

# The Senior Sentinel



Saratoga County Department of Aging and Youth Services



Happy Valentine's Day!  
 Valentines Day and National Caregiver's Day are February 14th  
 Our offices will be closed on Monday, February 17th  
 in observance of President's Day!

## AARP Volunteer Tax Preparation

AARP Volunteers will prepare taxes again this year. Trained volunteers will prepare Federal and State personal income taxes for low to moderate income individuals. Electronic filing is available. Tentative locations and days for this service are listed below. Each site will start their first scheduled day in February.

**Please call for an appointment, they are required. This is a first come, first serve service.**

**Appointment days and protocols are subject to change.**

### Location

Ballston Spa Library  
 Clifton Park Senior Community Center  
 Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library  
 Town of Corinth EMS Building  
 Department of Aging & Youth Services  
 Halfmoon Senior Center  
 Malta Community Center  
 Mechanicville Public Library  
 Moreau Community Center  
 Saratoga Springs Senior Center

### Day

Fridays  
 Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays  
 Mondays & Saturdays  
 Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
 Mondays  
 Wednesdays  
 Tuesdays & Thursdays  
 Tuesdays & Saturdays  
 Thursdays  
 Tuesdays

### Phone

518-288-5423  
 518-383-1343  
 518-371-8622  
 518-223-9915  
 518-884-4100  
 518-371-3892  
 518-899-4411  
 518-664-4646  
 518-792-6007  
 518-584-1621

**Tax Preparation Protocol** - Individuals will need to complete a packet prior to appointment times.

Drop off at appointment time: all of the necessary paperwork

**Please be sure to bring the following:**

**Your Social Security Card (s) for all individuals on the return**

**A Photo ID - NYS Drivers License**

**All required Tax Documentation Needed.**

**A copy of your 2025 tax return**



## **\*\*Volunteers Needed for Home Delivered Meals\*\***

We are in dire need of volunteers to deliver meals to our communities seniors.  
 If you are interested in volunteering for a few hours on a weekly or monthly basis.

Please contact: **Home Delivered Meals at (518) 363-4020** for more information.

## **Nutritional Program Weather Closings**

To see if the Home Delivered Meals are canceled due to inclement weather, please check the closings on your local T.V. Stations under Saratoga County Senior Meals.



## **Nutrition Offense vs. Defense**

Did your team make it to the Super Bowl? Winning teams in sports require both a strong offense and strong defense to be successful. They work together to achieve the winning results. Nutrition also has an offense and a defense. In nutrition, offense means proactive, goal-oriented eating for peak health and performance. Defense is reactive, addressing issues after they arise, like using supplements (Vitamin C & zinc for colds) to counter illness or fixing a poor diet once problems start. Offense builds strength; defense repairs damage, but true health thrives with a strong offensive strategy.

### **Nutrition Offense (Proactive & Building)**

- Focus: Preventing problems, fueling for success, and building reserves.
- Actions: Eating whole foods (fruits, veggies, lean proteins, whole grains, low or non-fat dairy & healthy fats), drinking water, regular exercise, getting sleep, planning meals ahead.
- Goal: Creating a resilient body, optimal energy, and prevent chronic disease.

### **Nutrition Defense (Reactive & Protecting)**

- Focus: Mitigating harm, fighting off immediate threats, and fixing existing imbalances.
- Actions: Taking supplements when nutritional needs are higher during illness and/or when dietary intake alone does not meet needs, using carbs/protein for muscle repair after intense workouts, or correcting a diet after weight gain.
- Goal: Survival, recovery, and damage control.

The key difference: Offense is about consistently making good choices to win the health game. Defense is about responding when the opponent (illness or poor choices) attacks, aiming for survival rather than victory. The best approach is a strong offense which makes defense less necessary.

### **Key Nutritional Strategies for the Best Defense**

**Prioritize Nutrient-Dense Foods:** Since calorie needs often decrease with age, every bite needs to be packed with nutrition. Focus on whole foods found in the perimeter of the grocery store.

- Fruits and Vegetables: Aim for a variety of colorful options (e.g., dark leafy greens like spinach and kale, berries, sweet potatoes).
- Whole Grains: Choose oatmeal, whole grain bread and brown rice over refined grains like white bread and white rice.
- Lean Proteins: Essential for maintaining muscle mass and strength. Good sources include seafood, poultry, eggs, beans, nuts and seeds.
- Low-Fat Dairy: Include milk, cheese, and yogurt (or fortified soy alternatives) for calcium and protein.
- Healthy Fats: Incorporate sources like avocados, salmon, nuts & seeds, and olive oil.

**Focus on "Risk Nutrients":** Older adults are often deficient in specific nutrients critical for health:

- Protein: Requirements increase with age (around 1.0 -1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight daily).
- Calcium and Vitamin D: Vital for maintaining bone health and preventing osteoporosis.
- Vitamin B12: Crucial for nerve function and red blood cell production.
- Fiber: Supports digestion and heart health; aim for 30g daily for men and 21g for women over 51.
- Potassium and Magnesium: Help regulate blood pressure and support cell function.

