

Crawford County *Senior Gazette* January 2026

**ADVANTAGE
AUDIOLOGY
& HEARING
CENTER**
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A Brutally Realistic Expectation for the New Year

by Toby Neal

There is something charming about the optimism we carry into each new year. We roll out of December full of sugar cookies and holiday cheer, and into January, believing that a few scribbles on a list will transform us into new, improved, highly disciplined versions of ourselves. We imagine a year ahead when we suddenly crave salad, jump out of bed before sunrise, and joyfully embrace activities that sound like they belong on an infomercial.



New Year's resolutions are a treasured tradition. They are also, if we are telling the truth, wildly overrated. Every January, we make big promises: "This year I will become a traveler, a yogi, an early riser, or a daily vitamin taker. I will be the person who knows what quinoa is and how to say it correctly." Yet by mid-month, I am back to being someone who prefers sweatpants, knows where the cookies are, and does not feel bad about either.

I recently had a conversation with Carolyn DiPonio, a regular at the senior center who is both insightful and absolutely hilarious. She was reflecting on the pressure people put on themselves at New Year's, and shared a line that could easily be printed on a greeting card. She said, "Why would I go out on New Year's Eve just to kiss someone I wouldn't kiss any other time of the year? I will stay home with a margarita."

That is the kind of wisdom you earn by surviving several decades of parties, people, and poor decisions. Her attitude reminds us that adulthood comes with a powerful revelation. You do not have to spend your holiday in a room full of strangers just because society says it is a celebration.

Continued on Page 11

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
4388 W. M-72 Hwy
Grayling, MI, 49738
www.crawfordcoa.org
Find us on Facebook!



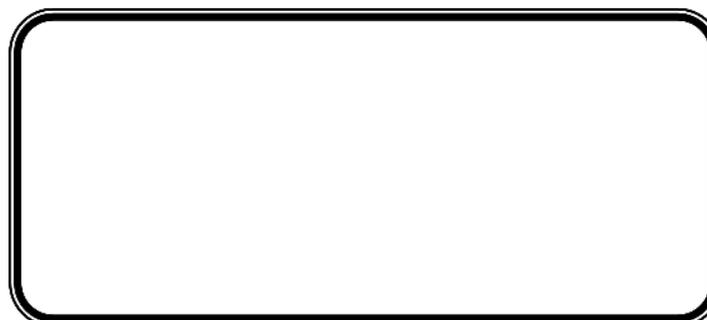
Find Us By Searching

Crawford County
Commission on Aging
& Senior Center



Our Mission

The Mission of the Commission on Aging is to advocate and promote the well-being and independence of all older adults of Crawford County.



director@crawfordcoa.org
Fax: (989) 348-8342
Phone: (989) 348-7123
Grayling, MI 49738
4388 West M-72 Hwy

Smartphone Scan
to our Website



Letter from the Director: Commission on Aging & Senior Center Angel Tree



This was our first year doing an official Angel Tree. Because of this, I set a reasonable goal of providing gifts and showing love to 40 older members of our community. In typical fashion, our members put in 120% effort, and we were able to help over 50 grateful residents have a wonderful Christmas. At the time of this writing, Christmas is still a few weeks away, but I've already had several recipients not be able to wait until the magical day, and they opened their presents early. One of them in particular had recently undergone surgery, and she was in a great deal of pain and fairly down in the dumps about her current situation. We delivered a passel of presents to her, and she immediately perked up. "Oh, my goodness, are all of these for me?" We assured her that they were and left. Less than an hour later, I received a call from her, and she was so happy. She began by saying, "I asked for a cookbook, and they got me the nicest cookbook I've ever seen. I asked for soap, and they got me many bars of Dove soap. They could have gotten me any soap, and I would have been happy, but they got me Dove soap." She continued to list off the items she requested and how the things she received were so much nicer than she ever dreamed they would be. Finally, she said, "Then they got me really nice and warm pajamas, I didn't even ask for them, they just got them for me." She told me that this was the best Christmas she has had in many, many years, and that for the past hour, she hadn't thought about the pain for one second. She made me promise I would tell the person who got her the presents how happy it made her and how grateful she was for their gracious gifts. Unfortunately, we did the Angel Tree program, so it was two-way anonymous. The Tags had numbers, and the donor would bring us a tag, and we would give them an envelope with the tag number on it. We had no idea which recipient was which number, or which generous donor got which number, so here I am with a conundrum. I made a promise I can't keep. My solution, I will tell everyone how much they are appreciated. Everybody was so eager to take a tag, I couldn't keep any on the tree. No sooner had I placed a tag on the tree that it was gone. You all have done wonderful acts of kindness, and the community is a better place for them. Thank you all for your heartfelt giving this season. It is deeply appreciated by everyone involved, and as always, we at the Commission on Aging are nothing without you.

Merry Christmas

Brian McLaughlin



A Heartfelt Thank You from the Commission on Aging for Your Giving Tuesday Support

This Giving Tuesday, our community showed extraordinary generosity, and we are truly moved. On behalf of the Commission on Aging and the Senior Center, we extend our sincerest appreciation to everyone who chose to give. Your donations are more than contributions; they are acts of kindness that directly touch the lives of older adults throughout Crawford County. Thanks to your generous support, we were able to raise \$7,940 on Tuesday, December 2nd.

Because of your support, we can continue strengthening our Home Delivered Meal Program (Meals on Wheels). This service is so much more than a warm meal. This program offers comfort, safety checks, and connection for older adults who may be isolated or facing challenges that make daily tasks difficult. Your generosity ensures that no one on our care list is left without nourishment, care, or a friendly face at their door.

Thank you for believing in our work. Thank you for standing with us. And thank you for making a tangible difference in the lives of the people we serve. Your support gives us strength and hope as we move into the new year.

With heartfelt gratitude,

*The Staff and Volunteers at the Crawford County
Commission on Aging and Senior Center*

Need Help with Taxes?

The COA and AARP will be offering a free tax service for the 2025 tax year. You will need to make an appointment by calling 989-348-7123. We will need your name and address. We will send you instructions on what to bring. You MUST have a social security card for each person on your tax form, and a picture ID(s) or Driver's License for adult. If filing joint, both persons must be at the appointment. As a general rule of thumb, you will need:

- Social Security Cards For You, Your Spouse And Dependents
- Birthdates For Spouse And Dependents
- Copy Of Last Years Tax Return
- Any Income, W2's, Tips, Gambling Winnings
- Your Social Security Statement SSA-1099, Railroad Retirement RRB-1099
- Interest 1099-INT, Dividends 1099-DIV, Stock Sales 1099B
- Retirement, Annuity, IRA Distributions 1099-R
- Unemployment Compensation 1099-G
- Any Other Income Documentation, 1099-MISC
- FIA/FIP Obtain DHS Statement, SSI Fed/State Bank Statement
- Daycare Total Amount Paid, Providers Id Number or SS Number
- Charitable donations up to \$300 if you do not itemize.
- A Copy of Your Property Tax Bills For Last Year: Summer And Winter Taxes
- Renters May also apply for a Homestead Property Tax Credit.
- Your Heating Costs From November 1, 2025 Thru October 31, 2025. (Renters May Qualify Even If Heat Is Included In Rent)

For direct deposits, we will need your bank routing and account number, you can also bring a blank check.

