've established boundaries and schedules, and we aim to set realistic expectations. Answering these questions has involved evening dog walks with serious conversations about tasks that need to be completed, and phone calls that need to be made, along with a daily personal stress check. We've been open with each other when it was time to move his mother into a higher level of care, when we needed to hire an aide to help, and when it was time to reach out to siblings because the load was too much to bear.





My husband and I have learned that the key to being successful caregivers starts with clear communication. We have come to better understand that everyone has varying degrees of capacity for carrying the responsibility of caregiving. Some are new to caregiving and need a whole lot more support. Some have caregiving in their background, maybe professionally, and are more prepared to take on the task. The more you communicate with co-caregivers, doctors, and other support figures, the better you can operate as a team with the goal of finding what's best for your loved one.

At the end of the day, my husband and I have peace knowing that we have led with love and kindness, just as she would if the roles were reversed. We've learned that caregiving is not about having all the answers or carrying the weight alone. It's about communicating, supporting one another, and knowing when to ask for help. Together, we can face whatever comes next, every step of the way.

Jennifer Gundling, ADHC and Caregiver Services

Seeking support from outside the home is another way to build a strong and reliable support system. My husband and I have learned about the importance of connecting with fellow caregivers who are willing to listen to the hardships of caregiving and provide useful information, encouragement, and local resources.

Nassau County Council on Aging is an indispensable local resource, offering support groups and free respite care to caregivers in Nassau County. The Caregiver Stressbusters Forum is structured as an educational session, ideal for new caregivers who are learning to navigate this unfamiliar role. It takes place on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month from 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. NCCOA also offers the Caregiver Support Group, which is a good fit for a seasoned caregiver who is seeking camaraderie and emotional support. It runs on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month from 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The Successful Caregiver group is scheduled for the 3rd Monday of every month from 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. This meeting is led by a registered nurse and provides a wonderful platform for receiving support through troubleshooting and disease-specific questions. As caregivers, we begin to realize we can handle more than we ever imagined. We learn to notice when needed help is around the corner and, perhaps most importantly, how to accept it when we need it.



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Life in Full Color

Finding Connection, Creativity, and Joy Through Art

After ten years of being a cook at a preschool in Bloomington, Indiana, it was time to hang up my hairnet—yes, hairnet! My daughter and son-in-law had moved to Florida, so at the time, I lived alone in Bloomington. The kids explained to me that they had a large house with an apartment on the lower level and that they would love me to come and try the Florida lifestyle. Since I was newly retired, I decided to accept their offer and start a new adventure on Florida's sunny northeast coast.

I have now lived in Florida for about five years. At first, I made a habit of staying home, reading, and watching TV. Often the kids would include me in activities with their friends, yet during any given week, I spent most of my time alone, either reading or watching television.

One afternoon, my daughter came downstairs, got me out of bed, put away my book, and mustered me to the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center on Amelia

Island. We were greeted by friendly staff and a wealth of information about NCCOA's services, programs, and classes. After receiving a tour of the building, I decided to sign up for Art Therapy. I went, I painted, and I absolutely loved it.

I now look forward to Friday's art class every week. More than anything, I look forward to meeting again with the friends I have made there. We all sit around the table, painting and talking. The ebb and flow of conversation is something that rises and falls, but we all just paint and allow the process to take over.

I am always curious as to what project our dear instructor, LEEANNE SAYLORS, has planned for us. It never disappoints me. Sometimes we paint wine glasses, sometimes we explore watercolors. Other times, she brings Van Gogh or Picasso-inspired prompts. One of my favorites was when we participated in a "Pass the Canvas" exercise. Some were more comfortable than others with that one.

I now understand why it's called Art Therapy. I've found that this class offers more than an outlet for art. My friends and I talk a lot—sometimes we chat about life on Amelia Island, other times we share past experiences. Sometimes we're looking for guidance—maybe a pet is suffering, or someone is looking for the grocery store with the best produce. Everyone listens and shares their opinions.