**Stay Adequately Hydrated:** The sense of thirst can diminish with age, increasing dehydration risk. Water is the best choice, but low-fat milk or 100% juice can also contribute to fluid intake.

### **Limit Unhealthy Choices**

- Reduce intake of foods with little nutritional value.
- Added Sugars (soda, candy, baked goods).
- Excessive Sodium (processed and pre-packaged foods). Use herbs and spices for flavor instead.
- Saturated and Trans Fats (fried foods, fatty meats, stick margarine)



## Medicare

**My Medicare Advantage Plan was not renewed for 2026  
I did not realize this and now I am not sure that I have insurance.**

### **What can I do?**

Call the Medicare Advantage Plan company that you were previously with in 2025.  
They may have a plan that works for you in 2026.

Or

Call the Saratoga County Department of Aging and Youth Services and  
ask for help with your Medicare at:

**518-884-4100**

### **When should I do this?**

**You have from now until February 28, 2026  
to possibly enroll into a new plan.**

## **Property Tax Discounts for Seniors**

Contact your Town Assessor's Office to see what discounts you qualify for.  
Some of the exemptions that are available are the Enhanced (or Senior) STAR  
exemptions, Low Income Senior exemptions and Low Income Disability exemptions  
as well as Veterans and Agricultural exemptions.

**Exemption filing deadline is March 1**

## **Winterfest is Back!**

Continuing every Tuesday through the month of  
February, Winterfest will be held at a four more different  
Gather and Dine locations.

Lunch will consist of Belgian Waffles with toppings,  
Bacon and a Hot Cocoa Bar.

If you are interested in attending, contact the  
Gather and Dine site for more information.

You must register at the site you'll be  
attending at least a day in advance by 12 noon.

Check out the following upcoming dates  
for Winterfest at these  
Gather and Dine locations.

2/3 - Moreau  
2/10 - Mechanicville  
2/17 - Corinth  
2/24 - Saratoga



Beat the winter blues  
and join us for  
**Winterfest!**



## What's Happening in Youth...



**Double Dutch Jump Rope is Coming Back!!** During April 7-9, Ms. K's Swagga Jumpers will be in the House!!

Look for more information to come on our website, and in the Sentinel and Youth newsletters.

**Kids at Heart** is a multigenerational program sponsored by the Department of Aging and Youth Services. The idea behind this program is to bring the communities seniors and youth together in a fun and interactive way. We have assembled a collection of themed boxes filled with fun, high level activities and exploration surrounding each theme. Inside each box you will find a folder with detailed instructions for each activity plus all of the supplies are included to facilitate each of the activities. This program is free, it's like borrowing a library book. Our themes include the following: Kids at Heart, Checkers and Golf, Bubbles, Outer Space, Navigate Nature, Community Kindness, Mosaics and Jenga, Dinosaurs, The Amazing Hand, Bees - The Great Pollinators, Bats and Spiders, Community Garden, Turning Point (What it is like to be a kid in 1777), and Winter.

To borrow a box or for more information please contact: Rebecca Robarge at 518-884-4100

## Caregiver Corner

### Show Some Love to a Caregiver

Do you have a caregiver?

Does someone:

- *take out the trash?*
- *do your Laundry?*
- *manage your Finances?*
- *do your shopping?*
- *run your errands?*
- *clean your home?*
- *attend doctor appointments?*
- *provide transportation?*
- *manage your medication?*



If someone is providing these services, and it is not their paid job, in addition to managing their own life needs, they ARE a caregiver. Caregivers rarely remember to schedule downtime for themselves and often neglect their own personal needs (sleep, nutrition, exercise, and medical attention). Caregivers pour their love and attention into other people's needs. This month, Look for ways to help a caregiver by recognizing their efforts, thank them, and show your love. It could be your caregiver, or someone else's.

### How to Help a Caregiver: Simple Ways to Provide Support & Care

*From: [caregiveraction.org](http://caregiveraction.org)*

Being a family caregiver can be a rewarding experience, but it often comes with significant physical, emotional, psychological, and financial strain. Caregiving can also lead to feelings of isolation as caregivers devote so much time and energy to their loved ones that they often lose touch with others or can no longer participate in regular activities. Friends and family who haven't experienced caregiving may not fully understand the demands or may distance themselves out of fear of saying the wrong thing. However, offering support doesn't need to be complicated or intimidating.

**Listen and Provide Emotional Support** - Caregivers often face days that are more challenging than others and may need someone to talk to, even if it's just to vent. Whether it's a family member, friend, or co-worker, let them know you're available and that you care. Offer your full attention without judgment. Caregivers may not be looking for solutions, but rather a compassionate listener. Avoid sharing stories about other caregivers or asking why they don't place their loved one in a nursing home - this can often feel judgmental. Simply listening and offering validation can be an enormous source of comfort.

**Keep Them Included and Show You Care** - Caregivers often feel isolated because they may not be able to join in social events or gatherings. Continue to reach out, invite them to activities, and let them know you care. Even if they can't always participate, staying in touch helps them feel less alone. Call regularly, check in on how they are doing, and acknowledge the tremendous work they are doing.

Caregivers need support just as much as those they care for, and your small actions can help lighten their load and improve their well-being.