We do not do schedule A or Schedule C. Please call 989-348-7123 to schedule an appointment.

Coming Attractions: Save the Dates

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging Webinars for January 2026



Caregiver Webinar

Friday, January 9, 2026, 1:00 pm-2:00 pm

The Webinar is online via Zoom.

The Webinar is entitled:
Dementia Friendly
Environments

To register, call
989-889-4667, or email
healthyaging@nemsca.org

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



From your friends at the Crawford County Commission on Aging & Senior Center. We hope your holidays were Merry & Bright, and we look forward to spending 2026 with you!

Secretary of State Mobile Office

Get all of your yearly renewals done in one quick, easy, and convenient place. The Secretary of State Mobile Office will be at the Crawford County Commission on Aging from 10:30 am - 3:00 pm on February 9th. Call the Secretary of State for your county for specific pricing information. For all other questions or to book your appointment with the mobile office, call the Crawford County Commission on Aging at 989-348-7123.

Trip Survey Results

The Crawford County Commission on Aging is excited to announce plans for several highly requested trips in 2026. Topping the list is the enchanting Lilac Festival on Mackinac Island, a beloved springtime celebration filled with color, history, and island charm. Also popular among respondents is a visit to the beautifully designed and seasonally stunning DOW Gardens, offering a perfect day of nature and relaxation. Sports fans will be thrilled to know that a Detroit Tigers Game is also in the works, providing a fun and lively outing to Comerica Park. Rounding out the top selections is a festive trip to Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, where participants can enjoy the magic of the holiday spirit year-round. The Commission on Aging looks forward to bringing these top-voted adventures to life for the community in 2026.



Veteran's Coffee Hour Date

Date: Thursday, January 8th

Time: 10:00-11:00 AM

At the American Legion Post #106

More Info: (989) 344-3861



Kate's Cooking Class Future Sessions Preview, Alternating Tuesdays, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm:

Feb 3rd: Mexico

Make your Quesadillas explode with layers of flavor, see how quick and easy a quick blender sauce is to make, and learn to prepare Mexican rice from scratch.

Feb 17th: Italian

Learn to make meatballs with fresh ingredients that would make an Italian Nona proud, and the Spaghetti & Marinara sauce to go with them.

March 3rd: Chinese

Skip the Chinese buffet line and blanch, velvet, and stir fry your way through creating a Chicken & Vegetables in brown sauce dish that may rival your favorite restaurant's

March 10th: Mediterranean

Pair fresh vegetables and salty cheese together with their classic dressing for a Greek-style salad, and marinate and grill some Mediterranean-style chicken breast for a light meal that is unbelievably flavorful.

Special Dinner Schedule

January 15th

Winter Picnic

February 19th

Chinese New Year

March 19th

St. Patrick's Day

April 16th

Spring Serenade

May 14th

Mother's Day

June 18th

Father's Day

July 16th

Hawaiian Luau

August 20th

Backyard BBQ

September 17th

Thursday Night Lights

October 22nd

Halloween

November 19th

Thanksgiving

December 17th

Christmas

Time: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm,
Suggested donation of
\$4.00 for those over 60
and a cost of \$8.00 for
those under 60.



Although the Crawford County Commission on Aging is supported by state & federal grants, Crawford County millage monies and Crawford United we could not do what we do without also having the support of people just like you. You can donate online at crawfordcoa.org/make-a-donation, in person, or by mailing your donation to us at 4388 M-72 HWY, Grayling, MI, 49738.

Make Your Mark: Leave a Legacy

By including the Crawford County Commission on Aging (COA) in your estate plans, you can help ensure that our mission of advocating and promoting the well-being and independence of older adults endures long after you're gone. Here are a few ways you can gain tax or estate benefits while also supporting the COA. If you're not sure where to start, we encourage you to consult with an attorney or financial advisor to determine the best option for you.

Bequest

You can designate a specific amount or percentage of assets that you would like to leave to COA as part of your will or trust and your gift will be exempt from federal estate taxes.

Retirement Plan Beneficiary

You can name the COA as a beneficiary of an IRS, 401(k) or 403(b). A change of beneficiary form is required from your plan administrator.

Life Insurance Beneficiary

You can assign a charitable organization as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy which can provide tax benefits while helping to sustain arts and culture.

Charitable Trusts

Charitable Remainder and Charitable Lead Trusts allow you to designate and split your assets in the way that best fits your wishes.

By making a legacy gift, you're supporting the Commission on Aging's work to ensure that every older adult is taken care of in our community. Your generosity will ensure everyone receives a meal, in-home services, and the advocacy needed to support the needs of older adults in our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sponsors

Silver Sneakers

Led by Rich Ferrigan
of Grayling Fitness Center

Foot Clinic

by Linda Russel

Hearing Clinic Offered

by Advantage Audiology

Birthday Lunch Flowers

donated by Family Fare

Legal Aid Offered

by Jason R. Thompson Law
Office PLC

Grayling Pharmacy Bingo

by The Grayling Pharmacy

Fit for the Aging

by Sami Szydzik of Stronger
Fitness

Housing Counseling

by Laurie Jamison

General Donations

Pam & Richard Alexander Linda Bostic Betty Jo Bresmon Ben & Pam Carr Rev. Elizabeth Chace Cornell Insurance Jane Croze J Francis Keith Radwanski & Erin Fanning Anna Fradl Bob Gerring Janet Gildner Jim & Cindy Johnson JM Door Denis Kemmerer Glenn & Lorelei King Kodiak Group Kelly Lako Dick & Alice Lee Kirsten Lietz	Judy Marchlewicz McNearney Quilters Dennis & Mickie Meyers JoAnn Michal Tim & Oralia Miller Jack Millikin Inc. Connie Rowe Wayne & Rosemary Nelson David & Diane Noelke Bea & Bruce Patrick Dorothy Peacor Tad & Bonnie Randolph BJ Sanders Karen Schafer Gary Sielski Mark & Val Sloan St. Mary's of Grayling's Women's Club Kevin Wiley Richard Young
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Hometown Heroes

**\$300.00 per day supports a day
of Meals on Wheels**

**Running Tally of Support: 85 Days,
\$26,090.00. Thank You!**

Become a Hometown Hero by donating a day's worth of meals for local Meals on Wheels recipients! December 22nd was donated by Jim & Cindy Johnson and BJ Sanders, in memory of Thekla B. LeHoux. January 10th was donated by Keith Radwanski & Erin Fanning in memory of Joan Radwanski, and January 14th was donated by Sherry Haag, in memory of Dawn Haag Pindell, who hated to cook.