Although I still enjoy reading and watching TV, I have added a studio for painting in my house. I had to make space in my cats' room, but it has worked out. Many times, I'll get inspired, and I don't have to go far to pick up my brush and paint, using the new technique we learned that week in class.



Art Therapy with Leeanne Saylors takes place every Friday from 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm at the Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center.

One day in Art Therapy, a smartly dressed lady was sitting at a table, all prepared to write on a notepad. She asked me about the “therapy” part of the class and was waiting for a lecture by a teacher. I explained that it isn't exactly like traditional therapy, but that the therapy part is in the hidden moments of the process. The therapy lives in the struggle of finding what you want to put down on the canvas, how you're going to do it, and how you'll pivot if it doesn't turn out the way you expect. It's also in the friendships you make. For instance, when I first started coming, I talked a lot about my life situations. Everyone listened and offered solutions, opinions, or similar experiences, and after a few times I was cured—of loneliness!

That is the therapy part.

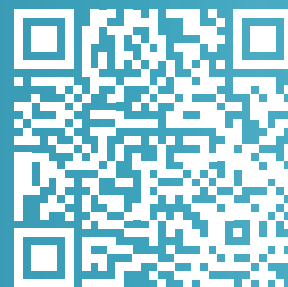
Ruta Ozolins, NCCOA Member

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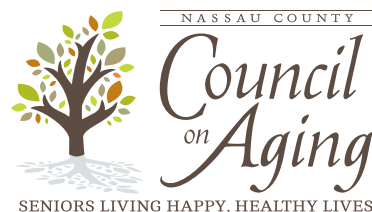


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The Power of Showing Up

One Man's Journey From Observer to Volunteer

Why do I volunteer? I've been asked that question many times by relatives and friends. Among those friends are several people who also volunteer at Nassau County Council on Aging, specifically The Club. My answer isn't all that simple.

It all began with a shopping trip to Walmart in November of 2022. I was contemplating the shelves of hand lotions and skin softeners in the pharmacy area when I heard an adult daughter fussing with her older mother—the very woman who had given her life. That same woman was now gripping the handles of the shopping cart with both hands and talking in a fearful, almost childish voice as her daughter chastised her for wanting things, or even mentioning things she thought she needed. It was obvious to me that the mother was suffering from some form of dementia. I said nothing.

I thought of my sister, who is in the late stages of Alzheimer's. I've learned that it is a terrible disease that affects not only the patient but also the caregivers. I know that dementia patients need calm, quiet routines in their lives. In addition to mental support, they need tactile support, much like a child with their favorite toy or blanket; or something that is familiar from the past, like holding on to the handles of a shopping cart. I know these things, but still, I said nothing.

I said nothing at Walmart, but I did sit down the next day and write a letter to the local newspaper. A letter that got a couple of totally unexpected responses. The first response was from a caregiver that told me in no uncertain terms that being a caregiver for an Alzheimer's patient full-time job, with no time off and no breaks. The weight of her comment jogged my memory. I thought to myself, *Wasn't that why my niece,*

who had four small children of her own, had moved her mom to an assisted living center? A person can only do so much, and four kids, ages two to ten, don't leave you much time to care for someone whose dementia is progressing.

The second response was from someone at NCCOA who talked me into stopping by The Club, a place designed specifically for people living with dementia. It is quiet yet entertaining, with volunteers and staff working to keep everyone active and engaged in a variety of activities. It is not assisted living—it's an Adult Day HealthCare program designed with the caregiver in mind. Caregivers can take a day off by letting us, the folks at The Club, care for their loved one for a day or a few days each week. With my sister in mind, I agreed to stop by and talk with the folks at NCCOA.

It was an ambush. Within minutes, Emily Kunzelmann, a large tornado of a woman in a petite body, had captured me with the help of the clients, volunteers, and staff at The Club. Those few minutes changed my life. I had suddenly found my purpose. I had found a way to ease the guilt I felt for not speaking out about dementia.

