



**National Stress Awareness Month**— April is recognized as National Stress Awareness Month to bring attention to the negative impact of stress. Managing stress is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Knowing how to manage stress can improve mental and physical well-being as well as minimize exacerbation of health-related issues. Stress may contribute to poor health behaviors linked to increased risk for heart disease and stroke, such as:

- Smoking
- Overeating
- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet
- Being overweight
- Not taking medications as prescribed

The good news is you can manage stress with a few helpful tips!

- Exercising regularly. It can relieve stress, tension, anxiety, and depression. Consider a nature walk, meditation or yoga. Did you know your local Senior Center offers exercise classes? To find your nearest Senior Center please visit [www.mercercountyaging.org](http://www.mercercountyaging.org) or call Mercer County Area Agency on Aging at 724-662-6222.
- Making time for friends and family. It's important to maintain social connections and talk with people you trust. Did you know your local Senior Center offers a hot nutritional meal every day where you can visit with others?
- Getting enough sleep. Adults should aim for seven to nine hours a night.
- Maintaining a positive attitude. Keep a gratitude journal and write weekly entries.
- Practicing relaxation techniques, such as meditating or listening to music.
- Finding a stimulating hobby. A hobby you enjoy can keep you engaged so you don't dwell on negative thoughts or worries. You might want to try cooking or knitting.

### Are you in need of food?

If you or someone you know needs food assistance, the Mercer County Food Bank can help. The food bank does not supply food directly to individuals, except through scheduled distribution programs. Through their network of member agencies, they distribute food to 3,578 households in Mercer County each month.

You can contact the Mercer County Food Bank, Monday-Friday from 7:30am – 3:30pm at 724-981-0353 and they can assist in connecting you to a member agency or direct distribution program nearest you.

### Mobile Pantry Monthly Schedule:

MERCER

Mercer United Methodist Church

1st Wednesday • 12–2pm

FREDONIA

Fredonia United Methodist Church

2nd Thursday • 11am–1pm

HERMITAGE

Charleston United Methodist Church

3rd Friday • 1–3pm

\*\*Dates and times are subject to change. Distributions are first come first serve to income eligible Mercer County recipients until quantities run out.

According to Johns Hopkins there are four ways to prevent falls:

1. Stay active. It's important to stay mobile and avoid a sedentary lifestyle.
2. Watch for warning signs such as unsteadiness walking, vision problems, and medication side effects.
3. Remove risks at home by checking all rooms in your home.
4. Report a fall to your physician. By reporting falls to your physician, it will be easier to come up with a plan to keep you safe at home.



### Primary Election Deadlines

The deadline to register to vote for the April 23, 2024, Primary Election is **April 8, 2024**. The last day to request a Mail-In ballot is **April 16, 2024, by 5:00p.m.** Mail-In ballots must be returned **by 8p.m on April 23, 2024**.



### SCAMS TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THIS MONTH.



**Don't Hand Off Cash to "Agents"**— Real SSA OIG agents will never ask you to give them cash or gift cards. The Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is receiving alarming reports that criminals are impersonating SSA OIG agents and are requesting that their targets meet them in person to hand off cash. SSA OIG agents will never pick up money at your door or in any type of exchange. This is a SCAM! NEVER exchange money or funds of any kind with any individual stating they are an SSA OIG agent. This new scam trend introduces an element of physical danger to scams that never existed before. This recent method of handing cash directly to a phony agent is a dangerous twist on a known scam tactic that pressures individuals to pay in a specific way by using cash or gift cards. SSA OIG and official government agencies do NOT conduct business in this manner. "This is the latest example of how scammers are constantly evolving their tactics to intimidate or pressure people into making hasty decisions that usually involve stealing their target's hard-earned money," said Inspector General Gail S. Ennis. "While our agents are out in the field, they will not ask you for money. I urge you not to respond to these kinds of requests."

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU'VE BEEN SCAMMED**

Stop talking to the scammer. Notify financial institutions and safeguard accounts. Call the police and file a police report. File a complaint with the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center ([ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)). Report Social Security-related scams to SSA OIG ([oig.ssa.gov](https://oig.ssa.gov)). Report other scams to the Federal Trade Commission ([ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov)). Keep financial transaction information and a record of all communications with the scammer.

**Tax season scam**—With April being Tax Season it is important to be aware of the latest scam personating government tax documents. Cybercriminals are taking advantage of tax season by trying to trick you into opening an email and downloading a malicious PDF attachment. The email they send looks like a government form and includes a link to download the PDF attachment. The scammers even include helpful instructions for pasting the web page URL into your browser in case the link isn't working. Clicking the link will redirect you to a fake webpage and initiate a file download. Malware is installed on your computer once the file downloads. Remember, cybercriminals don't only want your money—they also want your data! And they can use this malware to steal your user credentials and other personal data.

Follow these tips to avoid falling victim to a tax scam:

- The latest software versions for devices often contain security updates. Make sure that your devices are running the latest software updates recommended by your IT team.
- Follow instructions for reporting any suspicious emails that you receive. Quickly reporting suspicious emails can help keep you and others safe!
- Be skeptical of unsolicited emails from the government or other financial entities. Always double-check with the organization that sent the form if you have doubts about its authenticity.