Memorial Donations

Mark Hanson & Nancy Lemmen donated in memory of Scott Foster, Donna Hubbard donated in memory of Fred Campbell, and Cindy & Jim Johnson, BJ Sanders donated in memory of Thekla B. LeHoux.

Memorials

Monetary gifts to the Crawford County Commission on Aging are a fitting tribute to the memory of those no longer with us or in honor of those we love. Your tax-deductible gift in their name will enable us to continue to provide and initiate programs that promote the well-being and independence of all older adults of Crawford County. You can also buy a memorial plaque to be displayed in our Exercise Lobby. If you are interested in donating in memory of someone, call 989-348-7123 for more information.

Make a Donation Today & Create Golden Opportunities for a Lifetime!

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Cell Phone (_____) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Method of Payment o Cash o Check Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Please make check payable to "COA" at 4388 West M-72 Hwy, Grayling, MI 49738

Call (989) 348-7123 to make donations or payments of \$25 or more with a credit, debit, or EBT card.

All Gifts are Tax Deductible

- I would like to receive monthly emails about activities and events.
- I would like to be contacted about Legacy Giving.
- I would like to volunteer for the Commission on Aging.

Monthly Featured Activity - Chess Club

Do you love a good challenge? The Chess Club is the perfect place to sharpen your mind and connect with others. Whether you're a total beginner, a casual player, or a seasoned strategist, you'll find a welcoming group ready to play, teach, and grow together. The club meets every Monday at 1:00 pm. Stop by and learn new skills, improve old ones, and make new friends. Don't miss your chance to sharpen your mind and expand your horizons.

January Birthdays

Jim O'Neill 1/3
 Juanita Roberts 1/5
 Donna Farren 1/9
 Cassie Campbell 1/14
 Larry Davis 1/21
 Lenora Beckett 1/22
 Lisa Munifo 1/25

Birthday Lunch is on Thursday, January 22nd, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
 Want your birthday in the Senior Gazette? Stop by Reception to fill out the form to allow us to share.



The Brook
 Retirement Communities
 Big Rapids • Boyne City • Cedar Springs • Cheboygan Gaylord • Gladwin • Grayling • Houghton Lake • Newaygo Portland • Rogers City • Roscommon • Standish • West Branch

The Weather Outside is Frightful, but these January Activities are Delightful



Kate's Cooking Class

January 6th & 20th, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

On January 6, explore the tastes of France as you channel your inner Julia Child. You'll prepare a classic French vinaigrette over mixed greens and craft a comforting Potato Leek Soup (Vichyssoise for those feeling fancy). Then on January 20, enjoy a taste of the Southern U.S. with fluffy buttermilk biscuits and homemade sausage gravy, a quick, cozy, and endlessly satisfying dish perfect for breakfast, or any time of day.

Mason Jar Crafting Class

January 12th, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Melanie Douglas will be back with another crafting class. The class is \$5.00 per person and includes the opportunity of a few different crafts using mason jars. Call 989-348-7123 to reserve your spot, as the class size is limited to 12 people.

Write Your Own Story

Wednesdays starting January 14th, 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Do you remember a lot of interesting things about your life? And would you like your kids and grandkids to know about it? A class about writing your memoirs is going to be held here at the Senior Center, taught by Cathy Lester, an accomplished writer who enjoys guiding others in the writing process.

Winter Picnic Special Dinner

January 15th, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Winter Picnic Special Dinner will feature BBQ Ribs, Potato Salad, Coleslaw, and Lemon Bars. The door prize this month is a Retro Toaster donated by the Haag Family. Dinner is a suggested donation of \$4.00 for those over 60, and a cost of \$8.00 for those under 60.

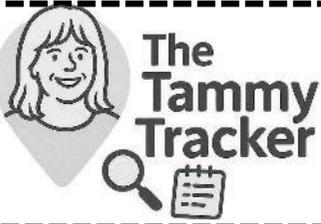
Volunteers

Mark Anderson
 Meredith Anderson
 Nancy Billinghamst
 Mary Beth Brady
 Betty Jo Bresmon
 Sue Cameron
 Ben & Pam Carr
 Debbie Carrigan
 Carolyn Diponio
 Diana Doremire
 Melanie Douglas
 Kathy Drefts
 Dave Felker
 Richard Ferrigan
 Janet Gilbert
 Karen Gribb
 Sherry Haag
 Donn Handy
 Nancy Haywood
 Susan Hensler
 Donna Hubbard
 Francis Hummel
 Liedewey Hunter
 Cindy & Jim Johnson
 Glenn & Lorelei King
 Sarah & Jim Lawless
 Alice Lee
 Nancy Lemmen
 Cathy Lester
 Kirsten Lietz
 Judy Marchlewicz
 Dan & Karen McCarthy
 Barb McNamara
 Max Meisner
 Tim & Olie Miller
 Brian Miller
 Barb Miller

Marlyn Neuberger
 Bev Organek
 Suzanne
 Ostahowski
 Mark Ostahowski
 Ron Pagereski
 Lisa Pamame
 Lois Platt
 Jackson Pollock
 Breiana Probert
 Keith Radwanski
 Al Reynolds
 Chuck & Robin
 Rodgers
 Jon Shazri
 Richard Smith
 Cheryl Starr
 Randy & Tanya
 Stephens
 Ann Stephenson
 Dave Stephenson
 Brad Summers
 Tim & Susie
 Swedine
 Sami Sydzyk
 Farrell Thomas
 Ellen Thompson
 Ken Thurston
 Scott Ulrey
 Becky Walrath
 Curtis Williams
 Janet Williamson
 Ernie & Ruthann
 Windolph
 Laura Wood

Zumba Gold Scheduling Changes

Due to forecasts calling for heavier snowfall this winter, Cindy, Meredith, and Nancy have decided to combine the current classes into a single session for the season. During January, February, and March, the class will meet once per day on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. The 9:00 a.m. session is expected to return in the spring, with additional scheduling updates to be announced in March 2026. Anyone with questions is encouraged to contact the COA.



As the winter season kicks into high gear, be sure to build and keep an emergency kit with food, water, and medications for you and your pet in case of winter storms. These storms could cause lasting damage and extended power outages. Be prepared, stay safe, and pack that emergency kit so that you are ready when severe weather hits.