I now have a sense of purpose and joy that comes from helping people who need it. There really is a warm feeling of appreciation that rises when you help others—a joy that comes from helping those who literally can't help themselves. Not only does it enrich their lives, but it also enriches your own.

Some of my personal observations from volunteering at The Club: A smile doesn't cost a dime, but you get back a fortune in the return smile. Complimenting someone on a hat, blouse, or tie always makes both of you feel better. When you're doing PT, if it hurts, don't do it (I remember that one every morning). Just because someone doesn't know your name doesn't mean that you shouldn't speak to them. And just because someone doesn't talk doesn't mean that they can't hear you.

Each day when I'm driving away from NCCOA, I wish to myself that every county, in every state, had an organization like this one. A place where seniors can meet, learn, and socialize. A place where there are dozens of activities that can be enjoyed by everyone.

We all talk about living in paradise. We just need to remember that paradise changes depending on the perspective of the viewer. My perspective is very different today from what it was three years ago. I've found my cheeseburger in paradise.

Jim Ramage, NCCOA Volunteer



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SOLUTION FROM PUZZLE ON PAGE 15

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Caregiver Support Groups

Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center
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All support groups are hosted by Nassau County Council on Aging, and are open to the community. Meetings include guest speakers and group discussion.
There is no charge to attend our support groups.



Grieving with Hope Support Group

2nd and 4th Monday of each month, 5:30 pm—7:00 pm

Share stories and find support from those who have also lost a family member or close friend.



Successful Caregiver

3rd Monday of each month, 3:30 pm—5:30 pm

Do you want to become a more educated caregiver? This support group is facilitated by a registered nurse and public health professional. Come ask questions relating to transportation, nutrition, medical equipment, “awkward” topics and more.



Caregiver Stressbuster Forum

2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 1:30 pm—3:00 pm

Practice stress-reduction techniques, find support from other caregivers, reduce anxiety and improve quality of life. A respite activity for loved ones is available by reservation for a nominal fee for Club members during the meeting.



Caregiver Support Group

2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 3:30 pm—5:00 pm

Reduce stress and improve quality of life through conversation with fellow caregivers. A free respite activity for loved ones is available by reservation during the meeting.



Memory Café

2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 2:00 pm—3:00 pm

Find support, connection, health & well-being for those experiencing clinical memory loss in a welcoming and safe environment.

For more information, please contact

Jennifer Gundling, 904-775-5488, jgundling@nassaucountycoa.org





Support Groups

Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center
1901 Island Walk Way
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

All support groups are hosted by Nassau County Council on Aging, and are open to the community. Meetings include guest speakers and group discussion.
There is no charge to attend our support groups.

Yoga for the Grieving Heart

2nd and 4th Monday of each month, 4:15 pm—5:15 pm

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Contact: Melody Dawkins, 904-775-5477, mdawkins@nassaucounty.org



Hearing Loss Support Group

1st Tuesday of each month, 12 noon—1:30 pm

Discuss latest technologies and member experiences to assist with hearing loss in daily living.

Contact: Chris Fournier, 904-775-5490, cfournier@nassaucountycoa.org



Low Vision Support Group

4th Wednesday of each month, 11:00 am—12:30 pm

Discuss latest adaptive devices and member experiences to assist with vision loss in daily living.

Contact: Chris Fournier, 904-775-5490, cfournier@nassaucountycoa.org



Parkinson's Support Group: You Are Not Alone

3rd Thursday of each month, 10:00 am—11:00 am (beginning Sept. 18)

Open to individuals with Parkinson's and their care partners to share experiences, learn coping strategies and find encouragement. Facilitated by Tina LaVacca.

Contact: Melody Dawkins, 904-775-5477, mdawkins@nassaucountycoa.org



National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Every Friday, 11:00 am—12:30 pm

Share experiences with individuals, family members and friends impacted by mental illness.

Contact: NAMI Nassau, 904-277-1886



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