**Call the Federal Trade Commission to report suspected fraud at 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357)**

# Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc. Newsletter

## April 2024



### The Benefits of Volunteering

April is National Volunteer Month. This is a time to celebrate and recognize the contributions of volunteers. Have you ever considered the benefits of volunteering?

#### **Benefits of volunteering #1: Volunteering connects you to others.**

One of the better-known benefits of volunteering is the impact on the community. Unpaid volunteers are often the glue that holds a community together. Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place. Even helping with the smallest tasks can make a real difference to the lives of people, animals, and organizations in need. And volunteering is a two-way street: It can benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help. Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills.

#### **Benefits of volunteering #2: Volunteering is good for your mind and body.**

Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health.

- Volunteering increases self-confidence. Volunteering can provide a healthy boost to your self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. You are doing good for others and the community, which provides a natural sense of accomplishment. Your role as a volunteer can also give you a sense of pride and identity. And the better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life and future goals.
- Volunteering combats depression. Reducing the risk of depression is another important benefit of volunteering. A key risk factor for depression is social isolation. Volunteering keeps you in regular contact with others and helps you develop a solid support system, which in turn protects you against stress and depression when you're going through challenging times. Working with pets and other animals has also been shown to improve mood and reduce stress and anxiety.
- Volunteering helps you stay physically healthy. Volunteering is good for your health at any age, but it's especially beneficial in older adults. Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not, even when considering factors like the health of the participants. Volunteering has also been shown to lessen symptoms of chronic pain or heart disease.

#### **Benefits of volunteering #3: Volunteering brings fun and fulfillment to your life.**

Volunteering is a fun and easy way to explore your interests and passions. Doing volunteer work you find meaningful and interesting can be a relaxing, energizing escape from your day-to-day routine of work, school, or family commitments. Volunteering also provides you with renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life. Many people volunteer to make time for hobbies outside of work as well. For instance, if you have a desk job and long to spend time outdoors, you might consider volunteering to help plant a community garden, walk dogs for an animal shelter, or help at a children's camp.

#### **Local Volunteer Opportunities:**

**Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc—Long-term Care Ombudsman Program 724-662-6222**

**American Red Cross 1-800-422-7677**

**Meals on Wheels 724-342-2042**

**United Way of Mercer County 724-981-1884**

**Mercer County Food Bank 724-981-0353**

**Understanding Medicare's Part D Low Income Subsidy (LIS/Extra Help)** Do you need help paying for your prescription medications? You may qualify for LIS/Extra Help. What is LIS/Extra Help? It's a program that covers some of the Part D prescription drug plan costs, including Part D premiums, deductibles, and copayments. The Social Security Administration (SSA) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) work together to administer LIS/Extra Help. To learn more about the Extra Help program, including the income and resource guidelines, contact Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight, PA MEDI, at the Mercer County Area Agency on Aging at 724-662-6222.

# Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc. Newsletter

## April 2024



### Senior Resources

AARP ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org))

The National site for AARP a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people, ages 50 and older. Call 1-888-687-2277

Benefits Checkup ([www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org))

An online questionnaire to help search for a list of all state and federal benefits.

COMPASS (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Application for Social Services

[[www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us)])

Enables Pennsylvania citizens to apply for social service programs online.

Call 1-800-692-7462.

Medicare ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov))

The official government site for Medicare consumer information. Call 1-800-633-4227

### Mental Health Services

Do you need to talk to someone about loneliness or depression?

Locally:

Mercer County Crisis:

724-662-2227

Community Counseling Center Warm Line:

724-981-1741

1-866-853-7758

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Dial 988 –or- 1-800-273-8255

Veteran Crisis Line: Call 988 then press 1.

**Please Check Out Our Updated Website  
and try our new QR Code.**



[www.mercercountyaging.org](http://www.mercercountyaging.org)

**Applications for the 2023 Property Tax/Rent Rebates  
are due by June 30, 2024.**

**2024 Mercer County Senior Games  
Coming Soon!**

Save the dates:

Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> through Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Community Events Happening Near you:

#### Community Shred Event – Hermitage PA

April 13 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Shenango Valley Senior Center

220 N. Buhl Farm Drive

Hermitage, PA 16148

Hosted by PA State Rep. Parke Wentling.

Limit to 4-5 standard boxes or bags with material for shredding.

#### Health and Wellness Fair

April 19, 2024, 10am-2pm at the Salvation Army

660 Fisher Hill Street, Sharon, PA 16146

### MCAAA, Inc. Contact Information:

[www.mercercountyaging.org](http://www.mercercountyaging.org)

#### Administration / Care Management / Older Adult Protective Services

133 N. Pitt Street, Mercer, PA 16137

724-662-6222

#### Greenville Senior Community Center

45 Alan Avenue, Greenville, PA 16125

724-588-3155

#### Grove City Senior Community Center

301 S. Broad Street, Grove City, PA 16127

724-458-6844

#### McQuiston Center by the Park

29 Railroad Street, Sandy Lake, PA 16145

724-376-3608

#### Shenango Valley Senior Center and Adult Day Care

220 N. Buhl Farm Drive, Hermitage, PA 16148

724-981-7950