New to Medicare

Happy Birthday! Are you going to be 65 soon? Are you getting mail & phone calls from insurance companies? Protect yourself from Scams and Fraud! Need help understanding Medicare? Join Tammy Findlay, a certified State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Counselor on Wednesday, January 21st at 9:00 am for a New to Medicare Presentation. Learn whether you need to enroll in Medicare at 65 if you have employer-sponsored insurance.



The Pet Program

The Crawford County Commission on Aging & Senior Center (COA) has been awarded a grant from Meals on Wheels of America and PetSmart Charities. This grant continues a pet project program at the COA to assist low-income Crawford County older adults with the purchase of pet food, limited veterinary assistance, and kitty litter. Please call Tammy Findlay, Advocacy/Resource Coordinator at 989-348-7123, to see if you qualify.



Winter Self-Care Tips for Older Adults

Stay Active Indoors

Regular exercise keeps your body strong and your spirits high. When outdoor walks aren't feasible, try chair yoga, indoor walking routines, or light strength training. Many senior centers like the COA offer group classes that combine fitness and fun.

Hydrate, Even When You're Not Thirsty

Winter air can be dehydrating, and many people feel less thirsty in colder weather. Aim to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Warm herbal teas or infused water with fruits can make hydration more enjoyable.

Get Your Daily Dose of Natural Light

Lack of sunlight during winter can lead to SAD. To counter this, sit by a sunny window, go outside on bright days, or use a light therapy lamp. Even a brief walk outdoors can boost your mood and energy.

Monthly Commodities

Commodities will be available for pickup on Wednesday, January 28th, between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. If you are currently receiving commodities or plan to pick them up, please ensure that you collect your items by the end of the day on Friday, January 30th. To find out if you're eligible and to get signed up, contact Tammy Findlay at 989-348-7123.



Pet Winter Safety

Like humans, cold weather can worsen arthritis in our fur babies. Watch for limping or stiffness and consult your vet for care.

Keep an emergency kit with food, water, and medications for your pet in case of winter storms that could cause power outages.

Knowing the Difference	Winter Storm Watch	Winter Storm Warning
Timing & Certainty	Conditions are favorable for hazardous weather to develop. Timing is not quite certain yet.	Hazardous weather is imminent or already occurring. The threat to life and property is certain and immediate.
Action Required	Stay informed and prepare your emergency plan. Check your supplies and get ready to act.	Take immediate action to protect yourself and property. Stay off the roads, bring pets inside, and shelter in place.
Analogy	The ingredients for a storm are on the counter.	The storm is now in the oven and cooking.

The Scoop: Winter is Here. Be safe!

I don't know if you were surprised by all this snow so early in the year, but I was. Seems like we've been having fairly mild winters lately, compared to years past. It looks like we could be headed for a good old fashioned winter this year. With that in mind, I thought it would be a good idea to just focus on some winter safety tips. So here goes:

Keep Safe from Exposure to Cold Outdoors:

- Check the weather forecast for windy and cold days. A heavy wind can quickly lower your body temperature, so try to stay inside or in a warm place.
- If you must go out on windy, cold, or damp days, don't stay outside for long.
- Let others know when you're planning to spend time outdoors and carry a fully charged mobile phone.
- Keep warm blankets and extra cold-weather clothing in your car.
- Wear a hat, scarf, and gloves or mittens to prevent loss of body heat through your head and hands. Consider using disposable or rechargeable hand and foot warming products.
- Wear warm, waterproof, and loose layers of clothing. The air between the layers helps to keep you warm.

Tips for Avoiding Falls in the Winter:

- Keep outside walkways clear of snow and ice with an ice melt product or sand.
- Avoid shoveling snow yourself when possible. You're not a kid anymore. You could have a heart attack, so let the young'uns help you.
- Use railings to help avoid slipping on icy stairs and walkways.
- Wear nonskid, rubber-soled, low-heeled footwear.
- Consider using services that deliver prescriptions, groceries, and other necessities so you don't need to go out.

Tips for Staying Warm Indoors:

- Set your heat to at least 68°F.
- Place a rolled towel in front of doors to keep out drafts.
- Keep your blinds and curtains closed, and if you have gaps around the windows, try using weather stripping or caulk to keep the cold air out.
- Dress warmly on cold days, even if you are staying inside. Wear socks and slippers and make use of throw blankets.
- When you go to sleep, use extra covers. Wear long underwear under your pajamas and consider wearing a head covering.
- Make sure you eat enough food to maintain your weight
- Avoid or limit alcohol intake. Alcoholic drinks can make you lose body heat.
- Ask someone to check on you during cold weather. If there is a power outage, try to stay with a relative or friend.

I know, I know.....basic common sense....BUT...we all need reminders now and again. Take care and be safe!!

& that's
THE SCOOP
ON HEALTHY LIVING



Thank You for Your Donations



(Left) Janet, a Friend of the COA, made 120 hot tray holders for our Home Delivered Meals participants this holiday season. (Right) Judy, one of our wonderful COA volunteers, donated handmade blankets for local Veterans and older adults in Crawford County. Thank you both for your generosity.

Upcoming Online Classes from Michigan State Extension Office - January 2026

Tai Chi for Better SLEEP

Tues/Thurs, Jan 6-March 3, 9 am or 7 pm
January 6, 2026 – March 3, 2026 Online

Virtual Mindfulness for Better SLEEP -

Tuesdays January/February 2026
January 6, 2026 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
11:00 am - 12:30 pm EST Zoom

Property Tax Foreclosure Basics

January 6, 2026 12:00 pm– 1:00 pm Webinar

Seated Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

January 6, 2026 – March 3, 2026 Online
ONLINE: Sleep Education for Everyone

Jan/Feb

January 6, 2026 – February 10, 2026
Every Tuesday, 7:00 -7:30 pm Online via Zoom

Coffee Hour : Begin with a Breath

January 8, 2026 8:30 am to 10 am
Online via Zoom

Sleep Education for Everyone Program (SLEEP) - Virtual

January 8, 2026 – February 12, 2026 9:30 - 10:00 am. Online via Zoom

Protecting Your Identity - January 8, 2026

January 8, 2026 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Webinar

Coffee Hour Session: Be Kind to Your Mind

January 13, 2026 8:30 am– 10:00 pm - Online
Via Zoom Webinar

Chronic Disease PATH Toolkit

Jan 13-Feb 17, 11:00 am 12:00 pm

Mindfulness for Better SLEEP

9:00 am or 7:00 pm, January 14, 2026 –
February 18, 2026 Online

Walk with Ease Self-Paced Series Jan/Feb 2026

January 19, 2026 – February 23, 2026

Keys to Embracing Aging - Winter 2026, ONLINE via Zoom

January 20, 2026 – February 24, 2026 Online
via Zoom

Every Penny Counts: Savings Strategies (Webinar)

January 20, 2026 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/rlr/> and click on the
Events tab



MSU EXTENSION

January 2026 - Meal Calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>December 22nd was donated in Memory of Thekla B. LeHoux</p> 			<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon, Fried Egg, Breakfast Potatoes, Wheat Toast, Four Berries Blend, Blueberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Cheese Ravioli, Asparagus, Italian Blend Vegetables, Red Grapes</p>
<p>5</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Biscuits and Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Four Berries Blend, Strawberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Lemon Baked Fish, Redskin Potatoes, Green Beans, Fresh Pear</p>	<p>6</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Fried Egg Sandwich, Oatmeal, Mango Berry Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Chicken & Pepper Bake, Dinner Roll, Apple</p>	<p>7</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon & Egg Bake, Hash Browns, Assorted Bagels, Tropical Smoothie, Kiwi</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Pork Roast, Baked Potato, Green Beans, Red Grapes</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Pancakes, Two Sausage Patties, Sunrise Peach Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes with Beef Gravy, Brussels Sprouts, Apple</p>	<p>9</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon, Fried Egg, Breakfast Potatoes, Wheat Toast, Four Berries Blend, Blueberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch American Goulash, Green Beans, Dinner Roll, Kiwi</p> <p style="text-align: right;">donated</p> <p>in Memory of Joan Radwanski</p> 
<p>12</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Biscuits and Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Four Berries Blend, Strawberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Chicken Drumsticks, Baked Beans, Prince Charles Vegetables, Banana</p>	<p>13</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Fried Egg Sandwich, Oatmeal, Mango Berry Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Spaghetti and Meatballs, Broccoli, Breadstick, Cantaloupe & Honeydew</p>	<p>14</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon & Egg Bake, Hash Browns, Assorted Bagels, Tropical Smoothie, Kiwi</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Lemon Pepper Chicken, Baked Potato, Brussels Sprouts, Orange</p>  <p>January 14th was donated in Memory of Dawn Haag Pindell</p>	<p>15</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Honey Mustard Chicken Thighs, Herbes De Provence Potatoes, Peas & Onions, Fresh Pear</p> <p>4:00p – 6:00p Winter Picnic BBQ Ribs, Potato Salad, Coleslaw, and Lemon Bars</p>	<p>16</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon, Fried Egg, Breakfast Potatoes, Wheat Toast, Four Berries Blend, Blueberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Pepper Steak, Brown Rice, Stir Fry Vegetable, Vegetable Egg Roll, Kiwi</p>
<p>19</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Biscuits and Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Four Berries Blend, Strawberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Chili with Beans, Broccoli & Cauliflower, Roll, Fresh Pear</p>	<p>20</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Fried Egg Sandwich, Oatmeal, Mango Berry Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Lasagna, Mixed Vegetables, Orange</p>	<p>21</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon & Egg Bake, Hash Browns, Assorted Bagels, Tropical Smoothie, Kiwi</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Chicken Stir Fry, Brown Rice, Vegetable Egg Roll, Mandarin Oranges</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Pancakes, Two Sausage Patties, Sunrise Peach Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Sweet & Sour Meatballs, Brown Rice, Stir Fry Vegetables, Pineapple Chunks</p>	<p>23</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon, Fried Egg, Breakfast Potatoes, Wheat Toast, Four Berries Blend, Blueberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Roast Turkey, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Peas & Onions, Orange</p>
<p>26</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Biscuits and Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Four Berries Blend, Strawberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch BBQ Pork Sandwich, Dill & Garlic Potatoes, Carrots, Kiwi</p>	<p>27</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Fried Egg Sandwich, Oatmeal, Mango Berry Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Western Omelet, Redskin Potatoes, Broccoli & Cauliflower, Dinner Roll, Banana</p>	<p>28</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon & Egg Bake, Hash Browns, Assorted Bagels, Tropical Smoothie, Kiwi</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Herb Seasoned Pork Loin, Mashed Sweet Potatoes, Dilled Cauliflower, Dinner Roll, Cinnamon Apples</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Pancakes, Two Sausage Patties, Sunrise Peach Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Chicken Enchiladas, Corn & Black Bean Fiesta, Applesauce</p>	<p>30</p> <p>8:30a-9:30a Breakfast Bacon, Fried Egg, Breakfast Potatoes, Wheat Toast, Four Berries Blend, Blueberry Chia Smoothie</p> <p>11:30a-12:30p Lunch Sloppy Joe, Green Beans, Carrots, Four Berries Blend</p>
<p>Light Bites – Dine in Only Chicken Taco, Cuban Black Bean Soup, Fresh Pear</p>	<p>Light Bites – Dine in Only Turkey Sub, Minestrone Soup, Grapes</p>	<p>Light Bites – Dine in Only Ham & Cheese Sub, Cabbage & White Bean Soup, Fresh Pear</p>	<p>Light Bites – Dine in Only Vegetable Beef Soup, Garden Salad, Roll</p>	<p>Light Bites – Dine in Only Italian Meatball Sub, Tomato Florentine Soup, Mandarin Oranges</p>

January 2026 - Activities Calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				2 10:30a Bible Study 1p Pantry Bingo 2p-4p Board Games
5 10a Silver Sneakers 1-4p Chess Club 2-3p Diamond Art Club	6 9a Friends of a Feather Quilting 10a Zumba Gold 12:30p Euchre (Events Room) 1:00p Kate's Cooking Class 2:30p Cardio Drumming	7 8:30-4:30p AuSable Quilt Guild 8:30a Blood Pressure Checks 9a New to Medicare 10a Silver Sneakers 12:30p Mahjong 1:00-3:00p Wii Bowling	8 10a Zumba Gold 1p Penny Bingo	9 10:30a Bible Study 10:45a Fit for the Aging 1p Pantry Bingo 2p-4p Board Games
12 10a Silver Sneakers 10a Mason Jar Crafting 1-4p Chess Club 2-3p Diamond Art Club	13 10a Zumba Gold 9a Housing Counseling 10a Grief Support Group 12:30p Euchre 2:30p Cardio Drumming	14 8:30a Blood Pressure Checks 10a Silver Sneakers 12:30p Mahjong 12:30p Write Your Own Story 1:00-3:00p Wii Bowling	15 10a Zumba Gold 1p Penny Bingo 1p Legal Advice 4p-6p Winter Picnic Special Dinner	16 10:30a Bible Study 10:45a Fit for the Aging 1p Pantry Bingo 2p-4p Board Games
19 10a Silver Sneakers 1-4p Chess Club 2-3p Diamond Art Club	20 10a Zumba Gold 12:30p Euchre 1:00p Kate's Cooking Class 2:30p Cardio Drumming 5p COA Board Meeting	21 8:30a Blood Pressure Checks 9a New to Medicare 11a Alzheimer's Support @ the Brook 10a Silver Sneakers 12:30p Mahjong 12:30p Write Your Own Story 1:00-3:00p Wii Bowling	22 10a Zumba Gold 1p Penny Bingo 11:30a Birthday Lunch	23 10:30a Bible Study 10:45a Fit for the Aging 1p Pantry Bingo 2p-4p Board Games
26 10a Silver Sneakers 1-4p Chess Club 2-3p Diamond Art Club	27 10a Zumba Gold 12:30p Euchre 2:30p Cardio Drumming	28 8:30a Blood Pressure Checks 10a Silver Sneakers 12:30p Mahjong 12:30p Write Your Own Story 1:00-3:00p Wii Bowling 1-3p Commodities	29 10a Zumba Gold 1p Penny Bingo	30 10:30a Bible Study 10:45a Fit for the Aging 1p Pantry Bingo 2p-4p Board Games

January Crossword

ACROSS

- 2. A powerful business leader, or a small mound on a ski run
- 4. Snowy season, where the days are short and the nights are long
- 5. Descriptor word for when the temperature falls below zero
- 7. A term for lacking warmth or hope
- 9. Sleeping, waiting to awaken
- 10. Winter "run" famous at Bear Mountain before its closure in 1973
- 12. Seasonal schedule frequency
- 13. The pledge you make to commit to change in the New Year
- 14. A favorite snowy-day activity

DOWN

- 1. Shade of the winter sky
- 3. Heavenly or ghostlike, feels otherworldly
- 6. The birthstone for January
- 8. The name of a snowman, voiced by Jackie Vernon
- 11. Landscape with no new growth, empty and devoid of life

**Feeling Stuck? Flip this Page
Upside Down & Use a Magnifying
Glass to View the Word Bank**



1. Blue 2. Mogul 3. Ethereal 4. Wintertime 5. Frigid 6. Garnet 7. Bleak 8. Frosty 9. Dormant
10. Toboggan 11. Barren 12. Quarterly 13. Resolution 14. Sledding

A Brutally Honest New Year's Resolution (Continued)

Staying home with a good drink and bad television counts as a celebration, too. Some might argue it is the best kind.

But here is what struck me most: Carolyn believes she lacks discipline. To her, resolutions always felt like chores she was destined to fail. Yet the more she talked, the more her story revealed the opposite.

She quit smoking after years of fighting the habit. That victory alone is proof that she has a stronger will than most. She helped manage a family-owned business, with all the long hours and unexpected challenges that come with it. She has stayed active through shoulder trouble, back surgery, and the unpredictable aches that show up sometime after our 50s and refuse to leave. She has traveled with family, visited nieces and nephews in Minneapolis, laughed too hard in a hotel bar after a couple margaritas, and even tried out a women's retreat in Vermont on a whim where she drummed, learned new things, and surprised herself with how social she can still be.

At the Crawford County Commission on Aging's Senior Center, she has already committed to adding Euchre to her list of skills. Although she admits she may need a few refresher lessons, which is perfectly acceptable, because half the fun of a card game is laughing with people while you try to figure out what a "trick" even means.

She takes chair-exercise classes at the library when her shoulder is behaving and keeps moving because she knows that staying active is the key to feeling better. She shows up. She laughs. She supports her family, including cheering on her son's snowplowing business when winter hits hard. She invests in people. She makes community happen without ever writing it down as a goal.

That sounds like discipline. It also sounds like a full, meaningful life.

So why is she convinced she is failing at resolutions? Maybe the problem isn't Carolyn. Maybe it is the resolutions.

Every year we reach for impossible things. We decide that perfection is finally within reach, as long as we buy a new calendar. We imagine that our future selves will be immune to temptation. Future you will not eat snacks after 8 PM. Future you will enjoy Pilates. Future you will definitely not stay up past midnight watching a show he has already seen three times. But future selves have the same quirks as current selves. We continue being human, even in January.

What if we stopped trying to become entirely different people and instead committed to being the best version of the person we already are? Carolyn shared several small,

hopeful habits that have nothing to do with unrealistic self-reinvention. Here are a few we can borrow from her experience:

Laugh more...truly laugh, the kind where you lose your breath for a second and have to wipe your eyes. We live in a stressful world. Politics, health concerns, unpredictable weather, and family drama are enough to dampen anyone's mood. Laughter cuts through the noise better than any self-help trend.

Move regularly. We do not need a membership to an exclusive gym or a five-mile running routine. Moving can look like chair exercises, a slow walk with a friend, stretching in the living room, or dancing while you wait for your coffee to brew. The goal is not athletic perfection but reminding your body that it still knows how to enjoy life.

Learn something new. It can be a card game like Euchre, a new recipe, a craft, or a gentle exercise class. Curiosity keeps the brain young and gives us more excuses for socializing, which we all need.

Do not take life too seriously. There is enough heaviness in the world. Finding joy in small things does not mean we ignore our problems, but it does mean we refuse to let them take over.

Meet new people. Carolyn's trip to Vermont proved that friendships are not reserved for youth. The world keeps offering us connections if we are willing to show up.

Invest in family, whatever that looks like. Taking care of relationships with children, siblings, or chosen family creates meaning that lasts longer than any goal list.

When we look at life through this lens, a brutally honest New Year's resolution might sound like this: "I resolve to keep living the way that has gotten me this far, while adding a little more joy wherever I can. No unrealistic diet. No pressure to overhaul your personality. No timeline for improvement. Just small, steady commitments to curiosity, movement, laughter, and love."

We have already proven we can do hard things. Many of us have survived heartbreak, health scares, loss of loved ones, job changes, and the awkwardness of aging. We have raised families, built careers, and adapted to technology we never asked for. We deserve to celebrate every bit of that.

So, this year, skip the pressure. Skip the guilt that arrives when perfection does not. Set your expectations at a human level and walk into January knowing you are already doing better than you think.

If you want to stay home on New Year's Eve so that you do not have to kiss someone you would never kiss the other 364 days, Carolyn approves. And honestly, that might be the most practical resolution of all.

Here is to another year of good stories, good people, and the kind of living that never depends on a date on the calendar. Happy New Year, just as you are!

HAPPY New Year



Commitment means showing up for those who need us most. The sick, the injured—and the underserved. At Munson, care means more than helping you heal. It's about leaning in. Listening closely. And standing by you—so you can shine again.

Learn more at:
munsonhealthcare.org/commitment



Assistance to Help You Maintain Your Independence

Commission on Aging Services, Classes, and Resources

Health Services

Foot Care Clinic - appointments only \$25 per visit - by Linda Russell — 4th Mondays, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm - 4388 West M-72 Hwy, Grayling

Hearing Clinic - appointments only by Advantage Audiology. Call COA Office for appt.

Blood Pressure Checks - every Wednesday from 8:30 am - 10:00 am.

Incontinence Supplies

Supplies are available for a donation of \$5.00

Medical Equipment Loan Closet

Items are available for a donation of \$5.00

Nutrition Services

Boost Plus: Discounted cost for liquid nutrition with a prescription from your doctor. \$30.00.

Commodities Food Distribution:

The 4th Wednesday of the month from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm @ the Commission on Aging.

Congregate Meal Program:

Breakfasts: Mon-Fri from 8:30—9:30 am.
Lunches: Mon-Fri from 11:30--12:30pm.
Suggested donation for seniors 60+ is \$4.00 and for age 60 or younger, cost is \$8.00.

Home Delivered Meals: (*Meals on Wheels*)

Meals are delivered Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, with frozen meals included for non-delivery days.

Senior Project Fresh:

Each summer, qualified seniors receive \$25 worth of coupons for fresh fruits & vegetables.

Resources

Information / Assistance: (989) 348-7123

Our COA staff are ready to assist you in finding answers to your questions or to assist you in finding available resources.

Legal Assistance:

by Jason R. Thompson, Law Office PLC
Free legal consultations available the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1-5pm

Housing Counseling

Get housing advice from Laurie Jamison from Century 21 on the second Tuesday of each month from 9:00 am-2:00 pm.
Call 989-348-7123 for an appointment.

State Health Insurance Program (SHIP)

Trained counselors help seniors decide which health insurance options are best for them.

Medical Transportation: COA can assist in arranging transportation for seniors who have no other means and refer to hired car services too.

Senior Gazette: This monthly newspaper which is full of information for seniors and caregivers.

Telephone Reassurance/Senior Companion:

COA provides weekly phone calls or home visits to older adults who want a reliable, caring phone call or home visit plus this is a safety check too.

In-Home Services

For those who need a little assistance maintaining their independence.

- Housekeeping
- Bathing Assistance
- Respite for Caregivers

Classes

AARP Driver Refresher Course: Offered once each year.

Tai Chi: Helps people with or without arthritis to improve balance.

Geri Fit:

Learn helpful skills to improve balance and strength.

Fitness Programs

Fit for the Aging: This class is held on Fridays, and focuses on maintaining safe fitness activities as we age. Seated and standing variations for every workout. Led by Volunteer: Sami Szydzik.

Silver Sneakers: Held on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10:00 am. It is an exercise program designed for older adults. Great workout and adaptable to you. Nation's leading fitness program for Seniors. Led by Volunteer: Rich Ferrigan.

Zumba Gold: Held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 am and 10:00 am. It is a lower-intensity version of the typical Zumba dancing fitness class. It was designed to meet the anatomical and physiological needs of older adults. Led by Volunteers: Nancy Lemmen, Meredith Anderson and Cindy Johnson.

Cost of Programs

Almost all COA services are available to Crawford County Residents on a suggested donation basis. Our programs are funded by Crawford County millage taxes along with Federal, State, and local grants. However, our needs are greater than covered by these sources. Your support through donations helps us to help more. We are grateful!

How We Served You in November 2025

At the Senior Center

We served a total of 837
Congregate Meals

In-Home Services

HDM – 2,724
Respite – 59.25
Homemaker – 212.50
Bathing – 28

Important Phone Numbers:

Social Security
(800) 772-1213 or
(866) 739-4802

Medicare (800) 633-4227

Veterans Administration
(800) 827-1000

Alzheimer's Assistance
(800) 272-3900

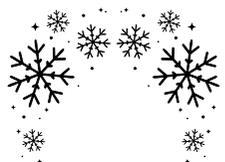
Crawford County Commission On
Aging & Senior Center
(989) 348-7123

Telephone Reassurance Service is for any older adult in Crawford County who lives alone or for anyone whether they get COA services or not.

A phone call is made on Tuesday or Thursday from 11am—1pm and serves two main purposes: a well-being check and to have a friendly conversation. This free program benefits so many and is easy to sign up for. Contact In-Home Services, Kathy Meisner at (989) 348-7123

Listen online: Community Calendar for the COA Calendar of Events
aired daily by: Blarney Stone Broadcasting Stations
q100michigan.com upnorthsportsradio.com
to add events to calendar email: peyton@blarneystonebroadcasting.com





Michigan Wild Life



C O H K I E P M O V O H J A W D A Z Z U C O U G A R I Z
 B L X L K G A L Q U B G T R H R O X V U X B F E C C U E
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 X N V F G I R G D Y I P T T C L W O A D I T Z Z L Z D G
 Y A M L A D M R P S N L I E U X Y E R E U W P Z B G M Y
 G S J F C E F A X O G E M L A R N K A R Q B S D T G U H
 O J F D M O Y C Z C B K W X E G G B G S S Q I N A H S E
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❄️ Badger ❄️ Bass ❄️ Bat ❄️ Bear ❄️ Beaver ❄️ Bluegill ❄️ Bluejay ❄️ Brook ❄️ Butterfly ❄️ Cardinal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❄️ Chickadee ❄️ Cougar ❄️ Coyote ❄️ Cricket ❄️ Deer ❄️ Dragonfly ❄️ Eagle ❄️ Ecosystems ❄️ Elk ❄️ Fawn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❄️ Fox ❄️ Heron ❄️ Hummingbird ❄️ Kingfisher ❄️ Kirtland ❄️ Mallard ❄️ Mayfly ❄️ Mink ❄️ Muskellunge ❄️ Muskrat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❄️ Newt ❄️ Pike ❄️ Pileated ❄️ Perch ❄️ Porcupine ❄️ Raccoon ❄️ Rainbow ❄️ Rattlesnake ❄️ Robin ❄️ Salamander 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❄️ Shrew ❄️ Skunk ❄️ Squirrel ❄️ Sturgeon ❄️ Trout ❄️ Turkey ❄️ Warbler ❄️ Waxwing ❄️ Weasel ❄️ Woodpecker
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Welcome to *The Kitchen Corner*

Make your way to the Kitchen Corner to visit with Kate Moshier for a monthly serving of culinary inspiration and community connection. On each visit Kate will have a recipe to share and also Special Dinner recaps and highlights, information about upcoming COA events, and anything else culinary or nutrition related. Whether you're looking for a new dish to try or you're curious about what's cooking at the Senior Center, The Kitchen Corner has something for everyone. Pull a chair up to the fire and stay awhile.

January Nutrition Education: Food Choices and Chronic Illness

Hypertension (High blood pressure) is both a cause and a symptom of multiple chronic health problems and diseases.

If your blood pressure is high, did you know that you can lower it by changing something as simple as your daily food choices? Starting to make informed decisions today can positively affect your health for years to come.

DASH Diet

- DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension and is a healthy eating plan designed to help prevent -or treat- high blood pressure. Foods in the DASH diet are rich in potassium, calcium, and magnesium, while also limiting sodium, sugar, and saturated fat intake.
- The standard DASH diet limits salt to 2,300 milligrams (mg) a day, as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Suggested Servings

The DASH diet provides daily and weekly nutritional goals. The number of servings depends on daily calorie needs. Here's a look at the recommended servings from each food group for a 2,000-calorie-a-day DASH diet:

- Grains: 6 to 8 servings a day.
- Vegetables: 4 to 5 servings a day.
- Fruits: 4 to 5 servings a day.
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy products: 2 to 3 servings a day
- Lean meats, poultry and fish: six 1-ounce servings or fewer a day.
- Nuts, seeds, or dry beans and peas: 4 to 5 servings a week.
- Fats and oils: 2 to 3 servings a day.
- Sweets and added sugars: 5 servings or fewer a week.
-

Everyone's health needs are different. Please consult your doctor before making diet changes.

For more detailed information please see:

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/dash-eating-plan>
<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>

“Skinny” Cheesy Potato Soup

For those of you who eat our congregate lunch meals regularly, you may have noticed that something was missing from our Winter Light Bites menu. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but we could not bring back the Cheesy Potato Soup this year. I know it was many people's favorite and I hate to disappoint, so, here it is! This is a “Skinny” soup with only 80 calories per 6 ounce serving, perfect for keeping any New Year's weight-loss resolutions-without sacrificing taste! Happy New Year!!

Recipe & Steps:

- 1.5 lb russet potatoes-peeled and diced in ½ in cubes
- 1 large onion- diced
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 12 oz evaporated milk (1 can)
- 1 tbl. corn starch
- ½ c. Shredded cheese (We use Cheddar but use what you have on hand)
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. ground celery seed

1. Peel and dice potatoes and onions
2. Heat a drizzle of olive oil in stock pot and then Sautee onions until translucent- about 5 minutes.
3. Add diced potatoes and seasonings, stir to combine and then add stock. Do not let potatoes and spices cook for longer than 30 seconds before adding liquids.
4. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, and cook until potatoes are fork tender-15-25 minutes.
5. Mash half of the potatoes right in the pot if you want a chunky soup and transfer to a blender for a smooth soup.
6. Whisk corn starch into a small amount of evaporated milk and add to stock pot, whisk and let thicken for a few minutes.
7. Add remaining evaporated milk and cheese
8. Cook until thickened and smooth.

Notes: This recipe makes about 12 servings, if that's too much I recommend freezing some for another day.

Pro tip: Try using a blend of different cheeses and sautéing your onions in bacon grease for more complex flavor. Garnish with bacon pieces, chopped green onion, and sour cream to serve.

Senior Gazette Staff

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Tammy Findlay, Sarah Pollock, Jan
Williamson, and Carlie Wilson

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(989) 348-7123.

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Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period Starts in January

The main difference between
Medicare Advantage Open
Enrollment and Medicare Annual
Enrollment is who can use each one.
Medicare Annual Enrollment is when
anyone who has Medicare can make
coverage changes for the upcoming
year, while Medicare Advantage
Open Enrollment is only for people
who are currently enrolled in a
Medicare Advantage plan.
Another difference between the two
is the timing. Medicare Annual
Enrollment is October 15 - December
7, while Medicare Advantage Open
Enrollment is January 1 - March 31.
Both happen every year.
Tammy Findlay is available and can
help you through this process. Call
989-348-7123 to book your
appointment.

Cost of Living Adjustment in 2026

Social Security and SSI benefits for
75 million Americans will increase by
2.8% in 2026.

The 2.8% COLA begins in January
2026 for nearly 71 million Social
Security beneficiaries. Increased
payments for about 7.5 million SSI
recipients start December 31, 2025.
(Some individuals receive both
benefits.)

The maximum taxable earnings
amount will rise to \$184,500.

The earnings limit for workers
younger than full retirement age
increases to \$24,480 (\$1 deducted for
every \$2 earned over this amount).
For those reaching full retirement age
in 2026, the earnings limit rises to
\$65,160 (\$1 deducted for every \$3
earned over this amount until the
birthday month).

There is no earnings limit for those at
full retirement age for the entire year.

Read more by visiting:
<https://www.ssa.gov/news/en/cola/>

Support Groups:

Alcoholics Anonymous

St. Francis Episcopal Church, Grayling
Sun. (O/ST) / Tue. (C/D) / Fri. (C/B) @ 7:00
pm

Mon. / Fri. (C/D) @NOON

Wed. (W/C/D) (Women's) @ 7:00 pm

St. John Lutheran Church, Grayling

Sat. (B/C) @ NOON / Thurs. (C/D)@7:00 pm

Frederic Twp. Hall

SAT. @ 6:00 pm (C/H)

Alzheimer's Support Group

3rd Wednesday, 11 am

The Brook of Grayling, 503 Rose St.

Info call: COA Senior Center

(989) 348-7123

Choices Group

Anger Management for Women

Mondays, 1:00-2:30 pm

At River House Inc. in Grayling

Register: (989)348-3169 Lynn or Danyelle

GLUED

Tuesdays, 4:00-5:30pm, for 1st-6th graders

at River House Inc. in Grayling

who have experienced domestic violence

(directly / indirectly) sexual abuse or bullying.

River House info: (989) 348-3169

Grayling Al-Anon

Tuesdays 11am

St. Francis Episcopal Church, Grayling

Call: (989)348-5850

Healthy Relationships Group

Thursdays, 2:00-3:30pm

At River House Inc. in Grayling

Register: (989)348-3169 Barbara

Long COVID - Support Group

First Thursday each month, 5-6:30pm

via Zoom, call (231) 935-0951 to register

Narcotics Anonymous

Wednesdays, 8pm

Saturdays, 4pm

St. Francis Episcopal Church, Grayling

Weight Loss & Support group

Thursdays 10:30am – 11:30am

St. John Lutheran Church, Grayling

Info: (989)348-1398 Mary Kay

Faith Based Grief Group

Wednesday, 6-8pm—(Aug 2 to Oct 25 Class)

Grayling Baptist Church,

705 Madsen St. (989) 390-0831

www.griefshare.org/about

www.griefshare.org/groups/169551

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Thank you to the McNearney Quilters. Quilters Jan Morgenstern, Mary Louise Smith, Mary Beth Schearer, Julie Dennison, Carol Chidester, Cindy Laur, Barb Bobalek, and Gloria Owaski. In total, the McNearney Quilters made 60 total place mats for HDM Clients. These place mats brought joy to our clients this Holiday season. Thank you for creating and donating these beautiful placemats. We greatly appreciate it.

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